

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. KHANNA) for the opportunity to be able to stand with him on behalf of America's working families.

□ 1815

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative SOTO for his analogy that the rules for our corporate shareholders shouldn't be different than the rules for workers. We need fairness. We certainly shouldn't be privileging shareholders. I appreciate the gentleman's advocacy for working families and speaking out today.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close with some simple points. People often say that workers have a negative view of unions or don't want unions to be representing them, but here are the facts: Gallup Poll research shows that 60 percent of Americans have a favorable view of labor unions, and that number has been going up as more and more Americans see that their wages have been going down. More and more Americans are saying they need the unions to level the playing field.

When we look at AFSCME and what AFSCME stands for, what Janus is saying that he doesn't want representing him, I think about the trip I took with Representative JOHN LEWIS down to Memphis a few months ago. We went to Mason Temple. In Mason Temple, we heard over the loud speaker Dr. King's voice as he spoke about seeing the promised land.

As that booming voice came over the loud speakers in that temple, there on stage was a man in his 80s who was a sanitation worker at the time that Dr. King marched in Memphis, and he talked about how he still was owed money for his fair work. At the age of 80, Memphis still hadn't paid him.

That person, that man, he didn't shirk from work. He was working still in his 80s. He believed in the dignity of work. He talked about young people needing to believe in the dignity of work. He just wanted to have a fair shot at being paid for that work.

That was AFSCME. That is what AFSCME stands for in this country. That is what is at stake in this Supreme Court fight. Do we stand for the values that Dr. King marched for, and do we stand for the labor union in this Nation?

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, thank you for your graciousness in giving us this hour and moderating this debate.

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

THE PROSPER ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 30 minutes.

HONORING TROOPER BULLARD

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, only days after we commemorated National Police Week, I rise to honor the life of Trooper Samuel Newton Bullard.

The community of Ronda, North Carolina, tragically lost Trooper Bullard in the line of duty on Monday in my district.

A 3-year State trooper veteran, Trooper Bullard was dedicated to the safety and protection of Surry County. Our country could not be so blessed without selfless law enforcement officers like him who protect our communities and uphold the rule of law that our safety rests upon.

My heartfelt condolences go to the family and friends of Trooper Samuel Newton Bullard.

While Trooper Bullard's ultimate sacrifice cannot be repaid, I remain grateful for his sacrifice and remember him and his loved ones in my prayers.

Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight to talk about a serious situation that exists in our country, a very serious situation. Every Member of this body hears every day from employers in our districts that they have jobs that are going unfilled because Americans do not have the skills they need to fill those unfilled jobs. Specifically, there are over 6 million unfilled jobs in this country due to the skills gap.

We have a solution to that problem, Mr. Speaker, and it has come out of the Education and the Workforce Committee. It is called the PROSPER Act.

Today, in The Hill, there was a terrific article encouraging this body and this Congress to pass the PROSPER Act, and I am going to quote some of the article. The article was entitled "Congress, Pass the PROSPER Act for Federal Student Aid Reform." It is written by Rachele Peterson.

"It has been 53 years since President Lyndon Johnson signed the Higher Education Act into law, and 10 years since it was reauthorized, under President Obama. Over the years, the law—which touches nearly every aspect of higher education—has turned into a special interest bonanza. It shields traditional colleges from marketplace competition, weaves a labyrinthine web of student aid options, packs on the pork, and in the last administration served as a pretext for the Department of Education to invent politically charged regulations.

"The PROSPER Act . . . would reauthorize the Higher Education Act and clean up the mess it has become. The bill would streamline Federal programs, relax burdensome regulations, forbid the Secretary of Education from acting outside the scope of the law, and protect the key principles of free speech and religious freedom.

"Today, my organization, the National Association of Scholars, released a top-to-bottom review of the PROSPER Act, concluding that it represents the best opportunity to reform higher education in decades. With a few tweaks, the PROSPER Act should be passed at once. Two especially important areas—Federal student aid reform and protections for freedom of speech and association—show why."

Ms. Peterson goes on: "Currently, Federal student aid is a complicated system that encourages students to take on unmanageable debt and incentivizes colleges to raise tuition. The system has six loan programs, numerous grants, and some four dozen options for paying off or getting loans forgiven.

