

and natural resources, and the farm bill has long supported programs to conserve and protect those resources. As the harmful effects of climate change become more prevalent, our agricultural policy should reflect the threat posed to farming and food production by these changes. In this farm bill, "climate change" and "extreme weather" are hardly mentioned. Congress can start by opening the Regional Conservation Partnership Program to climate change adaptation and mitigation projects.

The farm bill is important and wide-ranging legislation. Unfortunately, the conference report leaves out essential protections for low-income Americans, hard-hit fisheries, and precious natural resources.

THE USS FORRESTAL

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today marks the last voyage of the Ex-USS *Forrestal*, the world's first supercarrier. On this occasion, I believe it is fitting to recognize the ship and all who sailed on her in service to a grateful nation. Launched almost 60 years ago in Newport News, VA, she was named after former Navy Secretary and first Secretary of Defense James Forrestal.

Forrestal represented American ingenuity and shipbuilding excellence, integrating operational needs, and engineering insight that created the first steam catapult, angled flight deck, and use of optical landing systems.

During her 38 years of active service, *Forrestal* and its attached air wings were involved in missions around the globe. At the beginning of her sea life, she was sent to the eastern Mediterranean during the Suez and Lebanon Crises and over the course of her service life was involved in dozens of NATO operations, overseas deployments, patrol missions, and strategic port visits around the Atlantic and Sixth Fleets. She was "home" to thousands of the Nation's finest sailors and aviators this country has ever known.

Forrestal's contributions to the war effort in Vietnam are well documented. Unfortunately, so is the terrible fire that engulfed the flight deck on July 29, 1967, killing 134 shipmates, injuring 161 more, and destroying more than 20 aircraft. I will never forget when that Zuni rocket hit my A-4 Skyhawk after it was accidentally fired from across the flight deck, rupturing the fuel tank and setting that horrific, costly fire.

I will always remember and honor my brave comrades who died in the *Forrestal* fire. Although the ship is

being towed to Brownsville, TX, to be physically dismembered, her legacy, the bonds forged, and memories created among shipmates will live forever. I bid her a final "fair winds and following seas."

HIGHER EDUCATION

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, earlier this week I spoke to the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. I ask unanimous consent that a copy of my remarks be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD as follows:

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

A few weeks ago, the National Conference of State Legislators gave me an award—for defending the 10th Amendment. It's the first time in ten years they were able to give that award. There hasn't been much protection of the 10th Amendment going on in Washington. As grateful as I am for both awards, the award that I am working even harder to earn is one for deregulating and simplifying the federal role in higher education.

If I were to earn that, it would be the first time in American history that honor had been bestowed. Truth is, for a long time it wasn't needed.

The federal government didn't begin to focus on colleges and universities—almost all of them private at the time—until 1862 when President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act. That Act provided each state with 30,000 acres of federal land for each member in their congressional delegation. States were then required to sell the land and use the proceeds to fund public colleges that focused on agriculture, engineering, and military science. States were expected to contribute to the maintenance of its land-grant institution as well as to provide its buildings. But Congress was otherwise sparse on advice for how to establish these institutions and there was little federal intervention.

The federal government didn't focus much more on higher education again until 1944, when Congress passed the G.I. Bill. This included federal financial assistance to help any veteran who served at least 90 days between December 1941 and 1946 pay for college or vocational training programs at the public or private institution of their choice. This even included high schools. The big news here was not just the new federal money, but the way it was spent. Instead of establishing a Washington program for colleges serving the needs of veterans, the federal money followed veterans to the college of their choice.

Not all of the independent private colleges thought this was such a good idea. The president of the University of Chicago said the G.I. Bill would turn universities into an "educational hobo jungle."

The only limitation on choice of institution for those using the G.I. Bill was that it

had to be approved by the appropriate state educational agency or by the Administrator of the Veterans Administration.

So you see, the dreaded "voucher," which raises the hackles of the K-12 establishment, was the very foundation of federal funding for colleges and universities for seventy years.

