

over inflation during the last five years. The rising cost of tuition causes approximately 200,000 students annually to delay beginning college or forgoing the chance to study for a higher degree altogether. This disturbing trend must change. The adoption of H.R. 2669 will help make college as affordable as possible for every qualified student who would like to earn an advanced degree, without new costs to taxpayers.

H.R. 2669 would authorize an increase to the maximum value of the Pell Grant scholarship by \$500 over the next five years. The legislation would also cut interest rates in half on need-based student loans, reducing the cost of those loans for millions of student borrowers. H.R. 2669, moreover, would prevent student borrowers from facing unmanageable levels of federal student debt. It does this by guaranteeing that borrowers will never have to spend more than 15 percent of their yearly discretionary income on loan repayments and by allowing borrowers in economic hardship to have their loans forgiven after 20 years.

H.R. 2669 also promotes the development of the next generation of high-quality teachers and public servants. It does this by authorizing tuition assistance for excellent undergraduate students who agree to teach in public schools and authorizing loan forgiveness for college graduates that enter public service professions.

Of particular importance to my constituents is the Upward Bound program which seeks to increase high school completion, college participation, and graduation rates among low-income and first-generation college students. H.R. 2669 would provide \$228 million in funding over four years for Upward Bound, restoring critical funding for programs that were not funded in fiscal year 2007, as well as fund over 100 new programs. Students from minority communities—including the Asian and Pacific Islander American community—make up nearly 50 percent of all Upward Bound participants.

What is more, this legislation would make significant and needed investments in Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions and other minority serving institutions. I commend my colleague from California (Mr. MILLER) for his commitment to assisting the minority serving institutions. I do, however, have two concerns with respect to this aspect of H.R. 2669. I respectfully request that they be favorably considered as this legislation proceeds through the legislative process.

First, section 311 of H.R. 2669 establishes categories of minority serving institutions that would be eligible to participate in a Centers of Excellence grant program that would provide funds to help recruit and prepare teachers. Institutions that traditionally serve Asian and Pacific Islander American students would benefit from eligibility for such grants. Unfortunately, the category Asian American and Pacific Islander-Serving Institution does not appear in the bill. I respectfully request that my colleagues support my efforts to make Asian American and Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions eligible for these grants.

Second, section 411 of H.R. 2669 establishes a College Access Challenge grant program for eligible students from underserved populations who enter and complete college. The term "State" is defined under this section as each of the several States of the United

States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Students who attend institutions of higher education in the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the Freely Associated States (FAS)—the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau—would be prohibited from participating in this grant program as a result of the limited definition for the term "State." I respectfully request that my colleagues support the efforts to expand the definition of the term "State" in this section of H.R. 2669 to include the U.S. territories and the Freely Associated States.

I support this bill. Its provisions will help ensure that many talented young Americans can afford the benefits of a college education. I urge my colleague to support H.R. 2669.

RESPONSIBLE REDEPLOYMENT FROM IRAQ ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS A. CARDOZA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 12, 2007

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act.

It is long past time for a change of direction in Iraq. For far too long, this institution merely acted as a rubber stamp and never asked the hard questions necessary of the Administration.

That begins to change today. The passage of this bill will require the Administration to confront the consequences of their bad choices and, more importantly, set us on a responsible path for ending our involvement in Iraq.

This legislation would begin the responsible redeployment of U.S. troops within 120 days and complete redeployment by April 1, 2008. In addition, troops could remain in Iraq for the limited purposes of fighting terrorism or to train Iraqi forces.

This bill is a measured response to the quagmire we find ourselves in. As has been clear for some time, Iraq is currently engulfed in a vicious civil war. This strife between Sunnis and Shiites goes back 1400 years and the American people never signed up for refereeing a civil war.

Moreover, this bill expressly allows for our troops to remain in the region for the purposes of fighting terrorism or to train Iraqi forces.

Our enemy in this conflict is Al Qaeda. They are the ones who attacked us on 9/11, they are the ones who declared war on the United States, and they are the ones we were told were in Iraq. This bill allows our troops to do whatever is necessary to root out Al Qaeda and ensure they will not be able to use Iraqi territory as a safe haven.

Moreover, by augmenting our ability to train Iraqi police forces, this bill places the onus for Iraqi security squarely where it belongs—on the Iraqis themselves. This Administration has only given lip-service to the importance of training Iraqi soldiers and has allowed the bulk of the security responsibility to rest on the shoulders of our brave American men and women.

This is not only unfair, it is counter-productive. We keep hearing—"we'll stand down when the Iraqis stand up." This bill, by beginning the belated shift of responsibility from the American military to the Iraqis, will finally force the Iraqis to stand up.

As many have said, the problem of Iraq will not be solved militarily. No less than our military commander in Iraq—General Petraeus—has said that Iraq will not be solved with military means. Only by engaging the full weight of our diplomacy we will be able to force the political compromises necessary that will bring some measure of stability to Iraq. This bill, by redeploying our troops and thus signaling our recognition of the importance of diplomacy, will finally put the Iraqis on a path towards peace.

The time is now. The American people are clamoring for a change in our Iraq policy and, despite the recalcitrance of the Administration, a change in policy will come. After close to 5 years, billions of dollars spent, thousands of our soldiers dead, maimed, or wounded—we simply must chart a new course.

As always, this Congress stands ready to work the President to find a bipartisan solution to Iraq. However, veto threats and refusals to deal with the reality on the ground are no longer tolerable. We must all negotiate an end to this conflict in good faith with a clear and honest recognition of the challenges we face. For my part, I stand ready to work with my colleagues to engage in such a constructive dialogue.

Mr. Speaker, let's end this. Let's bring our soldiers home and thank them for a job well done. Let's pass the Responsible Redeployment Act.

RESPONSIBLE REDEPLOYMENT FROM IRAQ ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 12, 2007

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2956, and I appreciate the fact that we are again addressing this important issue today. I want to start by recognizing the ongoing sacrifices and tremendous bravery of the men and women of our armed forces. Their dedication inspires us all and we owe them a debt of gratitude.

Very simply put, it is time to bring our troops home. The effort they are making has not been met by the Iraqi government, and there is no reason to believe that the situation is going to improve there in the foreseeable future. The various reports we have received just this week underscore this point. As I have said for some time, we are beyond the point of being able to impact events in a meaningful way militarily. The political decisions that the Iraqis need to make will not be made as long as our soldiers are there, and I seriously doubt they will be made when we are gone. All we are doing is letting an untenable situation drag on, with our soldiers caught in the crossfire. We are spending over \$329 million every day in Iraq. That is a staggering sum of money. We can redirect that money to better fighting the war on terror and also addressing important domestic initiatives.