

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE STUDENT LOAN SUNSHINE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 9, 2007

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Student Loan Sunshine Act, and to congratulate Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member McKEON for moving quickly on this critical issue.

The recent investigation by New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo has brought attention to serious problems in our student aid industry. While it is unfair to malign all schools and all lenders, it is clear that in large part due to lax oversight by the Department of Education, there have been many instances of actions intended for profit—rather than for improving student access to education. It is time to put an end to the conflicts of interest and corrupt practices that increase costs for students and taxpayers.

This legislation is an important first step in improving oversight of the student loan industry and in ending inappropriate relationships between lenders and colleges and universities.

H.R. 890 will ban loan arrangements that include benefits to higher education institutions, prohibit lenders from serving as staff in campus financial aid offices, and ban gifts from lenders to campus officials and their families. It allows the continuation of preferred lender lists but requires that these lists include at least 3 lenders and that the institutions explain their choices. This bill includes civil penalties for companies that violate the new regulations and increases the Department of Education's authority to regulate the private loan market. The Student Loan Sunshine Act also makes it clear that lenders who are transparent in their processes and advocate on behalf of students continue to be an important part of the student aid system.

Mr. Speaker, the recent scandals in the student loan industry illustrate the Department of Education's failure to adequately regulate the student loan industry and the conflicts of interest too often noted in this administration. As the New York Times reported, Department officials were alerted to inappropriate lender subsidies in 2003 and failed to act. This week a top ED official, who formerly worked for Sallie Mae, has resigned. It has also been noted that a recently investigated lender was a top contributor to the Republican party. It is time to refocus higher education policy where it should be—on the student.

This Congress has made access to higher education a priority. It is critical to the future of students, our communities and our Nation. With more and more students and parents relying on student loans and with student debt burden increasing, clearly we must do all we can to ensure the integrity of student aid pro-

grams. The Student Loan Sunshine Act is an important first step. I also look forward to working with Chairman MILLER and the other members of the Education and Labor Committee to pass a strong Higher Education Act Reauthorization that protects students, increases access to higher education, and improves our Nation's global competitiveness.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 890.

RECOGNIZING THE DEDICATION OF DOCTOR SUSAN A. COTA

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 14, 2007

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Susan A. Cota, as she retires from the Chancellorship of the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District.

Dr. Cota was the first Hispanic female Chancellor in the 43-year history of the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District. She was also the first Hispanic female Chancellor appointed in the California Community College system.

Dr. Cota has held various positions in the California Community College system, such as counselor, director, and dean of student services. She has also served as the Statewide Administrator of Disabled Students Programs and Services.

Dr. Cota holds a doctorate in organization and leadership from the University of San Francisco, a Master of Science degree in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling from San Francisco State University and a bachelor's degree in English from Immaculate Heart College.

Dr. Cota is active in a wide variety of national, state, and local organizations. She was elected to the Board of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), and currently serves on the Executive Board and as Chair of the Community College Futures Committee and on the Board of the Community College Leadership Development Initiatives Foundation at the University of San Diego.

In 2006, she received the Harry Buttimer Distinguished Administrator Award from the Community College Administrators. She has also received the Community College League of California's Courageous Leader Award, and the Outstanding Educator in Administration Award.

Under her leadership, a \$498M facilities construction bond was approved, to provide for the complete build-out of Las Positas College in Livermore, and full renovation of the Chabot College campus.

As Dr. Cota retires, I thank her for her steadfast leadership of the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District, and her commitment to the continuing education of our com-

munity. I wish her the best in her future endeavors.

COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ACME RIGGING & SUPPLY COMPANY IN UKIAH, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 14, 2007

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Acme Rigging & Supply Company in Ukiah, California, on the occasion of its 50th anniversary. Acme has been locally owned and operated for the past 50 years, and for the last 18 years has transitioned into a wholly employee-owned business while continuing to expand its operations and the markets it serves.

Acme Rigging started out in 1957 as the vision of Pete Dunnebeck, when five rigging shops went out of business on the northern California coast. Initially, as the sole employee, he took orders, performed the assembly, and then delivered the final product to customers. Thirty-two years later Mr. Dunnebeck was getting ready to phase out of the business when he learned about Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOP).

In 1989, Mr. Dunnebeck sold forty-nine percent of the business to his employees. By 1997, the employees had fulfilled the payoff on their shares and approached the Savings Bank of Mendocino County to borrow money to purchase the remaining 51 percent. This was the first loan of its kind for the local bank, and they put the deal together and agreed on a ten-year payback. The employees met that obligation in nine years, one year earlier than expected.

Upon the retirement of Mr. Dunnebeck, John Peaslee took the reins of the company and has guided an impressive expansion. In 1997, Acme Rigging had less than three million dollars in sales. By 2006 that number had tripled. The company grew from eight employees to a total of 29 today. A second location was opened in Sacramento in 2000. Acme Sacramento started with four employees and now has 10.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, there are more than 10,000 ESOP companies employing nine to ten million employee/owners in our country. Acme Rigging & Supply Company is a superb example of how well employee stock ownership plans can work. It is appropriate that we honor the successful transformation and expansion of this local, employee-owned business on the occasion of its 50th anniversary.

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