

all of us who have been Secretary of Education, all of us who have been in the Congress since 1965. We haven't done our job, and of the 59 recommendations, probably a dozen are recommendations that the U.S. Secretary of Education could do himself. They could be done by an administrator. So, go to Secretary Duncan and say, "Look, we'd like to make a hero out of you. We're here to say, we've identified the 12 areas that you can change that would make a big difference in increasing innovation and reducing cost of colleges all across America." And I've talked with him about that, and I think he'd be willing to hear about that.

We'll be reauthorizing the Higher Education Act later this year after we get through fixing "No Child Left Behind," which is the first order of business. And the first thing we want to do is make it easier for students to go to college. That's the "FAST Act," aimed at simplifying the student aid form. That includes saying that you can apply your junior year of high school, so you can know what your award will be before you are admitted to college. And, you will know what your tax information is before you have to turn in your form.

We want to simplify the number of grants and loans. We want to make it possible for there to be year-round Pell for your students to be able to follow their own rate and use their Pell grants and student aid progressively at their own rate in college. We'd like to discourage over-borrowing by changing some rules that exist, permit you to do more counseling of students, change the rule that allows a part-time student to borrow a full-time amount of money. We'd like to simplify the repayment plans. Now, all those things don't have much to do with being a Republican or a Democrat. They have a lot to do with an important system.

We'd like to take as many of these fifty-nine recommendations and put them in a bill and pass them as we can. A lot of that will depend upon your business at home to the men and women who run the universities in your state. We want to take a look at the accreditation and make sure it's focused on the right thing. As a former university president, I didn't like a lot about accreditation. The only thing I would like less would be having the U.S. Department of Education take the place of the accreditor. So, let's work together and fix the accreditation system and have focus on academic quality instead of all that random other stuff that accreditors often get themselves involved in.

We want to make it harder to over-borrow. I mentioned a couple of ideas about this. There are a few more in this report. Finally, we want to do our best to make sure that the consumer information that you're asked for really is needed and is presented in a useful way to students. Typically, it's just a big pile of stuff that has the disadvantage of by the time you go all the way through you haven't learned anything. It's like a mortgage application or a car loan. You just sign at the bottom and have no clue about what you just signed. We need simpler, plain English, clear sentences—pieces of information that are valuable to students and that are valuable to parents, and that we can weed our way through the system more confidently.

So, that's what we're trying to do, and we need your help. One thing that I would say to you is that this is a train that is likely to move down track in out of the station by the end of year. Why do I say that? Well, because it has bipartisan support in a town that's not noted for that. This report has been active interest of four senators who will a lot more. The FAST Act, as we call it, which will simplify student aid has the support of six: Senator Booker and Senator King and Senator

Burr and Senator Isakson and me, equally divided by party. Senator Murray and I, she's from Washington state, will work together to reauthorize it. I've talked to the president about it. He did a very good job of working with us on some forms on student loans two years ago. There's no reason he can't work with us in that way and this year finish the job.

So, I hope you'll keep in mind the letter that I read. I suspect that you have made the same feelings, and I am here to thank you for the tremendous work that ACE and the chancellors and their team and staff did on the report. It's been one of the most consequential reports made to the Congress during this year. Will you please make an appointment in the next thirty days in your home state, first with the members of the Senate education committee? Bring along a few colleagues and say, "We spent a lot of time on this. This is wasting a lot of money. This is discouraging a lot of students. This is taking a lot of time. Will you please support this bipartisan effort to bring some common sense to the jungle of red tape that is the current federal regulation of higher education?" Thank you.

#### NATIONAL HEALTHCARE DECISIONS DAY

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I am pleased to recognize that today, April 16, 2015, is National Healthcare Decisions Day.

National Healthcare Decisions Day exists to inspire, educate and empower the public and providers about the importance of advance care planning. Started by a Richmond attorney as a local, grassroots initiative in Virginia, NHDD became an annual event in 2008 and today is recognized across all 50 States. Faith-based groups, doctors and nurses, hospitals, patients, and caregivers alike are engaged in these efforts.

It is critical that Virginians and all Americans—both patients and providers—engage in advance care planning, and that they have access to clear, consistent, and concise information on how to make these critical health care decisions. Today, on National Healthcare Decisions Day, it is important to discuss preferences and goals with family and friends—and this starts with filling out an advance directive. But advanced care planning is about much more than that, and in the last several years, there has been a growing awareness of the need to transform advanced care, both among providers and families.

