

to support exchange programs with other countries to promote best practices in election administration.

When we bring folks over here to show them how we do things and send Americans to other nations to see how elections are conducted overseas, we can have candid conversations on how all of us can improve.

I would like to thank, again, Congressman MEADOWS for working with me on this bipartisan bill, and for all of his insight in making this bill and this legislation more effective.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to thank the authors of the bill. I would like to thank Representative CASTRO and Representative MEADOWS. I would like to thank also our ranking member, Mr. ENGEL. They put a lot of work in on this important legislation.

There has long been a strong bipartisan consensus in Congress on the importance of promoting democracy overseas, and this is because America is undeniably more secure when fewer nations are authoritarian.

But democracy promotion is not just about that. It is not just about our security. It is also morally just. Human rights are far better protected in democratic countries, ones without dank prison cells full of political prisoners.

Elections are an important part of democracy, but all too often, elections overseas are plagued, often by corruption or technical challenges, sometimes by lack of transparency. And this bill will address these impediments by creating an electoral exchange program so that we can take our best practices and lessons learned overseas to help local governments improve their own election capacity.

So I urge my colleagues to support this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5274, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EMPOWERING STUDENTS THROUGH ENHANCED FINANCIAL COUNSELING ACT

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1635.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ALLEN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kentucky?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1049 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1635.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1428

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1635) to amend the loan counseling requirements under the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes, with Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

General debate shall not exceed 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

The gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) and the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak today in support of H.R. 1635, the Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act, which I introduced earlier this Congress with my friend, Congresswoman SUZANNE BONAMICI of Oregon.

As the school year begins, high school seniors across the country are trying to figure out their next steps. Many of these students will ultimately decide to attend a traditional 4-year university or community college program.

Parents and students know too well that the cost of college tuition has climbed dramatically over the last decade. I know that many families are worried about how to afford a college education. As college tuition has risen, student loan debt has surged to more than \$1.4 trillion, surpassing both national auto loan debt and credit card debt.

□ 1430

This should be a concern to everyone, not only to those with loan debt to their names. Many borrowers are entering the workforce with overwhelming debt that will play a role not only in their own lives, but in the health of the American economy as a whole.

Student loans can, of course, play a positive role in helping students attend college when they borrow mindfully and responsibly. Unfortunately, many students enter into binding loan contracts with their respective universities without fully appreciating the

gravity of the financial decision they are making and the consequences it can have on their futures.

A recent survey of current students and new graduates with a high level of debt found that more than 40 percent had no recollection of having received financial counseling, even though current law requires that students receive entrance counseling before receiving their first loan.

It is vitally important for students to be equipped with all the facts of their loan agreement so they can finance their postsecondary education responsibly and with eyes wide open. The Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act is designed to improve financial aid counseling for students receiving a Pell grant or a Federal loan. H.R. 1635 increases the timing, frequency, and content of mandatory student loan counseling.

Under current law, borrowers are required to receive counseling only when they arrive on campus and upon graduation, which makes it easy for borrowers to lose sight of just how much debt they are acquiring each year and the responsibility they bear to pay it back. H.R. 1635 requires financial counseling for students and parents who participate in Federal loan programs before they sign the dotted line on their loans. After that, students would participate in annual counseling so they can continue to understand their financial obligations and how new loans would affect their payments later on.

The importance of annually providing information was dramatically reinforced in a recent year when Indiana University reported they were able to reduce undergraduate Stafford loan disbursements by 11 percent—11 percent—or \$31 million, by telling students annually what their monthly payment would be after graduation before the students took out loans for the next school year. This was more than a fivefold decrease in outlays compared to public schools nationally.

In addition to making the counseling an annual event, this bill would require the counseling to include recommendations to students to pursue all available grant, work study, and scholarship assistance prior to taking out loans, as well as provide them with information about the differences between Federal and private loans in bankruptcy. Exit counseling would include information about the borrower's remaining loan balance as well as what to anticipate throughout repayment of the loan.

The legislation would also require borrowers to affirmatively provide consent each year before receiving additional Federal loans instead of automatically receiving the full offered amount every year.

The bill also equips low-income students with enhanced information about the terms and conditions of the Pell Grant Program by providing annual financial counseling to all grant recipients. The counseling will include information about the expenses the grant

covers, the level of assistance the students are able to receive, and ways to seek additional assistance in the case of changing financial circumstances. Under current law, Pell grant recipients are not required to receive any counseling.

This bipartisan legislation will help America's students and families borrow responsibly and understand their aid package better so that new graduates have the very best chance of success upon graduation.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of the Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act, a bill I introduced with Congressman GUTHRIE.

Mr. Chair, I want to thank Chairwoman FOXX, Ranking Member SCOTT, and Congressman GUTHRIE for their leadership on this bill. I would also like to thank the Education and the Workforce Committee staff on both sides of the aisle for their hard work to include the shared priorities of Members in this bill.

This bill shows that there are areas of bipartisan consensus in Congress.

Today, a college education continues to be a powerful force for economic and social mobility in our country. I know. Neither of my parents graduated from college. I worked my way first through community college, which opened the door to the university and then to law school.

I am pleased that Democrats and Republicans are working together to take a meaningful step toward addressing the student loan debt crisis, which is now shockingly close to consumer debt in this country.

This bill recognizes and addresses the clear need for enhanced financial counseling. More than 40 million Americans are struggling with student loan debt, and default rates are climbing.

At the same time, there is evidence that student loan debt is a drag on the broader economy. For many borrowers, student loan debt affects the ability to buy a home, to purchase a new car, or to afford childcare. Student loan borrowers may be unable to access capital to start a small business or they may put off saving for retirement.

That is why we need to help current and future students understand their rights and obligations as borrowers, and we need to help them forecast their obligations in the years after college so they can make informed decisions now for the years ahead.

One of the frustrations I have heard from former students in Oregon is that they didn't understand all of the jumble of terms in their loan agreement or all of the differences between Federal and private student loans. With this bill, students, whether they are sophomores or seniors, will have information about how much they have borrowed,

what they are expected to borrow, how their loans will accrue interest, and what they can expect their monthly payment to be when they leave college. They will be better able to see their road to repayment.

Importantly, this bill provides annual counseling, so borrowers who don't graduate will still receive information about what to expect when they leave school and have to start repayment.

Borrowers will have more clarity about their monthly payments under two repayment plans: income-based repayment and the standard 10-year option. That is critical for students to see what those differences will be, and they will with this bill. Clarifying and streamlining this information will simplify the repayment process for borrowers and reduce default.

Borrowers will be reminded each year they don't have to borrow the full amount made available to them. They should consider grants, work study, and Federal loans before turning to private lenders.

Unlike current practice, borrowers will receive financial counseling before signing their master promissory notes, and they will be reminded that they can repay interest before it capitalizes.

For the first time, parent borrowers of student loans will be given virtually the same information about their loans that the students receive.

Additionally, this bill will extend counseling to Pell grant recipients so they understand the limits on eligibility for the grants and the circumstances under which they would be asked to repay their grants, helping students to avoid expensive surprises.

Finally, this bill does not interrupt the disbursement of financial aid, and it delivers enhanced student loan information in consumer-tested formats that check for students' understanding. It will make sure we provide personalized borrower information in a way that borrowers understand.

Mr. Chair, again, I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their support, and I encourage all my colleagues to support the Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX), the chairwoman of the full committee.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman from Kentucky for yielding time.

Mr. Chair, the 115th Congress has been a landmark time for the Committee on Education and the Workforce. Committee members have come together to build the case for historic postsecondary education reforms.

With more than \$1.4 trillion in student debt and a skills gap that has resulted in more than 6 million unfilled jobs, we have recognized that restoring the promise of postsecondary education

isn't simply a good idea; it is our responsibility.

The Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act recognizes that students and families are the most important players in reforming postsecondary education. Giving them all the information they need to make wise Federal financial aid decisions can put a dent in all this debt. Better financial education before a borrower signs on the dotted line will help students and protect taxpayer dollars.

Knowledge really is power, especially in how we make practical financial decisions. Student borrowers and parents, if they are trying to help, should understand and control their financial situation; their financial situation should not control them.

As chair of the Higher Education and Workforce Development Subcommittee, Representative BRETT GUTHRIE has been a champion for commonsense reforms, and this legislation is the result of his leadership. I commend his work, as well as Representative BONAMICI and her many Democrat colleagues for joining in this effort.

Mr. Chair, I urge every Member of this body to support this legislation and make sure students and families in their districts know about it.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chair, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairwoman for her remarks.

This bill we are considering today is an important step to protect students and borrowers, but it is not a substitute for an update to the Higher Education Act.

We still have more work to do to invest in our Nation's students, our future leaders. We especially need to do more to keep higher education within reach for low-income students and working families.

We need to strengthen the Pell Grant Program, which has served as a foundation of support and opportunity for many Americans and helped them afford college.

We need to do more to address State disinvestment and partner with States. State disinvestment in higher education has also led to a rise in college costs, and we need to do more to make sure student loan borrowers have access to affordable repayment plans.

The Democratic proposal to update the Higher Education Act, the Aim Higher Act, will do all of this and more.

I am glad we are considering this bipartisan proposal today instead of the PROSPER Act, which would actually make college less affordable and accessible by cutting student aid by billions of dollars.

The Aim Higher Act, on the other hand, invests in students and makes higher education more affordable through robust funding in financial aid programs. It also addresses the rising cost of college through the creation of a Federal-State partnership to reduce

the student debt burden on families. It is a thoughtful package that deserves to be considered on the House floor.

The legislation we are considering today, though not a comprehensive reauthorization, will protect students and families and make a real, positive difference for grant recipients and student loan borrowers.

Mr. Chair, I do urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES).

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 1635, the Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act.

As a member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce and a father of three, I value the importance of higher education and making sure everyone has a way to pay for it.

For the last decade, a generation of students have graduated college with massive debt and little prospects for a job.

Thankfully, today, unemployment is at a historic low, and for the first time ever, we have more job openings than job seekers. Our economy is finally on the move, but the burden of student debt remains. In fact, Americans currently have more than \$1.4 trillion in student debt. Unfortunately, much of this aid was received without adequate information about how to make the best financial choices.

Currently, individuals receiving student financial loans must complete a one-time entrance counseling session, but this counseling can occur after the students have already signed up to take out the loan and is not required for those who receive Pell grants.

Before completing classes, students must complete exit counseling. However, this information is very general, rather than being specific to the individual's specific situation.

These generic counseling sessions have failed our country and not helped students to put themselves on financially sound footing. That is why I am proud to support H.R. 1635.

This bill ensures borrowers who participate in a Federal loan program or receive a Pell grant get targeted counseling every year and not just once they enter and exit the program.

It also provides awareness about financial obligation borrowers are accumulating by requiring the borrower's consent each year before receiving Federal student loans.

These steps give students the tools they need to be financially responsible, while having the opportunities to get the education they deserve.

Mr. Chair, I want to thank my colleagues on the Committee on Education and the Workforce for recognizing the importance of financial literacy and bringing forth this legislation that will help families in Kansas and throughout the country.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

□ 1445

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chair, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE), my good friend from the eastern part of the great State of Tennessee and the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of H.R. 1635, the Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act. I am a proud cosponsor of the bill and believe it will take a step forward in improving student financial literacy today.

Student loan debt has risen at an alarming rate over the last dozen years, from roughly \$480 billion in 2006 to over \$1.4 trillion this year. The American Government is the guarantor of more than 90 percent of that debt. Today's graduates, on average, leave campus with more than \$35,000 in debt.

Mr. Chairman, let me give an example. I was raised in a middle-class family. My mother was a bank teller. My dad was a factory worker. I was able to go to college and medical school in 7 years and graduate with no debt.

The medical students who I taught in medical school at our medical school in east Tennessee had an average debt of over \$175,000 when they left school, an enormous debt. Many of them had upward of \$300,000 in debt and will spend many years paying their way out of that.

Today's graduates, as I said, graduate with more than \$35,000 in debt, and, currently, only students receiving Federal loans are required to complete a financial counseling session.

This counseling is provided only twice and only to students. Counseling is offered the first time the student takes out a Federal loan and again upon graduation, which is way too late, and does not apply to a large pool of students receiving Federal aid, those receiving the Pell grant.

H.R. 1635 requires students to receive annual counseling about their Federal loan and Pell grants. In other words, you don't have to take out the maximum loan. Just take out what you need. Additionally, parents who apply for a parent PLUS loan would also have to receive financial counseling.

While no solution is perfect, these counseling sessions will give borrowers important information about their Federal financial aid and, hopefully, leave them with a better understanding of their repayment options and recommendations about grants, work study, and scholarship opportunities.

In our State of Tennessee, as my good friend was mentioning a minute ago, we provide community college and technical school for free. This fall, we are beginning a program that is called Tennessee Reconnect, where you can go back to school if you have lost your job and you are middle-aged and you need to be retrained. You can go do that for free in our State.

We believe that we need to retrain a workforce in our country for the jobs of tomorrow, and without this onerous debt, which a lot of people won't go to school because they realize it costs so much money that they can never pay it back.

H.R. 1635 will encourage a better-informed decisionmaking on the part of borrowers and increase financial literacy.

Mr. Chair, I encourage my colleagues to support this commonsense bill.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chair, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. FERGUSON).

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 1635 because our country is facing a student debt crisis.

In fact, nearly 580,000 student borrowers defaulted on their loans in just the last year. This debt crisis has been created, in part, because students and their parents aren't given the full information they need to make informed decisions about paying for college.

Right now, only students receiving Federal loans are required to receive financial counseling. Even then, they only receive counseling when they take out their first loan and upon graduation. That means that countless students are signing up for thousands of dollars in loans and arriving on campus before they have received any advice about these major financial choices.

This is just wrong. Our young people should not be left in the dark as they make decisions that will impact their lives for years after graduation.

That is why I am supporting H.R. 1635, the Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act, which would make sure that students know all of their funding options, including grants, work study, and scholarship assistance, before taking out loans.

The legislation would also ensure students and parents receive financial aid counseling before they sign on the dotted line.

Higher education should be a stepping-stone to success, not a financial drag on our students' futures. By giving students and their parents the best information possible to make financial decisions, we can ensure students are prepared for a bright future.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chair, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG), my good friend.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act.

For families in Michigan who are struggling to make ends meet, figuring out how to pay for college is a big challenge. Young people today who are graduating and entering the workforce face overwhelming college student loan

debt. When considering financial aid options, we need to empower students to make the best, fully informed decisions about their futures.

This bipartisan bill will promote access to financial counseling so students better understand the process and receive personalized advice that speaks to their personal situations.

It also will provide counseling assistance for the first time to low-income students who participate in the Pell Grant Program.

I am grateful to Chairman GUTHRIE, Ranking Member BONAMICI, and my colleagues on the Education and the Workforce Committee for their work on this legislation.

Encouraging financial literacy is an important step to help prepare students for successful futures. I urge passage of this bipartisan bill.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chairman, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN), my good friend.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, I thank Chairman GUTHRIE for his work on this important legislation.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1635, the Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act.

As the father of 4 and grandfather of 12, with 1 on the way, I understand the anxiety that rising education costs can have on our American families.

Students go to school to get a job, not to wrangle with the Federal Government over student loans. With student loan debt climbing to over \$1.5 trillion nationwide, we must do more to ensure students are aware of the financial obligations of accepting a Federal student loan.

