

### CORINTHIAN COLLEGES AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THE CLASS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, next month, almost 4 million students will graduate from college, but on Monday, more than 16,000 students—students who have sacrificed countless hours and resources—were robbed of the opportunity to achieve this goal.

These students are the victims of Corinthian Colleges, which closed its doors yesterday amidst ongoing State and Federal investigations regarding the school's fraudulent and predatory recruiting tactics. Corinthian's closure marks the end of one of the Nation's largest for-profit colleges, an industry wrought with fraud and deception.

The story of Corinthian starts with the rising cost of college, combined with repeated cuts to other affordable public educational options like community college or HBCUs. The combination of these factors led to the explosive growth of a for-profit college industry that quickly began to prey on low-income, minority, and veteran students by enticing them with the false promise of a quality education and good jobs. These promises were simply untrue.

Corinthian repeatedly misrepresented the quality of its programs and lied about the job placement rates of its graduates. By doing so, Corinthian lured in the country's most vulnerable student populations, whose Federal loan and grant dollars were used to line the pockets of its CEO, investors, and shareholders.

As a result, Corinthian and the for-profit college industry as a whole absorbed one-quarter of all the Federal student aid, more than \$30 billion annually. During the Great Recession, Corinthian alone nearly doubled its revenue due to the enrollment of millions of vulnerable unemployed workers who were even more susceptible to the enticing offer of a quality education and future employment.

Make no mistake, these people preyed on at-risk students and workers. They took advantage of the next generation of America's leaders, and they used the economic distress and uncertainty our young people were dealing with for their own economic gain.

As Corinthian continued its deceptive practices, the school had 162 failing academic programs, more than any other for-profit college in the country.

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During this Congress, I have continued my lifetime of work on this subject, which began in the California General Assembly. I have repeatedly called on the Department of Education to close Corinthian and offer full loan forgiveness for all its students. Last month, I was proud to endorse the Co-

rinthian 100 and their efforts to obtain full debt relief.

Today, joined by my Senate colleague, Democratic Whip DICK DURBIN, I am introducing the CLASS Act, a piece of legislation that will help restore students' legal rights against for-profit institutions.

We need this for a key reason. As Corinthian knowingly deceived its students, it also included in its enrollment agreements provisions that limited students' access to courts and shielded Corinthian from liability for its misconduct. These included mandatory arbitration and measures that prohibited students from joining together to form a class action lawsuit.

As a result, even though Corinthian Colleges has closed its doors, students are still suffering because they do not have a legal outlet to address their harms.

If students are to receive any relief, they are at the mercy of the Department of Education and the good faith of Corinthian Colleges itself, the same institution that has already deceived them and saddled them with debt.

The CLASS Act attempts to remedy this problem by prohibiting any school receiving Federal funding from including any restrictions on students' ability to pursue legal claims against it in court.

Essentially, this bill serves as the students' strongest line of defense against any future fraudulent conduct by restoring their rights to have their day in court.

I encourage all of my colleagues to take a stand against the practices of Corinthian Colleges and other predatory for-profit institutions by supporting this legislation and fighting for our students' right to an honest, quality education.

Mr. Speaker and Members, we still have a lot of for-profit colleges out there that are treating our students in the same manner that Corinthian has—deceiving them—and who are guilty of fraud.

We must take responsibility in this Congress to protect our students.

### RAISE THE WAGE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this is an important and significant week here in the Hall of the people's House because, this week, we are going to be introducing the Raise the Wage Act.

This argument has been going on for quite some time now; yet, frustratingly, despite all the time and energy that has been focused on this issue, the Federal minimum wage still has not been raised in almost a decade.

Depending on what measure of inflation you use, the minimum wage in real dollars is either at its lowest level in 50 years or its lowest level in 70

years. Either way is bad for American workers.

I want to particularly combat the perception some have that all minimum wage workers are teenagers. Actually, the average age of a minimum wage worker is 33 years old.

Any time you go into the local McDonald's or Burger King in my neighborhood, you can see in person that we are dealing with not just teen workers, but many who are in their thirties, forties, fifties, and many seniors who need to work in order to supplement their income.

I also want to highlight this important fact: 18.7 million children—almost 19 million children—are supported by parents who work full time at minimum wage jobs.

We are not talking about a government handout. We are not talking about helping those who aren't attempting to help themselves. We are talking about making sure a fair day's work actually pays. We are talking about rewarding hard-working Americans.

By the way, if you don't work a minimum wage job—you are just an ordinary taxpayer—you, too, would benefit from increasing the minimum wage.

Here is why. We have, right now in America, the highest percentage of minimum wage workers who are currently getting government assistance—food stamps, Medicaid, and other sorts of programs—because, despite working full time, they make so little, they qualify for government assistance.

By raising their wage, we would decrease the poverty rate and decrease the amount of money needed to be spent on public assistance programs.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue about fairness; it is an issue about justice, but it is also an issue about what kind of an America we believe in, one that rewards hard work, one that rewards those who are going to work every day and working for a living, or one that just says the wealthiest one-tenth of 1 percent can continue to grow at the greatest rate of income in American history, while the other 70 percent of Americans are losing their share of income. That is wrong.

We believe in an America in which those who work hard and play by the rules should benefit. One way of ensuring this will happen is raising the minimum wage now.

### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 21 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

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### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MCCARTHY) at 2 p.m.