

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5, legislation that will reduce interest rates for student borrowers.

Now, we all know that the cost of college has gone up every year. In fact, over the last 7 years the cost of a public school education, on average, has increased by 41 percent and at a private school by 7 percent. That is in real dollars.

So, how do lower income and middle income students go to higher education? They do it with Pell Grants. In California we do it with the State grants, but we also do it by borrowing. And so I believe that we should lower the interest costs so that anybody who wants to have a higher education, if you want to go back and get your master's, if your child wants to go and get their B.A., that we should be a partner in investment with them. Investing in our people is the most important thing our country can do to be competitive vis-a-vis the rest of the world.

NO JUSTICE FOR BORDER PATROL

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, today Border Patrol Agents Ramos and José Compean turned themselves in to begin serving their 11- and 12-year prison terms. Now, what was their crime? Shooting a habitual drug smuggler after he evaded law enforcement, attacked one of the agents and threateningly turned to the agent with what appeared to be a gun, and was fleeing back across the border.

Now, how is this justice, Mr. Speaker?

Assistant U.S. Attorney Debra Kanof even went to Mexico to find this drug dealer, brought him to America, paid for his medical treatment in an El Paso hospital with taxpayers' dollars and gave him immunity to testify against the agents.

The unreasonable sentence of these agents undermines the morale and makes all of them question what they are doing, do they have the right to draw their firearm in the course of their duty.

This is an outrage. I urge President Bush to review this draconian prison sentence.

COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT

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

Mr. LOEBSACK. Mr. Speaker, I stand before all of you today as an example of what can be achieved if provided the opportunity and resources. I grew up in poverty and relied upon loans and grants to pay for my education. In short, I was able to achieve the American Dream because of legislation similar to the College Student Relief Act.

In America, millions of high school students forego higher education because of the financial barriers created by the ever increasing costs of tuition and fees at our colleges and universities. This situation harms qualified but economically disadvantaged students and endangers our country because the American economy relies on a highly skilled and well educated workforce. As a college professor for the past 24 years, I saw firsthand the financial struggle so many students face.

I call on my colleagues to support H.R. 5 because it is time we provide hope and opportunity to the youth of our country, the youth who want to participate productively in an increasingly globalized economy.

COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act.

This legislation will benefit 5½ million students. These students are predominantly from middle class, hard-working American families. Without this act they may not otherwise be able to attend our public institutions.

The generation that came before mine understood the investment in the future. At age 17, when I joined the military to be able to, one, support this country in its defense and, two, further my own career, I was given the GI bill, Pell Grants and the ability to use low interest student loans. Because of that I was able to achieve my dream of becoming a public school teacher.

However, unfortunately, this next generation does not have that same investment, a generation that has never seen the kind of investment that I saw.

The good people of the First District of Minnesota sent me here to change the priorities of this government. They sent me here to look out for the next generation of Americans.

Mr. Speaker, with this legislation the American Dream will be a little more in grasp of this next generation. This is not a theoretical discussion on interest rates. These are the students that were in my classroom, on my football team and in my Guard unit.

THE WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the most important political and moral issue of the day, the war in Iraq. The war in Iraq costs us dearly in lives, more than 3,000 Americans so far, in dollars, 471 billion by my count; in international prestige by compromising our ability to meet our other foreign policy goals.

President Bush has rejected the sensible recommendations of the Iraq

Study Group and instead chosen an escalation of troops. Rather than sending more brave young Americans to fight in an undefined, impossible mission in an Iraqi civil war, we should be looking for ways to redeploy our troops responsibly.

Representative MURTHA has courageously offered a framework for that redeployment, and the administration would be wise to heed his advice. The American people want to bring home their loved ones who are in harm's way. The Iraqi people want us to leave so that Iraqis can solve their problems.

As former Secretary of State Albright has pointed out, the only ones who want us to stay are those who will leave Iraq when we leave.

Mr. Speaker, Congress should reject the President's last ditch effort to salvage a botched execution of a flawed strategy.

WORKING FOR POSITIVE CHANGE AND A NEW DIRECTION FOR AMERICA

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

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, today, in a bipartisan embrace, both Republicans and Democrats will continue to work together for positive change and a new direction for America by promoting a truly bipartisan first-100-hour agenda.

People in Appleton and Green Bay, Wisconsin, and all across America, wanted us to come together and begin to solve these problems that we are facing, and we have done just that. Two weeks ago we passed a rules package and a comprehensive ethics reform package supported by margins of 426-0 and 430-1, respectively. I believe we are really beginning to come together.

Fiscally responsible, pay-as-you-go, and real budget reforms were supported by many, many Republicans. Sixty-eight joined in implementing the 9/11 Commission recommendations. Eighty-two Republicans helped to increase the minimum wage, and 36 joined in lowering prescription drug costs for seniors.

Let's continue to work together to help reduce the costs of higher education as well. By working together we really will build a better future for everyone.

COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

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

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this College Student Relief Act of 2007. This bill will help thousands of students throughout the State of Maine.

Maine has one of the highest high school graduation rates in the country. However, only one out of four Mainers go on to complete college. That is because college costs are rising, and

many Maine students cannot afford their tuition. Too many are being denied the opportunity that college provides.