With over 40 years of business experience, I have applied for loans. I have provided a business plan and proof of performance, showing that I can repay those loans. And, over time, I have done just that.

However, in education, many students and families are not receiving the necessary information about their loans and grants in order to make responsible financial choices. I want students and families to clearly understand that just because the Federal Government will give you a loan, you do not have to take the full amount. The less in loans you take out, the less you have to pay back.

H.R. 1635 addresses the lack of information provided for those taking out student loans. Students and families will now receive counseling every year and detailed loan information so that students have sound decisionmaking tools when it comes to borrowing and repaying student loans.

As cosponsor of H.R. 1635, I was also proud to introduce an amendment that will allow any eligible institution to provide additional information and counseling services to Federal student aid recipients.

In my district, hardly a day goes by that I don't run into a former student who asks me: What am I going to do about this student loan debt? And once I discover the consequences of their decisions, it makes me more supportive of this legislation, so that these young people can understand exactly what they are getting into.

We owe it to these American students to pass the legislation before us today, and I hope that my colleagues will join me in supporting H.R. 1635.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining.

The CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Oregon has 23 minutes remaining.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I want to again thank Mr. GUTHRIE for cosponsoring this legislation with me, and thank the leadership, both Chairwoman FOXX and Ranking Member SCOTT, for their support, and all of the staff. I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their support for this legislation.

Mr. ROE from Tennessee mentioned his story, and it is not unlike mine, from a middle-class family, went through 7 years of higher education on my own, working my way through. I ended up with a very modest amount of student debt.

As I say, that is not what I am hearing from families today in Oregon, and I know my colleagues are not hearing that from their constituents across the country.

I also want to point out how the student loan debt crisis is affecting the workforce issues that we all talk about and care about.

An example is that there are many people who wanted to go into primary care. They are going through medical school. They wanted to go into primary care. I just had a conversation with one last week. Too many medical students are choosing higher paying specialties, not because that is where their passion or interest is, but because their student loan debt is so high.

I just had a great conversation on Labor Day with some firefighters in the district I am honored to represent. I thanked them for working, keeping our communities safe. They are concerned about student debt, and they are very concerned about the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, which, of course, is threatened under the PROSPER Act.

We need to come back to the table and talk about how we can preserve the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

Today, however, I urge all of my colleagues to take this important step forward on this bipartisan legislation, the Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act. I encourage broad support for the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, this is important. It is a first step, but it is a big step and an important step as we look at what is going on in the cost of our higher education.

Mr. Chairman, I know that, in our beloved Commonwealth, our Governor and our legislators are trying to deal with the demands on the budget, and they are working hard on it. But in the meantime, the costs to go to school in our Commonwealth and across the country have increased. Students have to rely more on Federal subsidized loans and Pell grants.

We hear stories, like the one that Dr. ROE talked about, of people leaving professional school with a six-figure debt. But we hear about an awful lot of people who have \$6,000, \$7,000, and \$10,000 worth of debt. They have to drop out, and they have no degree, and they have a hard time paying it back.

This bill lays out, through the course of their time in school, for each year, what their payments will be, and it walks them through what they really need. Do they need to take out the full loan?

Back when colleges weren't that expensive, I remember people saying: Take out the full loan; that is the cheapest money you will ever have. Well, it becomes the most expensive money you have ever had over time, as interest rates build up and other things move forward.

This bill is to make sure students are aware. It is something we agree on. We do it bipartisan. I expect a big bipartisan vote, and we do work together. There are issues that we have differences of opinion on, and there are issues that we have similar opinions on.

When I was home in my State in August, people would say: Can't you find things to work together on? And we do, as a matter of fact, on most of the things we do. It is just not what tends to get out into the news.

So I appreciate the hard work of my friend from Oregon, and I appreciate the hard work of our committee.

Mr. Chair, I urge the passage of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

The bill shall be considered as read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1635

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act".

SEC. 2. ANNUAL COUNSELING.

Section 485(l) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092(l)) is amended to read as follows:

"(1) ANNUAL FINANCIAL AID COUNSELING.—

"(1) ANNUAL DISCLOSURE REQUIRED.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible institution shall ensure that each individual who receives a Federal Pell Grant or a loan made

under part D (other than a Federal Direct Consolidation Loan) receives comprehensive information on the terms and conditions of such Federal Pell Grant or loan and the responsibilities the individual has with respect to such Federal Pell Grant or loan. Such information shall be provided, for each award year for which the individual receives such Federal Pell Grant or loan, in a simple and understandable manner—

“(i) during a counseling session conducted in person;

“(ii) online, with the individual acknowledging receipt of the information; or

“(iii) through the use of the online counseling tool described in subsection (n)(1)(B).

“(B) USE OF INTERACTIVE PROGRAMS.—In the case of institutions not using the online counseling tool described in subsection (n)(1)(B), the Secretary shall require such institutions to carry out the requirements of subparagraph (A) through the use of interactive programs, during an annual counseling session that is in-person or online, that test the individual’s understanding of the terms and conditions of the Federal Pell Grant or loan awarded to the individual, using simple and understandable language and clear formatting.

“(2) ALL INDIVIDUALS.—The information to be provided under paragraph (1)(A) to each individual receiving counseling under this subsection shall include the following:

“(A) An explanation of how the individual may budget for typical educational expenses and a sample budget based on the cost of attendance for the institution.

“(B) An explanation that an individual has a right to annually request a disclosure of information collected by a consumer reporting agency pursuant to section 612(a) of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (15 U.S.C. 1681j(a)).

“(C) Based on the most recent data available from the American Community Survey available from the Department of Commerce, the estimated average income and percentage of employment in the State of domicile of the individual for individuals with—

“(i) a high school diploma or equivalent;

“(ii) some post-secondary education without completion of a degree or certificate; and

“(iii) a bachelor’s degree.

“(D) An introduction to the financial management resources provided by the Financial Literacy and Education Commission.

“(3) STUDENTS RECEIVING FEDERAL PELL GRANTS.—The information to be provided under paragraph (1)(A) to each student receiving a Federal Pell Grant shall include the following:

“(A) An explanation of the terms and conditions of the Federal Pell Grant.

“(B) An explanation of approved educational expenses for which the student may use the Federal Pell Grant.

“(C) An explanation of why the student may have to repay the Federal Pell Grant.

“(D) An explanation of the maximum number of semesters or equivalent for which the student may be eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant, and a statement of the amount of time remaining for which the student may be eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant.

“(E) An explanation that if the student transfers to another institution not all of the student’s courses may be acceptable in transfer toward meeting specific degree or program requirements at such institution, but the amount of time remaining for which a student may be eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant, as provided under subparagraph (D), will not change.

“(F) An explanation of how the student may seek additional financial assistance from the institution’s financial aid office due to a change in the student’s financial circumstances, and the contact information for such office.

“(4) BORROWERS RECEIVING LOANS MADE UNDER PART D (OTHER THAN PARENT PLUS LOANS).—The information to be provided under paragraph (1)(A) to a borrower of a loan made under part D (other than a Federal Direct PLUS Loan made on behalf of a dependent student) shall include the following:

“(A) To the extent practicable, the effect of accepting the loan to be disbursed on the eligibility of the borrower for other forms of student financial assistance.

“(B) An explanation of the use of the master promissory note.

“(C) An explanation that the borrower is not required to accept the full amount of the loan offered to the borrower.

“(D) An explanation that the borrower should consider accepting any grant, scholarship, or State or Federal work-study jobs for which the borrower is eligible prior to accepting Federal student loans.

