

is what we are concentrating on this year. That is why I am so proud to support the Speaker in the Boehner principle: that we will not raise the debt ceiling without at least dollar-for-dollar compensatory cuts.

Christopher, you deserve a better future. We are determined to provide that to you, and I urge our fellow Members of the House to follow the same.

VAWA—WOMEN'S HEALTH WEDNESDAY

(Ms. SCHAKOWSKY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Since 1994, the Violence Against Women Act has strengthened communities and provided critical, lifesaving support to victims of violence.

VAWA reauthorization must continue the fight to protect all victims and their families from the fear of violence, including those victims who are immigrants, Native Americans, members of the LGBT community, and college students. Unfortunately, for the first time in VAWA's history, we will not have a bipartisan reauthorization bill. Even worse, H.R. 4970 is a step backward and is opposed by hundreds of anti-violence groups.

While there are many problems with the bill, I am most distressed by the provisions regarding battered immigrant women. H.R. 4970 destroys years of work of protecting immigrant women. It creates more obstacles for these victims to report crimes, and it limits U visa protections and adds restrictive certification requirements that will only discourage cooperation with law enforcement agencies, which themselves oppose these provisions.

Victim safety is a core principle of VAWA. We must remain firm in our commitment to ensure that all victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and trafficking have meaningful access to protection under the law.

HOUSE GOP PLAN FOR AMERICA'S JOB CREATORS

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Fostering job growth for the American people continues to be the number one job for House Republicans. With unemployment above 8 percent for the past 39 months, the Obama economy continues to produce the Nation's worst jobless record since the Great Depression.

By following the House Republican Plan for America's Job Creators, the House has passed more than 30 bipartisan jobs bills on behalf of the American people. Each of these bills is aimed at unleashing the power of our private sector to freely and confidently build, invest, innovate, and expand again—and put millions of Americans back to work. Unfortunately, the vast majority of these bipartisan House-

passed jobs bills are being blocked or ignored in the Democrat-controlled Senate.

The American people are tired of waiting. It is time for Democrats in the Senate and White House to put politics aside and to support the House Republican Plan for America's Job Creators.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

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

Mr. COSTA. Today, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4970, the partisan reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

Since 1994, the Violence Against Women Act has been a critical tool for protecting women and children who are victims of domestic abuse, and Congress has twice made necessary bipartisan improvements in the law.

As a cochairman of the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus, I know that we have learned a great deal from law enforcement and victim advocate groups since we last reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act in 2005. Unfortunately, this bill rolls back comprehensive protections for all vulnerable populations rather than reflect on the lessons we've learned.

We should be listening to the victims' rights advocate groups and our local law enforcement agencies, which know and deal daily with the impacts on people's lives who are the victims of crime. Therefore, we ought to pass the bipartisan Senate reauthorization bill and end this partisan charade.

EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO H.R. 4970—VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2012

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

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong opposition to H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, which shifts the power into the hands of the abuser and moves away from long-standing bipartisanship on this issue.

In my view, a vote for H.R. 4970 is clearly an attack on the Violence Against Women Act, and I am deeply concerned that the manager's amendment to H.R. 4970 weakens current law and rolls back protections in the VAWA self-petition process, empowering abusers and harming battered immigrant spouses.

The manager's amendment rolls back U visa protections, denying protection to immigrant victims of serious crime and stripping police and prosecutors of a critical law enforcement tool. The manager's amendment fails to include provisions from the bipartisan Senate-passed bill to protect Native American women and includes language that may

lead to further abuse. The manager's amendment fails, again, to include provisions of the bipartisan Senate-passed bill to protect LGBT victims from discrimination, and it weakens non-discrimination employment protections.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote against H.R. 4970 and to work together in a bipartisan manner in order to improve and reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

STUDENT DEBT

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

Mr. WELCH. In 45 days, the interest rates on some Stafford student loans are going to double. Even though we have a consensus in Congress that low interest rates should be extended, we can't get the job done. Families can't wait. They're sitting around, trying to figure out how they'll put their kids through college.

Take Beth from Westfield, Vermont. She told her children when they were young that college was part of their futures and important if they were going to make it into the middle class. Now she fears she may have steered them wrong. Her family currently holds \$150,000 in debt. In a tough job market, Beth's kids are struggling to get a foothold in life with loan repayment costs exceeding \$500 a month. Beth would like to help, but she is not really in a strong position to do so. She went back to college later in life, hoping to advance her career, and now she is way down, as are her kids, with this enormous burden.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has 45 days. Congress needs to act. We can't afford to price the middle class out of a college education.

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

(Ms. HAHN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, the Violence Against Women Act has saved lives, reducing domestic violence by half. Our colleagues in the Senate have embraced this fact and passed a bipartisan reauthorization bill that makes sense. Unfortunately, I can't say the same thing about H.R. 4970.

My Republican friends have good intentions. I believe they want to protect victims of domestic violence just as much as I do, but to be effective, however, our legislation has to address the problems as they exist. H.R. 4970 does not. The bill makes reporting abuse more difficult, forces shelters and counselors to spend more of their precious resources on unnecessary paperwork, and fails to extend protection to the LGBT Americans. One of the most striking deficiencies is its failure to protect immigrant victims of abuse.