face, not another excuse to spend money and increase the reach of Big Government. Republicans have real solutions, but the people in charge of Congress and the President are ignoring them. It's time for the President and the Democrat-controlled Congress to start over on health care, work to get our economy back on track and accept real solutions.

SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

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

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, last week we got the troubling news that Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez was joining Russia and Nicaragua in recognizing the Abkhazia and South Ossetia territories of Georgia as independent countries. This is very troubling. The international community recognizes the territorial integrity of Georgia, and now we have to wonder, with Chavez's move, what other countries might join him in this effort.

It is absolutely essential that we stand with our ally, Georgia, in doing everything that we can to strengthen democracy, the rule of law, and the institutions that exist there.

Senator KERRY and I have joined in introducing a resolution calling for the establishment of a U.S.-Georgia free trade agreement. The actions of Chavez make that even more important today than ever. We need to do all that we can to help strengthen and bolster our economy and their economy as well.

Let's pass this resolution and ensure that the free people of Georgia are able to succeed.

IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

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

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, we are just days away from President Obama's deadline to Iran that it accept his offer of meaningful talks about that country's nuclear program. Although the U.S. and other world powers will meet in Iran on October 1, Iran has said discussions of its nuclear program are finished. Any discussion that does not include Iran's nuclear program significantly dilutes any benefits of such talks.

For 8 months, Iran has had the opportunity to discuss its nuclear program. Now, moments before the deadline, it proposes talks but remains unwilling to engage on the most important issue.

The President needs to rally international support through the U.N. and G–20 summit this month for sanctions against Iran to ensure that they have great impact.

At the same time, Congress should move forward with legislation that has been introduced to put pressure on Iran. Specifically, we should pass H.R. 2194, the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act.

The longer we wait to address Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons, the more difficult it becomes to deal with Iran, and the world becomes a more dangerous place. Hoping that Iran changes course is not a strategy we can live with.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3221, STUDENT AID AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT OF 2009

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 746 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 746

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. 3221) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and Labor. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Education and Labor now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the committee 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 except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. The Chair may entertain a motion that the Committee rise only if offered by the chair of the Committee on Education and Labor or his designee. The Chair may not entertain a motion to strike out the enacting words of the bill (as described in clause 9 of rule XVIII).

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Colorado is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina, Dr. VIRGINIA FOXX. All time yielded for consideration of the rule is for debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. POLIS. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material into the record.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, House Resolution 746 provides for a structured rule for consideration of H.R. 3221, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009.

The rule makes in order 24 amendments, which are listed in the Rules Committee report accompanying the resolution. Each amendment is debatable for 10 minutes, except the manager's amendment and the Kline substitute, which are each debatable for 20 minutes.

The rule also provides one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 746 and the underlying bill, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, which was passed by the House Education and Labor Committee with bipartisan support.

I thank Chairman MILLER, as well as my colleagues on the committee on both sides of the aisle for their leadership in this historic legislation that puts America's students and their families first. Education is the key to progress and prosperity, both for individuals as well as collectively as a Nation.

Every day we hear from our constituents about their inability to afford college or their excessive student loan debt that burdens their families. Just yesterday I talked to a young woman who attends a university in my district, the University of Colorado at Boulder, and she is graduating with $50,000 in debt.

□ 1045

This Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act tackles this problem head-on by making the single largest investment in higher education in history without costing taxpayers any more.

Following the unprecedented Federal support for education in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which increased Pell Grants and funding to K–12 schools through special ed and Title I, this landmark legislation will transform the way our student loan programs operate and generate $87 billion in savings over the next 10 years that will be used to help increase Pell Grant scholarships, keep interest rates low on Federal loans, and create a more reliable and effective financial aid system for families at no cost to taxpayers. Converting all new Federal student lending to the reliable, effective, and cost-efficient Direct Loan Program enables these critical investments to make our economy strong and competitive while reducing the deficit and bringing college in reach for countless American families.

I strongly believe in President Obama's goal that the United States become the world leader in the proportion of college graduates by 2020. But like the rest of the country, lower-income students in my home State of Colorado are too often left behind because their families can't afford to pay for college.

Over the next 10 years, this bill invests more than $589 million in Colorado alone to increase the maximum Pell Grant scholarships to $5,550 a year in 2010 and $6,900 in 2019. And starting in 2011, the scholarship's value will be preserved by indexing it to inflation plus 1 percent. Under this bill, students in my district could see a dramatic increase in their Pell Grant awards over the next 10 years.

Applying for financial aid should help, not hinder, college access, yet an estimated 1.5 million college students who likely were eligible to receive Pell Grants didn't even apply for financial aid because they found the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the FAFSA document, too confusing to fill out. This bold legislation makes it easier for families to apply for financial aid through a streamlined FAFSA form that is simpler and shorter by reducing the number of questions and allowing applicants to use the information from their tax returns.

In addition, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act strengthens and expands the Perkins Loan Program that provides low-cost Federal loans to every U.S. college campus and keeps interest rates low on subsidized Federal student loans by making them variable beginning in 2012. These interest rates are currently set to jump from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent in 2012. For the 5.5 million borrowers across the Nation who take out subsidized student loans every year, these changes mean real savings and offer much-needed relief, more money that can go into textbooks, living expenses, and paying additional college tuition above the student loan amount.

We also know that too many students enroll in college but drop out and don't graduate. College access should lead to college success. However, only half of students who enroll end up with a bachelor's degree. This has enormous economic implications for college dropouts and our economy as a whole because workers with bachelor's degrees earn 54 percent more on average than those who attend some college but don't finish.

This legislation invests $3 billion to bolster college access and completion through innovative programs that focus on financial literacy and help retain graduate and undergraduate students, as well as a $2.5 billion investment in Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds stay in school and complete their studies. Colorado, as an example, will receive at least $10.5 million over the next 5 years from the increased funding for the College Access Challenge Grant Program.

In recognition of our troops' heroic service to our country, H.R. 3221 gives servicemembers more freedom to attend the college of their choice under the GI Bill and also helps our troops afford an education by providing loan forgiveness for members of the military who are called up to duty in the middle of an academic year, and we all know how disruptive that can be, and helping them complete school and get their degree is an important element that this bill provides to those who serve our Nation proudly.