Last week I introduced a bill to give federal money to elementary and secondary students in the same way we do with the G.I. Bill, Pell Grants and student loans—let the money follow students to the schools they choose. If you just take 41 percent of the federal dollars we are already spending on K-12 education, you can turn that into \$2,100 scholarships for 21 million low-income children.

But as you can imagine, these Pell Grants for Kids created an uproar from the K-12 establishment. My response was, if vouchers helped created the best system of colleges in the world, why don't we try it for our schools?

But back to the history of federal involvement in higher education.

After the G.I. Bill, the number of Americans enrolled in college more than doubled in just six years between 1943 and 1949.

Then came the Korean G.I. Bill in 1952.

And this brought more federal regulation. The Korean G.I. Bill specified that institutions of higher education needed to be accredited by a federally recognized accreditor in order for a veteran student to use their benefits.

Still it was not much regulation. Only a single page of paper.

By the way, in 1952, roughly 35 percent of students were graduating from high school and only 6 percent were completing college.

Now move ahead to Sputnik in the late 1950s. Congress passed the National Defense Education Act that created the first federal loan program in order for students to attend college. Between 1952 and 1965, college enrollment increased from more than 2.1 million to nearly 6 million (almost 30 percent of the 18-24-year-old population).

Still, after 100 years of federal involvement, there were not many rules and regulations.

This brings us to 1965 and the passage of the Higher Education Act.

Now here is the problem. Congress has reauthorized the Higher Education Act eight times since 1965. With each reauthorization came many well-intentioned good ideas and another stack of additional regulations. The laws and regulations have piled so high since 1965 that I voted against the 2008 reauthorization because the stack of regulations was as tall as I was then and I believed that a new bill would eventually double that stack.

Here is a concrete example of unnecessary complication in the higher education system: the application for federal aid.

It is a ten-page document that asks more than 100 questions and is accompanied by a 72-page instruction booklet.

This is considered a victory in Washington. I know that when I came here 11 years ago, I was determined to simplify this application

form. So were many other senators. And this is the result.

Despite well-meaning intentions over the years, our system has become too complicated and burdensome. It wastes time and dollars that ought to be spent helping students.

So today, I am here to ask for your help. I want to reverse this trend of piling on layer after layer.

To begin with, I have asked my staff to consider drafting a new Higher Education Act from scratch. Start all over. Include everything that needs to be included and consider new regulations that need to be written. This is not an ideological exercise. It is an effort to clean out the clutter. Call it a long-delayed spring cleaning.

The Senate education committee has begun to hold hearings on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

Chairman HARKIN and I have worked closely together on these hearings and the chairman has been very thoughtful in how we are approaching them.

At a recent financial aid hearing, here is what the witnesses told us and they all told us the same thing:

- o The application for a Pell Grant could be reduced to a post-card by collecting only income and family size
- o The federal aid system should consist of one grant, one loan, and one tax credit
- o Students should know how much the federal government will invest in them in their junior year of high school
- o We can use social media to reach those in middle school about potential aid opportunities

We were told that these four big ideas would:

- o Save money
- o Reduce regulation
- o Increase access for low-income, disadvantaged students

To take these ideas and others and put them into law, I have created a Task Force on Government Regulation of Higher Education.

I am joined in this by Senator Mikulski, Senator Burr, and Senator Bennet; Brit Kirwan of the University of Maryland System and Nick Zeppos of Vanderbilt University have agreed to co-chair this task force. And 14 other college presidents, university system heads, and other leaders representing all sectors in higher education will work with the American Council on Education to:

- o Identify duplicative or unnecessary regulations
- o Determine the cost of complying with federal regulation
- o And offer suggestions for improving the current structure of regulating.

Other members of NAICU serving on this panel include:

- o Hartwick College (which has done tremendous work in this area already)
- o Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association

- o Colorado Christian University
- o American University
- o Hiram College.

