

Let's debate these issues. Let's come to the table to negotiate on a bipartisan overhaul, but let's not hold historically Black colleges and universities and minority-serving institutions hostage in the meantime. We can get something done in the short run that would be beneficial to these institutions.

We need to ensure that colleges and universities have the resources to provide support to all students they serve, including students with disabilities. A couple of examples of some of my bills—the Higher Education Mental Health Act, which is supported by over 250 college and university presidents, including 15 of the historically Black colleges and universities—would help institutions of higher education identify the resources and services needed to support their students with mental health needs.

A second bill of mine, the RISE Act, would make it easier for colleges to provide support to students with disabilities by accepting student assessments from high school and smoothing the transition to higher education.

A third bill, my Expanding Disability Access to Higher Education Act, would increase the funding for TRIO Programs that serve first-generation students with disabilities and make higher education more accessible.

These bills would provide the resources needed for students to be successful as they pursue higher education, but without a comprehensive bill, the needs of these students will continue to go unmet. Rather than blocking vital resources from flowing to our Nation's historically Black colleges and universities, we should immediately pass the FUTURE Act. This would restore funding, while providing us time to work on a comprehensive re-authorization that addresses the needs of all students.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that as in legislative session, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 212, H.R. 2486. I ask unanimous consent that the Murray amendment at the desk be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I am reserving the right to object.

I have a better idea, which I am going to offer to the Senate once again. It is permanent funding for historically Black colleges at the level of \$255 million a year. The distinguished Senator from Pennsylvania has stated he doesn't want a piecemeal bill. He wants a more comprehensive bill. I have offered such a bill and introduced it in the Senate. I will describe it in a few moments when I ask unanimous con-

sent to pass it, and it will include not a 2-year short-term fix based upon a budget gimmick, which will have difficulty passing the Senate, but permanent funding of historically Black colleges and minority-serving institutions.

It will include simplification of the FAFSA, the form that 8 million minority students fill out every year, which in our State is the biggest obstacle to minority students having an opportunity for higher education and a variety of other bipartisan proposals.

I am ready to pass a comprehensive bill. I offered one before. It was blocked by my Democratic friends. I am going to offer it again in a minute, and we will see if they agree to it, but I don't think we should pass a piecemeal bill. I agree with the Senator from Pennsylvania. I think we should be more comprehensive, and not only that, we should do permanent funding of historically Black colleges.

The last point I will make before I object is that the U.S. Department of Education has written all the presidents of the historically Black and minority-serving institutions and said there is sufficient funding in the Federal Government for the rest of the year—fiscal year—until October 1 of next year. So while we need to finish our work, there is no crisis at the moment, so let's do the job right.

I will offer, in just a moment, the way to do that, which is permanent funding of historically Black colleges and minority-serving institutions. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2557

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, for the convenience of the Senator from Pennsylvania, I am going to offer my unanimous consent agreement at the beginning of my remarks, and then if he wishes to stay, he can, but if he has another place to go in his schedule, he may do that.

Let me just say that the provision I am going to—let me preface it in this way. I know very well the value of historically Black colleges. One of my favorite stories is the story that the late author, Alex Haley, the author of "Roots" and "The Autobiography of Malcolm X"—I suppose the two best selling books ever on the history of the African American—used to tell about his father, Simon P. Haley, who was wasted as a child. That was the word they used.

He was allowed to go to college, and he went to North Carolina A&T where he was ready to drop out. He came back, got a summer job on a Pullman train to Chicago, and a man talked to him at night asking him for a glass of warm milk. He got the glass of warm milk and thought nothing more about it. He went back to North Carolina A&T, a historically Black college.

The principal called him in. He thought he was in real trouble, as the

president of the college called him in. Simon P. Haley thought he was in real trouble. The President of the college said that the man on the train had sent enough money for Simon P. Haley to graduate—to pay his tuition to graduate from college.

So Alex Haley wrote for the Reader's Digest the story of the man on the train who helped his father. That father went to Cornell and became the first Black graduate of Cornell's agricultural college. He came back to Lane College, one of the six historically Black colleges in Tennessee, where he taught and raised a son, who is a lawyer, later Ambassador to Gambia; two daughters, one a teacher; he raised another son, an architect; and then he raised a son he thought wouldn't amount to anything who joined the Coast Guard and ended up writing a Pulitzer Prize-winning book, "Roots," and "The Autobiography of Malcolm X."

