

lack of awareness. Too often, visible signs of human trafficking go unnoticed or unreported simply because individuals lack proper training.

□ 1650

By arming these employees with critical information on how to identify potential trafficking situations, we can strengthen our ability to intervene quickly and efficiently to hold traffickers accountable and protect those who are most vulnerable.

I am proud to say that, last Congress, this legislation passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, with a vote of 407-0. Protecting more people from falling victim to the scourge of human trafficking is not political.

I urge my colleagues to put an end to this modern-day slavery and to vote “yes” on H.R. 4307.

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

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4307, the Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act.

This bipartisan bill is led by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) and the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH). It directs the Secretary of the Department of Labor to develop and implement effective training to ensure that the Department of Labor enforcement personnel continue to be educated on identifying and responding to human trafficking.

It also ensures that Department of Labor employees are aware of how to refer potential cases of human trafficking to the Department of Justice and other appropriate authorities.

It requires a new annual report to Congress on the Department of Labor’s trafficking prevention efforts, which will help guide the committee’s future oversight efforts.

The Department of Labor’s worker protection agencies play an essential role in enforcing Federal labor standards, ensuring workers are paid what they have been promised by their employers, and protecting health and safety in the workplace. Adequate training ensures that investigators are equipped to recognize red flags, such as confiscated identification documents, withheld wages, restricted movements, threats, coercion, and other indicators of forced labor.

These efforts should be appropriately funded, and the Department of Labor must continue to play a key role in fighting human trafficking. Wage and Hour investigators are often on the front lines and may be the only Federal officials in a position to encounter workers trapped in exploitative conditions.

Unfortunately, President Trump’s fiscal 2026 budget request proposed cutting funding for the Wage and Hour Division by nearly 10 percent and reducing staffing by roughly 250 employees for non-H-1B activities.

Over the course of the past decade, the number of Wage and Hour staff has fallen from a little over 1,400 in fiscal year 2017 to just under 1,200 in fiscal year ‘25, an 18 percent decline, even as the Wage and Hour Division has tracked a 150-percent increase in child labor violations over the same period.

It is critical to follow up this authorization with additional funding because, without the additional funding, this bill could result in even fewer resources available for the Department to carry out their core missions because it imposes additional burdens on agency staff. Additional funding could allow the Department to continue its core functions and fulfill the responsibilities outlined in the bill.

No one should be forced to work under threats, abuse, or intimidation. This legislation recognizes the essential role the Department of Labor and worker protection agencies play in protecting vulnerable workers and holding traffickers accountable.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan proposal, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Guam (Mr. MOYLAN), a great member of the Education and Workforce Committee.

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for the introduction. I am very happy and pleased to be a co-sponsor of this measure.

As we know, human trafficking is modern-day slavery, Mr. Speaker, and traffickers abuse and exploit millions of victims, especially children, girls, and women, all for commercial gain. This is a serious problem around the globe, Mr. Speaker, and even here at home.

We must do more to raise awareness of this crime.

The U.S. Department of Labor is on the front lines of detecting human trafficking. In 2024, the National Human Trafficking Hotline’s data showed that there were 21,865 victims, and that is only what we know was reported.

Mr. Speaker, one in six endangered runaways is a likely victim of child sex trafficking. We have a moral and ethical obligation to empower Federal agencies to prevent, detect, and address these horrific crimes.

This bipartisan, commonsense bill raises awareness of human trafficking and establishes effective and timely educational programs to train Department of Labor personnel.

This bill establishes a framework for employees to assist law enforcement, requires reports to Congress on the scope of the issue, and ensures U.S. DOL personnel have the tools they need to detect forced labor and sexual exploitation when they investigate labor law violations.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to vote for this measure to help address, prevent, and crack down on this terrible practice.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan has the only time remaining. The gentleman from Virginia has yielded his time back.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation and the policies it supports have been important to me for quite some time. That is because behind every statistic is a name, a face, and a heartbroken family.

Human trafficking doesn’t just rob these individuals of their dignity. It robs them of their future.

Department of Labor personnel already interact with workplaces, review labor conditions, and identify irregularities. H.R. 4307 ensures that when red flags appear, they are recognized for what they are and are acted upon swiftly and responsibly.

The earlier they can intervene, the greater the chance we have to stop exploitation before it becomes prolonged abuse. That proactive approach is both compassionate and common sense.

This approach also utilizes resources and tools already in place. It supports law enforcement without expanding government unnecessarily. It honors taxpayers by making better use of the workforce we already have.

H.R. 4307 better arms DOL employees to disrupt criminal enterprises and uphold justice, but most importantly, it helps bring victims back home to safety.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes,” and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4307, 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.

