

H.R. 1595, THE STUDENT LOAN
RELIEF ACT OF 2013

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 20, 2013

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of extending the 3.4 interest rate on Stafford Student loans to protect students from seeing their interest rates double on July 1, 2013. As the cost of higher education continues to climb and total student loan debt eclipsed credit card debt for the first time, the consequences of inaction are unacceptable. We need to be making college more affordable for all students, not putting it further out of reach.

As an advanced degree becomes more and more of a requirement for well paying jobs, it is vital that low interest loans be available so that students can access an affordable college education. Approximately 60 percent of students take out loans to attend college and increasing the cost of borrowing will prevent millions from being able to obtain a degree.

H.R. 1595, the Student Loan Relief Act of 2013, is a clean extension that would freeze the 3.4 interest rate on Stafford loans for two years. I urge my colleagues to pass this legislation to prevent a crippling hike in rates and give Congress time to find a true long-term solution to student loans and college affordability that is worthy of our nation's young people.

A strong middle-class, well educated workforce and the opportunity for upward mobility are the building blocks of a thriving economy. To maintain and strengthen each, every student must have the opportunity to pursue higher education, not just the privileged few.

College educated students are the future engine of our country, and anyone who wants to pursue a post-secondary education should have the opportunity to do so without going into crushing debt. I urge my colleagues to stop rates from doubling and extend the current interest rate of 3.4 percent.

EN BLOC PACKAGE: AMENDMENT
60—MILITARY FAMILY HOME
PROTECTION HR. 1960, NATIONAL
DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 20, 2013

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the bill's managers for including in this en bloc amendment a provision I submitted to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.

Under current law, certain disabled veterans, servicemembers and their families are not receiving the critical protection they need. As a result, banks are foreclosing on their homes at the very moment when our heroes most deserve our support.

Our amendment extends foreclosure protections to all servicemembers receiving hostile fire or imminent danger pay, to the surviving spouses of servicemembers killed in the line of duty, and to veterans who become disabled due to service-connected injuries.

Last Congress, I introduced a similar amendment that passed the house with overwhelming bipartisan support.

I ask Members to vote in favor of this amendment.

FEDERAL AGRICULTURE REFORM
AND RISK MANAGEMENT ACT OF
2013

SPEECH OF

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 18, 2013

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1947) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes:

Mr. PASCRELL. Madam Chair, I rise today in opposition to this Farm Bill, H.R. 1947, the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013, due to the unconscionable cuts to the SNAP program, formerly known as food stamps.

Across the country, over 47 million of our fellow Americans depend on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to put food on their tables each and every day. In my home state of New Jersey alone, SNAP serves over 800,000 individuals. These are our friends, family, and neighbors. An average monthly benefit of \$133.36 per person for recipients in New Jersey amounts to \$1.48 per meal. This does not go very far towards buying nutritious food in a state where the cost of living is high. That's why 90 percent of benefits are redeemed by the third week of the month.

Eighty-three percent of SNAP benefits go to households with children, seniors, or disabled Americans. These are not freeloaders or people trying to game the system; they are our most vulnerable citizens. When the going gets tough, we have a responsibility to ensure that a safety net is in place for them. When our people go hungry, we pay the consequences down the road. Poor nutrition and hunger leads to costly but entirely avoidable health problems. Furthermore, as a former teacher, I know that students who go hungry have trouble focusing in school. We need to ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to excel to keep us competitive in today's global economy.

This bill, however, would take us down the wrong path. It further tightens eligibility requirements for SNAP, cutting \$20.5 billion by kicking about two million people off the program. This bill will also kick 210,000 kids off of school meals, and reduce benefits by an average of \$90 for 850,000 additional households. If we want to reduce the costs of this program, don't cruelly throw people off the roles. Let's create some jobs and as our economic recovery gains steam, SNAP costs will decline as more and more Americans find steady work.

We are the greatest nation on earth. Our Farm Bills are designed to ensure that we can produce food to feed the world. Shouldn't we first ensure that we can provide for our own?

HONORING LOES HEDGE

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 20, 2013

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Loes Hedge of Saint Joseph, Missouri. Loes is active in the community and has been chosen to receive the YWCA Women of Excellence Woman in Volunteerism Award.

