

Absent congressional action, interest rates on student loans will double from 3.4 to 6.8 percent on July 1. This bill prevents this from happening and ends what has become an annual debate within Congress on how to set the rates for student loans, a process that has served neither students nor taxpayers.

H.R. 1911 builds on a proposal put forward by President Obama in his fiscal year 2014 budget request which would move to a market-based interest rate. The bill would allow students to take advantage of low interest rates but also protect them with reasonable rate caps during higher rate environments.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join in support of this bill, which will offer students the lowest possible cost for higher education and ensure the solvency of these important programs.

□ 1340

#### REMARKABLE WOMEN OF WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

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

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to place in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the names of six phenomenal women who have positively influenced the lives of the people of my hometown of West Palm Beach, Florida:

Sheri Brooks, Renee Kessler and Ilene Silber, dynamic educators who have devoted their lives to the future of the youth of our community;

Sherry Hyman, an exceptional lawyer who has helped shape our county's physical environment;

Mona Reis, a courageous crusader for women's health and reproductive rights;

and Young Song, a brilliant architect whose projects bring joy to thousands of visitors each year.

Best yet, these phenomenal women have beautiful hearts and remarkable children.

#### IN HONOR OF THE SERVICE OF FIRE CHIEF KENNETH BRISCOE

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

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lenoir Fire Chief Ken Briscoe as his term of president of the North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs comes to an end this August.

It is a well-earned rest after serving 7 years and traveling across the State of North Carolina and the United States in representing more than 1,500 fire chiefs and 45,000 firefighters in North Carolina.

Chief Briscoe has been the fire chief for the city of Lenoir since 2004 and has worked in the fire service for over 35 years. During that time, his main focus has been improving the training and

education of firefighters in North Carolina. Chief Briscoe will continue to serve on the board of directors as the past president of the North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs.

Today, we honor his years of service and express our appreciation for his continued commitment to North Carolina firefighters. We are grateful to Chief Briscoe and to his fellow firefighters across North Carolina for their bravery and selfless dedication to protecting our communities in the face of danger.

#### OPPOSING THE REPEAL OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

(Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, instead of taking steps to create jobs and grow the economy, Republicans yesterday voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act for the 37th time.

The Affordable Care Act is working, and its benefits are being felt throughout the country, especially in my home State. Almost 525,000 New Mexicans now have access to free preventative services, such as mammograms, flu shots and colonoscopy screenings. Almost 19,000 seniors have benefited from lower prescription drug costs, and over 26,000 young adults in New Mexico can stay on their parents' insurance plans until they are 26.

So why in the world would we want to hurt seniors, women and young people by repealing the Affordable Care Act?

Let's not forget that the Affordable Care Act is a job creator. The Medicaid expansion alone will create 6,000 to 8,000 jobs in New Mexico and will pump more than \$5 billion into our economy over the next 6 years.

Mr. Speaker, let's stop trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act, and let's get back to work on behalf of the American people.

#### DIABETES

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

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to address a mounting health crisis and on behalf of nearly 26 million Americans and 532,000 Kentuckians who suffer from diabetes.

This disease kills more Americans each year than breast cancer and AIDS combined and costs our Nation more than \$200 billion in health care expenses each year. Tragically, every 17 seconds, someone is diagnosed with diabetes, and current estimates project that, by 2050, as many as one in three Americans will suffer from diabetes.

We cannot sit idly by and accept the likelihood of this bleak future. Diabe-

tes can be devastating, but it can be managed. Like most chronic diseases, diabetes can be attributed to poor behaviors, such as lack of physical activity, poor nutritional choices and other risky behaviors. By not only changing our behaviors but by improving access to education, proper diabetes care and continued funding for research to find a cure, we can truly make a positive, sustained change in the quality of life for millions of Americans.

#### REDEFINING THE NATION'S CAPITAL AS A FREE-STANDING FEDERAL AGENCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. NORTON. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I come to the floor to discuss a bill addressed only to my district, the District of Columbia, which will come to a hearing next Thursday in the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, chaired by Chairman TRENT FRANKS.

In point of fact, over the last month, there have been two such bills introduced in this House, bills that can only fairly be characterized as abuse of power. They are both directed against only one jurisdiction—my own district.

