

Caucus and cochair of the Manufacturing Caucus here in Washington, D.C., caucuses that have cochairs on a bipartisan basis, where we're working together to try to figure out how we can become energy independent, but more importantly, Mr. Speaker, what this issue represents for the average American family.

What this represents, when we are developing domestic energy sources such as the natural gas boom across America that's coming out of our shale formations and our tight sands formation when it comes to oil, what this represents to manufacturing is it puts American manufacturers in a competitive position so that they can invest in manufacturing facilities here on American soil.

So what does that mean? What that means to every man, woman, and child out there in America right now is that we are sitting on the precipice of a manufacturing renaissance in America. This competitive edge that we are getting from developing our natural gas and oil resources here in America means that we're going to build plants. They're going to be putting people back to work for today and tomorrow and for generations to come.

We need to build things in America. That's what this represents. We have a report from PricewaterhouseCoopers: by 2025, we are talking 1 million manufacturing jobs.

There should be no dispute in this Chamber to join hands to make sure we develop the energy resource in a safe and responsible manner, but develop it for the sake of creating those jobs that put food on people's tables, put a roof over their heads, and take care of families for generations to come.

I appreciate my good friend from Colorado yielding the time to me today. I just have to say, American energy means Americans' national security, and it means American prosperity for Americans of today and tomorrow.

Mr. GARDNER. I thank the gentleman from New York.

Mr. Speaker, the other night when I was driving home from a meeting in one of my rural counties—it was about 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock at night, it was dark outside—I drove by a field of windmills. At night, you can see that red light flashing across 100 wind turbines, and then of course the natural gas development that's taking place right next to it. So, Mr. Speaker, this Nation has an opportunity for energy security. It's not next year; it's now.

I thank my colleagues for joining this debate on American energy today and look forward to continued conversations throughout this year.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. Speaker, thank you, Mr. JOHNSON for leading tonight's leadership hour on American energy. This is an issue of great importance to the people of Montana, and I'm glad we're having this discussion tonight.

1678. That's how many days it's been since the application to build the Keystone XL pipeline was filed.

It took Canada seven months to approve the pipeline. President Obama has taken over four and a half years.

Study after study has shown that not only is the pipeline safe—but it said to be the most advanced, state-of-the-art pipeline ever constructed.

And the benefits of constructing this pipeline go beyond just transporting oil.

Earlier this month, I was in Glasgow, Montana visiting NorVal Electric Co-op. Members of the co-op told me that they are going to be supplying electricity to pump stations for the KXL, allowing them to spread their cost burdens and hold rates steady for customers.

If Obama does not approve the Keystone pipeline, their customers will see upwards of a 40 percent increase in their utility rates over the next ten years.

This is a great example of how this will impact everyday Americans.

It will create thousands of jobs—at least 800 in my home state of Montana alone.

And the president still can't make a decision.

Last month, the U.S. State Department issued its Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Keystone XL Presidential Permit application, which confirmed what we already knew.

The Keystone XL Pipeline will have no significant impacts on the environment.

In fact, this is the fourth environmental review of the Keystone Pipeline—with a final report still to come.

Let me be clear—this project means jobs.

This project could directly create more than 800 good-paying jobs in Montana—and thousands more across the nation.

It means coming one step closer to North American energy independence. The Keystone XL would be able to move up to 830,000 barrels of oil per day. That's about half the amount that the U.S. presently imports from the Middle East.

And of the oil moved each day, 100,000 barrels will come from the Bakken formation, which spreads across Montana and North Dakota.

This isn't about politics—Republicans and Democrats alike support the pipeline.

This is about our nation's security. This is about lowering energy costs for American families. This is about American jobs.

After four and a half years of waiting on President Obama to approve the Keystone XL pipeline, enough is enough.

The American people deserve action on this job-creating project, not more of President Obama's delays.

That's why today, the House Natural Resources Committee voted to advance the Northern Route Approval Act.

This bill makes it possible for the pipeline to be constructed in its entirety by removing the need for a presidential permit for the northern portion of the Keystone XL pipeline.

With this approval, we are one step closer to getting this pipeline approved.

The construction of the Keystone XL pipeline means hundreds of good-paying jobs created for Montanans, it means millions of dollars injected into our economy, and it even means lower utility rates for Montanans—we can't afford to wait any longer.

Enough is enough. It's been 1678 days.

As a member of the House Energy Action Team, I urge President Obama to approve the

Keystone XL Pipeline. And, if he won't act, we will.

REREFERRAL OF H.R. 763, REPEALING ANNUAL FEE ON HEALTH INSURANCE PROVIDERS

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that H.R. 763 be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and, in addition, to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

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

There was no objection.

KERMIT GOSNELL

(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, I stand here today outraged and deeply saddened by the heartbreaking story of the abortion doctor, Kermit Gosnell. This is the man currently on trial for the murder of eight people, seven of whom were newborns who were killed after surviving late-term botched abortions in his "house of horror" clinic.

