

Again, I want to thank the chairman of the committee for his immediate response to our letter of concern. I want to thank my colleagues who joined me on that.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4849

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 “Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Backcountry Access Act”.

SEC. 2. COMMERCIAL USE AUTHORIZATIONS IN DESIGNATED WILDERNESS WITHIN THE SEQUOIA AND KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS.

(a) ISSUANCE OF COMMERCIAL USE AUTHORIZATIONS.—Notwithstanding the decision or any other provision of law, the Secretary shall issue such packer permits at the levels of commercial services authorized by the Secretary in 2011 until the Secretary—

(1) makes an extent necessary determination that addresses the violations of the Wilderness Act found in the decision; and

(2) begins to issue packer permits for operations in designated wilderness within the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks in accordance with that extent necessary determination.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this Act, the following definitions apply:

(1) DECISION.—The term “decision” means the January 24, 2012, ruling by the United States District Court for the Northern District of California in *High Sierra Hikers Association v. United States Department of the Interior*, et al., Case No. C09-4621 RS.

(2) EXTENT NECESSARY DETERMINATION.—The term “extent necessary determination” means a determination on the need for commercial services within Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park wilderness under to section 4(2)(5) of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1133(d)(5)).

(3) PACKER PERMIT.—The term “packer permit” means a commercial use authorization granted to a commercial stock operator.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. HASTINGS OF WASHINGTON

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 2, line 5, strike “Notwithstanding” and all that follows through line 8 and insert the following: “Notwithstanding the decision, for the 2012 and 2013 seasons, the Secretary shall issue packer permits at no more than the levels of commercial services authorized by the Secretary in 2011 until the Secretary—”.

Page 2, line 15, strike the period and insert “reflected in a Record of Decision for the Wilderness Stewardship Plan.”.

Page 2, line 22, strike “C09-4621” and insert “C 90-4621”.

Page 3, line 2, strike “to section 4(2)(5)” and insert “section 4(d)(5)”.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask

unanimous consent that the amendment be considered read.

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

There was no objection.

The amendment was agreed to.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment bills of the House and a concurrent resolution of the following titles:

H.R. 298. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 500 East Whitestone Boulevard in Cedar Park, Texas, as the “Army Specialist Matthew Troy Morris Post Office Building”.

H.R. 1423. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 115 4th Avenue Southwest in Ardmore, Oklahoma, as the “Specialist Michael E. Phillips Post Office”.

H.R. 2079. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10 Main Street in East Rockaway, New York, as the “John J. Cook Post Office”.

H.R. 2213. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 801 West Eastport Street in Iuka, Mississippi, as the “Sergeant Jason W. Vaughn Post Office”.

H.R. 2244. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 67 Castle Street in Geneva, New York, as the “Corporal Steven Blaine Riccione Post Office”.

H.R. 2660. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 122 North Holderrieth Boulevard in Tomball, Texas, as the “Tomball Veterans Post Office”.

H.R. 2767. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 8 West Silver Street in Westfield, Massachusetts, as the “William T. Trant Post Office Building”.

H.R. 3004. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 260 California Drive in Yountville, California, as the “Private First Class Alejandro R. Ruiz Post Office Building”.

H.R. 3246. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 15455 Manchester Road in Ballwin, Missouri, as the “Specialist Peter J. Navarro Post Office Building”.

H.R. 3247. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1100 Town and Country Commons in Chesterfield, Missouri, as the “Lance Corporal Matthew P. Pathenos Post Office Building”.

H.R. 3248. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 112 South 5th Street in Saint Charles, Missouri, as the “Lance Corporal Drew W. Weaver Post Office Building”.

The message also announced that the Senate has agreed to a concurrent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 43. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment or recess of the Senate and an adjournment of the House of Representatives.

INTEREST RATE REDUCTION ACT

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 631, I call up the bill (H.R. 4628) to extend student loan interest rates for undergraduate Federal Direct Stafford Loans, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 631, the bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4628

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 “Interest Rate Reduction Act”.

SEC. 2. INTEREST RATE EXTENSION.

Subparagraph (D) of section 455(b)(7) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087e(b)(7)(D)) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking “2012” and inserting “2013”; and

(2) in clause (v), by striking “2012” and inserting “2013”.

SEC. 3. REPEALING PREVENTION AND PUBLIC HEALTH FUND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 4002 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 300u-11) is repealed.

(b) RESCISSION OF UNOBLIGATED FUNDS.—Of the funds made available by such section 4002, the unobligated balance is rescinded.

SEC. 4. COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY PAY-AS-YOU-GO ACT OF 2010.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4628.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 4 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, when I talk to students and families, it's clear that today's economy doesn't hold the same promise for young adults as it once did. Our sons and daughters, many with student loan debt, are moving back home after college only to find Washington's tax-and-spend policies have made it even harder to find a job. In fact, according to a recent Associated Press report, at least half of recent graduates are unemployed or underemployed. That's unacceptable.

Under current law, the outlook for some of these young adults only gets worse as interest rates on subsidized Stafford student loans are set to spike from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent on July 1 of this year. That's why I've introduced H.R. 4628, the Interest Rate Reduction Act, a bill that would avert this interest rate increase, because the last thing we should do is to allow loan rates to double and make it that much harder to afford a high-quality education. Unfortunately, that's exactly what will happen if we don't set aside the rhetoric and work in a bipartisan way to pay for this critical interest rate fix.

Under my legislation, the \$6 billion cost of the interest rate fix is offset in the same way as bipartisan legislation signed into law by the President earlier this year. Just 3 months ago, Members on both sides of the aisle came together and the President signed a bill that extended unemployment benefits and the payroll tax cut.

The legislation I offer today would use, as an offset, the exact same source that we all agreed to use just 3 months ago. The bill would eliminate the remaining \$12 billion from the so-called Prevention and Public Health Fund, which, in truth, is nothing more than an open-ended fund that has no clear oversight or purpose. At best, this fund serves only to circumvent Congress's annual appropriations responsibilities by granting, in perpetuity, the Secretary of Health and Human Services unabridged discretion to direct billions of taxpayer dollars under the loose label of prevention programs.

I should note that the President, himself, acknowledged that the prevention fund is bloated when he requested a \$4 billion cut to the program in his FY13 budget. By reclaiming a portion of the administration's misguided health care law through the elimination of this blank-check program, my legislation would extend lower rates for college loans, granting relief to our young people without raising taxes on their potential employers.

It is a commonsense plan that deserves bipartisan support. I ask my colleagues to step forward today and show the American people that we can solve this problem immediately, without the drama of a last-minute, on-deadline fix.

□ 1020

It is my hope that our colleagues in the Senate as well will work with us to send it to the President immediately.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Interest Rate Reduction Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, it's nice to have our Republican friends finally agree that the interest rates would be a problem if they rise and double.

Since 2007, when the rates were first reduced when the Democrats were in

the majority, it's been resisted by our friends on the Republican side—resisted in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011. And not until recently, when the profile of this issue had been raised to a degree where students and families started to really get involved and engaged, did our friends on the other side of the aisle finally decide that, well, they now don't want the rates to go up either. But cynically, some might say, the only way they can find to pay for it is to attack women's health and children's health.

Now, women don't want this bill that way. Children and students don't want the bill this way. Labor doesn't want the bill this way. Public health groups don't want the bill this way. The Senate has said that they won't accept the bill this way; it's dead on arrival. And the White House senior staff says they'll advise the President to veto the bill this way.

If we really want to set aside partisanship and do this, let's pick a pay-for that the American people can get behind and that we can all agree on. Let's put aside the cynicism, let's stop playing games, and let's do the right thing. Let's make sure the interest rates stay at 3.4 percent. Let's make sure that 177,000 students in Massachusetts and 7 million nationwide have affordable access to college and are able to pay for that bill in a better way when they graduate on that. Let's start doing the right thing.

Last week, our Republican friends found \$46 billion to give to hedge fund managers in a tax cut, to give to Donald Trump in his Trump Towers leasing company, to give to other people that already had millions of dollars and didn't pay for it. This week, they finally get brought around to the issue of trying to help students and come up with this cynical aspect of paying for it by, once again, attacking women's health, in this case adding children on—children's immunizations, women's screenings for breast and cervical cancer and birth defects. This is insidious. This is ridiculous on this. And we should move forward and do the right thing.

The fund that the bill addresses is a fund that was attacked a little bit the last time, as the Speaker mentioned, but left largely intact. This one would wipe out the entire fund, twice the amount of money necessary in order to fund what they're purporting to do because they are ideologically going after the health care bill.

We need to make sure that women's health care and children's health care is protected. We need to make sure the interest rates stay low. We are certain we can do that. It won't be done by doing it this way. And Members in the Senate will have to work in conference to make sure that we get to a pay-for for this that makes sense, and it's something we can do. There's 250 tax expenditures in the Tax Code, 250—\$1.3 trillion. We can find a way to pay for this interest rate reduction here and do

it in a way that all of America can get behind and both parties can get behind without the cynicism and without moving in this direction.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Let me just take a couple of seconds to remind the gentleman from Massachusetts that we also are for prevention, but we have a whole list of appropriations, a whole list of what we do, and not to leave all of this to the discretion of one person when there is no oversight by Congress.

With that, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG), a member of our Education and the Workforce Committee.

Mr. WALBERG. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, just a bit of a history lesson. We hear a lot of demagoguery going on right now from the highest office of the land about the unwillingness of Republicans to help our college students receive the education that they need by having the loans that they deserve.

Going back to 2006, as part of the Democrats' Six for '06 campaign agenda, the Democrats promised to cut student loan interest in half. When they took the majority—and I sat on the House Education and Labor Committee at the time—they gained control of Congress, all of a sudden they realized it was too costly to do what they planned to do. So they put in place, against our opposition, saying that the private sector still could foster opportunities for student loans and make it fluctuate and flow in a variable rate with the market, ultimately reducing the overall cost of interest over the course of time for our students. They chose not to do that. They put in place the plan that we have right now, a Democrat plan that said, in fact, we will go to 6.8 percent in July of 2012 after dropping it back because they knew they couldn't afford it. They did it in a short-term process. And ultimately, it has come to fruition now that we are at a cost problem and we are at a problem for students to gain education support. It is their plan that we're dealing with. It is their mess that we're asked to fix at this point in time.

The College Cost Reduction and Access Act incrementally reduced to the 3.4 percent that we have now, ultimately putting a cliff in place of what we're looking at. As the expiration date crept closer, Democrats did nothing in the 111th Congress, despite knowing that this would take place, and now we have a problem.

Mr. Speaker, this morning we see a picture of students in graduation garb. On top of one of the mortarboards it says: "Hire me." That's the issue we're talking about: an economy that doesn't offer jobs. And so what we ought to be looking at here is growing an economy, not an ObamaCare fix that is ending up costing these loan programs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. WALBERG. I thank the gentleman.

We ought to be looking at ways for growing an economy that gives the opportunity for students to know that they will have a job, that they can pay off loans at whatever rate it will be. There is a much better way than doing what has been done. We ought to be growing an economy for job providers, as opposed to what the Senate sent over to us, their solution: to whack at more job providers and make it more difficult to provide stable and secure jobs for college graduates looking for simply the opportunity to be hired.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I remind the gentleman that in 2007, the bill was paid for. In fact, it was paid for, and 77 members of the Republican Party agreed as well. Now it is time to pay for it in an intelligent and correct manner.

I now yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I understand the fix that the Republicans are in after just over a week ago almost unanimously voting not to extend the 3.4 percent interest rate to students, and in adopting the Ryan Republican budget, agreeing to let it go out to 6.8 percent. In fact, they use that to pay for the tax cuts for the wealthy they anticipate in their budget. So they took students' money, and the families and the savings that they were made out of—almost \$16 billion over the last 4 years—and they said we're going to use this to provide tax cuts for the wealthy, and we assume that the rates will go to 6.8 percent. President Obama went on the road for 3 days, and all of a sudden Republicans have decided that they're for keeping the interest rates at 3.4 percent.

You can say all of this is cynical, and I believe it is on their part, because what they really see now is an opportunity to attack women's health. They see their position of being for student loans gives them cover to attack women's health, to attack the screening for women's health in the areas of breast cancer and cervical cancer, to attack the ability of public health agencies to screen newborn infants for birth defects, to take away the ability to make sure that young people have the immunizations they need when they start school. So now, under the cover of being for student loans, they now are attacking women's health in the most cynical fashion.

But you know, every now and then in this place—where it's terribly partisan; it can be very cynical, as we see with this action today with this bill—a little ray of light comes in of idealism and hopefulness and understanding. We see today that we have statements by almost all of the major student organizations saying we want that interest rate kept at 3.4 percent, but we do not want it kept at that rate at the risk of

jeopardizing women's health, jeopardizing our parents' health, our mothers' health, our sisters' health, our friends' health.

□ 1030

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. TIERNEY. I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from California.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. So we should understand that these students see this cynical match that is being played here, and they ask for a timeout and they say find another way to pay for this.

But don't do it at the risk of birth defects for newborn infants. Don't do it at the risk of a child not being immunized against disease.

Don't do it at the risk of young women and older women being screened for breast cancer and cervical cancer, where the difference can mean life or death for those women. Don't attack and abolish and repeal women's health on the backs of our students. Don't do it in our name. In our name, don't do this legislation.

Vote "no" against this. We'll find another way to do this, but don't do this in the name of students. That's what they've asked with their opposition to this legislation.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. BASS).

Mr. BASS of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Illinois for recognizing me.

There's little disagreement between Republicans and Democrats over the need to extend the subsidized interest rates for student loans for at least another year. Student loan debt now in America exceeds \$1 trillion which, I believe, is more than the entire Nation's credit card debt. It's a very serious national priority that needs to be addressed, and it should be resolved in a bipartisan fashion.

As you can tell from the tenor of the debate this morning, it has been reduced to the issue of how we are going to come up with the money to pay for this. First of all, I think it's a miracle that we're even debating that because the prior administration in this Congress wouldn't have even brought the subject up of how to pay for it.

At least the Democrats now want to pay for it by raising prices on gasoline through higher taxes on oil companies. And I believe that taxation of oil companies should be on the table in tax reform, not on an education bill.

We have a proposal that would reduce the funding in the prevention and public health fund account, and of course our friends on the other side of the aisle are right on message, on the national message, of tying everything that Republicans want to do to be some sort of a battle against women.

Let me just point out that I believe there's already about \$119 million in FY 2011 for the CDC's breast and cer-

vical cancer early detection program. And I know my friend from Illinois will probably enumerate on this even further.

I would point out that the program, or the fund, that the Democrats are trying to protect actually is providing money for early detection, but it's for free spaying and neutering for dogs and cats around the country. This money comes out of the Communities Putting Prevention to Work campaign, and that's receiving money from this Health and Human Services Secretary slush fund.

I would also point out to my friends that this fund has already been reduced in order to pay for the payroll tax reduction, so it's not setting any kind of a precedent.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman.

Mr. BASS of New Hampshire. I would suggest that a fund that's funded at \$17.75 billion for the first 10 years, and then automatically advance-appropriated for \$2 billion a year after that, I've never heard of that in the Congress. That means that we are turning over our authority to raise and appropriate money to the tune of \$2 billion a year to the Health and Human Services Secretary with no oversight from Congress at all.

