

of activist and humanitarian Muhammad Ali on his 65th birthday. Muhammad Ali is not only recognized for his boxing career but also for his dedication to reaching out to lesser developed countries. His involvement in social causes, diplomacy and politics has served as a shining example of courage, strength and dignity.

Muhammad Ali was once one of the world's greatest and most flamboyant boxers, and during the course of his long career, he also became known as an eloquent statesman for peace, as well as, a generous man who devoted much of his considerable earnings to charity.

Born Cassius Clay in Louisville, Kentucky in 1942, Ali learned at a very young age that determination and dedication would take him to greater places. After winning the gold medal in the 1960 Olympics, Muhammad Ali became actively involved in the Civil Rights Movement with Malcolm X. At a time when race and politics permeated the public stage, Ali represented a well known figure not afraid to speak his mind and fight against oppression imposed by Jim Crow. Never had a sport figure encouraged so many people to fight against social oppression.

After he retired from boxing he continued working to better the lives of others through his involvement with the Jimmy Carter Campaign in 1980. Through his humanitarian work Ali has founded WORLD, the World Organization for Right, Liberty, and Dignity, and the Ali Center. WORLD, an organization that fights for human rights against exploitation and slavery, and the Ali Center serve as international and cultural centers to explore the greatness and the drive that lies within all of us and to inspire everyone to pursue their highest potential.

In spite of the fact that Muhammad Ali has been suffering from Parkinson's disease in the past two decades, he still remains an advocate of children and war victims. Inspiring millions has been an arduous work in progress till this day for Muhammad Ali. He continues to be a leader and revolutionary to this day.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 58, honoring a good friend, Muhammad Ali, on the occasion of his 65th birthday and to extend best wishes to him and his family. The Gentlelady from Indiana [Ms. CARSON] is to be commended for bringing this resolution to the House in celebration of an icon of sportsmanship, fortitude, perseverance, and peace.

On November 20, 2005, I was honored to have given remarks during the grand opening of the Muhammad Ali Center in downtown Louisville. This educational and cultural center was established to give visitors a glimpse of Ali's life and experiences and to help inspire them to pursue their dreams by applying their maximum potential.

Ali is many things to many people: a world champion, an Olympian, an innovator, a world-class father, husband, and friend. In his 21 years of boxing, he won 56 fights out of 61 and is the first boxer to win the heavyweight championship three times. He achieved the incredible feat of winning an Olympic gold medal in the 1960 games at the age of 18.

However, his legendary charisma, charm, and genius did not stop in the ring or at press conferences. What makes him a true pioneer is the fact that he was principled enough to say no to the Vietnam War. The words he

spoke in refusing the draft made a stark social commentary during that time and taught America a valuable way of thinking. Those words taught us that war should always be a last resort and that before we over-commit ourselves elsewhere, we must fix the problems that exist right at home. This philosophy has tremendous relevance to us today in the context of the War in Iraq. Many Americans feel that we should re-align our priorities to address problems at home instead of fighting a war in Iraq.

I wish Muhammad Ali a very happy birthday. For his outstanding contributions to sports and sportsmanship and for the lessons on peace and conviction to principles that he gave the world, I sincerely thank him. His legacy and record of achievement have earned him the title of "the Greatest of All Time." I support this resolution.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support the passage of H. Res. 58 and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 58.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those voting have responded in the affirmative.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. 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 question will be postponed.

#### REPEALING CERTAIN LAWS PERTAINING TO THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 57) to repeal certain sections of the Act of May 26, 1936, pertaining to the Virgin Islands.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. R. 57

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

#### SECTION 1. REPEAL OF CERTAIN LAWS PERTAINING TO THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.

(a) REPEAL.—Sections 1 through 6 of the Act of May 26, 1936, (Chapter 450; 49 Stat. 1372-1373; 48 U.S.C. 1401-1401e) are repealed.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall be deemed to have taken effect on July 22, 1954.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) and the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. FORTUÑO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands?

There was no objection.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 57, legislation to repeal an outdated Federal law which limits the authority of the Virgin Islands to assess and collect property taxes. Both the U.S. Senate and the House passed identical legislation in the waning hours of the last Congress but ran out of time before completing the process.

Mr. Speaker, it remains critical that we pass this bill and have it enacted into law as soon as possible in order to prevent some of my constituents from facing the very real risk of losing their homes because the Virgin Islands Government could not provide them protections from sky-high property tax bills because of that 1936 statute. It was enacted to address the tax policies of the Danish era in the Virgin Islands. It was generally thought to have been repealed by the enactment of the Revised Organic Act of 1954, which created a comprehensive system of local government with sufficient legislative powers to resolve local property tax issues without the need for Federal intervention.

The bill before us became necessary because 3 years ago the Third Circuit Court of Appeals revived the 1936 statute and struck down a local statute capping the amount of any increase in the assessment of residential real property and, therefore, any increase in the property tax owed in any assessment period.

If the 1936 law is not now repealed by the Congress, the government of the Virgin Islands will not have the authority to limit such increases by capping assessments or similar methods commonly used by other jurisdictions. Indeed, the revived 1936 statute may have the anomalous result of pricing land and homeownership beyond the reach of many Virgin Islanders. That statute has long outlived its usefulness and now interferes with the Virgin Islands' ability to perform an essential governmental function.

