

But now what we see is we still don't have the basic infrastructure in our communities to deal with natural disasters, to deal with possible terrorist attacks, to deal with regional-wide problems, whether they be fires, earthquakes, terrorist attacks, or any of that. In fact, what we need is we need volunteers and people with volunteer experience, people with organizing volunteers to start to come together to think about how a community would respond, whether it's a chemical spill, whether it's a chemical plant explosion, whether it's an earthquake or a fire, to respond to help those people, to help those first responders. We've never organized that. But we would like to start thinking about organizing that, and I'm sure when we do, we will be calling upon the professionals that were in VISTA, that were in AmeriCorps, that were in the Senior Corps, that have connections through their business connections, through their community involvement.

So, this program pays many dividends way beyond the idea that this is just about volunteering on a Saturday morning or a Sunday morning with your church. We all do that. But there has to be more. And there has to be avenues for people who aren't encouraged to volunteer, that we can provide that encouragement and we can encourage people to participate with populations that need that kind of assistance. That's the importance of this legislation.

It's unfortunate it has taken so long for us to reauthorize this bill. But what we know is Americans all across this country in every region of this country want to see a greater sense of people giving back to their communities, people volunteering in their communities, organizing people to volunteer, to provide services to their communities. That's what this legislation responds to.

It's been incredibly successful, when you meet the graduates of these programs, when you meet the alumni of these programs. They don't stop there. It becomes part of the ethic of their life. And they continue it in their business, in their professions. They continue that kind of activity because they see the value of it, they've participated in it. And I would hope that my colleagues would give this legislation overwhelming bipartisan support.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5563, the "Generations Invigorating Volunteerism and Education Act" or the "GIVE Act." I would like to thank my colleague, Congresswoman MCCARTHY, for introducing this important legislation, as well as the Chairman of the Committee on Education and Labor, Congressman GEORGE MILLER, for his leadership in bringing the bill to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation came to the floor last week as H.R. 2857. It was a good bill then but now it is an even better piece of legislation.

The ten amendments that were incorporated into the current bill before this chamber provide:

(1) greater integration of funding, (2) strengthens the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), and (3) more support for our military families and veterans.

This legislation will make vital strides toward expanding and improving key community service programs, including AmeriCorps, VISTA, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America. The GIVE Act works to ensure that volunteers, and the organizations that support them, will receive the resources that they need to continue their vital work in our communities.

Today's legislation embodies the altruistic spirit that has made our nation great. Great numbers of Americans donate their time and their unique skills and gifts to our cities and communities, without any expectation of compensation or material reward. According to a 2005 study, 29 percent of the American public, or about 65.4 million people, had volunteered in the past year.

This legislation engages our youth and fosters a sense of civic duty. Which is why I was so pleased to see Section 1202 of this legislation, which gives special consideration to Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities. I want to thank Representative MCCARTHY and Representative MILLER for allowing me to add to this great bill. By adding predominately minority community colleges to the list of those to receive special consideration, we help so many more students who have a commitment to service.

Our community colleges are growing as many of our returning veterans, single parents, and senior desire to make a change in their live circumstances and simply cannot afford traditional higher education. A sense of civic engagement is not fostered only among students at Harvard and Berkeley; it is also found among students at community colleges like Houston Community College and North Harris College. I thank the Chairman for recognizing this needed addition and incorporating it into the Manager's Amendment.

The GIVE Act would:

(1) increase the number of AmeriCorps volunteers from 75,000 to 100,000 by 2012; (2) increase stipends for AmeriCorps volunteers from \$4,725 to \$5,225 by 2012; and (3) promote recruitment of disadvantaged youth, baby-boomers, and veterans into national and community service opportunities; (4) create an AmeriCorps Alumni Reserves Network aimed at tapping into the skills and experience of alumni volunteers, with a particular focus on assisting during emergencies or natural disasters; and (5) constructs an Energy Conservation Corps, which will address our nation's energy and transportation infrastructure needs while providing work and service opportunities.

I am disappointed that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have chosen to be obstructionists to legislation that engages our youth, strengthens disaster and emergency preparedness, and invests in our volunteer and service organizations with appropriate funding. This Bipartisan effort needs to be supported.

I am proud to cosponsor legislation that will add service before self to our leaders of tomorrow. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ALTMIRE). The question is on the mo-

tion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5563.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend and to insert extraneous materials in the RECORD on H.R. 5563 and on S. 2733.

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

There was no objection.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

HIGHER EDUCATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2008

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 2733) to temporarily extend the programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 2733

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 "Higher Education Extension Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF PROGRAMS.

Section 2(a) of the Higher Education Extension Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-81; 20 U.S.C. 1001 note) is amended by striking "March 31, 2008" and inserting "April 30, 2008".

SEC. 3. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act, or in the Higher Education Extension Act of 2005 as amended by this Act, shall be construed to limit or otherwise alter the authorizations of appropriations for, or the durations of, programs contained in the amendments made by the Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-171) or by the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (Public Law 110-84) to the provisions of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the Taxpayer-Teacher Protection Act of 2004.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and