

NO BUDGET NO PAY ACT

(Mrs. BLACK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an important piece of legislation that I am proud to co-sponsor, the No Budget No Pay Act. It says if we, the Members of the House and the Senate, don't adopt a budget and pass all of the appropriations bills by October 1, we don't get paid.

The Congressional Budget Act of 1974 requires the Congress complete a budget annually, and for over 1,000 days, we have not done so. The deadlines for the budget and appropriations bills are missed so often that they're meaningless. This kicking the can down the road mentality has got to stop. People are fed up. And, frankly, America cannot afford it anymore. We have to balance our books just like American families do.

Our constituents have to perform their job duties to collect a paycheck, and so should we. I urge you to support this commonsense legislation. Not only will it help us get our fiscal house in order, it will help restore trust in this institution.

PREVENTING CUTS TO AIR NATIONAL GUARD

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

Ms. HOCHUL. Mr. Speaker, as we begin voting on the National Defense Authorization Act later today, I want to remind people that, earlier this year, the Air Force proposed cutting 5,100 Air National Guard positions from our military. Part of this plan eliminates three C-130s and 800 jobs from the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station in my own district.

Transparency in government is important to all of us. Yet in this decision, no information was provided to us as to how these decisions were made to cut that many across the country. It's clear we need to reduce our spending, but we need to do it in a transparent and open way.

Last week, I was proud to join Republicans and Democrats on the Armed Services Committee in offering an amendment to restore these positions. When our citizens need help, whether it's fighting terrorism in Afghanistan or being rescued from floods in upstate New York, I say: Who you gonna call?

I want to make sure that the Air National Guard is prepared to protect us; and therefore, today, we need to protect them.

COMBAT ACTION BADGE AMENDMENT

(Mr. NUGENT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. NUGENT. Mr. Speaker, on May 2, 2005, the Department of the Army au-

thorized the creation of the Combat Action Badge. This badge provides special recognition for soldiers who personally engage the enemy or are engaged by the enemy during combat operations. The bayonet and grenade on the badge are associated with the act of combat. The oak wreath on the badge signifies strength and loyalty.

Current Army policy limits the eligibility to those individuals who meet the criteria of the Combat Action Badge after September 18, 2001. Unfortunately, this overlooks thousands of veterans who made similar sacrifices in previous wars. That's why I offered this amendment that would expand the eligibility for the Combat Action Badge to also include those who served honorably from December 7, 1941, to September 18, 2001.

Additionally, in accordance with the wishes of those veterans who approached me about the expanded eligibility of this badge, the costs of the Combat Action Badge would be borne by those individuals, not the taxpayers. Therefore, this measure will cost American taxpayers nothing.

I was proud to introduce this identical amendment last year to the National Defense Authorization Act, which passed the House en bloc. So I'm back this year continuing to fight for combat veterans of the past to receive the recognition they rightfully deserve. With that, I ask for your support.

RECOGNIZING UNIVERSITY WITHOUT WALLS

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

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the University of Massachusetts' popular and successful University Without Walls program as it celebrates its 40th anniversary at the end of this academic year.

The University Without Walls program was established in 1971 to give adults an opportunity to complete their bachelor's degrees at a world-class public university while simultaneously maintaining a job.

Over these past 40 years, the program has awarded degrees to more than 4,000 men and women ranging in age from 20 to 80. From the Facebook generation to the Greatest Generation, this program continues to make a difference in the lives of ordinary people.

While many colleges and universities across the country now have similar programs on their campuses, the program at UMass is one of the oldest and most well-regarded adult bachelor's degree completion initiatives in the Nation. I know many of the successful individuals from western Massachusetts who have benefited professionally from this initiative.

I applaud Dr. Ingrid Bracey and her extraordinary team at the UMass campus in Amherst for their dedication to nontraditional students in both the

classroom and the workplace. As one of their strongest and most outspoken supporters, I'm happy to share their success story with the American family here today in the House of Representatives.

□ 0910

HONORING BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS

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

Mr. BARTLETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor two very special schools in the Sixth District of Maryland which were honored this year as Federal Blue Ribbon Schools: Bel Air Elementary School in Cumberland and Oklahoma Road Middle School in Eldersburg.

Since 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program of the Department of Education has recognized schools where students achieve the very highest academic level.

I would like to particularly mention the women who lead these schools.

Mrs. Autumn Eirich brings a spark of excitement to Bel Air Elementary with her positive attitude and her dedication to the school community. She facilitated the Bel Air philosophy: School Centered on Reaching Excellence, or SCORE.

The Oklahoma Road Middle School has adopted the motto, "Good, Better, Best," to encourage educational and social achievement for all their students. Ms. Catherine Hood symbolizes that motto with her leadership style of collegiality and stewardship, which has created an atmosphere of trust and fosters a positive learning environment.

With educational leaders like Autumn Eirich and Catherine Hood and dedicated students like those at Bel Air Elementary and Oklahoma Road Middle School, America's future is bright.

STUDENT LOAN CRISIS

(Mr. COURTNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, in a few hours, one of the least productive, most unpopular Congresses in American history is going to go on another recess, despite the fact that in 43 days interest rates for the Stafford student loan program will double from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent on July 1, 43 days away from today.

What's happened in the last week or so? The Senate Republican leadership led a filibuster to block not only the consideration of a bill to prevent this, but discussion or debate on a bill. In this House, after 3 months of stonewalling, Speaker BOEHNER brought a bill to the House which cynically took money out of a preventive health care fund for cancer and heart disease screening to pay for a 1-year