But Gosnell didn't act alone. He had a host of silent co-conspirators who referred women to his practice knowing full well of the horrors that went on behind those closed doors. Meanwhile, the State boards gave Gosnell a free pass for 17 years by failing to inspect his clinic.

When asked about Gosnell's crime, our President tells us he has no comment. Where is your outrage, Mr. President? Are you too busy preparing your remarks for tomorrow night's Planned Parenthood fundraising gala?

My heart breaks that our country has reached a point where we are all not outraged by a practice that ends a beating heart and takes the lives of our most vulnerable in our society. May God forgive us.

□ 1630

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, it's an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to stand here once again and to anchor the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order with my distinguished colleague from the Silver State, STEVEN HORSFORD.

For the next 60 minutes, members from the Congressional Black Caucus will speak directly to the American people about the importance of investing in the education of our children and of our young people as a matter of utmost importance for the future prosperity of this great country.

I've got the honor and the privilege of representing the 8th Congressional District, which includes parts of Queens, and it is largely anchored in neighborhoods in Brooklyn. And 100 years ago this month, in April of 1913, Ebbets Field opened for the first time. Ebbets Field, as the movie "42" has illustrated, is the baseball stadium where, on April 15 of 1947, Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in America's pastime and became the first African American to participate in a Major League Baseball game.

Now, we know that prior to that moment, African Americans, solely on the basis of their color, were prohibited from playing Major League Baseball. And so you had individuals like "Cool Papa" Bell and Josh Gibson, any number of individuals who were stellar at their craft amongst the best who have ever played, confined to the Negro leagues, unable to ever get onto a Major League Baseball field because of the color of their skin.

That all changed on April 15, 1947, when Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier. And I think that holds an important point for us, what Jackie Robinson illustrated: that if you get an opportunity to get on the field of play, folks who otherwise have been excluded from the mainstream can demonstrate that they will perform just as well, if not better, than everyone else.

And in the context of education in the United States of America, we confront a situation where you have one group of children in this country who've got a first-rate education, and then you've got another group of children who are confined to a broken public school system that has failed them, that has inadequately prepared them for the opportunities that otherwise would be available in life.

We don't have necessarily, the literature has begun to show, an achievement gap that relates to capacity or ability. Yes, based on different performance measures, Black children and White children and Latino children score differently in various areas of proficiency, but the literature has begun to show that's not really an achievement gap. It's really an opportunity gap.

And what Jackie Robinson demonstrated, I think, for all of America to see is that, if you just give our children the same opportunities available to others through the educational system—give them the same bat, give them the same glove, give them the same cleats, allow them to perform on the same fields of human endeavor—that they can perform just as well, if not better, than everyone else.

And if you give them that opportunity, if you give all American chil-

dren opportunity, it's good for them, but it's good for the community and it's good for the Nation. It lifts everyone's productivity in a manner that will benefit America. That is why the CBC believes that investing in education is the appropriate and a meaningful and the right way to go, given what we confront in our country at this moment.

We've been joined by several distinguished members of the CBC. Let me first yield to my co-anchor, the distinguished gentleman from Nevada, Representative STEVEN HORSFORD.

Mr. HORSFORD. To my colleague and dear friend, the Representative from the 8th Congressional District of New York, it's good to join you for this hour of power to talk directly to our constituents and the American people about the priorities that we're focused on here in the United States House of Representatives and that we hope our colleagues on the other side will join with us to advance.

Today, we bring to the focus of this body the need to invest in opportunity through education. A pathway to a college education is a pathway into the middle class. And as a panel that was just convened, moderated by Wade Henderson, entitled, "For Each and Every Child," they indicated that, while a post-high school education is not an economic cure-all, it does provide a steppingstone to a good job and stable wages.

Now, every parent should be able to count on a good education for his or her children. As a father of three young children, I'm very focused on what my children need in the opportunities to advance in their lives and to be successful, as every parent is focused on, but, unfortunately, it is not always the case.

We need to refocus the conversation on educational opportunity, as my colleague, Mr. JEFFRIES, just indicated, and making sure that our children's future is not determined by a ZIP Code. Our schools should not be structured like a lottery system where some luck out and others strike out—to continue with your analogy, Mr. JEFFRIES.

Poor kids who are exceptional should be the norm, not the exception to the rule. They deserve the resources they need to be successful; and that's what we, on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus, are bringing forward here today.

In order to fix what's wrong right now, we need to change the way we think about our schools, because it's not simply schools that teach our students; it's actually the entire community. It is a community effort.

In 2011, 78 percent of high school graduates from high-income families enrolled in college. The shares for middle- and low-income families were 63 and 55 percent, respectfully. We have to work to close this gap and open a pathway to college for all students.

Now, today, we will hear from our colleagues who share with this need to

invest in education. We would like to talk about the particular issue that's affecting our Black men and boys in education. We want to focus on the need to grow more science and math majors. We know we need to invest in pre-K, and we want to outline our priorities as they compare to the Republican budget that's been offered by the other side.

And so as we enter into this hour of power to talk about education, I hope that we can cover these topics and others, and I look forward to this discussion.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, let me now yield to a great fighter for education and for social and economic justice here in the Congress and in this Nation, the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD).

