

As we have reached a time in our energy history that we are realizing more and more the importance of and the place that renewable and alternative forms of energy have in our current and future energy mix, NREL's significance and prominence as a world leader in this field is becoming increasingly evident and appreciated. The resolution before us today recognizes NREL for its 30 years of service to our country. I am proud that such a facility exists in this great country of ours. I could only be prouder if it were in my home State of Texas.

I thank Dr. Arvizu and all the scientists and employees at NREL. You serve our country and serve our future very well.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 251.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCNERNEY. I thank the gentleman from Texas for his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER).

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Thank you, Mr. MCNERNEY, and I want to thank Mr. HALL. All of you are supporting this particular resolution, and it is one that is apropos for our time right now. We need to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and the National Renewable Energy Lab, NREL, which is about three blocks from my house, is the leading organization in the world for developing energy efficiency technologies and renewable energy technologies.

Today, I rise to honor and commend that laboratory, which is the premier in the country. In 1977 the Solar Energy Research Institute opened and was designated a national laboratory of the Department of Energy. In 1991, President George Bush changed the institute's name to the National Renewable Energy Lab, which I will call NREL.

NREL is the principal research laboratory for the Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy and also provides research expertise for the Office of Science. Changing our energy policy and developing a new direction for energy was and is a high priority for Americans across the country. We must reduce our dependency on foreign oil and we must increase our supply of renewable energy. We cannot afford the status quo any longer.

Leadership in the House on both sides of the aisle has shown this understanding for the increase in renewable energy and energy efficiency across the country, and for the first time in a long time this Congress passed a budgetary increase to the Office of Energy Efficiency and to the Office of Science so that NREL can continue its vital and important research and development in these particular areas.

NREL has advanced our national energy goals by developing innovative

ways to change the way we power our homes and businesses and fuel our cars. They have developed competitions for solar cars and energy efficient homes. In fact, many times the races have ended here in Washington, DC, and we have had on the mall these competitions among our colleges and brightest kids as to how to make our buildings more energy efficient.

NREL has worked to develop biomass, solar, wind, geothermal, hydrogen, and the list goes on, types of renewable energy, and it has worked on both renewable energy for buildings, as I said, as well as renewable fuels for vehicles. Now more than ever we must seek ways to increase production of renewable energy and make our country more energy efficient, and NREL is helping to do just that. By seeking and creating avenues to develop renewable energy and improve our energy efficiency, we can strengthen our national security, protect our environment, and create thousands and thousands of new jobs.

I commend NREL on its work for the past 30 years, and I look forward to their work in the next 30 years. I thank the 1,200 current employees and the past employees who helped make NREL the leader that it is today. I thank the gentleman from Texas and the gentleman from California as well as the Speaker for helping me with this bill and commending this laboratory for the good work that it does.

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I don't have any further speakers or any further comments, but I just want to point out that NREL has done a fine job. I want to see this institution and this government support and continue to support that kind of work that is going on in northern Colorado.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 251, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, NREL, in Colorado. The facility serves our Nation as the chief research laboratory for energy efficiency and renewable energy for the Department of Energy. As the co-chair of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Caucus, I am proud to celebrate this organization and its invaluable work to set our country on a course towards sustainable energy practices.

The range of research areas at NREL is remarkable; from hydrogen-storing carbon nanotubes for fuel cell-powered vehicles to architectural computer design tools for low-energy construction to "smart windows" which automatically tint in order to cut the cost of air conditioning, NREL has developed cutting-edge technology for 30 years. NREL's National Wind Technology Center, located in my district, has helped push forward development of more efficient and economic wind turbines, which are critical to making the wind industry an important player in our Nation's energy markets. NREL will continue to be a leader on important research and development in these critical areas.

NREL continues to be an important resource for the people of Colorado. NREL is a

critical participant in the Colorado Renewable Energy Collaboratory Agreement, which also includes the University of Colorado at Boulder, the Colorado School of Mines and Colorado State University. The Collaboratory will not only advance new energy research, but it will also encourage quicker transfer of new technology to energy businesses. For example, the new Colorado Center for Biorefining and Biofuels, C2B2, partners NREL and the Collaboratory with Colorado businesses to help reduce our dependence on foreign sources of oil while researching commercially viable biofuel technologies.

NREL and its employees continue a tradition of service to the community. Hundreds of NREL employees have completed over 43 community service projects in the past 5 years. NREL has focused community efforts for its 30th anniversary on helping the "Family Tree" organization, which provides assistance to the homeless and victims of domestic violence.

On a personal note, I have greatly enjoyed working with NREL scientists and staff, including NREL's former Director, Vice Admiral Richard Truly, and NREL's current Director, Dr. Dan Arvizu. I have great respect for both men and look forward to continuing to work with Dr. Arvizu for many years to come.

As the world demands sustainable energy solutions in a new era of energy awareness, I am confident that the talented scientists, engineers, and researchers at NREL will continue to lead our country and the world forward in expanding and improving our energy resources. I join my colleagues in recognizing NREL for its 30 years of service and look forward to many years to come.

