

This year marks a number of historic milestones for the Asian Pacific American community, including the 20th year since the formal establishment of APA Heritage Month; the 100th anniversary of the planting of the first cherry blossoms in our Nation's Capital; and the 150th year since the passage of the Pacific Railroad Act, which led to the construction of the transcontinental railroad.

This year also marks the anniversary of several painful events in our history: 130 years since the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, a discriminatory piece of legislation which prevented people of Chinese ancestry from becoming naturalized citizens and from ever having the right to vote; 70 years since the signing of Executive Order 9066, which led to the internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II; and 30 years since the unpunished murder of Vincent Chin in Detroit by two unemployed auto-workers who blamed him and all Asian Americans for the loss of their jobs.

Although our history has indicated great progress since the days of discrimination, it is important to continue to remember our history in order to protect the civil rights of all Americans and to prevent these atrocities from ever happening again.

As chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, or CAPAC, I have the privilege of advocating for the APA community's needs and priorities on a broad range of issues, including civil rights, health care, economic justice, and immigration reform. This year, our caucus welcomed 12 new Congress Members, bringing our total to a record high of 42 members. This means that CAPAC will be able to serve as an even stronger voice for the Asian Pacific community at all levels.

As the Asian Pacific community continues to grow across the Nation—not just in traditional strongholds like California, Hawaii, or New York, but also in States like Texas, Georgia, and Nevada—my colleagues and I will continue to ensure that the needs of the APA community are included as we push for policies that re-ignite the American Dream for all.

So as we celebrate Asian Pacific Heritage Month this May, I hope you will join me and remember the many contributions that Asian Pacific Americans have made to our great country.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE BUILDING WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on energy-efficient buildings—we're talking about schools, factories, department stores, shopping centers, any type of a large building or even a small building—and the money they can save and the manufacturing jobs that energy-efficient initiatives can create.

This week, architects, code officials, designers, and others involved in making buildings more energy efficient celebrate High-Performance Building Week. This annual event features briefings, meetings, and other educational outlets designed to showcase and promote the good work being done to provide better buildings and mitigate the impact on the environment.

Building owners and operators continue to find creative ways to minimize the effect that rising energy costs have on their operations and productivity. These owners and operators are beginning to find that better designs of new buildings and smart retrofits of existing buildings free up capital and allow managers to commit more resources to the core operations rather than to utility bills.

The State of Montana decided to make its buildings more energy efficient. They brought in engineers to do the study, and they found that over 7,500 pipes needed to have mechanical insulation. These are pipes that needed to be wrapped.

□ 1040

And so they undertook that project. And what's interesting is that the payback was less than 4 years. But each year the State of Montana saves 5 to 8 percent in energy costs on those buildings. That's a massive savings of energy in this country.

One of the easiest, most cost-effective ways to improve building performance is to ensure the mechanical insulation systems are properly installed. While most of us think that insulation is only for walls and attics, mechanical insulation is a vital component for commercial and industrial and educational applications.

Working with my colleagues, I introduced H.R. 2866, the Mechanical Insulation Incentive Act of 2011, last year to help commercial and industrial facility owners make their facilities more energy efficient and put people back to work.

Improved insulation for piping and mechanical components in commercial and industrial settings will help save businesses more than \$4.8 billion a year, according to the National Insulation Association. These improvements will also save resources to the tune of 82 million barrels of oil or 19 million tons of coal each year. And it's probably more than that.

I ask my colleagues to consider supporting H.R. 2866. It's a commonsense bill that will save money, improve facility operations, put people back to work, and help our buildings perform to a higher standard.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close by saluting the hard work that our Nation's architects, engineers, and building professionals do to improve the condition of our homes, schools, and businesses.

I also want to ask my colleagues to participate in some of the events being held this week in honor of High-Performance Building Week.

I yield back the balance of my time.

SUPPORT EXTENSION OF THE COLLEGE COST REDUCTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, in 45 days, the interest rate on the Stafford Student Loan program is going to double from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent.

As millions of American families know, the Stafford Student Loan program is the workhorse for middle class students trying to pay for college. It is a program which has an affordable interest rate. It provides protections for students so that interest doesn't accumulate while you're actually in school. It provides a grace period after you graduate. And it also has a cap in terms of how much of your income has to be devoted to Stafford loan repayments.

In 2007, as a freshman Member of Congress, I was proud to have been a cosponsor of the College Cost Reduction Act, which cut that rate from 6.8 to 3.4 percent. It was a 5-year bill, like many measures that Congress passes; and that expiration, that sunset, will occur on July 1, 45 days from today, when that rate will double back to 6.8 percent.

Last week the Senate made an attempt to try and take up legislation to protect that lower rate. Sadly, the Republican minority used the filibuster rule to block not even just the bill, but even a debate on the bill. I repeat: they didn't even use the filibuster rule as a block of all Republicans to vote against the measure. They actually used the filibuster to even allow consideration of debate.

And, again, the leader in the Senate made it very clear if they had alternatives to the Senate bill which would protect the lower rate, they were more than free to offer their own amendments.

