

plan. During the past year, many parents who contributed to a 529 college savings plan—an investment vehicle where earnings grow tax free—saw those savings take a hit. Many 529 plans were heavily invested in stocks, though their beneficiaries were just a few years away from attending college. This is a big blow to the 63 percent of parents who are saving for college expenses, according to a September 2009 Fidelity survey, and who must now manage a wide array of expenses with less money and security.

H.R. 4178 establishes an avenue for those wanting to save for the college education of a child, grandchild or other related individual, in a Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, FDIC, insured deposit. Today, savers can only access the 529 college savings program through a securities-based plan, and this plan would offer another option. H.R. 4178 amends the Federal Deposit Insurance Act to prescribe requirements for deposit restricted qualified tuition programs which are exempt from Federal income tax. It also declares that in no event shall a deposit restricted qualified tuition program, the State entity designated by statute to oversee such program, or the administrator appointed to operate it on behalf of the State or a participating depository institution, be deemed to be an issuer of a security or an investment company. This bill does not make any changes to the current 529 college savings program nor the current delivery system of the program through a securities based plan. It simply adds another 529 college savings program delivery option through an FDIC insured deposit.

The Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on Tax have completed a review of the budgetary impact of H.R. 4178, the Deposit Restricted Qualified Tuition Programs Act of 2009. They determined that by enacting this legislation it would affect revenues, but estimate that the reduction in revenues would not be significant over the 2010–2020 period. Similarly, implementing the bill could affect direct spending but the net impact of such spending would be negligible over the next 10 years.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLEAVER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4178, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

INDIAN VETERANS HOUSING OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2009

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3553) to exclude from consideration as income under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 amounts received by a family from the Depart-

ment of Veterans Affairs for service-related disabilities of a member of the family.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3553

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Indian Veterans Housing Opportunity Act of 2009”.

SEC. 2. EXCLUSION FROM INCOME.

Paragraph (9) of section 4 of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4103(9)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(C) Any amounts received by any member of the family as disability compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, or dependency and indemnity compensation under chapter 13 of such title.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLEAVER) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material thereon.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, according to the most recent U.S. census data from 2003, there are 561 federally recognized tribes, which include Native American Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages. More than three-quarters of a million Native Americans live on reservations or in other tribal areas, and another 1.68 million live outside tribal areas. Furthermore, a total of 34 percent of the Native population resides in rural areas, where many reservations are located.

It has become clear that much of the housing in tribal areas lack adequate housing compared to the general U.S. population. According to the 2000 Census Bureau report, 14.7 percent of homes in tribal areas are overcrowded, compared to 5.7 percent of homes of the general U.S. population. On Native American lands, 11.7 percent of residents lack complete plumbing facilities, compared to 1.2 percent of the general U.S. population. Furthermore, according to a 2005 Government Accounting Office report, 11 percent of residents lack kitchen facilities, compared to merely 1 percent of the general U.S. population.

This situation is even more dire for those in need of housing on tribal lands. In total, approximately 90,000 Native American families are homeless or underhoused and an estimated 200,000 housing units are needed imme-

diately in Indian Country, according to a 2003 report from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

However, Native Americans have the highest rate of serving in the military, making them more likely to serve of any ethnic group. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 22 percent, 22 percent, of Native Americans are currently serving in the military. It is appalling that although Native Americans are the most likely to serve of any ethnic group, little has been provided to ensure adequate and sufficient housing for the brave veterans who have served our Nation. Furthermore, with the total number of disabled veterans in the United States currently at 24 million and 3.1 million veterans receiving service-connected disability benefits, it is also evident that many Native American veterans are also struggling with disabilities.

The Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, or NAHASDA, was established through the Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide housing services to Native Americans based on a needs-based formula. Unfortunately, under the current calculation, Native American veterans and their families and survivors are often disqualified from this program.

