

thank my colleagues, Representatives TUBBS JONES and WHITFIELD, for taking the lead on this important topic.

There are numerous examples nationwide that demonstrate a renewed commitment to campus fire safety. In my home State of Minnesota, the University of Minnesota system equips dorms with smoke detectors and is working now to ensure that residence halls and individual dormitory rooms have sprinkler systems. They use flame-resistant mattresses and other materials to provide students with the safest furniture available. In another example, New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control trains college officials and distributes materials that can be used in training college students on campus fire safety. These are just two examples of the good work being done at the State level to increase awareness of fire safety on college campuses.

The legislation before us today is sure to raise awareness even further. This is not the first time that campus safety has been discussed in the House. In the 109th Congress, we passed the College Access and Opportunity Act which endorsed an effort to ask colleges and universities to report annually on fire safety efforts. The report would include information such as a list of all student housing facilities and whether or not each is equipped with a sprinkler system or other fire safety system, statistics on occurrences of fires and false alarms, information on various fire safety rules and regulations, and information about training provided to students, faculty and staff. Moreover, the measure asks schools to keep a publicly available log of all on-campus fires and false alarms.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLT. I appreciate the remarks of the gentleman from Minnesota. May I ask if he has any further speakers?

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. I have no further speakers. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman from Minnesota has said, we are safer, students in dormitories and off-campus housing are safer than they were 6, 8 years ago. We have learned things to do. In this case, we know what to do. The education should be carried forward. Designation of this awareness month will help in that educational effort.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support enthusiastically this measure.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker I rise today in support of H. Res. 95, a bipartisan resolution that I, along with Mr. WHITFIELD, introduced to establish September as Campus Fire Safety Month.

This legislation encourages administrators and municipalities across the country to provide educational programs to all students during September and throughout the school year on fire safety.

Additionally, the resolution calls for evaluation of the level of fire safety being provided

in both on- and off-campus student housing and taking the necessary steps to ensure fire-safe living environments through fire safety education, installation of fire suppression and detection systems and the development and enforcement of applicable codes relating to fire safety.

In June, the Senate adopted a similar resolution, sponsored by Senator JOE BIDEN, that also encourages campus fire safety across the Nation.

Nationwide, 113 people have been killed in student housing since January 2000, as identified by the Center for Campus Fire Safety, a nonprofit organization that compiles information on campus-related fires. Almost 80 percent of the fire fatalities have occurred in off-campus occupancies such as rented houses and apartments. Common factors in a number of these fires include: lack of automatic sprinklers, disabled smoke alarms, careless disposal of smoking materials, and alcohol consumption. According to the center, April and May, followed by August and September, are the two most dangerous periods of time for student housing fire fatalities. So far 31 States have issued proclamations declaring September as Campus Fire Safety Month. Historically, September is one of the most fatal months for campus fires, but for the first time since 2000 there were no fatalities last September.

H. Res. 95 is supported by the Center for Campus Fire Safety, National Electrical Manufacturers Association, Congressional Fire Services Institute, National Fire Protection Association, International Association of Fire Chiefs, International Association of Fire Fighters, National Fire Sprinkler Association, International Code Council, Society of Fire Protection Engineers, International Association of Fire Marshals.

For the past few Congresses I have introduced H.R. 642, known as the College Fire and Prevention Act. This legislation would establish a demonstration incentive program within the Department of Education to promote installation of fire sprinkler systems, or other fire suppression or prevention technologies, in qualified student housing or dormitories, and for other purposes. The Congressional Fire Services Institute, the National Fire Sprinkler Association and the American Fire Sprinkler Association have endorsed this fire prevention legislation.

Fire safety and prevention is an issue that needs to be addressed across this country. Over these few years we have seen many tragedies involving fire at colleges, places of business, entertainment venues and places of residence. We must begin to put in place suppression measures against fires and increase support and resources for our fire fighters to ensure that no more lives are lost to fires that could have been prevented. I am pleased to say that this institution adopted this resolution in the 109th Congress and will do so again today. It is encouraging that we remain committed to bringing awareness to this issue in order to prevent more needless deaths of our students.