“(E) A recommendation to the borrower to exhaust the borrower’s Federal student loan options prior to taking out private education loans, an explanation that Federal student loans typically offer better terms and conditions than private education loans, an explanation of treatment of loans made under part D and private education loans in bankruptcy, and an explanation that if a borrower decides to take out a private education loan—

“(i) the borrower has the ability to select a private educational lender of the borrower’s choice;

“(ii) the proposed private education loan may impact the borrower’s potential eligibility for other financial assistance, including Federal financial assistance under this title; and

“(iii) the borrower has a right—

“(I) to accept the terms of the private education loan within 30 calendar days following the date on which the application for such loan is approved and the borrower receives the required disclosure documents, pursuant to section 128(e) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)); and

“(II) to cancel such loan within 3 business days of the date on which the loan is consummated, pursuant to section 128(e)(7) of such Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)(7)).

“(F) An explanation of the approved educational expenses for which the borrower may use a loan made under part D.

“(G) Information on the annual and aggregate loan limits for Federal Direct Stafford Loans and Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loans.

“(H) Information on how interest accrues and is capitalized during periods when the interest is not paid by either the borrower or the Secretary.

“(I) In the case of a Federal Direct PLUS Loan or a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, the option of the borrower to pay the interest while the borrower is in school.

“(J) The definition of half-time enrollment at the institution, during regular terms and summer school, if applicable, and the consequences of not maintaining at least half-time enrollment.

“(K) An explanation of the importance of contacting the appropriate offices at the institution of higher education if the borrower withdraws prior to completing the borrower’s program of study so that the institution can provide exit counseling, including information regarding the borrower’s repayment options and loan consolidation.

“(L) For a first-time borrower—

“(i) a statement of the anticipated balance on the loan for which the borrower is receiving counseling under this subsection;

“(ii) based on such anticipated balance, the anticipated monthly payment amount under, at minimum—

“(I) the standard repayment plan; and

“(II) an income-based repayment plan under section 493C, as determined using regionally available data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the average starting salary for the occupation in which the borrower has an interest in or intends to be employed; and

“(iii) an estimate of the projected monthly payment amount under each repayment plan described in clause (ii), based on the average cumulative indebtedness at graduation for borrowers of loans made under part D who are in the same program of study as the borrower.

“(M) For a borrower with an outstanding balance of principal or interest due on a loan made under this title—

“(i) a current statement of the amount of such outstanding balance and interest accrued;

“(ii) based on such outstanding balance, the anticipated monthly payment amount under, at minimum, the standard repayment plan and, using regionally available data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the average starting salary for the occupation the borrower intends to be employed, an income-based repayment plan under section 493C; and

“(iii) an estimate of the projected monthly payment amount under each repayment plan described in clause (ii), based on—

“(I) the outstanding balance described in clause (i);

“(II) the anticipated outstanding balance on the loan for which the student is receiving counseling under this subsection; and

“(III) a projection for any other loans made under part D that the borrower is reasonably expected to accept during the borrower’s program of study based on at least the expected increase in the cost of attendance of such program.

“(N) The obligation of the borrower to repay the full amount of the loan, regardless of whether the borrower completes or does not complete the program in which the borrower is enrolled within the regular time for program completion.

“(O) The likely consequences of default on the loan, including adverse credit reports, delinquent debt collection procedures under Federal law, and litigation, and a notice of the institution’s most recent cohort default rate (defined in section 435(m)), an explanation of the cohort default rate, the most recent national average cohort default rate, and the most recent national average cohort default rate for the category of institution described in section 435(m)(4) to which the institution belongs.

“(P) Information on the National Student Loan Data System and how the borrower can access the borrower’s records.

“(Q) The contact information for the institution’s financial aid office or other appropriate office at the institution the borrower may contact if the borrower has any questions about the borrower’s rights and responsibilities or the terms and conditions of the loan.

“(5) BORROWERS RECEIVING PARENT PLUS LOANS FOR DEPENDENT STUDENTS.—The information to be provided under paragraph (1)(A) to a borrower of a Federal Direct PLUS Loan made on behalf of a dependent student shall include the following:

“(A) The information described in subparagraphs (A) through (C) and (N) through (Q) of paragraph (4).

“(B) The option of the borrower to pay the interest on the loan while the loan is in deferment.

“(C) For a first-time borrower of such loan—

“(i) a statement of the anticipated balance on the loan for which the borrower is receiving counseling under this subsection;

“(ii) based on such anticipated balance, the anticipated monthly payment amount under the standard repayment plan; and

“(iii) an estimate of the projected monthly payment amount under the standard repayment plan, based on the average cumulative indebtedness of other borrowers of Federal Direct PLUS Loans made on behalf of dependent students who are in the same program of study as the student on whose behalf the borrower borrowed the loan.

“(D) For a borrower with an outstanding balance of principal or interest due on such loan—

“(i) a statement of the amount of such outstanding balance;

“(ii) based on such outstanding balance, the anticipated monthly payment amount under the standard repayment plan; and

“(iii) an estimate of the projected monthly payment amount under the standard repayment plan, based on—

“(I) the outstanding balance described in clause (i);

“(II) the anticipated outstanding balance on the loan for which the borrower is receiving counseling under this subsection; and

“(III) a projection for any other Federal Direct PLUS Loan made on behalf of the dependent student that the borrower is reasonably expected to accept during the program of study of such student based on at least the expected increase in the cost of attendance of such program.

“(E) Debt management strategies that are designed to facilitate the repayment of such indebtedness.

“(F) An explanation that the borrower has the options to prepay each loan, pay each loan on a shorter schedule, and change repayment plans.

“(G) For each Federal Direct PLUS Loan made on behalf of a dependent student for which the borrower is receiving counseling under this subsection, the contact information for the loan servicer of the loan and a link to such servicer’s Website.

“(6) ANNUAL LOAN ACCEPTANCE.—Prior to making the first disbursement of a loan made under part D (other than a Federal Direct Consolidation Loan) to a borrower for an award year, an eligible institution, shall, as part of carrying out the counseling requirements of this subsection for the loan, ensure that after receiving the applicable counseling under paragraphs (2), (4), and (5) for the loan the borrower accepts the loan for such award year by—

“(A) signing the master promissory note for the loan;

“(B) signing and returning to the institution a separate written statement that affirmatively states that the borrower accepts the loan; or

“(C) electronically signing an electronic version of the statement described in subparagraph (B).”

SEC. 3. EXIT COUNSELING.

Section 485(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(A)—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking “through financial aid offices or otherwise” and inserting “through the use of an interactive program, during an exit counseling session that is in-person or online, or through the use of the online counseling tool described in subsection (n)(1)(A)”;

(B) by redesignating clauses (i) through (ix) as clauses (iv) through (xii), respectively;

(C) by inserting before clause (iv), as so redesignated, the following:

“(i) a summary of the outstanding balance of principal and interest due on the loans made to the borrower under part B, D, or E;

“(ii) an explanation of the grace period preceding repayment and the expected date that the borrower will enter repayment;

“(iii) an explanation that the borrower has the option to pay any interest that has accrued while the borrower was in school or that may accrue during the grace period preceding repayment or during an authorized period of deferment or forbearance, prior to the capitalization of the interest;”;

(D) in clause (iv), as so redesignated—

(i) by striking “sample information showing the average” and inserting “information, based on the borrower’s outstanding balance described in clause (i), showing the borrower’s”; and

(ii) by striking “of each plan” and inserting “of at least the standard repayment plan and the income-based repayment plan under section 493C”;

(E) in clause (ix), as so redesignated—

(i) by inserting “decreased credit score,” after “credit reports,”; and

(ii) by inserting “reduced ability to rent or purchase a home or car, potential difficulty in securing employment,” after “Federal law,”;

(F) in clause (x), as so redesignated, by striking “consolidation loan under section 428C or a”;

(G) in clauses (xi) and (xii), as so redesignated, by striking “and” at the end; and

(H) by adding at the end the following:

“(xiii) for each of the borrower’s loans made under part B, D, or E for which the borrower is receiving counseling under this subsection, the contact information for the loan servicer of the loan and a link to such servicer’s Website; and

“(xiv) an explanation that an individual has a right to annually request a disclosure of information collected by a consumer reporting agency pursuant to section 612(a) of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (15 U.S.C. 1681j(a)).”;

(2) in paragraph (1)(B)—

(A) by inserting “online or” before “in writing”; and

(B) by adding before the period at the end the following: “, except that in the case of an institution using the online counseling tool described in subsection (n)(1)(A), the Secretary shall attempt to provide such information to the student in the manner described in subsection (n)(3)(C)”;

(3) in paragraph (2)(C), by inserting “, such as the online counseling tool described in subsection (n)(1)(A),” after “electronic means”.

