

understand the challenges of our educators today.

While we ask our teachers to prepare our children to meet the challenges of the 21st century, we must also give them the tools to rise to these challenges. Competitive salaries and financial resources must be provided so that they can recruit the very best teachers in science, technology, engineering, math, and the arts.

While we honor our teachers this week, let's not forget the services they do for our children every day. Let us join together in recognizing teachers across this country.

WORKING FAMILIES FLEXIBILITY ACT

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

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, as a father and a grandfather, I am fully aware of the responsibilities and challenge of balancing a vocation and job responsibilities with taking care of the needs of my family. Mr. Speaker, that challenge is even greater today for American hardworking families who have to address the needs of their young children or perhaps aging parents who live nearby.

For almost 30 years, we have allowed this flexibility and option for those who work for the government to have the choice between taking comp pay or taking additional pay for additional work that they have to perform. Wouldn't it be great if we would do the same thing for those who are in the private sector? For some reason, we haven't allowed that.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I'm supporting the Working Families Flexibility Act. We need to pass this today in the United States Congress to give the same privileges, rights, and options to those in the private sector as we allow in the public sector.

THE SO-CALLED WORKING FAMILIES FLEXIBILITY ACT

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

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Today is just a few days before Mother's Day, and the House Republican leadership has this House considering the so-called Working Families Flexibility Act on the floor.

This bill is no Mother's Day bouquet, but instead it amounts to a bunch of dead flowers. It denies working mothers—like my mother, who still works today as a secretary and is a part of our middle class—and other hardworking Americans the flexibility they need. This bill only gives flexibility to employers.

Under this misguided legislation, employers would have the flexibility to substitute compensation time for over-

time pay. This legislation makes it less expensive for employees to work overtime, encouraging employers to demand more overtime, leading to more work and less pay.

Instead, we should be voting on priorities for working families like equal pay for all, raising the minimum wage, and giving hardworking Americans true flexibility. Unfortunately, the majority just does not understand the needs of working Americans.

Today, I will be voting "no" on H.R. 1406 because I will defend hardworking moms like my mom and others who rely often on overtime pay to make ends meet.

I urge my colleagues to stand up for working families. Vote "no" on H.R. 1406 and give working moms what they deserve this Mother's Day, which is equal pay for equal work.

THE IMMIGRATION BILL THREATENS PUBLIC SAFETY

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Center for Immigration Studies has analyzed the Senate immigration bill and found it threatens public safety. For example:

The bill allows the legalization of illegal immigrants who have been convicted of three misdemeanors, including multiple offenses for drunk driving, vehicular homicide, domestic violence, certain sex offenses, and identity theft;

It requires immigration agencies to ignore convictions under State laws for immigrant smuggling and human trafficking;

It waives criminal offenses for anyone under 18, even if the offender was tried as an adult; and

Anyone simply claiming eligibility for any legalization program may not be detained and need not show proof of eligibility.

So the Senate bill threatens American safety, which is another reason it should be opposed.

□ 1230

GIVING NIAGARA FALLS THE WATERFRONT IT DESERVES

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, this week's announcement that New York State is committing to take action on removing the Robert Moses Parkway in Niagara Falls is welcome news for western New York. Niagara Falls is a national treasure, drawing millions of visitors each year, yet the parkway has created a physical and economic barrier between Niagara Falls and its extraordinary waterfront.

With Federal infrastructure dollars already stretched thin, we must take every opportunity to look at alter-

native funding sources. In this case, the New York Power Authority, the body responsible for the creation of the parkway and the current owner of its infrastructure, has the responsibility and the capacity to fund its removal.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot let the New York Power Authority off the hook on this historic wrong. By holding them to this obligation, we free up State and Federal resources for additional projects in Niagara Falls, maximizing the impact of our investment. It's time for Niagara Falls to have the waterfront it deserves.

WORKING FAMILIES FLEXIBILITY ACT

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

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, in our recovering economy today, we have many families that have two working parents, each juggling their careers, coordinating children at school and extracurricular activities, parent-teacher meetings, and other work obligations. For so many Americans, balancing these important demands of family and work proves to be extremely difficult and oftentimes exhausting.

That is why I rise today in support of giving private sector employees the same flexibility and choice to balance their careers and home lives that public sector employees have enjoyed for the past 30 years.

The Working Families Flexibility Act simply gives employees a choice that already exists for public employees; and if passed, this commonsense legislation would correct an outdated Federal law and help give all employees more options to take care of family obligations.

Mr. Speaker, during our continued economic recovery, at a time when it is difficult for Americans to see Washington come together and pass bipartisan, positive solutions, let's show them that we understand times are difficult for many and pass the Working Families Flexibility Act of 2013.

HONORING BROTHERHOOD OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND TRAINMEN

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

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 150th anniversary of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, North America's oldest rail labor union. Since its founding on May 8, 1863, the BLET has always played a critical role in the transportation of people and goods throughout our Nation.

As America expanded westward, locomotive engineers and trainmen led the way. Our men and women on the railroads connected two oceans and opened up the new frontier.

