

creates a web portal of public and private science, technology, math education scholarships, loans, and grants that are available. And the database would be searchable by field of study, demographics, and level of study. By placing all of these scholarships in one easily accessible location, H.R. 1051 greatly increases the chances that our students will be able to pursue these valuable opportunities.

It is not without coincidence this bill comes up 3 to 4 weeks after the missed reauthorization wherein we set aside a certain amount of money to complete the huge web portal that would replace what agencies are doing in manufacturing and what programs are available. So this fits very tidily into that program, and I would encourage that the House adopt it.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I am now pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York, my colleague on the Committee on Education and Labor (Mrs. MCCARTHY), who also understands the importance of this legislation to individual students as well as to our economy at large.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I would like to thank my colleague from the Education Committee, Congressman HOLT, for bringing this measure to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1051, the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Scholarship Database Act. This legislation will help students become more competitive in science and math and allow them to find the scholarship that is right for them.

Mr. Speaker, in the audience today we have many young students. This is the future of this country. And we have to do everything that we can to encourage our young people to go into the sciences, math, and engineering. Last year the Education Committee went to China and we spoke with many students there and the minister of education. And their effort, and certainly on what they are pushing their young people to do, is to go into the math and sciences.

This country has an obligation to give our young people the ability to compete in the future. This kind of legislation is going to help in so many ways as far as our country on our economy. But more than that, our young people deserve this opportunity.

When you think back to the 1960s when we were looking at the moon and having programs that were putting us into space, those were kids' dreams. We need to reunite that dream, to have people understand that engineering and math is exciting. The last several years Mr. HOLT and Mr. EHLERS have been talking about science and math in our committee; so it is right that at this time we are pushing to encourage our young people, saying if these are the careers that you want to go into, we are going to help you between a private partnership and certainly with the gov-

ernment's helping. This is a great piece of legislation. We should be seeing more and more of this. This is only the beginning.

And I have to say last week I had a field hearing back in my district, and the issue had to do with gangs. And we had testimony from all the experts. But even those young people that had gotten into gangs, all they were asking for were opportunities to better themselves. This young fellow did go back to college. He did start studying science and math, and now he is reaching out. Education is the most important thing that we can do for our young people and for this country.

So, again, I thank my colleague Mr. HOLT for bringing this, and I encourage certainly all of my colleagues to support this legislation H.R. 1051. This is only the beginning. We must do more things like this.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind all Members to refrain from references to persons in the gallery.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I simply want to close and commend once again my good friend Mr. HOLT for introducing this legislation and for moving this forward.

I think the discussion that we have had has been good. I think that the breadth of individuals that have signed on as cosponsors to this legislation, as well as the diversity of the background of those Members who have come to the floor today to speak on behalf of this legislation, give testimony to the importance of moving forward and having this kind of information available.

So I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1051.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

As I said earlier, it may come as a surprise to my colleagues that this single database where any student who might be interested in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics could go might, they might be surprised that it doesn't already exist. In fact, it doesn't.

This is straightforward legislation that will make it easier for students to pursue a line of study or one of a number of lines of study that are critically important not only for their personal development, but for our economy and our society, our international competitiveness, indeed, the future of our country.

This is only one piece of the many things that we need to do that you have heard from other speakers about this morning. It is a straightforward, simple thing that we can do, that is not expensive. If we could, through this inexpensive method, encourage eight or ten or twelve more students to go into science, that would be wonderful. Instead, I expect we will get hundreds, if not thousands, who will find their way into these critical fields because of

the existence of a database that gives them a place to start as they look to their future.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of H.R. 1051, as amended.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the National STEM Scholarship Database Act. In a time of global economic and scientific competition, we must ensure that our brightest young people have the resources to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and math.

When students graduate from American universities with undergraduate degrees, they graduate with on average, \$20,000 in debt. This undergraduate debt is a significant factor in a student's decision to pursue graduate school. And among science and engineering students, those who had debt from their undergraduate education were more likely to say they could not afford graduate school.

We cannot afford to limit the potential of these students, or those who find the cost of even an undergraduate education prohibitive. We cannot afford to have ambitious students with interest and aptitude in science or math or engineering shut out of our colleges. We need Americans with advanced degrees in the STEM fields to propel our Nation forward in discovery and innovation.

This bill makes it easier for students to find scholarships and grants to finance their educations. It does not require a significant investment from the Federal Government—although I believe we should make the investment in more Federal loans in the future. It simply creates a central location where students can learn about their options.

This is a common sense way to help students pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and math. It is a simple, low-cost part of our competitiveness agenda, and I urge my colleagues to vote for it today.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1051, 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.