So here we are today, with students trying to plan for next fall's college, with kids getting their acceptance letters for next year, and yet they have no ability to budget or plan in terms of what the interest rate for this workhorse program to pay for college allows.

Now, how did we get to this place?

As I indicated, in 2007 we cut the rate. Back in January, President Obama stood at that very podium and challenged Congress to not allow the rate to double. For three solid months, nothing happened in this Chamber. There was not a single hearing at the Education and Workforce Committee. There was not a bill for markup. The only action was legislation that I proposed. H.R. 3826, which has over 150 cosponsors in this Chamber, on a bipartisan basis, which would lock in that rate permanently, has never been taken up for consideration.

Two-and-a-half weeks ago, Speaker BOEHNER who, by the way, voted

against the College Cost Reduction Act in 2007, rushed to the floor a bill for a 1-year Band-Aid, and used as a pay-for-depleting resources and funds from a program that would help folks with heart, cardiac, cervical cancer screening, diabetes screening, early childhood disease screening. They took money out of that fund to help desperate Americans to try and put a 1-year fix on the student loan issue.

President Obama made it very clear that bill is a dead letter. A veto threat was issued even before we voted in this Chamber. So here we are 45 days away waiting for action.

H.R. 3826, a measure which permanently locks in the lower rate, is at least a first step in terms of dealing with the crisis in this country of student loan debt, which now exceeds credit card debt and car loan debt. We have an issue here which threatens the future viability of this country to succeed and compete in the world global economy where we need a cutting-edge workforce if we're ever going to succeed in the future.

Forty-six days from today we are going to be celebrating the 150th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln signing into law a measure called the Moral Act. The Moral Act set up a national policy establishing land grant colleges in all 50 States in this country. Back then its mission was to establish programs for mechanical engineering and agricultural sciences.

What an amazing act of vision and leadership. In the darkest days of the Civil War, 1862, President Lincoln still had the long view and understood that if, as a Nation, we are going to succeed, we need a national policy for higher education. And in his wake, the Stafford loan program was created, sponsored by a Republican, Robert Stafford of Vermont. The Pell Grant program was established by Claiborne Pell, Democrat of Rhode Island, all to provide the building blocks so that young people have that opportunity and the ability to pursue their dreams and to pursue their skill set, the true key of success in this Nation.

We are a Nation that is blessed with great natural resources. We have the greatest military in the world. We have great financial institutions. But the real success of this country is our broad-based middle class where education provides the foundation for families and students to succeed.

That clock is ticking. I started this running at 110 days, and we're now down to 45 days. It is time for the Senate Republicans to drop the filibuster, allow consideration of the bill to help middle class families as they deal with next year's tuition costs, and pass H.R. 3826 in the House of Representatives.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 47 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DENHAM) at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Tom Ellsworth, Sherwood Oaks Christian Church, Bloomington, Indiana, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, mere words are inadequate to express our deep gratitude for the privilege of living in such a great land. You have graciously guided this Nation in the past. I pray that You will continue to bless it in the days ahead.

For all who have served in the past, and for all who currently serve within these hallowed walls, we give You our thanks. Bless them and their families.

I pray, Lord, that You will encourage them on the days when they are criticized more than cheered. Give them strength under stress, peace under pressure, and wisdom under the weight of the burdens they carry.

Fill them with Your insight and divine perspective. Give them good judgment in the decisions they make. Guide their thoughts and intentions to reflect Your timeless values. And in the Nation's business of this day, grant them success.

In Christ I pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCINTYRE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MCINTYRE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND TOM ELLSWORTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

(Mr. YOUNG of Indiana asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. I want to thank my friend, Tom Ellsworth, and

his wife, Elsie, for traveling all the way from Bloomington, Indiana, to deliver this morning's open prayer.

Tom has devoted his life to ministry. He is senior minister to me, my wife, Jenny, our four children, and so many other Hoosiers at Sherwood Oaks Christian Church in Bloomington.

2012 marks the 50th year since Sherwood Oaks was founded. To mark the celebration, Tom has thrown down the gauntlet. Our church will pray, give, and serve like never before. Tom is challenging more of us to become the hands and feet of God, serving our neighbors, our country, and beyond.

Tom understands that our Nation, in fact any nation worthy of the name, was built by selfless servants, people like the 55 members of our church who recently activated their faith to help out tornado victims in southern Indiana. America needs more such servants and more people like Tom to inspire us to service.

Thank you for making a difference, Tom.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the military spends a lot of money studying, presumably, the effectiveness of military programs. In fact, there are numerous military studies of military programs. So many, the Department of Defense has commissioned a study of those numerous studies to see how much those studies cost.

Stay with me, Mr. Speaker. Now, the Government Accountability Office has done their own study of the military study that is studying the cost of numerous military studies that are studying the cost and effectiveness of military programs.

The GAO has concluded its study that the military study of the studies is incomplete, inconclusive, and inconsistent. So we really don't know how effective or costly those military studies are. Meanwhile, the cost of the GAO study has not been studied yet.

Mr. Speaker, I hope this short study of the government's studies programs let's us all know how effective and efficient government bureaucracy actually operates.

And that's just the way it is.