Today, U.S. railroads transport 2.5 trillion metric tons a year. As we expand into new technology and high-speed rail, locomotive engineers will continue to propel the American economy forward.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen now counts 55,000 active and retired members among its ranks. These are the men and women who work around the clock to literally make the trains run on time.

In recognition of the 150th anniversary of the Brotherhood, I ask my colleagues to join me in passing a resolution to honor them for their contributions in growing this great Nation.

WORKING FAMILIES FLEXIBILITY ACT

(Mrs. WAGNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make life work a little easier for moms and dads in the St. Louis region. I rise today on behalf of every parent who wished they had more time to spend with their children or more time to care for a parent or a loved one. I rise today to level the playing field for all private sector employees so they receive the same flexibility public sector employees have enjoyed for nearly 30 years.

That is why I cosponsored the Working Families Flexibility Act of 2013, which allows employees the choice, voluntary choice, of paid time off or comp time in lieu of cash wages for overtime. The Working Families Flexibility Act is commonsense legislation that will help balance the needs of family life and the workplace, and I urge my colleagues to support this measure and make life work a little easier for all Americans.

REPEAL SEQUESTRATION

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

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Speaker, we've heard the words "sequestration" and "sequester" so often they've now become household terms. But when the Budget Control Act of 2011 became law, no one intended that sequestration would take place. In fact, everyone thought it would be so devastating that neither political party would let it stand. Well, Mr. Speaker, it stands.

At every opportunity to repeal sequestration, it has not happened. Yet we know Congress can act to address the impacts if it hits the front page of the paper. Our Republican colleagues did so for the FAA. But it is now time for us to ask: What about the children's Head Start program? What about FEMA for the victims of Hurricane Sandy? What about nutrition for women and children, also called WIC?

We need to compromise on these and other major programs, just like for the

FAA. We need Republicans to come to the table for the benefit of the people.

Wouldn't it be great if we could finally repeal sequestration?

GROWING JOBS IN AMERICA

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, just a few hours ago we had an opportunity to welcome the President of South Korea to this great body to listen to her words about how America, through not only our foreign policy but also with our United States military, helped South Korea to overcome the forces of Communism from the north and from China.

We heard the President speak about the economic growth and vitality of her people, of the Korean people who want more and better friendship with America. But the underlying theme was economic freedom—freedom for her people, freedom for people to make their own decisions. This is consistent with the message that we heard from the last head of a foreign government speaker we had, from Mexico, who spoke about how Mexico is going to aim for GDP growth of 6 percent.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we here in America catch on to what our allies are doing all across the globe, and that is seeking economic freedom, economic growth, and jobs for all of their people. We should be doing the same thing in this country. Mr. Speaker, that's why the Republican Party is trying to grow jobs and make sure life is better for Americans now.

STUDENT AID EXPANSION ACT

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

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, over the last 4 months, I have been proud to work towards building out what I have called the Infrastructure of Opportunity for our Nation. Recently, I had the opportunity to file legislation to reinforce one of the major cornerstones of that infrastructure: access to colleges and universities.

A few weeks ago, I filed the Student Aid Expansion Act of 2013 that will provide higher education students increased access to affordable financial aid. As we've all witnessed across our districts, the cost of tuition continues to rise. In Texas, for example, tuition and fees at public institutions have increased over 90 percent since 2003.

Meanwhile, students and families are left looking for ways to keep their higher education affordable. Over the last 10 years, we have seen students rely more heavily on loans to finance their education. Fifty-two percent of direct student aid now comes in the form of loans.

The Student Aid Expansion Act of 2013 would remove barriers that are

currently preventing our institutions of higher education from promoting affordable, State-based alternatives. These types of loans are zero interest and can be fully forgiven if a student does well in school. Importantly, this legislation will not cost Federal, State, or local governments a single dime.

SUPPORT UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, it has now been more than 2 months since mindless sequestration across-the-board cuts were enacted, crippling so many important services and benefits that Americans rely on, such as Social Security processing at Social Security offices around this country.

Well, there's another very important earned benefit that's being cut—unemployment benefits. Republicans keep rewarding the super-rich while cutting unemployment benefits. When you cut benefits, you not only hurt men and women who are looking for work, you actually hurt economic recovery.

Fact: unemployment checks pump money back into local communities, helping the economy to recover. Where does the money go? Groceries, gasoline, school clothing, rent payments, basics.

The U.S. Department of Labor, during the Bush administration, found that every dollar spent on unemployment benefits pumped \$2 back in to the local economy. It's a good deal. Therefore, sequestration cuts in unemployment compensation inflict pain not only on jobless families, but also harms economic growth in a major way.

I call on my Republican colleagues to come to the table, compromise, reverse the mindless sequester that is cutting unemployment benefits. Let's celebrate Mother's Day by paying workers their full earned benefits, not imposing more worry on the unemployed among America's working families.

□ 1240

WORKING FAMILIES FLEXIBILITY ACT

(Mr. GALLEG0 asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GALLEG0. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak against H.R. 1406, misnamed the Working Families Flexibility Act.

Feeding a family, paying our bills, and making sure that our kids have what they need, for most of us, those are the core things that we worry about each month, and they all involve money.

However, H.R. 1406, which would be more appropriately named the Working Families Get Less Act, does nothing for those working families who are