FIRST HIGHER EDUCATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2007

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2559) to temporarily extend the programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2559

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 "First Higher Education Extension Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF PROGRAMS.

Section 2(a) of the Higher Education Extension Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-81; 20 U.S.C. 1001

note) is amended by striking "June 30, 2007" and inserting "October 31, 2007".

SEC. 3. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act, or in the Higher Education Extension Act of 2005 as amended by this Act, shall be construed to limit or otherwise alter the authorizations of appropriations for, or the durations of, programs contained in the amendments made by the Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-171) to the provisions of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the Taxpayer-Teacher Protection Act of 2004.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent for 5 legislative days during which Members may insert material relevant to H.R. 2559 into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

(Mr. HINOJOSA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

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Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong report of H.R. 2559, a bill to extend the Higher Education Act through October 31, 2007.

This bill is very straightforward. It simply extends the current programs authorized under the Higher Education Act until October 31, 2007, giving us the time to fully consider and complete the reauthorization act.

I would like to thank Congressman MCKEON, the ranking member of the full committee, and Congressman RIC KELLER, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness, for joining Chairman GEORGE MILLER and me in bringing this non-controversial extension to the floor in a bipartisan manner.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2559, which is a measure to extend programs under the Higher Education Act that are set to expire at the end of this month.

I want to thank my committee colleagues, Chairman MILLER, Chairman HINOJOSA, Mr. MCKEON and Mr. KELLER for their work on this bill, as well as their consistent efforts on behalf of our Nation's college students and their families.

Bolstering our higher education and student aid programs has long been a priority for Congress, regardless of

which party was in the majority. In the last Congress, for example, under Republican leadership, we passed a measure that reduced lender subsidies, increased loan limits for students, and provided additional resources for students studying math, science and critical foreign languages in college.

Unfortunately, the Senate didn't act on the higher education reauthorization in the last Congress, so we were forced to extend programs under the law last September. In that extension, we included a number of important benefits for college students and institutions of higher education as well. For example, we reduced red tape and provided loan forgiveness to spouses and parents of those who died or became disabled on September 11.

Mr. Speaker, just last month, the House continued our work to strengthen the student aid system by passing the Student Loan Sunshine Act, bipartisan legislation that will restore confidence in the relationships between student lenders and colleges and universities.

Now, as we prepare anew to reauthorize programs under the Higher Education Act, we are again faced with the need to pass an extension of these programs to bridge this gap. Now, make no mistake, the measure before us today is worthy of our support, but, at the same time, I am hopeful that our friends on the other side of the Capitol will renew their commitment to a full reauthorization. These extensions, now five of which we've had in the last Congress alone, ought to become a thing of the past.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and on both sides of the Capitol in completing our reauthorization work in the 110th Congress. Just as importantly, I also look forward to working toward reforms that recognize the contributions of market-based programs that have been made on behalf of millions of students for the last several decades. In the meantime, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my strong commitment, as chairman of the Higher Education Subcommittee, that I will work very closely with Congressman PRICE from Georgia and all of the members of our committee to be able to finish the work necessary to reauthorize the Higher Education Act sometime before the end of this year, hopefully in October.

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am now pleased to yield to my good friend and fellow physician, a gentleman from Louisiana who has been a strong proponent of higher education in his work on the committee. I yield the gentleman 3 minutes.

Mr. BOUSTANY. I thank my colleague.

Mr. Speaker, it is high time that we actually get the work done on this. We really need to get this done permanently, but I rise in support of this extension so that we can continue to move the ball forward. It is my hope that the other body across the Capitol will move this time around. I know we are going to do it here in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the House has agreed to include a provision I offered with subcommittee Chairman ROB ANDREWS that would limit projected physician shortages. This was an amendment to the bill that we had in the 109th Congress, and it is my understanding that it will be included in the base bill, and I am very pleased.

I hope, also, that Congress will add a provision that I introduced with Congresswoman MCCARTHY to meet the future need of qualified nurses, which is an area where we have critical shortages throughout the country. And so it is my hope that as we go forward with this bill on the House side we can introduce this language into the bill or perhaps amend the bill, if necessary.

Once again, I think it is critical that we get the job done on this. We did our work in the 109th Congress. The other body needs to move forward. We need to complete our work here so we can get a good, solid reauthorization bill that will do justice to our higher education system.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman once again for moving this issue forward. Again, I look forward to working with him as we move forward with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act. I am confident that we will be able to get it done in this Congress.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HINOJOSA. I thank Congressman PRICE for those closing remarks. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to pass H.R. 2559.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2559.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THE MERCURY 13 WOMEN

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 421) honoring the trailblazing accomplishments of the "Mercury 13" women, whose efforts in the early 1960s demonstrated the capabilities of American women to undertake the human exploration of space.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.