

Code, who, since January 4, 2011, has been enrolled in the same non-public institution of higher learning in a State in

Beginning on page 4, strike line 12 and all that follows through page 5, line 3, and insert the following:

(a) EXTENSION.—Section 3729(b)(2)(B) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in clause (i)—

(A) by striking “January 1, 2004” and inserting “October 1, 2011”; and

(B) by striking “3.00” both places it appears and inserting “3.30”;

(2) in clause (ii)—

(A) by striking “January 1, 2004, and before October 1, 2011” and inserting “October 1, 2011, and before October 1, 2012”; and

(B) by striking “3.30” both places it appears and inserting “2.80”; and

(3) in clause (iii), by striking “October 1, 2011” and inserting “October 1, 2012”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the later of October 1, 2011, or the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of the Senate amendments to H.R. 1383, as amended, the Restoring GI Bill Fairness Act of 2011. The bill would temporarily restore the Post-9/11 GI Bill program’s original method of paying tuition and fees to veterans attending private schools in several States.

When the original Post-9/11 GI Bill was enacted, veterans were promised that the VA would pay 100 percent of tuition and fees up to a State’s most expensive in-state undergraduate tuition and fee charges at a public institution of higher learning. The State-based cap applied to veterans who chose both public and private schools. What this meant to some veterans attending schools in certain States was tuition and fee payments could be well in excess of \$20,000 annually. Veterans applied and enrolled in these schools based on that original promise.

However, in an effort to “fix” some elements of the original GI Bill, Congress left those veterans in a bind. The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010, which was enacted on January 4, 2011, made several changes. And one of those changes included a national cap of \$17,500 on tuition and fee payments for veterans attending private schools, a change that will go into effect 1 week from today. For veterans that were enrolled in certain private schools in several States, including New York, Texas, Arizona, Michigan, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina, this change has real consequences. They will see their tuition and fee payments reduced by thousands of dollars. And, Mr. Speaker, I just don’t think that’s fair.

We shouldn’t change the rules on these veterans when they had already

decided to attend the school of their choice and made financial decisions based on those rules. On May 23, the House unanimously voted to keep the original promise made to these veterans in H.R. 1383. The Senate has now acted on that bill, and we’re ready to finish the job and send the bill to the President before these cuts can take place.

□ 1920

Similar to the original House measure, the Senate amendment would temporarily restore the cap on tuition and fees to the State-based method effective on August 1, 2011. This increase would apply only to veterans who were enrolled in nonpublic institutions of higher learning in the seven States that I mentioned previously before the 4th of January of 2011—in other words, they had to have already been enrolled on the 4th of January of this year—a change from the House-passed version which was actually April 1 of 2011. Veterans who initially enrolled after January 4, 2011, would be subject to the new cap.

Mr. Speaker, it has come to our attention that some veterans are concerned about the January 4 eligibility date. We have talked with VA. They have assured us that any veteran who has applied and was accepted to a school on or before the 4th of January of 2011 will be covered under this particular bill we are considering on the floor today. Veterans who applied or were accepted after that date will be grandfathered under H.R. 1383.

I believe VA’s interpretation of the bill accurately reflects the House’s intent. I would note that this bill, as amended, passed the Senate unanimously, and, of course, it passed this body unanimously as well.

I reserve the balance of my time and would encourage a positive vote by all my colleagues.

Mr. FILNER. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I also rise in support of H.R. 1383, as amended. I thank Chairman MILLER for the work he has done on the bill to make sure it was palatable in both the House and the Senate.

Let me just say, though, for the record, the GI Bill updates which we passed last Congress were passed with the full support of virtually every veterans service organization in the Nation, the majority of which submitted letters of support and strongly advocated for the bill, which included this tuition cap which we have been talking about. Everyone was well aware of the effect of the tuition cap, so I was sort of surprised when these same folks started talking about what they called “unintended consequences.” I think everybody knew the consequences.

I know that many of our veterans made plans about their education based on the laws in effect before they started. And while most States ended up getting an increase with the new national average, a few States also saw a

decrease. It is in these States that H.R. 1383, as amended, seeks to hold harmless our veterans from the so-called “unintended consequences” of the tuition cap.

Our veterans have indeed, as Chairman MILLER pointed out, earned their education benefits, and I firmly believe that we should seek to avoid any actions that may interfere with the use of their benefits. I am pleased that we are here today taking action to alleviate this potential burden on a small population of these student veterans. The start of the new school year, of course, is right around the corner, so I hope that with our quick action today we will have this issue solved in time for the new academic year.

We have made quite a few changes to improve the so-called Post-9/11 GI Bill, and more changes are still being contemplated. As a veterans’ committee and as a Congress, we must continue to work hard to ensure future changes do not delay or diminish benefits. Veterans are our priority, and we will protect their interests.

I have no further requests for time, Mr. Speaker, and I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the Senate amendments to H.R. 1383.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I have no further requests for time.

Once again, I encourage all Members to support my motion to concur in the Senate amendments.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill, H.R. 1383.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair’s prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

BLOCKING PROPERTY OF
TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 112-46)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") declaring a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat that significant transnational criminal organizations pose to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States.