□ 1640

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Let me thank you, Mr. JEFFRIES, for yielding me this time, and thank you for your leadership here in the House of Representatives.

Since you have arrived here in the House, you have just done extraordinary work. You've taken the time to come to this floor and to educate and inform the masses of our people about the great, important issues facing our Nation. So I want to thank you for all of your work.

I also thank Mr. HORSFORD, the other gentleman who has taken the time to convene this special hour of presentations. I want to thank you for all of the work that you do. You are both freshmen, but you have the personalities and the abilities of someone who has been in this body for many years, so thank you very much.

The Congressional Black Caucus this evening has chosen to talk about the important subject of education. I am a strong supporter—a proponent—of strong public education. Mr. Speaker, there is no investment that we can make as a country that is more important than investing in children and investing in their education and in their higher education.

Regrettably, there are some people in this body who think otherwise. They may say that they don't think otherwise, but their actions demonstrate every day that they do not have a strong commitment to supporting our educational system in this country. There are even some Members of this Chamber who, regrettably, have said from time to time that they want to defund and eliminate the U.S. Department of Education. They feel that the educational responsibility of government belongs to the States and not to the Federal Government. That is so unfortunate, but I want to encourage all of us who serve in this body to work together and stay together and to try to promote public education in every way that we can.

Now, Mr. JEFFRIES, I cannot speak about the State of New York with any

authority or about the borough of Brooklyn—I know you do that very well in that you've been there for many years—but I can speak to my home State of North Carolina.

We have a demonstrated record of commitment and excellence in public education, both at the elementary and high school levels, as well as at the college level. We started way back in 1868 when our constitution was enacted. In the State constitution, we made sure that there was a provision that guaranteed a public education for every child in our State. Ensuring that our students have access to quality education has long been a principle of my State and of those that I associate with. So I have firsthand knowledge of our educational system. I know about the dedicated educators that we have in North Carolina, and I want to just encourage them and thank them for their service, and I urge them to keep on doing what they're doing.

Mr. Speaker, I came from a family of educators. My mother was a classroom teacher. She taught school for 48 long years. Many people want to know how a single person could be in the classroom for that long, but my response is that, during those days, you did not need a college degree in order to be a classroom teacher—only a passionate commitment and a high school diploma.

I understand the importance of education, but even the most devoted and capable educators must have the resources to provide our children with quality education. We now face a defining moment for future generations of Americans in which some Republicans want to fix this budget by cutting funding for our students in schools. At the same time, we continue to be outpaced by other countries that continue to increase their educational investments.

In this country, the world's most prosperous Nation, 25 percent of our children do not graduate from high school. More than 90 million adults have inadequate literacy skills. The numbers are even more startling for low-income children and African American children, many of whom live in my district. Less than 8 percent of students in advanced placement math or science courses are African American. Fewer than half of African American students graduate from high school on time, and that must change.

Despite these statistics, data show that investments in educational programs like Title I and IDEA and Race to the Top and Head Start and TRIO are instrumental in preparing our students to compete globally, but draconian cuts through sequestration have rolled back discretionary Education Department funding below the 2004 level and have gutted many of those programs.

My State will lose \$25 million in funding for primary and secondary education this year; 38,000 fewer students will be served in my State; and 350 edu-

cation jobs will be in danger. The Ronald McNair TRIO program for doctoral students from disadvantaged backgrounds, which was cut at Elizabeth City State University, is just one example. Many State legislatures, including that of my State, are cutting State education budgets at the same time. We must find ways to address our fiscal challenges without placing the burden on our children and our teachers.

While our goal must be to ultimately reauthorize the ESEA and the Higher Education Act, there are many ways we can help right now. We must preserve the maximum Pell Grant and keep interest rates on student loans low to enable low-income students to attend college. We must sustain funding for Race to the Top grants. In North Carolina, those grants have developed stronger curriculum in math and science, and they are working. They have strengthened teacher training and improved early childhood education.

Finally—and I will close—we must also protect other STEM funding streams through funding for NSF and NIH, which support innovative research in my district at Duke University, East Carolina University, Elizabeth City State University, and at my alma mater of North Carolina Central University. We must also support bills like H.R. 595, the Veterans Education Equity Act, which I introduced to resolve an inequity in existing law that unintentionally allots more education funds to veterans who are enrolled in private colleges than those in public institutions.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is that education must be a priority. We must seize every opportunity to increase support for public education and not decrease it. Public education should be off-limits to budget cuts.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the gentleman from North Carolina for his extremely insightful comments and for his leadership on this issue.

We have also been joined by another dynamic member of the freshman class, who has taken the Capitol by storm with her intelligence and elegance. We are thankful for her leadership. Let me yield to the distinguished gentlelady from Ohio, Representative JOYCE BEATTY.

Mrs. BEATTY. I would like to join my other colleagues in thanking my freshman class members Mr. JEFFRIES and Mr. HORSFORD for leading the Congressional Black Caucus' discussion on this critical issue.

I rise today to be an advocate for improving access to quality education for minority students and to discuss the government's role in breaking down economic barriers for educational opportunity.

