

This year marks a number of historic milestones for the Asian Pacific American community, including the 20th year since the formal establishment of APA Heritage Month; the 100th anniversary of the planting of the first cherry blossoms in our Nation's Capital; and the 150th year since the passage of the Pacific Railroad Act, which led to the construction of the trans-continental railroad.

This year also marks the anniversary of several painful events in our history: 130 years since the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, a discriminatory piece of legislation which prevented people of Chinese ancestry from becoming naturalized citizens and from ever having the right to vote; 70 years since the signing of Executive Order 9066, which led to the internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II; and 30 years since the unpunished murder of Vincent Chin in Detroit by two unemployed auto-workers who blamed him and all Asian Americans for the loss of their jobs.

Although our history has indicated great progress since the days of discrimination, it is important to continue to remember our history in order to protect the civil rights of all Americans and to prevent these atrocities from ever happening again.

As chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, or CAPAC, I have the privilege of advocating for the APA community's needs and priorities on a broad range of issues, including civil rights, health care, economic justice, and immigration reform. This year, our caucus welcomed 12 new Congress Members, bringing our total to a record high of 42 members. This means that CAPAC will be able to serve as an even stronger voice for the Asian Pacific community at all levels.

As the Asian Pacific community continues to grow across the Nation—not just in traditional strongholds like California, Hawaii, or New York, but also in States like Texas, Georgia, and Nevada—my colleagues and I will continue to ensure that the needs of the APA community are included as we push for policies that re-ignite the American Dream for all.

So as we celebrate Asian Pacific Heritage Month this May, I hope you will join me and remember the many contributions that Asian Pacific Americans have made to our great country.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE BUILDING WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on energy-efficient buildings—we're talking about schools, factories, department stores, shopping centers, any type of a large building or even a small building—and the money they can save and the manufacturing jobs that energy-efficient initiatives can create.

This week, architects, code officials, designers, and others involved in making buildings more energy efficient celebrate High-Performance Building Week. This annual event features briefings, meetings, and other educational outlets designed to showcase and promote the good work being done to provide better buildings and mitigate the impact on the environment.

Building owners and operators continue to find creative ways to minimize the effect that rising energy costs have on their operations and productivity. These owners and operators are beginning to find that better designs of new buildings and smart retrofits of existing buildings free up capital and allow managers to commit more resources to the core operations rather than to utility bills.

The State of Montana decided to make its buildings more energy efficient. They brought in engineers to do the study, and they found that over 7,500 pipes needed to have mechanical insulation. These are pipes that needed to be replaced.

□ 1040

And so they undertook that project. And what's interesting is that the payback was less than 4 years. But each year the State of Montana saves 5 to 8 percent in energy costs on those buildings. That's a massive savings of energy in this country.

One of the easiest, most cost-effective ways to improve building performance is to ensure the mechanical insulation systems are properly installed. While most of us think that insulation is only for walls and attics, mechanical insulation is a vital component for commercial and industrial and educational applications.

Working with my colleagues, I introduced H.R. 2866, the Mechanical Insulation Incentive Act of 2011, last year to help commercial and industrial facility owners make their facilities more energy efficient and put people back to work.

Improved insulation for piping and mechanical components in commercial and industrial settings will help save businesses more than \$4.8 billion a year, according to the National Insulation Association. These improvements will also save resources to the tune of 82 million barrels of oil or 19 million tons of coal each year. And it's probably more than that.

I ask my colleagues to consider supporting H.R. 2866. It's a commonsense bill that will save money, improve facility operations, put people back to work, and help our buildings perform to a higher standard.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close by saluting the hard work that our Nation's architects, engineers, and building professionals do to improve the condition of our homes, schools, and businesses.

I also want to ask my colleagues to participate in some of the events being held this week in honor of High-Performance Building Week.

I yield back the balance of my time.

SUPPORT EXTENSION OF THE COLLEGE COST REDUCTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, in 45 days, the interest rate on the Stafford Student Loan program is going to double from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent.

As millions of American families know, the Stafford Student Loan program is the workhorse for middle class students trying to pay for college. It is a program which has an affordable interest rate. It provides protections for students so that interest doesn't accumulate while you're actually in school. It provides a grace period after you graduate. And it also has a cap in terms of how much of your income has to be devoted to Stafford loan repayments.

In 2007, as a freshman Member of Congress, I was proud to have been a cosponsor of the College Cost Reduction Act, which cut that rate from 6.8 to 3.4 percent. It was a 5-year bill, like many measures that Congress passes; and that expiration, that sunset, will occur on July 1, 45 days from today, when that rate will double back to 6.8 percent.

Last week the Senate made an attempt to try and take up legislation to protect that lower rate. Sadly, the Republican minority used the filibuster rule to block not even just the bill, but even a debate on the bill. I repeat: they didn't even use the filibuster rule as a block of all Republicans to vote against the measure. They actually used the filibuster to even allow consideration of debate.

And, again, the leader in the Senate made it very clear if they had alternatives to the Senate bill which would protect the lower rate, they were more than free to offer their own amendments.

So here we are today, with students trying to plan for next fall's college, with kids getting their acceptance letters for next year, and yet they have no ability to budget or plan in terms of what the interest rate for this workhorse program to pay for college allows.

Now, how did we get to this place?

As I indicated, in 2007 we cut the rate. Back in January, President Obama stood at that very podium and challenged Congress to not allow the rate to double. For three solid months, nothing happened in this Chamber. There was not a single hearing at the Education and Workforce Committee. There was not a bill for markup. The only action was legislation that I proposed. H.R. 3826, which has over 150 cosponsors in this Chamber, on a bipartisan basis, which would lock in that rate permanently, has never been taken up for consideration.

Two-and-a-half weeks ago, Speaker BOEHNER who, by the way, voted