

Let's stop the student loan interest rates from doubling July 1. Stop the political games. Let's support American students to attain their highest achievements.

RURAL POST OFFICES

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

Mr. CRAWFORD. I rise today to highlight a subject that is personal in Arkansas's First Congressional District: the proposed closure of thousands of rural post offices across the country.

This week I sent a letter to Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe asking him to give the House of Representatives time to pass meaningful postal reform legislation. As it stands now, over 3,600 post offices are slated for closure on May 15. In my district alone, 100 post offices have been put on the closure list.

In November, I filed the Protecting Our Rural American Post Offices Act of 2011. The bill would prohibit the postal service from closing rural post offices that do not have an alternative office within 8 miles accessible by public roads. The bill is an effort to level the field between rural and urban post office closures.

So many of the challenges we face in Washington are not Democrat versus Republican, but rather urban versus rural interests. Americans living in rural communities rely on their post offices for medicine delivery and Social Security benefits and veterans benefits, among other things. Access to postal services should not be limited to urban families.

I urge Postmaster General Donahoe to give the House time to pass meaningful postal reform legislation. The postal service cannot hope to cure all their budget woes on the backs of rural Americans.

□ 1210

INVESTING IN AMERICA

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the golden opportunity to travel with our President to the capital region of upstate New York to visit our nanotechnology center. This campus is poised for tremendous growth as we witness an investment in public and private partnership.

The President utilized that visit to showcase a very glowing example of the appropriateness of investing in advanced manufacturing. It's a great path toward job creation, job retention. The President underscored the value of investing in precision technology, in R&D, in efficiency, and in workforce development—workforce development, development that comes in many dimensions, training and retrain-

ing and apprenticeship programs, and, yes, the path to success via higher education.

Speaking to that, our higher education dreams need to be fostered with affordability and availability. The 3.4 percent cap on interest rates for student loans cannot grow to 6.8 percent. We will dumb down the dreams of our young adults who are looking to go onward with their careers through higher education. We need to pass legislation so as to hold that cap at 3.4 percent, and we cannot allow it to grow come July 1 because of inaction by this Congress. I ask us to pass that measure in this House.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in order to recognize National Teacher Appreciation Week by sharing my heartfelt praise of Pennsylvania's teachers and educators throughout this great country.

I would like to recognize Tricia Miller, Pennsylvania's Teacher of the Year from Penns Valley Area School District located in my home county in the Pennsylvania Fifth Congressional District, and Margaret McLaughlin of Garnet Valley Area School District in eastern Pennsylvania, who was the recipient of the Education Support Professional of the Year Award for Pennsylvania. Their accomplishments are impressive, and both are the type who go above and beyond when helping our students achieve academic success.

Like so many other teachers, they remain tirelessly committed to high achievement and developing the next generation of leaders. And while these two are Pennsylvania's award winners, there are countless others who dedicate their lives day in and day out to ensure that students live up to their individual potential and strive to push young learners to surpass that potential.

As a Nation, we must make sure that we celebrate outstanding educators every day. During National Teacher Appreciation Week, I want to thank all teachers for their hard work and dedication.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

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

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor our teachers during National Teacher Appreciation Week. Teachers do not merely just teach in the classroom, they listen to their students and gently push them to reach their full potential. Teachers serve as role models and mentors.

Because of the mentorship of my teachers in high school, I applied for college. I was fortunate to be given a scholarship and an opportunity that I would not have known about if it were not for my teachers. Upon graduating, I decided to give back to my community and became a teacher.

New Jersey has among the most talented teachers in the country, and our students are lucky to learn from them. While we are honoring them this week, we should be thankful for their service every day. We trust teachers with our most valuable resources—our children.

While we ask teachers to prepare our children to meet the challenges of the 21st century, we must give them the tools to rise to these challenges. Competitive salaries and financial resources must be provided.

Let's join together in recognizing our teachers in New Jersey and across the country. Take the time to thank your teacher for their leadership and inspiration.

EDUCATION IS KEY TO SOUND FUTURE

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, as a former community college trustee member, I understand that good education is key to a sound future. Sadly, many working families in America now find themselves unable to afford higher education for their children. And even worse, if Congress does not act soon, the interest rate for students will double from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent; 7.4 million American students will face thousands of dollars in new debt if we do not act before July.

Last week, House Republicans showed they are unwilling to work on a real solution to this crisis. In a sham vote, Republicans put forward a bill to pay for the interest rate halt by slashing funds for women and children's health services.

America's young people deserve better. Let's keep their dreams alive. Let's get serious about a bipartisan solution to strengthen Pell Grants and keep student loan interest rates low. Let's help our students become the leaders of tomorrow.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

(Ms. BASS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BASS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize May as National Foster Care Month. The goal of this special month is to raise awareness about the experiences and needs of more than 400,000 youth in the foster care system.

The Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth asked young people around the country to tell us their experiences via our Web site, Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth. Throughout the month,

you will hear both Democrats and Republicans sharing these stories.

For example, Renee, a young woman from Los Angeles, was in foster care for over 8 years. She was placed in six different homes until she aged out of the system in June 2008. She currently attends UCLA and hopes to pursue a career in social work or community health.