You see, I know firsthand how important government assistance is for opportunity and quality education. I know that it makes a difference because, when my brother and I entered college—first-generation college grad-

uates in our family—we realized early on that we needed to do something with public education: it was government funding; it was access to a quality education; but more importantly, it was folks like Congressmen JEFFRIES and HORSFORD making a difference in our lives. But now we see there is still a significant number of hurdles that prevent many Americans from obtaining a quality education. Financial literacy, access to financial aid, quality education all play a critical role and must be a part of this national discussion.

I'm from the great State of Ohio. Last year, Ohio ranked seventh in the country for student debt, with the average student carrying \$28,683 in debt. I also know that the growing student loan is a burden in this country and makes it more difficult for families to achieve future financial security. If left unaddressed, it will affect us negatively over our broader economy. Currently, there are approximately 37 million student loan borrowers with outstanding student loans. These statistics threaten access to quality education and must be addressed.

One way to improve access to quality education, as I hope you will hear repeatedly tonight, is through the Pell Grant. Again, I know firsthand because, you see, when I was going to college, the Pell Grant in the early years was called the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant. There is that word again.

□ 1650

By receiving that, it gave me that opportunity that propelled me. And now, my sisters who follow me are all educators. My mother, like Congressman BUTTERFIELD's mother, served many years, until she retired, going into public schools as a reading specialist assistant where she helped so many children understand the quality of that education and how reading and speaking would make a difference.

So you see, Pell Grants have been the cornerstone in the lives of many minorities seeking higher education and have provided more than \$4 billion to African American college students each year. Without the Pell Grant program, hundreds of thousands of minority students would not be able to afford to go to college.

I've also had the experience of working as a leader in a 4-year institution in our great State, the largest single campus university in this country, Ohio State University. I am proud to say that they are strong advocates for us making sure that we continue to put dollars into the Pell Grant so children of all races, ethnicity and color will be able to have that quality education.

That is why the escalating cost of education acutely affects students of all color and their access to a quality

education. We need to also improve quality education by promoting STEM programs, STEM programs that build a pipeline of a highly skilled workforce for today's high-tech and industrial jobs.

Last year, African Americans received just 7 percent of STEM-related bachelor's degrees, 4 percent of master's degrees and only 2 percent of doctorates. American colleges and universities are poised to produce about 3 million science, engineer, technology and math STEM majors over the next decade. However, there has only been a 2 percent to 3 percent increase of African Americans in STEM professions over the past year.

So, you see, we come tonight to ask this body, this Congress to be supportive of making sure that children, and especially minority children, African American children, be able to be our Jackie Robinsons, as we have today with our two leaders who stand here today as our Jackie Robinsons of scholarship.

With that, I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to come today.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished Congresswoman from Ohio.

I note the connection to Ohio State University that we share in my family. My brother is a professor of history at Ohio State's great institution. Your contribution to opening up opportunities for people of color and all students at such a great public university is noted.

It is important, I think, for this institution to take a look at several of the issues that you've raised, Congresswoman, that Representative HORSFORD and I will shortly explore.

The debt situation is particularly troublesome, and I'm going to ask the gentleman from Nevada if he would make a few observations in connection to what Representative BEATTY noted is a student-loan problem that we have here in America.

Now, the interesting thing is that during the 110-plus days that we all as freshmen have been in this Chamber, we've heard a lot of talk about the moral imperative of dealing with the debt situation that we confront in America. And every time we're about to hit the debt ceiling, there are some in this Chamber who have said that we should perhaps default to send a message that some in this country apparently are reckless with their spending habits.

Now, parenthetically, this is, of course, a complete mischaracterization of what the debt ceiling actually represents. It's not a forward-looking vehicle designed to give the President the opportunity to spend more. It's a backward-looking vehicle designed to allow this administration, or any administration, to pay bills that this Congress has already incurred.

But whenever we talk about the debt, my friends on the other side of the aisle raise it as a moral imperative. I think the fact that we've got student

loan debt in America that now exceeds, as the chart illustrates, more than \$1 trillion is really what imperils future generations in this country. You've got young people saddled with, on average, in excess of \$25,000 per person in debt facing a tough job market, with the inability often to find employment in their field of endeavor, to start a family, to purchase a home, the things that traditionally have been associated with pursuit of the American Dream.

The prescription that has been put forth by the other side, as it relates to how to alleviate this debt connected to students, is very different than the one that, I think, we on this side of the aisle have chosen to offer.

Let me now yield to the gentleman from Nevada if he might elaborate on our CBC vision for how to deal with the student loan problem or the education of young people in America.

Mr. HORSFORD. I say thank you to my colleague from New York.

Before I elaborate further, let me say that first you have to understand that there is a problem in order to address the problem. I think far too often some of our colleagues on the other side fail to recognize the fact that so many families who are struggling to help their students obtain a college degree are having to do so through student loans and rely greatly on Pell Grants for that assistance. Maybe it's because they don't have that same experience that they don't understand why these are important.

