

the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 139.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1630

HIGHER EDUCATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2015

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3594) to extend temporarily the Federal Perkins Loan program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3594

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Higher Education Extension Act of 2015”.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AND INTEGRITY.

Section 114(f) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1011c(f)) is amended by striking “2015” and inserting “2016”.

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF FEDERAL PERKINS LOAN PROGRAM.

(a) **AUTHORITY TO MAKE LOANS.**—Section 461 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087aa) is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

“(b) **AUTHORITY TO MAKE LOANS.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—With respect to any student who is not described in paragraph (2), an institution of higher education may make loans under this part to such a student until September 30, 2016, from the student loan fund established under this part by the institution.

“(2) **ADDITIONAL LOANS FOR CERTAIN STUDENTS.**—With respect to any student who has received a loan made under this part for an academic year ending prior to October 1, 2016, an institution of higher education that has most recently made such a loan to the student for an academic program at such institution may continue making loans under this part through March 31, 2018, from the student loan fund established under this part by the institution to enable the student to continue or complete such academic program, but only if the institution has awarded all Federal Direct Stafford Loans for which such student is eligible.

“(3) **PROHIBITION ON ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS.**—No funds are authorized to be appropriated under this Act or any other Act to carry out the functions described in paragraphs (1) and (2) for any fiscal year following fiscal year 2015.”; and

(2) by striking subsection (c).

(b) **DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS FROM STUDENT LOAN FUNDS.**—Section 466 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087ff) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “After September 30, 2003, and not later than March 31, 2004” and inserting “Beginning October 1, 2016”; and

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking “2003” and inserting “2016”; and

(2) in subsection (b), by striking “After October 1, 2012” and inserting “Beginning October 1, 2016”.

(c) **ADDITIONAL EXTENSIONS NOT PERMITTED.**—Section 422 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1226a) shall not apply to further extend the duration of—

(1) the authority under paragraph (1) of section 461(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087aa(b)), as amended by subsection (a)(1) of this section, beyond September 30, 2016, on the basis of the extension under such subsection; or

(2) the authority under paragraph (2) of section 461(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087aa(b)), as amended by subsection (a)(1) of this section, beyond March 31, 2018, on the basis of the extension under such subsection.

SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

Section 491(k) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1098(k)) is amended by striking “2015” and inserting “2016”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Nebraska). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BISHOP) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 3594.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and rise in support of the Higher Education Extension Act of 2015.

Mr. Speaker, this week, several provisions of the Higher Education Extension Act are set to expire, including the Perkins Loan Program.

For several decades, the Perkins Loan Program has provided low-interest-rate loans to college students with severe financial need. If we allow this program to expire, it would be at a time when our Nation's higher education system is failing many students trying to earn a college degree and a lifetime of opportunity and success.

College costs continue to soar, new rules and regulations discourage innovation and deny access, and students are struggling to complete their education, not to mention find good-paying jobs.

This is a very bleak reality facing students from my home State of Michigan and across the country. The American people deserve better. Students and families in my district and across the country deserve better, and my three children, who will one day in the not-so-distant future begin their college careers, deserve better. The reauthorization of the Higher Education Extension Act presents Congress an opportunity to strengthen higher education for students, families, and taxpayers.

My colleagues and I have already proposed a number of responsible re-

forms that promise to promote innovation, strengthen transparency, and help students complete their education. Members are also working to streamline the confusing maze of financial programs so that students can get the support they need.

As we continue our efforts to reauthorize the law, now is not the time to turn our backs on the students who rely on the Perkins Loan Program for their college education. Now is the time to help meet the immediate need of students in Michigan and across our country, and the Higher Education Extension Act of 2015 will do just exactly that.

This bipartisan proposal will extend for 1 year the Perkins Loan Program, allowing participating colleges and universities to continue to service their borrowers. It will also allow current Perkins recipients who remain in the same academic program to be eligible to receive those funds through March 2018. The legislation will also extend other provisions in the Higher Education Extension Act that aim to support students, institutions, and policymakers.