As a member of the Community College Caucus, I am thrilled that this legislation recognizes the critical role that these open-door institutions play in our communities both as gateways to higher education as well as providers of a highly skilled workforce to fill the needs of our local economies and prepare kids for the growth sectors of our economy and for jobs in the ever-changing and evolving economic sectors. Community colleges are an essential component of America's workforce development, and that is recognized by this bill.

In my district in Colorado, Front Range Community College and the Colorado Mountain College are effectively addressing the needs of both students and employers and represent an essential component for our economic development as well as a source of community pride. By encouraging historic partnerships and innovative reforms and expanding access to free and high-quality online courses, this legislation helps prepare Colorado's 117,000 community college students with the real-world experiences and skills they need to be ready for 21st century jobs or to transfer to 4-year colleges or universities to complete their bachelor's degree. Enrollment in our community colleges is up 20 percent this fall compared to last year, so this funding will help our existing system and infrastructure meet that demand.

Colorado ranks third nationally in expected growth in jobs that will require post-secondary training, and we need to dramatically increase the number of degrees, certificates, and credentials awarded. These new investments will help community colleges establish articulation agreements, expand academic training programs for high-wage occupations in high-demand industries like health care, and improve student support services.

We will also build and enhance links through dual enrollment through our K–12 system to increase collegiate access as well as giving kids who might be first-generation college goers support as they attend college through the K–12 system and take their first college courses and show that, yes, they can achieve at the college level.

Through our bolstering community colleges, we can also strengthen their labor market responsiveness and competitiveness. And to ensure that community college students learn and thrive in modern updated state-of-the-art facilities, Colorado would receive $28.7 million under capital facilities, which will leverage additional funds to help repair and construct projects for community college facilities that are primarily used for instruction, research, or student housing.

But the impact of savings realized from cutting the middleman between students and lenders goes beyond higher education. They will also help ensure that the next generation of children enters kindergarten with the skills needed to succeed in school by increasing access to birth-to-five early learning programs for children from low-income families. The Early Learning Challenge Fund would award $1 billion each year in competitive grants to States that raise the bar of early education standards, show a State commitment to meeting the needs of birth-to-five students and practices through comprehensive reform, build an effective early childhood workforce, improve the school readiness outcomes of young children, and promote parental and family involvement. Investing in high-quality early education is not only the right thing to do, but it is the smart thing to do since it yields a high return, saving taxpayers up to $14 for every dollar we spend.

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to meet with a group of early childhood advocates from across the country, economists, business leaders, bankers, philanthropists, child development experts, who agree that smart investment in early education is critical if we want to close the achievement gap, prevent the achievement gap from arising before kids even enter kindergarten rather than trying to play catchup after the fact through improving our public schools alone. We can close the achievement gap and ensure that children from all economic and social and ethnic backgrounds are prepared to thrive in school as well as in life.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank my colleague from Colorado for yielding me time to discuss this bill.

During the month of August, people all over this country spoke out against the government takeover of our health care system. They are fed up with increased spending, increased long-term deficits and debt, and want to reduce the role of government in our lives. This bill does just the opposite of that.

I complimented my colleague from California Mr. MILLER, yesterday, in a kind of a backhanded way, by saying that he has come up with very, very good titles for the bills that he has been handling in this session. The titles do just exactly the opposite of what the bills do. This bill is called Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009, and to a person who hasn't spent time reading it or thinking about it, that sounds like a good thing to do. However, this bill and, of course, the rule, which we are debating today, aren't fiscally responsible and this is not the way we should be going.

As I listened to my colleague speak today, I was impressed by the paternalistic attitude that is represented by this bill and by the comments being made by our colleagues: It's going to give more freedom to people. It's going to ensure that community colleges do such and such. It's going to close the achievement gap.

Would that the government had that kind of power. Would that money alone do that kind of thing. That's not what this bill is going to do, and this rule needs to be voted down.

This bill was passed out of the House Committee on Education and Labor by a vote of 30–17. It eliminates the Federal Family Education Loan Program and shifts all student loans to a government-run system under the Direct Loan Program. In addition, the bill creates nine new programs and increases the Federal Government takeover of early education, higher education, school construction, and more. It is an insidious intrusion into education at all levels by the Federal Government, and it doesn't deserve to be passed by this House.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), the chairman of the Committee on Education and Labor.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank the Rules Committee for reporting this legislation to the floor with the amendments that have been made in order. And I want to thank the gentleman from Colorado for his strong support for this legislation not only in the Rules Committee but in our committee, the Education and Labor Committee, where he led a number of efforts to improve this legislation.

This rule will allow for the proper input and amendments from Members from both sides of the aisle on legislation that will be transformative for our students, families, and taxpayers.

The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act will allow us to invest $87 billion to make college more affordable, to build a world-class community college system, and to improve the opportunities to help our youngest students succeed. This represents the single largest investment in Federal college aid in history. We will be able to do this at absolutely no cost to the taxpayers by undertaking long overdue student loan reforms.

The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act is a win-win. It's a win for students. They'll have dependable access to Federal college aid, and it will make these programs more effective and efficient for families and for taxpayers. It will help rebuild our economy that is cutting edge, innovative, and it will help again regain our global leadership in both competitiveness and in college graduation rates.

I would like to especially make clear that this bill is, in fact, fiscally responsible. Not only will we be able to take and substitute the subsidies that we now pay out for institutions to lend the government's money to the students for the government to buy back, we will take those subsidies and we will invest that money on behalf of students and their families and institutions to improve the education that they will receive, to improve the access, to try to improve the retention rates so that students that, in fact, take out and borrow money end up with a degree and not as a dropout with a lot of debt, and we will also return about $10 billion to the Treasury to help reduce deficit spending.

Every aspect of this bill speaks to the future, to the future of our economy, to the future strength of our families, to the future needs of students who seek to acquire and are fully qualified to benefit from a college education.

Again I thank the Rules Committee, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation when we debate it on the floor later today and tomorrow.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I now yield such time as he may consume to our distinguished colleague from California (Mr. DREIER), the ranking member of the Rules Committee.

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. I thank my friend for yielding.

Madam Speaker, let me say that we are here talking about the issue of education and how we're going to pay for it. And I think that there is clearly a bipartisan agreement that improving the quality of education in the United States of America is essential, not only for people to be successful right here in the United States, but as I regularly point out, if we are in this global economy going to see the kind of success that we all want, it is essential that we have the best educated, most talented young people who are ready to enter the job market.

