

H.R. 627, the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights, is imperative to be passed today. It ends unfair, arbitrary interest rate increases, and lets consumers set hard credit limits. It stops excessive over-the-limit fees, ends unfair penalties for cardholders who pay on time, requires the fair allocation of consumer payments, protects cardholders from due-date gimmicks. As well, it has amendments that will stop the proliferating and the sale of credit cards to college students.

Can you imagine having a credit card and having a contract, and all of a sudden, like an adjustable rate, your rate spikes up without any knowledge and without any notice? It stops the small print where they can say all manner of things and never, never get the truth told.

Thank you for H.R. 627.

A COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Madam Speaker, more markets for our products mean more jobs for Minnesotans and for all Americans. That's why I was pleased that President Obama recently directed the U.S. Trade Representative to work through any outstanding issues so that we can move forward with a Colombia Free Trade Agreement. The President is right: more open trade is a win-win for both countries, and we need bipartisan action to pass this trade agreement, but Congress' lack of action has harmed U.S. interests, and it has given a competitive advantage to other countries.

How can American businesses compete when the European Union, Canada, China, and Latin America countries have better access to the Colombian market?

Over 80 percent of U.S. exports of consumer and industrial products would become duty free immediately, but instead, Congress' inaction has cost U.S. exporters more than \$1.5 billion in tariffs to Colombia.

Madam Speaker, let's do what is right and quickly pass the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF EVA A. VALENTINE

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

Mr. HARE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Ms. Eva A. Valentine of Rock Island, Illinois. On March 27, 2009, Eva passed away at the age of 87, surrounded by loving family, friends and neighbors.

Eva was a devoted mother, wife, and was an active member of the Rock Island community. She participated in the American Legion Post 246 Auxiliary and the Moline Croatian Crest Club. She also devoted many hours to

St. Mary's Catholic Church and to the Altar Society.

I had the pleasure of knowing Eva as the mother of my friend, Wayne Valentine. I have many fond memories of Eva as Wayne and I grew up together. She was a reliable source of support, and she helped me become the person that I am today. I owe Eva my thanks and my gratitude.

Eva will be dearly missed by her husband, John, by her son, Wayne, by numerous nieces, nephews, friends, and by the Rock Island community. As we celebrate and remember her long life, we are reminded of the important influence Eva was and will continue to be in our lives.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in honoring the life of Ms. Eva A. Valentine.

BORDER MONEY GOING TO WRONG PLACES

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, Homeland Security is going to spend \$740 million to beef up legal ports of entry into the United States. We absolutely need more border security. The problem is the bureaucrats who have probably never been to either of our borders are sending most of that money to little-used crossings, including one that just handles two cars and sees only four people a day. Many of these 37 crossings that are getting money average merely 50 cars and 85 people a day.

Contrast that with the Laredo-Nuevo Laredo legal crossing. It is receiving no additional money, and it is the largest legal port of entry in North America. It is vital to U.S.-Mexico trade. Over 7,000 18-wheelers a day cross that border in each direction. Trucks wait 2 hours to come into the United States. The vast majority of these trucks are not screened due to manpower and money issues.

Why not close the little used ports of entry that are now receiving most of the money and send the border agents where they could do some real good, to the port of entry where people and vehicles actually cross? But that would be too logical for the D.C. bureaucrats.

And that's just the way it is.

CREDIT CARDHOLDERS' BILL OF RIGHTS ACT

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

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H.R. 627, the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights.

As I've traveled across my district in western Pennsylvania, I've seen firsthand how abusive credit card practices can devastate families throughout this country, especially during this recession. The time has come to end the un-

fair, deceptive, and anticompetitive practices by credit card companies. These include soaring fees, arbitrary interest rate hikes, due-date gimmicks, and the incomprehensible credit card contracts that all Americans are familiar with.

The Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights offers an important opportunity to protect consumers from these practices, and this legislation can't come soon enough. With consumer credit card debt approaching \$1 trillion, we cannot wait any longer to hold credit card companies accountable and to give American cardholders more control over their credit limits. That's why I urge my colleagues to act today and join me in passing the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights.

THE 34TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FALL OF SAIGON

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

Mr. CAO. Madam Speaker, on April 28, 1975, an 8-year-old boy was rushed into an American C-130 to seek freedom in a foreign land. Two days later, on April 30, the Communist forces rumbled into Saigon and marked the beginning of one of the darkest periods in the long and illustrious history of Vietnam.

Immediately following April 30, the Communist government initiated one of the most horrific cultural and political cleansings of our time. Hundreds of thousands of religious, political, and military leaders were thrown into re-education camps. Approximately 300,000 people died at sea while fleeing the horrors of this regime; and of those who remained, thousands more died from famine.

Madam Speaker, today marks the 34th anniversary of that dark day in April when Saigon fell. The 8-year-old boy of whom I spoke now stands before you. I, on behalf of the 1.5 million Vietnamese living in the United States, take this opportunity to remember all who perished in the Vietnam conflict.

