

as cosponsor of H.R. 6. My name was listed inadvertently as a cosponsor.

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

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 6

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Tennessee Mr. JOHN TANNER's name be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 6.

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

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

INVESTING IN AMERICA'S FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, we will invest in America's future tomorrow by making college more affordable and accessible for over 5 million Americans. We are going to cut the interest rate in half over the next 5 years for undergraduates with subsidized student loans. Interest on those loans will drop from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent over the next 4 years.

Investing in America's future is long overdue. Now, the question is: Who benefits? Ordinary Americans, that is who. This legislation will help low- and middle-income Americans who rely on subsidized loans to make college a reality. It gives them a real shot at the American Dream.

We know that an undergraduate college degree is a minimum education requirement for participating in the hope and opportunity of the 21st century. We also know that our sons and daughters have been forced to take on significant debt in recent years to pursue that college degree. In the last 5 years, undergraduate students and their families have seen tuition and fees rise over 40 percent at public universities after inflation. At the same time, the cost of borrowing money has gone up by 2 percent.

It is a debt load that is forcing talented young Americans to pass up a

college education and America cannot afford to let that happen. Americans with an undergraduate degree earn much more on average than Americans without one. In 2005, the average earnings of someone with a college degree was 60 percent more than someone with only a high school degree. In today's dollars, we are talking about \$37,000 versus \$67,000 for a college graduate.

And there is every reason to believe this income gap will widen in coming years. Making college more affordable and accessible gives more of our children and grandchildren access to a better life, and those economic benefits ripple through the entire economy.

I represent Seattle, a city where technological innovation is a daily ingredient of our local economy, from Boeing to Microsoft, through a thousand start-ups. These companies need an educated workforce to succeed. Like it or not, we are competing in a global economy, and Americans deserve every fair advantage.

A college education is one of the best advantages, and it isn't just about making money. With a college degree, students have more careers to choose from. In other words, a college degree is a key that can unlock your own personal happiness. Imagine working at something you want to do every day instead of something you have to do.

Today, too many promising young Americans are not going to college because it costs too much, not because they do not have the ability to succeed. And we know there are racial and gender disparities that make it imperative for us as a Nation to make college more affordable, accessible, and available.

For those who do go to college, the typical student graduates over \$17,000 in debt. So we are making a downpayment in this bill on America's future by cutting the interest rate on subsidized student loans, and we would be wise as a Nation to do more.

Today, the United States accounts for 14 percent of the world's college graduates. That is just half of the percentage we accounted for 30 years ago. In other words, knowledge is power, and other nations have dramatically stepped up their efforts.

A few months ago, the nonpartisan National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education released a new report that ranks the United States 16 among the 27 industrialized nations in the world for the number of students who complete a college education or advanced certificate degree. The data in the report also suggests there is a shortage of college-educated young Americans ready to take over as the college-trained baby boomers retire. We could be as much as 15 million college graduates short in just over a decade. That would be completely unacceptable in the United States of America.

Cutting interest rates in half on subsidized student loans is a start, but it is just that. It is just a beginning. We

need to find other ways to invest in America's future by investing in America's future generation. We say it over and over again, that children are our future. This is an opportunity to put in law the fact that we mean business. The 21st century will require nothing less.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ADERHOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ADERHOLT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SPECIALIST RYAN BERG—TEXAS SOLDIER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, January 10, 2007, the flag flew at half mast in the small coastal town of Sabine Pass, Texas. The neighbors had learned of the sacrifice of their hometown son, Specialist Ryan Berg, who was 19. He was fighting the war in the land of Iraq.

Army Specialist Ryan Berg was an American soldier. When others his age were talking about going to college or working in the nearby refineries, Ryan went to the local Army recruiter's office on his 18th birthday and joined the United States Army, knowing America was at war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He was proud to be an American, and Ryan chose to serve his Nation. He wanted to make a difference by being an American soldier. Ryan Berg had spent his entire life in Sabine Pass, Texas, and he knew everybody in town. Ryan always planned on returning to his home to live and raise a family after he finished his duty with the United States Army and for America.

Like his mother and his father, Ryan attended and graduated from Sabine Pass School. The Sabine Pass School has all the grades in just one building. Ryan played football, basketball, and golf. Childhood friends of Ryan knew him as an outgoing and friendly guy. One of his friends said, "There wasn't anything or anyone he didn't like, and everybody liked him." He was a gentleman who always helped others who needed it in Sabine Pass.

Ryan knew his calling after high school was to join the United States Army. He simply wanted to protect his country, like he had protected those he knew and loved all his life. He was stationed in Fort Hood, Texas. Ryan met his wife, Katy, in September of 2006, just a few months ago. The young newly wed couple soon received the news that Ryan, like so many others before him, would be sent to the desert sands of Iraq.

He was deployed to Iraq on October 4, 2006, and he was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, Alpha Section, 3rd Platoon.