The legislation before us today would save students thousands of dollars on their loan repayment by cutting interest rates in half. Students in Maine beginning college in the fall of 2007 would save \$2,107 on their loans, and those starting in 2011 would save \$4,210.

This bill is also consistent with the pay-as-you-go principle that my fellow Blue Dogs and I have long advocated and that the Speaker has committed to. So it will not increase the deficit one dime.

I urge my colleagues to pass this legislation to help all the young people live the American Dream.

□ 1030

AMERICA FERRERA GOLDEN GLOBE WIN

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate America Ferrera for winning the Golden Globe for best actress in a comedy for her work in ABC's television show "Ugly Betty." America Ferrera is a native of Los Angeles, the daughter of Honduran immigrant parents and a student at the University of Southern California, earning a degree in international relations.

As Betty Suarez, her character in "Ugly Betty," Ferrera plays a smart, young Latina professional breaking into the publishing world. The people we see in here on television and in movies have a great influence on our communities and the attitudes of Americans.

While 40 percent of American youth ages 19 and under are children of color, few of the faces that they see on television actually reflect those races and cultures. Through her work, Ms. Ferrera is breaking down barriers for Latinos and Latinas in prime-time television.

I commend America Ferrera and everyone involved in Ugly Betty for helping to break down the stereotypes and provide a role model for young Latinas. I hope we can work together to teach everyone to appreciate diversity in our country.

Congratulations, America Ferrera.

CONGRATULATING THE CITIES OF NORFOLK, VIRGINIA BEACH, AND PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA

(Mrs. DRAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate the cities of Norfolk, Virginia Beach, and Portsmouth, Virginia, for the grand opening of a new complex that serves formerly homeless people. This is the first complex in the Nation that is financed and

supported by more than one city. This complex will serve over 60 adults from our region who formerly lived in shelters, under bridges or on the street.

Congratulations to these three cities who worked regionally and who worked together to address the very basic human need for shelter and providing other comprehensive services such as job counseling, mental health, substance abuse and drug-abuse treatment as well. Congratulations to them, and we hope other regions of the country will follow their example, and they will be a great model for our Nation.

COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

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

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the health of the American economy depends on having a highly educated skilled workforce, but studies show the number one reason that students fail to attend college today is cost.

In addition to tuition, fees, interest rates on student loans have also risen. Over the last 5 years the interest rates on student loans have jumped by almost 2 percentage points, further increasing the cost of college. Many of us were dependent on student loans to go to college in the first place. I am one of them.

Recently, when I visited Pompano High School in my district, I met many exceptional students who were concerned that they would have difficulty managing tuition costs. These students in Pompano High School deserve better, as students do all over the United States. This Democrat bill would cut the interest rate in half from the current 6.8 percentage to 3.4 percent over the next 5 years.

This proposal will help over 5.5 million low- and middle-income students and their families afford a college education and a way to a better life. As a case in point, a study this year by the U.S. Public Interest Research Group estimates the average cost for a Florida student, what it will save over the cost of its life is \$4,400. That is a powerful incentive, and I ask everyone to join us in passing this legislation.

AGAINST NEW IRAQ POLICY

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, last week something very disturbing occurred. President Bush had an opportunity to demonstrate that he understood the country's concern, he had a chance to finally articulate a clear plan for our country's engagement in Iraq. But, instead, the President chose to escalate our involvement in Iraq's civil war by proposing a substantial increase in the number of American troops there, about half of whom are based in Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, our troops have performed with great courage. They have performed admirably in the Congress, and the American people will continue to support them and provide them with every resource that they need. But we need better leadership coming from the President and his War Cabinet. This new Democratic Congress is not going to give the President a blank check, and we will continue to demand answers to the tough questions that have not been answered.

Rather than escalating our involvement in Iraq, I believe that any plan should focus on shifting responsibility to the Iraqis so that we can begin a phased redeployment. The American people want change, of course, in Iraq, and House Democrats intend to keep pressing the President to provide it.

PASS THE COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT

(Ms. SHEA-PORTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I am urging my colleagues today to pass the College Student Relief Act. I speak not only as a Congresswoman from New Hampshire, but also as the mother of a college student and one about to enter college.

These student loan interest rates are absolutely crippling students' ability to go to college and putting a burden on their families. These students are also deeply concerned now about what will happen when they go into the workforce and they have to pay a higher interest rate on their loans, as well as paying for higher energy costs and paying for rent and paying for all of the other expenses that young adults experience.

I urge my colleagues to please ease the pain on these students, encourage this higher education, because higher education is the key to prosperity in our country.

SUPPORT THE REDUCTION OF INTEREST RATES FOR STUDENT BORROWERS

(Mr. AL GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the foundation of our Nation is education. Generally speaking, those with better educations earn more, are healthier and live longer. The road to a better society is paved with education.

I want more of our people to have the opportunity to travel the road to a better society. This is why I will support H.R. 5. It cuts interest rates on subsidized student loans in half from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent. It saves the typical borrower \$4,400. It provides more opportunities for more Americans to have more opportunities.

I will support H.R. 5.