By calculating disability payments and survivor benefits into the family's income, the family will often exceed the 80 percent area median income threshold required under this program's regulations, thereby disqualifying the family from the program.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK's bill, H.R. 3553, will correct this provision by amending the definition of “income” in NAHASDA to exclude payments for disability and service-related injuries. By doing so, disabled Native American veterans, their families, and their survivors will be able to qualify for this program. This bill will do much to help ensure that all citizens are adequately served in government housing programs, especially those who have served our Nation bravely.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support of H.R. 3553, the Indian Veterans Housing Opportunity Act of 2009.

This bill would amend the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act, also called NAHASDA, so that a disability income is not counted against Native American veterans when determining eligibility for NAHASDA housing benefits.

Currently, Native American households with incomes below 80 percent of an area's median income are eligible for housing assistance under this program. Unlike similar programs for non-Native American households, NAHASDA counts Veterans Affairs disability payments or survivor benefits as income when determining eligibility for housing assistance. As a result,

many Native American families of disabled veterans can lose their eligibility for housing aid if their disability benefits place them beyond the 80 percent threshold.

Interestingly, the Internal Revenue Service does not consider disability payments as income. Yet without changes included in this bill before us, Native American veterans who have been left disabled as a result of their service to our country will remain limited in their access to affordable housing on the reservation.

H.R. 3553 simply amends the definition of "income" under the law to exclude payments for disability compensation. The bill would not affect any tribe's current funding under NAHASDA, and the Congressional Budget Office has said that there is no cost to this bill.

Mr. Speaker, we must meet our commitments to our troops both in the field and when they return home. This legislation will help extend existing housing resources to Native American veterans, allow them to return to the reservation, and will provide their families with access to stable housing.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. KIRKPATRICK), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona. I wish to extend my thanks to Mr. CLEAVER for the opportunity to address my bill, H.R. 3553, the Indian Veterans Housing Opportunity Act. And I also want to thank Chairman FRANK and Ranking Member BACHUS for their support of this. I especially want to thank Chairwoman MAXINE WATERS and her staff, Jeff Riley and Keo Chea, who traveled the long distance to Window Rock, Arizona, to have a field hearing on April 10 on this bill.

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Mr. Speaker, growing up in Indian Country, I learned at an early age the long history of Native Americans sacrificing in service to our country. This history includes Indian scouts assisting United States units throughout the American West. It includes the best known example, the brave and honorable service of the Navajo code talkers who saved the lives of countless Americans in World War II and the Korean War by using Dine to transmit sensitive military communications. And it continues to this very day as Native Americans serve proudly and honorably in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world.

Today, the Department of Housing Affairs estimates that 20 percent of Native Americans are veterans or are currently serving. That's the most of any ethnic group.

Despite this honorable service, far too many Native American veterans return home to tribal land to face ex-

traordinary challenges in finding safe, quality, affordable housing. Service-disabled veterans returning to Indian Country face the added challenge of having to make every dollar of their disability compensation count as they deal with circumstances unique to tribal land, including very long distances to VA medical centers and under-improved surfaces, we call them washboard roads, that accelerate wear on prosthetics and wheelchairs.

I am a member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, where we have taken a number of steps to keep our promises to all veterans. We remedied budget shortfalls in veterans health care and benefits to address an aging vets population and returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

We helped finally pass a law that veterans service organizations have been pushing for years, a law to require Congress to approve the VA health care budget 1 year in advance to ensure timely, sufficient funding of these necessary programs.

However, we can and must do more to ensure that Native American veterans are not allowed to slip through the cracks, even as we make broad advances to better serve these veterans, and Native Americans in general.

The Native American Housing Assistance and Self-determination Act of 1996 was a monumental step forward in helping tribes provide safe, quality, affordable housing for thousands of low income Native American families across the country.

This assistance can come in the form of down payment assistance, property acquisition, new construction, and housing rehabilitation, and is limited to families making less than 80 percent of the median income in their area. This income limit contains one important flaw. The act treats compensation, either paid to veterans with service-related disabilities, or for the families of those killed in service, as income. As a result, these benefits can push veterans and survivor families above the limit, making them ineligible, and costing them assistance that they badly need.

