

The American people deserve a voice on this critical matter of national security, and Congress must have the opportunity to take an up-or-down vote on any final deal.

THE BILLY FRANK, JR., TELL
YOUR STORY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HECK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HECK of Washington. Mr. Speaker, we hear a lot about rap sheets these days. We hear of a lot of young people defined simply by their brushes with the law. But for this man, Billy Frank, Jr., his story was so much more than the crimes for which he was arrested—not convicted I might add. His rap sheet, Martin Luther King's rap sheet, Rosa Park's rap sheet, and Congressman JOHN LEWIS' rap sheet are just a piece of a larger narrative about the struggle for social justice.

Billy Frank, Jr., was the Pacific Northwest's foremost advocate for restoration of Native American fishing treaty rights, a dream he lived and saw realized. He cherished clean water and salmon, and he was a key voice in the recovery of the Puget Sound, the largest estuary in the United States of America. Billy was also a proud patriot. He served in the United States Marine Corps where, ironically, he was a member of the military police.

Billy passed away a year ago May 5. But he really isn't gone. His story is here in the Halls of Congress, in which he was so often seen and which he roamed on behalf of his beloved causes, including protecting the Puget Sound, our fisheries, and the cause of clean water.

His story is in the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, which we now protect to give our wildlife a clean and sustainable place to live and which was made possible by a great former Member of the House of Representatives, Norm Dicks. Billy was born, raised, and grew up at Frank's Landing, which was literally just a hop, skip, and a jump from the wildlife refuge and is where his family lived for perhaps thousands of years. He fished in the Nisqually River, which snakes through the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge, and that is the location of where he was arrested more than a dozen times—well, okay, it was actually 59 times.

The bill I introduced this week, H.R. 2270, will rename that refuge after Billy Frank, Jr., and it will also make the place of the signing of the Treaty of Medicine Creek a National Historic Site. It will make sure that the story of that site is told, especially by the descendants of those who lived that history. Those tribes will be involved in the development and the understanding behind that site and what it means to them now and before.

Mr. Speaker, Billy was often asked, How do you do this? How do you effectively advocate on behalf of clean water and salmon—as he did—over so many decades? Billy always had the

same answer. He would say, “Tell your story. Tell your story.”

So when people go to the Billy Frank, Jr., Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, they will be able to see why—why—he held fish-ins. They will see why he risked arrest so many times. They will see why he ultimately worked with others to help protect his home and the home of the fish. They will see why he did all these things.

Like many young people today, he fought for what he believed in, and later in his life he worked with lawmakers to build consensus. In fact, he was a master consensus builder. How do I know this? Well, he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. He actually won the extremely prestigious Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism award, and he has had not one but two books written about him.

So my hope is that when people drive by the sign that directs them to the refuge, maybe they will feel a little bit of that Billy Frank, Jr., magic. Maybe they will wonder who he was, what he did, and find out about his story. For those of us who knew him, it will be a great reminder of a hero. In fact, I would count Billy Frank, Jr., a man I knew many decades and loved, more than a hero. He was truly a great man. He was the Pacific Northwest equivalent of Nelson Mandela or Martin Luther King, Jr. or Desmond Tutu.

That is how great a man he was. Here is what Billy said: “I don't believe in magic. I believe in the Sun and the stars, the water, the tides, the floods, the owls, the hawks flying, the river running, the wind talking. They are measurements. They tell us how healthy things are because we and they are the same. That is what I believe in. Those who learn to listen to the world that sustains them can hear the message brought forth by the salmon.”

Billy Frank, Jr., and his stories have to be told, and that is why I invite my colleagues today to join in cosponsorship of H.R. 2270. Join me and all the members of the Washington State House delegation, and Mr. COLE and Ms. MCCOLLUM, the co-chairs of the Native American Caucus, in cosponsoring the Billy Frank, Jr., Tell Your Story Act.

MAY IS ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the month of May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. I am proud to say that we have many visitors—in fact, hundreds of visitors—who are here at the Capitol, many celebrating this month with us. Among those who are visiting are some of my friends and some of my colleagues, and some persons who are from other places than my congressional district, but they are still friends of mine.

Among them is Dawn Lin. She worked in our congressional office for

sometime, and she is a visitor here today. She is the mother of the Confucius resolution that I brought before Congress and passed.

Another is the father of the International District in Houston, Texas, Mr. Wei Le. He is a dear friend, and I am honored that he is here today.

Another is Kenneth Li, known as the mayor of Chinatown in Houston, Texas, affectionately so.

We also have Chris Kang, Casey Kang, Dionne Cuello, Vickie Silvano, Ray Huang, and Lily Lee, all friends and visiting today.

I am honored today, Mr. Speaker, to say a few words about Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, because the truth is America the beautiful is a more beautiful America because of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

One such beautiful American was Wong Kim Ark. Wong Kim Ark was born in the United States, and in 1894, he decided that he would travel to China. Upon returning from China in 1895, he was denied entrance into the United States.

Wong Kim Ark was denied entrance into the United States because of the Chinese Exclusion Act. This act was one that was passed to prevent Chinese Americans from having ingress and egress into this country if you were not a citizen, of course.

The 14th Amendment to the Constitution became the subject of his reentry into the country because when they declared him ineligible to return to the country, it was because they were saying he was not a citizen, notwithstanding the fact that he was born in California. But if you read closely the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, you will find that it reads: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof”—that is some key language, “and subject to the jurisdiction thereof”—“are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.”