Loes Hedge is a retired educator that continues to have a positive influence in the Saint Joseph community to this day. Loes has served as the President of Saint Joseph's NAACP and continues her work with them today as it's current secretary. Recently she was awarded the YWCA's Racial Justice Award in recognition of her many efforts to bridge diversity, empower at risk students and to strengthen education universally. Loes has also been honored as an inductee to the Black Archives Museum Hall of Fame.

Loes also continues in her role as mentor for young educators and serves as a Co-Chair for the Saint Joseph School District Long-Range Planning Committee. She has served on the YWCA Board of Directors, has been involved in voter registration efforts throughout Saint Joseph.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in recognizing Loes Hedge. She has made an amazing impact on countless individuals in the St. Joseph community. I am honored to represent her in the United States Congress.

IN RECOGNITION OF LINDA BEST
UPON HER RETIREMENT

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 20, 2013

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise with my colleagues Congressman MIKE THOMPSON, Congressman JERRY MCNERNEY, Congressman JOHN GARAMENDI and Congressman ERIC SWALWELL to recognize the outstanding career of Ms. Linda Best, a dynamic leader in the community, and congratulate her as she retires after more than thirty-two years in service to the people of Contra Costa County.

In 1981, after earning a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts degree from Stanford University, Linda began her successful career as the Executive Director of the Coalition of Labor and Business. Three years later she became Executive Director for the Contra Costa Council, an organization she would help shape and expand throughout her tenure. From 2004 on, Linda has served as President and CEO of the Council and continued her strong commitment to the organization and the communities which it serves.

In her nine years as President, Linda has been the heartbeat of the organization and shown a remarkable command of the issues most critical to business, education, the environment, transportation, and workforce development. Under her leadership, the Council has been an engine for economic development, public policy formation, and an informed decision-making voice for the region. Linda has

been instrumental in building the Workforce Development Initiative, which brings together business and education in support of high school academics. What was once an organization only affiliated with business has now grown to include labor, education, health care, and nonprofit interests. In fact, the Contra Costa Council's scope has become so widespread, that it recently changed its official name to the East Bay Leadership Council.

Linda's spirit and energy is not only apparent in her work with the Council, but also encompasses her work with the many Boards on which she has served. Included in this long list are; the Board of Directors for John Muir Health, the Eugene O'Neill Foundation, the DVC Foundation, Opportunity Junction, the West Contra Costa Business Development Center, STAND for Families Free of Violence, and the United Way Leadership Council.

Throughout Linda's tenure, she earned many awards and distinctions, including the San Ramon Valley Chamber of Commerce "Woman of the Year Award," the Eugene O'Neill Foundation Open Gate Award, the Contra Costa Child Care Council Kiddie Award, and the Contra Costa Times Woman of Achievement Award for Business and Technology.

We invite our colleagues to join us in commending President & Chief Executive Officer Linda Best for her committed and diligent service to the citizens of Contra Costa County. We are pleased to congratulate Linda on an outstanding career and wish her the very best as she begins a well-deserved retirement.

HONORING THE TOWN OF MACHIAS, MAINE

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 20, 2013

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the town of Machias, Maine as it celebrates its 250th anniversary.

Located in the heart of Washington County and known as the "Blueberry Capital of the World," Machias is one of our state's most historic and picturesque communities. It serves as the county seat and is a regional center for Downeast Maine, with agricultural, commercial, and educational resources that are utilized and embraced by thousands of nearby Mainers.

The town was settled in 1763 and is home to the Burnham Tavern, a National Historic Site carefully maintained by members of the Hannah Weston Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. In 1775, Machias was the site of the first naval battle of the American Revolution. Author James Fenimore Cooper described the infamous battle and the capture of the English schooner HMS *Margaretta* in his *History Of The Navy Of The United States Of America*, as "the Lexington of the seas, for like that celebrated land conflict, it was a rising of the people against a regular force, was characterized by a long chase, a bloody struggle, and a triumph."

The residents of Machias embody the values of the hardworking people of Maine, and they may take great pride in the rich heritage they have created over the past 250 years. It is an honor and a privilege to represent the

people of Machias in Congress, and I am pleased to have this opportunity to help the town celebrate its 250th anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the people of Machias and wishing them well on this joyous occasion.