□ 1100

That is why making sure that they can pursue higher education is a very high priority. There is no disagreement on that whatsoever. The reason we are here right now, Madam Speaker, is to address the issue as to how we pay for it.

Now, I was just in a discussion with the very distinguished new ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and Labor, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE), and we were talking about the size of the Federal deficit. It is $1.6 trillion. I reminded him that is larger than the entire Federal budget was just 10 years ago. We have a number of new plans before us that dramatically expand that. Health care is just one of them. We have the $787 billion stimulus package. We have many, many plans that expand rather than reduce the reach of government. Unfortunately, we have before us one more of those.

Now we have sort of what I have seen as the battle within the Congressional Budget Office. We have a lot of different figures that have been thrown forward to us which create some conflict. I think one of the most interesting was a letter that I just saw sent from Doug Elmendorf, the Director of the Congressional Budget Office, to the distinguished ranking member of the Senate Budget Committee, our colleague, Mr. GREGG. In it he refers to the fact that as we go down the line, we are going to obviously see what is a tremendous increase in expenditures.

I listened to my friend, the chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, talk about the fact that we will have $10 billion in savings. Based on what I have seen from this Congressional Budget Office number, we not only will not have savings; we will have a dramatic increase in spending.

Now we know that pursuing private markets is the right way for us to go, but we have had disruptions in the private markets over the past couple of years. Unfortunately, the measure before us prevents us from being able to rely on private credit markets in the future. One of the reasons that is so important is because private capital is what I believe we should be relying on as much as possible.

I am not saying there should be no role for government, but this measure before us usurps even a modicum of private sector involvement. Where do we as taxpayers look? As my friend and I were just discussing, the distinguished ranking member, Mr. KLINE, we will be looking to China as we continue to go further and further into debt. That is unfortunately exactly what this legislation will do. We will be paying a rate of return on that money that the taxpayer is borrowing. And, again, we will be ignoring the private markets as they reemerge.

And so, Madam Speaker, I have to say that this is just one more indication, as all of the attention is focused on health care, of another $50 billion to $150 billion expansion of the burden that is imposed on our taxpayers, and I don't believe that it will do nearly as well as the private sector would in trying to look to the sources of credit so that we can ensure that the pluralism that we have in education, clearly the best higher education system on the face of the Earth, succeeds.

And so I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this rule and to make sure that we do have the kinds of improvements that I believe the gentleman from Minnesota wants us very much to implement.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, in a brief response to the gentleman from California, I had the opportunity to talk to a student, Hailee Koehler, who goes to the University of Colorado, yesterday. She is graduating $50,000 in debt; $30,000 of that is privately borrowed capital and $20,000 is her student loans. The interest rate that she pays on the money that she accessed outside of the federally backed student loans is 15 to 18 percent. That is the interest rate on $30,000 of her debt. And this is just the cost of a college education. This is $50,000 tuition, books, room/board. That is actually very reasonable compared to what it costs at some colleges. She is paying 10 percent less on her federally backed student loans. What a difference in her life it would make if she had access to more at the lower rate.

When we are talking about the government going out and borrowing money, government is borrowing money, 3 percent, 4 percent a year. That is what the government is paying. If we can turn that around and loan that out at 5, 6, or 7 percent, it sounds like a pretty good business for the government to be in.

Mr. DREIER. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. POLIS. I know the gentleman has experience in business. Doesn't that sound like a pretty good business proposition?

Mr. DREIER. I thank my friend for yielding and I appreciate his question. Let me say that obviously the lowest rate is what we all want to pursue. I believe if we create an opportunity to move into the private markets, creating more competition will play a role in bringing those rates down; and that is what we should be doing.

The debt burden that is going to continue to be imposed on the U.S. taxpayer is something we also need to address as well.

Mr. POLIS. Reclaiming my time, I would simply submit it is better for students and the system, to the extent debt has to be on the books, for debt to be at 3 percent, 5 percent, 6 percent at a year rather than 15 to 18 percent a year which is onerous for anyone who has that kind of debt load.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

The troubling legacy of the eight years of Bush-Cheney mismanagement includes many types of deficits. We all know of the soaring budget deficit, but every bit as real is the ''opportunity deficit.''

Despite our success earlier this year in creating a new higher education tax credit and expanding Pell Grants, too many young Americans find themselves unable to go to college because of financial barriers. As the gentleman from Colorado just mentioned, too many others leave college with such a mountain of debt they are unable to pursue some of the professional objectives that they would like to do.

When our youth cannot develop their full God-given potential because of financial barriers, our entire country suffers an opportunity deficit. With families struggling in this difficult economy, we bridge the opportunity gap and ensure that more students can obtain a college degree.

This bill really corrects two deficits left over from the Bush Administration by eliminating the waste and inefficiency in the operation of the federal student financial assistance program. It is truly an investment in America's future. By eliminating the unnecessary middleman role of private financial institutions, eliminating the red tape and lending directly to the students, the Federal Government will have more money for them and more resources left over to apply to reducing our national debt.

With the approval of this bill, just in my Central Texas congressional district alone, over the next decade, college students attending the University of Texas, Huston-Tillotson University, Texas State University, St. Edwards, and ACC, will receive more aid, about $46 million more aid, with this measure. Fifteen thousand more students will apply through the simplified financial aid application form, as we cut through the red tape. And we will have $15 million more dollars to help young people prepare to go to college to get the education that they need. Who could oppose such a winning combination of helping our students and reducing the national debt?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. POLIS. I yield the gentleman from Texas an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. DOGGETT. Who could oppose this winning combination? Well, the banks who pocketed the wasteful expenditure of taxpayer money, of course, and a few ideologues in the Republican Party who oppose all federal involvement unless it helps their buddies.

The alternative that the Republicans are offering today is little more than another corporate bailout that will provide billions more to lenders instead of reducing our debt and helping our students.

Let's invest in our students and reject another corporate giveaway.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I know that sometimes we are all given to a little hyperbole here on the floor, but the comment from my distinguished colleague from California that this would be absolutely no cost to taxpayers, if there is anybody listening to this who believes that, I am going to find some swamp land in New Mexico to sell them.

We know that the estimates are that 40,000 jobs are going to be lost in the private sector as a result of this bill. So tell me, who is going to be administering this program? Right now the Direct Loan Program covers 20 percent of the loans that are given out. So is the Department of Education going to absorb this workload? I doubt that. Are they not going to ask for more help to be able to administer the other 80 percent?