SEC. 4. ONLINE COUNSELING TOOLS.

Section 485 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092) is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(n) ONLINE COUNSELING TOOLS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act, the Secretary shall maintain—

“(A) an online counseling tool that provides the exit counseling required under subsection (b) and meets the applicable requirements of this subsection; and

“(B) an online counseling tool that provides the annual counseling required under subsection (1) and meets the applicable requirements of this subsection.

“(2) REQUIREMENTS OF TOOLS.—In maintaining the online counseling tools described in paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure that each such tool is—

“(A) consumer tested, in consultation with other relevant Federal agencies, to ensure that the tool is effective in helping individ-

uals understand their rights and obligations with respect to borrowing a loan made under part D or receiving a Federal Pell Grant;

“(B) understandable to students receiving Federal Pell Grants and borrowers of loans made under part D; and

“(C) freely available to all eligible institutions.

“(3) RECORD OF COUNSELING COMPLETION.—The Secretary shall—

“(A) use each online counseling tool described in paragraph (1) to keep a record of which individuals have received counseling using the tool, and notify the applicable institutions of the individual’s completion of such counseling;

“(B) in the case of a borrower who receives annual counseling for a loan made under part D using the tool described in paragraph (1)(B), notify the borrower by when the borrower should accept, in a manner described in subsection (1)(6), the loan for which the borrower has received such counseling; and

“(C) in the case of a borrower described in subsection (b)(1)(B) at an institution that uses the online counseling tool described in paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection, the Secretary shall attempt to provide the information described in subsection (b)(1)(A) to the borrower through such tool.”

SEC. 5. LONGITUDINAL STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STUDENT LOAN COUNSELING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Education, acting through the Director of the Institute of Education Sciences, shall begin conducting a rigorous, longitudinal study of the impact and effectiveness of the student loan counseling—

(1) provided under subsections (b), (1), and (n) of section 485 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092), as amended by this Act; and

(2) provided through such other means as the Secretary of Education may determine.

(b) CONTENTS.—

(1) BORROWER INFORMATION.—The longitudinal study carried out under subsection (a) shall include borrower information, in the aggregate and disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, income, and status as an individual with a disability, on—

(A) student persistence;

(B) degree attainment;

(C) program completion;

(D) successful entry into student loan repayment;

(E) cumulative borrowing levels; and

(F) such other factors as the Secretary of Education may determine.

(2) EXCEPTION.—The disaggregation under paragraph (1) shall not be required in a case in which the number of borrowers in a category is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information or the results would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual borrower.

(c) INTERIM REPORTS.—Not later than 18 months after the commencement of the study under subsection (a), and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Education shall evaluate the progress of the study and report any short-term findings to the appropriate committees of Congress.

SEC. 6. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.

(a) USE OF EXISTING FUNDS.—Of the amount authorized to be appropriated for maintaining the Department of Education’s Financial Awareness Counseling Tool, \$2,000,000 shall be available to carry out this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

(b) NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.—No funds are authorized to be appropriated by this Act to carry out this Act or the amendments made by this Act.

The CHAIR. No amendment to the bill shall be in order except those

printed in part A of House Report 115-919. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MS. STEFANIK

The CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in part A of House Report 115-919.

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 4, after line 11, insert the following:

“(E) An explanation of how the student may seek additional financial assistance from the institution’s financial aid office due to a change in the student’s financial circumstances, and the contact information for such office.

Page 5, strike lines 12 through 16.

Page 15, line 15, insert “and for such amount as is specified by the borrower” after “such award year”.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1049, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Chairman, I thank Chairwoman Foxx.

Today, young Americans are burdened with more than \$1.4 trillion in student debt. As the cost of college tuition continues to rise, we know that students who do not complete their degrees and graduate bear the heaviest burden when paying back loans.

□ 1500

This is why we must ensure that borrowing is done wisely and that we provide students with information so they don’t feel compelled to drop out because of a change in finances.

Financial literacy is the foundation needed for students to make informed decisions, yet over 40 percent of students carrying high debt loads cannot remember ever receiving financial counseling.

Many students work very hard to line up savings, scholarships, grants, and loans to pay for their education only to have something change in their personal life. This could be the death or an illness of a family member, the loss of a parent’s or student’s job, an investment that didn’t work out, or any number of situations resulting in a significant change to the student’s financial circumstances.

When students are faced with these hardships, some rush into a loan that may not be in their best interest, and some may even decide to drop out of school. We should not accept either of those outcomes, especially when our Nation’s schools are equipped with the dedicated support of financial aid offi-

cers. These individuals are able to help guide a student through the many complexities of financing higher education and are also ready and willing to guide students through unexpected financial turbulence.

We know that students who do receive adequate financial guidance are positioned to have much stronger financial health than those who do not. One challenge to this goal of financial literacy is ensuring students know who to go to when finances become an issue. This problem is particularly harmful to first-generation college students who may not have any family members or friends who can help advise on this type of situation or may not know where to look for additional financial guidance.

My amendment adds to the important work of this underlying bill by ensuring all students receive an explanation of how they can seek additional assistance from their financial aid office should they face a change in personal financial circumstances.

Since students will not be required to take out the maximum loan that they are eligible for, my amendment also clarifies that the loan the borrower receives is the amount the borrower wants to take out.

Mr. Chairman, I ask my colleagues to support this commonsense amendment and the underlying bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chairman, I claim my time in opposition, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee). Without objection, the gentlewoman from Oregon is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chairman, I thank my friend, the gentlewoman from New York, for her amendment. It improves the bill, and I support its acceptance.

Financing a college education can be a daunting process, especially for first-generation students. It can seem like there are things that everyone else knows but no one is telling them. If we are going to improve student counseling, we need to recognize this fact.

This amendment requires that as part of the annual counseling students receive, they be made aware, if their financial circumstances change, they can and should contact their financial aid office on campus. There they can seek someone with the professional background, judgment, and assistance to help them make changes to awards, or they may find out about other aid for which the student may be eligible.

Additionally, students may not know that while they are eligible for a certain amount of Federal aid, they are not required to take the full amount. Many debt-conscious students may prefer to fund a smaller portion of their education through loans but may not know that this is an option. This amendment clarifies that in cases where the student specifies they would

like to receive less aid, that is an amount that is discussed in their counseling.

Again, I support the gentlewoman’s amendment, and I urge a “yes” vote.

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

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague and friend, the gentlewoman from Oregon, for her support.

As she mentioned, this is a commonsense amendment. It particularly helps first-generation college students access the financial counseling they need. This improves the bill.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MRS. MURPHY OF FLORIDA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in part A of House Report 115-919.

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 5, strike lines 4 through 11 and insert the following:

“(E) An explanation that, in the case of a student who transfers to another institution, the amount of time remaining for which a student may be eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant, as provided under subparagraph (D), will not change, regardless of whether all of the courses completed by such student are accepted for purposes of meeting specific degree or program requirements by the institution to which such student transfer.”