I know the value of Lane College, Fisk University, Tennessee State University, Lemoyne-Owen College, Meharry Medical College, and America Baptist College, and I want to help them. The request I am going to make is that the Senate pass a small package of bills that are sponsored by Democrats and Republicans, 29 Senators—17 Democrats and 12 Republicans. The first provision would be permanent funding. That is \$255 million every year permanently for historically Black colleges and minority-serving institutions. A second provision—I ask consent to use this document on the Senate floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALEXANDER. That is the FAFSA. This is the document that 20 million Americans fill out every year. We know how to reduce it. It is the biggest impediment to minority students going to college today. We are ready to pass it. Eight million minority students fill this out. The president of the Southwest Community College from Memphis tells me he loses 1,500 students a semester because of the complexity of that.

There are other provisions in this package, which include the Portman-Kaine provision for short-term Pell grants sponsored by about 20 Senators, many of them Democrats; the provision for Pell grants for prisoners who are eligible for parole; an increase in the number of Pell grants; an increase in the amount of Pell grants. All of that is in this package that I have offered, but it starts with permanent funding for historically black colleges. Since there is time until October 1 of next year, the Department of Education has said that there is plenty of Federal funding for all of those institutions. There is no reason we can't agree to my package today, send it over to the House of Representatives, send it to the President, and let all of these institutions know they don't have to worry about funding permanently instead of just for 2 years.

So, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 2557 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I just want to make a couple of comments by way of response.

I really want to go back to what we said earlier. There is no reason we can't at least get this piece of legislation done. I will say it again: These institutions are underresourced. They don't have the flexibility to operate in the red in the hopes of potential reimbursement later on.

We are also told by the institutions themselves that planning has "all but stopped." Campuses are feeling this impact already. Just 2 weeks after this program expired, some campuses informed employees that their positions and programs may be terminated. So I would argue that the present circumstance is not acceptable.

I realize the chairman wants to proceed to other issues, and I respect that, but when you consider what he is proposing, there are some changes that should be pointed out.

First of all, when considering the proposal he has, in comparing what it would do, for example, on the Second Chance Pell proposal, that only contains a limited repeal of the ban rather than a full repeal of the ban. Any reference to the JOBS Act making short-term programs eligible for Pell grants—a bipartisan bill that was introduced—excludes for-profit colleges. In this micropackage that the chairman is proposing, the for-profit colleges are added back in.

No. 3, just by way of some examples, in the Grassley-Smith bill on financial aid award letters, some changes were made to that on financial aid award letters that weren't contemplated by the bill's original authors.

Our legislation is fully paid for. It reinvests up to \$55 million in recovery programs. For several reasons, by way of contrast but also by way of what is happening right now with regard to these institutions—for those and other reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I know this Senate is a deliberative body, but we have been working on higher education for 5 years in our committee, and suddenly, out of the blue, comes a bill out of the House which says that we have an emergency in one provision of the Higher Education Act; don't take it through committee. That is the way we usually do things.

The distinguished Senator from Louisiana is a member of this committee, and the Senator from Pennsylvania is a valued member of the committee. We have a pretty good reputation for working together, despite our differences, in fixing No Child Left Behind, 21st Century Cures, opioid legislation. Healthcare is a contentious issue, but by a vote of 20 to 3, we brought out a bill to lower healthcare costs.

Yet the suggestion is that we take this bill to the Senate floor without any consideration by the committee. That is not the way we usually do things.

Let me reemphasize that the U.S. Department of Education has told every one of the historically Black colleges and minority-serving institutions that there is sufficient Federal funding between now and October 1 of next year. There is no reason to cut anybody's pay and no reason to stop planning. That is what the Federal Government has told those institutions. That is plenty of time for us to take a provision—such as the one I have proposed or such as the one that the distinguished Senator from Pennsylvania has proposed—through our committee and recommend to the full Senate what we ought to do.

Let's not minimize what else there is to do. I mean, we literally have been working for 5 years on simplifying this FAFSA. There are 8 million minority students who fill it out every year. I think we should be concerned about the 300,000 students who attend historically Black colleges and universities. Many of them fill this out. I am told by the former Governor of Tennessee that filling out this complicated form is the single biggest impediment for low-income students having an opportunity to go to college because their families think it is too complicated.