In terms of debts, we keep hearing about people who are graduating from college with so much debt. Where is the issue of personal responsibility that we keep hearing so much about from the President. Debt is a personal responsibility. There is no reason for anybody in this country to graduate from college with $50,000 worth of debt.

And it is pretty good business for the government to be in because we can borrow money cheaper than the private sector can: that sounds like the argument that established Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. And we do know where that has led us.

Last but not least, I guess it is going to be hundreds of years before our colleagues stop blaming every ill in this country on the Bush-Cheney administration.

I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE), the ranking member of the Education Committee.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding, and I rise in opposition to this rule and the underlying bill.

Once again Members on the other side of the aisle are frantically rushing to expand the reach and cost of the Federal Government. Well, if government expansion is what you are looking for, this is the bill for you.

H.R. 3221 eliminates the private sector-based Federal Family Education Loan program and shifts every student and every school in America into the Direct Loan Program beginning July 1, 2010, less than 10 months away.

It creates or expands numerous entitlement programs, spending tens of billions of dollars on everything from prekindergarten programs to school renovation to online course management.

Republicans offered more than a dozen amendments to this deeply flawed legislation, amendments that were designed to forestall the damage it is sure to cause, or at the very least, alleviate some of the most egregious spending and policy shifts. Six of those amendments were made in order, less than half. By comparison, Democrats offered a total of 32 amendments: 18 were made in order and another five were incorporated into the manager's amendment. That means in total 72 percent of the amendments offered by Democrats will receive a vote today.

A bad process often accompanies a bad bill, and H.R. 3221 is no exception. The Education and Labor Committee has a track record of working across party lines when it comes to education.

In recent years, our panel has approved a comprehensive renewal of Federal higher-education programs that incorporated ideas from both Democrats and Republicans. We also acted last year to avert a shutdown of the student loan programs by enacting, with bipartisan support, the Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act.

Apparently, Democrats have now decided to abandon that effort and pursue a partisan goal they have harbored for more than a decade. Bipartisanship has been cast aside, as this rule reflects.

If Democrats wanted to pursue a thoughtful, careful, bipartisan approach to stabilizing the student loan programs and reducing our deficit, they would support the Republican alternative which we plan to offer later in the debate. That's one amendment that was made in order under this rule, and I am certainly glad it was. Our amendment offers a commonsense solution that allows us to slow down and carefully consider what is best for students, schools, and taxpayers.

Shifting to 100 percent direct lending will radically alter the way students pay for college. It will cause upheaval at colleges and universities from coast to coast as schools scramble to make the personnel and infrastructure changes necessary to administer a program that is run by the Federal Government.

This is a serious issue that deserves a serious debate. And what are we doing about it? We are giving it a few hours this afternoon and tomorrow morning before casting our votes and turning our attention to the next thing.

□ 1115

Students deserve better. Families deserve better. The tens of thousands of Americans who stand to lose their jobs deserve better. And taxpayers—who ultimately foot the bill for this measure, this massive expansion of government—deserve better.

We have had discussion already this morning about the costs of this bill. And they are certainly confusing and debatable. Proponents say and have said it will save billions and reduce the deficit. Others say it will add tens of billions of dollars to the deficit, as Mr. DREIER was addressing earlier.

In fact, I was looking at a story from McClatchy Newspapers coming out of Kansas City, discussing an independent analysis of this program, and it says, ''Changes in the loan program will 'save a big chunk of money,' said Marc Goldwein, the policy director for the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a watchdog group. Will it be the right amount to offset the new spending? The obvious answer is we don't know.''

He warned that the new system's fiscal outlook would be ''particularly uncertain because it would depend on economy-related factors such as default rates, need-based aid, and other factors.''

In fact, that's why the Congressional Budget Office, in looking at this bill, has amended, although not officially by the rules of this House, its estimate. The letter that Mr. DREIER talked about, addressed to Senator GREGG, they said if we had used market risk-based analysis like we did in the TARP program, this bill wouldn't ''save $87 billion, but some $33 billion less.'' And if we counted the discretionary spending—over $13 billion—it would cost more. And if we looked at the real cost of Pell Grants, it would cost another $11.5 billion more.

So I think those that say that this is going to impact the deficit, increase the deficit, have the arguments in their favor. I understand it's debatable. But what is certainly clear, what is not confusing, is that this bill is an expansion of the government, with new programs and new spending. It is a government takeover in an industry. And it will result in a loss of jobs.

I wanted to address just a couple of comments that have already been made today in this debate. I felt the pain when my colleague from Colorado talked about the student that was paying some 15.5 percent interest. That's not a FFEL program. That interest rate is capped. We want to make sure that such a program exists and people aren't paying those kind of interest rates.

Then, I'm always struck when one of my colleagues says, Well, we're trying to eliminate waste and inefficiency by going to a government program. My colleagues, that just defies history, to find a government program that reduces waste and inefficiency. The stories are rampant. We know in every department huge amounts of waste and inefficiency, whether it's a $500 or $600 hammer in Defense acquisition or money wasted on trailers sitting in fields after hurricane recovery efforts. The Federal Government does not reduce waste and inefficiency. That defies history.

I urge a ''no'' vote on the rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. POLIS. I'd like to yield 2 minutes to my colleague on the Education and Labor Committee, the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of New York. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I want to make three quick points, but first I want to say that I rise in support of this rule and, more importantly, in support of the underlying legislation.

Three quick points. The ranking member of the Rules Committee spoke with great reverence for private markets and talked about how we are eliminating any private role in the student loan program. The truth is that, were it not for the intervention of the Federal Government this year, there would be virtually no private student loan market.

We passed last year a piece of legislation called the Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans, and we did so so that students could continue to borrow because of a lack of liquidity in the student loan market. Had we not acted, the private student loan market would have been severely diminished, if not nonexistent. In fact, 60 percent of the $85 billion that students were borrowing this year, they are borrowing as a result of the intervention of the Federal Government.

So we can't rely on the private loan market. And one of the reasons we are taking this action is because students need to have a source of funding that they can rely upon.

So it's very important that we pass this legislation to address the issue of the lack of liquidity in the student loan market and to give students a source of financing that they can rely upon.