I encourage my colleagues to pass this legislation so that we can increase awareness about this problem that affects us all.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 95, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 25) calling on the Board of Directors of the National High School Mock Trial Championship to accommodate students of all religious faiths.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 25

Whereas religious intolerance and discrimination continue to be the root causes of many of the conflicts around the world;

Whereas the United States of America was founded by those seeking to practice their religion freely, and the American justice system, including all legal professionals involved, should be working to uphold this principle;

Whereas the First Amendment to the Constitution states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances";

Whereas section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution states, "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.";

Whereas the National High School Mock Trial Championship has been, until this date, a prestigious event that requires a tremendous amount of preparation, skill, and dedication on behalf of those students who are competing, and is looked upon with distinction by institutions of higher learning;

Whereas the National High School Mock Trial Championship is a program based on constitutional law;

Whereas the sponsor of the 2005 competition stated that, "The National High School Mock Trial Championship is a participatory program that engages students, legal professionals and the educational community to advance the understanding of the American justice system and the important role of lawyers. A well-educated public translates into a more engaged citizenry that is better equipped and more interested in fulfilling their civic responsibilities";

Whereas the National High School Mock Trial Championship espouses the goals of heightening “appreciation of the principle of equal justice for all” and promoting the “exchange of ideas among students from throughout the United States”;

Whereas the usual National High School Mock Trial Championship schedule consists of two rounds on Friday and two rounds on Saturday, followed by a Championship round on Saturday;

Whereas the Torah Academy of Bergen County of Teaneck, New Jersey, won the 2005 New Jersey State Bar Foundation High School tournament, and was eligible to compete in the National High School Mock Trial Championship;

Whereas the members of the mock trial team from Torah Academy observe the Sabbath, in accordance with their practice of Orthodox Judaism, and would not have been able to participate in any National High School Mock Trial Championship competitions from sundown on Friday through sundown on Saturday without certain accommodations;

Whereas satisfactory accommodations were made to allow Torah Academy of Teaneck, New Jersey, to compete during the last National High School Mock Trial Championship held in Charlotte, North Carolina, from May 5–7, 2005, without violating the religious practices of the students;

Whereas a review of the post-host report compiled after the 2005 Championship showed a majority of the comments supported the accommodations made for the Torah Academy students and the benefit of competing with the Torah Academy students;

Whereas one respondent replied, “the compromise demonstrated fairness, tolerance and problem-solving, all values that I try to encourage in my students”;

Whereas the Board of Directors of the National High School Mock Trial Championship voted on October 15, 2005, to refuse any future accommodations for students who observe Sabbath on Friday and/or Saturday;

Whereas students who have otherwise met all of the criteria to participate in the qualifying competitions leading to the National High School Mock Trial Championship should be able to compete regardless of their religious affiliation;

Whereas the Board of Trustees of the New Jersey State Bar Foundation unanimously voted at its October 27, 2005, meeting that New Jersey will not compete in the National High School Mock Trial Championship unless the National Board establishes a policy permitting accommodation for religious observance;

Whereas on January 6, 2006, the North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers also officially withdrew from participating in the National High School Mock Trial Championship because the National Board would not make changes to the competition's schedule to accommodate students with religious restrictions;

Whereas the decision of the Board of Directors of the National High School Mock Trial Championship to refuse any future accommodations for students who observe their Sabbath on Friday and/or Saturday adversely and wrongly impacts observant Jewish, Muslim, and Seventh-Day Adventist students;

Whereas the decision made by the Board of Directors of the National High School Mock Trial Championship is inconsistent with the spirit of freedom of religion or equal protection; and

Whereas all students should be allowed to both compete fully in the National High School Mock Trial Championship and uphold the practice of their religion: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) calls on the Board of Directors of the National High School Mock Trial Championship to accommodate the religious beliefs of students participating in the competition; and

(2) urges the Board of Directors of the National High School Mock Trial Championship to restructure the rules of the competition to allow qualifying students of all faiths to compete fully in this national championship without betraying their religious beliefs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may insert material relevant to H. Res. 25 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. HOLT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 25, a resolution that calls on the National High School Mock Trial Championship board of directors to make provisions in the championship schedule to accommodate the religious faiths of all potential students and participants. This legislation was introduced by Mr. ROTHMAN, my colleague from New Jersey, who has worked diligently on this issue to see that fairness and tolerance prevails.

