



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 158

WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 2012

No. 81

Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, June 4, 2012, at 2 p.m.

House of Representatives

FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 2012

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We pause now in Your presence, and acknowledge our dependence on You.

We ask Your blessing upon the men and women of this, the people's House. Keep them aware of Your presence as they face the tasks of this day, that no burden be too heavy, no duty too difficult, and no work too wearisome.

Help them, and indeed, help us all, to obey Your law, to do Your will, and to walk in Your way. Grant that they might be good in thought, gracious in word, generous in deed, and great in spirit.

Make this a glorious day in which all are glad to be alive, eager to work, and ready to serve You, our great Nation, and all our fellow brothers and sisters.

May all that is done this day be done for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. 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. Will the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. COURTNEY 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five 1-minute requests on each side of the aisle.

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

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

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, the other day, I received a letter from a constituent, Lana Kunkel. Like many Vermonters, she is concerned about the doubling of Stafford student loan interest rates scheduled for July 1.

This is very personal for her. She used the Stafford loan to get a good education and start a career as a nurse. She is now a contributing member of the community. She is also the granddaughter of former U.S. Vermont Representative and Senator Bob Stafford, for whom the Stafford student loan program is named. Here is what she had to say about her grandfather:

I know my grandfather's intention for these loans was accessibility and not profit.

I understand that times are tough and people are looking everywhere, but this is just not right. My grandfather was known as a gentle giant, but if he were alive today, I think he would oppose this with force.

Mr. Speaker, Bob Stafford knew that a higher education was the clearest path to the middle class in this country—and he was a good Republican. We should not let the interest rates double. There is no justification for having these interest rates go from 3.4 to 6.8 percent. We have 30 days to act.

THE FOREST PRODUCTS FAIRNESS ACT OF 2012

(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, the USDA Biobased Markets program was created to provide new markets for farm commodities and to encourage consumers to purchase environmentally friendly biobased products. Unfortunately, under the current law, most forest products are excluded from both the Federal procurement preference and the market label of the USDA Biobased Markets program. For instance, bamboo plywood is already eligible for the BioPreferred label and is used as a "green" alternative for hardwood flooring or lumber.

The Forest Products Fairness Act of 2012 modifies the definition of "biobased product" to clarify that forest products should be included in the Biobased Markets program if they

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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meet the minimum biobased content requirements. The Forest Products Fairness Act of 2012 will enable U.S. producers to build back a competitive advantage through stronger, expanded product markets and new economic opportunities so that the industry can better compete in the global marketplace.

Including U.S.-made forest products as part of the USDA's BioPreferred program is a win-win for consumers and producers. It will promote healthy, well-managed forests and the protection of communities that rely on these jobs and industries to survive.

EXPIRATION OF INTEREST RATE FOR STAFFORD STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, in 29 days, the interest rate for the Stafford student loan program is going to increase from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent. This will add thousands of dollars of additional debt costs for middle class students all across America.

Yesterday, The Christian Science Monitor reported that Speaker BOEHNER called this issue a phony issue and a distraction from the real issues. There is nothing phony about adding thousands of dollars of added debt to middle class students. There is nothing phony about the Federal Reserve Board report that came out yesterday that showed that student loan debt increased by \$30 billion in the first quarter of this year, surpassing credit card debt. The only thing, frankly, that is a pretense around here is the work schedule: in this week, only 1 full day, 2 part-time days, and 40 days for the next 5 months.

It is time for us to get to work in this Chamber and to fix problems like the Stafford student loan interest rate.

VETERANS SKILLS TO JOBS ACT

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

Mr. DENHAM. Members, the recent Memorial Day weekend and now the ever-escalating high unemployment numbers remind us of how many veterans are out of work and of how many who will be returning home to no jobs.

For the last year, I've worked on the Veterans Skills to Jobs Act. When I left the active duty military, I realized that it would take me several years to get the credentialing on the civilian side that I already had on the military side.

We have the best, most sophisticated, trained workforce in the military. As they return home, we need to make sure that not only do they have jobs but that they have high-paying skilled jobs. By credentialing them through the Department of Defense before they

get discharged, we give them the opportunity to capture those jobs immediately.

When I introduced this bill, several weeks later, the Senate introduced a companion bill, and now, today, the President has declared his support for the bill. It is time to show leadership in both Houses, to show leadership in the Presidency, and to pass this bill.

Our brave men and women who have served so bravely and sacrificed so much deserve jobs when they get home, high-paying jobs that will allow them to get back into our society.

□ 0910

PASS THE DISCLOSE ACT

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, Americans are growing more and more cynical of politics and politicians with good reason. Citizens United opened the floodgates to unrestricted special-interest campaign spending in elections, and we need to put an end to the influence of secret money in our elections.

I advocate the DISCLOSE Act. It would shine the light on secret money in political campaigns. The DISCLOSE Act requires public reporting by super-PACs, corporations, unions, and outside groups within 24 hours of making a campaign expenditure or transferring funds of \$10,000 or more to other groups for campaign-related activities.

Mr. Speaker, I tell you, when I'm on the trail and I talk to my constituents, everyone is outraged by the millions, and possibly billions, of dollars that are going to be spent on the Presidential, congressional, and Senate campaigns. It makes sense to have some transparency. We should pass the DISCLOSE Act so that at least those who make these contributions have to say who they are. It's only fair.

FIGHT AGAINST OBAMACARE

(Mrs. BLACK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, as one of the most outspoken opponents of ObamaCare, I hope in the upcoming week that the Supreme Court strikes down this disastrous piece of legislation. But the fact is, no matter what the Supreme Court decides about ObamaCare, it does not change the reality that this law is horrible policy. That is why I voted more than two dozen times to either defund or repeal ObamaCare since being elected to Congress.

Yesterday, in the House Ways and Means markup, we successfully passed out of committee two bills that would repeal the ObamaCare tax hikes: one, the medical tax device; and, number two, the medicine-cabinet tax.

It is clear that the House must continue to fight against ObamaCare until either the Supreme Court overturns this law in its entirety or until we have willing partners in the Senate and the White House.

SUZANNE MCDANIEL: A HERO TO VICTIMS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to celebrate the life of a friend and someone who changed the lives of victims throughout the Nation.

Suzanne McDaniel appeared in my court years ago as one of the first prosecutor-based victim assistance directors in the State of Texas. She went on to start the Texas Crime Victims Clearinghouse, the first of its kind anywhere in the United States.

In recognition of her incredible work, she was tapped as the State's crime victim information officer, educating and influencing the community and the State legislature with her vast knowledge of victims' issues. This led to her role as a legislative liaison for the State coalition of victim organizations and her leadership on the board of the National Organization of Victim Assistance.

Suzanne's accomplishments are far reaching, touching lives in Texas and throughout our Nation. A crime victim wrote:

Suzanne feels everyone is important and needed in the fight to improve assistance for crime victims. I have never heard her say, It's not my job. In fact, she has never been shy about poking her nose into things and offering assistance. Her enthusiasm and dedication is boundless.

Mr. Speaker, her work will continue to touch crime victims for many years to come, and victims are safer in America because of Suzanne McDaniel and her life.

And that's just the way it is.

REPORT ON H.R. 5882, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

Mr. CRENSHAW, from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 112-511) on the bill (H.R. 5882) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes, which was referred to the Union Calendar and ordered to be printed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENHAM). Pursuant to clause 1, rule XXI, all points of order are reserved on the bill.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in