

My Eighth District, like others, counts on these family businesses and their teams working hard to support their families and aid their communities. As retailers, these teams often bring different or unique products to the marketplace. In manufacturing, they create innovative concepts and ideas. They manage to do all of this while at the same time providing stellar and personal customer service.

As a member of the House Committee on Small Business and because of my own experience as a small business owner, I am appreciative of the impact these small businesses have on our local economies. In fact, 80 percent of our domestic job growth comes from the small- and medium-sized business community.

I am proud of the contributions of these mom and pop business owners across America and hope that my colleagues will join with me in celebrating this important day.

□ 1030

CLOSE THE LOOPHOLE ON 527 GROUPS

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, what we have today is more liberal lunacy. Billionaires like the Daddy Warbucks of the Democratic Party, George Soros, are pushing their left-wing agenda by funneling hundreds of millions of dollars through shady organizations called 527 groups.

Section 527 groups operate outside of campaign finance laws by spending hundreds of millions of dollars on ads and partisan voter recruitment efforts with no oversight and no accountability.

Mr. Speaker, \$370 million flowed through 527 groups in the last campaign election cycle, and this is outside of campaign disclosure. So much for taking big money out of politics.

Over one-fifth of the \$370 million channeled through 527s came from four individuals. This is money laundering on a scale that would make even Tony Soprano blush.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we close this loophole on 527s and open transparent and accountable campaigns to the American people.

REPUBLICAN REFUSAL TO EXTEND PRESCRIPTION DRUG SIGN-UP PERIOD

(Mrs. JONES of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, it is time the House Republicans stand up to the Bush White House and say they are not going to allow America's seniors to be penalized for a complicated and confusing drug proposal they helped create.

It was bad enough that the Republicans allowed the big drug companies to write their own prescription drug plan for them, but now that a deadline looms 47 days away that would inflict a tax on seniors who have not yet chosen a plan, Republicans seem willing to, once again, blindly follow the President.

Earlier someone made the comment that Democrats are not doing enough to have seniors sign up for the plan. I beg to differ. I work very hard to have my seniors sign up and save money, but they will never save as much, the billions of dollars that went to the drug companies, as the drug companies will receive in that process.

House Republicans seem willing to once again rubber-stamp a plan that would inflict a Bush prescription drug tax on seniors for the rest of their lives. They have yet to show any support for Democratic efforts to extend the sign-up deadline to the end of the year.

While America's seniors continue to pay outrageously high prices for their prescription drugs, House Republicans can no longer just rubber-stamp.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of securing our borders and getting legislation to the President's desk that will stop the flow of illegal immigrants into our country.

This week, the Senate is debating immigration reform, and it is crucial that they pass legislation that puts enforcement first and says "no" to blanket amnesty.

As a physician, I know you have to stop a patient's bleeding before you can heal the wound. Likewise, we must stop the bleeding of our borders before we can address other areas of reform.

Our southern border is not just bleeding; it is hemorrhaging. Thousands of illegal immigrants cross it each month, and our incomplete border fence does little to tame the flow. Our border enforcement is woefully understaffed, and local law enforcement officials lack the jurisdiction to apprehend illegal immigrants within their own communities.

Mr. Speaker, the House passed legislation in December to address each of these concerns. Reforming our immigration system requires a commitment to security and lawfulness, and our Senate colleagues must pledge their resolve to these core principles as they move forward in this debate.

REPUBLICANS REFUSE TO TAKE 9/11 COMMISSION SERIOUSLY

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, more than 4 years have passed since 9/11, and

Washington Republicans have failed to make the American people as safe as they should be.

House Republicans continue to ignore the real security risks that we face. They allow President Bush to disregard the recommendations from the independent 9/11 Commission. After all, House Republicans stood by the Bush administration in its attempts to keep the 9/11 Commission from ever being created.

A report from the commission in December gave the Bush administration failing grades in securing our Nation. From chemical plants to subways, ports and the border, the commission report showed how Washington has failed to take the proper steps needed to close security gaps.

House Republicans could make homeland security a priority if they joined us this month in rejecting President Bush's 2007 budget that dramatically underfunds key homeland security programs. Unfortunately, I am concerned Republicans will once again pay lip service to these critical security needs and will, instead, once again, rubber-stamp a Bush budget that leaves us vulnerable to those who wish us harm.

HONORING FIRST SERGEANT MICHAEL MATTHEWS

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today, I recognize an American who has given so much to our community and our country.

In January of this year, Michael Matthews of the Roswell, Georgia, Police Department was named the 2005 Officer of the Year for his work as a patrol officer and SWAT team member. When Officer Matthews is not serving the Roswell Police Department, he dedicates his time to protect America as a member of the Army National Guard.

On August 30 of last year, First Sergeant Matthews was on patrol in Iraq when his convoy was struck by an IED. Suffering injuries requiring surgery, First Sergeant Matthews received the Purple Heart for being wounded in combat. The deepest gratitude of the American people go to First Sergeant Matthews and his fellow soldiers.