The National High School Mock Trial Championship is a competition between winning high schools on a national level designed to showcase bright and talented high school students. The event requires intense preparation, skill and dedication for those who reach the high level of competition. The current championship takes place on weekends. There are two rounds on Friday, two rounds on Saturday, and a championship round that occurs later on Saturday.

In 2005, just a couple of years ago, this schedule caused an imposition to a team in that competition. The Torah Academy of Teaneck, New Jersey was scheduled to participate after winning the 2005 New Jersey State Bar Foundation high school tournament. Now, this school, without proper accommodation, would not have been able to compete because of their orthodox religious practice to observe the Sabbath from sundown on Friday until sundown on Saturday. In that instance, the board of the competition made a proper accommodation for the students' religious faiths. The team was able to compete in May of that year. Those who took part in that competition rec-

ognized that the adjustment made by the board showed fairness and tolerance, and it was a good way to approach a problem. All participating applauded the board for doing so. However, the board later voted to refuse any future accommodations for students who observe the Sabbath on Friday or Saturday. The vote carried and signified a rejection of participation for all future participants with religious prohibitions, religious practices that may require accommodation.

Well, a number of legal organizations then withdrew their participation and support for the National High School Mock Trial Championship pointing to this act of the board of directors that quite clearly undermines free religious spirit, the kind of spirit on which this country was based. It is not without irony that this was applied in a competition that is intended for legal and constitutional education.

The resolution before us today from Mr. ROTHMAN and cosponsored by a number of us calls on the mock trial championship to recognize the diverse religious views and practices in this country and to restore its rules in order to accommodate excellent students of all faiths. I commend Mr. ROTHMAN for pursuing this. We hope that this can be resolved in a way that is most inclusive and in the spirit, the constitutional spirit, of equality of religious practice in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 25. I thank my colleague for his opening remarks. This resolution calls on the board of directors of the National High School Mock Trial Championship to accommodate students of all religious faiths. Among our most basic human rights, the right to follow one's conscience in matters of religion and belief, is undoubtedly one of the most cherished, so much so that people have been willing to endure the severest trials and even to lay down their lives rather than surrender this fundamental right.

Throughout history, men and women of religion have fought for the natural right of all individuals to practice their own faith and beliefs free from harassment, suppression and persecution. One can also point to many shining examples of established religions tolerating each other's beliefs and practices. The National High School Mock Trial Championship, which is based on constitutional law, is a prestigious event that requires a tremendous amount of preparation, skill and dedication on behalf of those students who are competing. The competition espouses the goals of heightening “appreciation of the principle of equal justice for all” and promoting the “exchange of ideas among students from throughout the United States.”

This participatory program engages students, legal professionals and the

educational community to advance the understanding of the American justice system and the important role of lawyers. I have to admit sometimes that I have a prejudice against some of my lawyer friends. Nevertheless, they are clearly an integral part of our system of the rule of law and justice for all.

On October 15, 2005, the board of directors of the National High School Mock Trial Championship voted to refuse any future accommodations for students who observe the Sabbath on Friday and/or Saturday. This decision of the board of directors to refuse any future accommodations adversely and wrongly impacts observant Jewish, Muslim and Seventh Day Adventist students and is inconsistent with the spirit of freedom of religion and equal protection guaranteed by our Constitution.

□ 1315

During the 2005 championships, satisfactory accommodations were made to allow Torah Academy of Teaneck, New Jersey, to compete at the National High School Mock Trial Championship held in Charlotte, North Carolina. A review of the post-host report compiled afterward showed a majority of the comments supported the accommodations made for the Torah Academy students and the benefit of competing with the Torah Academy students.

I think that is an important point in this debate. All the other participants, even recognizing the challenge from a significant competitor, thought this was the right thing to do. One respondent replied, "The compromise demonstrated fairness, tolerance and problem-solving, all values that I try to encourage in my students."

The simple fact is that all students should be allowed to both compete fully in the National High School Mock Trial Championship and uphold the practice of their religion. We stand here today calling the National Board of Directors to accommodate the religious beliefs of students participating in the competition and urge the Board of Directors of the National High School Mock Trial Championship to restructure the rules of the competition to allow qualifying students of all faiths to compete fully in this national championship without betraying their religious beliefs.

