

outstanding women who are emerging as leaders throughout the world. I sincerely commend the newly elected leaders and admire the female leaders from the past who paved the way for this newer group of women elected officials. It is evident that they are poised to demonstrate their ability to lead their countries into the future.

Portia Simpson-Miller, Jamaica's first woman Prime Minister and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Liberia's new President and the first elected female leader in Africa's history are surfacing to prominence with much support from their countrymen. The term referenced in the article to give a sense of the political climate in their countries is "national euphoria". This term clearly signifies the exuberance that is felt as these ladies take on the task of running their countries.

While I am overjoyed for the newly elected female officials, a disturbing part of the editorial addresses the declining number of males in the U.S. and in the Caribbean who are failing to take advantage of the educational opportunities that could lead to a more active role from men in politics of the future. The Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies ventured to say that in another decade women will be leading the Caribbean in most spheres of influence. Hopefully, opportunities will continue to exist for all and more young men and women will embrace and seize the opportunity to contribute to the political processes in their countries.

Mr. Speaker, I have deep respect for the fortitude and commitment of the many women leaders who are rising to the forefront as they embark on the mission to bring about positive changes in their countries. I enter this editorial into the RECORD to reiterate the point that women are emerging as leaders throughout the world and this emergence signifies that it is truly "Women's Time Now."

[From the NY Caribnews, April 4, 2006]

"WOMEN TIME NOW"

"It's woman time now, give her a chance."

Across Jamaica, indeed throughout the Caribbean and in the West Indian Diaspora in North America and Europe, both men and women are chanting that sentiment.

Although the words are meant for Portia Simpson-Miller, who in a few days time will make history in her country by becoming Jamaica's first woman Prime Minister, they are also being directed at Liberia's new President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the first elected female leader in Africa's history, and the newly installed President of Chile, Latin America's first woman head of state and government.

Like others in different parts of world, Simpson Miller and Johnson Sirleaf, for instance, have come to office with national euphoria serving as the wind beneath their wings. It's up to them to lead their respective countries into a new and prosperous direction.

Simpson-Miller, perhaps the most popular politician in Jamaica is not the first woman to head a Caribbean government. Eugenia Charles, the Prime Minister of Dominica in the 1980s and Janet Jagan, Guyana's President in the 1990s, are but two who come quickly to mind. In addition, Haiti, the Netherlands Antilles and St. Marteen have all had women at the helm.

Across the Caribbean, indeed, around the world women are taking charge, enacting new laws, changing old bad habits, reshaping broken countries and companies and bringing a new sense of order and inspiration that augurs well for the future.

In the U.S., which by the way lags Rwanda in giving women a larger share of political and parliamentary power outstanding women now hold key positions in government, the judiciary, on college campuses, civil society, the trade unions, corporate America and elsewhere. But as outstanding as it sounds, the pace may have been a bit too slow and needs to be quickened.

Such outstanding women as Dame Billie Miller, Barbados' Senior Minister who has been her country's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade for a dozen years, Claris Charles, Grenada's Minister of Education, Dame Pearlette Louisy, St. Lucia's Governor General, and Pat Bishop of Trinidad and Tobago who is one of the Caribbean's most accomplished composers, arrangers and ethno musicologists are but a few of those who come to mind for having changed the course of government, the trade union movement or cultural expression in our part of the world.

Just the other day, Dr. Nigel Harris, Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, served notice that in another decade women would be leading the Caribbean in most spheres of influence. He based that on the fact that females account for more than 70 per cent of the students on UWI campuses in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados. While that's a source of joy, it's also a reason to express regret as far as young men are concerned. The male of the species in both the U.S. and the Caribbean are failing to take advantage of educational opportunities, thus leaving us all to ask what does that tell us about the future?

Women, especially Black women around the world are seizing every chance they get to make a difference for themselves and society. The barriers they have broken down are mind-boggling and are a lesson to all about rising to the occasion.

That's not to suggest that the path has been easy or that the future is entirely rosy. They must expect challenges at every step but there is little doubt that they would be able to complete the task successful.

GENERAL DEBATE OF H.R. 609

**HON. BETTY McCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 27, 2006*

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, with great disappointment, I rise to voice my opposition to H.R. 609, a bill to reauthorize the Higher Education Act.

College affordability is the major issue for this generation of students and their families. A higher education is increasingly out of reach for too many in America and for those who do attend, the average student debt amount continues to grow. Many of us know how difficult it can be to finance a college education and we also know that this education is a key to a successful economic future.

The Higher Education Act is one of the most important laws governing our Nation's education system because its intent is to create and improve access to college for millions of students each year. Discussion of this law should be focused on changes that will make college more affordable for all families and that will increase our global competitiveness. Instead the Republican leadership has put forward legislation that does nothing to increase the affordability of college and at the same time allows for-profit education companies access to limited education dollars.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is moving America in the wrong direction. While other nations around the world are investing in higher education, this Congress has passed a \$12 billion cut to student aid—the largest cut to students ever. That devastating cut, combined with the effort in this bill to eliminate fraud and abuse protections currently governing financial aid dollars, clearly show that the Majority has prioritized for-profit education companies over our students and our future.

In addition, Republicans have included language to broaden federal influence over colleges and universities. This bill gives Congress a role in overseeing daily campus activities, including monitoring classroom discussions, reviewing student grades, and setting curriculum. This sets a dangerous precedent for what has historically been an issue of academic freedom for our higher education system.

It is the American dream to have the opportunity to learn, to work in the career of your choice, and to succeed. It should not be the policy of the United States Government to limit the dreams of students. Mr. Speaker, I urge colleagues to reject H.R. 609 and to work for legislation that improves access to college and increase our ability to compete in the new global market. This is a priority for families and our communities and should be a priority for our leaders in Washington.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DEDICATED DENTAL SERVICE FOR HIV/AIDS ACT OF 2006

**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 27, 2006*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to introduce the Dedicated Dental Service for HIV/AIDS (DDS for HIV/AIDS) Act of 2006 to establish a loan repayment program for dental school graduates in exchange for their agreement to remedy a critical shortage of dentists for the poor, particularly in areas with a high incidence of HIV and AIDS, by agreeing to serve such patients. This bill is similar to legislation Congress has enacted in the past to encourage other health professionals, such as physicians, nurses, optometrists and pharmacists to provide vital services in underserved areas.

Howard University professors of dentistry inform us that the first indicators of HIV/AIDS infection are often oral health problems. Oral health problems often not only constitute an important early signal of HIV/AIDS symptoms; they also serve as benchmarks for disease progression. One of the most serious problems with the spread of HIV/AIDS is the reluctance of people to be tested for such a disease, especially in the African American community and other big city and rural areas. Access to dental care, I therefore, is critically important from the earliest onset, especially in high impact areas. Access, of course, minimizes long term oral health complications for patients, but it also provides important linkages to good overall medical care to combat the disease in the community.

A recent RAND health study on HIV costs and services found that the vast majority of patients received care at their local AIDS clinic, not a primary dentist. Moreover, these