This is what the House Republican budget would mean for those very programs that you're talking about. First, the Republican budget freezes the maximum Pell Grant for the next 10 years, even though Congress already enacted and paid for mandatory annual inflationary increases in 2010. With this one step, they slash higher education funding by \$83 billion.

The House Republican budget allows the interest rate on need-based student loans to double this summer.

The House Republican budget eliminates the income-based repayment program, which provides that Federal student loan borrowers can cap their loan payments at 15 percent, going down to 10 percent in 2014 of their discretionary income each year.

The reason that this is so important is because of constituents like the ones I spoke to on Sunday in my district. We were talking about the immigration issue. But as we were discussing that, many of them came to me and said, Well, you know what? I've had to borrow \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000 in student loans to acquire this degree, and I'm now working in the field I'm in, but unfortunately it's taking \$1,000, \$1,500, \$2,000 a month of my income to pay back those student loans.

At the very time these families are struggling to do that, the Republican budget proposes to slash it further. Not only does it slash support for individuals and families who rely on student loans, as I said, they also freeze the

maximum Pell Grant, which so many low-income families and students desperately depend on.

This is a real issue, and it's a real difference. That is why we are here today to bring attention to the differences between the two sides. I hope that as we move forward, we can find common ground.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say something, because sometimes I know when we talk about the needs of educating Black children, that people will say, What about other communities? My answer to that is that if we can help improve the education for Black children in America, we will improve education for all children in America, whether they be Latino or White or Asian.

□ 1700

And so that is why we need to have an investment in education in America, not to defund, not to slash, not to reduce or not to freeze funding, but to invest in the very things that we know work and that will improve the successes for young people to succeed in life.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the gentleman from the Silver State for those very astute observations. As Representative HORSFORD has pointed out, a budget essentially is a choice and a pathway forward that people in this Chamber are making decisions on based on what they see as best for America. And the Republican budget that was passed by this House, as Representative HORSFORD has indicated, in total would cut \$168 billion in spending on higher education. That's a value choice, to walk away from young people in America, young people who already are being saddled with in excess of \$1 trillion in debt in total.

Now, what else does that budget do? Well, it says that we're going to take the top tax rate, which is 39.6 for millionaires and billionaires, the wealthiest and the well off, and we want to slash that tax rate down to 25 percent. So we're going to cut education spending for, among other reasons, to cut further the taxes paid by the wealthy and the well off in this country. That is a choice that is bad for America. It's bad for the middle class. It's bad for working families, and it's bad for our future.

We have been joined by the distinguished gentleman from Virginia, an expert in all matters pertaining to the budget in this Congress, among other things. Representative BOBBY SCOTT is an expert on the CBC budget, in the budgets that have come out of this House of Representatives, and it is my honor and privilege to now yield to him.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I thank the gentleman for yielding and thank him for his leadership on this issue and many other issues that he's been working on while we've been serving on the Judiciary Committee together.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an issue that is important to our

society, and that is access to higher education. Our Nation's economic competitiveness depends on our ability to educate our next generation. We compete with nations all over the world for business, and our competitive advantage is in our education.

We're not going to compete on low wages. There are people who'll work for much lower wages than we'll work for in the United States, and so we're not going to win the battle of a race to the bottom on wages.

We're not going to win the battle by requiring workers to work near their coworkers. If you can work across the hall from your coworkers, if you have a computer, a modem, a fax machine, a cell phone, if you can work across the hall, you can work across the globe. So there's no urgency to have people located here in the United States.

And if you can manufacture goods anywhere in the world, you can have them delivered anywhere else in the world, so you don't have to be there to be close to your customers. There used to be a time where if you wanted to build a manufacturing plant, to get financing it had to be here in the United States. Now we have worldwide banking. You can build that plant anywhere in the world.

The reason businesses want to locate in the United States is because they know they can get a well trained and well-educated workforce, and we need to make sure that we don't fall behind because that is our economic competitive advantage.

We know that neighborhoods rely on education because those neighborhoods that have high investment in education are much less likely to suffer from crime and pay for social services.

We know that individuals benefit from education. There's an old adage that the more you learn, the more you earn. The kind of job that you can get in America today in our high-tech, information-based economy depends on the education that you get. In fact, according to the Department of Labor, 90 percent of the fastest growing, best-paying jobs in the United States will require at least some education past the high school level. Not necessarily a 4-year college, maybe community college or career education, but some education past the high school level.

And while the benefits of getting an education are important and well known, how to get that education is becoming a challenge. People have to pay for that education. Many people apply for financial aid. That includes scholarships, loans, grants, and also the well known Pell Grant. The Pell Grant provides up to \$5,500 a year for an education. Unfortunately for many students, although the Pell Grant used to cover the cost of tuition, rarely does it provide tuition today. In fact, the College Board suggested the average cost of tuition is over \$10,000. Many public colleges charge as much as \$22,000, so a student has to come up with as much as \$15,000 over the Pell

Grant to be able to afford tuition and room and board.

In most circumstances, students can obtain student loans to cover the difference. It is also critical that students know what they're getting into when they take on student loans because these are not grants. These are loans that have to be paid back with interest.

