

education that they need. This legislation will help middle- and working-class families afford to send their children to college at a time when the cost of college, particularly in Arizona, is skyrocketing.

The average subsidized loan debt for tens of thousands of students in my home State of Arizona is around \$15,000, a staggering amount for someone entering the workforce. This new act will save students in Arizona an average of \$4,700, a substantial difference.

We must focus on preparing young Americans like those we have in the gallery today to be competitive in this 21st century global economy. Ensuring access to higher education is critical. This is a goal that is supported by the American people.

DEMOCRATS AND THE FACTS

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, the media just loves to give names to the different Congresses. I think that they should call this one the Hold-onto-Your-Wallet Congress, because they are definitely coming to a wallet near you and it is going to be yours. During their first 100 hours, which is seeming to never end, they are spending billions of dollars of the American taxpayers' money on, guess what, bigger government, right here in Washington. They are not sending that money back to the local communities. And today they are going to have their student loan bill up.

Here are some facts. They would have you believe that we have slashed student loans and it is just not true.

Here is a fact. In a shocking display of hypocrisy, Democrat leaders are paying for their \$6 billion plus plan with some of the same lender subsidy cuts crafted by congressional Republicans in the 109th Congress.

Here is another fact. House Republicans have committed a record \$13 billion for Pell Grants, a two-thirds increase over the past decade. Go look it up.

Another fact. To the tune of more than \$4 billion over 5 years, congressional Republicans established the first-ever grant program for high-achieving Pell students in their first and second years of college.

It is a fact. Republicans have a solid record of helping students get and stay in school.

□ 1015

DENVER TO HOST THE 2008 DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pride and honor that the Democratic National Com-

mittee has chosen Denver to host the 2008 Democratic National Convention.

2008 will mark exactly one century since Colorado last had the opportunity to nominate the Democratic candidate for President.

The Mile High City is a fitting choice, as it offers an opportunity to showcase the Rocky Mountain region as a new frontier on our Nation's political landscape. Colorado and the Rocky Mountain West are known for their independence and pioneering spirit, and will ultimately help shape the national debate to reflect the values of hard-working people all across America.

We embody a community that supports an investment in renewable energy, in fiscal discipline, and the protection of our civil liberties.

I want to thank the many individuals who worked tirelessly on behalf of Denver's bid to host this prestigious event. It is a privilege for the Centennial State to play such an influential role in our Nation's history.

DEMOCRAT JUGGERNAUT

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, well, it looks like the Democrat juggernaut is rolling along, or maybe it is more like the first steps of fledgling toddlers stumbling through their day.

First was the embarrassment of saying we would have open and fair debates for all, and then the first rule, no amendments, no open rules, and no committee hearings, which of course led to the embarrassing "Sorry, Charlie Tuna" incident of exempting American Samoa from workmen's compensation. I have to ask my friends, why did y'all do that? What were you thinking?

But I also want you to know I am on the side of American Samoa on this one. I don't think it is fair to go in there and beat them up and tell them how they should run their economy, tell them what is best for them and tell them that Washington knows best on central wage planning. Wait a minute, though. That is what we did to the other States, too.

Well, as a matter of fact I don't think we should bring American Samoa into this. I think we should amend the bill, if you do decide to have a committee hearing, that is, and allow the other States to join American Samoa and set their own minimum wage. But then that would be decentralized planning.

BIG OIL DOESN'T NEED ANY MORE HELP FROM WASHINGTON

(Mr. STUPAK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, during the past 4 years big oil companies have seen their profits quadruple, while gas prices doubled and America continues to depend on foreign oil to operate our cars and our economy.

Yet, the Republican Congress did not think this was enough. They chose to give Big Oil billions in tax breaks and outrageous royalty incentives, instead of working to protect consumers and promote alternative energy.

Today we are sending \$800 million per day to the Middle East and other oil producing countries. America now has record high dependence on foreign oil, and the need is growing.

Mr. Speaker, Congress must support consumers instead of Big Oil. Democrats have put forth a bill to increase our investment in renewable energy and put our Nation on a path to energy independence. The first step is to repeal the billions of dollars in subsidies given to Big Oil so that America can instead invest that money in clean and renewable energy sources.

Beginning the process of curbing our addiction to foreign oil is one of the main priorities of the Democratic Congress during the first 100 hours. I hope Democrats and Republicans will come together and pass this commonsense legislation that will promote our national and economic security.

IRAQ

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of delivering a knockout punch in Iraq, stabilizing Baghdad, securing freedom for the Iraqi people, and dealing a blow to terrorism across the Middle East.

There has been far too much politicking on this issue. Let me remind my colleagues that Iraq strategy is not about the legacy of Don Rumsfeld or General Abizaid or even President Bush. It is about 23 million Iraqi people. It is about the citizens of the United States of America. It is about the future of the Middle East, and it is about the 6 billion people on this planet who desire to live without the fear of radical terrorism.

We can achieve victory in Iraq. In the past we have underestimated the intensity of the death squads and the sectarian violence. Now we will confront them head on by ensuring we have enough coalition and Iraqi troops, not only to clear pockets of resistance, but to hold them.

Mr. Speaker, our President and combatant commanders are ready to deliver the knockout blow in Iraq. This is not the time for Congress to tie one hand behind their backs. We must be in this fight to win, and I support our drive to victory.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 5

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5, legislation that will reduce interest rates for student borrowers.