Well, we know what to do about this. Senator BENNET, the Democratic Senator from Colorado, and I began working on this 5 years ago. Senator MURRAY, the Democratic Senator from Washington, and I recommended that the Senate pass legislation getting rid of 22 questions that were double reporting. You have to tell the IRS some facts, and you have to tell the Department of Education the same facts, and then they come in the middle of the semester and try to catch you having one answer here and another answer there. So at East Tennessee State University, 70 percent of the student body has their Pell grant verified, and some of them lose their Federal funding while they check to see if the information they had to give to two Federal agencies is different. We passed the Senate with that—Senator MURRAY and I did that last year.

So why should we wait on this? I don't think we should wait on permanent funding for historically Black colleges, but why hold this hostage to that?

I am ready to move ahead on permanent funding for historically Black col-

leges. I am ready to move ahead on simplifying the FAFSA for 8 million students who fill this out every year. I am ready to move ahead on short-term Pell grants. I have been working with the Senator from Washington on this and with other Members of the Senate. I think we are moving to a consensus. We have time to do this right. Let's take it through committee and send back to the House of Representatives a permanent solution.

I think it is very important that we make clear to all of the presidents and all of the students at historically Black colleges and minority-serving institutions, No. 1, you have a year of funding ahead of you; No. 2, you have a proposal by the chairman of the Education Committee that will permanently fund what you are doing; and No. 3, our Democratic friends are asking that the Senate pass short-term funding that will create another funding cliff within a matter of months and that is funded by a budget gimmick that will never pass muster in the Senate. That is not going to happen.

So we need to work together as we normally do and come to a conclusion on the Higher Education Act, including permanent funding of historically Black colleges and minority institutions. I am ready to keep doing that. But I am also ready to encourage the passage not only of the provisions that I have introduced and that I asked for permission to pass today, which the Senator objected to, but other provisions that might be included.

I think 5 years is long enough to work on the Higher Education Act. I am coming to the conclusion we have time to do it, and I look forward to saying to our six historically Black colleges in Tennessee that the result of our hard work and debate and discussion has been permanent funding, so you don't have to worry about Federal funding.

Mr. BURR. Mr. Chairman, will the Senator yield?

Mr. ALEXANDER. I will yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I thank the chairman for yielding, and I am here as living proof that he is not the Lone Ranger on this. The committee has worked diligently. We may not be as passionate as he is, but the committee has worked diligently to get higher education done.

It is a farce to come in here and think that we are going to pass a 2-year House bill to fund historically Black colleges. Nobody has more historically Black colleges in their State than I do. What they want—they want predictability, permanent funding. The chairman is willing to do that, but part of the condition to do that is to sit down and, now, quit talking and pass higher education. Reduce the FAFSA application to one page. Let these students go out—and their parents—and be able to fill this out and not miss an education because they can't go through the laborious process.

What the chairman has laid on the table is reasonable. The committee has talked about it for years. Now it is time to act. It is not time to act on one little piece of it for temporary funding. It is time to provide permanent funding for that and to do the rest of higher education.

As proud as I am of our being the home of the majority of Black colleges and universities, I also have about 70 other colleges and universities in North Carolina, and they are the beneficiaries of everything else that is in this education bill.

Compromise is not about “Take what I have” and not give anything else. We have been trying to work, with the chairman and the ranking member working together, to find compromise for 5 years. Many times the chairman has come to me and said: I think we can do it this year. Well, we have to have willing partners on the other side of the aisle. Today is a live example of where it is either their way or no way.

I hope we can get back, and, before we leave this year, we can get this package passed. It is really simple: Just commit to do what we all have sat down and talked about for 5 years. If there are minor changes that need to be made, let’s make them in the next day or two. But to say that we are going to wait until next year and be here a year from now when that timeframe has run out, let me assure you, if the chairman is not here to object to this request, I will be here to object to this request.

The time to talk is over. The time to act is now.

I thank the chairman for yielding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Just a couple of points on where we are: There is no question that, in my judgment, if you have more time to consider these issues for a full reauthorization, we could address some of the shortcomings that have been proposed already. I mentioned earlier issues that are not addressed, such as childcare, housing, food and mental health, the needs of first-generation students, needs of students of color, and students with disabilities. We can do that if we can get through this short-term period. We are asking for help only for a very limited timeframe so that we can work through these other issues.