I urge my colleagues to work with the Vietnamese communities around the world to promote a free and democratic Vietnam.

MACKENZIE BROWN

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

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, in February, the House passed a resolution supporting the goals of National Girls and Women in Sports Day.

National Girls and Women in Sports Day works to celebrate female athletes' achievements, to acknowledge the positive influence of sports participation in women's lives, and to urge equality and access for women in sports.

On April 21, 2009, Mackenzie Brown, a sixth grade Little League pitcher from

Bayonne, New Jersey, in my district, threw a perfect game. Throwing fast balls and change-ups, she struck out 18 batters. All of them were boys.

Mackenzie is the first girl in the city's history to throw a perfect game. Her achievement was so impressive that she was asked to throw the ceremonial first pitch before the Mets game against the Washington Nationals at Citi Field.

Mackenzie also excels in the classroom. She has consistently been an honor roll student at Henry E. Harris School in Bayonne. Mackenzie's achievements exemplify the important and beneficial role that sports can play in girls' lives. She is an inspiration to many, and I want to congratulate her and her family. I look forward to her many future successes on and off the field.

TRIBUTE TO FLOYD LAWSON

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

Mr. ADERHOLT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate, pay tribute and honor a great American patriot and educator on his 90th birthday.

Floyd Lawson was born on April 25, 1919, to Luther Franklin and Mary Emily Ingle Lawson. He grew up in Winston County, Alabama and graduated from Lynn High School. He then went on to attend college on a scholarship in Missouri.

When World War II broke out, he gave up his scholarship and draft deferment and returned to Winston County, Alabama to enlist in the United States Army where he served in the U.S. Army Air Force for more than 4 years. He spent most of his time on the staff of the general commander of the Canal Zone. He is the third great grandson of Paul Ingle, who served in the Revolutionary War.

After his military duties, he pursued his education at the University of Alabama where he received a B.S., a master's degree and all classroom studies for his Ph.D. He received his LLB degree from the Blackstone School of Law in 1957. Floyd's career led him to teach at Tuscaloosa High School, the University of Alabama, Walker County High School, Walker College, and at the State of Alabama Department of Education.

He married his high school sweetheart, Modine West, and they have two wonderful daughters, Emma Lil and Melissa. They have five lovely grandchildren and two great grandsons.

After Modine's death, Floyd met and married the next love of his life, Dorothy Jane Strong Abbott. They have lived for the past 22 years in Cullman, Alabama, where they both work as a team in community, civic, and political affairs.

I'm thankful to know Floyd Lawson and to know that he is my friend. I'm looking forward to having the benefit of his wise counsel for many years to

come. I wish him a very happy birthday.

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PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 627, CREDIT CARD-HOLDERS' BILL OF RIGHTS ACT OF 2009

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 379 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 379

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for further consideration of the bill (H.R. 627) to amend the Truth in Lending Act to establish fair and transparent practices relating to the extension of credit under an open end consumer credit plan, and for other purposes. No general debate shall be in order pursuant to this resolution. The bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Financial Services now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Colorado is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days in which to revise and

extend their remarks on House Resolution 379.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, House Resolution 379 provides for consideration of H.R. 627, the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights Act. On a regular basis, constituents of mine from Colorado contact me in disappointment with stories about actions taken by their credit card companies. Hardworking Americans who make payments on time, have good credit, and live within their means see their rates increase without notice and without cause.

In a time when many Americans are struggling to pay their mortgage, when health care costs are increasing and many are out of work, unfair credit card practices threaten many families. Americans deserve a fair shake. They deserve transparency and not smoke and mirrors. They deserve reliability and not chaos within their statements.

The bill brought to us today by Congressman GUTIERREZ and Congresswoman MALONEY, the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights Act, gives consumers a fair deal. Prior to 1990, credit cards had more or less standardized rates—around 20 percent—few fees, and they were generally offered to persons with high credit standards.

However, since 1990, card issuers have adopted risk-based pricing, and as a result of this new pricing structure, rates have increased and fees have increased dramatically. Today's credit cards feature a wide variety of interest rates that reflect a complex list of factors. The terms of most agreements have become so complicated, consumers don't know what they are getting into when they sign on to a credit card agreement. Most, if not all, agreements allow the issuer to change the interest rate or other terms of agreement at any time for any reason.

For example, there is something called "universal default" in most credit card agreements. Universal default allows the credit card company to change the rate or change the terms of the credit card agreement for something completely unrelated to the credit card. That's got to stop.

There are also practices which allow for credit card companies to apply payments to the lowest rate of interest, not the highest rate of interest, so that amounts continue to grow under the credit card agreements. There are things including double billing cycles so you think that you have paid off a substantial portion of the credit card but, in fact, you continue to get interest charged against the amount you already paid off.

These are excessive practices, and they must be changed.

Under H.R. 627, issuers can only raise interest rates for the reasons provided within the legislation as proposed.