

STUDENT LOAN REFINANCING AND RECALCULATION ACT OF 2021

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

Mr. GARAMENDI. Madam Speaker, today I reintroduce the bipartisan “Student Loan Refinancing and Recalculation Act” to address the ballooning student loan debt crisis crippling millions of Americans and their families. I thank my bipartisan co-lead Congressman FITZPATRICK (R-PA) and the other original cosponsors for their support.

This legislation would allow students to refinance their federal student loan interest rates, lower future student loan interest rates, eliminate origination fees on student loans, delay student loan interest rate accrual for low-income and middle-class borrowers while they are pursuing their education, and allow for borrowers in medical, veterinary or dental residencies to defer payments until the completion of their professional accreditation program.

With over 45 million Americans burdened by student loan debt, the education debt crisis has reached an epidemic level. The total student loan debt in America has reached nearly \$1.7 trillion according to the Federal Reserve.

The need to service these debt loads often prevents graduates from making important purchases like houses or cars, and it also can make people more hesitant to take risks like starting a new business. Cumulatively, this mountain of debt slows down our economy and makes it less entrepreneurial, productive, and vibrant.

Most student loan debt is owed to the federal government, at interest rates of up to 5.30 percent or more for earlier loans. That percentage far exceeds the market rate for most government loans or U.S. Treasury bonds. Americans with student loans should be able to reasonably refinance their debt just as they would for a mortgage or any other consumer loan.

The “Student Loan Refinancing and Recalculation Act,” which I have sponsored since the 114th Congress, would relieve some of the debt burden faced by American students and their families, while also ensuring that the federal government is not making a profit on the backs of students.

Madam Speaker, I urge all members of the House to join us in cosponsoring the “Student Loan Refinancing and Recalculation Act” and to work to address this crisis facing so many Americans.

THE ONGOING IMPORTANCE OF THE WORK OF THE U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss the work of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission and its continued importance in addressing chal-

lenges in our country and abroad. For over four decades, the Helsinki Commission has championed human rights, democracy, and comprehensive security across the 57 North American, European, and Central Asian countries that make up the region of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). As Chair of the Helsinki Commission during the 116th Congress, I worked with my House and Senate colleagues to continue the Commission’s longstanding efforts to monitor participating States compliance with the Helsinki Accords.

The importance of election observation in our country and abroad, restorative justice, the safety of journalists, and the global impact of George Floyd’s tragic death on racial justice efforts were just some of the issues the Commission addressed last Congress, in addition to our continued focus on Russia, Ukraine, the Balkans and continued democratic development in the region.

As we continue our work of the 117th Congress, I invite you to review the report: “Retrospective On The 116th Congress” at <https://www.csce.gov/international-impact/retrospective-116th-congress> and <http://www.csce.gov/sites/helsinkicommission.house.gov/files/116th%20Congress%20Report%20Final.pdf>.

This report summarizes the Commission’s activities, as well as recommendations critical for the continued promotion of democracy and U.S. national security.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to continuing this critically important work during the 117th Congress.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF BILL SPEER

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Bill Speer, who retired as the publisher and editor of The Alpena News after 42 years in journalism. Through his tireless work ethic and devotion to his community, Bill has become an indispensable part of Northern Michigan.

After graduating from West Virginia University in 1978, Bill began his career in journalism working at The Wheeling Intelligencer, where he was initially responsible for covering local governments and the area’s steel and coal industries. His skills as a writer and reporter were recognized quickly, as he was named Ohio Bureau Editor of The Intelligencer just three years later. In 1988, he and his wife Diane moved to Alpena, Michigan, where he would serve as the editor of The Alpena News. As the paper’s head, Bill oversaw its transition to new ownership, the move from an evening to a morning publication, an expanded Weekend Edition, and the rise of the internet in modern journalism. Bill’s dedication and effective leadership has allowed The Alpena News to thrive today. His commitment to the Alpena community and the state of Michigan touched the lives of countless Michiganders, and the impact of his work cannot be overstated.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of my constituents, I ask you to join me in recognizing the career of Bill Speer. Michiganders can take

great pride in knowing the First District is home to such a dedicated leader. On behalf of my constituents, I wish Bill all the best in his future endeavors.

IN RECOGNITION OF LIBERTY DAY 2021

HON. LAUREN BOEBERT

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

Mrs. BOEBERT. Madam Speaker, I rise in honor of Liberty Day, which falls on the 270th Birthday of the Father of the Constitution, James Madison. Our Founders understood the importance of citizen-led government and the power of “We the People.” The spirit of liberty is forever enshrined in the documents that gave birth to our Nation. I am honored to recognize the rights and liberties of the American people protected by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights this Liberty Day.

For the past 21 years, our Nation has celebrated Liberty Day to honor the American liberty recognized by our founding documents. In 2000, Congress passed a resolution designating March 16th, Madison’s birthday, as Liberty Day. James Madison’s ideas in the Federalist Papers, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights were vital in the founding of our Nation. He served as the Fourth President of the United States and committed his life to affirm Americans’ rights to Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

President Madison’s legacy and his vision for our Nation persists through the lives of Americans throughout this great country. I took an oath to my constituents to uphold these values by supporting and defending the Constitution. Today is a great reminder to remember the Constitution as elected officials throughout this great Nation fulfill our duty.

In honor of Liberty Day, I encourage all Americans to learn and celebrate our Nation’s history. Our Founders’ vision lives on through the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and Bill of Rights. These documents continue to empower Americans to reap the benefits of our flourishing society rooted in freedom and liberty. I urge all Americans to take the time today to read and study these documents that empower the continuation of American ideas and values. Madam Speaker, I ask that you rise with me to celebrate Liberty Day.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF STELLA PRUSAK

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

Mrs. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Stella Prusak on the occasion of her 100th birthday. Her significant contributions to our community is worthy of commendation.

Mrs. Prusak was born in Coldwater, Poland on May 5, 1921 and came to the United States at only six months old. She was raised in Detroit, Michigan and attended St. Hedwig and Condon Schools until 10th grade. At the