

when Congress switched to direct lending we ensured that not-for-profit servicers would continue to service Federal loans because of the superior customer service experience that not-for-profit servicers have consistently provided. I am glad that Congress is continuing to recognize the importance of not-for-profit servicers in our communities and intends to allow for their continued role of servicing Federal loans and helping more students gain access to college and more students to complete their degrees.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, as chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, which holds jurisdiction over the servicing of our Federal student loan programs, it is my understanding that the intent of the budget agreement is to allow for the continuation of the existing not-for-profit servicer contracts and that they will be permitted to compete based on performance with the Department of Education's title IV servicers for additional accounts, so that students receive the best possible service and taxpayer funds are used efficiently.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Vermont for engaging in this dialogue and appreciate the Senator from Washington clarifying that it is the intent of the budget measure for the Department of Education to continue to use not-for-profit servicers for the Federal loan program and that these entities should be permitted to compete for additional loan volume in the future.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Vermont and the Senator from Washington for providing clarification on this issue. I am happy to hear that the legislative intent of the budget deal is to continue the use of the not-for-profit student loan servicers and that they will be permitted to compete in the future for additional accounts.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I would like to associate myself with the comments of the senior Senator from Washington and am pleased to know it is her intent that not-for-profit servicers, like the New Hampshire Higher Education Loan Corporation and the NHHEAF Network, will be able to continue their important work and that they will be able to compete in the future for additional accounts.

For over 50 years, the New Hampshire Higher Education Loan Corporation and the NHHEAF Network have provided critical college access, financial education, and default-prevention programs to students in New Hampshire and across the country. The New Hampshire Higher Education Loan Corporation's dedicated staff services a national portfolio over 250,000 borrowers, helping them to manage repayment of almost \$5 billion in student loans. These professionals play a uniquely important role in helping students to succeed in postsecondary education, and I am pleased that it is the Senator from Washington's intent to allow them to continue their work.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I rise as well to thank the senior Senator from Washington for her insight and to echo the comments from my colleagues, especially my good friend from Alaska. The not-for-profit student loan servicer in my State, the Alaska Student Loan Corporation, does an outstanding job of servicing student loans. They take a proactive and supportive role with the accounts they receive from the Department, and I want to ensure they will be able to continue to participate in this important program. I was pleased to learn that the chairman's intent in including this language was not to exclude not-for-profit servicers from competing for additional servicing accounts.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to associate myself with the comments of the senior Senator from Washington and am pleased to know it is her intent that the use of not-for-profit servicers continues and that not-for-profit servicers will be permitted to compete on an equal basis in the future for additional accounts.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I wish to associate myself with the comments of the senior Senator from Washington. I am pleased to know that it is her intent that the work of not-for-profit servicers advances and that they will continue to be allowed to compete for additional accounts in the future. In Maine, two not-for-profit servicers, the Finance Authority of Maine and Maine Education Services, provide essential services to Maine students through financial literacy education and the servicing of Federal student loans. Indeed, not-for-profit servicers do meaningful work across the country, and I am glad to know it is the Senate Budget Committee Chairman's intent to continue to allow these State agencies and nonprofits to play a role in servicing federal student loans.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I would also like to associate myself with the senior Senator from Washington, my colleague from Vermont, and my colleague from Montana. Our Montana servicer, the Student Assistance Foundation, provides vital services to Montana students by delivering financial aid education, scholarships, and grants. I am therefore pleased to know it is the intent of the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee that not-for-profit student loan servicers will continue to play a role in the servicing market and will be permitted to compete for future servicing contracts.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise to share in this important discussion and would also like to associate myself with the comments of the senior Senator from Washington and my colleague from Montana. The Student Assistance Foundation is a strong employer in Montana, representing nearly 200 jobs, and I am pleased to know it is the chair of the Budget Committee's intent that the use of not-for-profit servicers continues. I am also pleased that not-for-profit servicers, such as

the Student Assistance Foundation, will be permitted to compete in the future for additional accounts.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I am pleased to know it is the intent of the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee—the chief Senate negotiator for the Bipartisan Budget Act—that nonprofit servicers will continue to play an important role in servicing Federal student loans, both now and in the future. I strongly support this intent and the vital public service role that nonprofit and State agency servicers have played in Federal student loan programs on behalf of Federal student loan borrowers and the American public. I will be one of those who will expect the Department to pay close attention to congressional intent in this matter. I also look forward to working with my colleagues on both the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and the Appropriations Committee to ensure that this intent is carried out.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I would like to thank the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, who coauthored this legislation, for clarifying that it is not the intent of the bill's authors to require that existing contracts with not-for-profit student loan servicers be canceled and that such servicers will continue to be able to compete for additional Department of Education contracts in the future. Not-for-profit servicers provide students in Maine and across the country with important financial counseling services, and I am pleased to know that they will continue to be allowed to compete to perform this work under this legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Chair, I yield 1 hour of my time postcloture to Senator SESSIONS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The Senator from Washington.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the exception of Senator GRASSLEY for up to 20 minutes; further, that the time count postcloture.

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

The Senator from New York.

#### COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 3588, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3588) to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to exempt fire hydrants from the prohibition on the use of lead pipes, fittings, fixtures, solder, and flux.