Finally, let me note for my colleagues and the American people, by reforming the Perkins Loan Program, we ensure that this legislation is fully paid for, at no additional cost to taxpayers.

I am proud to lead this bipartisan effort with the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN), who shares my commitment to helping other students achieve their dream of a college education.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on the Higher Education Extension Act of 2015.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today in support of H.R. 3594, the Higher Education Extension Act, and I would like to thank my colleague, Mr. BISHOP, as well as my colleagues, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. MESSER, and Ranking Member SCOTT, for their leadership on this issue.

This bill would extend the Perkins Loan Program for 1 year. Perkins loans are need-based loans which foster access to higher education for low-income students by providing low-interest loans to students in need. Colleges and universities tailor the program to best fit borrowers' and educational institutions' situations.

Perkins is a risk-sharing program, with institutions contributing one-third of their students' awards. This “ownership interest” also contributes to the successful management of this vital program.

We have only 2 days before the Perkins Loan Program is set to expire, so we must act immediately.

Since its inception in 1958, over \$28 billion in loans have been made to students through almost 26 million aid awards. Perkins Loan borrowers are predominantly from lower income families and are often the first in their family to attend college.

Perkins loans have a set interest rate of 5 percent, which begins to accrue 9 months after the borrower ceases to be a student. However, this program has not been reauthorized since the 2009 fiscal year.

Besides making higher education accessible for lower income students, this program serves as an incentive for people who wish to go into a public service by offering targeted loan cancellations for specific progression in areas of national need, including teaching, nursing, and law enforcement.

Earlier this year, I introduced a bipartisan resolution in support of the Perkins loans with Congressman MESSER of Indiana, H. Res. 294, with 56 cosponsors. My colleague Representative LOUISE SLAUGHTER, a leader on this issue, offered a letter with more than 90 bipartisan signatures in support of this important program. Over 33 groups and higher educational institutions have supported this bill's reauthorization.

Bottom line, the Perkins Loan Program has helped millions of students and families struggling to find a way to pay for college. I applaud my colleague across the aisle, specifically, a thank-you to Mr. BISHOP, for helping to ensure students have access to Federal financial aid that they need to make college affordable and accessible.

I urge support of this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

Ms. BONAMICI. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman BISHOP and Congressman POCAN for introducing H.R. 3594, the Higher Education Extension Act.

I would also like to thank Chairman KLINE and Ranking Member SCOTT for supporting a bipartisan effort to avoid the expiration of the Federal Perkins Loan Program, a program that helps make college affordable for low-income students across the country.

In my district in Oregon, across the State, and across the country, colleges and universities use the Perkins Loan Program to expand access to higher education. For example, Linfield College and Pacific University, in my district, award Perkins loans to hundreds of students; and University of Oregon and Oregon State University distribute Perkins loans to thousands, providing a clear benefit to students who have significant financial need.

As Congress works to reauthorize the Higher Education Extension Act, it is important that we continue to increase access to affordable higher education.

I commend my colleague for introducing the Higher Education Extension Act, and I ask all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this bipartisan bill.

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DESAULNIER).

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for this bipartisan effort, and I want to thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise today also in support of the Higher Education Extension Act.

The Perkins Loan Program provides low-interest loans to economically disadvantaged students to help finance their postsecondary educations.

The Perkins Loan Program assisted nearly 540,000 American students nationwide in the 2013-2014 academic year by providing \$1.2 billion in loans. More than 1,500 colleges and universities across the United States participate in this popular program.

While the Perkins Loan Program is sometimes viewed as benefiting students predominately in the Northeast, California is the second largest recipient. In California, more than 46,000 students received these loans last year. These loans resulted in more than \$105 million in the last year to California students.

Students from across the country who attend California schools, like Saint Mary's College in my district, are able to receive a top-notch education through assistance programs like the Perkins Loan Program. Increasing access and improving affordability translates to increased opportunities for students and improves the Nation's economy by ensuring that today's students are tomorrow's highly trained workforce.