I want student loans to remain at their lower rate, and I want to do it in a fiscally responsible fashion; and that's what this bill does.

Mr. TIERNEY. I yield myself such time as I may consume in order to address the fact that the elimination of the fund would mean that on an annual basis, 326,000 fewer women would be screened for breast cancer.

I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY).

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. TIERNEY. I want to just, first of all, begin by recognizing your leadership and, particularly, GEORGE MILLER's leadership back in 2007 when we passed the College Cost Reduction Act which reduced an interest rate of 6.8 percent, which was set as a result of a Republican Congress in 2002 which passed a Budget Reconciliation Act locking in that higher rate.

The College Cost Reduction Act has saved 15 million students in this country higher debt levels because we cut that rate to 3.4 percent. Sadly, the Speaker of the House, JOHN BOEHNER, voted against that measure. Sadly, my good friend from Minnesota, the chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee, voted against that measure in 2007.

It was well understood that it had a 5-year sunset, like a lot of programs and tax policies in this Congress. People were complaining about the cliff we created.

Well, how about the Bush tax cuts? That's got a \$4 trillion cliff on December 31 because the majority party, when they enacted the Bush tax cuts, sunset that measure.

So here we are today, 64 days away from the rates doubling, and we're now suddenly seeing the majority party get religion on this subject. As Mr. MILLER pointed out a minute-or-so ago, in fact, the Ryan budget, which the Republicans lined up as a party to pass two or three weeks ago, locked in the higher rate at 6.8 percent for 2013. That was built into the Ryan budget.

In addition, it doubled down on higher education affordability by cutting the Pell Grant award from \$6,000 to \$5,000. That is the Republican higher education platform.

But, thankfully, we have a President who stood on that platform on January 24 and challenged this Congress to protect that lower rate. And because we did not get a hearing, we didn't get a bill, we didn't get a markup, we got no flicker of action by the leadership of this Chamber, he went on the road and talked to the people of this country, like Presidents before him, like Harry Truman and others, because that was the only way you were going to turn this body around was with external pressure to make sure that middle class families knew what the heck was going on, which was nothing.

I started this countdown clock at 110 days when we were waiting for this debt level to go up, and there was a reason for that, because 130,000 petition signatures were dropped off at the Speaker's office at day 110, and we heard nothing from that date when, again, overwhelming college campus signatures arrived at this Congress. And now today we're down to day 64. They're feeling the political heat.

Good for you, Mr. President, for raising this issue and forcing this body to address one of the biggest challenges our Nation faces. And yet they come up with a pay-for that is a disgraceful, grotesque pay-for that goes after women and children in the name of protecting student loans.

As Mr. MILLER said, thank goodness the student leaders who have been leading the fight to protect this lower rate have stood up and said no way.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. TIERNEY. I yield the gentleman another 15 seconds.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, that's all I need.

And I would just say that the President responded to that call a few minutes ago by indicating that this measure is dead. It will be vetoed. It's not going anywhere.

Let's get back to work and come up with a real fix and solve this crisis for the American people.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to remind the gentleman from Connecticut that he was one of 147 Members on that side of the aisle voting for taking money out of the privatization protection for health care.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE), our esteemed chairman of the Education Committee.

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding the time, and for introducing this legislation.

I rise in support of H.R. 4628, the Interest Rate Reduction Act. We seem to be in pretty strong agreement on both sides of the aisle that we've got an economy in shambles. We've got an unemployment rate above 8 percent now for over 3 years. We've got college graduates who graduate from college and can't get a job—half of them can't get a job or get the right job. They're underemployed or unemployed.

And we've got, by law, the interest rate on subsidized Stafford student loans going from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent, by law, a law drafted, crafted, passed by my friends on the other side of the aisle.

It was entirely predictable when this was passed in 2007 that this was going to happen. We were going to get to the point where interest rates were going to double. Nevertheless, it's the law.

And so what do we do about it?

It seems to me—and I think that we get some agreement on this—we ought to have a long-term fix so we're not doing this again next year and the next year and the next year, making a political decision. We need a long-term fix.

□ 1040

So, today, we're trying to step up and address the immediate concerns of our students, our graduates, as they go into this shaky economy. So we're moving the interest rate in this legislation, keeping it at 3.4 percent for 1 more year.

I look at this as the opportunity for us to then get together and make a long-term fix, a fix that is much more driven by the market rather than the politics of the day or by an election year. We need a long-term fix. This is going to give us the opportunity to do that.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS of New Hampshire). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. KLINE. There has been a lot of discussion here about the pay-for, and the words "cynical" and "cynicism" have been used. We have got proposals from the other side of the aisle, from our friends in the Senate that want to tax small businesses, the job creators, at the very time when our economy is in such trouble. Then there are other proposals that say let's tax oil companies, let's drive up the price of gas.

You can talk about cynicism. What we're talking about is using a slush fund that is provided to the Secretary to spend as she sees fit, and that is perceived as an attack somehow on women. What a surprise in this election year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has again expired.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. KLINE. There are multiple sources of funding of programs that

can address women's needs. I think it is cynical to suggest that we are somehow attacking women and their health by going at a slush fund that has no control, no oversight, irresponsibly given.

The President himself has already proposed taking \$4 billion from the slush fund. This is the way to go. Let's address the immediate needs of our students and then work together on a long-term solution.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans' long-term fix, of course, was voted on a couple of weeks ago in their budget which allowed for the rates to go up to 6.8 percent and took away the in-school subsidy for interest rates, driving students' costs even further up. That's why we're here today.

I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS).

(Mr. ANDREWS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ANDREWS. A college student sits in the financial aid office worried about her interest rate doubling on July 1. A woman sits in the waiting room of the health clinic waiting to get a cancer screening. A corporate executive sits in a boardroom of an oil company waiting to get his tax break from the Federal Government.

Everybody here today says they want to help the college student avoid the loan increase. The bill says the way we'll pay for avoiding the interest rate increase is to send the woman home from the health clinic and deny her the cancer screening. We say the way to do it is to go to the corporate executive in the oil company boardroom and deny him his tax giveaway from the Federal Treasury.

The way to pay for this assistance for students is not to shut down health for the women of this country. The way to pay for it is to shut down the giveaway of taxpayer dollars to the oil industry of this country. That's the way to fix the problem, and that's the way we eventually will.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. BUERKLE).

Ms. BUERKLE. Mr. Speaker, today we have an opportunity to vote on a bipartisan initiative that will save our country's future leaders billions of dollars. Economists have resoundingly predicted that a student loan crisis may soon send America's fragile economic sector into shambles if it is not soon addressed.

The New York Federal Reserve has reported that student loans are the leading cause of this debt, with \$870 billion last month alone. This tops even credit card debt.

My friend in Illinois has proposed a commonsense solution to halt an increase in Federal loan rates that everyone agrees is needless.

But, Mr. Speaker, I must say to you, I was stunned to hear that leaders on the other side of our aisle, our good friends on the other side, were attempting to take this issue hostage.

Our sons' and daughters' pursuits have been hijacked for political gamesmanship.

Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker, the fund which is offsetting this looming rate hike is nothing more than a slush fund. The HHS Secretary has authority to use it without congressional discretion. It was yet another allowance given to an unelected, unaccountable bureaucrat to be used on things such as bike paths, jungle gyms, and worse yet, lobbying efforts.

I am a woman who has worked for years as a women's health care practitioner, and on behalf of women's health care patients, I will tell you, for the other side, Mr. Speaker, to manipulate this issue does nothing to advance women's interests, but in fact demeans the accomplishments made in women's health over the past decades.

Mr. Speaker, I implore my colleagues who are playing games with this critical issue to grow up. This is not kindergarten. This is the reality of crushing college costs. This bill will help our future by making colleges more affordable by leaving them with a country that is not inundated in debt.

Mr. TIERNEY. Before yielding further, I'm going to take 15 seconds and yield that to myself.

Mr. Speaker, this supposed slush fund the people are talking about is a fund identified and given Appropriations Committee authority to designate where it would be spent. That authority was advocated by our friends on the other side, and the Secretary has in fact specified every year where the money be spent: \$326,000 in screenings for breast cancer; \$284,000 for cervical cancer screenings; \$10,000 for breast and cervical cancer; and so on down the line.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the minority leader of the House from California (Ms. PELOSI).

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank him for his leadership in presenting a commonsense piece of legislation to ensure that the interest on student loans is not doubled in July, and to pay for that by cutting the subsidies to Big Oil instead of, as the Republicans do, continuing their all-out assault on women's health.

So much of the time that we spend on this floor seems completely irrelevant to America's working families as they're struggling to make ends meet. Imagine them around their kitchen tables as we talk about this, that, and the other thing that seems disconnected from their emergency and urgent needs. What we're talking about today directly relates to what keeps people up at night: their economic security, the education of their children, the health of their families. The list goes on. Some of those are addressed in this legislation.

I think we all agree that the greatest thing the country can do and that a family can do is to invest in the education of the next generation, the education of our children.

Imagine if we're sitting around that kitchen table as a family, as we are, and we say as a family, in order for you to go to college, we're not going to be able to immunize your little brother or sister, we're not going to be able to have preventative care in terms of screening for breast cancer, cervical cancer—the list goes on and on—for your mom or any other preventative care for men and women in your family. It just would be wrong.

Who are we as a Nation, if that's a statement of our values, to choose between the education of your children and the health of your family? It is just not right. Especially when you have a situation where we had this fight over and over again.

But let me put it in context. In 2007, the Democratic majority in the House, working in a bipartisan fashion with our Republican colleagues, passed a bill that ratcheted down the interest rate to 3.4 percent. We were very proud of that legislation passing with 77 members of the Republican Party voting with the Democratic majority. The bill was signed by then-President George W. Bush, and we all celebrated that legislation.

□ 1050

That is expiring in July, and if no action is taken, those interest rates of 3.4 will go back to the level of 6.8 percent. We had been making that argument over and over again, which is that in our budgeting we must provide for the education of our children in a way that enables them to acquire a higher education should they desire and be qualified to do so and if that is in their interests and in their families' priorities.

Republicans have grown impatient, they've said, with hearing about student loans—don't look at us—until the President went to the public and clearly spelled out the public policy debate that was going on here, which is that in the Republican budget—the Ryan-Republican-Tea Party budget—it enabled the doubling of the interest rates. In the House Democratic budget, we provided for keeping it at 3.4 percent—a big difference if you're sitting at that kitchen table and if you have a college-aged child.

It's about the children and the debts they incur. It's about the families and the parents and the debts that their families incur. Because the President took the issue to the American people, he made the issue too hot to handle, so the Republicans this week are doing an about-face for what they did last week, to vote overwhelmingly for their budget, which now has enabled the interest rates on student loans, the Stafford loans, to double. An about-face.

But what did they do? They said, Okay, we won't allow it to double, but we're going to take the money from women's health.

It should be no surprise to anyone because they have an ongoing assault on women's health. This is in their budget, and this is just a continuation of

that; but I think it's important to note the following: that they not only in their bill call for taking the amount of money that would cover the cost of keeping the interest rates at 3.4 percent; they say, while we're at it, let's eliminate the entire fund. Let's eliminate the entire fund for the prevention, for the immunization, for the screening, and for the rest—for the CDC to do its public health work. Let's eliminate it.

So that should tell you something about where their priorities are if they're saying, We stand here, once again, handmaidens of the oil industry, protecting subsidies for Big Oil, and instead we want Mom and the children to pay the price with their health. It's just not right. It's just not right. The President made it clear to the public the difference in our approaches on the student loan issue. Now he has made it clear that he will veto this bill if it contains this pay-for.

Unfortunately, rather than finding common ground in a way to pay for this critical policy, the Statement of Administration Policy says:

This bill includes an attempt to repeal the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which was created to help prevent disease, detect it early, and manage conditions before they become severe. Women, in particular, will benefit from this prevention fund, which would provide for hundreds of thousands of screenings for breast and cervical cancer.

This is already happening. This would have to stop under this bill. So let's back up for a moment and say we all want the most educated population in our country so people can reach their self-fulfillments, whatever they decide those are; so we can be competitive in the world market; so we can have an informed electorate in the spirit of the GI Bill, which educated our soldiers when they came home and created a middle class in our country, which is the backbone of our democracy. In a global economy, it is even more necessary for us to be able to have the skills and trained workforce to compete.

Let's also recognize that nothing brings more money to the Treasury than the education of the American people. Whether it's early childhood, K-12, higher education, postgrad, lifetime learning—nothing brings more money to the Treasury. So it would be a false economy to deter people from seeking more education. It's also adding insult to injury to say, now that we've finally had to fold on the issue and agree with the Democrats that we should keep the interest rates at 3.4 instead of doubling them to 6.8, we're going to put women and children first as those who will pay for that. It's just not right.

I congratulate the President for his message to the American people and for the message of his administration in his Statement of Administration Policy that a veto would be recommended. I urge my colleagues to vote "no."

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL).

Mr. WOODALL. I thank the chairwoman, and I thank the chairman of the committee, Mr. KLINE.

I rise in reluctant opposition to this bill, but in strong support of the committee and the work that they're doing.

We got caught up in politics again today. It makes me so angry. I'm so angry I could spit. I'm trying to bring my blood pressure down over here as a freshman, remember, because I came here for results. I am the keynote speaker tonight for the Georgia College Republicans' statewide convention, and I'm going to go down there and proudly tell them that I voted "no" on this bill today that is pandering to their interests, not because I don't like young people in education, but because I love young people in education.

Every time we come to this floor and talk about how proud we are that we're paying for a piece of legislation, every oil industry tax you want to raise and every millionaire tax you want to raise, those could be paying down the deficit that we're borrowing from these young people that you purport to support here today. With every new piece of ObamaCare that we want to abolish and that should be abolished, we could put that money towards reducing the over \$1 trillion a year we're borrowing and asking our young people to pay back.

But let me tell you, as a conservative Republican, I am not embarrassed of what we do to serve our young people. Congratulations on our subsidies for our young people. We've now driven our student loan debt higher than the credit card debt in this country. Congratulations. Congratulations that we now have a 3.4 percent interest rate so that the one out of two young people who comes out of college and can't find a job can default on those loans at a lower rate instead of at a higher rate. Congratulations. What about focusing on the jobs? What about focusing on our children's futures? What about focusing on the better tomorrow that we owe to these young people?

There is a choice of two futures here. The committee, as everyone in this House knows, is working on a permanent solution. We subsidize student loans today with a Federal Government guarantee for below-market interest rates; 6.8, that's a below-market interest rate. We subsidize student loans today with an above-the-line deduction on the 1040. Everybody can take that today, already today; and here we are in the midst of the largest economic crisis in our Nation's history, saying, once again, let's spend the money instead of putting the money towards these children's futures.

There is no free lunch in this town. Every single penny that we spend we're spending from them. You're not subsidizing these people. You're asking them to pay more with interest in

their futures. In graduating from college, one out of two kids can't find a job. Student loans are higher than credit card loans for the first time in American history. Are we headed in the right direction, or are we headed in the wrong direction?