We've been helping students with these loans. In fact, when we passed the Affordable Care Act a couple of years ago, we included \$1.5 billion to strengthen the income-based repayment program that currently allows students to cap their monthly student loan payments to 15 percent of their discretionary income. We need to do more.

The College Cost Reduction and Access Act, which was signed in 2007, included a reduction in interest on student loans from 6.8 percent down to 3.4 percent. That expired last year but we extended it, and we need to extend it again and even make it permanent so that the loan interest rate doesn't go up again.

There is other legislation spending. Congresswoman KAREN BASS has a 10/10 program that will allow payments to be made of 10 percent of your discretionary income for 10 years, and the rest can be written off. There are other things that are pending.

But Mr. Speaker, we need to make sure that every student that studies and is prepared for college has that opportunity. We need to make sure that no student is discouraged from enhancing their education because they don't believe they can afford it. We need to do what we can for student loans, increasing Pell Grants, and making those opportunities real. Our Nation depends on it. Our neighborhoods depend on it, and our next generation depends on it. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank Representative SCOTT. We both sit on the Judiciary Committee, and in the context of our service on the Judiciary Committee, we will be presented with an opportunity to deal with the issue of comprehensive immigration reform. Already two hearings have been held on this matter.

One of the issues that has consistently come up is the need to increase the number of H-1B visas for highly skilled immigrants in the STEM field—science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

□ 1710

The technology-and-innovation economy and sector in this country have taken off, and there are actually opportunities. Some estimate approximately 20 percent of the workforce has openings in the technology-and-innovation sector that many would like to see filled by opening up the opportunities for highly skilled immigrants. It's an approach that I think shares bipartisan support.

But, simultaneously, many of us believe that, as a country, we must also

invest in STEM education for our children and our young people to make sure that, moving forward, they have the opportunity to develop careers in the STEM fields in a manner that will benefit themselves, their families, their communities and, by extension, the country.

And so before I yield to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey, I believe that Representative HORSFORD had an observation or two to make in the area of the need to invest in STEM education.

Mr. HORSFORD. Thank you, Representative JEFFRIES. And you provided the clear nexus.

While the Congressional Black Caucus, working with our colleagues from the Hispanic Caucus and the Asian Pacific Islander Caucus, supports comprehensive immigration reform, including provisions that allow the best and the brightest from around the country to immigrate to the United States and to contribute to making our country great, we also believe that there should be investment here in the United States to educate those of us here for these careers in the 21st century.

Colleges and universities in our country will produce 3 million STEM majors in the next 10 years. Still, according to a 2012 report by the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, our economy will demand more students graduating with STEM degrees than we are currently providing.

So what can we do?

We need to increase funding in STEM education and follow the lead of many of our Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic-serving institutions which are producing a greater share of students with STEM degrees.

Among HBCUs, currently, they produce about 19 percent of all STEM bachelor degrees, 38 percent of which are in the biological sciences, 31 percent in math, 35 percent in computer science, 34 percent in the physical sciences, and 22 percent in engineering.

Now, the Obama administration has requested more investment for STEM teachers and additional funds to expand effective models of teacher preparation to help train 10,000 STEM educators per year. That's what the President's budget proposes. Those are the same priorities, they are the right priorities, and they're the priorities that the Congressional Black Caucus agrees need to be supported by this Congress.

We need to invest in teachers that will train students for jobs in the 21st century. But let me be clear: you can't expect students to graduate with degrees in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology if we're not doing more to invest in pre-K and to help students start with a strong foundation. And that's why the President has a historic level of investment in his budget for early childhood education and pre-K.

We enroll most kids in this country at 5 or 6 years old. We should be starting them earlier; 50 years of research

tell us that critical development and learning happen before the age of five. When schooling starts at kindergarten or first grade, it denies these young people chances to make the most of this critical period.

Fundamentally reforming our education system begins with high-quality pre-kindergarten programs. In my opinion, pre-kindergarten is an antidote for the achievement gap. In cases where our kindergarten teachers are getting kids who've had, in some cases, 2 years of early education, they're seeing that the achievement gap has stopped or been narrowed. That's why we need to invest in programs like Head Start so that we don't have to play catch-up later or deny these young, bright minds the opportunities to go into the fields of the 21st century.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is an and/also strategy, not an either/or. We believe that we can invest in both early childhood education, K-12 education and higher education, not cut, slash or deny these opportunities to America's children. These are our priorities, and it's what we'll continue to fight for for all of America's children.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Thank you, Representative HORSFORD. And as was noted earlier, the CBC believes that there are children all across America, in many inner-city communities, certainly in the neighborhoods that I represent back home in Brooklyn and places like Bedford-Stuyvesant and east New York and parts of Coney Island, where the public school system has failed them for decades, generation after generation after generation subjected to a broken public school system, from a very early point, all the way through high school.