This bill is a necessary step to ensuring that our students continue to receive the assistance they need and deserve. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), who has been a leader on this issue.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I am very grateful to Mr. BISHOP and to Mr. MESSER and Mr. POCAN and all others who worked on this really important issue.

Mr. Speaker, the Perkins Loan Program is 57 years old. It is the Nation's longest running Federal student loan program. It is unlike any other Federal student aid program because this critical program is specifically directed at helping low-income students afford the cost of higher education. It helps the deserving students who would not be able to afford a college education otherwise, students that save up and work hard for every credit that they earn.

Without Perkins, 500,000 low-income students across the country, nearly 50,000 from the State of New York and over 6,000 in my district alone, would not have access to a critical safety net.

The Perkins Loan fills the gaps in student aid, and acts as a lifeline when

unforeseen disruptions jeopardize a student's ability to pay for college. They offer an affordable alternative to private student loans and, furthermore, they are self-sustaining, meaning that as graduated students pay back their loans, they fund the current students' loans.

This summer, 94 bipartisan colleagues joined me in a letter urging Chairman KLINE and Ranking Member SCOTT to ensure that the Perkins Loan Program was not allowed to expire, and I am grateful for their help here on this today.

I stood with students and the presidents of colleges and universities in my district, two of whom have received Perkins loans themselves, to voice support for the continuation of the program. Among the people attending were three medical students from the University of Rochester. Heaven knows, we cannot afford to lose the services of three medical students.

I was also privileged to stand with my good friend Congressman POCAN and to hear from advocates and students who see and experience the benefits of the Perkins loans every day.

While I strongly prefer a long-term reauthorization and look forward to working with my colleagues in the coming months to secure one, I am pleased that the Higher Education Extension Act succeeds in keeping the program alive, ensures that next year's incoming class will be able to access Perkins loans, and buys us some time to secure a lasting extension.

I urge passage of this bill for all those students whose education dreams depend on having the Perkins loans.

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

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

I just want to again thank Representative BISHOP for all your work on this—thank you very much—and Chairman KLINE and Ranking Member SCOTT. This is, I think, a good example of how we can work together in a committee to make sure that higher educational needs are met.

I represent about 75,000 higher education students. With UW Madison as the flagship, about 45,000 students, we have other campuses for the UW system, Beloit College and other smaller private colleges, Madison College and others.

This is a really important program, not just back home in Wisconsin, but across the country; and the fact that we are able to get this done in a bipartisan manner shows how I think Congress can work its very best. So I urge my colleagues to support this.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank Mr. POCAN as well and all those that have come to support the bill.

Helping more individuals access and complete higher education is a goal we all share. Research shows that students who earn a degree or credential are more likely to succeed in today's global economy.

For example, those with an Associate Degree are expected to earn 27 percent more than those with a high school diploma over the course of a lifetime, underscoring the value of higher education.

□ 1645

Unfortunately, less than 60 percent of students complete their studies within 6 years often because they can't afford to. Failure to pass the Higher Education Extension Act of 2015 will only make it more difficult for some students to access and complete their education.

Students across the country—including in my home State of Michigan—count on the Perkins Loan Program to help afford a college education. By supporting this responsible bipartisan legislation, we will deliver certainty to students and institutions as we continue to work on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 3594.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, as we pass the Higher Education Extension Act of 2015, I would like to emphasize the importance of higher education in assisting our young people in building the knowledge and skills that will allow them to succeed in the workforce and, ultimately, help U.S. businesses and industry to compete in the global market.

Michigan is home to many outstanding colleges and universities and I often speak with families throughout the 14th District and the state about the financial burden created by the increasing cost of higher education. Like many Americans, I firmly believe that making higher education more affordable and accessible should be among our foremost priorities. During a recent trip to my District, I spoke with a student who held a full-time job while in school because her family could not afford her tuition. Although work can be extremely rewarding and helps to build a strong work-ethic, students who are forced to work long hours and attend school full-time often suffer diminished academic success.