I say focus on what this Committee on Education and the Workforce is doing. Look at what they are doing for a permanent fix to provide certainty. This is another short-term fix. I know my colleagues on the left and on the right are trying their best to do what they believe in their hearts is going to serve our young people, but short-term fixes are not the answer. There is a better answer, and it's coming from the committee later on this year. I hope my colleagues will oppose this bill today and will support that bill coming forward.

Mr. TIERNEY. Before I yield, I do want to correct the gentleman. There is somebody around here who gets a free lunch under your bill, and that would be the oil companies, which made \$80 billion in profits last year.

I yield for the purpose of making a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to robbing health and education to pay for oil.

Baron Henry Brougham once said, "Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern but impossible to enslave." Education is at the cornerstone of our democracy, and college access and success are fundamental stepping stones toward economic security and global competitiveness. As policymakers, it is imperative that we support students in making college affordable so that our citizens can prosper. We face an immediate crisis in college costs. Without congressional action, interest rates will get out of the box pushing students and families in deeper debt.

Yet, rather than setting forth a bipartisan solution to address the impending interest rate hike, the Republican leadership insists on waging a partisan war on the health of our nation by cutting six billion dollars from the Prevention and Public Health Fund. The Prevention and Public Health Fund invests in state and local public health entities to address critical public health problems effectively from the front end, lowering health costs and benefiting over one hundred million Americans. I have been a strong proponent of prevention my entire adult life given its proven ability to improve the quality of life for citizens with minimal financial investment. Indeed, proven community-based prevention programs yield an estimated return of \$5.60 for every dollar invested. Since 2010, the state of Illinois has received \$31 million from the Prevention Fund. I cannot support the loss of these funds.

I do not understand the Republican position that decreasing access to women's health exams, children's immunizations, obesity programs, smoking cessation, and other proven health promotion programs by slashing prevention funding is better public policy than stopping billions of dollars in taxpayer sub-

sidies for oil companies with record profits. One policy approach benefits our society; the other benefits a handful of privileged corporations. Why should Republicans demand that the wealthiest oil companies that make tens of billions of dollars in profit receive billions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies? With the price of a barrel of oil so high, there is no need to incentivize oil companies to produce oil. The billions of dollars of profit are incentive enough. Further, leading Senate Republicans have acknowledged that Big Oil doesn't need this incentive.

I stand with the nearly 800 public health, prevention and other health and wellness advocates that strongly oppose repeal of this fund. Helping our nation's low and middle-income students avoid deeper debt should not be contingent on eliminating funding for childhood immunizations and screening programs for breast and cervical cancer and birth defects. I support the extension of the interest rate reduction for student loans, but not at the expense of the health of our nation.

Mr. TIERNEY. With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the majority's faulty attempt to extend current student loan interest rates.

The Ryan budget, which most of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle voted for, allowed those interest rates to expire. It was only when they started getting criticized by the press did they decide to offer an alternative to our proposal.

□ 1100

Even then, they took yet another shot at the health care law while keeping Big Oil subsidies intact.

Mr. Speaker, this year, a mammogram has saved my wife's life. They have chosen the wrong priority. At the end of the day, the American people cannot afford to see their interest rates double on their student loans.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to join us in offering a legitimate source of funding that doesn't put anyone's health in jeopardy. This Congress needs to find an equitable solution to this problem before July 1.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, banks offer car loans at a 3.99 percent interest rate. Banks also offer 30-year fixed mortgages on homes with an interest rate of 3.8 percent. Student loans are currently at 3.4 percent, but if we don't do something, it's going to jump to 6.8 percent.

It seems to me Congress can handle this and do something about it. Recent reports show that 50 percent of recent graduates from college are unemployed or underemployed.

I received an email from a Kingwood Park High School student today named Derek encouraging Congress to do a commonsense thing: to put the student loan rate at 3.4 percent. Why don't we do that?

The student loan debt has reached a trillion dollars. Why would we want to strap students going into college with more debt by increasing the student loan rate in this current economic climate?

You can get a car loan rate very low. In fact, you can get some car loans with 0 percent, but not so with students. Why is that? We should maintain low interest rates for student loans.

Cars and homes are important, but students going to college are an investment in our future. Education is an important tool for our young people to be able to contribute to America's competitiveness worldwide. Also, the bill is paid for. Some of the money that's coming out of this unconstitutional health care mandate will go to deficit reduction.

We need to support our students and encourage young people to go to college, not discourage them by increasing their student loan rates because of politics. This is a commonsense idea. Extend the student loan low interest rate, and we should do it today.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I just note that it was common sense about 2 weeks ago and almost the entire Republican Party voted to let the rate go to 6.8 percent. It's nice to see that they've found some reality here.

At this time, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Following up on my friend from Texas, I served on the Labor and Health Committee for 23 years. Bill Natcher from Kentucky used to say this: If you take care of the health of your people and invest in the education of your young people, you will continue to be the strongest and best Nation on the face of the Earth.

I agreed with the gentleman from Kentucky then, and I agree with him now.

Everybody says on this floor, although everybody didn't vote that way—Mr. BOEHNER voted against this reduction in interest rates; Mr. CANTOR voted against this reduction in interest rates; and Mr. KLINE voted in 2007 against this reduction in interest rates. What we are saying is we need to invest.

We talk about subsidies. This isn't a subsidy. This is an investment in a better, stronger, more growing America. That's what this is. But what do we say? Natcher said, remember, if we take care of the health of our people. This undermines the health of our people. It takes away preventive assistance so that women, families, and children can get preventive care, which so many Republicans have said is a more efficient and effective cost-saving way to address the health of our country.

Bill Natcher was right. Bill Natcher was a conservative Democrat from Kentucky who said, if you take care of the health of your people and educate your young people, you will be the strongest Nation on Earth.

This bill goes in the wrong direction trying to do the right thing. Let us reject this bill, and if, in fact, you are for investing in our young people and bringing these interest rates down—which is so absolutely essential—then bring back a bill you know will pass, because you know this bill will not pass.

The President has issued a statement of administration policy that says they will veto this bill because they do not want to undermine the health of women, family, and children while, at the same time, they want to invest in the college education for our country's young people and our future.

Reject this bill. Bring back a new bill, the Courtney bill, which does, in fact, invest in our children and take care of the health of our people.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, as we've noted before, in February, Congress took action to stop a payroll tax increase on millions of working families and to ensure that the tax increase did not add to the deficit. The legislation cut \$5 billion from the prevention fund, and the bill received the support of 149 House Democrats, including Democrat leaders such as Ms. PELOSI, Mr. KILDEE, and Mr. COURTNEY. I guess that the Democrats were in favor of raiding the slush fund before they were against it.

With that, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY), a member of the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4628, the Interest Rate Reduction Act.

I had a nice prepared speech, but in sitting here listening to the debate, I really want to focus in on one specific issue. American students should not be fearful to attend college due to the crushing weight of student loans weighing them down after their graduation.

But as is suggested by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that this preventive care fund reduction would deny access to individuals for these health care screenings, I had the privilege, Mr. Speaker, just yesterday to have a conversation with Secretary Sebelius directly as it relates to this fund. I asked her specifically: Madam Secretary, will the reduction in the preventive fund cause a child to be denied access to a health screening? And by her own admission, she said, "Absolutely not."

As I listen to this debate and I hear the comments from my friends on the other side of the aisle, I'm actually dismayed to hear some of the things that are being said that, quite frankly, by the Secretary's own admission just, quite frankly, aren't true.

I stand today in support of this bill.

I want to also point out that by the Secretary's own admission as well, she acknowledged that, in fact, the President of the United States himself, in his own budget, put reductions to this fund.

The Interest Rate Reduction Act will repeal the slush fund. The \$5.9 billion will be used to offset the cost of maintaining the 1-year extension as we move towards a meaningful response to our young people.

Congress must put Washington politics aside and take action. And it is time to stop piecing together temporary solutions to the problems that exist in our student aid programs.

I fully support the Interest Rate Reduction Act, and I courage my colleagues to join me.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I note that I was at that education meeting and heard the Secretary say very quite clearly that no child who gets an immunization under this program will get an immunization under this program if the fund is eliminated. Mrs. BIGGERT, of course, analyzed the taking a little bit of the money and equating that with taking and wiping out the entire fund.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN).

Mr. WAXMAN. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

The cynicism of the debate today is why Congress is held in such low repute.

We hear Republicans saying that a public health fund is a slush fund. This is a fund set up to keep us healthy, prevent diseases as long as possible, immunize our kids, provide mammography and PAP smears, services to women in need, to find birth defects early on, to help stop smoking, and they call this a slush fund. They're not trying to reduce this fund; their proposal is to eliminate it. The argument from the other side of the aisle is we'll still get those services.

I don't know where we're going to get those services if the fund is eliminated and appropriations are being squeezed down. They call this a slush fund, but they are using it as a slush fund because they took the elimination of this fund to pay for this extension of student loan interest rates.

□ 1110

Then they eliminated this fund so they could use it for their reconciliation to the budget in order to make sure defense is adequately funded, to make sure that their tax cuts are kept in place. They're using it as a slush fund, and they're using the student loan issue to drive their agenda.

I find that very cynical. I find that, in fact, quite repulsive, and I hope we will reject this bill. We're all for, according to the debate, making sure that we maintain the current interest rate for the 7.4 million students depending on these loans, but I don't find much sincerity when we see a proposal coming from the Republican majority to pay for that by cutting out preventive services.

There's got to be a better way to do it. They're not looking for a better way; they're just looking for a way to cover their rear ends.

I urge people to vote against this bill.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS).

Mr. STEARNS. I thank my distinguished colleague, and let me just say to the gentleman from California, who is just getting ready to leave the floor, when he mentioned that Republicans are going to prevent tobacco prevention of our youth today, he and I both know there is a separate program in CDC just for tobacco prevention and, in fact, in this so-called PPHF, which all of us have called a slush fund, which is the prevention and public health fund, there is, right now, \$191.685 million for this spending for tobacco prevention. After this bill passes, there would be \$109 million still remaining in this for that smoking and health component of CDC.

I say to the gentleman from Massachusetts and Mr. HOYER of Maryland, I mean, you're yelling fire and there's no fire. I mean, I can go through all these things to show you that your arguments are wrong. The fact that Sebelius, the head of the Health and Human Services, has said publicly—as the gentlelady from Alabama so eloquently pointed out—she, in fact, pointed out that this so-called slush fund is not going to impact what Mr. HOYER says, dealing with women, families, and children.

They bring up Rep. William Natcher. Well, Mr. Natcher says it's very noble, very good, and you constantly use that.

But I'm just going to take you through these different areas where you say that it's going to be unable to provide support for families and women and children.

Cancer prevention and control, which includes breast and cervical cancer screening, it's funded at \$205 million in the FY 2012 budget. The FY13 budget goes up to \$261 million. It goes up almost \$60 million. No prevention funds are being used for free cancer screening, and they will not be affected.

Let's take birth defects and developmental disabilities. In FY 2012, the CDC birth defects program was \$138 million. It's now going to be \$125 million. Again, these funds would continue to receive discretionary funding. Nutrition, physical activity and obesity activities, again, will continue to receive funding, viral hepatitis screening, CDC health care statistics and surveillance, and, lastly, prevention and research center. All of these things, I say to the folks on this side, are going to continue to receive base discretionary funding.

I challenge you, the gentleman from Massachusetts, to point out where in each of the ones I have talked about, all these programs are going to remain in existence.

So how in the world can you come down to the floor and constantly say—

Mr. TIERNEY. Will the gentleman yield? That is an empty challenge.

Mr. STEARNS. But the point is that you folks are not accurately por-

traying what this bill does, so I support H.R. 4628. I agree with Secretary Sebelius, the slush fund will not affect women, families, and children.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK). The time of the gentleman has expired.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to others in the second person.

Mr. TIERNEY. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would have addressed my remarks to the Chair and taken the challenge if it had been anything other than an empty challenge and would have noted that Secretary Sebelius and the administration know clearly that those funds would have been diminished and that thousands of screenings for breast cancer and cervical cancer would have been passed by, hundreds of thousands, in the administration's own analysis on that.

With that, I ask the Chair for the time remaining on both sides, please.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 13 minutes remaining, and the gentlewoman from Illinois has 5¾ minutes remaining.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

Mr. HOLT. I thank the gentleman, who is a pleasure to work with on the Education Committee.

Think of the great moments of American public policy—creation of land grant colleges, the GI Bill, providing student loans—all directed toward increasing access to higher education.

Four years ago, we, the Democrats, lowered interest rates for students to 3.4 percent, saving today's typical student borrower a couple thousand dollars. So 2 days ago, the Speaker, cornered by student outrage, says, well, the majority always intended to keep these rates low.

Well, if the Republicans really cared about keeping student interest rates low, why did their budget double those rates? They voted twice this year, clearly, explicitly, twice, to let rates double and collect \$166 billion more from students so they could preserve tax giveaways for Big Oil.

Now they come and propose canceling preventive health care funding, not preventing cervical cancer, not preventing tobacco-related diseases, not preventing type 2 diabetes, eviscerating the Centers for Disease Control to preserve tax giveaways for Big Oil.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of California. First, let me thank Congressman TIERNEY for yielding and for your tireless leadership on this important issue.

It's clear to me the Republicans are not serious about addressing the stu-

dent loan interest rate hikes with the so-called Interest Rate Reduction Act. Their bill is a wolf in sheep's clothing and would permanently end the prevention and public health fund established by the Affordable Care Act.

This prevention fund is the first mandatory funding stream dedicated to improving public health. It is extremely important in our fight to prevent chronic diseases, HIV, AIDS, and for women's health. This is such a sad and sinister ploy. Instead of pitting student loan relief for middle- and low-income families against critical preventive health services for middle- and low-income families, we should be working towards real solutions.

Instead of paying for subsidies to Big Oil, we should invest in our students, who are our future. This bill jeopardizes, mind you, jeopardizes the health of our Nation. It uses our students as pawns, and it is morally wrong.

I hope we defeat this insincere proposal.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. The Republican majority in this House is involved in a political shell game on this issue. They have voted to eliminate the prevention and public health fund. They voted 2 days ago to end it. Today they want to tell you they are going to take money from it to pay for student loans. You can't end a fund and then talk about taking money to use it.

In addition to that, the gentleman from California a moment ago talked about money in the appropriations bills for these health care programs.

What he doesn't tell you is that the majority in the committees is voting to cut the money for the Centers for Disease Control, for screenings for breast and cervical cancer, for all of these efforts. They are talking out of both sides of their mouths.

This majority passed a budget that has asked families to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, slashes Pell Grants for nearly 10 million college students, allows interest rates on student loans to double in July. After there was an outpouring of concern about the doubling of interest rates, they switched course. This apparent moment of conscience was too good to be true.

□ 1120

Instead of ending oil subsidies and closing corporate tax loopholes, what they now have done is they eliminate—eliminate—the prevention and public health fund. What that fund does is provide crucial health services to all Americans, including women and children.