I thank my colleague, Mr. ROTHMAN, for bringing this matter to the floor today, and I ask my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN), the author of this resolution.

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, first let me thank my distinguished friend and colleague, Mr. HOLT from New Jersey, for his leadership on this issue and his support from the very beginning. It was critical. I am most grateful, as are

all the students who will now be able to participate.

I also would like to thank my friend and colleague from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) for his kind remarks and his support of this resolution, which will bring fairness and restore a sense of equal justice under the law to a program we are hopeful has the potential to provide valuable lessons to all our students.

Mr. Speaker, in 2005 there was a National High School Mock Trial Championship competition all over America, just like there has been for many years. There were literally hundreds of schools in New Jersey, as there are hundreds of schools in other States, participating in this competition, and, by the way, hundreds of schools, public schools, private schools.

That year, in 2005, the Torah Academy, an Orthodox Yeshiva located in Teaneck, New Jersey, won the New Jersey State championship. And they won the right to represent our beloved Garden State in the National High School Mock Trial Championship.

How awful it was for them to learn that if they had proceeded in the competition to the semifinals and finals, they wouldn't be able to participate because the semifinals and finals had been scheduled on a Saturday, on their Sabbath.

When we went to the National High School Mock Trial Championship, they were at first very reluctant to accommodate these students, although every conceivable reason that they might have, they had to get more buses, move people from one place to another, would have been accommodated and provided for them. In the end, they did the right thing, and they allowed these students to participate. All they did was move the championships then to Sunday instead of Saturday, without objection from anyone.

As my colleague from Minnesota has said, the results of the inclusion of these students not only demonstrated fairness, tolerance and problem-solving, but was a demonstration to all those involved, particularly the young people, that accommodations for religious practice, when reasonable, should be put into place.

But the decision of the board of this National High School Mock Trial Championship to never again permit such an accommodation, whether it be an Orthodox Jewish school or a Muslim school or a Seventh Day Adventist school, was wrong, and we couldn't talk them out of it. The question was how to impress upon them that this was un-American and that the Congress of the United States wouldn't stand for it. That is why we drafted this resolution.

Remember, these are students who played by the rules, were eligible to participate, competed, and won in their State championships, all according to the rules. The organization in fact demonstrated that they could accommodate these students without any

problems whatsoever, and, in fact, with a very positive result.

That is why I urge all the Members of the House to join me and my distinguished colleagues in supporting House Resolution 25, to express our body's strong disapproval of the decision made by the board of the National Mock Trial Championship not to make any attempt in the future to accommodate students of all faiths in future events.

You know, the most important purpose of this mock trial championship was to teach about the rule of law; and part of our rule of law here in America is equal justice under the law, no matter where you come from, what your religion is, as well as equal access to the law. As we pride ourselves on these values, it is important for the United States House of Representatives to pass this resolution to convey in the strongest terms its hope that the National High School Mock Trial Championship Board will revisit its decision to deny accommodations for students who observe the Sabbath on Friday and Saturday, and instead schedule future competitions in such a way that enable all eligible students to participate, regardless of their religion.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I was sitting here listening to my distinguished colleagues speak and looking at my own notes, and, again, I just find it incredible that you have this wonderful competition which espouses the goals of heightening the appreciation of the principle of equal justice for all stated, a stated goal, and yet it couldn't make accommodation to respect the religious beliefs and practices of the competitors.

Again, I urge all my colleagues to join in support of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield balance the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN).

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I did want to point out that good people have not stood silently during all of this. Both the New Jersey State Bar Association and the North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers have withdrawn from the National High School Mock Trial Championships and have established their own mock trial competition, which ensures that all students, regardless of affiliation, religious affiliation, can participate in every aspect of the annual contest.

I commend these organizations. That may be the direction to go, to ask people of all good will to remove themselves from the National High School Mock Trial Championships if they will not accommodate students of all religions who are otherwise eligible to participate. I hope it doesn't come to that, but so far the board of the National High School Mock Trial Championship has not been willing to accommodate all these students.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I wish this resolution were not necessary, but maybe we should welcome this and embrace it as a teachable moment, not only to understand the religious tenets, practices, and traditions of various people in this country, but also to understand what it means to say we are a Nation dedicated to the proposition that all are equal.