In section 485(l)(4) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as proposed to be amended by section 2 of the bill—

(1) redesignate subparagraphs (H) through (Q) as subparagraphs (I) through (R), respectively; and

(2) insert after subparagraph (G) the following:

“(H) An explanation that, in the case of a student who transfers to another institution, the loan amounts such student received before such transfer shall be used in determining the aggregate loan amount of the student, regardless of whether all of the courses completed by such student are accepted for purposes of meeting specific degree or program requirements by the institution to which such student transfers.”

Page 12, beginning on line 17, strike “(N) through (Q)” and insert “(O) through (R)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1049, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MURPHY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of my amendment to H.R. 1635, the Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act. This amendment would ensure that student borrowers who are considering whether to

transfer to another academic institution are provided with the guidance necessary to make fully informed decisions related to their student loan debt and academic credit transfers.

Currently, students who take out Federal loans to finance their education are limited to borrowing up to a certain aggregate amount, with the precise amount depending on the type of loan they have, their financial status, and whether they are enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program.

My amendment would ensure that a student borrower who wishes to transfer to another institution is provided with a clear and concise explanation that the loans he or she has received up to that point will count towards their aggregate loan limit, regardless of whether all the course credits they have completed are accepted by the school they seek to transfer to. Students will benefit from learning this important information because it will help them more effectively plan their educational and financial futures. Students who know the facts before they transfer will be in a better position to decide whether transferring is, in fact, the right decision for them.

Those students who do decide to transfer will be more likely to carefully research all their transfer options, and they will likely give preference to those schools that will accept the credits they earned at their current school and that otherwise provide students with a smooth and seamless transition process. Fewer students will be in the position of having transferred only to find out that very few of the credits they worked so hard to earn and had paid for will actually count towards their degree.

I believe my amendment will be particularly helpful to students who are enrolled in community or State colleges and are seeking to transfer to a 4-year program. Many students who live in my central Florida district are in precisely this position.

Notably, the University of Central Florida, which I am proud to represent, has established a strong transfer program in partnership with six State and community colleges throughout Florida, including Valencia College and Seminole State College in my district.

The program is called DirectConnect to UCF. In general, it guarantees students admission to UCF if they have earned an associate degree from a partner college, and the credits earned by the student at the partner college typically transfer. This is exactly the sort of transfer program that my amendment will encourage students to utilize.

Collectively, Americans owe a crushing \$1.4 trillion in student debt. As someone who is still paying off her own student loans, I know there is far more we can and should do to ensure that students are not saddled with excessive debt and are prepared to succeed after graduation.

Nevertheless, I am encouraged that we are taking a step in the right direc-

tion today by considering this important legislation. By increasing transparency in the student loan process as it relates to credit transfers, we will provide our students with the information they need to make the best educational and financial decisions for themselves.

I thank the Rules Committee for allowing the House to consider this amendment, and I respectfully ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support it.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to this amendment, but I do not intend to oppose it.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Kentucky is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chairman, this amendment will provide borrowers with critical information on aggregate loan limits, which is particularly important for transfer students, as my friend just explained. This disclosure will encourage borrowers to thoughtfully plan their college expenses and will help students make informed decisions when transferring schools.

I thank my colleague for offering this amendment, and I urge my colleagues to support it and the underlying bill.

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

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I would just reiterate my hope that my colleagues will accept this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mrs. MURPHY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. O'HALLERAN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in part A of House Report 115-919.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 9, line 10, strike "an income-based repayment plan under section 493C" and insert "the income-driven repayment plans the borrower is eligible for".

Page 10, beginning on line 14, strike "an income-based repayment plan under section 493C" and insert "the income-driven repayment plans the borrower is eligible for".

Page 17, beginning on line 11, strike "the income-based repayment plan under section 493C" and insert "the income-driven repayment plans the borrower is eligible for".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1049, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Chairman, college affordability and the student loan crisis affect every community across our Nation. The decisions that

young people are forced to make in order to get a degree—decisions involving tens and sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars—can affect the rest of their lives.

Over 44 million Americans have a total of \$1.5 trillion in student loan debt. In Arizona, borrowers owe an average of just under \$24,000, annually, in student loan debt.

That is why I am pleased that the underlying bill before us today takes an important step towards making sure students and borrowers have more tools and information about their options, including income-driven repayment plans. Income-driven repayment plans like PAYE, REPAYE, and IBR have increased in enrollment in recent years and can offer borrowers more predictability and manageability on their student loan payments.

A lot of borrowers don't know about all the income-driven repayment options they are eligible for, making it harder to figure out which one might be the best fit. My commonsense amendment helps to fix that by simply requiring the annual counseling mandated by the underlying bill to disclose the anticipated monthly payment to a borrower for any income-driven repayment plan they are eligible for.

Increasing awareness about all income-driven repayment options and what a borrower could expect to pay under each program they are eligible for will help equip them and their families with more resources to make important decisions.

My amendment, like the underlying bill, is an important step forward to support our hardworking students and workers in our communities at a time when many are still struggling. We have an obligation to increase transparency to borrowers and ensure they have the tools to thrive.

I want to thank Congressman BERA for his support of this amendment, as well as Congresswoman FOXX and Ranking Member SCOTT for their work on this bipartisan bill before us today.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support my amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to this amendment, but I do not intend to oppose it.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Kentucky is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chairman, this amendment will help students see an estimated monthly student loan payment broken down by all income-driven repayment plans for which the student is eligible.

I support this amendment because students need to see the full range of possibilities available to them so they can make informed choices about what they borrow and how they will repay the funds.

I thank my colleague for offering the amendment, and I urge my colleagues to support it and the underlying bill.

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

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. BERA).

Mr. BERA. Mr. Chairman, I thank my good friend from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN) for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of our amendment to H.R. 1635. Our amendment is simple. It would ensure that student borrowers are provided information about the full range of income-based repayment options. This will help students get a full picture of what college is going to look like and give an estimate of what they might owe on a monthly basis over their anticipated career. This additional transparency will make sure students are not caught off guard about their student debt after graduation.

As the co-chair of the California Public Higher Education Caucus, one of my priorities here in Congress has been working to improve the affordability, accessibility, and quality of higher education.

Think about it. I paid \$393 a quarter to go to medical school. That meant I could go to 4 years of undergraduate school, 4 years of medical school, get some help from my folks, work part time, a few scholarships, and graduate with less than \$10,000 of debt. That is amazing.

□ 1515

Now, I am not that old. We might not be able to get to that place, but the truth is that education has allowed me to do what I have done throughout my life, and that is an investment that pays off.

Let's make sure we make higher education affordable and accessible to our students in that next generation. Let's make sure we keep making those investments, and, again, let's make sure that those students have that transparency and the information that they need to make reasonable decisions.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MR. LEWIS OF MINNESOTA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 4 printed in part A of House Report 115-919.

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 12, strike lines 19 through 21 and insert the following:

“(B) A notification that some students may qualify for other financial aid and an explanation that the student for whom the borrower is taking out the loan should consider accepting any grant, scholarship, or State or Federal work-study jobs for which such student is eligible prior to borrowing Parent PLUS Loans.

Page 14, line 23, insert “pay each loan while the dependent child is still in school, pay the interest on the loan while the loan is in deferment,” after “a shorter schedule.”

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1049, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. LEWIS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, we currently have over \$1.4 trillion in student debt, a burden that too many carry with them well after their time on campus, delaying critical milestones, such as buying a house or starting a family.

At the core of this problem is insufficient financial literacy at the time of borrowing, things like understanding that the amount you will have to pay back is going to be greater than the loan you took out, the magic of compound interest; learning how to budget for typical educational expenses and recognizing that paying loans back faster, not just hitting the minimum amount due, will make the loan less expensive.

When borrowers do not receive this critical information up front, they are prone to over-borrowing and inefficient repayment, costing our students, families, and taxpayers far more than it should for access to a great higher education.

So I applaud Representative GUTHRIE and Representative BONAMICI for their hard work as this underlying legislation is an essential step towards enhancing financial awareness and empowering smart decisions.