Women, I'll be brief in this: it is about providing screenings for breast and cervical cancer. My friends, 4,000 women die every year from cervical cancer. Isn't it worth trying to prevent

cervical cancer and not eliminate it? It works to prevent coronary heart disease, the leading killer of women in America. It has the potential to mitigate osteoporosis, arthritis, and mental illness, all conditions which disproportionately affect the women in this Nation.

This fund is about the giving of life. There is a level of hypocrisy on this floor that is staggering. Instead of taking the money from health care for education, a false choice, vote against this bill.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN).

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. The Republicans have taken a 180-degree turn on helping with student loans. The Republican budget said “no,” and in February, Governor Mitt Romney said this:

The right course for America is to make sure that we provide loans to the extent we possibly can at an interest rate that doesn't have the taxpayers having to subsidize people who want to go to school.

Now he and the Republicans here have shifted—shifty indeed. How they are doing so is not only politically expedient, but extremely harmful. They hit health care—health care. They refuse to end a tax break for Big Oil that never should have been given in the first place, even though the Big Five oil companies made more than \$32 billion in the fourth quarter of last year alone. This bill is shameless, and it is shameful. Vote “no.”

Mrs. BIGGERT. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, in my dictionary, a “slush fund” is defined as “a fund for bribing public officials or carrying on corruptive propaganda.” Yet, the Speaker of the House used that term, and the chair of the Education and Labor Committee used that term “slush fund,” to describe the prevention and public health fund, which saves lives by paying for childhood immunizations and screenings for cervical cancer and birth defects.

We are the wealthiest and most powerful nation in the world. I refuse to accept the idea that to solve one problem, we have to create another.

The Democrats proposed righting the Ryan Republican budget wrong by taxing oil company profits. Therefore, their suggestion that we go from 3.4 percent interest to 6.8 can be paid for out of the wealth of oil companies that benefit from our country so tremendously.

Mr. Speaker, I reject the blackmail inherent in H.R. 4628. I don't want anybody to know that it's okay to pit one

group against another, and we cannot undermine health care to pay for education. We have to do the right thing. We have to choose both.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mrs. DAVIS).

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, unless Congress acts, Stafford loan rates will double. I spoke to some students at San Diego State University just the other day who are worried about their day-to-day needs, and they asked us not to play politics with this issue.

New grads should have increased opportunities, not bills they can't pay. A college degree should invite calls from job recruiters, not from collection agencies.

I'm glad that the majority has abruptly changed course by agreeing to stop this interest rate hike. But it is unacceptable that this bill proposes to pay for this by repealing the prevention fund.

The bill creates a choice between funding cancer screenings for a mother or making college more affordable for her daughter. Would you want to be that mother? That sends the wrong message to the American people about our priorities.

I urge my colleagues to support a more equitable solution that promotes the health of the American families and the future of our bright minds.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I would ask the gentleman how many speakers does he have?

Mr. TIERNEY. I have at least five more speakers.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I would continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TIERNEY. At this time, Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CLARKE).

Mr. CLARKE of Michigan. I want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY) for yielding me time.

We've talked about the cost of capping student loan interest rates. Well, I think we should extend the cap for longer than a year, and we don't need to cut people's health care screenings in order to do it. Let's create jobs. That's how we can create the economic revenue.

One of the best ways for us to create jobs is to allow student loan borrowers the ability to pay down on their loans according to their income for 10 years and then making them eligible to have the balance of their student loans, if they owe any, be forgiven.

That's the best economic stimulus. These loans are not just for the benefit of the borrower. It also makes our country stronger. The more our people are trained and educated, we can sell the best products overseas and create the best technology. That creates jobs for this country.

It's in our national interest to help pay down these debts and forgive cer-

tain student loans. Let's redirect some of our money from Afghanistan and Iraq and use the savings to forgive student loans.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I continue to reserve the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

Mr. ENGEL. Well, once again, the Republican leadership has shown that it's more interested in playing political games than it is in getting things done.

We're talking about student loans here. We should be putting our heads together and coming up with a better way to pay for lowering student loan rates, not eviscerating health care prevention. This is nothing more than a cynical ploy.

The American people want us to work together. We have an opportunity to do this. This is what we really should be doing. There are lots of loopholes that we could close. My colleagues have mentioned Big Oil and Big Gas. We could close those loopholes. We have corporations making lots of money. We could close those loopholes. But what do the Republicans decide to do? They decide to hurt health benefits. They decide to hurt prevention benefits.

This is not the way we should be going. We need to put our heads together and help these students. The Democrats have said time and time again that this is our priority. We have voted against Republican budgets that raise the amount that students have to pay in loans. Stop playing your cynical games, and let's get to work for the American people. Let's put our heads together, let's help these students, and let's not eviscerate health prevention.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I'd like to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. PETERS).

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4628, a misguided, deeply partisan bill which would cut \$6 billion from the prevention and public health fund. For months, I have been proud to help lead the charge to prevent student loan rates from doubling on July 1. So please excuse my surprise when I hear the majority talk about their strong support for keeping college loans affordable. This is a position that they have repeatedly rejected.

Apparently, Republicans have no interest in trying to prevent serious diseases. Surely, if Republicans can ram a \$46 billion tax cut to millionaires and billionaires, they can find a way to pay for both education and health care.

I urge my colleagues to vote for defeat of this bill, stop protecting tax giveaways to Big Oil, and pass a responsible bill to stop the doubling of student loan rates.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to enter into the RECORD several documents. One is from

the American Council on Education, representing 37 education associations. They say:

Education has never been as important to America's economic health as it is now. That is why we are encouraged by the proposals we have seen. The administration and both parties have expressed their strong support for keeping the interest rate at 3.4 percent without cutting other forms of student aid.

Another one is from Lewis University in Illinois, saying that:

Doubling the interest in the subsidized Stafford loans will discourage students in need who are striving to continue their degree studies during these difficult economic times. Thank you for your support for these students.

□ 1130

Finally, from Joliet Junior College, saying that the college serves a population of seven counties in Illinois.

In the 2010-2011 school year, JJC students were awarded over \$23 million in total financial aid. Because of this, the institution supports H.R. 4628, legislation that would prevent the scheduled rate hike.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

APRIL 27, 2012.

KELLY ROHDER,

Director of Communications and External Relations, Joliet Junior College, Joliet, IL.

Joliet Junior College is a comprehensive community college that not only helps students transfer to complete their bachelor's degrees, but provides occupational education leading directly to employment, adult education and literacy programs, and workforce development services.

We serve the populations of seven counties that cover a 1,442-square-mile district. While the principal mission of a community college is to be a resource to the populations it serves, access to quality education is equally important. In the 2010-2011 school year, JJC students were awarded over \$23 million in total financial aid. Because of this, the institution supports H.R. 4628, legislation that would prevent the scheduled rate hike on certain federal student loans and extend lower rates for an additional year. It is our goal to help students—whatever their educational goals are—be successful in achieving them.

DEBRA S. DANIELS, Ed.D.,

*President,
Joliet Junior College.*

LEWIS UNIVERSITY,
Romeoville, IL, April 26, 2012.

Hon. JUDY BIGGERT,
Willowbrook, IL.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN BIGGERT: I am writing today to support your efforts to avert the automatic doubling of interest rates on subsidized Stafford loans that will occur on July 1, 2012 as the expiration date approaches for legislation that was approved in 2007 to fix the interest rate on these loans through June 30, 2012. You are to be commended for taking action to extend the rate through June 30, 2013 to protect students from another increase in costs that might discourage some from pursuing higher education. If the 2007 legislation is allowed to expire, the interest rate will increase from 3.4% to 6.8%, an increase that seems unconscionable in today's struggling economy.

You are to be commended for your leadership in promoting affordability and access to higher education throughout your career in the U.S. House of Representatives. Much appreciation for your leadership in introducing

House Bill 4628, the Interest Rate Reduction Act, to extend the 3.4% rate for one more year. According to news reports, President Barack Obama supports freezing the interest rate for an additional year and the likely Republican nominee in this year's Presidential election, Governor Mitt Romney, also opposes an increase for the interest rate.

An educated workforce is essential in current efforts to restore and maintain economic stability and assure a bright future for our nation. You have been far-sighted in your support of students at public and private colleges and universities across the country. Doubling the interest in the subsidized Stafford loans will discourage students in need who are striving to continue their degree studies during these difficult economic times. Thank you for your support for these students. I appreciate your efforts, your leadership and your continuing support for quality higher education.

Sincerely,

BROTHER JAMES GAFFNEY, FSC,
President.

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION,
Washington, DC, April 26, 2012.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: I write on behalf of the higher education associations listed below to express our strong support for enacting legislation to maintain the subsidized Stafford student loan interest rate at 3.4 percent. Allowing this rate to double, as it is scheduled to do on July 1st, would impose significant additional costs on more than 7.4 million students and their families.

We are very encouraged by the bipartisan interest in preventing the rate from rising to 6.8 percent in just over two months time. With interest rates on many consumer loans available at rates below 3.4 percent, raising student loan interest rates to 6.8 percent in this environment makes little sense and would create considerable hardship for students and their families. We particularly appreciate the effort made by Democrats and Republicans in both chambers to seek offsets from outside of student financial aid. In recent years, a number of benefits within the student loan programs have been eliminated in order to pay for other programs or to contribute to deficit reduction. Through a combination of reductions or eliminations of other student aid programs, we have witnessed an increased financial burden on our students.

Education has never been as important to America's economic health as it is now. That is why we are encouraged by the proposals we have seen. The administration and both parties have expressed their strong support for keeping the interest rate at 3.4 percent without cutting other forms of student aid. We urge Congress to continue their work and produce a final bill with bipartisan support.

Sincerely,

MOLLY CORBETT BROAD,
President.

On behalf of:
ACPA—College Student Educators International
ACT, Inc.
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Association of University Professors
American Dental Education Association
American Indian Higher Education Consortium

APPA, "Leadership in Educational Facilities"

Association of American Colleges and Universities

Association of American Law Schools

Association of American Universities

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

Association of Community College Trustees

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Association of Research Libraries

College Board

Council for Christian Colleges & Universities

Council for Opportunity in Education

Council of Graduate Schools

Council of Independent Colleges

Educational Testing Service

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

NAFSA: Association of International Educators

NASPA—Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

National Association for College Admission Counseling

National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education

National Association of College and University Business Officers

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

National Collegiate Athletic Association

Thurgood Marshall College Fund

UNCF

University Professional & Continuing Education Association

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH).

Mr. WELCH. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, last week, the Republican majority was adamantly opposed to this legislation. This week, we're rushing it through on the floor today. You know what? That's a good thing. We're on the same page. The majority and the minority want to preserve student loan interest rates at 3.4 percent, not let them double to 6.8 percent.

So if that is the case, why are we selecting mutually unacceptable ways to pay for this? It's as though we're resorting to the trick bags: you raid the health fund that's so important to us; we present the oil company provision that is so unacceptable to you.

What we should do is find a way to put some limits, some incentives to keep tuition increases at or below the rate of inflation. They were up, 8.4 percent. If we work together, that would be a double win for students and parents. We could keep those interest rates low, and we could start bringing down the escalation in tuition increases that are unacceptable.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN).

(Mr. LANGEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LANGEVIN. I'd like to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding, and for his outstanding leadership on this issue and so many other issues in education.

Mr. Speaker, we obviously absolutely cannot allow the interest rate on student loans to more than double. I rise in opposition to H.R. 4628.

While Congress must prevent the Stafford loan interest rate from doubling to 6.8 percent, it is unconscionable that the Republican leadership is forcing us to choose between education and health care. Too many students face unnecessary barriers to pursuing a college degree, and it is our responsibility to empower them by investing in their education and health.

Republicans are putting us in the untenable position of paying for this measure by gutting the prevention and public health fund, the sole purpose of which is to reduce chronic conditions that are driving up the cost of health care in the first place.

Now, instead of sacrificing our public health to score political points, we need to work together to ensure our students can pursue their dreams without the burdens of unnecessary costs and debt.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill.

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

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield the remaining time on this side to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank my friend from Massachusetts.

Just a few weeks ago on this very floor, our Republican colleagues voted for the Republican budget that called for a doubling of interest rates on student loans on 7 million American students, and they voted against the Democratic alternative budget, which would have prevented that increase in student loan interest rates.

So what's happened over the last couple weeks? Well, President Obama has gone to the country. He has gone to students and he's told the story about what the Republican budget would do, and so we are here today.

But make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, our Republican colleagues haven't changed their minds about this; they've changed their tactics. If they really wanted to prevent student loans from increasing, they wouldn't seek to cover the costs by cutting funds for cervical cancer screening, by cutting funds for breast cancer screening, by cutting other women's health care measures. They wouldn't push a measure the President has already said he would veto.

Mr. Speaker, we have a proposal. Let's cover the cost by getting rid of the subsidies for Big Oil companies. That's the real slush fund around here. The big taxpayer subsidies go for that purpose. Let's get the job done, and let's not play political games.

Unfortunately, what we're seeing here, Mr. Speaker, is an effort to seek

political cover. Let's get the job done for real.

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

It seems like we came in, and I think the first thing that I talked about here is how I hoped that we would be able to work together on a bipartisan basis. It just seems like this is so hard to do in this political time. I really think that, in major legislation, we really have to work together to find the solutions, but it seems like the other side is always ready to tell us what we think and what we are doing and why we are doing it. We are doing this because we really want to have our students have the ability to have a quality education, and it just seems like we're so different on the pay-fors.

I know that everybody agrees on the program itself and how we have to do it, but we can't seem to do anything without giving us a cynical view, and it bothers me. It seems like when we were talking about the pay-fors, the other side of the aisle's first reaction is to raise taxes for everything and ours has always been to reduce spending, and we think that this is the way to go. I think we have just got to find a way to get together.

I had said in my opening statement that I hoped that we would be able to get together and work together, and also the Senate. I hope that when this bill goes over to the Senate that there is a negotiation, that there is a conference so that we really can iron this out and make sure that there is not a raising to the 6.8 percent.

It kind of makes you wonder. It just seems like the political maneuvering certainly is continuing on the student loan issue. I guess today when we have this vote, we'll see what happens. But I really hope that we get to the Senate so that we have the opportunity to do this.

I just want to go back a little bit to what happened in the Education Committee yesterday that Mrs. ROBY talked about and so did Mr. TIERNEY. I think Secretary Sebelius did say that there were services outside the prevention and public health fund that will remain available to individuals who seek preventive care, such as cancer prevention and care, including breast and cervical cancer screenings, screenings for birth defects and developmental disabilities, tobacco prevention at the CDC, and efforts that promote healthy nutrition and physical activity to prevent obesity.

□ 1140

So I think that this really is a lot that we believe in for prevention. And we heard from Mr. STEARNS all of the appropriations and how that takes care of a lot of the prevention issues.

I think that the American people are really very knowledgeable now about prevention and what they need to do and have the ability to do this on their own as well.

This political bickering is not what the bill is all about. What the bill is all about is to reduce to 3.4 percent interest rates on the subsidized Stafford loans. And I hope that this bill will pass. I urge my colleagues to vote for it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, House Republicans have demonstrated their complete disregard and contempt for women's health and the plight of students by forcing a choice between the elimination of funding for the Prevention and Public Health Fund or relief for students who are saddled with student loan debt.