In fact, when we had the field hearing in Window Rock, I met with many families who told me because of this flaw they had to move in with their children because they couldn't qualify for their own home. This flaw has caused disabled veterans, their families and survivors to be denied help because that extra income has pushed them over the allowable limit.

My bill would fix this flaw by changing the definition of income to explicitly exclude veterans disability and survivor compensation, ending this unfair practice and lifting the burden from Native American veterans.

Native American veterans have sacrificed so much for this country, and neither they nor their surviving families should be punished for receiving the compensation they have earned. It is long past time to right this wrong

and ensure that this Nation keeps its sacred promise to its native veterans.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address H.R. 3553.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, as a proud member of the Native American Caucus, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3553, the Indian Veterans Housing Opportunity Act, which will address a critical need in tribal lands.

First, I would like to acknowledge Speaker PELOSI, Majority Leader HOYER, Chairman RAHALL, and Congresswoman KIRKPATRICK for their leadership in bringing this important bill to the floor. My colleague Congresswoman KIRKPATRICK, the author of this legislation, has worked hard to ensure that underserved communities, including tribal lands, have the housing necessary to support our growing population.

H.R. 3553, the Indian Veterans Housing Opportunity Act, makes an important fix to the existing bill for providing Native American housing. The Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) is the foundation for providing housing assistance to low-income Native American families on Indian reservations, in Alaska Native villages, and on Native Hawaiian Homelands.

In California, the State I represent, there are over 100 Native American tribes, many of varying levels of economic success. Based on the 2000 Census, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has determined that nationwide, almost 543,000 American Indian and Alaska Native households have "severe housing needs," meaning they live in conditions that are overcrowded, substandard, or cost-burdensome.

To complicate matters further, the NAHASDA statute does not contain an income exception for service-disabled veterans or families of soldiers killed in action. The Indian Veterans Housing Opportunity Act remedies this situation by revising the definition of income for NAHASDA to exclude payments for service-related disability, dependence, or indemnity. Veterans are especially likely to fall into these categories, which is unacceptable considering the role they have played in the defense of our country. Native Americans have the highest rate of enlistment in our armed services out of any group of Americans, and they deserve our support. Therefore, as a long time friend and supporter of the Native American community, I am so pleased to champion a bill such as H.R. 3553, which provides the housing this community needs.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 3553 because it ensures that Native American veterans do not face extraordinary obstacles when procuring or financing housing after serving this country. The Native American servicemen and women benefiting from H.R. 3553 deserve our full support. I am proud to work with my colleagues to ensure that they are not overlooked.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 3553.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr.

CLEAVER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3553.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH, 2010

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1257) supporting the goals and ideals of National Financial Literacy Month, 2010, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1257

Whereas personal financial literacy is essential to ensure that individuals are prepared to make informed financial choices so that they can become successful heads of households, investors, entrepreneurs, and business leaders;

Whereas financially informed individuals are better able to take control of their circumstances, improve their quality of life, and plan for their financial future;

Whereas personal financial management skills and lifelong habits begin to develop during childhood, making it all the more important to support youth financial education;

Whereas financial education is the first line of defense against financial fraud;

Whereas the results of the National Foundation for Credit Counseling's fourth annual Consumer Financial Literacy Survey suggest that while many United States adults are improving how they manage their money, and more consumers now have a budget and nonretirement savings, many Americans continue to struggle with their finances, especially young adults and minorities;

Whereas the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's "National Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked Households, December 2009" found that approximately 60,000,000 people in the United States are either unbanked or underbanked;

Whereas almost 54 percent of Black households, 44.5 percent of American Indian/Alaskan households, and 43.3 percent of Hispanic households are either unbanked or underbanked;

Whereas personal saving as a percentage of disposable personal income was 3.1 percent in February 2010, compared with 3.4 percent in January 2010, and a reduction from a 12-month average of 4.1 percent in 2009, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis;

Whereas public, community-based, and private sector organizations throughout the United States are working to increase financial literacy rates for Americans of all ages and walks of life through a range of outreach efforts, including media campaigns, Web sites, and one-on-one financial counseling for individuals;