The second point. We talk constantly in this Chamber about waste, fraud, and abuse. And the simple fact is that we are supporting a private loan program, the FFEL program, that wastes $8 billion to $9 billion a year in taxpayer dollars, and we are making the judgment that those taxpayer dollars would be much better spent if we took that $8 billion or $9 billion and used it to help students attend college, to improve community colleges, to expand other student aid programs, to help students graduate, something that's very, very important.

So we are attacking the waste, fraud, and abuse that exists.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. POLIS. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. We are attacking the waste, fraud, and abuse that exists, and doing so in a way that helps students.

Lastly, my friend from Minnesota, the ranking member of the Education Committee, just said that we are pursuing a partisan goal. I would take issue with that and say that what we're pursuing is a very practical goal.

The practical goal we're pursuing is to help young people go to college. We are not going to be able to compete as a Nation in an increasingly competitive global marketplace unless we have an educated workforce. Higher education is the key to that educated workforce.

So, from a very practical perspective, not partisan perspective, we need to pass this legislation.

Ms. FOXX. I would like to share with the Members some concerns that have been shared with me by the University of North Carolina system, and I will quote: ''UNC is concerned about the committee's attempt to divert Federal funding away from higher education to K–12 construction and early childhood education.

''While K–12 construction and early childhood education may be worthwhile Federal priorities, they should not be funded at the expense of higher education.''

Another point that they have made is that they're very concerned about a provision in the Miller reconciliation bill that would eliminate the in-school interest exemption for graduate and professional student borrowers.

While we are talking about how we want people to continue their education and how important an education is to our country, putting graduate students in the position of having to pay interest while they're in school is not a very smart thing for us to be doing.

I want to talk a little bit about other changes that are coming to the Federal Financial Aid Program through this bill. It's going to eliminate restrictions that prevent individuals convicted of drug possession from receiving taxpayer-funded financial aid. It's going to change the need analysis formula, which is going to fail to do enough to fundamentally simplify our system of financial aid programs, and there is a move to variable interest rates for subsidized Stafford loans, which keeps the system unnecessarily complex for borrowers in an effort to cover a broken political promise to cut interest rates in half, which was made last year and which we debunked, I thought, pretty well then.

With that, Madam Speaker, I will reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. I would like to inform the gentlelady from North Carolina I was just given this information by staff that some of the remarks that she made were with regards to a previous version of the bill. The version that is being put forth in this rule does allow graduate students to be eligible for in-school interest subsidies for subsidization through the Stafford loan.

So the changes she's referring to were in fact discussed and there was initially some discussion that it could come down a different way. But this bill being put forward does allow graduate students to participate in that.

I would like to yield 2 minutes to a former member of the Rules Committee, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR).

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. I thank the gentleman from Colorado and the Rules Committee for yielding time. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3221, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, and this rule, and I rise in support of every student who hopes to attend college but is grappling with rising costs.

For millions of students across America, we are going to make the cost of attending college more affordable. In Florida, my home State, hundreds of thousands of students and families will find the cost of attending college more affordable through significant increases in the Pell Grant and expanded student loans.

I cosponsored this landmark investment in our students and higher education because over the next 10 years we will invest over $2.2 billion in Florida students, including over $100 million for students in the Tampa Bay area, through increases in the Pell Grant. That means direct aid to half a million Florida students, including over 24,000 students in my district alone, at no new cost to taxpayers.

We all understand that in this economy families are being squeezed by the rising cost of tuition and living expenses. And with the price of college steadily increasing, too many students are forced to make tough choices when trying to figure out how to pay for college. But due to our efforts and support from President Obama, a college education in America will be more affordable.

A college education has always been critical. People with college degrees earn more. And a college degree today is even more valuable as the fabric of our workforce changes and we prepare students for 21st century jobs.

Thank you to Chairman GEORGE MILLER and the great Education and Labor Committee for standing up once again for students, families, and American colleges and universities. Madam Speaker, this bill provide our students with the tools they need to be successful, and I urge support.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I want to say that I appreciate the fact that we did have several amendments made in order by the Rules Committee, and we're very grateful for that because it gives us an opportunity to debate those amendments on the floor. And we have certainly talked a lot about that in the past, especially with the appropriations process.

But I want to say that we were very disappointed that, given the financial situation in our country and the concern that people have that's being expressed every day by our constituents over the fact that we continue to have massive job losses in this country, despite the fact that the President promised with the passage of the stimulus bill that we would not go above an 8 percent unemployment rate, that ever since the President came into office, job losses have skyrocketed, and the fact that our deficit is the largest that it's ever been in the history of this country. There were two amendments that we think we should have had made in order so that we could discuss the financial situation and the impact that this bill, the underlying bill is going to have.

One of those amendments, by Congressman TOM PRICE of Georgia, provided that the act would fail to take effect if the Secretary of Education, in consultation with the Secretaries of Labor and the Treasury—all of those positions, of course, controlled by the President—would determine that the provisions of section 201, which would end the FFEL program, will result in more than 5,000 job losses. We are very concerned that this bill is going to increase job losses.

Furthermore, the amendment by the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM) would have prohibited using Federal funds to carry out titles 3 through 5 of H.R. 3221 until the national deficit is under $1 trillion.

We believe that in a time, again, when our economy is suffering tremendously from actions—wrong actions taken and appropriate actions not taken—that we should not be adding to the problems of our citizens by increasing unemployment and increasing the deficit.

□ 1130

So I want to express our concern that those amendments were not made in order, but express my appreciation for those that were made in order, including one from me.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time, Madam Speaker.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. I appreciate the gentleman yielding time, and I rise in support of this rule. I think it's clear from the debate and the discussion that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would rather put their support with banks, maintain banks as the middlemen in this effort—banks are making money hand over fist and enormous profits—and cast their lot with banks versus casting their lot with students and their families.

Education is the cornerstone of our republic. It is only by offering and delivering quality education for all of our citizens—from the earliest years to the college years—that we can live up to our most noble democratic principles and ensure freedom and equality, that we make opportunity real for each and every American, and that we can continue to lead the world to economic security and lasting prosperity. As President Obama said last week, and I quote, Countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow.

But today as our economy struggles to emerge from a debilitating recession, fewer and fewer students are able to afford a college education. Although the Recovery Act we passed in the winter has helped to fill the gap, States are facing massive budget shortfalls and are thus forced to decrease the resources available to education. Meanwhile, many schools are raising tuition, cutting financial aid and closing classrooms.