No one said that the freedoms we cherish need be convenient. They do require from each of us, from time to time, accommodation, even inconvenience. This is a teachable moment, an important lesson in tolerance, equality and, yes, accommodation.

I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN) for bringing this forward, and I urge my colleagues to support this.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 25.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE DURING A WAR OR OTHER MILITARY OPERATION

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3625) to make permanent the waiver authority of the Secretary of Education with respect to student financial assistance during a war or other military operation or national emergency.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3625

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003 addresses the unique situations that active duty military personnel and other affected individuals may face in connection with their enrollment in postsecondary institutions and their Federal student loans; and

(2) the provisions authorized by such Act should be made permanent, thereby allowing the Secretary of Education to continue providing assistance to active duty service members and other affected individuals and their families.

SEC. 2. PERMANENT EXTENSION OF WAIVER AUTHORITY.

The Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-76; 20 U.S.C. 1070, note) is amended by striking section 6.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may insert material relevant to H.R. 3625 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. SESTAK asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3625, an act to permanently extend waiver authority to the Secretary of Education with respect to enrollment in post-secondary institutions and student financial assistance during a period of combat or national emergency.

This legislation recognizes the unique and unexpected situations that military personnel face when called to active duty to serve our country, as well as situations that many face in times of a national emergency, even here at home.

The intent of this legislation is simple: to provide the Secretary of Education with the permanent authority to ensure that active duty military personnel are not financially harmed by the service that they perform.

The Secretary is thereby granted the authority to take necessary actions which include, first, protecting borrowers from further financial difficulty when they are called to serve. This will ensure that when a student withdraws from college because of his or her status as an individual called up for service, Guard, Reserve or active, or, if they are affected by a disaster, that the requirement that grant overpayments be repaid would be waived, and collection activities on a defaulted education loan may be halted for the time period during which a borrower is serving.

Second, minimizing administrative requirements without impacting the integrity of the Federal Student Aid program. So, for instance, certain requests that previously required written documentation may now be made orally by an affected individual or member of the borrower's family when that member may actually be, while applying for school, actually in conflict overseas.

Third, adjusting the calculation used to determine students' eligibility for aid for those whose financial circumstances change because the student or his or her parents are called to serve, such as when a parent was about to give a large contribution to the son's education, is suddenly called up in the National Guard, and is unable to make that commitment.

This bill, therefore, encourages financial aid administrators to choose to use professional judgment as the proper method of determining financial need that is most beneficial to an affected individual and to his or her family; for

instance, taking into account the most favorable tax period for the student's or the parents' recording period in order to be assessed on that year's tax recording period, a grant or aid.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague Mr. KLINE for his leadership on this legislation in past Congresses and for the flexibility that our men and women in the service have received because of you. These provisions have been critical to our men and women serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. In addition, these provisions will provide critical relief to those who answer the call to serve in the future, including responding to national emergencies and natural disasters.

I am also pleased with the additional relief provided to men and women in uniform in the College Cost Reduction and Access Act, which is currently waiting for the President's signature. That piece of legislation included necessary provisions that recognize military service by allowing those called to service to serve on active duty, including National Guard and Reservists, to defer payments on their student loans not only while serving but for a period of time after leaving active duty.

Because of unforeseen national emergencies, such as Hurricane Katrina, as well as our continued military engagement overseas, it is important that we pass the legislation before us and allow the Secretary of Education to continue providing this needed relief. Without prompt passage of H.R. 3625, the Secretary's authority to provide this flexibility will expire at the end of this week. It is critical not only for those currently receiving relief from unnecessary financial burden while sacrificing for our country, but also for those who will serve our country in the future, that these provisions be made permanent.

I urge my colleagues to pass the resolution.

□ 1330

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of permanently extending the Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003, or HEROES. This extension will ensure that all of our men and women serving in the military will always receive the flexibility they need in dealing with their student loans and post-secondary education commitments.

Mr. Speaker, I have championed this act since coming to Congress, and support for this legislation has always transcended party lines. I appreciate that Members on both sides of the aisle have joined together once again this year. I would like to thank senior Republican Member McKEON and Chairmen MILLER and HINOJOSA for their continued support for higher education and this legislation. And I extend my