True patriots are protecting and serving their local communities, as well as our country at large. As these brave men and women stand on the front lines of the war on terrorism, there should be no limit to the time and opportunities we take here at home to remind the American people of their courageous and selfless acts.

REAUTHORIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION ACT

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

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Higher Education Act, which will be reauthorized

today and tomorrow in Congress. As the chairman of the Higher Education Subcommittee, I am intimately familiar with this legislation.

This legislation expands college access for millions of American students by strengthening the Pell Grant program and by strengthening Perkins student loans.

We strengthen the Pell Grant program by allowing Pell Grants to be used year round for the first time in history and by increasing the maximum award to \$6,000, the largest amount in history.

We strengthen Perkins student loans by reauthorizing them and providing a way for low-income students, up to 10 million of them, to get fixed, low-interest rates at 5 percent.

Perkins loans and Pell Grants are the passport out of poverty for millions of worthy young students. So do not believe the hype from the critics of this legislation. Here is some straight talk: not a single student in America will receive less financial aid under this bill, not one.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the higher education reauthorization bill today.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY?

(Ms. SLAUGHTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, whatever happened to the Republicans who were fiscally responsible? I think they must have left town after President Bush came to Washington in 2001.

In January of that year, thanks to the fiscal policies of the Clinton administration, we were expecting a \$5.6 trillion budget surplus over 10 years. Instead, thanks to the fiscal policies of President Bush and the Republican "Rubber Stamp" Congress, that \$5.6 trillion surplus has been turned into a \$3.3 trillion deficit.

President Bush has yet to propose a balanced budget, and yet the Republicans do not seem to mind. They keep signing off on the budget proposals, ignoring fiscal discipline.

Because of their reckless borrow-and-spend policy, Republicans were forced to increase the debt limit earlier this year for the fourth time in 5 years, raising it to nearly \$9 trillion. We are currently borrowing more than \$600,000 a minute, much of it from foreign countries such as China and Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Speaker, if House Republicans are serious about fiscal discipline, they will stop rubber-stamping President Bush's failed fiscal policies.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 609, COLLEGE ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2005

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I

call up House Resolution 741 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 741

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 609) to amend and extend the Higher Education Act of 1965. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment recommended by the Committee on Education and the Workforce now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of the Rules Committee Print dated March 22, 2006. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. After disposition of the amendments printed in the report of the Committee on Rules, the Committee of the Whole shall rise without motion. No further consideration of the bill shall be in order except pursuant to a subsequent order of the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISSA). The gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

H. Res. 741 provides a structured rule of 1 hour of general debate on H.R. 609, the College Access and Opportunity Act of 2005, and makes in order 15 separate amendments to that legislation.

I would like to point out that this bill has been significantly discussed in committee markups. Seventy-nine amendments were discussed; half as many, as well, were discussed in the subcommittee markup. Nonetheless, 117 amendments were also filed with the Rules Committee, many of them by members of the committee, some re-treads, but some allegedly were rewritten

after the committee markup took place.

Because so many amendments have been introduced and many of them are those first impression-type amendments, the Rules Committee will be issuing a separate, second rule at a later date that will allow for consideration of additional amendments to H.R. 609.

Providing for two separate rules in this manner will allow the Rules Committee some additional time it needs to adequately review the large number of amendments that were submitted, guard against potential duplicative amendments, violation of House rules, ensure germaneness and also eliminate those that would violate budgetary rules.

I hope that in this process we will ensure an orderly debate on the key issues of this particular bill with the proposed two structured rules coming to us.

This two-step process will also allow many of the sponsors of those amendments some additional time to perhaps redraft their language, with closer consultation with the Parliamentarian and the relevant committees of jurisdiction.

The Rules Committee did work hard to listen to the Member testimony and consider the amendments that were proposed. What is filed in this particular rule are 15 amendments, seven of which are Democrat or bipartisan amendments which provide for a wide range of debate on many key aspects of the higher education program and policy. I think it is indeed a fair rule.

In 1965, the original Higher Education Act was proposed in order to provide assistance to a high number of students to fulfill a dream of a college education. Since that time, this bill and reauthorizations of this bill have been used for some other purposes.

One of the things that is positive about the bill before us is an effort to refocus on the primary purpose and the primary goal of this bill as it was originally applied, and that is public assistance to more students, period.

It is an effort on the part of the committee to try and make sure that people have this opportunity to go to college. As such, they reauthorize programs like TRIO and its associate programs like Upward Bound and GEAR UP to take kids who, by virtue of their socioeconomic status or perhaps their cultural background, are given an opportunity to advance to a college degree maybe for the first time to fulfill that particular dream.

□ 1045

I realize that my brothers and I are the first ones in my family to have actually graduated from college, and to allow that for many of these kids who will sometimes be the first of their families to have that experience in college and to graduate from college is significant.

The committee reauthorized the student Perkins loan grants, which also