That's why this bill is the right bill at the right time. By restructuring our Federal financing of student loans to enhance the Direct Loan Program, we can realize significant savings throughout the system. This money will be applied to other areas of critical education funding, including increasing Pell Grants and Perkins loans. With these and other reforms in the bill, such as keeping investment rates low and simplifying student aid forms, this legislation keeps the door of opportunity afforded by a college education open to all, without costing American taxpayers an extra dime.

Equally important to the savings realized by this bill is the creation of the State Challenge Grants which will allow States to invest in their early childhood development infrastructure. These competitive grants will mark a historic collaboration between the Department of Education and Health and Human Services, where the expertise on these programs has traditionally resided.

Each day, over 11 million children under the age of 5 spend time outside the care of their parents and in a wide variety of environments. We need to ensure that they are spending this critical social and cognitive development time in a quality setting. As with any endeavor, early investments in education yield tremendous dividends down the road for both the student and for society. Cognitive science and countless studies tell us the same thing: early childhood education helps students achieve more throughout their lives. There is arguably no better way to spend our education dollars than to fund these important programs.

In closing, I am proud of the bill that Chairman MILLER has brought to this committee, and I urge my colleagues to support this rule.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I think I may be the only Member of Congress who has been a community college president. So I've had a good bit of experience. I was a professor and an assistant dean at a university. I served on a school board for 12 years. So I have extensive experience in the field of education.

I am a product of public education. I grew up extraordinarily poor. I doubt there is anybody in the Congress who grew up as poor as I did. And I know that much of the success that I have had has been the result of the opportunities I had in education. I give credit to the people who taught me and who guided me throughout my educational career. It took me 7 years to get my undergraduate degree, but I graduated without a dime of debt because I worked and went to school. I know that it is possible to do that, and I know that a person does not have to borrow $50,000 a year to get an education in this country. We are blessed that we have extraordinarily high-quality, low-cost education programs all across this country. We have excellent community colleges. We have excellent public education, higher education, and we have excellent private education. We have more choice in this country than any other place in the world.

As I said, I have extensive background in this area. As a community college president, I had the opportunity to work with the Workforce Investment Program. As a member of the State legislature, I had an opportunity to understand these programs and work with them at some length. So I am not unfamiliar with this area. What I see when I read this bill, particularly as it talks about giving money to community colleges, is basically setting up a welfare program for States and for community colleges. We already have the kind of accountability, I believe, that we need in community colleges in this country.

Yesterday, again, my distinguished colleague from California said that the bill has, for the first time ever, accountability in it. I have read this bill. There is no accountability in here. There are benchmarks established somewhere out in the future. They're not even discussed in the bill. There is talk about serving underserved groups of people. There is really no accountability in here.

And I'm wondering if our colleagues are going to consider men an underserved group. It's my understanding—and, again, I'm not up to date on the literature—that approximately 65 percent of the people now in higher education are women. So women have certainly found the opportunities there.

I have a great number of concerns about this bill, not just what it's going to do to the student loan programs but to the other areas. It's going to get into elementary education, preschool education. We just don't need the Federal Government injecting itself here. The bill is going to limit choices for parents and students seeking educational loans and I think decrease the quality of service historically provided by private lenders. In 2007–2008, the FFEL program served more than 6.4 million students and parents at 5,000 postsecondary institutions, lending a total of $55.3 billion or 78 percent of all needed Federal student loans. In general, postsecondary institutions have preferred to provide their student loans through the private FFEL program because of its ability to provide students high-quality customer service, education outreach, and loan default prevention.

Again, what this is, in my opinion, is another takeover by the Federal Government of a segment of our society that we don't need taken over.

I would like to quote from an article from The Weekly Standard entitled, Need a Student Loan? Boy, Does Uncle Sam Have a Deal for You:

''For whatever else the monopoly in direct lending accomplishes, it will greatly expand the number of young people who find themselves entangled with, and ultimately beholden to, the vast system of rewards and rebukes that the Federal Government has at hand. More than 65 percent of college students borrow money to go to college. That's a lot of guinea pigs.

''We already have a foreshadowing of possibilities. Congressmen are tinkerers, and they have been tinkering with federally backed loans for years, hoping to push borrowers into doing things that Congressmen find pleasing. The most interesting of their ideas was signed into law by President Bush. This shouldn't be a surprise, since by his second term Bush had proved a pretty ambitious tinkerer himself. The Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007—such big titles you have, grandma!—was designed to let college students know what they should do once they got out of school.

''Student borrowers can have their Federal loans forgiven after 25 years, on the condition that they make a single minimum payment every 360 days. This is already a significant inducement to acquire a Federal rather than a private loan. But the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program goes a step further. You can have your loan forgiven after only 10 years, vastly reducing the total amount of money you pay for your college education—to below $5,000 in some cases—on three conditions. Your loan has to be handled directly by the government, with no contamination from private lenders; you have to meet a schedule of monthly minimum payments; and upon graduation, you have to get the right kind of job.

''The right kind of job turns out to be what's loosely called ''public service.'' In common discourse, public service is already an elastic term, used mostly as a form of self-flattery, but seldom has the euphemism been stretched quite as far as it was in Bush's bill. Work for the government, any government—whether as an actuary, a diplomat, or a teacher; a social worker, a fighter pilot, or a forklift driver—and you qualify for the loan forgiveness. You qualify, too, if you take a job with any 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization: the Wilderness Society, U.S. Public Interest Group, the Rainbow Coalition, the Transgender Law and Policy Institute, even, theoretically, the Heritage Foundation. It doesn't matter if you're an agitator, lawyer, lobbyist, congressional aide, or pavement-pounder hectoring passersby into signing petitions for Greenpeace. The important thing is, you can't be helping anyone turn a profit.''

Madam Speaker, this bill is another government takeover of parts of our lives, and this rule should be voted down along with the bill.

[From the Weekly Standard, Aug. 3, 2009]

NEED A STUDENT LOAN?

(By Andrew Ferguson)

The House Committee on Education and Labor is having a busy summer. (Everybody in Washington is having a busy summer!) Earlier this month, for example, one of its essential subunits—the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education and Healthy Families and Communities, or SECESEHFC—held lengthy hearings to determine new ways the United States Congress might accomplish one of its many important goals: the ''Prevention of Bullying.''

The subcommittee chairman, a congressman named Kildee, from Michigan, pointed out that last year, fully 75 percent of schools in the United States had reported an incident of bullying or worse.