H.R. 7 would appear to be a Federal matter. That bill would make permanent the Hyde amendment, which annually passes this House every year, barring the use of Federal funds for abortion. Wherever you stand on abortion, at the very least, that is a Federal matter. In the very same bill however is an outrageous abuse. The bill seeks to do the same for the District of Columbia, barring permanently the use of local funds—funds raised by local taxpayers—for abortions for low-income women. Local funds are similarly used for abortions for low income districts in districts across the United States because, after all, they are local funds. But H.R. 7 redefines the Nation's Capital which was given home rule in 1973, as a free-standing jurisdiction—instead of a Federal agency for purposes of abortion.

Imagine having your district defined as a Federal agency so that the Congress can make ideological points by overturning local legislation at will. Yep, this is still America. That bill is H.R. 946. As to the District of Columbia, it's simply an expanded way to interfere with the business of a local jurisdiction.

I must say that I think that H.R. 7 and H.R. 1797 I will discuss shortly do point to the bankruptcy of the Republican agenda in the 113th Congress essentially does what is done anyway every year with respect to abortion. It hasn't come to the floor yet.

□ 1350

It hasn't come to the floor yet, and indeed very few bills have come to the

floor. Sometimes the House has a rule one day and the bill the next day when there was plenty of time on both days because the Republican House doesn't have any agenda and it has to stretch out what few bills it has to make it look like there's something that the House is doing. That's how the House is doing its business.

Now the House is into my business, however, when it deals with the district I represent, a district of 600,000 American citizens who you can bet your life are going to demand and always demand to be treated as full American citizens because that is exactly who we are. We will never accept overriding our rights—our local rights and our constitutional rights—in order to satisfy the agenda of this Member of Congress or that Member of Congress who is making a point for special interest groups or for others.

The bill that I want to primarily discuss, H.R. 1797, goes beyond the usual way in which the Congress—or at least the Republican Congress—seeks to interfere with the rights of the people of the District of Columbia. What they do generally is to take advantage of the fact that the district's own local taxpayer-raised funds have to come here essentially to be checked off and signed off, and Congress don't ever look at the budget. How could they? They don't know anything about a local jurisdiction's budget. But they do use the local budget to attach their own ideological stripes, and the usual one has to do with abortion.

H.R. 1797 uses the District of Columbia in yet a new way with a new abuse because it goes beyond the low-income women for whom the district cannot spend its own local funds. Instead, H.R. 1797 goes after every woman in the District of Columbia because that bill essentially would make all abortions in the District of Columbia after 20 weeks illegal.

Don't talk about the obvious constitutional issue. I'll get to that in a minute.

H.R. 1797 seeks to regulate pregnancy and abortion—a local matter—with respect to only one jurisdiction, and it's a matter that usually involves a matter of principle. People who are “pro-life,” as they call themselves, have my respect, but this circumstance is the only example where I have seen them try to apply the principle only to one jurisdiction, leaving everybody else in the United States exempt from the so-called “principle.” If abortion should be denied after 20 weeks, as a matter of principle, then surely that principle should apply throughout the United States. There's a reason why it doesn't, and I will get to that.

First, I want to thank Chairman TRENT FRANKS for permitting me the courtesy of testifying next Thursday at the hearing of H.R. 1797 that affects only my district. He had two bills last year. This bill is a redux of the same bill that came to the floor and was defeated last year, and he also had an-

other to permanently disallow local funds to be used to fund abortions for poor women in the District. On both of those bills, I was denied the right and the courtesy of testifying, although traditionally granted to Members, even though bills don't usually involve only one jurisdiction.

This bill is of great concern not only to me, but there's going to be a press conference next week indicating that the bill is viewed by women all over the United States as, of course, a vehicle to eliminate the reproductive rights of women across the country. The bill is fatally flawed in several obvious ways.

First, there is discriminatory treatment of the District of Columbia to its residents by banning abortions after 20 weeks only in the District of Columbia, as I've indicated. If barring abortion is a principle, it's a principle that as a matter of principle, would apply nationwide. But it's not applied nationwide in H.R. 1797 because the District is the one jurisdiction over which Congress has a modicum of control. Until the District becomes a State, the Congress can step in. But, of course, the Home Rule Act contemplates that in our democracy Congress would never step in, unless there was an abuse of Federal authority by the District of Columbia. This would be, on the contrary, an abuse of Federal power by the Congress of the United States were this bill to pass.

The bill discriminates against the District by picking out the District among all the districts in the United States for unequal treatment. H.R. 1797 violates unabashedly *Roe v. Wade*, which allows abortion until viability as determined by a physician. *Roe* and all of its cases, all of the precedents that follow it, make it clear that viability cannot be determined by statute.