#### HOME SCHOOL GRADUATION RECOGNITION ACT

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6392) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to recognize students who have completed secondary school education in a home school setting as high school graduates, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6392

*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 “Home School Graduation Recognition Act”.*

#### SEC. 2. RECOGNIZING HOME SCHOOL GRADUATES AS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES.

*Section 484(d) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1091(d)) is amended—*

(1) in the heading of such subsection, by striking "WHO ARE NOT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES" and inserting "FROM NON-TRADITIONAL SETTINGS"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(3) HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE.—For purposes of this Act, a student who has completed a secondary school education in a home school setting that is treated as a home school or private school under State law shall be considered a high school graduate."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

□ 1700

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 6392.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, every student deserves to have their hard work recognized.

Unfortunately, many homeschooled students face unjust barriers when applying to college simply because they didn't attend a traditional school.

On average, homeschoolers do remarkably well, better than their public school peers, on tests. Yet for some reason, colleges arbitrarily and unfairly subject homeschooled students to additional hoops, like taking a GED exam, to prove they are fit for admission.

The Home School Graduation Recognition Act sends a clear and simple message to colleges and universities: Homeschooled students are just as qualified to attend college as any other high school graduate.

The Home School Graduation Recognition Act also reaffirms House Republicans' commitment to expand educational opportunity and school choice for American families.

As chairman of the Education and Workforce Committee, I am grateful to serve alongside Members like Congressman HARRIS who are eager to sponsor legislation that empowers students of all ages on their respective educational journeys.

I am glad to have the opportunity today to stand up for homeschoolers and against the needless discrimination they face in the college application process. Today, we have a chance to stand up for homeschooled students and families who have transformed kitchen tables into significant classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6392, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6392, the Home School Graduation Recognition Act. The bill reinstates and clarifies present law to make clear that homeschooled students are eligible for Federal student aid so that they can pursue higher education.

Under the Higher Education Act, students who complete a home school program recognized under their State's law qualify for title IV aid, including Pell grants and Federal student loans. Each State sets its own requirements for the education of homeschooled students.

The HEA confirms that homeschoolers must meet their State's eligibility requirements to receive Federal student aid if educated at home according to those State rules. HEA does allow schools to set their admission standards for students, including those educated at home, but no homeschooled student should be denied Federal higher education assistance just because they do not technically have a regular high school diploma. This bill clarifies that eligibility if they have qualified under their State laws.

Mr. Speaker, I do urge my colleagues to support the bill in its efforts to clarify the laws to ensure students access to higher education. Of course, that being said, the bill may clarify some students' right to Federal student aid, but the action does not go far enough to mitigate the damage done since the Trump administration came in about 1 year ago. By illegally dismantling much of the Department of Education, firing critical Federal financial aid staff, and limiting access to Federal aid in the big, ugly law, the Trump administration has only put higher education further out of reach for many.

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HARRIS), who is the bill's sponsor and a member of the Education and Workforce Committee.

Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman WALBERG for his incredible leadership, and I am so grateful for this bill.

Mr. Speaker, would you believe that Federal law actually refers to students who have completed their home school education as students who are not high school graduates?

Mr. Speaker, strangely enough, it does.

While most colleges eagerly admit and help homeschooled students secure financial aid, some compliance-minded schools point to this language as a reason to make a homeschooled applicant jump through extra hoops to prove that their diploma is worth the same as that of their public- or private-school peers. This language makes it seem like the homeschooled student is not eligible for student aid as they are going through the application process.

This might seem like a small problem to fix, but it represents a real bur-

den for the students and families who are impacted by it.

Mr. Speaker, a diploma is a diploma, whether it was earned in a classroom or at the kitchen table. My bill makes one simple but critically important clarification to fix this problem once and for all. It states plainly that a homeschooler who earns a diploma recognized under State law is a high school graduate. If a student has lawfully completed their education, the Federal Government must recognize them as a high school graduate when determining eligibility for Federal student aid.

Today's vote is about honoring the constitutional role of the States and parents in education. Federal agencies or college admissions offices can no longer use unclear statutory language to undermine State-recognized diplomas.

For decades, millions of American families have chosen to educate their children at home. In fact, nearly 3 million students today are receiving a quality education in a home school setting, guided by devoted parents who take their responsibility seriously to prepare the next generation for success. In my home State of North Carolina alone, more than 165,000 students are homeschooled under the authority and recognition of State law.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the Home School Legal Defense Association for their steadfast advocacy and for all they do to ensure homeschooled students are protected under the law. Their work has been instrumental in bringing clarity to this issue.

I thank our Senate co-leader, Senator ASHLEY MOODY, for standing with families and leading this effort in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense clarification: Homeschooled graduates are high school graduates. They deserve to be treated as such under Federal law.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6392 because the bill makes it clear that homeschooled graduates have access to higher education.

By further clarifying the intent of the Higher Education Act, this bill would ensure that students who complete a home school program recognized under their State's law can continue to qualify for title IV aid, including Pell grants and Federal student loans.