That is a choice that we shouldn't and don't have make. It is cruel and destructive, it is anti-family, it is not smart economically, and it is completely unnecessary.

As a mother and a grandmother, I simply cannot understand why Congressional Republicans continue their assault on women's health. I cannot understand why they prefer to reduce access to cancer screenings and immunizations rather than asking Big Oil to give up their subsidies. I cannot understand why they are trying to force us to choose between keeping moms healthy or sending their children to college.

If we want to revitalize our economy and unburden Americans who are saddled with student loan debt, we must enact policies that help to cut that debt. Democrats have been demanding action on student loans for months—and finally, Republicans have agreed to do something.

But at what cost? By putting the health of women and children at risk. The Prevention and Public Health Fund supports proven prevention activities like breast and cervical cancer screenings. It helps provide immunizations for children. It will save lives and keep women well. Republicans are telling us that we have to choose between protecting women's and children's health or letting student loan rates double.

Republicans are trying to label the Prevention Fund as a slush fund. Americans know that mammograms and Pap smears are not "slush"—they are basic, routine—and often life-saving—services for women. Prevention is fundamental. It is the key to reducing health care costs and creating a long-term path to a healthier and economically sound America. Cutting prevention programs like breast and cervical cancer screening now will only lead to increased health costs down the road.

In fact, the data proves that we should be increasing our investment in early detection through screening and working to increase awareness about these diseases. The National Health Interview Survey from 2010 found that women are getting screened for breast and cervical cancers at rates below national standards.

The breast cancer screening rate was 72 percent in 2010, below the federal health target of 81 percent. The cervical cancer screening rates were 83 percent, below the 93 percent goal. The screening rates for both cancers were significantly lower among Asian and Hispanic and women, as well as those without health insurance or no usual source of health care.

In the United States in 2012, it is estimated that there will be 226,870 new cases of invasive breast cancer, and nearly 40,000

women will die from the disease; an estimated 12,000 women will be diagnosed with cervical cancer, and over 4,000 women will die from cervical cancer.

Earlier this week, Republicans on the Energy and Commerce Committee approved over \$97 billion in cuts to public health programs to insulate the Department of Defense from spending cuts triggered by the failure of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. Among the suggested cuts was the complete elimination of funding for the Prevention and Public Health Fund. I offered an amendment to preserve support under the Fund for breast and cervical cancer screening programs and other women's health preventive services. My amendment was defeated along party lines.

Republicans could ask millionaires and billionaires, oil and gas companies making record profits, and corporations that shift jobs and profits overseas to help offset the cost of reducing student loan interest rates. Instead, they have decided to continue with their repeated war on women's health by eliminating funding for the public health programs that benefit women—to reduce the costs for their sons and daughters to attend college.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in opposition to H.R. 4628. This bill forces an unnecessary and immoral choice between students' education and the health care of women, children, and seniors.

Since January, President Obama and the Democratic Members of Congress have urged Republicans to address the pending increase in student loan interest rates. Over the last month, many Republicans have stated that they had no qualms about the additional borrowing costs. In fact, they spoke loudly with their votes in support of the Ryan Budget just last month, which would double student loan interest rates.

Republicans are not working in good faith to help students and their families, but are rather using this situation to continue their efforts to defund programs that provide critical illness prevention and wellness screening. Cutting the Prevention and Public Health Fund will have a disproportionate impact on America's women and children. Defunding this program means stripping away vital funding for cancer detection, childhood immunizations, and screening newborns for birth defects. The GOP repeal of the Prevention and Public Health Fund is opposed by nearly 800 organizations, including the American Lung Association, American Heart Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs.

In 2007, Democrats in Congress provided relief to students from high interest rates on need-based loans. We passed the College Cost Reduction and Access Act that lowered interest rates on subsidized Stafford Loans each year until they reached a low of 3.4 percent this past year. Since then, 15 million students have benefitted from lower rates. Unfortunately, without Republican action in the House and action in the Senate, those rates are set to double on July 1st from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent.

The doubling of loan rates will hit students at a time when they can least afford it. In the current weak economy, young Americans have the highest unemployment rate of any other group. Two-thirds of the Class of 2010

graduated with an average of student loan debt of \$25,000.

Congress should not be building more hurdles for young people to get the education and the skills needed to succeed. We should be facilitating the ability of students to pursue higher education and training. Every year Congress does not act, it will cost a student borrower \$1,000 in additional repayment costs, and failure to act now will add \$6.3 billion to students' debt burden in one year alone.

Mr. Speaker, it is stop playing politics with American's students and the health care of women, children, and seniors. I urge the passage legislation maintaining the current student loan rate that does not undermine the access to health care that would affect millions of Americans.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this sham Republican bill that would eliminate a vital component of ObamaCare—the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF)—in a blatantly political attempt to avoid being blamed for allowing interest rates on student loans to double on 7 million Americans.

Just one month ago, nearly the entire Republican caucus voted for the Ryan Budget. This budget included a provision allowing the current 3.4 percent interest rate on federal student loans to double on July 1. Now, in response to intense political pressure, Republicans have done a complete 180 and claim they do not want to cost college students and their families an extra \$1,000 a year by letting the rate hike take effect. While I welcome them to the party, the Republican bill, hastily rushed to the floor under a completely closed process, contains a poison pill. In order to pay for this legislation, they are continuing their assault on health reform in general and women's health in particular. The PPHF has already been used to improve prevention services in low-income and underserved communities, including vaccinating children and intervening to prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes. Eliminating this fund will also mean that hundreds of thousands of women will lose access to screenings for breast and cervical cancers. This will cost lives and is completely unacceptable.

There is a better way. Earlier this week, I helped to introduce the Stop the Rate Hike Act. This bill would keep interest rates on student loans low. However, it would pay for the fix, not by taking away health care, but by ending egregious tax breaks for big oil companies. The Democratic bill would not only keep college within reach for millions of middle class families, it would also restore some sanity to our tax code. That is the bill we should be voting on today. I urge all of my colleges to vote to protect our nation's health and oppose the sham "Interest Rate Reduction Act."

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor of H.R. 3826, a bill that would prevent a sharp increase in interest rates on Direct Stafford Student loans beginning in July, I am very much opposed to playing politics with this important issue.

I do not believe we need to choose between cutting funds that provide much needed preventive health services and making college more affordable. I cannot understand the mentality that flirts with the idea of raising college costs and limiting access to health care for working middle-class families, while instinctively recoiling at the idea of closing tax loop-

holes for multinational conglomerates and the wealthiest Americans.

This is exactly what infuriates the American public and why Congressional approval ratings are at record lows. I understand it's an election year and each side wants to score points at the other side's expense but every time we get into one of these debates with competing proposals we know will split the Congress and lead to gridlock, it chips away at the credibility of the institution. We must find a way to summon the will to get beyond the temptation to take cheap shots at the other side and put the interests of the American people first.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I submit the attached letters of opposition to H.R. 4628.

AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION,

April 26, 2012.

Tomorrow, Friday, April 27, your Representative will cast a vote that will impact the future of programs that improve public health and prevent diabetes.

Take action now to protect vital public health and prevention programs!

The Prevention and Public Health Fund was established in 2010 as a national investment in prevention and public health programs over ten years. It is from this fund that the National Diabetes Prevention Program received its initial funding. But Members of Congress will be voting tomorrow on whether to fully repeal this vital fund, gutting efforts to prevent diabetes and improve our nation's overall health!

We need to make sure diabetes programs and prevention efforts don't get slashed. Tell your legislators RIGHT NOW to oppose HR 4628!

Nearly 26 million Americans have diabetes and another 79 million are on the brink of developing the disease. Prediabetes, diabetes and its complications already cost the nation an estimated \$218 billion annually and this cost is expected to grow. If current trends continue, by the year 2050 one in three American adults will have diabetes. Diabetes prevention is an example of an effort that can save both lives and money. If brought to scale, it is estimated that the NDPP will save \$191 billion in health care costs over ten years! The Prevention and Public Health Fund is a critical source of potential funding for the NDPP.

Take this chance to make your voice heard and tell your Representative to oppose any efforts to eliminate the Prevention and Public Health Fund!

Sincerely,

L. HUNTER LIMBAUGH,
Chair of the Board,
American Diabetes Association.

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP
FOR WOMEN & FAMILIES,
April 26, 2012.

Hon. ROSA DELAURO,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE DELAURO: We are writing to strongly urge you to protect women's access to important preventive health benefits by opposing H.R. 4628. This legislation would eliminate the Prevention and Public Health Trust Fund and rescind all unobligated funds. The National Partnership for Women & Families represents women across the country—and in your district—who are counting on critical prevention services that would be lost if this funding were eliminated.

The Prevention and Public Health Trust Fund (PPHTF) was created by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to ensure adequate funding for preventive health initiatives. These initiatives help to improve the health of lower

and middle income women and families and, by improving health, also help to lower health care spending over time. And what makes the PPHTF so unique is that it works in partnership with states and communities. Already there are several key initiatives funded by the Prevention and Public Health Trust Fund that are benefitting women including:

Chronic Disease Prevention: to enable communities to use evidence-based interventions to reduce chronic conditions and prevent heart attacks, diabetes, strokes, cancer, and other conditions that impact women.

Obesity Prevention and Fitness: to improve nutrition and increase physical activity to reduce obesity-related conditions and health care costs. Reducing obesity rates (BMI) by 5% nation-wide could save almost \$30 billion in health costs within 5 years.

Expanded Immunization Services: to provide critical immunizations. Every dollar spent on childhood immunizations saves \$16 in costs to treat preventable illness.

Behavioral Health Screening and Integration with Primary Health: to help communities integrate primary care services into publicly funded community mental health and other community-based behavioral health settings and expand suicide prevention activities and screenings for substance use disorders.

HIV/AIDS Prevention: to focus on HIV prevention in high risk populations and communities by increasing HIV testing opportunities, linking HIV-infected women with needed services including preventing maternal child transmission, and filling critical gaps in data and understanding of the HIV epidemic to better target prevention, care, and treatment.

Women in communities across the country are already beginning to benefit from the initiatives funded by the Prevention Trust Fund.

To eliminate funding for programs that not only improve the health and lives of millions of women but also have the potential for improving population health and lowering health care spending over time is not fiscally prudent.

We strongly urge you to support the women and families in your district and oppose H.R. 4628.

Sincerely,

DEBRA L. NESS,
President.

NEMOURS,
April 23, 2012.

Hon. HENRY WAXMAN,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy & Commerce, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR RANKING MEMBER WAXMAN: As the House votes on H.R. 4628, the Interest Rate Reduction Act, Nemours—an integrated child health system in the Delaware Valley and Florida—would like to express its opposition to the repeal of, or any additional cuts to, the Prevention and Public Health Fund (Fund). While Nemours has no objection to extending student loan interest rates, we oppose offsetting this provision with the Prevention and Public Health Fund. Further cuts to the Fund will only hurt investments already made in wellness, prevention, and public health programs. We need to stop continually sacrificing the Fund for other priorities.

Experts have warned that this could be the first generation of children who live shorter, less healthy lives than their parents. As a foundation operating an integrated health system, we have a unique perspective on the threat that preventable chronic diseases are posing to the health of America's children. We believe our country has the opportunity

to invest in our children by promoting health and disease prevention through the Fund. Already, the Fund has made important investments in obesity prevention, tobacco control, and other health priorities. Every attempt to diminish the Fund compromises our ability to protect and promote the health of our children, which is our mission at Nemours.

With Americans spending more each year on health care, the Fund represents an important investment in a slower cost growth for our health care system and America's economy overall. By partaking in preventive and wellness initiatives early in their lives, more Americans will be able to remain healthy, preventing unnecessary hospitalizations later in life. However, in order to do this, our nation needs to fundamentally realign its health care spending. We need to invest more at the front end to maintain people's health, as opposed to focusing our scarce resources on treatment at the back end. The Fund helps to achieve this goal, and any attempt to diminish the Fund will compromise our ability to ensure the health and well-being of our nation and economy.

We urge you to stand with our nation's children and fight to safeguard the Prevention and Public Health Fund and oppose all efforts to siphon away this investment.

Sincerely,

DEBBIE I. CHANG,
VICE PRESIDENT,
Policy and Prevention.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I hereby submit the attached letters of opposition to H.R. 4628.

CONGRESS MUST NOT ELIMINATE PREVENTION
AND PUBLIC HEALTH FUND
STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN LUNG
ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON.—Some in Congress are trying to force the nation to choose between health and education. The House of Representatives is poised to vote on a measure to eliminate the lifesaving Prevention and Public Health Fund to pay for keeping student loan rates down. The American Lung Association fiercely opposes any attempts to divert or cut the Prevention Fund. The Affordable Care Act established the Prevention Fund to promote wellness, to prevent disease, and to protect against public health emergencies.

America should not have to choose between protecting the health of its citizens and making higher education more affordable. Congress must reject this ill-conceived approach. The student loan interest rate issue can and must be resolved without undermining the health of millions of Americans.

The Prevention Fund is already helping Americans across the country to make healthier choices and to take responsibility for their own health and the health of their families. Because of the Prevention Fund, states and communities are now able to help more people quit smoking through cessation programs and improve lung health by preventing and treating lung diseases, including COPD, lung cancer, and asthma. It is also allowing states and communities to monitor outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as influenza, and enhance prevention services in low-income and underserved communities.

Quitting smoking is the single most important thing a smoker can do to improve their health status. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Tips from Former Smokers media campaign, which was underwritten by the Prevention Fund, has already resulted in tens of thousands of additional calls to 1-800-QUIT NOW by smokers seeking help with quitting. This is tangible evidence of the Prevention Fund having a positive impact.

Prevention programs work. Prevention save lives and helps keep people healthy. Congress must not play politics with our nation's health. The American Lung Association strongly urges Congress to reject this absurd choice.

ERIKA SWARD,
Director, National Advocacy.

APRIL 27, 2012.

Hon. GEORGE MILLER,
House of Representatives, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN MILLER: Interest rates on new subsidized Stafford student loans will double to 6.8 percent beginning July 1 unless Congress extends a cap that has helped make the loans more affordable for millions of Americans. This cap was enacted through bipartisan legislation approved by Congress in 2007.

As the House votes today on legislation to extend this cap for one year, we are grateful that the issue is getting attention and support from members of both parties.

Many students and parents are struggling to keep up with the runaway costs of paying for college. This is not the time to pile thousands of dollars in additional debt on their backs by allowing student loan interest rates to double.

If Congress fails to extend the cap, an estimated 7.4 million borrowers will face higher interest rates. Two-thirds of all college students now graduate with student loan debt, compared to just one-third a decade ago. On average, these students graduate with \$25,000 in debt. At over \$1 trillion, student loan debt now tops what Americans owe on their credit cards.

As a consumer organization, we are deeply troubled by the idea of paying for this extension by cutting funds from a prevention and public health fund that is designed to help consumers get life-saving cancer screenings and child immunizations. The alternative proposal to cut federal subsidies for oil and gas companies, which have collected record-breaking profits, appears to be a more equitable solution.

We urge lawmakers to come together to develop a path forward on the funding mechanism so that students can afford the education they need to stay competitive in today's tough job market. Congress should invest in our future by extending the interest rate cap.