There were some persons who thought that the term “and subject to the jurisdiction thereof” meant that since their parents were the subjects of the Emperor of China, he could not be a citizen of the United States of America. This case went all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States of America, and it was all because of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

The Supreme Court did the judicious thing. They ruled in his favor that he was a citizen of the United States of America. While that might seem such a small thing today, it is really a significant piece of world history in terms of how persons born in this country become citizens, because had they ruled otherwise, there are a good many people who could be born in this country but not be citizens of the United States of America. He was the test case that went before the Supreme Court.

□ 1100

While many persons conclude that the 14th Amendment has its roots in

those who were freed from slavery in the United States of America to accord them citizenship—and I concur with this, by the way—but I also would add this: while it was given birth to because of the freed slaves, it was given clarity because of Mr. Ark who was denied citizenship for a brief moment, but finally, the Supreme Court ruled that Wong Kim Ark was a citizen of the United States of America.

As I close today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to simply say there are many contributions that Asian American and Pacific Islanders have made to this great Nation to make America a more beautiful America.

I think we should not limit our thoughts to things such as dance, which is wonderful; the great food, which is great; to the beautiful clothing, which is a great thing as well. I think we have to go beyond these things and remember the transcontinental railroad that was constructed by the labor of tens of thousands of persons of Chinese ancestry.

I think we have to go beyond this country if we are going to take a global look at the great history. I think, Mr. Speaker, that America the beautiful is a more beautiful America because they are here.

BANK ON STUDENTS EMERGENCY LOAN REFINANCING ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, May 13, was a significant day for 15 million college students who are entering next year's academic year because it is the day that the U.S. Department of Treasury, based on their auction of 10-year notes, sets the interest rates for the Stafford student loan program for all those students who will be borrowing for next year.

The good news is that, based on yesterday's auction, where 10-year notes sold for 2.29 percent, the interest rates for next year's Stafford student loan program will be 4.29 percent, which is actually lower than last year's Stafford student loan interest rates. It is a savings of about a third of a percent—not a huge amount, but certainly headed in the right direction.

This is because in 2013, we passed the Bipartisan Student Loan Certainty Act which prevented a doubling of interest rates for the Stafford student loan program. It was slated to go to 6.8 percent and, tying it to the interest charged by the Department of Treasury, moderated those costs for, again, 15 million college students all across the country who used the Stafford student loan program.

That news event yesterday, though, begs the larger question, which is: What about all those people who are carrying high interest rate student loans who have already graduated over the last 10 years or so?

The Federal Reserve Board tells us that over \$1 trillion of student loan debt overhangs the U.S. economy today, more than car loan debt and more than credit card loan debt.

The trap that many of those people find themselves in is that they cannot refinance that debt because it is noncollateralized loans and that those who hold it in the public sector, in the Stafford student loan sector, again, cannot, by law, refinance down and take advantage of these low interest rates that the Federal Government is benefiting from because of monetary trends in markets that exist today.

Well, the good news is that there is a measure before the Congress, the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act, H.R. 1434, which would allow people both with private student loan debt and public student loan debt to refinance those loans down to 3 percent, taking advantage, again, of the fact that we have a very beneficial environment right now in terms of government borrowing.

Today, the Federal Government actually makes money off those graduates who are paying 8 percent, 9 percent, 10 percent interest on their loans, which is unconscionable given the fact that that debt is causing great damage to those individuals in terms of starting their lives.

The Pew Research Center actually issued a report last year where it talked about the fact that 40 to 50 percent of people in their twenties and early thirties are delaying marriage, they are delaying starting a family, and they are basically denied the access to get a starter home or a real estate mortgage because their debt to income ratios are thrown completely off kilter due to the fact that they are carrying such high rates of student loan debt.

The Congressional Budget Office tells us that H.R. 1434 would basically result in half of that trillion dollars of debt being written down, putting millions of dollars of money into people's pockets that they can spend on things in terms of getting their lives started.

Again, it is important to note this is not a giveaway by the government; these folks are paying back the loans that they were able to acquire from the Stafford student loan program, but it allows them to moderate their interest rate to comport with what is out there for a 30-year loan for a house or for credit cards or for car loans which, again, are lower than what student loan debt is today.

H.R. 1434 has 128 cosponsors in the House. Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to take up this emergency loan refinancing act to provide critical help for individuals who are getting killed out there with monthly payments and, again, inhibiting them to start their lives and do the steps in life that people in their twenties and thirties have done in generations before.

Sadly, we saw a budget resolution pass a couple weeks ago—the House Re-

publican budget resolution—that not only failed to take advantage of the fact that the government is able to borrow at historic low rates, but, in fact, compounds the problem because it is going to allow the Federal Government to charge interest while students who are carrying Stafford student loans in school are going to have interest charged while they are in school.

Traditionally, the Stafford student loan program has provided one good benefit, which is they don't charge interest while a young person is in their freshman, sophomore, or junior year. The Republican budget actually changed that rule so that interest is going to accumulate while students are in college, adding to their debt burden at the time that they graduate.

We need to address this problem; pass H.R. 1434. Let's take advantage of these low interest rates. Let's help millions of Americans get a better start on life.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 6 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Loving and gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Help us this day to draw closer to You so that, with Your spirit and aware of Your presence among us, we may all face the tasks of this day.

Bless the Members of the people's House. Help them to think clearly, speak confidently, and act courageously in the belief that all noble service is based upon patience, truth, and love.

In the wake of the train derailment earlier this week, Americans are reminded of the needs of our domestic infrastructure. May all citizens feel empowered to encourage their Representatives to use their best judgment in considering how to address the many needs of our Nation.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.