Fortunately, this bill will help ensure that these students can access an affordable, high-quality degree while this action taken by this body is reducing and denying aid to others.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we pass the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and ranking member for his support on this legislation as well.

Homeschooled graduates are graduates plain and simple. They should not be penalized because their families chose a learning environment that met their specific needs and actually goes back to the beginning of time.

That is why we must pass H.R. 6392, the Home School Graduation Recognition Act, and tell colleges that it is completely unnecessary to subject homeschooled graduates to needless exams to prove they have, in fact, graduated.

I am proud to do my part in removing these roadblocks and helping more students pursue higher education.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6392, the Home School Graduation Recognition Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6392, 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.

#### TERRITORIAL STUDENT ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION ACT

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6472) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for in-State tuition rates for certain residents of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and the United States Virgin Islands, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6472

*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 "Territorial Student Access to Higher Education Act".*

##### SECTION 2. IN-STATE TUITION FOR CERTAIN RESIDENTS OF GUAM, THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, AMERICAN SAMOA, AND THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS.

*(a) IN-STATE TUITION RATES.—Part C of title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1015 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 135 the following:*

**"SEC. 135A. IN-STATE TUITION RATES FOR CERTAIN RESIDENTS OF GUAM, THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, AMERICAN SAMOA, AND THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS.**

*"(a) IN GENERAL.—A public institution of higher education that receives assistance under this Act shall not charge a covered individual tuition or fees for attendance at such institution at a rate that is greater than the rate charged for residents of the State in which such institution is located.*

*"(b) COVERED INDIVIDUAL.—In this section, the term 'covered individual' means an individual who—*

*"(1) is a resident of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, or the United States Virgin Islands; and*

*"(2) is a national of the United States (as such term is defined in section 101(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a))."*

*(b) PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT.—Section 487(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1094(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:*

*"(30) The institution will comply with the requirements of section 135A, as applicable."*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

□ 1710

##### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6472, sponsored by Congressman JAMES MOYLAN of Guam, which allows residents of U.S. territories to access in-State tuition rates at public universities across the U.S.

I am proud to rise in support of H.R. 6472, which ensures students of the U.S. territories of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands receive in-State tuition at public universities across the country.

I am pleased that all of the Delegates from each U.S. territory are original cosponsors of the bill and that it received strong bipartisan support in the committee markup.

Under H.R. 6472, public postsecondary institutions will be required to offer in-State tuition rates to residents of U.S. territories. Through this bill, a student from Guam would pay the same tuition at a public university just as any in-State student.

This isn't a novel idea. Under current law, servicemembers and their families already receive in-State tuition rates, creating new pathways for more Americans to get high-quality educations at a competitive cost.

However, H.R. 6472 doesn't just help students. It helps the territories, too. After graduation, students can return home with advanced degrees and credentials they can reinvest back into their homes and local economies.

This isn't just an investment in our students. It is an investment in the economic strength of American territories. Students can contribute their newfound expertise to help develop new industries and drive economic development.

That investment also strengthens American national security. As competition with our adversaries, like China, intensify in the Pacific and drug trafficking continues in South and Central America, we must ensure our territories have the infrastructure and brainpower needed to promote a strong national security posture in the region.

Last year, we passed the Working Families Tax Cut Act, which included some of the most conservative reforms to higher education in decades, massively lowering costs and helping create new pathways for students to chase the American Dream.

We now have a chance to build off that success of the Working Families Tax Cut Act and lower postsecondary education costs for U.S. residents in U.S. territories so they can continue supporting our vital military operations.

Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, I look forward to passing H.R. 6472 and supporting our territories.

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

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6472, which would amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for in-State tuition rates for certain residents of Guam, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, the American Samoa, and the United States Virgin Islands.

I support this initiative in principle because we cannot ignore the needs of these States. However, we also should not ignore that States and public colleges set their own tuition rates based on State budgets and priorities.

When this bill was marked up in committee, Democrats proposed an amendment to require the Federal Government to foot the bill for these costs instead of the public colleges themselves. This approach has a similar goal to the District of Columbia Tuition Assistance Grant, the DCTAG program, which provides Federal funding for D.C. residents to help pay the difference between the higher out-of-State tuition and the lower in-State tuition at public universities across the country.

The DCTAG program was established because Washington, D.C., does not have an adequate number of public universities. The territories involved in this bill face a similar challenge. Most of the territories do not have a robust public university system that offers a variety of majors for students to choose from. Regrettably, the full committee did not agree to this amendment to provide Federal funding.

Mr. Speaker, while I support the bill because we must ensure that all students have access to low-tuition college education, I still have concerns about the funding mechanism. It is the Federal Government's responsibility to bear the cost of this mandate rather