First, broader transformations in health care, especially the movement towards paying for quality, not volume, of services offer opportunities to speed the adoption of effective advanced care programs. Our health care system does a great job paying for procedures: surgery, chemotherapy, hip replacements. It does a not so good job paying for health care providers to spend face-to-face time with patients, helping them to choose among many options with uncertain outcomes. Improvements to care planning would give individuals and their families the ability to make smarter decisions. It

would provide additional information and support so they can make informed choices based upon those values and goals.

Meanwhile, across the country, people are innovating and creating new models of care to provide patients with the tools and support to make their own advanced care decisions. For example, in my own State of Virginia, a Richmond Academy of Medicine initiative called Honoring Choices Virginia promises to fill a critical hole. This innovative partnership involves the academy and three independent health care systems working to adopt nationally-recognized best practices, and adapting them to the needs of patients, families, doctors, and hospitals of the local community in Central Virginia. This commitment to patients and families in our region sets an example for the rest of the Commonwealth and the country.

It is similarly essential that we consider how Federal policies impact patients and their families during times of serious illness. For example, the vast majority of these patients receive care funded by Medicaid and Medicare, and many of them are elderly or disabled. Medicare, however, does not adequately reimburse physicians or other important members of the care planning team, such as nurses or social workers, for systems to support patients and their families. Likewise, faced with an uneven patchwork of advance directive laws across States, providers too often base their actions on the technicalities of forms or on fear of being sued. Such hurdles make it difficult for health care providers to focus on what the patient really wants.

In the 111th and 112th Congress, I introduced the Senior Navigation and Planning Act, to help people grapple with the challenges of caring for those with advanced illness. And in the 113th Congress, Senator ISAKSON and I introduced the Care Planning Act. The purpose of the Care Planning Act is to align the care people want with the level of care they get. It does not limit choices—it works to make sure people are made fully aware of the broad range of choices they have. I hope to reintroduce the Care Planning Act in the coming weeks.

I believe this effort is critical, not just from my time serving as a Governor and as a Senator, but also through the eyes of a loved one who struggled with these issues. My mother suffered from Alzheimer's disease for 10 years, and for 9 of those years, she couldn't speak. My father, sister and I found grappling with the challenges of caring for her difficult. The difficulty was greater because, when she was first diagnosed, my family didn't take the opportunity to talk in an honest and fully informed way with her and her health care providers about the full array of health care options available, or about what her priorities would be during the final years of her life.

It is not easy, and this is a subject that most people do their best to avoid.

But it is critical. National Healthcare Decisions Day reminds us of the importance of discussing ways to improve advanced care planning at all levels—Federal, State, local—and above all, amongst Americans and their loved ones.

#### TRIBUTE TO JIM SCOTT

• **Mr. PORTMAN.** Mr. President, I wish to recognize the retirement of Jim Scott after nearly 50 years as Cincinnati's familiar voice of morning radio.

Jim Scott began his Cincinnati radio career in 1968 as morning show host for the iconic pop radio station 1360 WSAI-AM in Price Hill. He joined 700 WLW in 1984 and for 45 years, Jim has been the familiar voice of morning radio.

During his morning time slot from 5am to 9am, Jim interviewed countless dignitaries and celebrity newsmakers from Presidents and civic leaders to top movie stars and sports figures. He routinely talked with news correspondents from around the globe, including those reporting at the White House and from posts in London to Baghdad.

Jim is a true public servant and an inspiration to us all. He has been a long-time volunteer leader of the Greater Cincinnati United Way and has served on many boards, including the Wellness Community, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, the March of Dimes, and Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

A stalwart volunteer, Jim is Cincinnati's voice of volunteerism; whether he's hosting Marty & Joe night at the Great American Ballpark, serving as emcee for your favorite animal shelter or welcoming Presidents and foreign dignitaries to the Queen City.

Jim has been recognized with many awards, including the Silver Medal of the Cincinnati Ad Club, and the Neil H. McElroy Award from the United Way. In 1996 and 2000, the U.S. Olympic Committee named Jim "A Community Hero" and he was thrilled to be a torchbearer in the Olympic Torch Relay.

