

and more than 200,000 individuals forced from their homes. Many schools are closed, residents hundreds of miles away are advised to stay indoors to avoid the smoke, and, more urgently, lives and property are at risk across Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.

The time for the Senate to act was 2 years ago when they failed to act on similar legislation. We can't afford for the Senate to continue to do nothing. Pass the Resilient Federal Forests Act. Give the Forest Service the tools it needs to prevent and combat catastrophic wildfires. Fires are raging, lives are in danger, and the situation will get worse in the future if the Senate continues to fail to act.

#### HONORING RICHARD CULLEN OF VIRGINIA

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

Mr. MCEACHIN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor a fellow Virginian, Richard Cullen, who is in the midst of transitioning his law practice into "becoming one of the boys" again.

Richard Cullen is a dedicated public servant who has served our great Commonwealth in different capacities during his longstanding career at both the Federal and State levels.

Mr. Cullen was raised in Staunton, Virginia—located in our State's cherished Shenandoah Valley—and completed his education at the University of Richmond's T.C. Williams School of Law where he served as the editor-in-chief of the school's law review.

Richard began his career at the Federal level with former Congressman Butler of the Sixth Congressional District. He continued to serve Virginians at the State level when he was appointed in 1991 as the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Richard also served at the State level, from 1997 to 1998, as the attorney general of Virginia. He is a Virginian's Virginian who values his community.

On behalf of our great Commonwealth, we thank Richard Cullen for his continued service.

#### HONORING PEARL HARBOR SURVIVOR AND WORLD WAR II VETERAN CLARENCE VAROS

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

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, on this historic day in this Chamber where President Roosevelt appeared the day after the Pearl Harbor attack, I rise to honor a World War II veteran and Pearl Harbor survivor, Mr. Clarence Varos, who will turn 100 this weekend.

Born on December 10, 1917, Mr. Varos has served our country and State in many ways. As a member of the U.S. Navy, Mr. Varos fought through and

survived the attack on Pearl Harbor. He risked his life in the defense of freedom as a gunner on the USS *Hyde*, transporting marines in the Pacific theater. After bravely serving our Nation in uniform, Mr. Varos went on to dedicate 30 years of his life to the Union Pacific Railroad.

I want to thank Mr. Varos for all he has contributed to our great Nation and State. His sacrifice, bravery, and grit are an example to us all. I look forward to congratulating Mr. Varos in person at celebrations in his honor this weekend in Cheyenne. I would like to say happy birthday to Mr. Varos and thank him for his service.

#### OPPOSING OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION IN THE EASTERN GULF OF MEXICO

(Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to, once again, vigorously and unrelentingly oppose offshore oil and gas exploration in the eastern Gulf of Mexico. I know this is an imperfect graphic, but what I have got here is a map of the Gulf of Mexico showing the Military Mission Line, longitude 86 degrees, 41 minutes, where the military doesn't want offshore drilling east of it, and neither do we citizens of Florida.

This big blob here is where the oil companies want to go get oil and gas and tear up our Gulf of Mexico and change our coast from high-quality residential development to things like this: huge, steel-hulled offshore supply vessels coming in our residential bays and estuaries.

This is Sanibel Lighthouse. We don't want to see a commercial vessel like this in Sanibel Lighthouse, nor do we want to see one in the Gordon River of Naples surrounded by beautiful homes, trees, and second homes of retirees who have come to Naples to make it their home. This thing could be replicated in Fort Myers as well.

We can't let our coast be changed irreparably by industrialization to support unnecessary offshore drilling.

#### HONORING JOE GEORGE, AN AMERICAN HERO

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

Mr. BANKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Joe George, a sailor who showed exceptional bravery during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Joe defied direct orders from his superior officer and saved the lives of six men trapped on the embattled USS *Arizona*.

Mr. Speaker, for years, Joe's family and two veterans he saved have petitioned the Navy to acknowledge his bravery. I first heard his story from Warsaw, Indiana, middle school students Keller Bailey, Jason Benyousky, Ryun Hoffert, Geoffrey Hochstetler,

and their adviser, Richard Rooker, regarding the National History Day project.

I introduced a resolution that highlights Joe's courage and calls for the Navy to recognize his selfless actions during the attack. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Navy has recently announced that Joe George will be posthumously awarded the Bronze Star for his heroism. Joe George was an American hero and a shining example of the courage of the Greatest Generation.

#### TO ATTACK STUDENT LOAN DEBT, EMPOWER STUDENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address this Chamber and, indeed, America about the challenges that we face at this time in our country. There are many. Some exist within this Nation, some exist overseas, and some have many answers being batted around in Washington; whereas, others have nearly none.

One of those challenges that has hamstrung our youngest generation is the massive, dark cloud of student loan debt. When our colleague, Senator SANDERS, from the other side of the aisle addressed student loan debt during the Presidential campaign last year, he was correct in identifying a problem. The way that he chose to address it I would disagree with, as he suggested that we should provide for people something from the government. I would suggest that the people should provide for themselves.

There are two schools of thought, one that the people rely on the government, and one that the government should rely on the people.

So how do you address this massive black cloud of student loan debt that is handicapping our youngest and most creative generation? That is something that we have started to do today with the filing of H.R. 4584, the Student Security Act.

I speak to you tonight about a brighter future, a future where individuals are empowered to make decisions for themselves and where they can escape this looming cloud of debt so they might be free to do things that we have, heretofore, perhaps taken for granted in this country, like buy a new car, like start a family, or, in the words of former Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, move out of mom and dad's basement.

But the most important thing that they are not able to do because of the black cloud of debt that faces them, Mr. Speaker, I would submit, is harness the creativity and the energy that is embodied by their ideas. This is a nation of ideas, and certainly when you

are encumbered with over \$40,000 of loan debt per person on average, you are not able to get that small business loan, and you are not able to start that new business to put those ideas into action and create jobs.

