

While the bill today will offer some protections for individuals with mental health needs in private insurance, we also must ensure that the budget reconciliation bill does not erode protections in Medicaid, which provides coverage for those for whom private insurance coverage is not enough or those who have no private insurance.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4579.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SECOND HIGHER EDUCATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2005

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4525) to temporarily extend the programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4525

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Second Higher Education Extension Act of 2005".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF PROGRAMS.

(a) GENERAL EXTENSION.—Section 2(a) of the Higher Education Extension Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-81; 20 U.S.C. 1001 note) is amended by striking "December 31, 2005" and inserting "March 31, 2006".

(b) EXTENSION OF LIMITATIONS ON SPECIAL ALLOWANCE FOR LOANS FROM THE PROCEEDS OF TAX EXEMPT ISSUES.—Section 438(b)(2)(B) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087-1(b)(2)(B)) is amended by striking "January 1, 2006" each place it appears in clauses (iv) and (v)(II) and inserting "April 1, 2006".

(c) EXTENSION OF EFFECTIVE DATE LIMITATION ON HIGHER TEACHER LOAN FORGIVENESS BENEFITS.—

(1) AMENDMENT.—Paragraph (3) of section 3(b) of the Taxpayer-Teacher Protection Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-409; 20 U.S.C. 1078-10 note) is amended by striking "October 1, 2005" and inserting "June 30, 2007".

(2) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 2 of such Act is amended by inserting "of the Higher Education Act of 1965" after "438(b)(2)(B)".

(d) EFFECTIVE DATES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the amendments made by this section are effective upon enactment.

(2) EXCEPTION.—The amendment made by subsection (c)(1) shall take effect as if enacted on October 1, 2005.

SEC. 3. ELIGIBILITY PROVISION.

Notwithstanding section 102(a)(4)(A) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(a)(4)(A)), the Secretary of Education shall not take into account a bankruptcy petition filed in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York in July, 2005, in determining whether a non-profit educational institution that is a subsidiary of an entity that filed such petition

meets the definition of an "institution of higher education" under section 102 of that Act (20 U.S.C. 1002).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4525.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very simple bill that extends the Higher Education Act of 1965 for 3 months until March 31, 2006. While the committee has passed the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, it is not completed. The Senate concluded their Higher Education Act amendments in their reconciliation bill, and we expect part of this higher education reauthorization to occur in the reconciliation process. But there will be a balance of it left that does need to be dealt with, and I am hopeful that early next year Congress will, in fact, complete the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act authorization.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Second Higher Education Extension Act of 2005. The bill before us today, as the chairman has noted, temporarily extends the laws that govern higher education and student aid while the Congress continues to work to reauthorize the Higher Education Act. I would also like to note for the record that the Department of Education has informed us that they have no objections to the manager's amendment offered by Mr. BOEHNER to this effort.

I rise in support of the second Higher Education Extension Act of 2005.

The bill before us today temporarily extends laws that govern higher education and student aid while Congress continues to work to reauthorize the Higher Education Act.

It also extends the partial closure of the 9.5 percent loan loophole and teacher loan forgiveness provisions.

There has never been a more important time than right now to help students and their families afford a higher education.

Despite the tremendous personal and economic benefits of a college education, however, millions of American students and families struggle to pay for college.

Last year the maximum Pell grant scholarship was worth \$900 less than the maximum grant 30 years ago.

The typical student borrower now graduates with \$17,500 in debt, while more and more

students are working long hours to pay for college.

Even with increased borrowing and longer work hours, millions of students and families continue to fall short when paying for college.

But rather than help to make college more affordable and accessible, this weekend the Republican leadership plans to raid the student aid programs by nearly \$13 billion—the largest cut in the history of the programs.

As a result, students and families will be forced to pay even more for college.

Rather than work to build a better, stronger America for future generations, they chose to cut our national commitment to a college education for every qualified student.

The Republican leadership plans to use the nearly \$13 billion in cuts to deal with Congress' budget mess.

It is wrong to force America's students and families to pay for the irresponsible management of the Nation's budget.

We should be doing more, not less, to significantly increase affordable college opportunities.

For years, Democrats and others have been demanding that the majority join us in stopping excess lender subsidies—such as the 9.5 percent loans—and re-deploy those billions of dollars in savings to students and their families struggling to pay for college.

Billions in taxpayer funds were squandered on super-sized lender subsidies that the majority party is only now, under great pressure, conceding should be constrained.

Unfortunately, the raid on student aid misses a golden opportunity to re-direct billions of dollars in savings by recycling the excessive subsidies paid to student lenders into additional grant aid for students—without any additional costs to taxpayers.

I support this temporary extension today because it ensures that the nearly 11 million students who rely on student grants, loans and work-study to finance their college education will continue to receive this much needed aid in a timely fashion.

However, I urge the Republican leadership and my colleagues to recognize that this is only the first step towards boosting affordable college opportunities and ensuring the Nation's global competitiveness.

The next step is to stop the raid on student aid and to reinvest all of the savings found from eliminating excessive student lender subsidies towards boosting grant aid, lowering interest rates and fees for student borrowers.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to note for the record that the Department of Education has informed us that they have no objection to the manager's amendment offered by Representative BOEHNER to reinstate St. Vincent's Nursing Schools of Brooklyn and Queens, New York.