While right now only about half of all students even remember receiving the limited counseling they did receive, this bill ensures students will receive comprehensive counseling each year and before they agree to take out the loans.

For the first time, low-income students receiving Pell grants will be included in the counseling, allowing them to maximize this opportunity for education vouchers.

My amendment builds on the power of this legislation and is specifically aimed at parents who want to provide the best education for their child and must navigate the confusing maze of student aid options currently on the books.

With my amendment, parents will be notified that their child may qualify for and should consider scholarships, grants, and Federal workstudy jobs prior to taking out any PLUS loans. These debt-free alternatives to borrowing exist, yet lack of awareness can lead to a costly missed opportunity.

A workstudy program provides not only a source of income to cover the costs of college, but it can be a powerful educational experience and a complement to learning that takes place in the classroom.

Additionally, my amendment ensures parent borrowers are aware that they

can start paying off the loan while their child is still in school and can pay interest on the loan while it is in deferment.

Student loan programs should encourage a quick and responsible path towards becoming debt-free and not incentivize borrowers to pay back as slowly as possible.

My amendment in this legislation will equip students and families with greater financial awareness around the true cost of paying back their loans, protecting them from over-borrowing and improving loan repayment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Oregon is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the gentleman from Minnesota for his amendment. It improves the bill, and I support its acceptance.

Students may be eligible for many different forms of financial aid, and in our effort to improve financial counseling, we should make sure that appropriate disclosures and information are being shared with the borrowers based on the type of aid they are receiving.

This amendment addresses Parent PLUS loans, loans that parents or guardians can take out to pay for the education of a dependent student. Parent PLUS loans have a higher interest rate than direct loans, and because they can cover unmet need up to the cost of attendance, the loan balance can grow rather quickly. As such, parents should be counseled that there may be other forms of aid that their student can take advantage of to help reduce the size of the Parent PLUS loan that is needed. A robust counseling program will also inform parents, as the gentleman stated, that there is no penalty to prepaying either the interest or the principal on these loans.

Again, Mr. Chair, I support the gentleman's amendment because it improves the underlying legislation, I urge a “yes” vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague as well for supporting this amendment.

As students return to their classrooms this fall, parents across the country are wondering how they can provide the best opportunities to their children.

Financing a higher education is one of the biggest financial decisions a family will make. It is essential they are equipped with the right information and meaningful counseling before they make this decision.

My amendment ensures parents are able to consider all the options to pay for their student's education before they decide to take out a PLUS loan.

With the right information, a great workstudy job, scholarship, or grant program will not be left on the table when parents make certain those decisions to go into debt are responsible ones.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and the underlying legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. LEWIS).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MR. ALLEN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 5 printed in part A of House Report 115-919.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 15, line 24, strike the period and quotation mark at the end.

Page 15, after line 24, insert the following: “(7) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit an eligible institution from providing additional information and counseling services to recipients of Federal student aid under this title, provided that any additional information and counseling services for recipients of Federal student aid shall not preclude or be considered a condition for disbursement of such aid.”

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1049, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, H.R. 1635 makes important improvements to ensure that the Department of Education is doing its job when offering loans to our students for their continued education.

Too many young people are coming out of school with a mountain of student loan debt without having understood the full implications of accepting such debt in the first place. Students receiving annual counseling about the obligations of Federal student loans is long overdue.

However, it is imperative that institutions of higher education do their part to ensure that students consider Federal student loans as a last resort. In fact, one of the questions that I asked in a committee hearing is: Does anyone encourage students to work their way through college anymore?

My amendment provides that nothing prohibits institutions from providing additional financial counseling above what is already included in the bill.

When it comes to government-backed loans, the goal of every higher education institution should be to guarantee the success of their students rather than burdening them with debt they cannot repay.

Many institutions are taking steps in the right direction to contain costs,

but the higher education community needs to step it up to lower costs to ensure that our students are not graduating with an unreasonable amount of debt and without a plan to pay it back.

The purpose of my amendment is to send a signal to the university system that it should do more than the minimum required by law to ensure students receive meaningful financial counseling.

Mr. Chairman, I urge passage of my amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Oregon is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the gentleman from Georgia for his amendment. It improves the underlying bill, and I support its acceptance.

I rise in support of the amendment to clarify that institutions have the ability to provide additional financial counseling beyond the requirements established in the underlying bill while making sure that the additional counseling will in no way preclude students from receiving their aid on time.

Although the underlying bill does not prohibit institutions from providing this counseling, this amendment makes explicit the institution's ability to provide that additional support.

Institutions know their students and the individual capacity of those students, and it is important to provide this flexibility so schools can provide more counseling as needed.

Again, I support the gentleman's amendment, I urge a “yes” vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Oregon for her support of this important amendment. I urge passage of my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MRS. HARTZLER

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 6 printed in part A of House Report 115-919.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 15, line 24, strike the period and quotation mark at the end.

Page 15, after line 24, insert the following: “(7) COUNSELING SESSIONS CONDUCTED IN PERSON.—Institutions of higher education may encourage individuals to attend in-person loan counseling sessions under paragraph (1)(A).”

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1049, the gentleman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to offer an amendment that would encourage colleges and universities to offer face-to-face loan counseling. As students arrive at colleges and university campuses this fall, many will soon find themselves immediately in debt. According to the Department of Education, a typical student borrower takes out roughly \$6,600 in a single year and averages \$22,000 in debt by graduation.

Alarming, default rates are at an all-time high. What is worse is that many students report not even remembering their student loan counseling. We need to change that.

I have heard from schools in my district, including many community colleges, about the need for more robust, personal loan counseling. Many students take out loans and have difficulty finding the type of jobs necessary to pay those loans off and become so saddled with debt that it causes them to delay many of life's milestones, like getting married or buying a house.

The type of personalized counseling my amendment encourages should include a sit-down discussion about the current demands of the job market in relation to what the student is studying and their realistic ability to repay the financial obligations they are taking. Students should know what they are getting into and not be at an immediate economic disadvantage at graduation.

Schools should do their best to educate their students about their obligations and guide them toward financial literacy and stability, and this cannot effectively be accomplished through the click of a button.

I applaud my colleague from Kentucky for offering this important piece of legislation to enhance the information that students receive, and I thank the Rules Committee for making my amendment on personal loan counseling in order.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Oregon is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chairman, I am supportive of this amendment because it simply allows institutions to encourage in-person counseling, but I would be remiss if I did not state that this provision is not necessary. The underlying bill already permits institutions to provide either in-person counseling or use the consumer-tested online tool that would be created by the Department of Education.

H.R. 1635, the underlying bill, was written intentionally in this way to provide flexibility to institutions. Some institutions will be able to provide high quality in-person counseling, but underresourced institutions may find it difficult to do so.

This is why the bill contains provisions to have the Department of Education create a standardized tool to ensure at least a base level of quality within and across institutions. Because the success of in-person counseling is informed not only by the content but also by the individual providing the counseling, this online tool will make sure that students receive the same caliber of counseling regardless of where the counseling is provided or who provides the counseling.

To confirm effectiveness, the tool will be tested by students, financial aid advisers, advocacy organizations, and other stakeholders.

Again, in-person counseling would be fine and best for some students when the institution can provide it, but having that flexibility is important as well.

Mr. Chair, I do urge support of this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentlewoman's support. With total student loan debt of over \$1.3 trillion and rising and over 44 million individuals still saddled with student debt, we must take action.

□ 1530

The student loan crisis looms over America's economy, and we must make sure that students are aware of the financial obligations they are agreeing to and cognizant of their ability to repay those obligations. Personalized, face-to-face counseling can be an effective tool to address this crisis.

Mr. Chairman, I ask for support of my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MS. JAYAPAL

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 7 printed in part A of House Report 115-919.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 16, line 13, strike "(iv) through (xii), respectively" and insert "(v) through (xiii), respectively".

