

This bill is supported by the National Governors Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the International City/County Management Associations, as well as the National Association of Clean Water Agencies. All of these national groups understand that stormwater management fees, without any exceptions, are necessary for managing and reducing water pollution caused by stormwater runoff. Moreover, they understand that many agencies in States and localities may stop paying their water and stormwater management fees if we do not act, putting even more financial burden on residents.

Federal law has mandated that these local governments must collect these fees. No exemption has been granted to Federal facilities. Please support S. 3481 to clarify the original intent of the law.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 22, 2010

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I was unable to cast votes on the following legislative measures. If I were present for roll call votes, I would have voted "aye" for each of the following votes:

Roll 657, December 21, 2010: On Agreeing to the Resolution: H. Res. 1771, Waiving a requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules, and providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules.

Roll 658, December 21, 2010: On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass: H.R. 6540, Defense Level Playing Field Act.

Roll 659, December 21, 2010: On Motion to Concur in the Senate Amendment: H.R. 5116, America COMPETES Reauthorization Act.

Roll 660, December 21, 2010: On Motion to Concur in the Senate Amendment: H.R. 2142, GPRA Modernization Act of 2010.

Roll 661, December 21, 2010: On Motion to Concur in the Senate Amendments: H.R. 2751, FDA Food Safety Modernization Act.

Roll 662, December 21, 2010: On Motion to Concur in the Senate amendment to House amendment to Senate amendment: H.R. 3082, Making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

Roll 663, December 21, 2010: On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass: H.R. 6547, Protecting Students from Sexual and Violent Predators Act.

Roll 664, December 21, 2010: On Motion to Concur in the Senate Amendment: H.R. 847, James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DEAN HELLER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 22, 2010

Mr. HELLER. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 662 I was unavoidably detained.

Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS AND SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EXTENSIONS ACT, 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. PEDRO R. PIERLUISI

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 21, 2010

Mr. PIERLUISI. Madam Speaker, I rise to express my strong support for the inclusion of increased funding for the Federal Pell Grant Program in the Continuing Resolution. Pell Grants are instrumental in helping students obtain college degrees and further prepare themselves to join the modern workplace. In Puerto Rico, over 280,000 students benefit from this funding each year.

Last year, I was proud to join my colleagues on the House Education Committee in voting to increase the maximum Pell Grant award to \$5,550 for the current academic year and to tie future awards to inflation. However, this increased funding will be put in jeopardy if Congress does not act today. Largely as a result of the economic downturn, Pell Grant applications have increased by 20 percent during the past year. Without an additional investment in the Pell Grant Program, the maximum award could be cut by more than 15 percent, putting college out of reach for many students.

I urge my colleagues to support the Continuing Resolution to ensure that college remains affordable for our Nation's students.

POST-9/11 VETERANS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2010

SPEECH OF

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 15, 2010

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 3447, the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010.

The original GI Bill proved to be a landmark initiative for our troops and an outstanding investment in the future of our Nation. The Post-9/11 GI Bill, signed into law in 2008, built on the success of the original program by providing helpful and hard-earned educational and economic benefits for our newest generation of veterans. Although today's legislation seeks to make it easier for veterans to utilize their educational benefits, some of the changes will have detrimental consequences.

Just as the veterans of WWII were the engine of economic recovery and expansion in the post-war period, the most recent genera-

tion of veterans will continue their service to America by reaching their full educational and economic potential through the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

While I support this bill and urge my colleagues to vote for it, there are some provisions in the legislation that I believe deserve additional consideration. Although I support setting a national average tuition rate for benefits, I am concerned that students in states like New York will be negatively impacted by the \$17,500 baseline.

This legislation will reduce benefits for students in New York already enrolled in programs where the cost is above the baseline. Students based decisions about which institution of higher education to attend partly on a benefit level guaranteed in the 2008 law. A "hold harmless" provision would have allowed these students to continue to receive the same level benefits for which they are entitled.

Under current law, state approving agencies, SAAs, are charged with approving programs and schools that are deemed appropriate for vets using the GI Bill. S. 3447 permits the Veterans Administration, VA, to make this determination and I am concerned that this responsibility should remain within SAA's jurisdiction, as they have been the experts in protecting veterans from fraudulent programs. The bill goes further by permitting veterans to use their GI benefits at schools without any approval by SAAs or the VA. In my view this is unwise.

This legislation permits the VA to expand GI benefits to trade schools, unaccredited colleges, and programs that lead to no degree or certificate. While I understand that many veterans choose not to take a more traditional path and attend an institution of higher education, I am deeply concerned that taxpayer dollars will go to programs that will not lead to gainful employment.

I am also concerned that this bill includes a so-called "last-payer" provision. The last payer provision withholds the student's GI Bill benefit until a calculation is made of any state and private tuition aid, for which a veteran may be eligible. In some cases, this would cause a delay in GI benefits and lead to needless confusion.

As a former college administrator, I am very pleased to see so many veterans returning home and choosing to seek further education. However, I am deeply concerned with a growing number of reports that some institutions may be abusing GI tuition payments by aggressively targeting veterans for academic programs that may not provide an actual benefit to a student, such as preparation for future employment.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that in the 112th Congress we can achieve bipartisan solutions to these issues to protect both taxpayers and distinguished veterans. The Post-9/11 GI Bill is a small token of our appreciation for their valor and service to our Nation. I would like to submit for the RECORD a letter signed by various higher education groups that outlines the community's concerns with this legislation.

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION,
Washington, DC, December 14, 2010.

*House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the American Council on Education and the organizations listed below, we write to express our hope that before adjournment, the 111th Congress will approve a final version of the