

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.

Ryan called home weekly, but the thunder of battle sometimes forced him to quickly end those phone calls. As the 2006 Christmas season approached, Ryan was given last-minute leave to spend the holidays at home in Texas with his family and his neighbors in Sabine Pass.

During Christmas, Scottie, Ryan's mother, held her son tightly and told him that she was not going to let him go back to Iraq. Ryan replied, Mr. Speaker, "I've got to go back over there. I've got to make it safe for my wife, my mom, my dad, and all those I love."

Mr. Speaker, amazing people, these Americans who go to war. On January 4, 2007 with nearly a year to go in Iraq, the teenager returned to the battlefront to fight against these insurgents and their terror against the people of Iraq. Ryan was only in Iraq for 5 days when he was shot by a hidden enemy sniper. The wound was fatal.

Last week, 19-year-old U.S. Army Specialist Ryan Berg became the first son of Sabine Pass, Texas, to be killed defending freedom in that land far, far away, of Iraq. For his courage during combat, Ryan was awarded the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star.

The news of his death at the hands of the anarchists stunned the Berg family and the people of Sabine Pass. Through their tears, Ryan's mother and father, Scottie and Travis; his brother Brad, his sister Marissa, and his new wife, Katie, and countless other relatives and friends have, in their anguish, honored the American warrior.

Ryan's loved ones expressed their pride of his service to America and the bravery their soldier exhibited throughout his career. They also asked for the community to pray not only for Ryan but for those soldiers still amid the dusty trenches fighting for freedom and securing liberty.

Those who knew Ryan, and I have a photograph of him, Mr. Speaker, those who knew him, remember his loyalty to his family and to his friends, but not only as a man who never knew a stranger, but Ryan devoted his life to guarding them from danger, those especially who could not stand up for themselves.

This Nation owes its gratitude, its liberties, its freedom, to people like Specialist Ryan Berg and to brave soldiers who have walked the path of sacrifice for the rest of us.

So God bless Sabine Pass, Texas and God bless the Berg family and God Bless Ryan Berg.

It has been said that when the Rolling Legions went into battle one of their generals once told his men, "How you yet live will echo throughout eternity."

Ryan, your deeds will always speak the example of the spirit of the American soldier.

And that's just the way it is.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of California). Under a pre-

vious order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

BRING THE TROOPS HOME

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, along with Congresswoman BARBARA LEE and Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS, I will be introducing the Bring the Troops Home and Iraqi Sovereignty Restoration Act.

This bill fulfills the voters' November 7 mandate to the Congress. It ends the occupation of Iraq and, at the same time, it strengthens the Iraqi government, and it also meets the needs of our returning troops.

It will, one, bring our troops home; two, it will expedite the training of Iraqi security forces; and three, if invited by the Iraqis, work with the international community to rebuild Iraq's infrastructure, while four, fully funding the commitment we have made to our returning soldiers for full health care benefits, physical and mental.

The situation in Iraq, Mr. Speaker, gets worse every day, and it is clear that we cannot provide security to Iraqis in the middle of a civil war. We need to bring our brave and capable men and women home to safety and to their families, and we need to help the Iraqi people regain their sovereignty.

President Bush does not have a plan to bring our troops home. In fact, if anything, he is escalating this occupation with absolutely no end in sight. Our standing in the region and our standing around the world is at an all time low, and this administration has all but given up on diplomacy.

We can no longer wait for the Commander-in-Chief to come up with a plan. We are in the fourth year of this occupation. We have waited long enough. That is why I will introduce the Bring the Troops Home and Iraqi Sovereignty Restoration Act tomorrow.

Whether my colleagues voted to support the invasion of Iraq or not, they can now unite behind a comprehensive plan, a plan to bring peace and stability to the region.

One of the most important elements of this bill is to live up to the promises made to those who have put their lives on the line for this President's fiasco in Iraq.

Our most solemn obligation is to the men and women who have been placed in harm's way. To fulfill our obligation, we must bring them home to their families, while, at the same time, guaranteeing physical and mental health care for all U.S. veterans of military operations in Iraq and other conflicts around the world. It is the least we can do. It is the least we can

do to show the gratitude of a grateful Nation.

I urge my colleagues to stand up for our troops, stand up for Iraqi sovereignty. Cosponsor the Bring the Troops Home and Iraqi Sovereignty Restoration Act.

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

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

12-POINT PLAN FOR IRAQ

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House of Representatives, last week the President of the United States gave a speech to this Nation that he intends to escalate the war against Iraq. Compounding his speech was the point-by-point recitation of his intention to continue to escalate tensions between the United States and the sovereign nation of Iran.

At this moment, when this Congress has honored the memory of Dr. King, it bears reflection as to whether or not we in this Nation have the capacity to begin to pursue a path of nonviolence in our relations with other countries.

Our President is intent on escalating a war against Iraq. He is intent on precipitating a war against Iran. Whatever happened to the science of human relations? Whatever happened to using our head in dealing with people so that war is not an acceptable option, but that peace becomes inevitable because we pursue talking to one another?

If we had taken the case for Iraq to the U.N., we would not have gotten approval for an attack against Iraq. How much better it would have been if this Nation had not decided to attack Iraq, because Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction, did not have the intention or capability of attacking the United States, was not trying to get uranium from Niger, did not, in effect, constitute a threat to the United States of America.

And yet, we attacked a nation which did not attack us, at tremendous consequence, the death of over 3,000 American men and women who served this country valiantly, the deaths of over 650,000 innocent Iraqis, according to the Lancet Report, during the conduct of the war; complete annihilation of so much of the cities of Iraq.

What are we doing? What do we stand for as a nation? Does this really represent what America is all about? Or does America have a higher destiny? Is it our destiny to rule the world with our military might? Or is it our destiny to hold up our values of peace and justice, and to live them in our own