FEDERAL AGRICULTURE REFORM AND RISK MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 18, 2013

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1947) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes:

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Chair, I rise to speak in support of Jackson Lee Amendment #94, which will be in the en bloc for H.R. 1947, the "Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013." My thanks to Agriculture Committee Chair Frank D. Lucas and Ranking Member Collin C. Peterson for including the Jackson Lee Amendment in the en bloc.

I appreciate the work of Rules Committee Chair and Rules Committee members Congressman McGovern for managing the debate on amendments to H.R. 1947.

I offered amendments to H.R. 1947 for deliberation by the Rules Committee for approval for consideration by the Full House. Only one of my Amendments was made in order and will be included in the en bloc for the bill.

Jackson Lee #94 will be included in the en bloc and is a sense of Congress that the Federal Government should increase business opportunities for small businesses, black farmers, women and minority businesses.

Small farm businesses, black farmers, women and minority agriculture related businesses could benefit from partnerships with federal office location in receiving support for farmers markets. This would assist with eliminating food deserts, which are urban neighborhoods and rural towns without easy access to fresh, healthy and affordable food. These communities may have no food access or are served only by fast food restaurants and convenience stores.

Other Amendments, I request that the Rules Committee favorably consider included Amendment #1, the McGovern Amendment, which was joined by over 80 members of the House. This important amendment would have restored \$20.5 billion in cuts in SNAP funding by offsetting the Farm Risk Management Election Program and the Supplemental Coverage Option.

Jackson Lee Amendments not included in the Rule for the bill include:

Jackson Lee Amendment #182 was a sense of Congress that the Federal Government should increase financial support provided to urban community gardens and victory gardens to heighten awareness of nutrition.

The knowledge shared with urban dwellers can have a long term benefit to the health of our nation by increasing awareness regarding

the link between what we eat and health. This would also be a means of expanding the diet options for persons who live in areas where the cost of fresh fruits and vegetables can be prohibitive.

Jackson Lee #183 is a sense of the Congress regarding funding for nutrition program for disabled and older Americans. Accessible and affordable nutrition is especially important when dietary needs change or must accommodate life's changes. Older Americans and persons with disabilities often must live with restricted diets.

Jackson Lee Amendment #184 was a sense of the Congress that encourages food items being provided pursuant to the Federal school breakfast and school lunch program should be selected so as to reduce the incidence of juvenile obesity and to maximize nutritional value.

This amendment passed the House by a substantial margin in the 110th Congress by a recorded vote of 422 to 3. The inclusion of this amendment in the Rule for 1947 would affirm Congressional commitment to fight juvenile obesity and to maximize nutritional value. The amendment should have been made in order considering the epidemic of juvenile and adult obesity.

Finally, I sought support by the Rules Committee of an Amendment offered by Congresspersons Kildee, Fudge, Peters, Tim Ryan and Jackson Lee Amendment #53.

This amendment was not included in the final Rule for the bill. This amendment would have brought healthy food to those with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables through a public-private partnership. It would increase funding for SNAP incentive programs for fresh fruits and vegetables by \$5 million per year, which is offset by decreasing the adjusted gross income limit for certain Title and Title II programs.

Food is not an option—it is a right that all people living in this nation must have to exist and to prosper. The \$20.5 billion cuts in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program also known as SNAP would remove 2 million Americans from this important food assistance program, and 210,000 children would lose access to free or reduced priced school meals.

The course of our nation's history led to changes in our economy first from agricultural, to industrial and now technological. These economic changes impacted the availability and affordability of food. Today our nation is still one of the wealthiest in the world, but we now have food deserts. A food desert is a place where access to food may not be available and certainly access to health sustaining food is not available.

The US Department of Agriculture defines a food desert as a "low-access community," where at least 500 people and/or at least 33 percent of the census tract's population live more than one mile from a supermarket or large grocery store. The USDA defines a food desert for rural communities as a census tract where the distance to a grocery store is more than 10 miles.

Food deserts exist in rural and urban areas and are spreading as a result fewer farms as well as fewer places to access fresh fruits, vegetables, proteins, and other foods as well as a poor economy.

The result of food deserts are increases in malnutrition and other health disparities that impact minority and low income communities in rural and urban areas. Health disparities