*Roe v. Wade*, 40 years ago, guaranteed the right of an abortion as a constitutional right. So you can expect that this is a matter that would be ultimately challenged. But the reason that the District is the vehicle used here is that the special interests obviously want a Federal imprimatur and don't have the guts to go get it by bringing a bill to the House floor that would apply to everybody. So they choose the bullying way, the easy way. You have a Federal imprimatur, if you can get the Congress to vote with respect to one jurisdiction because the Congress is Federal. Of course, the bill violates the Home Rule Act itself because while the Home Rule Act acknowledges the ultimate jurisdiction of the Congress, it clearly, in its terms, contemplates that the legislative power will go to the Council of the District of Columbia. There is no principled reason here to violate the local jurisdiction's local authority.

Here we have gone from the usual attack on low-income women by denying the city its authority to spend its own taxpayer-raised funds as it sees fit, to an attack on every woman of child-

bearing age, every such family in the District of Columbia.

The bill goes further. It criminalizes abortion by making a physician subject to imprisonment for up to 2 years for abiding by *Roe v. Wade* and engaging in an abortion.

Then the bill has a truly bizarre section which gives new meaning to the word “extreme.” It allows any current or former health provider, who has ever treated a woman—and it doesn't say when that provider might have treated a woman, perhaps as a child, because it has no limit—but allows any former health provider to obtain an injunction against the abortion. The right to privacy, among others is absent.

□ 1400

This is a new low in extreme provisions that we have seen in the Congress from my Republican colleagues. The very idea of even introducing a bill that would deny the constitutional rights of only one jurisdiction is an outrage in and of itself. Sure, bills are introduced on this floor all the time that are, on their face, unconstitutional, but it is bullying to pick out one jurisdiction because you don't have the courage to come forward with a national law, a national bill. By no means, however, do we believe a national bill is appropriate.

This bill has also been introduced on the other side by Senator MIKE LEE of Utah. Apparently someone asked him if there is a 20-week abortion bill in Utah or if Congress might introduce one for Utah. He was quick to say, no, they don't have such a bill in Utah, and he would oppose it if the Congress tried to enact one that applied to Utah. He would be for only if Utah itself enacted the bill. So here we have a Tea Party Republican in the Senate who applies his Tea Party principles against federal intervention except when it comes to the District of Columbia.

Anybody who thinks that we're going to stand here and let that happen without, in fact, protesting it and rallying Americans who believe in fairness do not know us very well. We refuse to be a vehicle for the extreme views or pet projects of some Republicans. They have their own outlets. They have the right to come to this floor and offer bills. They have the right to speak on this floor in any way they choose. We will not be a prop for those views.

The Republicans are the supposedly small government Tea Party party who are now using the big foot Federal Government against a single jurisdiction that doesn't have a vote on this floor, that could not vote for or against H.R. 1797 if it came to this floor. What kind of courage is that? It's a bully's path to making ideological points. If you have an ideological point, make it; don't use my district to do so.

The extreme right-wing of the Republican Party doesn't even want the Federal Government in what the Federal Government has always done, but now they've got the Federal Government in

something that even they say the Federal Government should never be doing—interfering with the local rights of people to govern themselves locally.

This is a country in which there are wide differences on many subjects, perhaps none more so than the right to reproductive choice, but it is also a country that respects one another in the various States and localities where we live and do not try to reach over and somehow compel people in one jurisdiction to do as people in another jurisdiction do. That's the difference between this country, a Federal republic, and other countries, and it is a principle we mean to hold this Congress to.

There is the claim that, well, the District doesn't do enough restricting of abortion, so that's why we simply have to step in here. On the contrary, there are nine States that do not restrict abortions any more than the District does, and the District abides by *Roe v. Wade*. Yet this bill is directed against only one jurisdiction. Of course I take exception to the bill itself, but I take particular exception against being bullied by people outside my jurisdiction in order to satisfy their own personal philosophical concerns.

I can tell you this much: the notion that you can use the District and abuse its women on reproductive choice and nobody else will care should have been put to rest last year. The kickoff of the Republican attack on reproductive rights was, in fact, this bill which went to the floor and failed, but Republicans didn't stop there. Going back to abortion was not enough. They went all the way back to contraception and, amazingly, made contraception a campaign issue in the last election. Well, I hope they have learned their lesson, because women put all of this together and showed what they thought about it in the Presidential election.