Whereas the National Endowment for Financial Education provides consumers with the tools necessary to manage their money wisely and empower them to turn their financial education into action;

Whereas bankers across the United States will teach savings skills to young people on April 27, 2010, during "Teach Children to Save Day", which was launched by the

American Bankers Association Education Foundation in April 1997 and has now helped more than 80,000 bankers teach savings skills to more than 3,200,000 young people;

Whereas staff from America's credit unions will focus on the financial needs of young people, provide financial literacy education, and teach youth under the age of 18 the benefits of saving and goal setting during "National Credit Union Youth Week", April 18-24, 2010;

Whereas more than 100 Federal agencies have collaborated on a Web site, www.consumer.gov, which helps consumers shop for a mortgage or auto loan, understand and reconcile credit card statements and utility bills, choose savings and retirement plans, compare health insurance policies, and understand their credit report and how it affects their ability to get credit and on what terms;

Whereas Members of the United States House of Representatives established the Financial and Economic Literacy Caucus in February 2005 to provide a forum for interested Members of Congress to review, discuss and recommend financial and economic literacy policies, legislation, and programs; to collaborate with the private sector, and non-profit and community-based organizations; and to organize and promote financial literacy resolutions, legislation, seminars, and events, such as "Financial Literacy Month" in April 2010, and the annual "Financial Literacy Day Fair" on April 27, 2010; and

Whereas the Council for Economic Education, its State Councils and Centers for Economic Education, the JumpStart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy, its State affiliates, and its partner organizations, and JA Worldwide have designated April as Financial Literacy Month to educate the public about the need for increased financial literacy for youth and adults in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month, including raising public awareness about financial education;

(2) recognizes the importance of managing personal finances, increasing personal savings, and reducing personal debt in the United States; and

(3) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on the Federal Government, States, localities, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, other entities, and the people of the United States to observe the month with appropriate programs and activities with the goal of increasing financial literacy rates for individuals of all ages and walks of life.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA) and the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material thereon.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may need.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 1257, Supporting

the Goals and Ideals of National Financial Literacy Month, 2010, and for other purposes. I will enter into today's RECORD President Barack Obama's National Financial Literacy Month proclamation, which I hold in my hands.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pride to bring this important resolution to the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. It contains some very important data on financial literacy and economic education. Unfortunately, I'm sad to have to report again this year that the surveys and the studies we reviewed while drafting this resolution indicate that the majority of Americans remain financially illiterate and are in desperate need of financial education.

I represent the 15th Congressional District of Texas, which includes Hidalgo County, one of the poorest counties in the whole country. It is 89 percent Hispanic and contains over 900 colonias. Many of the residents do not speak English fluently, and several speak English as a second language.

They tend to purchase refrigerators, washing machines, automobiles, televisions, and electronic equipment in cash. One of the reasons for this aberration is a question of trust. Another is that lower-income Americans are not aware of the benefits conveyed when they open a bank account at a mainstream financial institution.

A more pervasive problem is that mainstream financial institutions tend not to open branches in the neighborhoods in which these constituents live. Consequently, these residents are left to rely on non-mainstream financial servicers such as payday lenders, such as check cashers and other predatory entities.

For these reasons, I was not surprised by the findings of the FDIC's December 2009 national survey of unbanked and under-banked households. It revealed that approximately 60 million people in our United States are either unbanked or under-banked.

It is for situations such as this that Congresswoman JUDY BIGGERT and I began collaborating on financial literacy and economic education starting in 2003. Two years later, in 2005, we co-founded and currently co-chair the Financial Economic Literacy Caucus. I'm very pleased and grateful that she and I and the members of this caucus have worked together on a bipartisan basis on financial literacy and economic education over the years.

This year, 2010, the caucus has coordinated with several different associations on financial literacy events, including the National Consumer Protection Week Fair, America Saves Week, and the release of the National Foundation for Credit Counseling's, better known as the NFCC, their fourth annual consumer financial literacy survey.

On April 27th of this year, the Congresswoman and I are coordinating on the Annual Financial Literacy Day Fair with Senator DANIEL AKAKA from