Organized crime is no longer a local or regional problem; it has become a danger to international stability. Significant transnational criminal organizations have become increasingly sophisticated and dangerous to the United States, and their activities have reached such scope and gravity that they destabilize the international system. These groups have taken advantage of globalization and other factors to diversify their geographic scope and range of activities. They have increased and deepened their ties to governments and the international financial system, relying not only on bribery and violence, but also more and more on the ability to exploit differences among countries and to create and maintain legal facades to hide illicit activities.

The specific harms that significant transnational criminal organizations threaten today are many. They corrupt—and in some cases co-opt—governments, thereby destabilizing them and weakening democratic institutions and the rule of law. They threaten U.S. economic interests by subverting, exploiting, and distorting legitimate markets, and could gain influence in strategic sectors of the world economy.

Significant transnational criminal organizations that engage in cybercrime threaten sensitive public and private computer networks, undermine the integrity of the international financial system, and impose costs on the American consumer. Those that engage in the theft of intellectual property not only erode U.S. competitiveness, but also endanger the public health and safety through the distribution of tainted and counterfeit goods. Many of them also engage in drug trafficking.

Finally, significant transnational criminal organizations increasingly support the activities of other dangerous persons. Some of these organizations are involved in arms smuggling, which can facilitate and aggravate violent civil conflicts. Others are involved in human smuggling, exacerbating the problem of forced labor. There is also evidence of growing ties between significant transnational criminal organizations and terrorists.

The Executive Order I have issued today is one part of a comprehensive strategy to address the growing threat of transnational organized crime. The order targets significant transnational criminal organizations and the networks that support them, striking at the core of those networks—their abil-

ity and need to move money. It does this by blocking the property and interests in property of four transnational criminal organizations, listed in the Annex to the order, that currently pose significant threats to U.S. domestic and foreign economic interests, as well as to U.S. promotion of transparency and stability in the international political and financial systems. The order provides criteria for the further blocking of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Attorney General and the Secretary of State:

to be a foreign person that constitutes a significant transnational criminal organization;

to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or

to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority, in consultation with the Attorney General and the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order.

The order is effective at 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time on July 25, 2011. All executive agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

BARACK OBAMA.
THE WHITE HOUSE, July 24, 2011.

RECOGNIZING BARRY WONENBERG

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

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago, President Kennedy observed that "the life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction, in the life of a nation, is very close to the center of a nation's purpose—and is a test of the quality of a nation's civilization."

I ask you to join me today in recognizing Barry Wonenberg, an artist in the Northern Mariana Islands, who very much embodies the ideal of which the President spoke, and who, through his avocations as both artist and educator, has, for more than 20 years, broadened our community's appreciation of art, creativity, and culture—and encouraged others to explore, and achieve in, artistic endeavors as well.

Today, Barry is representing the United States at the 12th International

Sculpture Symposium in Changchun, China. Artists from 96 different countries are creating sculptures there which will be added to some 500 sculptures already exhibited in that city from previous symposia. We all watch the progress on the massive clay sculpture Barry is creating, wish him well, and thank him for representing the Northern Marianas and America with such distinction.

Fifty years ago, President Kennedy observed that "the life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction, in the life of a nation, is very close to the center of a nation's purpose—and is a test of the quality of a nation's civilization." I ask you to join me today in recognizing Barry Wonenberg, an artist in the Northern Mariana Islands who very much embodies the ideal of which the president spoke, and who, through his avocations as both artist and educator has, for more than 20 years, broadened our community's appreciation of art, creativity, and culture—and encouraged others to explore, and achieve in, artistic endeavors as well.

Barry came to the Commonwealth in 1989 under an artist-in-residence contract and he initially aided in the design of lesson plans and textbooks for the local public school system, including the first-ever Northern Marianas History textbook. Not long thereafter, Barry accepted a teaching position at Northern Marianas College, where he developed a ceramics program and has assisted in the development of other arts-related curricula.

Barry's true passion as an artist, and the area in which he has inspired most students, though, remains sculpture and pottery—which he has been crafting for 35 years. As in most cultures around the world, these arts represent a tangible link to our local historical past. The mediums also inspire exploration, consideration, and interpretation of the natural beauty that abounds in our contemporary island environment.

Barry's passion for pottery has led to local and international distinction. In 2003, Barry was a recipient of the Governor's Humanities Award in the CNMI. He was celebrated for bringing local cultural elements of design into the vision of the contemporary artist, which has aided the preservation of a primary indigenous cultural art.

In 2008, Barry was one of 31 sculptors worldwide invited to participate in the International Sculpture Symposium in Changchun, China. His ten-foot-high bronze and stainless steel sculpture has a permanent place in the Changchun World Sculpture Park, which is home to hundreds of sculptures from artists around the world. In 2010 he was again chosen to represent the Northern Mariana Islands at the Symposium. Out of 1,060 submissions from around the world, 29 artists were selected to attend the Symposium. Of those 29 artists, four were chosen to create two works of art each. Barry was one of those four.

Barry's artistic talents have also benefited our island community in some very real and significant ways. For example, he joined with others to transform a underutilized area of our local hospital into a calming therapeutic garden for psychiatric patients. He also served as an advisor to a group that worked to apply for, and receive, funding through NOAA's Prescott Grant Program to engage in a regional study