Sincerely,
PAMELA BANKS,
Senior Policy Counsel, Consumers Union.
IOANA RUSU,
Regulatory Counsel, Consumers Union.

CONGRESS MUST FIND A TRULY BIPARTISAN
SOLUTION TO KEEP STUDENT LOAN RATE
FROM DOUBLING

WASHINGTON, DC.—Today, Campus Progress Action is calling on Congress to set aside its partisan differences, come together, and stop the interest rate on the subsidized Stafford student loans from doubling July 1.

Anne Johnson, director of Campus Progress Action, said: "While we are pleased that the Republican leadership in the House has moved swiftly to bring a bill to a vote, their proposal to pay for the extension of the current interest rate by cutting preventive health care is destructive and shows a lack of serious leadership. This is not a bipartisan solution."

"If Congress fails to act" Johnson continued, "being able to afford college will be even harder for millions of American families. An extra \$1,000 will add to the burden of already skyrocketing tuition. That money could be used to help a young graduate move out, pay rent, buy food, pay for a car, and other important expenses."

Campus Progress Action is urging members to vote no on H.R. 4628 and work to find a bipartisan way to pay for maintaining low interest rates for students without impacting other vital programs.

The nearly 7.5 million students who will be impacted if Congress does not take action are hard at work on campuses around the country as they earn their degrees. Congress should be working just as hard to make sure we don't let them down.

TRUST FOR AMERICA'S HEALTH,
Washington, DC, April 26, 2012.

DEAR MEMBER OF CONGRESS: On behalf of the Trust for America's Health, I urge you to oppose the use of the Prevention and Public Health Fund (Fund) as an offset for the Interest Rate Reduction Act (H.R. 4628). Repealing the Fund, which has already suffered a significant cut, would compromise our ability to make progress on cost containment, public health modernization, and wellness promotion. Please oppose this measure and instead look to a solution that will not penalize middle-class Americans.

Two years ago, in creating the Fund, the federal government made a historic investment in the future by focusing on keeping soaring health care costs under control, while at the same time, helping those who wanted to be healthy get or stay healthy. The Fund is our first sustained national investment in prevention, and is essential to efforts to reduce the growth of chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes, which are the primary drivers in the increase in health costs.

To date, the Fund has provided resources to support evidence-based strategies at the community level that help people get healthy and achieve significant gains such as reducing average body mass index (BMI). A recent TFAH study finds that if the country ignores the obesity epidemic, obesity rates could be expected to grow from 32 percent to 50-51 percent for men and from 35 percent to 45-52 percent for women by 2030. In under two decades, the majority of our country could be not just overweight but obese. Yet, according to the same TFAH analysis, if we reduce the average BMI by just five percent, the country could save nearly \$30 billion in health care savings in just five years.

However, if the country keeps using investments in the future to cover these short-term "fixes," our children will continue to be penalized and, for the first time ever, there's a significant chance that a generation will live shorter and less healthy lives than the previous generation.

The Fund was designed to invest in innovative programs that will help make healthy choices the easy choices for Americans, and help curtail rising health care costs. It has received wide backing since it was created: 760 national, state and local organizations, representing a broad spectrum of sectors, have pledged their support for the Fund. Any cuts to the Prevention Fund guarantee the country will now be paying more for obesity-related health costs over the next ten years and Americans will be less healthy, productive and happy.

Prevention is the key to lowering health care costs and creating a long-term path to a healthier and economically sound America, and the Prevention Fund is an essential part in bringing communities together on innovative projects that will help us reverse the obesity epidemic and realize these cost savings. I urge you to reject any proposal to repeal or cut the Prevention and Public Health Fund.

Sincerely,

JEFFREY LEVI, PH.D.,
Executive Director.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I hereby submit the attached letters of opposition to H.R. 4628.

HOUSE GOP STUDENT INTEREST RATE BILL
OFFERS YOUNG ADULTS A CHOICE: YOUR
HEALTH OR AN AFFORDABLE EDUCATION?

Yesterday, House Republicans announced support for preventing interest rate hikes on subsidized Stafford Loans from doubling on July 1st, joining the Administration and House and Senate Democrats who have already stated a commitment to keeping rates down. On Friday, the House Republicans will call for a vote on their bill introduced yesterday to extend the lower interest rates. However, the bill pays for this extension by eliminating a multi-billion dollar health care prevention fund for life-saving cancer screenings and child immunizations. These cuts would have a negative impact on the health of children, young adults, and families. "Keeping interest rates from doubling is a priority, and we are thrilled to see policymakers from both sides of the aisle support college affordability and take steps to keep student debt from increasing even further," said Jennifer Mishory, deputy director of Young Invincibles. "However, pitting the interest rate freeze against health care prevention calls for a false choice between staying healthy and getting a shot at an affordable education." The House Republican bill would cut the Public Health and Prevention Fund, which next year is set to provide funding for childhood immunizations and cancer control programs, including breast and cervical cancer screening. Mishory added, "About 15% of young adults have a chronic disease. Since when does this generation have to choose between a stable economic future and a healthy one?" Effective cancer screening and early and sustained treatment could reduce the cancer death rate by 29%. Moreover, just as 92 percent of young Democrats and 78 percent of young Republicans say that making college loans affordable will help the economy, sufficient investment in prevention has positive economic impact. Research shows that every dollar spent on immunizations could save \$5.30 on direct health care costs and \$16.50 on total societal costs. You can view a recent Young Invincibles report on the Stafford interest rate issue at the link below: http://younginvincibles.org/News/releases/student_loan_interest_rates.pdf.

For background on the cost of college and the rise in student debt, please visit: http://www.younginvincibles.org/News/releases/student_debt_onepager_apr12012.pdf.

DON'T PLAY POLITICS WITH STUDENT LOAN HIKE

WASHINGTON, DC.—Victor Sanchez, President of the United States Student Association, issued the following statement on the recent flood of legislation to address the fast approaching student interest rate hike.

"Students respond to Republican lip service with a unified response: 'Don't play politics with my student loans.'"

"We are thrilled to see President Obama and Congressional leaders of both parties working to prevent 7.4 million students from taking on an additional \$1000 of debt for each new student loan they borrow," said Victor Sanchez, President of the United States Student Association."

"This week House and Senate members from both parties introduced contrasting proposals to pay for legislation that will keep student loan interest rates from doubling to 6.8% on July 1st. Amongst the proposals, House Speaker Boehner announced a vote this Friday on Rep. Biggert's bill, which would cut funding for the Prevention and Public Health Fund in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to pay for the investment."

"Speaker Boehner believes that the best way to pay for the extension of the 3.4% interest rate on subsidized Stafford loans is by taking funding from an important program that supports efforts to prevent disease and protect against health emergencies in the ACA. In contrast Democrats, who have led on this critical issue, put forth a plan that closes tax loopholes that allow wealthy individuals to avoid paying the same income taxes that middle-class Americans pay."

"The United States Student Association is happy that both parties have prioritized extending the current student loan interest rate, but students know that the fight to make education affordable and attainable has not yet been won. Students should not have to choose between their health care and an affordable education, which is what Speaker Boehner's proposal would force them to do."

"Over the past few months students have been organizing tremendously to put student loan debt and the subsidized Stafford loan hike at the forefront of the national dialogue by coordinating national days of actions and confronting members of Congress on the issue. Students cannot allow this important investment in our education to become the victim of Washington partisan gridlock."

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY,
CANCER ACTION NETWORK,
Washington, DC, April 26, 2012.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) strongly opposes any legislation that would cut prevention and public health funding for any purpose, including offsetting the cost of student loan programs. Reducing funding intended for prevention of disease makes no sense from a public health standpoint and furthermore will increase overall health care expenditures in the long run.

Half of the estimated 577,000 deaths that will occur from cancer this year could have been prevented by eliminating tobacco use, encouraging better diet and exercise, and giving all Americans access to cancer screening and preventive medicine. Tobacco use alone kills half a million Americans every year. Another 188,000 deaths from cancer are due to poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and obesity-related disease.

Prevention is predicated on the common-sense reality that we as a nation should take steps to resolve health care crises before they begin. It is a fact that diseases we have conquered in the past—polio, smallpox, tuberculosis and others—no longer present the public health risk they once did because of the work we still do to prevent them from occurring. In much the same way, prevention is the real cure for cancer.

Today, the Prevention and Public Health Fund is being used to save lives by addressing the greatest modifiable cancer risk factors: tobacco use, poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and obesity. For example, in Alabama, funding is being used to educate and help women access life-saving preventive services such as mammograms and Pap tests. In New York state, funding is being used to achieve four strategic objectives: tobacco-free living; active and healthy eating; high-impact evidence-based clinical and other preventive services; and creating healthy and safe physical environments. In Texas, funding is being used to improve the health care workforce and ensure that residents have access to evidence-based services including tobacco quitlines and cancer screenings. Dollars provided by the fund are supporting projects like these in each of the 50 states. This is the kind of work that will transform our health system, allowing the nation to control costs and improve health outcomes—something we all want to accomplish.

Voting to cut prevention funding is a vote in support of more chronic disease. Accordingly, we urge you not to cut the Prevention and Public Health Fund further, and help to save lives in the process. Thank you so much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER W. HANSEN,
President.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I submit the attached letters of opposition to H.R. 4628.

A UNION OF PROFESSIONALS,
April 26, 2012.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the more than 1.5 million members of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), I urge you to vote "no" on H.R. 4628, the Interest Rate Reduction Act.

As you know, on July 1, interest rates on federal subsidized Stafford student loans will double from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent. This increase will affect 7.4 million low- and middle-income students, having a lasting impact on the long-term costs of their loans and on their future life decisions, like buying a home, owning a business or starting a family.

College students are graduating with record levels of debt. In fact, national student debt has surpassed our nation's credit card debt, and with the high levels of unemployment and underemployment for graduates, there could hardly be a worse time for the interest rate on Stafford loans to double.

We are pleased that both parties in the House have now finally acknowledged the need to prevent interest rates from doubling in July. However, there is a right way and a wrong way to pay for the cost of keeping the rates low for one year. Under H.R. 4628, the majority proposes to take billions of dollars from the prevention and public health fund in the Affordable Care Act. This fund helps ensure that women receive affordable and critical preventive healthcare, like breast cancer and cervical cancer screenings that can save their lives and reduce unnecessary medical costs to them and to taxpayers. And the fund supports community health centers, provides child immunizations and helps children with birth defects. Alternatively, the minority supports ending unfair tax loopholes that benefit wealthy individuals and corporations, and then using these savings to prevent loan rates from doubling.

Congress should not rob Peter to pay Paul by using a funding stream geared to help public health and provide preventive healthcare to pay for the loan rate extension. It is unconscionable, when other options are available, to propose that the student loan problem be solved by undercutting the healthcare available to women, children and others most in need of assistance. Instead, the majority should be supporting other ways to pay for this proposal, such as requiring wealthy individuals and corporations to pay their fair share of taxes.

Again, I urge you to vote "no" on H.R. 4628. The House must stop playing politics with students' debt and put forth a serious proposal with responsible and fair offsets.

Thank you for considering our views on this important matter.

Sincerely,

KRISTOR W. COWAN,
Director, Legislation.

ASTHO AND NACCHO,
April 26, 2012.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER AND LEADER PELOSI: We are writing today to oppose efforts to pay for changes in interest rates on student loans using funds from the Prevention and Public Health Fund (the Fund). Tens of millions of Americans suffer from preventable diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer, and today's children are in danger of becoming the first generation to live shorter, less healthy lives than their parents. In order to support the nation's public health system and reduce rising health care treatment costs, the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) strongly support the Prevention and Public Health Fund and oppose any effort to reduce or eliminate the Fund.

As you know, the Fund is a dedicated investment in community prevention and state and local public health capacity and workforce and is a much-needed down payment on the health and economic well-being of all Americans. Federal investment from the Fund has already begun to address improvements in the nation's health status by supporting essential and proven prevention activities, such as immunization and tobacco cessation. Additionally, through the National Public Health Improvement Initiative which is supported through the Fund, states and localities are working to improve the delivery of necessary public health services by accelerating the ability for public health agencies to achieve national performance standards. Public health capacity will be improved and made more efficient through this investment.

Of the more than \$1.7 trillion in healthcare spent nationally every year, less than four cents out of every dollar are spent on prevention and public health. Half of American adults have at least one preventable chronic illness, such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, or arthritis. This has a resounding effect on the productivity of our nation and is taking a huge toll on our economy. Additionally, chronic disease accounts for nearly 70 percent of all U.S. deaths and costs the nation approximately \$1.8 trillion each year in lost productivity and healthcare expenditures. More than 60 percent of American adults are overweight or obese, and this epidemic costs the U.S. \$147 billion annually. Investing in prevention and public health not only saves lives, but it also yields a significant return on investment.

The Fund not only provides innovative ways to fight preventable diseases, it also supports core public health programs such as the Section 317 Immunization program which provides essential immunizations for the nation's under and uninsured children. Significantly reducing the Fund would also cripple state and local health departments' ability to inspect food, prepare for and respond to deadly tornadoes or floods, or track and isolate a disease outbreak. On top of losing programs, state and local health departments have already seen a loss of over 52,000 public health jobs (17 percent of state workforce and 22 percent of local workforce). Due to cuts at the state and local levels, health departments cannot make up for these lost dollars; this puts all Americans' health at risk.

The Fund has already faced a steep reduction this year, losing \$6.25 billion in budget authority to offset the cost of freezing the Medicare sustainable growth rate formula.

Further reducing the Fund now would only exacerbate the strain state and local public health departments are facing. Additionally, unlike the mandatory funds for Medicare and Medicaid, the law creating the Fund explicitly reserves the right of Congress to allocate spending. This provision was purposefully inserted into the law to preserve the ability of the Congress to exercise its judgment in making funding decisions while maintaining this important fiscal commitment to prevention.

Once again, we urge you to oppose efforts to eliminate or reduce the Prevention and Public Health Fund. The nation's comparatively poor health has a high cost in both human and economic terms. Our nation's health department officials strongly oppose any efforts to decrease the federal commitment to prevention and public health.

Sincerely,

PAUL E. JARRIS, MD, MBA,
STHO Executive Director.

ROBERT M. PESTRONK, MPH,
NACCHO Executive Director.

CAMPAIGN FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE

DEAR FRIEND: Here's the real debt crisis: student loan debt. Today, the average student graduates from college with a diploma and an anchor—\$25,000 of debt.

And if Congress doesn't act, student loan interest rates will double on July 1.

Don't let Congress kick new graduates in the teeth. Click here to demand your representatives in Congress stop the student loan rate increase.

President Obama supports keeping the current Stafford Loan interest rate at a low 3.4% rate. His opponent Mitt Romney just reversed his position and said he agrees. This should not be a partisan issue.

Yet the House bill to stop the scheduled rate increase has no Republican sponsors.

The Republican chair of the House education committee says he has "serious concerns" about the bill. And the Republican budget—championed by Paul Ryan and embraced as "marvelous" by Mitt Romney—both calls for deep cuts in Pell grants and assumes that the interest rates on government sponsored student loans will double.

