

Vitter
Warner

Webb
Whitehouse

Wicker
Wyden

NAYS—1

Lee

NOT VOTING—11

Burr
Chambliss
Coats
DeMint

Harkin
Heller
Kirk
Lautenberg

Menendez
Portman
Rubio

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, will the Senator from Ohio yield for a unanimous consent request?

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Sure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion of the remarks of the Senator from Ohio I be recognized as in morning business for such time as I may consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam President, I am pleased to work with Senator INHOFE on this matter.

STAFFORD LOANS

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam President, in 25 days, the cost of attending college, a trade school, a university, or a 2-year community college will increase for some 380,000 students in my State of Ohio. It is because without congressional action—something which we have tried to fix repeatedly on the floor of the Senate—interest rates for Stafford loans are scheduled to double on July 1.

Now, this was done 5 years ago. Bipartisanly, we were able to do this. President Bush signed legislation by a Democratic Congress—a Democratic House, a Democratic Senate—to freeze interest rates on Stafford subsidized loans for American college students for 5 years at 3.4 percent. That expires July 1, and it is something we need to do, we have tried to do. It has repeatedly been batted down by threats of a filibuster.

That is why today I met with students in Toledo, at Owens Community College. Jakki, CJ, and Megan all have dreams to attend, first, Owens, and then to move on to 4-year institutions. But they rely on Stafford loans to afford their tuition and other expenses.

I have been to Cuyahoga County Community College meeting with stu-

dents. I have been to Hiram College visiting students on their graduation day. I have been to the University of Cincinnati. I have been to Ohio State. I have been to Wright State University in Dayton speaking to students.

They understand if we do not act, future college graduates will see an average of about \$1,000 in extra interest fees per student per Stafford loan.

My colleague JACK REED, a Senator from Rhode Island, Senator HARKIN, and I have introduced the Stop the Student Loan Interest Rate Hike Act, which would keep college affordable for more students.

The act is fully paid for by closing a corporate tax loophole. We want to pay for this. We do not want to add to the debt of college students. We do not want to add to their personal debt by allowing this 3.4-percent interest rate to double.

I would like to make this more personal, if I could, and read some letters from students in Ohio schools. These higher interest rates affect students personally, of course. It also affects the families who are helping to pay for their college tuition in many cases. It also affects the community. We know, looking back at the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the GI bill enabled literally millions of individuals—millions of young Americans who had fought for their country in World War II or Korea or in successive military involvements—to go to school and to afford their college tuition. What that meant was not just helping those students and their families. It helped raise the level of prosperity for the entire country because those were people who got to go to school. It meant they could start businesses and buy homes and get better jobs and give back a lot to our communities.

That is the same thing that will happen if we can lock in these 3.4-percent interest rates. It will mean students who might not have been able to buy a car or might not have been able to start a business or might have been more reluctant to start a family—they are less likely to do that if we cannot lock in these interest rates.

Before yielding the floor to Senator INHOFE, I would like to share three letters my office received recently, starting with Kasey from Union in Miami County, OH. Miami County is just north of Dayton.

Going to college was never a question for me—there was an unspoken understanding that it would happen.

Unfortunately, my parents could not afford to pay for college for all of their children, particularly after [we faced] foreclosure in 2007.

At 17, I faced responsibility for covering the \$10,000 per year gap of paying for George Washington University.

Over the past four years, I have taken out the maximum allowed in student loans—both subsidized and unsubsidized. I have held a federal work study job since October of my freshman year. Because both of my parents were unemployed at the time, I was forced to take out PLUS loans. This still left me with a gap, and I had to ask my parents to spend

a significant portion of their retirement fund to allow me to finish my degree.

At 21 years old, I have more than \$42,000 in loans to repay. I have received a world class education thanks to the opportunities provided to me by my scholarships, student loans, Pell grants and federal work study programs.

Students should not be punished for following the American Dream. There is a huge emphasis on the importance of education, but the soaring costs of private and public universities is making it harder and harder for my generation.

Doubling the interest rates on loans is not the solution. Making education harder to pay for will shut doors for students like me, and college will inch back toward being a privilege of the wealthy.

I have worked part time since I was 15, I did well in high school to win a substantial scholarship, I have maintained my grades in college to keep that scholarship, I have taken advantage of work study programs, and I have every intention of paying back my student loans in full as I enter the world of full time employment.

Please do not make it harder to pursue the American Dream.

Waylon from Fairborn, Greene County, near Springfield. The city of Xenia is nearby, outside of Dayton.

I am deeply concerned about the thought of an increase in student loan interest.

I am currently a student at Antioch University Midwest taking classes to pursue my license to become an Intervention Specialist. I also have two children who are finishing up their sophomore years in college at the end of May.

My sons, as well as myself, have student loan debt and an increase in the rates would certainly have a diminishing affect on affording an already higher tuition rate at the college itself.

Hasn't it been a big push for the people in our country to become more educated equating to a more resourceful and competitive country?

How will this ever be attained without an affordable education?

Gaining higher, more competitively paying jobs would also equate to more taxes being paid!

Isn't that what we should be looking at?

I believe that there is a disconnection between what people in Washington want—a more educated country and how they are willing to get it.

Sarah, from Dayton, writes:

I started college in fall 2003. As a foster youth fresh from emancipating, I took out student loans because I don't have any family that can help me pay for college.

9 years, 2 Bachelor of Arts (one in Criminal Justice and the other in Social Science Education . . .) and an almost complete Master of Arts degree later not only am I \$100,000 in debt with student loans I am still unable to find a job.

Since I am overqualified for jobs at places like McDonald's (who take one look at my application and reject it) and underqualified for positions using either of my degrees, I am forced to look outside of Ohio for jobs that will allow me to at least use my 1-2 years of secretary experience so that I have the salary to start paying on these loans.

My student loans are hindering not only my ability to possibly finish my Master's degree but also to potentially purchase a home and find a position near my family.

When I graduate I will not be able to move back home since my parents were the state so I will have to find a position outside what I went to school for and probably for minimum salary or even minimum wage just so