

see their interest rates double on July 1. Hawaii college students will owe nearly \$1,000 more next year.

I have heard countless stories of people in Hawaii burdened by student loan debt. One woman in Kailua told me she took out student loans to afford graduate school, and now teaches part time at Hawaii Pacific University. Her husband is a Marine who's currently deployed. She says, "My education was important to me, but now I wonder if it was truly worth it. I have the education that has provided me the job of my dreams but we are drowning in so much student loan debt that I may have single-handedly ruined both of our futures."

Hawaii students shouldn't have to drown in debt to achieve their dreams. Education is too important: it's the key to greater opportunity.

I know firsthand how education opens the door to a better life. I came to this country from Japan when I was nearly 8 years old. My mother courageously plotted and planned in secret in order to flee an abusive marriage and bring us to this country so we could have a better life. We came to Hawaii in steerage with little more than the clothes on our backs. I did not speak a word of English but my mother enrolled me in the public schools and that's where I learned to read, write and speak English. I used financial aid and student loans to put myself through college and law school.

A recent study found that by 2018, nearly two-thirds of jobs in Hawaii will require some type of post-secondary education or career training. Meanwhile, tuition is rising and student loan debt is a serious problem. The average Hawaii college graduate has over \$15,000 in student loan debt. Nationwide, Americans now owe more in student loan debt than credit card debt.

In my first year in Congress, I cosponsored the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007. This bill passed on a strong bipartisan basis and was signed into law by President George W. Bush. This law cut low- and middle-income student loan interest rates in half, from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent. This provision will expire on July 1. We need a solution right away.

Yet, rather than seek a real, bipartisan solution like we did in 2007, the House Majority continues to play politics with the issues that matter most to our families.

Their latest ploy is H.R. 4628. This bill is a sheep in wolf's clothing. It supports college

students, but on the backs of women and children. The bill would pay for keeping the lower interest rate for one year by repealing the Public Health and Prevention Fund. It's yet another partisan attack on the Affordable Care Act.

The Public Health and Prevention Fund has already had a major impact in Hawaii. Our state has received grants to provide vaccinations, HIV testing, obesity and smoking prevention, and warning systems for disease outbreaks. The Public Health and Prevention Fund is supported by American Academy of Pediatrics—Hawaii Chapter, American Lung Association in Hawaii, CHOW Project, Faith Action for Community Equity, Hawaii Island HIV/AIDS Foundation, Hawai'i Primary Care Association, Hawaii Public Health Association, Malama Pono Health Services, and Papa Ola Lokahi. National organizations supporting this fund include the AARP, Alzheimer's Foundation, American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association, American Nurses Association, March of Dimes, and hundreds more.

Today's vote is a false choice. Let's stop playing games with our students' future, and let's not balance the budget on the backs of women's and children's health. Today's vote is just a skirmish. The game is not over. We need a real solution right away.

That's why I'm a cosponsor of the Stop the Rate Hike Act, H.R. 4816. This bill would keep student loan interest rates low for another year, long enough to find a longer-term solution. We'd pay for this by ending tax loopholes for big oil companies. These companies are already raking in record profits, and don't need another year of handouts from you and me.

I voted today to take up H.R. 4816, a real solution for our students. I urge my colleagues to come together and get this done.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2012

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote Nos. 179, 180, and 181. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall vote Nos. 179 and 181; I would have voted "no" on rollcall vote No. 180.

HONORING THE VICTIMS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. DAVID N. CICILLINE

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2012

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the 1.5 million Armenians, men, women, and children, who were massacred under the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 20th century.

Each year, Armenians throughout the world mark April 24 as Genocide Remembrance Day by honoring those who perished from 1915 to 1923, and I join my friends and colleagues in remembering the victims today.

It's important to raise awareness about the Armenian genocide not only because it is an undeniable chapter in world history, but also because learning more about this horrific tragedy underscores the importance of eliminating intolerance and bigotry wherever it occurs.

I have enormous respect and admiration for the strength, resilience, and perseverance of the Armenian-American community. Over the decades since this massacre in their homeland occurred they built lives, homes, and businesses, and raised families in Rhode Island and across the country.

As the Congressman from Rhode Island's First Congressional District, I have the honor of representing many Armenian-Americans who grew up hearing family stories about the atrocities firsthand, as many are children and grandchildren of genocide survivors. Armenian-Americans living in my home state of Rhode Island have made significant contributions through their leadership in business, law, academia, government, and the arts.

As a cosponsor of the Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Resolution, House Resolution 304, I strongly believe that the time has come for the United States government to recognize this atrocity for what it was—genocide.

I join my colleagues today in remembering and honoring the victims of the Armenian genocide.