Stop the stonewalling! Click here to demand your representatives in Congress stop the student loan rate increase.

What are the Republican "concerns"? They claim to be opposed to the \$6 billion cost of keeping the rate low.

But jacking up the rate simply shifts that \$6 billion cost onto the next generation of students who are already crushed by debt.

And House Republicans didn't have a problem last week passing a bill with yet another tax break for the rich that would add \$46 billion to the national debt.

It gets worse, the key Republican subcommittee chair recently revealed her ignorance about today's high cost of college. Rep. Virginia Foxx declared she had "very little tolerance" for students with major debt because there is "no reason" to take out big student loans.

Why? Because she worked her way through college 50 years ago . . . when the cost of college was about three times cheaper.

They are playing politics with the futures of our students. It must stop.

Students are not political Pawns! Click here to demand your representatives in Congress stop the student loan rate increase.

Conservatives routinely claim we need severe austerity to save the next generation from massive debt. Yet here they are, about to dump more debt on them right now.

Instead of kicking students when they are down, we should end the student debt crisis. The Federal Reserve lends money to banks

at rates near 0%, why not lend to students at similar rates? Unlike banks, graduates won't use the money to blow up the economy.

We need bold ideas to make college affordable and give every child the tools to thrive in the modern economy.

For example, estimates on what it would cost to give every student free tuition at public colleges are LESS than the cost of Ryan and Romney's pledge to eliminate the estate tax on multi-million dollar fortunes.

Surely it makes more sense to insure that every qualified student can afford the education that he or she has earned than it does to guarantee that the heirs of the wealthy need never work another day in their lives.

We cannot simply protect the status quo. But the absolute last thing our college graduates need right now is to add to the burden of their school debts.

We need to win this fight against the loan rate increase today, and build momentum to win big progressive reforms tomorrow.

Sincerely,

ROBERT L. BOROSAGE,
Co-director,

Campaign for America's Future.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I submit the attached letters of opposition to H.R. 4628.

CAMPAIGN FOR
TOBACCO-FREE KIDS,
Washington, DC, April 26, 2012.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER AND MINORITY LEADER PELOSI: We are writing to express our opposition to eliminating the Prevention and Public Health Fund, a provision in H.R. 4628, the Interest Rate Reduction Act. Eliminating this funding for evidence-based prevention programs is an unwise choice for an offset for this legislation. Only by investing in prevention can the nation reduce the burden that preventable diseases are placing on our families, health care system, and government budgets.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund was created to transform our nation's health system into one that values prevention of disease as highly as treatment of disease. It was intended to provide a stable source of funding for prevention programs, which have been chronically underfunded despite their capacity to avert disease, save lives, and restrain the rate of growth of health care costs.

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death and disease in the United States. More than 400,000 people die each year because of tobacco use, and more than 8 million Americans are currently living with a tobacco-caused disease. Tobacco use is responsible for nearly \$100 billion in health care costs each year. Reducing tobacco use would reduce premature deaths and the costs of treating tobacco-caused cancers, heart disease, and respiratory disease.

Fortunately, there are proven programs and policies to reduce tobacco use, such as telephone-based quitlines that provide counseling and cessation products to people who want to quit, public education media campaigns that educate about the dangers of tobacco use, and state and community-based programs that involve community organizations and businesses in prevention efforts. Investing in comprehensive tobacco control programs pays dividends. The state of Washington's tobacco control program saved more than \$5 for every \$1 it spent between 2000 and 2009 by reducing hospitalizations for heart disease, stroke, respiratory disease, and cancer caused by tobacco use.

In March, the CDC used the Prevention and Public Health Fund to launch the government's first-ever, paid, nationwide media campaign to encourage smokers to quit and prevent children from starting to smoke. Public health authorities such as the Surgeon General, the National Cancer Institute, and the Institute of Medicine have all concluded that media campaigns work. The first results of the new CDC media campaign are promising: calls to state quitlines more than doubled during the two weeks after the ads began running.

We urge you to oppose H.R. 4628 and its elimination of the Prevention and Public Health Fund. The Prevention Fund was already cut by more than \$6 billion by Congress earlier this year. Cutting prevention funding is penny wise and pound foolish. Not investing in prevention now will mean higher medical bills later. We urge you to protect the Prevention and Public Health Fund.

Sincerely,

MATTHEW L. MYERS,
President.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS,

Washington, DC, April 26, 2012.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I am writing to urge you to vote against the Interest Rate Reduction Act (H.R. 4628), which would eliminate the Prevention and Public Health Fund in order to offset the cost of capping student loan costs, and instead support an alternative that would cap the interest rate on needs-based student loans at 3.4% without slashing important disease prevention programs. H.R. 4628 is little more than a ploy to score political points by pitting one worthy legislative objective against another.

We believe that a college education should be available to every student who is willing to work for it, and keeping the cost of student loans within reach is critical to achieving that goal. Congress must act before July 1 to keep interest rates from doubling for more than 7 million students, which would cost them an average of \$1,000 in additional repayment costs. But Congress must act without causing harm to another group of Americans who will benefit from the Prevention and Public Health Fund, created by the Affordable Care Act.

The Prevention Fund is already helping states and communities promote wellness, prevent disease, and protect against public health emergencies. Since the ACA was enacted in 2010, HHS has awarded over \$1 billion in Prevention Fund Grants to tackle the leading causes of chronic disease and mortality. Seven out of 10 deaths in America every year are from chronic diseases, and about 50 percent of all adults suffer from one. Programs supported by the Prevention Fund use evidence-based interventions to prevent heart attacks, strokes, cancer, and other illnesses by curbing tobacco use, eliminating obesity, and reducing health disparities. The fund also builds the capacity of our public health infrastructure and workforce to address the spread of infectious diseases and expand access to services in medically underserved communities. Repealing the Prevention Fund would result in higher mortality due to chronic illnesses and significantly higher costs for our health care system.

We urge you to vote against H.R. 4628 because it would inappropriately and gratuitously eliminate the Prevention and Public Health Fund. It is hard to believe that the House Republican leadership could not identify a more appropriate offset. For example, it could have chosen legislation to implement the Buffett Rule, which would ensure

that people who make more than \$1 million per year pay an effective federal income tax rate at least 30 percent. We urge the House to approve the Senate's Stop the Student Loan Interest Hike Act (S. 2343), which does include a more appropriate offset to forestall a spike in student loan costs.

Sincerely,
WILLIAM SAMUEL,
Director, Government Affairs Department.

AFSCME,
Washington, DC, April 26, 2012.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the 1.6 million members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I urge you to support responsible legislation to help students and families afford a college education by stopping the interest rate on student loans from doubling on July 1, 2012. However, the Interest Rate Reduction Act (H.R. 4628) is the wrong approach to this real problem, and AFSCME strongly urges you to vote no.

What H.R. 4628 gives with one hand, it takes away with the other. The bill would pay for the interest rate reduction by eliminating funding for public health activities such as breast and cervical cancer screenings, child immunizations, newborn screenings, protection of our food supplies and responding to disease outbreaks, bioterrorism and natural disasters. By gutting the Prevention and Public Health Fund, the bill would undermine efforts to refocus our health care system on wellness and to restrain the costs driven by the prevalence of chronic disease.

American families should not be forced to choose between access to an affordable college education and their health. There are far better options for funding the interest rate reduction, including an end to wasteful taxpayer subsidies for big oil and gas companies, as provided by the Stop the Rate Hike Act of 2012 (H.R. 4618).

We urge you to support a responsible fix to the student loan problem that does not compromise the health and well-being of American families. H.R. 4628 is clearly not the way to go.

Sincerely,
CHARLES M. LOVELESS,
Director of Federal Government Affairs.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I submit the attached letters of opposition to H.R. 4628.

APRIL 26, 2012.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the American Public Health Association, the oldest and most diverse organization of public health professionals and advocates in the world, I write to urge you to reject the latest attack on the Prevention and Public Health Fund that will be considered on the House floor on Friday, April 27. This proposed legislation would cut \$6 billion from the fund to pay for student loans. This irresponsible legislation marks the second time this week that the House has considered legislation to raid the fund. On April 25, the House Energy and Commerce Committee voted to eliminate the fund as part of its proposed budget reconciliation legislation.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund represents a critical investment in public health and a historic commitment to changing our health system from one that focuses on treating the sick to one that focuses on keeping people healthy. Chronic disease spending makes up a significant majority of our skyrocketing health care costs and the fund presents an opportunity to rein in our health care spending by reducing the rate of many leading chronic diseases. The fund's mandatory nature demonstrates an ongoing

commitment to preventing disease and improving the health of our nation.

Already, the fund is being used to control the obesity epidemic, reduce tobacco use, modernize vaccination systems and for other important interventions that will improve the health of the nation's children and research has show will ultimately improve student achievement. Additionally the fund is increasing training for the public health workforce, preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS and expanding our public health departments' abilities to prevent and respond to infectious disease outbreaks. Eliminating or reducing this funding would leave American families less healthy and at higher risk in the event of a public health emergency.

Public health funding, including the Prevention and Public Health Fund, has already seen significant reductions in recent years. We urge you to end the ongoing attacks on the Prevention and Public Health Fund and to reject any efforts to eliminate or reduce this critical public health funding.

Sincerely,

GEORGES C. BENJAMIN,
MD, FACP, FACEP (E),
Executive Director.

SERVICE EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION,
Washington, DC, April 26, 2012.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE, On behalf of the more than 2.1 million members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), I urge you to oppose H.R. 4628, the Interest Rate Reduction Act, which would force Americans to choose between preventive health care and paying more for college, rather than asking millionaires and corporations to pay their fair share. This bill cuts investments to improve preventive health care in order to pay to stop the student loan interest rate hike—once again protecting corporations like Big Oil instead of fighting for the middle class.

If Congress fails to take sensible action by July, the interest rate on need-based student loans will double for more than 7 million students, costing them \$1,000 in additional repayment costs. However, instead of closing loopholes that subsidize oil and gas companies, H.R. 4628 would take billions of dollars from investments in preventive health care in order to reduce student loan rates for low- and middle-income college students. This is a trade-off—between affordable health care and investments in preventive health—that need not and should not be made.

Students are already paying much more than their fair share. New graduates average more than \$25,000 in debt and collectively, Americans owe more than \$1 trillion dollars in student loans. Furthermore, the main reason why student debt has skyrocketed is because states dramatically decreased funding for higher education and universities passed the cost to students. State funding for public higher education dropped 26 percent over the past 20 years, resulting in a 116 percent increase in tuition. Students have to borrow more and pay back more.

During a time of dramatic income inequality and persistent unemployment, we should be focused on helping struggling families and creating good jobs. Congress should prevent this student loan rate hike to help pave the way to the middle class, but should not be cutting investments in preventive health care to pay for it.

I urge you to vote against H.R. 4628, and to pass a bill that does not force Americans to make a choice between keeping student loan interest rates low and compromising critical health care investments. If you have any questions about this bill, please contact

Steph Sterling, Legislative Director, at 202-730-7232, or steph.sterling@seiu.org.

Sincerely,

MARY KAY HENRY,
International President.

NEMOURS,
April 23, 2012.

Hon. HENRY WAXMAN
Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy & Commerce, Washington, DC.

DEAR RANKING MEMBER WAXMAN: As the House votes on H.R. 4628, the Interest Rate Reduction Act, Nemours—an integrated child health system in the Delaware Valley and Florida—would like to express its opposition to the repeal of, or any additional cuts to, the Prevention and Public Health Fund (Fund). While Nemours has no objection to extending student loan interest rates, we oppose offsetting this provision with the Prevention and Public Health Fund. Further cuts to the Fund will only hurt investments already made in wellness, prevention, and public health programs. We need to stop continually sacrificing the Fund for other priorities.

Experts have warned that this could be the first generation of children who live shorter, less healthy lives than their parents. As a foundation operating an integrated health system, we have a unique perspective on the threat that preventable chronic diseases are posing to the health of America's children. We believe our country has the opportunity to invest in our children by promoting health and disease prevention through the Fund. Already, the Fund has made important investments in obesity prevention, tobacco control, and other health priorities. Every attempt to diminish the Fund compromises our ability to protect and promote the health of our children, which is our mission at Nemours.

With Americans spending more each year on health care, the Fund represents an important investment in a slower cost growth for our health care system and America's economy overall. By partaking in preventive and wellness initiatives early in their lives, more Americans will be able to remain healthy preventing, unnecessary hospitalizations later in life. However, in order to do this, our nation needs to fundamentally realign its health care spending. We need to invest more at the front end to maintain people's health, as opposed to focusing our scarce resources on treatment at the back end. The Fund helps to achieve this goal, and any attempt to diminish the Fund will compromise our ability to ensure the health and well-being of our nation and economy.

We urge you to stand with our nation's children and fight to safeguard the Prevention and Public Health Fund and oppose all efforts to siphon away this investment.

Sincerely,

DEBBIE I. CHANG,
Vice President, Policy and Prevention.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 4628, the Interest Rate Reduction Act. At a time when 7.4 million low- and middle-income students are counting on Congress to extend the current interest rate on federal student loans, the majority has brought to the floor a partisan bill that would take billions of dollars away from the Prevention and Public Health Fund in the Affordable Care Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Prevention and Public Health Fund is a critical part of health care reform. Since the enactment of the Affordable Care Act, the Fund has already been used to:

Improve prevention services in low-income and underserved communities;

Expand mental health programs, including suicide prevention efforts;

Invest in public health workforce development;

Provide vaccines to underserved and underinsured children and adults, and provide support for state and local systems to promote and track immunization; and

Promote healthy diets and active lifestyles.

The GOP bill to extend the current interest rate on federal student loans would permanently end this vital program—cutting off basic preventative care services to millions of Americans.

We must extend the current interest rate on federal student loans, but not on the backs of women and children who will benefit from the prevention fund. This bill takes a short-sighted and misguided approach to solving the issue at hand.

If this body fails to act responsibly to extend the current interest rate on student loans, students who take out the maximum \$23,000 in subsidized student loans will see their interest increase an additional \$5,200 over a 10-year repayment period and \$11,300 over a 20-year repayment period.

By extending the current interest rate, we are making an investment in our country's future—our economy depends on an educated citizenry to out-compete and out-innovate the rest of the world. Maintaining access to a quality and affordable education is central to preserving America's status as a center for academic research and technological innovation.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this politically-motivated legislation that will threaten the long-term well-being of women and children, and request that a more serious alternative be considered.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, a previous commitment has prevented me from voting today, but if I had the opportunity, I would have voted against the legislation. It is abundantly clear that Congress needs to do something to keep student interest rates from doubling for more than 7 million college students in the coming year. Ensuring that education is widely accessible is vital to growing the U.S. economy and to expanding opportunities for all Americans. The growing burden of higher education costs is an issue that everyone should be concerned about and threatens to limit future economic growth. We must not burden graduates with unmanageable college debt as they seek to launch a career or a business, start a family, or buy a house.

That's why Democrats have been pushing Republicans for weeks to do something to provide students and families with certainty as they look ahead to the 2012–2013 school year.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of H.R. 3826, which would permanently keep interest rates for student Stafford loans at 3.4 percent. Taking action to stop the doubling of these rates will save students \$1,000, on average, over the life of their loans. There is a clear national interest in enacting this legislation and broad support from my constituents.