''One incident is one too many,'' Kildee said, thoughtfully if not originally. ''We must do something immediately to address this widespread problem.''

With the ''prevention of bullying'' safely in the solution pipeline, the committee went on to do something immediately to address another widesperead problem. Apparently college students are getting private loans to fund their education. Last week the committee approved a bill that will put an end to all that.

The committee's vote accelerates a process that was begun under President Clinton. In 1994, Congress approved his idea of a Direct Lending Program for students who needed to borrow money to go to college. Before then the government had merely guaranteed student loans, which were originated and serviced by private banks selected by the government. The guarantee ensured that the ''private'' loans made huge profits for the banks, regardless of interest rates or default rates.

Guaranteed loans are a textbook example of crony capitalism or (if you prefer) corporate socialism: The government assumes all the risk while doling out contracts to favored businesses, who then reap the profits. With student loans, the lender gets preening rights in the bargain, marketing itself as a Merchant of Dreams, a benefactor of America's youth, a sweet-tempered Mr. Jaggers to a nation of eager Pips. In truth, the only people who like the system of guaranteed loans are the student loan industry—now handling more then $90 billion a year—and the congressmen whose districts contain large numbers of people who work in the student loan industry.

Direct lending eliminates these unctuous middlemen by encouraging students to borrow money directly from the federal government. The program semi-satisfies libertarians, who dislike cronyism, and thrills liberals, who believe the noble goal of universal college education should be uncorrepted by the yuckiness of money making. Liberal backers of direct lending believe, in effect, that there's room for only one merchant of Dreams around here, and it better be the federal government. Moreover, direct lending saves the government money—no really, it does—by reducing fees and other handling costs, savings which can then be passed on to the poor borrowers, though they never are.

The bill that passed out of committee last week completes the triumph of Clinton's program. The grandly titled Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009 does away with the federal guarantee for student loans and brings them all under the care of Congress and fhe federal Department of Education, saving (say the committee's accountants) nearly $10 billion a year. The committee plans to rechannel more than half those savings to purposes other than financing higher education. But for a college student trying to make tuition, the most dramatic consequence is that federal direct lending will soon be the only kind of lending there is. Washington will be the lender of first and last resort.

Some students—or more likely, their parents—still take out private bank loans with no federal guarantees. This accounts for about 14 percent of the student loan market. But it's unclear how long that corner of the market can last, as the federal government slowly crowds out truly private lenders by offering customers lower interest rates, greater discounts, and easier eligibility rules. Most likely the private lenders will abandon the field altogether, and the last chance to build a genuinely competitive market in college loans will be lost.

Few will weep over that vanished opportunity—until, perhaps, they see what Congress does with the new power that has fallen into its lap. For whatever else the monopoly in direct lending accomplishes, it will greatly expand the number of young people who find themselves entangled with, and ultimately beholden to, the vast system of rewards and rebukes that the federal government has at hand. More than 65 percent of college students borrow money to go to college. That's a lot of guinea pigs.

We already have a foreshadowing of the possibilities. Congressmen are tinkerers, and they have been tinkering with federally backed student loans for years, hoping to push borrowers into doing things that congressmen find pleasing. The most interesting of their ideas was signed into law by President Bush. This shouldn't be a surprise, since by his second term Bush had proved a pretty ambitious tinkerer himself. The Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007—such big titles you have, grandma!—was designed to let college students know what they should do once they got out of school.

Student borrowers can have their federal loans forgiven after 25 years, on the condition that they make a single minimum payment every 360 days. This is already a significant inducement to acquire a federal rather than a private loan. But the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program goes a step further: You can have your loan forgiven after only 10 years, vastly reducing the total amount of money you pay for your college education—to below $5,000 in some cases—on three conditions. Your loan has to be handled directly by the government, with no contamination from private lenders; you have to meet a schedule of monthly minimum payments; and upon graduation you have to get the right kind of job.

The right kind of job turns out to be what's loosely called ''public service.'' In common discourse public service is already an elastic term, used mostly as a form of self-flattery, but seldom has the euphemism been stretched quite so far as it was in Bush's bill. Work for the government, any government—whether as an actuary, a diplomat, or a teacher; a social worker, a fighter pilot, or a forklift driver—and you qualify for the loan forgiveness. You qualify, too, if you take a job with any 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization: the Wilderness Society, U.S. Public Interest Research Group, the Rainbow Coalition, the Transgender Law and Policy Institute, even, theoretically, the Heritage Foundation. It doesn't matter if you're an agitator, lawyer, lobbyist, congressional aide, or a pavement-pounder hectoring passersby into signing petitions for Greenpeace. The important thing is, you can't be helping anyone turn a profit.

The first loans won't be forgiven till 2017, so there's no telling yet how many people are taking advantage of the program or how much it will cost. But it's clearly designed to cast a very wide net. Indeed, its definition of public service is so broad that only a certain kind of graduate would be denied this splendid perk of an almost-free education: the idiot who went to work in the world of buying, selling, inventing, making, and producing.

Though Bush couldn't have known it, his program anticipated the age that dawned this January. It fits the ambitions and tastes of the Obama era, especially as summarized on several occasions by the first lady. She and her husband are perhaps the most famous student-loan borrowers in history. She speaks often of the torment of living under the debt load they had accumulated in college (Princeton, Columbia) and law school (Harvard). In remarks first reported by Byron York in National Review, in February 2008, she was particularly graphic. Thanks to their student loans, the Obamas found themselves ''struggling to figure out how we would save for our kids.''

What placed them in this position, Mrs. Obama said, was their decision to ''move out of the moneymaking industry''—both had worked in corporate law—''into the helping industry.'' Again, the term ''helping'' is loosely defined: After leaving their law firms, he went to work for the Illinois state senate, she to Chicago city government and then a nonprofit hospital. ''We left corporate America, which is a lot of what we're asking young people to do,'' she said.

Recently she expanded on the theme. ''I went from college to law school to a big old fancy law firm,'' she told a group of Americorps workers, ''where I was making more money than both of my parents combined.'' But then came a revelation. ''I had to ask myself whether, if I died tomorrow, would I want this to be my legacy, working in a corporate firm, working for big companies? And when I asked myself the question, the resounding answer was, absolutely not.''