I am very grateful to women all over the country for how they responded specifically to this very bill, this 20-week abortion bill that applied only to the District of Columbia. They were not fooled for a moment. Women across the United States wrote thousands of emails and letters indicating that they understood this bill, the very same bill that was defeated last year, to be a vehicle for inroads into the reproductive rights of women across the United States. Far from ignoring it because, after all, it was only 600,000 D.C. residents. The women may live in California or Wyoming—we saw them writing from their States in large numbers, making it clear that they saw it for what it was, that special interest groups were going from State to State to pass anti-choice bills. They begin at personhood where there is absolutely no right to abortion or contraception because, in their view, life begins at conception. And then some have 6-week bills and there are other 20-week bills. They are all over the map. And by the way, they are quite divided because they are all over the map.

They have settled on 20-week abortion, however, for H.R. 1797, and we

mean to do for this bill what we did last year—to turn it back, to make women all over the country understand it for what it is, just as they did last year, to see that the only way to resist these attacks is to be as persistent as our opponents are in coming back to attack women using the women of the District of Columbia.

The women of my district are the chosen vehicle, but the targets are a national campaign against the reproductive rights of women in the Nation. They can't come to the floor, or they won't, with a broadside attack on the reproductive rights of women. So they do the cowardly thing and come against the District of Columbia because of the technical jurisdiction that, of course I can see the Congress has, but no principled Congress would ever use its federal power against a local jurisdiction.

□ 1410

Therefore I come to the floor this afternoon to put all on notice that you can come as many times as you want and as many ways as you want, but I represent 600,000 taxpaying Americans, and they insist that they are equal to Americans everywhere else.

For 100 years they did not have any rights. They didn't have the right to vote for President. They didn't have the right for a local government. For 100 years they were ruled by three commissioners appointed by the President.

During the civil rights era, the Congress became ashamed of having a local jurisdiction that was its Nation's Capital, that did not have the same rights as other people in the United States, not even a local government, a mayor or a city council who could enact legislation affecting the local population, although this population had been paying Federal income taxes ever since our country has been collecting income taxes. And our residents have fought and died in every war our country has ever fought, including the war that created the United States of America.

American citizens in a jurisdiction as old and historic as the Nation's Capital is, will not have our citizenship rights taken away lightly, and we will not be used and abused by Members of this Congress, whatever their party.

Our Union is not perfect, but it strives to be. It can become perfect only when it hears about its imperfections. There is no imperfection greater than having Members of Congress focus on one jurisdiction that does not have the same ability to defend itself as every other jurisdiction.

It is hard enough to see Members of Congress come down and vote on the District's local appropriation, which they had nothing to do with collecting, but which is still a part of what is allowed in the Congress. But it is disgraceful to see one issue picked out and one jurisdiction alone targeted.

If you feel strongly about your issue, step up and air your issue in the way this House allows. And I ask that what-

ever the Congress does, that it ask itself when it deals with the District of Columbia, is the action consistent with the principles that you profess on this floor time and again?

I ask reconsideration of any such attempts in the future. There is no possible way that any self-respecting jurisdiction would accept discriminatory treatment.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I put the Congress on notice, we will never—we do not accept the discriminatory treatment in the Franks bill, H.R. 1797 or in the bill that I discussed previously, H.R. 7, to bar abortions in Federal legislation permanently, which somehow tucks the District into a bill on federal funds.

We do not accept and never will accept second-class treatment by the Congress of the United States. We will always protest it, and we will always find a way to find the solid ground that American citizens must stand on to protect their rights.

I yield back the balance of my time.

#### REFLECTIONS ON ABORTION AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the House of Representatives.

And listening to the gentlelady from the District of Columbia, of course, a different opinion comes to mind, and that would be that, regardless of the discussion about the supposed anti-choice bill here, I didn't hear much discussion about "Dr." and I put that in quotes, "Kermit Gosnell," who has been convicted of murdering babies while they're struggling after they're born, while they're squirming, while they're gurgling, while they're crying and "snipping the necks of babies."

At least the jury has concluded that that is murder, and now it's come down to this point where society needs to ask the question, what's the difference between that baby that's born because he induced early labor to bring that baby into the fresh air, what's the difference between that baby and the same baby or maybe a twin that's 12 inches away?

And I would say there's no distinction from a moral perspective. That little innocent baby is alive, a unique human life that needs to be protected in all of its forms. And that's the argument that's going on here.

You'll not hear people on the other side of this argument bring up the brutal and bloody and ghoulish and ghastly Gosnell, but you will hear the argument about choice because that sanitizes this argument, and it tends to scrub the image out of our minds that we get when we think of that cruel Gosnell, who has now plea-bargained