The St. Vincent nursing schools lost eligibility for Federal student aid in November of this year due to the fact that their parent company, Saint Vincents Catholic Medical Centers of New York, filed for bankruptcy.

Under the Higher Education Act, once a school, or parent company of a school, files for bankruptcy they automatically become ineligible for Federal student aid such as student loans and Pell grants.

It is our understanding that the representatives for the parent company did not understand that filing for bankruptcy would result in students attending the two nursing schools losing their Federal student aid.

The Department of Education has informed us that both schools are in good fiscal standing and that a statutory fix by Congress is necessary to ensure that the students at these two nursing schools can receive federal student aid again.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE).

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding. I will be brief.

I realize that this is simply an extension of the Second Higher Education Act, but I would like to make a couple of points here. This act authorizes Pell grants and student loan programs, which are so important to so many students to continue their education. As part of the reauthorization package that moved through the Education and Workforce Committee this year, I was pleased to offer an amendment that would allow the Secretary of Education to award Pell grants on a year-round basis.

We think this is very important because this would allow students to be eligible for Pell grants during summer enrollment. The reason this is important is that we are going to see a rather dramatic increase in college enrollment in coming years.

In over 36 years on the college campus, I saw some rather significant changes in the time that it took for people to graduate from college. When I started on the college campus in the 1960s, most people graduated in 4 years, 4½ years; and now a 5½- to 6-year graduation timetable is very, very common. As a result, with increasing enrollment and also this extended time period, we are putting greater and greater stress on the facilities in colleges and universities.

Therefore, we feel that allowing students Pell grants during the summer which will allow them to go to school year-round and maybe approximate a 4-year to 4½-year graduation time would be very important. I look forward to seeing a reauthorization of the Higher Education Act signed into law in 2006. However, for now we must extend the existing authorization, and therefore I support H.R. 4525.

I thank Chairman BOEHNER for bringing this legislation forward. I urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 4525 today.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, while I support this temporary extension of the Higher Education Act, I am very disappointed that we have not passed the full Higher Education Act reauthorization and once again we are passing an extension.

Higher Education is more important than ever to ensure America's economic prosperity, security, and health. Just as college has become essential to both individuals and society's success, college tuition has risen dramatically, causing students to take on high loan debt, \$17,000, on average; to work long hours that interfere with academic success

sometimes; or to forgo college altogether. Yet, Congress has failed to pass the Higher Education Act.

Now, one party controls the White House, the Senate, and the House; the same party. Yet, they have failed to pass a Higher Education Act. Where are the priorities? Congress seems to have no trouble passing tax cuts for the wealthy, but to provide opportunities for students to attend college does not seem to be a priority.

Mr. Speaker, the failure of the House to pass a higher education reauthorization is emblematic of this ineffective Congress. In past years, the Higher Education Act was one of the easiest to pass, one of the most bipartisan, a bill we could count on.

And with this temporary extension, we have missed many opportunities today. We could have increased the Pell grant and provided it year-round. We could have significantly increased aid to minority-serving institutions. We could have increased assistance to low-income and first-generation college students. We could have increased loan forgiveness. We could have eliminated origination fees on student loans. We could have provided child care for parents who are attempting to go back to college. We could have changed the student aid formulas for working students.

But, today, we pass a temporary extension. We have failed to do any of those things, and American college students and their parents are paying for Congress' failure.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4525, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. 1281, NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2005

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the conference report on the Senate bill (S. 1281) to authorize appropriations for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for science, aeronautics, exploration, exploration capabilities, and the Inspector General, and for other purposes, for fiscal years 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of December 16, 2005, at page H12015.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the conference report on S. 1281.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this important conference report, the first NASA authorization in 5 years. We take up this conference report at a critical time for the Nation's space policy as NASA is laying out the policies and seeking the funding to set its course for the next decade and a half.

This bill will give the agency clear guidance while giving Congress important new tools for oversight at this pivotal time.

□ 1745

Most important, I believe this bill in its very first section makes clear that NASA is to remain a multi-mission agency with robust programs in science and aeronautics, even as it moves ahead with the President's vision for space exploration, and the bill also makes clear unequivocal endorsement of that vision.

The bill also ensures that Congress will have the information it needs to guide and monitor NASA. It requires a multiyear plan for aeronautics and science so that all NASA programs have a clear and well-articulated path, and it requires plans for facilities and workforce so we can see what assets NASA will need to achieve its goals.

The bill prevents any layoffs from occurring before March 16, 2007. The bill requires updated information on the cost of the crew exploration vehicle before NASA awards a development contract, and it requires that NASA provide a range of cost estimates for the CEV, along with the potential impact of each of those estimates on other programs.

The bill applies a version of the Nunn-McCurdy rules to NASA. These rules will not only require NASA to notify Congress early on of any significant cost overruns but will require congressional action if a program breaches a specific gap. This may turn out to be one of the most important provisions of the bill.

The bill also gives NASA the authority it has been seeking to offer larger prizes to encourage a broad range of private sector scientists and engineers to help NASA meet specific technological goals, and the bill establishes a new account structure that will make it easier for Congress to track NASA spending and to ensure that money is spent for the programs intended.

Finally, the authorization levels in the bill make clear that NASA cannot possibly accomplish everything that is now on its plate with the funding it is currently projected to receive. I should add that, for me, the authorization levels do not mean that NASA necessarily