

education that they need. This legislation will help middle- and working-class families afford to send their children to college at a time when the cost of college, particularly in Arizona, is skyrocketing.

The average subsidized loan debt for tens of thousands of students in my home State of Arizona is around \$15,000, a staggering amount for someone entering the workforce. This new act will save students in Arizona an average of \$4,700, a substantial difference.

We must focus on preparing young Americans like those we have in the gallery today to be competitive in this 21st century global economy. Ensuring access to higher education is critical. This is a goal that is supported by the American people.

DEMOCRATS AND THE FACTS

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, the media just loves to give names to the different Congresses. I think that they should call this one the Hold-onto-Your-Wallet Congress, because they are definitely coming to a wallet near you and it is going to be yours. During their first 100 hours, which is seeming to never end, they are spending billions of dollars of the American taxpayers' money on, guess what, bigger government, right here in Washington. They are not sending that money back to the local communities. And today they are going to have their student loan bill up.

Here are some facts. They would have you believe that we have slashed student loans and it is just not true.

Here is a fact. In a shocking display of hypocrisy, Democrat leaders are paying for their \$6 billion plus plan with some of the same lender subsidy cuts crafted by congressional Republicans in the 109th Congress.

Here is another fact. House Republicans have committed a record \$13 billion for Pell Grants, a two-thirds increase over the past decade. Go look it up.

Another fact. To the tune of more than \$4 billion over 5 years, congressional Republicans established the first-ever grant program for high-achieving Pell students in their first and second years of college.

It is a fact. Republicans have a solid record of helping students get and stay in school.

□ 1015

DENVER TO HOST THE 2008 DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pride and honor that the Democratic National Com-

mittee has chosen Denver to host the 2008 Democratic National Convention.

2008 will mark exactly one century since Colorado last had the opportunity to nominate the Democratic candidate for President.

The Mile High City is a fitting choice, as it offers an opportunity to showcase the Rocky Mountain region as a new frontier on our Nation's political landscape. Colorado and the Rocky Mountain West are known for their independence and pioneering spirit, and will ultimately help shape the national debate to reflect the values of hard-working people all across America.

We embody a community that supports an investment in renewable energy, in fiscal discipline, and the protection of our civil liberties.

I want to thank the many individuals who worked tirelessly on behalf of Denver's bid to host this prestigious event. It is a privilege for the Centennial State to play such an influential role in our Nation's history.

DEMOCRAT JUGGERNAUT

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, well, it looks like the Democrat juggernaut is rolling along, or maybe it is more like the first steps of fledgling toddlers stumbling through their day.

First was the embarrassment of saying we would have open and fair debates for all, and then the first rule, no amendments, no open rules, and no committee hearings, which of course led to the embarrassing "Sorry, Charlie Tuna" incident of exempting American Samoa from workmen's compensation. I have to ask my friends, why did y'all do that? What were you thinking?

But I also want you to know I am on the side of American Samoa on this one. I don't think it is fair to go in there and beat them up and tell them how they should run their economy, tell them what is best for them and tell them that Washington knows best on central wage planning. Wait a minute, though. That is what we did to the other States, too.

Well, as a matter of fact I don't think we should bring American Samoa into this. I think we should amend the bill, if you do decide to have a committee hearing, that is, and allow the other States to join American Samoa and set their own minimum wage. But then that would be decentralized planning.

BIG OIL DOESN'T NEED ANY MORE HELP FROM WASHINGTON

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

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, during the past 4 years big oil companies have seen their profits quadruple, while gas prices doubled and America continues to depend on foreign oil to operate our cars and our economy.

Yet, the Republican Congress did not think this was enough. They chose to give Big Oil billions in tax breaks and outrageous royalty incentives, instead of working to protect consumers and promote alternative energy.

Today we are sending \$800 million per day to the Middle East and other oil producing countries. America now has record high dependence on foreign oil, and the need is growing.

Mr. Speaker, Congress must support consumers instead of Big Oil. Democrats have put forth a bill to increase our investment in renewable energy and put our Nation on a path to energy independence. The first step is to repeal the billions of dollars in subsidies given to Big Oil so that America can instead invest that money in clean and renewable energy sources.

Beginning the process of curbing our addiction to foreign oil is one of the main priorities of the Democratic Congress during the first 100 hours. I hope Democrats and Republicans will come together and pass this commonsense legislation that will promote our national and economic security.

IRAQ

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of delivering a knockout punch in Iraq, stabilizing Baghdad, securing freedom for the Iraqi people, and dealing a blow to terrorism across the Middle East.

There has been far too much politicking on this issue. Let me remind my colleagues that Iraq strategy is not about the legacy of Don Rumsfeld or General Abizaid or even President Bush. It is about 23 million Iraqi people. It is about the citizens of the United States of America. It is about the future of the Middle East, and it is about the 6 billion people on this planet who desire to live without the fear of radical terrorism.

We can achieve victory in Iraq. In the past we have underestimated the intensity of the death squads and the sectarian violence. Now we will confront them head on by ensuring we have enough coalition and Iraqi troops, not only to clear pockets of resistance, but to hold them.

Mr. Speaker, our President and combatant commanders are ready to deliver the knockout blow in Iraq. This is not the time for Congress to tie one hand behind their backs. We must be in this fight to win, and I support our drive to victory.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 5

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