Since 1986, the Federal Perkins Loan Program has been an essential part of college financial aid packages because it provides a long-term and low-interest alternative to expensive private loans for students. Extending the Perkins Loan Program will provide lower income students with the funding they need to attend college with their full focus on their education. Additionally, the cost of this extension is not borne by taxpayers. Rather, the Perkins Loan Program fully funds itself when past loan recipients pay-off the balance of their loan.

I am proud that our Chamber has taken this important step toward ensuring all young people have the opportunity to benefit from a world class education. I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for supporting the fight to make higher education affordable and accessible for all Americans.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, which would extend the Perkins Loan program for one year, so that students who have demonstrated exceptional financial need can complete their undergraduate or graduate education in order to become academically qualified to join our workforce.

Historically, Perkins loans have served our students well by offering low-cost loans with flexible repayment terms and generous forgiveness options. They are often the difference between whether or not our students can afford to attend college, including 12,000 students in Texas.

For the academic year 2013–2014, nearly 500,000 students who needed financial assistance were awarded nearly \$1 billion in Perkins loans. And throughout its 57-year history, more than 30 million students with need have benefited from this program.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the federal government will reclaim nearly \$5 billion in revenue from Perkins loans over the next ten years. That is \$5 billion that should be returned to students to help keep college affordable for the most financially challenged students. And that is \$5 billion that would have been lost if the program is not extended.

Without Perkins loans, schools would lose the necessary flexibility to help students cover their expenses after federal grants and Stafford loans are applied or unforeseen circumstances jeopardize a student's ability to pay for college.

If we want the United States of America to remain a global leader with the competitive edge necessary to sustain economic growth and job creation, we need the best, most highly trained workforce to sustain our advantages. The Perkins Loan program is a major part of helping our students develop, reach for and join that workforce.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to extend the federal Perkins Loan program.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BISHOP) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3594.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AMERICAN SAMOA MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE POSTPONEMENT

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2617) to amend the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to postpone a scheduled increase in the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2617

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. MINIMUM WAGE FOR AMERICAN SAMOA.

(a) MINIMUM WAGE.—Paragraph (2) of section 8103(b) of the Fair Minimum Wage Act

of 2007 (29 U.S.C. 206 note) is amended to read as follows:

“(2) the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa under section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)) shall be—

“(A) the applicable wage rate in effect for each industry and classification as of September 29, 2015; and

“(B) increased by \$0.50 an hour (or such lesser amount as may be necessary to equal the minimum wage under section 6(a)(1) of such Act), beginning on December 31, 2016, and on December 31 of every third year thereafter, until the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa under this paragraph is equal to the minimum wage set forth in such section.”.

(b) GAO REPORTS.—Section 8104 of the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 (29 U.S.C. 206 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking “September 1, 2011” and inserting “April 1, 2017”; and

(B) by striking the second sentence and inserting the following: “The Government Accountability Office shall submit a subsequent report not later than April 1, 2020.”;

(2) in subsection (b), by striking “the study under subsection (a)” and inserting “any report under subsection (a)”;

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(c) REPORT ON ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE IN AMERICAN SAMOA.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Government Accountability Office shall transmit to Congress a report on alternative ways of increasing the minimum wage in American Samoa to keep pace with the cost of living in American Samoa and to eventually equal the minimum wage set forth in section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)).”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BISHOP) and the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials on H.R. 2617.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of H.R. 2617. This legislation is simple and straightforward. It would delay for 15 months a minimum wage increase that will take effect in American Samoa in just 2 days. If this increase takes effect, it will harm the very people it was intended to help, the hard-working men and women of American Samoa.

The reason we are here today is also quite simple. We are here because the local government in American Samoa is urging us to do this. We are here because the employers in American Samoa, who are few and far between, are urging us to do this. And, most importantly, we are here because the