

□ 1225

Mr. ROHRABACHER and Mrs. BACHMANN changed their vote from "yea" to "nay."

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. MANZULLO. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, February 6, 2008, I was unable to return to Washington in time to vote because of the large snowstorm that hit the Chicago-land area yesterday and delayed my arrival until mid-afternoon today. If I was here, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 29, "yea" on rollcall No. 30, "yea" on rollcall No. 31, "no" on rollcall No. 32, "no" on rollcall No. 33, "yea" on rollcall No. 34, and "yea" on rollcall No. 35.

#### COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY AND AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 956 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4137.

□ 1225

#### IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 4137) to amend and extend the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes, with Mr. PASTOR in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the House, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4137, the College Opportunity and Affordability Act, which was reported by the Committee on Education and Labor with unanimous bipartisan support. This legislation strengthens and reauthorizes our Nation's higher education program.

With our recent enactment of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act, this Congress has already taken a historic step by providing the single largest increase in Federal student aid since the GI bill.

But we all know that there's still work to do to ensure that the doors of

college are truly open to call qualified students. H.R. 4137 helps us reach this goal.

Today's students and families face a number of challenges on the path to college, from skyrocketing college prices, to needlessly complicated student aid application process, to predatory tactics by student lenders.

The College Opportunity and Affordability Act will address these challenges by reshaping our higher education system so that, once again, it operates in the best interest of students and families.

The bill will create a higher education system that is more affordable and fair and easier to navigate for consumers.

For years, prices have been skyrocketing at colleges and universities around the country, and we can all agree that the increase in college aid was vital. But there's no question we must also begin to address these rising tuition prices.

This legislation would create a new user-friendly Web site for families with helpful information on college pricing and the factors driving tuition increases.

The Web site would also publish lists of the most expensive schools, the least expensive schools, and schools with the largest percentage increase in tuition prices. Colleges with the largest increases in tuition prices would be required to report their reasons for these price hikes and to create a task force to examine how they can work to keep their prices lower.

The bill would also ensure the States would hold up their end of the bargain by providing higher education, by establishing State maintenance-of-effort requirements. We cannot just keep putting in Federal taxpayer dollars at the top and having States take money out of the bottom.

The bill would restore trust and accountability to the student loan program. It would also provide students and families with better protections when it comes to the often murky world of college loans.

The protections for students and parent borrowers in our bill form a bill of rights for college consumers, including fair disclosure loan terms to borrowers of Federal and private loans.

In addition, the bill would simplify the Federal student aid application process and provide families with extra time to plan for their college expenses.

The bill would also:

Make the Pell Grant scholarship available year round for the first time and would increase the authorization for that program;

Strengthen the TRIO and GEAR UP college readiness and support programs that are helping so many students discover that they not only can attend college, they can succeed in college and graduate;

Expand the funding for graduate programs at the Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic-serving Institutions and minority serving schools;

Increase college aid and support programs for veterans and our men and women in uniform;

To ensure equal opportunities and a fair learning environment for students with disabilities;

And to make our college campuses safer. The bill does all of that, and it's an important change in the higher education responsibilities of the Federal Government and in the support for our higher education institutions and in our partnership with the States.

□ 1230

It has been a long time for this bill to come to the floor. It has been 10 years since we reauthorized this Act. And in recognizing that long time, I want to certainly point out the contributions made by Congressman BUCK MCKEON, the senior Republican on this committee; RUBÉN HINOJOSA and RIC KELLER of the subcommittee; and the Chairs and ranking members of the Higher Education Committee.

But I just want to say that much of this bill reflects a lot of work that was done by Mr. KELLER, by Mr. MCKEON. Certainly the provisions dealing with college costs reflect an awful lot of work that was done by Mr. MCKEON when he was in the majority on the subcommittee and the full committee by Mr. TIERNEY, on our side of the committee, to bring this to fruition so finally we can start to not only make greater contributions in terms of assistance to families, but also help institutions rein in these costs, discuss these costs with parents and students so that they can make smart choices.

I would also like to thank my committee staff for helping us craft a strong bill, including Denise Forte, Stephanie Moore, Gaby Gomez, Julie Radocchia, Jeff Appel, Sharon Lewis, Julia Martin, and Rachel Racusen.

I would also like to thank the many students across the country whose voices have been so helpful in helping us to understand the changes that needed to be made and also to voice support for this legislation and are a very important part of this process.

I think the entire House can be proud of this legislation, and I think it will help us build a better future for our students and for our economy and for our country, both in terms of our economic security and our national security. And I think it will help fulfill the vision that all American families have for the members of their family to be able to participate in a higher education, to graduate and to pursue their hopes and aspirations, in making full contributions.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.