Renee says:

Being in foster care has played an integral role in shaping and developing my character and the person I am today. My experience with the foster care system has exposed me to speaking up, communicating with adults, and being open with my peers about my situation, not ashamed of who I am.

In honor of Renee's courage and tenacity, I invite my colleagues to join the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth and cosponsor the bipartisan resolution in recognition of National Foster Care Month and to wear the blue ribbon.

CONGRATULATING BOB OSTERHAUS

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

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I take a moment to honor and congratulate a constituent and personal friend, Bob Osterhaus. Bob is being recognized by the University of Iowa with an Honorary Doctor of Science degree for his service to our State and his work with the University of Iowa pharmacy program.

Bob has spent his entire life serving other people. After he finished his education at the University of Iowa, he served in the United States Army and later served in the Iowa House of Representatives, contributing his perspective as a health care professional in shaping legislative initiatives like the HAWK-I insurance plan for children from low-income families.

He has served his community of Maquoketa, Iowa, in many ways. Osterhaus Pharmacy is a staple in the community, and he is active with the Maquoketa Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Sacred Heart Church, and the Knights of Columbus. He was co-founder of the Maquoketa Area Community Foundation and served as its chairman for 7 years.

Tomorrow, Bob will receive his Honorary Doctor of Science degree. The university could not have made a better selection, and I congratulate Bob for his outstanding service to Iowa, the pharmacy profession, and his country.

PROGRESS MADE BY WORKING TOGETHER

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I have had the great privilege of serving in Congress with Senator RICHARD LUGAR. He

was in the Aspen Institute, and I visited with him on those occasions, and received an award from the American Bar Association the same day he did, as did JOHN LEWIS, which made it more important than any other reward I have received.

RICHARD LUGAR's loss is a great loss to this country. He worked in a bipartisan fashion, and worked with President Obama on nuclear proliferation treaties and on the approval of Supreme Court Justices.

He said, last night, we are experiencing days of political division in our society. These divisions have stalemated progress in critical areas. They have, indeed. And unless the Republican side works with the Democratic side in a bipartisan fashion, we won't be successful, as RICHARD LUGAR tried to do, and was defeated for doing it.

There's something wrong in the constituencies that don't realize that progress is made by parties working together, not by one party conquering the other.

□ 1220

ISSUES FACING AMERICA

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues in recognizing the crisis that is being faced by the postal offices across America, both urban and rural. We look forward to bringing a contingent of workers and postal persons from around the country to this Congress to urge it to move forward quickly and utilize the Senate proposal.

At the same time, I am deeply saddened by a reconciliation budget proposal by my friends on the other side of the aisle that's going to cut the Social Services Block Grant, it's going to cut Medicaid, it's going to cut Meals on Wheels. As a former chairperson of the Interfaith Ministries in Houston, Texas, what a sad day to cut Meals on Wheels.

Today and this week is Teacher Appreciation Week, and I salute them. They are great and grand as they teach our children that they can reach for the sky. That is why today, the Congressional Children's Caucus will host Lee Hirsch, the producer and director of the movie "Bully." Eighteen million children have been bullied, like Asher Brown, who lost his life, like a 13-year-old Girl Scout who said that she's been bullied since age 5.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me at 1:30 in 2237 for a press conference saying there should be a national call to ending bullying—intervention, and at the same time to come at 2 o'clock to see the movie. Third floor, Library of Congress, Madison Building. There must be, and I call for, a national solution to bullying in our children's lives.

PREGNANT WORKERS FAIRNESS ACT

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

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues to become cosponsors of my bill, the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.

While current law prohibits discrimination based on pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, and directs employers to treat pregnancies the same as any other condition that might temporarily limit an employee's ability to perform some job functions, these protections have proven inadequate. Case law shows that courts are uncertain, even confused, about the scope of the law, requiring Congress to set the record straight.

While several States have clarified pregnant workers' rights, this is a national problem that warrants a national solution. My bill would require an employer to make reasonable accommodations for these workers unless this creates an undue hardship on the employer. An employer would be prevented from forcing a pregnant worker to take an accommodation that she does not want or need, and an employer would be prevented from forcing a pregnant worker to take leave when another reasonable accommodation could keep her on the job.

This is a simple solution to a problem our women and families should not be facing. I urge my colleagues to become a cosponsor of this bill to ensure that a pregnant woman need never decide between maintaining a healthy pregnancy and maintaining her paycheck.

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK REAUTHORIZATION ACT

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

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and I urge passage of H.R. 2072, of which I am a cosponsor.

In 2011, the Ex-Im Bank supported 290,000 jobs in the United States. Additionally, over the past 10 years, the Ex-Im Bank actually returned \$900 million to the United States Treasury.

When a program supports so many manufacturing jobs and it doesn't cost the taxpayer a dime, you would expect this bill to be an easy win, and yet some Members on the far right are prepared to put extreme ideology above jobs for Americans. This bill is a real jobs bill, and I urge its support.

POSTAL SERVICE PROTECTION ACT

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