□ 1330

Mr. MCNERNEY. 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 California (Mr. MCNERNEY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 251.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MAKING TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 2371) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to make technical corrections, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 2371

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

SECTION 1. DEFINITION OF UNTAXED INCOME AND BENEFITS.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Section 480(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.

1087vv(b)) is amended by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

“(2) The term ‘untaxed income and benefits’ shall not include—

“(A) the amount of additional child tax credit claimed for Federal income tax purposes;

“(B) welfare benefits, including assistance under a State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act and aid to dependent children;

“(C) the amount of earned income credit claimed for Federal income tax purposes;

“(D) the amount of credit for Federal tax on special fuels claimed for Federal income tax purposes;

“(E) the amount of foreign income excluded for purposes of Federal income taxes; or

“(F) untaxed social security benefits.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section and the amendment made by this section shall take effect on July 1, 2009.

SEC. 2. INCOME-BASED REPAYMENT FOR MARRIED BORROWERS FILING SEPARATELY.

Section 493C of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1098e) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d) SPECIAL RULE FOR MARRIED BORROWERS FILING SEPARATELY.—In the case of a married borrower who files a separate Federal income tax return, the Secretary shall calculate the amount of the borrower’s income-based repayment under this section solely on the basis of the borrower’s student loan debt and adjusted gross income.”.

SEC. 3. TEACH GRANTS TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.

Subpart 9 of part A of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070g et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 420L(1)(B), by striking “sound” and inserting “responsible”; and

(2) in section 420M—

(A) by striking “academic year” each place it appears in subsections (a)(1) and (c)(1) and inserting “year”; and

(B) in subsection (c)(2)—

(i) by striking “other student assistance” and inserting “other assistance the student may receive”; and

(ii) by striking the second sentence.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PLATTS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may insert material relevant to S. 2371 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the amendment to S. 2371. This bill makes technical corrections to the College Cost Reduction and Access Act in order to ensure that the Department of Education and other relevant stakeholders

reflect congressional intent when implementing the law.

Mr. Speaker, during this Congress we have made significant commitments to our Nation’s students and families by putting resources into the hands of those that need it the most.

The College Cost Reduction and Access Act as passed and signed by the President does more to help Americans pay for college than any other effort since the GI Bill, at no new cost to taxpayers.

Specifically, the legislation provided a landmark investment of \$20 billion in additional funding for Pell Grants, reductions in the interest rates on student loans, and the creation of programs to help students manage debt, as well as encourage individuals to pursue public service.

Providing this critical funding is a large part of our efforts to increase access and affordability to higher education. Our work on reforming and strengthening higher education is not finished for this Congress.

I look forward to working with Chairman MILLER and the rest of the Education and Labor Committee on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act as it continues through the process. As passed by the Senate and amended in this bill, the technical amendments contained in the bill clarify the definition of untaxed income and benefits to ensure it does not include those items in the calculation that were removed from the list under CCRAA; clarifies that married borrowers’ income-based repayment payments shall be determined solely on the individual borrower’s loan information and the individual’s income without considering the spouse’s income or any other loan debt that they may have if the married borrower files taxes separately; conforms language in the TEACH Grant Program to ensure appropriate implementation.

Mr. Speaker, swift passage of S. 2371, as amended, will ensure that students and families will fully benefit from the programs, funding, and intent provided in the College Cost Reduction and Access Act. I urge my colleagues to support this provision.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2371, a bill providing for technical changes to the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007. This bill includes two necessary clarifications and corrections to ensure that this act, a series of financial aid changes made through this year’s budget reconciliation process, is implemented as Congress intended.

The bill before us today would make some, but not all, of the important technical amendments that are needed to ensure that the Department of Education is able to put this law into place in a manner consistent with congressional intent. The bill clarifies the

untaxed income and benefit items that are to be included in the needs analysis formula for purposes of determining what a family can actually pay for their child’s education. It also ensures that borrowers selecting the new income-based repayment plan will not face a penalty simply because they are married. Finally, the bill also provides technical amendments to the TEACH Grant program.

There are several other important technical corrections in a bill that the House passed prior to the Thanksgiving Day recess. The changes clarified that members of the Armed Forces Reserves are eligible for student loan deferments when they return home after serving abroad. The House-passed bill also encouraged families to adopt older children by permitting any student that was in foster care through the age of 13 to be treated as an independent student, even if the child was adopted after the age of 13. Unfortunately, most of these changes will not be enacted because our colleagues on the other side of the Capitol eliminated them from the bill, despite the bipartisan support shown for these important reforms here in the House.

These reforms are technical in nature, but their consequences will be far-reaching. Prior to the Thanksgiving Day recess, the Education and Labor Committee unanimously passed a bill to expand college access and affordability. Consistent with that goal, this package of technical corrections will improve our financial aid programs by clarifying the intent of the recently enacted College Cost Reduction and Access Act. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important measure.

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

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to thank Chairman MILLER for his leadership on this important issue which will keep costs down for our Nation’s students, and I urge each Member to support this reauthorization.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 2371, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN COMES FIRST ACT OF 2007

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2517) to amend the Missing Children’s Assistance Act to authorize appropriations; and for other purposes, as amended.