In fact, a recent poll last month indicated that the majority of millennials would sacrifice their very franchise, that is the right to vote, in exchange for relief from their student loan debt. All too often, heretofore, the words “student debt” in the Halls of Washington have scared up images of free college. Anyone knows—even Mr. SANDERS knows—that nothing is free; someone pays. But that is no excuse to ignore the problem. Why not allow individuals the option and opportunity to pay their own debt?

Over 40 million Americans—myself included—are paying back \$1.3 trillion in student debt, yet we have done nothing realistic to address this problem.

How do you address new problems? You must address new problems with new ideas. H.R. 4584, the Student Security Act, is just that.

I will stop as an aside to take a moment to thank a young man, Elliot Harding, a recent student from Charlottesville, Virginia, who came to me with this idea: What do we do as a nation if we lose the creativity of an entire generation because of this burdensome debt? Because that is what we are on the precipice of.

I contemplated it and decided that this isn't something I was able to let happen on my watch. So as a result, I was all ears as he explained the idea that became student security.

It is as follows: right now we know that the Social Security plan that our seniors—indeed, my very mother—rely upon to get by on a day-to-day basis is facing an imminent bankruptcy, that solvency is in question, and that by 2034, according to most estimates, there will be no solvency. That is a problem, too.

Many of you at home are wondering how I moved from student loan debt to Social Security, and that is the beauty of this idea. To empower individuals to make decisions for themselves and address these very real challenges, the Student Security Act would allow a student to write off \$550 of student loan debt for every month that they were willing to voluntarily forgo a Social Security benefit. The time value of money, my friends. We have forced no one to do anything. We have in no way, shape, or form changed one scintilla of the promise that is Social Security that we have made for generations to our seniors. But at the same time, we have provided an 11 percent increase in the solvency of that program, extending the life of that promise without raising taxes and without forcing a single soul to do a single thing against their will.

That would translate into \$6,600 per student, per year, that they were willing to voluntarily forgo receipt of Social Security benefits.

The bill would cap at a maximum of \$40,150 in debt relief. This would correspond to a 6-year delay in receipt of Social Security benefits, and, again, no one would be forced to do a thing, but students who sought to remove from their lives the black cloud of student loan debt would be empowered to, at their own discretion, make this decision for themselves.

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As they say in the TV world: But wait; there is more.

We ran this program past the Congressional Budget Office and then later past the Social Security Administration. What would the impact on Social Security be when empowering people to make decisions for themselves? And, by the way, how would we defray the costs as to people who are young now, who won't invest in Social Security until later, versus the fact they are students now?

The numbers are not good; they are great. We would allow cosigners on loans this option as well, to avail their children or grandchildren of these benefits should they choose to defer receipt of Social Security benefits, again to the amount of \$40,150. That would begin immediately.

That would also save, according to the Social Security Administration, \$700 billion, while also addressing the very real needs of American students currently hamstrung by a broken college finance system.

So what do we do with the Student Security Act?

We are delighted to welcome Congressman FERGUSON, Congressman BRAT, Congressman ROKITA, and Congressman MESSER. We invite our colleagues from both sides of the aisle to look at this outside-the-box, dynamic new way of addressing the solvency of Social Security and the insolvency of our youngest, most creative generation.

The data indicates that we would extend the viability of the Social Security program by 11 percent of what is needed to make it wholly solvent in perpetuity. That would be the equivalent of a 0.3 percent increase in the payroll tax, but without a tax increase and without taking anything from anyone without their voluntary entry into the program.

It would lift the black cloud of student loan debt to the tune of over \$40,000 per person in a world where 90 percent of debtors have less than \$40,000 in debt, and it would return to the coffers of this indebted Nation, by the Social Security Administration's estimates, \$700,000,000,000—sevenths of \$1 trillion.

So I stand here today and ask you to ask yourselves:

Do you trust people to make good decisions for other people?

Do you believe that people should rely on government or that government should rely on people?

Do you believe that this country can harness the ideas and the vision and

the energy of what is inherently the most creative generation if we are able to free these young people from burdensome debt that stops them from engaging in key life events like buying a home and buying a car and getting married and starting a business?

Do you believe that we need to think outside the box to ensure that we keep the promise that is Social Security, which has been made in this country for generations?

If you, like me, believe this and are a Member, I invite you to join as a patron of H.R. 4584, regardless of your party affiliation or ideology. If you, like me, as a citizen, believe this is a good idea, I invite you to speak to your Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, this is an opportunity not only to change how we do business, but to empower people to empower themselves to create greater opportunity and prosperity in this country by harnessing the energy and ideas of our youngest and largest living generation and to keep the promise that we have made for generation after generation and to people like my mother that Social Security will remain reliable and solvent.

Again, I invite you to join on this legislation or contact your Representative and encourage them to join. H.R. 4584, the Student Security Act, is a new way of addressing an old problem that relies on the oldest solution, and that is individuals empowered to work for themselves.

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

#### PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS: GOP TAX SCAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MITCHELL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be here on behalf of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

We are going to have some discussion about recent developments in Congress over this week, and we are going to focus on the proposed tax legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL), vice chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. She is going to talk about what that plan means for working people in America.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. RASKIN for his continued leadership in our caucus. It is such a pleasure to serve next to him on the Judiciary Committee. We have a lot of work to do. It is really terrific to be able to do it with him, to talk about the tax plan.

I don't think this is a tax plan. I think it is tax scam. I think it is a heist. I think that the middle class in this country is not going to benefit from this. Middle class Americans who are hoping for a tax break for the holidays are going to be sorely disappointed. Maybe they get a few lumps of coal.