The second point I would make is, I can’t stand in the shoes of the leaders of these institutions, but when they tell us that they are in a difficult circumstance in the short run, I will take their word for it. The word of the Department of Education—just from my point of view—doesn’t compare to what these institutions are telling us. So I think we should rely upon the representations by the leaders of the institutions and act in a short-term fashion, all the while committing ourselves to have a longer process to fully explore and try to reach consensus on a range of issues that come under the broad purview of reauthorization.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I want to thank the Senator from Pennsylvania for coming to the floor today on an issue I know he cares about. I thank the Senator from North Carolina.

We are accustomed to working together. We are accustomed to getting results, and I want to get a result on this.

I agree with both Senators in this sense: I think it is time to send a signal to historically Black colleges and minority-serving institutions that they don’t have to worry about funding for the future. For the next year, the Department of Education has told them: You have the money for the next year. It shouldn’t take us a year to finish our work.

So I look forward to sitting down with the Senator from North Carolina and the Senator from Pennsylvania and working out their differences on the provisions that we have. We have the basis for a very good higher education bill—the permanent funding for historically Black colleges, the simplification of the FAFSA, which affects 20 million families every year. We have broad bipartisan consensus on simplifying how you pay back student loans. There are nine different ways now. We could reduce that to two. That affects 43 million families.

The short-term Pell grants make a big difference.

So we have a number of provisions, and I am working well, as I always do, with the Senator from Washington, Mrs. MURRAY. I would like to bring this to a conclusion as rapidly as we can. I think this debate has been useful to do that. I look forward to continuing it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, for this 259th climate speech, I am going to return to the theme of corruption. Before diving into the how, let’s start with the why because the scale and the remorselessness of the scheme of corruption the fossil fuel industry has run is hard to comprehend without understanding why.

Here is the why. The fossil fuel industry reaps the biggest subsidy in the history of the planet. I will say that again. The fossil fuel industry reaps the biggest subsidy in the history of the planet. The IMF—International Monetary Fund—estimates that the global subsidy for fossil fuel is in the trillions of dollars every year. That is globally. In the United States alone, the fossil fuel industry got a \$650 billion—that is with a “b”—subsidy in 2015, according to the most recent report from the IMF. That is about \$2,000 out of the pocket of every man, woman, and child in the United States. Here is that IMF report. Look it up. Read it and weep.

Stop for a minute and understand this subsidy. Some of it is favorable

tax deals and other direct subsidies that pour public taxpayer money into the pockets of this polluting industry. In recent years, that has been estimated at around \$20 billion annually.

The vast bulk of this \$650 billion is something else. It is people getting hurt. It is the cost of people suffering economic harms. It is the cost of your home burned in a wildfire or swept away in a storm by rising seas. It is the cost of farms withered from unprecedented droughts or crops drowned in unprecedented flooding. It is the cost of fisheries that are lost or moved away as oceans warm and acidify. It is the lost day of work with your kid in the emergency room waiting out a climate-related asthma attack on the ER’s nebulizer. It is the cost of tick-borne and mosquito-borne illnesses that didn’t used to be where you live. It is the cost to dive tours of tourists seeing dead, white, bleached coral reefs instead of vibrant undersea gardens and the cost to snowmobile moose tours of going through mud instead of snow and when you see moose, seeing emaciated moose calves with thousands of ticks slowly killing them. It is the cost of American military deployments to conflicts caused by resource scarcity or climate migration. It is the cost of relocating Naval Station Norfolk when the community around it floods out. It is the cost of Glacier Park with no glacier. It is the cost of trout streams with no trout. It is the cost of millions of acres of healthy forests killed off by pine beetle infestation. It is the cost to Phoenix of staffing up emergency services when it is not safe to work outside because it is too hot and lost airline flights out of the airport when the tarmac melts. It is the myriad costs of basic operating systems of the natural world gone haywire because of climate change.

All this pain, all this loss, all this suffering has a bloodless economic name: externalities. Externalities are the social costs that are imposed on others by the use of a product. Pollution, of course, is the obvious example. In economic theory, those social costs should be baked into the price of a product. That is why courts and companies and countries around the world apply a social cost of carbon calculation.

But destroying the basic operating systems of the planet is a high-priced externality—by the IMF report, \$650 billion in 2015 just in the United States. And because it is hard to calculate a price for so much of this harm, that is a lowball estimate. For instance, we can estimate the loss to the dive shop of the coral reef off the coast dying, but is that really the full cost of the dead reef? There is a lot more. So the externality is probably well over \$650 billion.

By comparison, let’s look at the five major oil companies’ earnings. The five major oil companies earned somewhat more than \$80 billion in profits last year all around the world, all right?