The assessment and collection of real property taxes is fundamentally a local government issue with no Federal impact. No other State, territorial, or local government is subject to such Federal restrictions. The Revised Organic Act of 1954, as amended, confers upon the people of the Virgin Islands full powers of self-government; the 1936 statute is an anachronism that needs to be repealed.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleague, the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico (Mr. FORTUÑO), for his support, and to thank Chairman RAHALL and Ranking Member YOUNG for helping us to bring this bill to the floor so quickly.

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

Mr. FORTUÑO. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support passage of H.R. 57,

sponsored by my colleague and friend representing the U.S. Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN).

From our perspective, it is non-controversial legislation. It allows the local government of the Virgin Islands to set their own property taxes. This is consistent with the philosophical stand of the Republicans who believe in letting local governments create their own laws without Federal intervention.

Without this bill, the Virgin Islands would be forced to adhere to an outdated and unworkable Federal Property Tax Code. I urge my colleagues to correct the problem.

I also want to take this moment and congratulate my colleague Congresswoman CHRISTENSEN not only for seeing H.R. 57 pass today, but for her pending rise to the chairmanship of the Insular Affairs Subcommittee. I look forward to serving as the subcommittee's ranking member and addressing the many issues facing the U.S. territories and possessions.

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

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I just want to respond that I look forward to working with Mr. FORTUÑO once we organize the committee as well.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 57, to repeal certain provisions of the Federal law passed 70 years ago limiting the Virgin Islands' authority to assess and collect its property taxes. I thank the Delegate from the Virgin Islands, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, for bringing this legislation to the attention of the House.

This outdated law, enacted in 1936, results in the imposition of high property taxes that could cause many residents of the Virgin Islands to lose their homes. The local government does not have the capacity to protect them from these federally imposed taxes, nor should it have to. The policies which the statute was originally designed to address are no longer an issue; it is now entirely unnecessary.

In fact, the Revised Organic Act of 1954, which was enacted to grant the government of the Virgin Islands the power to assess, administer and collect real property taxes, was thought to have repealed the statute. However, the 1936 statute remained in effect, putting at risk our long-standing policies to support and protect economic development, social welfare, and homeownership in the Virgin Islands. No other State or territory in the United States is subject to such Federal restrictions.

I look forward to seeing H.R. 57 passed to provide relief to the good people of the Virgin Islands from this outdated law. I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. 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 the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 57.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds of those being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5, COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 65 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 65

*Resolved*, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 5) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reduce interest rates for student borrowers. All points of order against the bill and against its consideration are waived except those arising under clauses 9 or 10 of rule XXI. The bill shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) three hours of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and Labor; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. During consideration of H.R. 5 pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to a time designated by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI) is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Ms. MATSUI asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, as many of my colleagues know, I am, as many in this Chamber are, a proud parent and almost embarrassingly proud grandparent. All parents and grandparents are different, of course, but I believe almost all of us share one thing in common, and that is a hope that our children and our grandchildren will have a chance to do a little better, to go a little further, to have a little easier time than their parents and grandparents. That aspiration has a name in this country; it is called the American Dream. And the American people understand that education is the key to making that dream a reality.

Today, we consider legislation to combat a very real threat to that dream. The unfortunate reality is that skyrocketing college costs are putting a college education out of reach for many middle class families. Tuition and fees at public universities have increased by 41 percent after inflation since 2001. At private universities, tuition has increased by 17 percent after inflation. It is worth repeating because it is truly shocking: these figures are after inflation.

Indeed, according to the Congressional Advisory Committee on Student

Financial Assistance, financial barriers will prevent almost 4½ million high school graduates from attending a 4-year public college over the next decade, and prevent another 2 million from attending any college at all. Those statistics are very sobering, and the sound they make is that of the door of opportunity being closed on many young people.

That is why I am very pleased that our congressional leadership has made cutting interest rates on student loans one of its top priorities for the first 100 hours of this Congress.

The legislation being considered today will cut interest rates for subsidized student loans in half over the next 5 years from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent.

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As a result, we will help around 5.5 million more students afford college.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents are demanding quick action on this legislation, and with good reason. With Sacramento State University in my district and the University of California at Davis nearby, they are all too aware of the impact rising tuition costs are having on students and their families.

A recent study demonstrated that this legislation would, on average, save the average student borrower in California starting school this year almost \$2,500 over the life of the loan. For students beginning college in the year 2011, the legislation will save almost \$5,000. We will need to do more to make college affordable, but my constituents in Sacramento who are struggling to afford college will welcome this very important first step.

Mr. Speaker, helping all qualified students attend college is essential for our economy, for our competitiveness and for our future; but not only that, it is essential for ensuring that the American Dream remains a reality for our young people. That is why there is a remarkable consensus supporting this proposal across our country.

Newsweek reports that 88 percent of the country supports this legislation, including wide majorities of both Democrats and Republicans. We are not talking about the Democratic dream or the Republican dream, but the American Dream.

Further, this legislation meets our pay-as-you-go requirements and, therefore, will not add to our budget deficit. Fully five of six of the offsets have been approved previously by the Bush administration or Republican congressional leaders. That, again, is a remarkable consensus. It is now time to act.

All too often the American people look at Congress and they hear a lot of argument and see a lot of activity, but wonder though what Congress is doing to improve their lives. If we act on this legislation quickly, however, students will start to see a difference as soon as July 1. So let us surprise our skeptics, take action, and pass this legislation now on a bipartisan basis.