Page 16, line 14, strike "before clause (iv)" and insert "before clause (v)".

Page 17, line 2, strike the quotation mark and semicolon at the end.

Page 17, after line 2, insert the following: "(iv) an explanation that the borrower may be approached during the repayment process by third-party student debt relief companies, that they should use caution in any such dealings, and that the typical services provided by these companies are already offered to borrowers free of charge through servicers;"

Page 17, line 3, strike "in clause (iv)" and insert "in clause (v)".

Page 17, line 13, strike "in clause (ix)" and insert "in clause (x)".

Page 17, line 20, strike "in clause (x)" and insert "in clause (xi)".

Page 17, line 23, strike "in clauses (xi) and (xii)" and insert "in clauses (xii) and (xiii)".

Page 18, line 1, strike "(xiii)" and insert "(xiv)".

Page 18, line 6, strike "(xiv)" and insert "(xv)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1049, the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of my amendment, which simply adds to the requirements for student loan exit counseling in the underlying bill.

I would like to thank Congressman GUTHRIE and Congresswoman BONAMICI for their leadership in crafting this bill and for their consideration of this amendment.

With my amendment, exit counseling would include an explicit warning about third-party, fraudulent companies that often call, email, text, send letters, and use aggressive advertising to reach students during the repayment process.

These so-called debt relief companies sometimes say they can help settle your Federal student loans, warn borrowers that forgiveness programs could end soon, and sometimes even pose as being affiliated with the U.S. Government.

These companies generally do not offer any relief at all and charge for services that are already provided for free by loan servicers. Often, these companies leave borrowers worse off, severely damage their credit scores, or make changes to loan repayment plans that they didn't authorize.

I think Republicans and Democrats both agree that these are scams, pure and simple. These same companies who once preyed on underwater mortgage holders have now moved on to lure student loan borrowers simply trying to pay off their debts, provide for themselves or their families, and live a better life. It is hard enough for borrowers to navigate the complicated maze of repayment options and obtain sound guidance from their servicer without scammers coming in to blow up the whole thing.

What is more, many of these companies have already had to pay massive settlements to our government for scamming consumers. The Federal Trade Commission and State attorneys general across the country, including from my home State of Washington, have brought cases against these scammers who have used deception and false promises of relief to take more than \$95 million in illegal upfront fees from American consumers over the years.

In 2014, the CFPB filed a lawsuit against a company called Student Loan Processing.US for deceiving consumers about its fee structure and misrepresenting its affiliation. It led to the distribution of hundreds of thousands of dollars back to defrauded consumers.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to offer this critical consumer protection amendment that helps empower students to make sound financial decisions. I do recognize that enhancing financial literacy is just a small sliver of the legislation we need to chip away at our student debt crisis.

Right now, I know that we need to take that next step in the crisis with bold policy solutions to address that \$1.4 trillion in student loan debt that is dragging down our economy. But at this moment, Madam Chair, I commend my colleagues for this practical step, and I urge support of my amendment.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, I rise to claim the time in opposition to this amendment, but I do not intend to oppose it.

The Acting CHAIR (Mrs. HARTZLER). Without objection, the gentleman from Kentucky is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, this proposal will make sure students are warned about third-party debt relief companies that prey on borrowers.

They frequently provide inaccurate or misleading information and often charge excessive fees for services that can be received without cost through federally contracted student loan servicers. As my friend said, Federal student loan servicers employ dedicated professionals equipped to help borrowers navigate the loan repayment process and provide the assistance they need free of charge.

This amendment will ensure borrowers are armed with the information they need to better protect their finances and help make wise decisions as they begin to repay their Federal student loans.

I thank my friend from Washington for offering this amendment, and I urge my colleagues to support it and the underlying bill.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Madam Chair, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Chair, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. As someone with a consumer protection background, I thank her for her amendment.

It has already been stated during the debate that there is close to \$1.5 trillion in outstanding student loan debt. It should be no surprise that there are companies and individuals poised to make money on the backs of student borrowers through fraudulent means.

In recent years, there has been an explosion of third-party debt relief scams targeting student loan borrowers. These businesses claim that, for a fee, they can cut through the red tape for borrowers and get their student loan house in order. They misrepresent services, make promises they can't keep, and charge for activities that cost nothing.

State and Federal consumer protection groups have already started cracking down on these groups. State attorneys general, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau have either sounded the alarm or conducted enforcement actions targeting these fraudulent companies.

We should use this opportunity in this bill when conducting loan counseling to remind students that their loan servicer is paid through the Department of Education to provide assistance with these services free of charge. They should be wary of any third-party company attempting to facilitate repayment of their Federal student loans.

It is a commonsense addition to the bill, and I thank the gentlewoman for offering the amendment.

Again, I support this amendment, and I urge a "yes" vote.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Madam Chair, I wanted to again reiterate my thanks to both Congressman GUTHRIE and Congresswoman BONAMICI, and urge support of my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. There being no further amendments, under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee) having assumed the chair, Mrs. HARTZLER, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1635) to amend the loan counseling requirements under the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes, and, pursuant to House Resolution 1049, she reported the bill back to the House with sundry amendments adopted in the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on any amendment reported from the Committee of the Whole? If not, the Chair will put them en gros.

The amendments were agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. LAMB. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. LAMB. I am opposed in its current form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Lamb moves to recommit the bill H.R. 1635 to the Committee on Education and the Workforce with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

Page 21, line 22, insert "status as a recipient of assistance under a tuition assistance program conducted by the Department of Defense under section 1784a or 2007 of title 10, United States Code, or other authorities available to the Department of Defense or veterans' education benefits (as defined in section 480)," after "income,".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes on his motion.

Mr. LAMB. Mr. Speaker, this is the final amendment to the bill, which will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, I have been here for 5 months now. I have met a lot of people who still want to work hard, do the right thing, and, most importantly, get things done. This is true on both sides of the aisle. But the problem is that, even when we work together and we are close to finally getting something done, the leadership of this House can deny us a vote on bills that are already written, on bills that are supported by both sides, and on bills that are good for the American people. They deny us a vote.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment is a perfect example. I offered an amendment to this bill. The amendment would help make sure that veterans are getting the information they need about student loans. This bill does not recognize veterans. It does say that, down the road, we have to study its effects and that we should look at race; we should look at ethnicity; we should look at gender; we should look at income; and we should look at people with disabilities. I agree with all of that. But we should also look at the effect on veterans.

Veterans are different from other students. Many students rely on their parents, but many veterans are parents. Many students are taking out their first loans, but many veterans already have mortgages. Many students are leaving home for the first time, while many veterans are coming home from tours of service all over the world.

We need to know if veterans are getting the information they need about their student loans, in addition to these other groups.

I know that Members of both parties agree with that. I met with several Republicans yesterday, and not a single one raised a single objection to this amendment. But then we find out that leadership will not allow a vote on this amendment. Why is that?

Well, Mr. Speaker, this motion to recommit will allow us a vote. It will allow us to vote for veterans.

Our student loan system is stacked against veterans, just like it is stacked against so many of our fellow Americans. We thank our veterans for their

service all the time, using words. Today, let's thank them with action. Let's thank them with the force of law. Let's thank them by doing our jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of this motion to recommit, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Kentucky is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here. We all support veterans.

Under this bill, every veteran receives the same enhanced counseling provided to all borrowers. Looking at the study and before we determine the right elements of a new study to ensure we are providing the best service, we should pause and, I suggest, work with our Veterans' Affairs Committee to make sure we address the totality of the issue.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the underlying bill's support. I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on the motion to recommit and support the final bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. LAMB. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 44 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1705

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN) at 5 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Motion to recommit on H.R. 1635;

Passage of H.R. 1635, if ordered; and

Agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.