How great their struggles were, and to what extent the struggles were aggravated by college-loan payments, are open questions. From the time they left their moneymaking days behind, according to tax returns, the Obamas never had a combined yearly gross adjusted income of less than $207,000. Usually it was much more. (During those years in the helping industry, the Obamas donated 0.9 percent of their income to charity, presumably because, as the old saying goes, ''we gave at the office.'') By 2005, Mrs. Obama alone was making $315,000 a year as an industrial helper, directing ''community affairs'' at her hospital. Except for the bad timing, she could have had her loan debt scrubbed by President Bush's program.

One justification for the program is that people in the helping industry need the financial help, because of their low pay. But most people would consider the Obamas' income pretty good money. It turns out that public service, even strictly defined, doesn't necessarily require financial sacrifice. Neal McCluskey and Chris Edwards, of the libertarian Cato Institute (one of those public-serving nonprofits), have tried to show that government work, including public school teaching, compares favorably with work in the private sector, whether you count wages, benefits, or both. Using data from 2004, Edwards found that the average federal worker earned an average of 56 percent more than the average employee in the real economy.

So if public servants don't need their loans forgiven any more than do debtors in the private sector, what's the point of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program? Why provide an incentive for graduates to steer clear of the private workforce? Mrs. Obama's remarks capture the spirit behind the program. The implication isn't merely that nonprofit jobs are admirable. It's that they're always and everywhere more admirable than jobs in the world of commerce.

The logic closes like a pincer: The only loans available to students will be from the government; and the only way to get the most favorable terms on the loans will be to do what the lender likes. Of course, you don't have to work for Greenpeace or Amnesty International or AmeriCorps. But if you don't, you'll pay every penny of your student loan, plus interest, while your friends who made the right decision won't have to do that. No one's making anyone do anything. It's not a threat, it's a nudge. It's not an ultimatum, it's a suggestion. And it's certainly not bullying. Bullying is about to be made illegal.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my colleague on the Committee on Education and Labor, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I thank the respected gentleman from Colorado.

I rise in full support of the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, which would make college more affordable and accessible with a landmark investment in college aid. This will not cost taxpayers a dime by improving the way that our student loan programs operate. In fact, we can expect a $10 billion savings for taxpayers. Our experience with the direct loan program has lasted two decades now, and it is a great success. Students like it, colleges like it, taxpayers like it. Let's expand it.

This legislation makes available $40 billion to increase the maximum Pell Grant scholarship from its current $5,500—a long way from the $4,000 where it was mired for a number of years—now to $6,900 by later in the decade. It would, in effect, double the number of students who receive Pell Grants in my home State of New Jersey. Further, by converting all new Federal loans to the stable and cost-efficient Direct Loan Program, the bill would help keep interest rates low on need-based Federal student loans.

I'm especially pleased that the bill provides billions to modernize and make our Nation's elementary and secondary schools more energy efficient, including a number of provisions that I'm pleased to have written. Finally, I strongly support the Early Learning Challenge Fund, the community college reforms, and the simplifications to the FAFSA forms that are also included in this bill. I want to thank Chairman MILLER for working with me to protect the Graduate Stafford Loan Program in this bill.

This is a good bill. Millions of students and parents support the goals of the bill. Let's answer their pleas for help and make colleges more affordable. No one can argue reasonably that now is not the time to improve accessibility and affordability of college. I urge support of this rule and the underlying bill.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, as proposed in President Obama's FY 2010 budget, H.R. 3221 eliminates the FFEL student loan program that has been the overwhelming choice of students and families for more than 40 years, replacing it with a government-run program. While Democrats continue to use government takeovers as a panacea to all economic problems, converting all student loans to government subsidized loans is just another way that Democrats are killing jobs, increasing government intrusion, and eroding the rights of the consumer. I will urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the rule and ''no'' on the underlying bill.

Madam Speaker, having no additional speakers on our side of the aisle, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1145

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, overcrowded and crumbling schools threaten the safety and achievement of America's students and are an embarrassment for our education system.

Our schools are short of being in good condition by an estimated $255 billion. In my home State of Colorado, the backlog of school construction and maintenance needs has been estimated between $5.7 and $10 billion. That is why this legislation assists school districts with funds for school modernization, renovation, and repair projects that will create healthier, safer, and more energy-efficient teaching and learning climates.

Colorado will receive more than $42 million over the next 2 years under this bill. In 2006, I cochaired a successful campaign for a $300 million bond issue for the Boulder Valley School District in my school district to address the needs of our schools. But many low-income districts in Colorado don't have the capacity to finance the necessary school upgrades. That is why I am particularly pleased that this legislation addresses income disparities by allocating funds to States and districts based on their share of students from low-income families.

Most importantly, this legislation is fiscally responsible because it pays for itself. By ending subsidies currently given to banks and private lenders, this bill saves taxpayers $87 billion over 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

In addition to investing in our education system, this legislation also directs $10 million in savings back to the U.S. Treasury to help pay down the deficit and boost the fiscal health of the country our children will inherit. This legislation is yet another major step towards building a 21st century early childhood education system that will prepare the next generation of students for a lifetime of success.

In a global knowledge-based economy, our Nation cannot afford to waste talent and squander human capital. Each and every student who is ready and wants to go to college shouldn't give up because of the cost barriers that are in their way. This landmark legislation's historic investment in college scholarships provides increased educational opportunities to Americans across the board.

I talked to another student from the University of Colorado yesterday, Alexis Smith, who talked about her family's story. She grew up in a family with a small business in the Denver area. Their family earns between $40,000 and $60,000 a year, depending on the business. Like a lot of American families, they fall above a lot of the need-based scholarship programs and below the range that college is easily affordable. Alexis is graduating college with $25,000 in debt, including substantial credit card debt. She would not have been able to go to college without help from Pell Grants as well as Stafford loans, and her father is currently working 10 hours a day, 7 days a week at age 63 to help afford to put her and her brother through college. These are the kinds of sacrifices that Americans are willing to make.

The Federal Government is here as a partner. By passing this bill, we will be able to improve the student loan program and create savings that we can pass back along to the students in the form of increased availability of student loans as well as grants. That is why I strongly support this rule and the underlying legislation.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. FOXX. Madam 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, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3246, ADVANCED VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 2009

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 745 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 745

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. 3246) to provide for a program of research, development, demonstration, and commercial application in vehicle technologies at the Department of Energy. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Science and Technology. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Science and Technology now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the committee 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 except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have