Jim Scott has dominated morning show ratings in every decade since the 1970s and was the winner of the 2002 Marconi Award for Large Market Radio Personality of the Year. In 2013, the Cincinnati Enquirer named Jim the No. 1 radio personality of the past 40 years.

Jim Scott will remain on air until his "favorite day of the year," Cincinnati Reds Opening Day on April 6, 2015, when he'll walk in the Findlay Market Opening Day Parade to say thank you to his fans who have supported him throughout his career.

Thank you, Jim Scott. Your daily "good morning and thanks for listening" greeting will be missed.●

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### RECOGNIZING ORA ESTUARIES

• **Mr. VITTER.** Mr. President, due to their unique perspective, American en-

trepreneurs are often at the forefront of innovative solutions to local problems. This is especially true with environmental initiatives, and down in Louisiana where the ecosystems are diverse and delicate, the locals are best equipped to protect them. That is why ORA Estuaries of New Orleans, LA is the Small Business of the Week.

Civil engineer and New Orleans native Tyler Ortego was a student at Louisiana State University when he and a friend discovered a way to fight coastal erosion using oysters. In 2005, Ortego patented the OysterBreak system, which essentially allows oysters to fuse together on a man-made rock-like material in order to create a living coastal reef. Now holding two patents, Ortego and ORA Estuaries are focused on rebuilding and revitalizing coastal regions. ORA Estuaries recently claimed the top prize of the New Orleans Entrepreneurial Week's "Big Idea Pitch," and with the prize money hopes to move into food production and new versions of the OysterBreak system.

Our coast and wetlands provide some of Louisiana's most important resources and beautiful habitats, and because our geography makes us vulnerable to natural disasters, it is absolutely vital that we protect them. Innovative technologies like ORA's OysterBreak system play a significant role in restoring our coasts and wetlands, which protect Louisianians and gulf coast residents from storms and flooding. Currently, ORA's natural reefs systems are deployed in four different areas along the Louisiana coast, including an oyster habitat restoration project run by the Nature Conservatory of Louisiana. ORA is looking toward expanding to all five of the Gulf States, as well as the Chesapeake Bay area and even North Carolina. Not only is ORA's breakthrough system protecting vulnerable shorelines, but the growth and retention of oyster colonies that naturally process and filter water interests scientists and environmentalists, as well.

Congratulations to ORA Estuaries for being selected as Small Business of the Week. Thank you for your commitment to restoring and protecting our precious ecosystems and coastlines in Louisiana and the Gulf Coast.●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

##### ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 12:19 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 2. An act to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and strengthen Medicare access by improving physician payments and making other improvements, to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

At 12:39 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 709. An act to provide for the termination of employment of employees of the Internal Revenue Service who take certain official actions for political purposes.

H.R. 1026. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permit the release of information regarding the status of certain investigations.

H.R. 1058. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify that a duty of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue is to ensure that Internal Revenue Service employees are familiar with and act in accord with certain taxpayer rights.

H.R. 1104. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a deduction from the gift tax for gifts made to certain exempt organizations.

H.R. 1152. An act to prohibit officers and employees of the Internal Revenue Service from using personal email accounts to conduct official business.

H.R. 1295. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve the process for making determinations with respect to whether organizations are exempt from taxation under 501(c)(4) of such Code.

H.R. 1314. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organization.

H.R. 1562. An act to prohibit the awarding of a contract or grant in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold unless the prospective contractor or grantee certifies in writing to the agency awarding the contract or grant that the contractor or grantee has no seriously delinquent tax debts, and for other purposes.

#### MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 529. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve 529 plans; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 709. An act to provide for the termination of employment of employees of the Internal Revenue Service who take certain official actions for political purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 1026. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permit the release of information regarding the status of certain investigations; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 1058. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify that a duty of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue is to ensure that Internal Revenue Service employees are familiar with and act in accord with certain taxpayer rights; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 1104. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a deduction from the gift tax for gifts made to certain exempt organizations; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 1152. An act to prohibit officers and employees of the Internal Revenue Service from using personal email accounts to conduct official business; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 1562. An act to prohibit the awarding of a contract or grant in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold unless the prospective contractor or grantee certifies in