And unless we invest in turning these broken systems around, we're essentially at risk of dooming young people to life sentences of disadvantage and despair. That's why the CBC supports the President's proposal in his budget to invest an additional \$75 billion over a 10-year period, as Representative HORSFORD indicated, in early childhood education to make sure that we give every American child the opportunity to be successful by putting them on an even plane with those who get the benefit of a first-rate public or private school education.

I want to yield to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey, another dynamic member of the freshman class, Representative DONALD PAYNE, Jr., who was a leader on education issues prior to arriving in the Congress, and he's continued to demonstrate leadership in this area and in other areas moving forward.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues, Congressman HORSFORD of Nevada and Congressman JEFFRIES of New York, for anchoring tonight's CBC Special Order on improving access to quality education.

The recession, the economy, violence and gun control, the security of our Nation, these are the pressing issues

being debated across this great Nation today. However, efforts to address the issues are being undermined by our Nation's educational deficit.

John F. Kennedy said that "our progress as a Nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource."

True to this statement are struggles that we face as a Nation because of our divestment in our human mind and potential. In the past, the U.S. led the world in several categories, including college graduates and innovation. Unfortunately, there has been a rapid decline in our ranking in these areas that directly correlates to the strength of this Nation.

Among these things, the U.S. has dropped considerably in academic rankings, compared to other developed nations. About 33 percent of our Nation's fourth-grade students are proficient readers. Nearly 7,000 students drop out of high school daily, and about a third of first-year American college students are required to take at least one remedial course.

Globally, our rankings have fallen of our students in reading to 14th; in science, to 17th; and in mathematics, to 25th. Despite these daunting statistics, the U.S. continues to lead the world in competitiveness, patents, media, mobile and research universities. But imagine the leadership that we could hold in the world if we strengthened our investment in education.

Our Nation continues to be at a loss due to the untapped potential of our students, especially students of color and low income.

□ 1720

For this particular population, the statistics are even more daunting, but the potential is greater as well. Forty-two percent of Black students attend schools that are under-resourced and performing poorly. Twenty-eight percent of core academic teachers at high-minority schools lack the appropriate certification. Black children, especially boys, are more likely to be classified and placed in special education than their white counterparts. Black and Hispanic males constitute 82 percent of the youth in special education programs. Black boys are 2.5 times less likely to be enrolled in talented and gifted programs, even if their prior achievement reflects the ability to succeed.

Yet despite these demoralizing facts, despite the failure of the American education system to properly educate these students, nearly 3 million college students in America are African American. And only 13 percent of the U.S. population, Black students represent 15 percent of the college student population.

Currently, these are beating the odds; but imagine how we could develop and succeed as a Nation if we changed the odds for these students

and closed the opportunity gap. What if we strengthened our education system and allowed all children to reach their full potential? What if we fostered an environment of innovation and leadership for this Nation's outcomes in all communities equally?

We have long held the solutions to address these issues, but they aren't coordinated or connected. We have the potential to reach new heights as a Nation, but it requires a stronger education system as well as effective solutions and resources to change the odds for our children in the most distressed communities.

I will be introducing the Promise Neighborhoods Act soon to do just that. The Promise Neighborhoods initiative represents an unprecedented effort to work across silos and develop a comprehensive cradle-to-career pipeline for children in distressed neighborhoods to holistically address barriers to success. The Promise Neighborhoods Act would foster continued collaboration on the local level to build similar pipelines in communities across this country.

The pipeline of tightly woven, comprehensive support for children emphasized in the Promise Neighborhoods Act would provide, among other things: prenatal education and support for expecting parents;

high-quality early childhood education opportunities, including full-day, full-year kindergarten and pre-kindergarten;

high-quality schools that successfully leverage out-of-school time and community engagement;

support for the transition to elementary school, between elementary school and middle school, and from middle school to high school;

meaningful family engagement and capacity-building;

college and career readiness activities, including college counseling, subsidized employment opportunities, and early college programs;

neighborhood-based support for college-age students from the neighborhood.

This model engages the community to collaborate and end fragmented delivery of programs to develop a pipeline for programs with demonstrated success. This model aims to eliminate the opportunity gap for low-income children and children of color and set a new standard for education and success in this country.

Though not realized, our Nation holds a great deal of underdeveloped potential, and it lies within our human capital. Investing in education will strengthen our Nation as a whole and position us to once again lead the world. Education is the single investment that can unequivocally develop our economy and strengthen our future.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I want to thank the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey for his very astute observations.

Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining on this Special Order?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has approximately 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I thank the Representative from New Jersey for making it clear that all children in this country deserve the opportunity to be part of a pipeline toward progress and prosperity, even though some, unfortunately, have been subjected to circumstances that often lead to a pipeline from the schoolhouse to the jailhouse. That's not how things should be anywhere in America. And that's why we believe a robust investment in education is the right way to go in this country.

I'm going to ask the distinguished gentleman from the Silver State for his observations on this chart. The chart illustrates that education pays. If you invest in education, increase the level of degree of attainment, what it does is increase the capacity for Americans to earn a better living.

And so, for example, for Americans who have less than a high school diploma, their average weekly earning is \$451. But someone with a high school diploma earns, on average, \$638 per week. And someone with a bachelor's degree earns, on average, \$1,053 per week. If you give an American an advanced degree, their average earnings per week increase to in excess of \$1,600.