In addition, Congress has provided \$1 million to the National Research Council to conduct a study on overregulation of higher education funding for which I have fought since the last reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 2008.

So we have a bipartisan group of senators and a task force which has its first meeting next week and a National Research Council \$1 million study to help us do our job.

But we need one more thing: your help.

Ronald Reagan once said that the eight most dangerous words were: "I'm from Washington and I'm here to help."

Well, I'm from Tennessee. So, while I may be here in Washington, I am here instead to ask for YOUR help.

The task force needs to hear specific examples of rules and regulations that are no longer needed, overly burdensome, costly, and confusing.

I would suggest that you do it in the easiest, most specific and practical way. Start with the easiest thing that will make the most difference and save the most money and time that would be better spent on students, and make that first. And the next one, second. In every case, make it as specific as possible. You're the experts. You know what's happening at your institutions.

Send your specific recommendations to this organization (NAICU), my staff, and directly to Chancellor Zeppos.

But I would also like to recommend that you share these with your home state senators and representatives.

Now sometimes I've said that you don't need to come to Washington, and sometimes I get in trouble for saying that, but it's true. In fact, it's better if you see them at home. Think about it. Here they've all flown to Washington, they think the plane flight somehow made them smarter, they're away from their grounding, and they're busy. They have lots to do here.

Now, you all have flown up here and spent a lot of money to get here, and you're doing the right thing—that's a good thing, it's helpful, it's appreciated, it's important.

But let me tell you something that's more important. Take ten people from your congressional district and ask to see your congressman or congresswoman at his or her district office. Or go see your senator in his state office. You'll have more to say, it will cost you a lot less to travel, they'll have more time to hear you, and it will make a much bigger difference.

Visit them at home!

Tell them that you are forwarding a list of duplicative, unnecessary rules and regulations affecting higher education that you have identified for elimination.

Explain to them the importance on institutional autonomy, the accreditation process and the marketplace that produces competition allowing students to choose schools and why this has helped to create the best system of higher education in the world.

They will have questions, and they are entitled to have questions. Last year Congress appropriated \$33 billion in taxpayer dollars for Pell Grants, more than \$100 billion in loans and \$38 billion for university-sponsored research.

We'll need allies to make progress, and if you tell your elected representatives what you are doing and exactly how to deregulate higher education, I bet they will listen.

Let me give you an example of why this is worth your time, the story behind the America COMPETES legislation.

In 2005, I was sitting at a Senate Budget Committee hearing and I was worried about how all the Medicaid and Medicare spending was going to squeeze out investments in education. So, that afternoon, I walked over to the National Academy of Sciences and said, "I believe if you'll tell Congress 10 things in priority order that Congress would need to do in order to help make us more competitive in the world, I believe Congress would do it."

The Academy created a very good group led by Norm Augustine of Lockheed Martin and produced a report called "Rising Above the Gathering Storm." It had 20 specific suggestions in priority order—Congress enacted about 2/3 of them, and within 4 to 5 years, funded most of them.

In other words, the point I'm trying to get across here is that most ideas in Washington fail for lack of the specific idea.

You'll be surprised that the more specific you are, the more likely things are to get done.

Now, I am among the converted.

I believe we have the best system of colleges and universities in the world.

Despite that, you will hear me urging you to focus on worker training, to stop this business of shutting down such valuable assets during the summer, and to confront disturbing political correctness.

In the history of the world, universities have changed less than any other institution. But in the Internet age, they will need to change more. You need to learn from the same lesson that applied to the American automobile companies in the 1960s and 1970s which nearly led to their demise.

So my mission today is to deregulate and simplify the federal role in higher education. To do this, I need your help. First, to suggest concrete examples of overregulation. Second, to remind your elected representatives of the importance of autonomy and the marketplace that has created the best higher education system in the world.

And if all of that effort earns the award for deregulation and simplification of higher education, I will gladly share it with each of you.

RECOGNIZING JEANNE HULIT

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Jeanne Hult, who is