Now, we all know that the cost of college has gone up every year. In fact, over the last 7 years the cost of a public school education, on average, has increased by 41 percent and at a private school by 7 percent. That is in real dollars.

So, how do lower income and middle income students go to higher education? They do it with Pell Grants. In California we do it with the State grants, but we also do it by borrowing. And so I believe that we should lower the interest costs so that anybody who wants to have a higher education, if you want to go back and get your master's, if your child wants to go and get their B.A., that we should be a partner in investment with them. Investing in our people is the most important thing our country can do to be competitive vis-a-vis the rest of the world.

NO JUSTICE FOR BORDER PATROL

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, today Border Patrol Agents Ramos and José Compean turned themselves in to begin serving their 11- and 12-year prison terms. Now, what was their crime? Shooting a habitual drug smuggler after he evaded law enforcement, attacked one of the agents and threateningly turned to the agent with what appeared to be a gun, and was fleeing back across the border.

Now, how is this justice, Mr. Speaker?

Assistant U.S. Attorney Debra Kanof even went to Mexico to find this drug dealer, brought him to America, paid for his medical treatment in an El Paso hospital with taxpayers' dollars and gave him immunity to testify against the agents.

The unreasonable sentence of these agents undermines the morale and makes all of them question what they are doing, do they have the right to draw their firearm in the course of their duty.

This is an outrage. I urge President Bush to review this draconian prison sentence.

COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT

(Mr. LOEBSACK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LOEBSACK. Mr. Speaker, I stand before all of you today as an example of what can be achieved if provided the opportunity and resources. I grew up in poverty and relied upon loans and grants to pay for my education. In short, I was able to achieve the American Dream because of legislation similar to the College Student Relief Act.

In America, millions of high school students forego higher education because of the financial barriers created by the ever increasing costs of tuition and fees at our colleges and universities. This situation harms qualified but economically disadvantaged students and endangers our country because the American economy relies on a highly skilled and well educated workforce. As a college professor for the past 24 years, I saw firsthand the financial struggle so many students face.

I call on my colleagues to support H.R. 5 because it is time we provide hope and opportunity to the youth of our country, the youth who want to participate productively in an increasingly globalized economy.

COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT

(Mr. WALZ of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act.

This legislation will benefit 5½ million students. These students are predominantly from middle class, hard-working American families. Without this act they may not otherwise be able to attend our public institutions.

The generation that came before mine understood the investment in the future. At age 17, when I joined the military to be able to, one, support this country in its defense and, two, further my own career, I was given the GI bill, Pell Grants and the ability to use low interest student loans. Because of that I was able to achieve my dream of becoming a public school teacher.

However, unfortunately, this next generation does not have that same investment, a generation that has never seen the kind of investment that I saw.

The good people of the First District of Minnesota sent me here to change the priorities of this government. They sent me here to look out for the next generation of Americans.

Mr. Speaker, with this legislation the American Dream will be a little more in grasp of this next generation. This is not a theoretical discussion on interest rates. These are the students that were in my classroom, on my football team and in my Guard unit.

THE WAR IN IRAQ

(Mr. HOLT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the most important political and moral issue of the day, the war in Iraq. The war in Iraq costs us dearly in lives, more than 3,000 Americans so far, in dollars, 471 billion by my count; in international prestige by compromising our ability to meet our other foreign policy goals.

President Bush has rejected the sensible recommendations of the Iraq

Study Group and instead chosen an escalation of troops. Rather than sending more brave young Americans to fight in an undefined, impossible mission in an Iraqi civil war, we should be looking for ways to redeploy our troops responsibly.

Representative MURTHA has courageously offered a framework for that redeployment, and the administration would be wise to heed his advice. The American people want to bring home their loved ones who are in harm's way. The Iraqi people want us to leave so that Iraqis can solve their problems.

As former Secretary of State Albright has pointed out, the only ones who want us to stay are those who will leave Iraq when we leave.

Mr. Speaker, Congress should reject the President's last ditch effort to salvage a botched execution of a flawed strategy.

WORKING FOR POSITIVE CHANGE AND A NEW DIRECTION FOR AMERICA

(Mr. KAGEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, today, in a bipartisan embrace, both Republicans and Democrats will continue to work together for positive change and a new direction for America by promoting a truly bipartisan first-100-hour agenda.

People in Appleton and Green Bay, Wisconsin, and all across America, wanted us to come together and begin to solve these problems that we are facing, and we have done just that. Two weeks ago we passed a rules package and a comprehensive ethics reform package supported by margins of 426-0 and 430-1, respectively. I believe we are really beginning to come together.

Fiscally responsible, pay-as-you-go, and real budget reforms were supported by many, many Republicans. Sixty-eight joined in implementing the 9/11 Commission recommendations. Eighty-two Republicans helped to increase the minimum wage, and 36 joined in lowering prescription drug costs for seniors.

Let's continue to work together to help reduce the costs of higher education as well. By working together we really will build a better future for everyone.

COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

(Mr. MICHAUD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this College Student Relief Act of 2007. This bill will help thousands of students throughout the State of Maine.

Maine has one of the highest high school graduation rates in the country. However, only one out of four Mainers go on to complete college. That is because college costs are rising, and