Investing in education pays for the American people.

I yield to my distinguished colleague from Nevada.

Mr. HORSFORD. Just to elaborate further on this point, education attainment is an economic imperative. Not only is it the investment in the individual that proves great dividends and a return on investment, but the failure to invest, based on the bottom line in red, for someone with less than a high school diploma the likelihood of them being unemployed is 14 percent. For those with a high school diploma who are unemployed, it's 9.4 percent. If you have a bachelor's degree, the unemployment rate drops in half, to 4.9 percent. And if you have a professional degree, the unemployment rate is 2.4 percent.

So the correlation is clear that with education attainment come economic prosperity, opportunity, and a return on investment that is good for that individual, their ability to provide for themselves and their family, and for our entire country.

And so, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about investment, we're not talking about investments in programs or systems. We're talking about investments in people. When we talk about Head Start, we're talking about 3- and 4-year-old children. When we talk about title 1 funding, we're talking about schools and children that are identified as having low-income needs and the disadvantaged. When we talk about funding for IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, we're talk-

ing about individuals. And the more that we can invest in the individuals in America, the greater return we will have in the productivity of that individual, their family, the community they live in. And that will make for a stronger America for all of us. That is what we are aspiring to accomplish in this 113th Congress.

We want to work with our colleagues on the other side. Where they can meet us in the middle to find solutions to make these investments, we look forward to working with them. But one thing we will not do is to slash, defund, or freeze the investment of the American children and the American family.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the gentleman from Nevada. We will not, as he indicated, support any budget that balances itself on the backs of children or young people or college students in America. Unfortunately, that is the budget that has been put forth by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. We support a balanced approach to dealing with the economic problems that we have in this country that involves the investment in education. That is what we stand for. That's what is good for America.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it has been over 60 years since the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* desegregated our schools. Yet an achievement and opportunity gap remains among our minority and low-income students.

As Members of Congress who represent communities of color, the purpose of today's special order is to highlight an economic and social crisis America faces if this problem is not confronted and significant measures are not taken. Particularly, we must focus our efforts on closing the gap in the STEM disciplines. As the First Female and First African American Ranking Member of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee, this is an issue that is very serious to me and has been one of the pillars of my legislative agenda in the United States Congress for over 20 years.

Ensuring minorities are proficient in STEM is more than just a question of equity. We have a vast, untapped pool of talent in America, and this pool is continuing to grow. It is estimated that, by 2050, 52 percent of the U.S. population will be from underrepresented minority groups. Our "Nation's Report Card," by the National Assessments of Educational Progress, shows that students from underrepresented minorities are falling behind in math and science as early as 4th grade.

At the Post Secondary level, even though students from underrepresented minorities made up about 33 percent of the college age population in 2009, they only made up: 19 percent of students who received an undergraduate STEM degrees Less than 9 percent of students enrolled in science and engineering graduate programs, and; Barely 8 percent of students who received PhDs in STEM fields. Frankly, all of these numbers are much too low.

I also must underscore the important role that community colleges play in providing to STEM degrees for minority students. 50 per-

cent of African Americans, 55 percent of Hispanics, and 64 percent of Native Americans who hold bachelor's or master's degrees in science or engineering attended a community college at some point. We cannot afford to ignore the role of community colleges.

We have to drastically increase the number of African American students from these groups receiving degrees in STEM disciplines, or we will undoubtedly relinquish our global leadership in innovation and job creation. We know school administrators, teachers, community leaders, public-private partnerships and parents all play a critical role in addressing this issue. No one person or organization can do it alone. We must all work together to leverage our respective strengths and resources to tackle this challenge.

For example, the corporate community was highly involved supporting a bill I co-authored, the America COMPETES Act. As many of you are aware, I recently introduced the STEM Opportunities Act of 2013 this March. The STEM Opportunities Act of 2013 will help address many of the challenges faced by women and underrepresented minorities pursuing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) research careers by:

Requiring the National Science Foundation (NSF) to collect more comprehensive demographic data on the recipients of federal research awards and on STEM faculty at U.S. universities (while protecting individuals' privacy); Promoting data-driven research on the participation and trajectories of women and underrepresented minorities in STEM so that policy makers can design more effective policies and practices to reduce barriers; And developing, through the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), consistent federal policies, such as no-cost extensions and flexibility in timing for the initiation of the award, for recipients of federal research awards who have caregiving responsibilities, including care for a newborn or newly adopted child and care for an immediate family member who is sick.

We're all in this together, and working together I know we can achieve great success.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 527, RESPONSIBLE HELIUM ADMINISTRATION AND STEWARDSHIP ACT

Mr. BISHOP of Utah (during the Special Order of Mr. JEFFRIES), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113-47) on the resolution (H. Res. 178) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 527) to amend the Helium Act to complete the privatization of the Federal helium reserve in a competitive market fashion that ensures stability in the helium markets while protecting the interests of American taxpayers, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

□ 1730

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the