That's why it's particularly frustrating that Republicans have chosen to link their legislation, which provides students with only one year of reprieve before interest rates go up again, with a controversial offset that ensures the legislation won't actually pass. The chosen

offset for this bill removes funding for health prevention services, forcing Americans to choose between preventive health care and paying more for college. For instance, Republicans have used this legislation to remove funding for breast and cervical cancer prevention and control efforts (\$143 million), programs to address birth defects and developmental disabilities such as newborn screening for hearing loss and prevention of congenital heart defects (\$107 million), and vaccinations for underserved children and adults (\$72 million).

Both student aid and public health are core governmental functions and basic investments in our country's future. While providing student aid is very important, we have to make sure that children are healthy enough to go to college in the first place. Why are Republicans wasting America's time with political games when there is a clear path forward to solving the problem in a permanent, bipartisan fashion?

Unfortunately a long-standing engagement out of town means that I will have to miss the vote on this legislation. Due to my concern over the offset for the program, I would have voted no. I hope that my colleagues can draft a new bill that protects our students without taking money away from important preventative health services.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 4628. While I fully support extending the Subsidized Stafford student loan interest rate of 3.4 percent, the cost of it should not defund efforts to reduce health disparities, especially for America's women and children. I am glad the Majority in the House recognizes the need to extend the interest rate but they are toying with students by tying the extension to the elimination of the Prevention and Public Health Fund. Already this Fund has awarded more than \$62 million to New York State to combat obesity and tobacco use, prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, and train the State's public health workforce to meet modern health care needs. These and other critical services, including screenings for breast and cervical cancer, are being offered all across the country.

I am committed to the House Minority's effort to prevent the student loan rate from doubling for millions of Americans. My Congressional district is home to numerous colleges and universities, and I know the amount of debt that students incur by attending these schools. Federal loan and aid opportunities are critical to giving students the opportunity to pursue higher education. In his 2012 State of the Union, President Obama called on the Congress to advance new reforms to address the rising costs of college so that the American workforce is prepared for 21st century jobs. Now is the time to work to make college accessible and affordable. I urge my colleagues to support the Minority's legislation that would extend the lower interest rate for students without hurting the health of our nation.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, today, the House of Representatives missed an opportunity to do right by millions of American students.

This was an opportunity for us all to come together in a bipartisan way and ensure that college students would not see their student loan interest rates double in just a few months.

But instead, Republicans chose to give our students a lesson in Partisan Politics 101.

For all the rhetoric we heard about their desire to stop these rate hikes, they just couldn't pass up the chance to use one of their favorite tactics—dismantling the Affordable Care Act.

They did this knowing full well that this proposal would never get the support it needs to become law.

They made the calculation that they would try to score political points rather than help ensure that students can access an affordable college education.

But these political tactics are not going to help families shoulder the cost of paying for college.

They are not going to give more students the opportunity to achieve the American dream.

And they are not going to help keep our country competitive in a global economy by training the best and the brightest in needed fields.

What this maneuver would achieve is fewer disease screenings, weakened community health programs, and worse health for us all.

Is that the country we want to be?

We shouldn't have to choose between educating our next generation and making sure they're healthy.

And if this was really about "fiscal responsibility," then the Republicans wouldn't have chosen to eliminate—again—a program that actually saves money by preventing more costly disease.

I went to the House floor hoping to be able to vote for legislation that would make a responsible effort to stop this interest rate hike.

We could cover the cost by putting an end to unnecessary tax breaks for oil companies raking in profits.

But instead, Republicans were intent on making this a political ploy at the expense of American families.

I refuse to play these games with the well-being of hard-working Americans at stake, and I voted no on this legislation so that we can bring a better bill up for a vote.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this legislation, which would deprive women in need of vital health services. All of us—on both sides of the aisle—recognize the need to prevent student loan interest rates from doubling to 6.8 percent. But this bill tackles this problem in exactly the wrong way—depriving women of preventative care aimed at stopping cervical cancer and stopping low income children from receiving life saving vaccinations.

For the working families of New York, this legislation robs them of access to quality health care. With this bill, we are saying that for a young person from a working family to afford college, his or her mother must also forego vital medical care.

Preventing a rise in student loan rates is critical for our young people. With millions of students graduating into a difficult job market now is the time for serious solutions that keep these loans affordable—not the time to use this problem as a political football.

The President has said this bill is dead on arrival, so why are we wasting time debating it? We can and must find a better solution that keeps these rates low without harming working families.

Let us reject this bill and craft legislation that has a chance of being signed into law.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this bill.

I firmly believe that we need to make college more affordable. We should not double interest rates after we worked so hard to keep them down while the Democrats controlled Congress. However, by funding the interest rate extension with cuts to the Prevention and Public Health Fund, the Republicans are expanding a war on students into a war on women and a war on health.

As my colleague from California, LOIS CAPPAS noted, this fund supports critical women's health screenings—600,000 screenings will be cut with the repeal of this fund. This is essential to women's health. Moreover, the fund targets widespread chronic diseases like diabetes, stroke, and heart disease. The fund ensures that our children have access to necessary vaccines, and supports programs to prevent birth defects and screen for autism.

Students and their families do not need to be asked to choose between preventive health and affordable schooling. I call on the Republicans who set the agenda to get serious and work on solving this problem in a sensible, bipartisan way.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of hard working students and their families. Ensuring that all Americans have access to high quality education is one of my top priorities. I have worked to provide students with opportunities for higher education by fighting to strengthen financial aid, increase the maximum amount for Pell Grants, and lower student loan repayment interest rates.

At a time when many Americans are struggling to make ends meet, we must do all we can to keep post-secondary education affordable. Accordingly, I urge my fellow Representatives to take action to prevent student loan interest rates from rising this summer. If we do nothing, the interest rate on need-based student loans will double this July and will increase student loan repayment costs by over \$1,000 for more than seven million students.

While my Republican colleagues have reversed their opinion on this issue and now claim to support our Nation's students—despite their continued support for the Ryan Budget, which slashes funding for education by 45 percent—they have put forward a misguided and radical bill that hurts low-income and middle-income families. Instead of ending tax subsidies for oil and gas companies, the Tea Party Republicans have proposed slashing billions of dollars in funding from vital health care programs for women and children, including childhood immunizations and cancer screening programs.

The Republicans want you to believe that we must choose between supporting our students and providing vital health services to women and children. However, this is clearly not the case. My fellow Democrats and I have been fighting to expand health care coverage and promote affordable education for years. Since 2007, Democrats have lowered the cost of education by cutting the student loan interest rate in half, saving billions of dollars for millions of students while returning billions of dollars in bank subsidies to students in the form of higher Pell Grants, income-based repayment programs, and loan forgiveness for students entering public service.

Unlike my Republican colleagues, I remain committed to creating jobs, expanding health

care coverage, and promoting affordable, high quality education for all Americans. I urge my colleagues to do the same by voicing their opposition to the Republicans' damaging student loan proposal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 631, the previous question is ordered on the bill.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1(c) of rule XIX, further consideration of H.R. 4628 is postponed.

CYBERSECURITY ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2012

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2096) to advance cybersecurity research, development, and technical standards, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 395, nays 10, not voting 26, as follows:

[Roll No. 193]

YEAS—395

Ackerman Bucshon Davis (CA)
 Adams Buerkle Davis (IL)
 Aderholt Burgess DeFazio
 Akin Burton (IN) DeGette
 Alexander Butterfield DeLauro
 Altmire Calvert Denham
 Amodei Campbell Dent
 Andrews Cantor DesJarlais
 Austria Capito Deutch
 Baca Capps Diaz-Balart
 Bachmann Capuano Dicks
 Bachus Carnahan Dingell
 Baldwin Carney Doggett
 Barletta Carson (IN) Dold
 Barrow Carter Donnelly (IN)
 Bartlett Castor (FL) Doyle
 Barton (TX) Chabot Dreier
 Bass (CA) Chaffetz Duffy
 Bass (NH) Chandler Duncan (SC)
 Becerra Chu Edwards
 Benishek Cielline Ellison
 Berg Clarke (MI) Ellmers
 Berkley Clarke (NY) Emerson
 Berman Clay Engel
 Biggert Cleaver Eshoo
 Bilbray Clyburn Farenthold
 Billirakis Coble Fattah
 Bishop (GA) Coffman (CO) Fincher
 Bishop (NY) Cohen Fitzpatrick
 Bishop (UT) Cohen Fleischmann
 Cole
 Black Conaway Fleming
 Blackburn Connolly (VA) Flores
 Bonamici Conyers Forbes
 Bonner Cooper Fortenberry
 Bono Mack Costa
 Boren Costello
 Boswell Courtney Frank (MA)
 Boustany Cravaack Franks (AZ)
 Brady (PA) Crawford Frelinghuysen
 Brady (TX) Crawford Fudge
 Braley (IA) Crenshaw Gallegly
 Brooks Crowley Garamendi
 Cuellar Gardner
 Brown (FL) Culberson Garrett
 Buchanan Cummings Gerlach

Gibbs Luján
 Gibson Lungren, Daniel
 Gingrey (GA) E.
 Gonzalez Lynch
 Goodlatte Mack
 Gosar Maloney
 Gowdy Manullo
 Granger Marchant
 Graves (MO) Markey
 Green, Al Matheson
 Green, Gene Matsui
 Griffin (AR) McCarthy (CA)
 Grijalva McCarthy (NY)
 Grimm McCaul
 Guinta McClintock
 Guthrie McCollum
 Gutierrez McCotter
 Hahn Hall
 Hanabusa McDermott
 Hanna McGovern
 Harper McIntyre
 Harris McKeon
 Hartzler McKinley
 Hastings (FL) McMorris
 Hastings (WA) Rodgers
 Hayworth McNeerney
 Heck Meehan
 Heinrich Meeke
 Hensarling Mica
 Herger Michaud
 Herrera Beutler Miller (FL)
 Higgins Miller (MI)
 Himes Miller (NC)
 Hinchey Miller, Gary
 Hochul Miller, George
 Holt Moore
 Honda Moran
 Hoyer Murphy (CT)
 Huelskamp Murphy (PA)
 Huizenga (MI) Myrick
 Hultgren Nadler
 Hunter Napolitano
 Hurt Neal
 Israel Neugebauer
 Issa Noem
 Jackson (IL) Nugent
 Jackson Lee Nunnelee
 (TX) Olson
 Johnson (GA) Olver
 Johnson (IL) Owens
 Johnson (OH) Palazzo
 Johnson, E. B. Pallone
 Johnson, Sam Pascrell
 Jones Paulsen
 Jordan Pearce
 Kaptur Pelosi
 Keating Pence
 Kelly Perlmutter
 Kildee Peters
 Kind Peterson
 King (IA) Petri
 King (NY) Pingree (ME)
 Kinzinger (IL) Pitts
 Kissell Platts
 Kline Poe (TX)
 Kucinich Polis
 Lamborn Pompeo
 Lance Posey
 Landry Price (GA)
 Langevin Price (NC)
 Lankford Quayle
 Larsen (WA) Quigley
 Larson (CT) Rahall
 Latham Reed
 LaTourette Rehberg
 Latta Reichert
 Lee (CA) Renacci
 Levin Reyes
 Lewis (CA) Ribble
 Lewis (GA) Richardson
 Lipinski Richmond
 LoBiondo Rigell
 Loeb sack Rivera
 Lofgren, Zoe Roby
 Long Roe (TN)
 Lowey Rogers (AL)
 Lucas Rogers (KY)
 Luetkemeyer Rogers (MI)
 Mulvaney Rohrabacher

NAYS—10

Amash Graves (GA)
 Broun (GA) Griffith (VA)
 Duncan (TN) Labrador
 Flake Mulvaney

NOT VOTING—26

Blumenauer Canseco
 Camp Cardoza

Rokita
 Rooney
 Ros-Lehtinen
 Roskam
 Ross (AR)
 Ross (FL)
 Rothman (NJ)
 Roybal-Allard
 Royce
 Runyan
 Ruppel
 Rush
 Ryan (OH)
 Ryan (WI)
 Sanchez, Linda
 T.
 Sanchez, Loretta
 Sarbanes
 Scalise
 Schakowsky
 Schiff
 Schilling
 Schmidt
 Schock
 Schrader
 Schwartz
 Schweikert
 Scott (SC)
 Scott (VA)
 Scott, Austin
 Scott, David
 Serrano
 Sessions
 Sewell
 Sherman
 Shimkus
 Shuler
 Shuster
 Simpson
 Smith (NE)
 Smith (NJ)
 Smith (TX)
 Smith (WA)
 Southerland
 Speier
 Stark
 Stearns
 Stivers
 Stutzman
 Sullivan
 Sutton
 Terry
 Thompson (CA)
 Thompson (MS)
 Thompson (PA)
 Thornberry
 Tiberi
 Tierney
 Tipton
 Tonko
 Tsongas
 Turner (NY)
 Turner (OH)
 Upton
 Van Hollen
 Velázquez
 Visclosky
 Walberg
 Walden
 Walz (MN)
 Waters
 Waxman
 Webster
 Welch
 West
 Westmoreland
 Whitfield
 Wilson (FL)
 Wilson (SC)
 Wittman
 Wolf
 Womack
 Woodall
 Woolsey
 Yarmuth
 Yoder
 Young (AK)
 Young (FL)
 Young (IN)

Sensenbrenner
 Walsh (IL)

Davis (KY) Jenkins
 Farr Kingston
 Filner Marino
 Gohmert McHenry
 Hinojosa Nunes
 Hirono Pastor (AZ)
 Holden Paul
 Rangel
 Sires
 Slaughter
 Towns
 Wasserman
 Schultz
 Watt

□ 1204

Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. FOXX, Messrs. JOHNSON of Georgia and COHEN changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall 193, I was away from the Capitol due to prior commitments to my constituents. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea.”

Mr. PASTOR of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 193, due to business in my office I was delayed. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea.”

INTEREST RATE REDUCTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1(c) of rule XIX, further consideration of the bill (H.R. 4628) to extend student loan interest rates for undergraduate Federal Direct Stafford Loans, will now resume.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mrs. CAPPs. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentlewoman opposed to the bill?

Mrs. CAPPs. Yes, I am opposed to this bill in its current form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mrs. Capps moves to recommit the bill H.R. 4628 to the Committee on Education and the Workforce and the Committee on Energy and Commerce with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment: Add at the end of the bill the following new section:

SEC. 5. PROHIBITION AGAINST CUTS IN HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

Nothing in this Act shall endorse, promote, or result in a reduction of, or increased costs for, benefits in health insurance coverage offered by health insurance companies for women and children, including benefits for commonly prescribed contraception, mammograms, cervical cancer screenings, childhood immunizations, and health screenings for newborns.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlelady from California is recognized for 5 minutes in support of her motion.

Mrs. CAPPs. Mr. Speaker, this is the final—it's the only—amendment to this bill. It will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. Instead, if the House adopts this amendment, it will immediately move to final passage.

It appears that we now all agree that we cannot let student loan rates double