"The PROSPER Act simplifies Federal student aid, reining in costs and making it easier for students to see their options. It caps the amount of money parents and students can borrow from the Federal Government. It streamlines Federal student aid into a single loan program, a single grant program, and a single repayment program. It eliminates special interest projects, such as public service loan forgiveness, which privileged government employees by forgiving their loans after 10 years of payments."

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Peterson really encapsulates at the beginning of this article the reasons why we should be passing the PROSPER Act.

Again, it passed out of the committee in December, and we are working to find floor time to be able to bring this bill to the floor and be able to have the House vote on it, send it to the Senate, have the Senate vote on it, and send it to the President for his signature.

Again, Ms. Peterson says, "Congress, Pass the PROSPER Act for Federal Student Aid Reform," but as she explains in her quotes as I quoted, she says even more about it.

Let me explain some additional reasons why we need to pass the PROSPER Act.

Eighty-one percent of parents say 4-year schools charge too much. Fifty-four percent of parents think 4-year schools are accessible to middle class Americans.

Mr. Speaker, we have a problem in this country, not just with skills but people who are in poverty. The way for people to get out of poverty is to gain a good education that provides skills for people to be able to get a job.

Mr. Speaker, all my life I have promoted the need for people to get a great education. I myself am a living example of what an education can do for a person. I grew up in a house with no electricity, no running water. My parents had a sixth grade and ninth grade education. I come from no privilege whatsoever, and yet, Mr. Speaker, I and many millions of other people in this country who came from similar circumstances were able to get a good education and use their talents and skills to lead successful lives.

What I want, Mr. Speaker, is for every American who has the drive to do the same thing.

Mr. Speaker, while the Federal Government doesn't create jobs, the Federal Government can create situations where jobs can be created by the private sector, and we can help people gain the skills that they need to take those jobs.

Again, as I said, we have over 6 million unfilled jobs in this country, and what we need and what employers are begging us for is to provide the opportunity for people to gain the skills that they need to fill those jobs.

This is the way the American people feel right now. Again, 81 percent of Americans say the schools charge too much.

What we do with PROSPER is give an incentive to the schools to charge less. We don't tell them what to charge—that is not the role of the Federal Government—but we put in place policies that we believe will cause tuition not to continue to rise at such a high rate and that students will get more information so they choose well the programs they go into.

Also, we are closing out the opportunities that I had and millions of other middle class Americans have had in the past by pricing post-secondary education too high and making people feel it is not possible.

Only 13 percent of the people in this country believe that college graduates are well prepared for success in the workplace. Something is wrong, Mr. Speaker, that we have this low a number of people in this country who believe that those who are graduating from college or attending college don't have the skills that they need to take those jobs that are out there available.

□ 1830

And there is even more negativity coming from those who employ those who go to college.

Let me share some other information.

Only two in five managers believe college graduates are well equipped for a job in their field.

Mr. Speaker, even those who go to college are not completing their education. We have a 6-year completion rate of only 54.8 percent.

And what does this mean to students? It means \$68,000 per year in lost wages and the cost of attending.

Mr. Speaker, this is occurring not just with those who attend what are known as 4-year colleges, which actually now are 6-year colleges because students are aren't graduating in 4 years—most of the ones graduating are graduating in 6 years—but it is applying to students who are in what we have always called 2-year colleges.

So we have a terrible problem every way you look in this country in terms of providing the opportunities for not only poor people, but middle-income people, for completing a degree or a program or a certificate that will allow

them to gain the skills that they need and the credentials they need.

We are a credentialing society, Mr. Speaker. We want people to be able to prove what they have done. Therefore, we need to honor people with all kinds of credentials and make it easier for them to gain those credentials.

Not everybody needs a baccalaureate degree to be a successful person in our country, and we know that because only 30 percent of the people in this country do have a baccalaureate degree. Yet we have millions and millions of people already who are successful.

What we want to do is encourage more people to seek certification and programs that allow them to be certified without necessarily completing a baccalaureate.

Mr. Speaker, people will say: Well, you don't honor liberal arts degrees if you are encouraging people to go on and just get a certificate. I want everybody to get a liberal arts degree. I got a liberal arts degree. I think that is wonderful.

But people don't have to do that immediately out of high school, and they don't have to do it in order to lead successful lives.

But ultimately, we hope everybody will be a lifelong learner, and the best way to be a lifelong learner, I think, is to help people be successful early on so they will be encouraged to continue to want to learn and do the things that will make them successful.

So what does PROSPER do? We make it possible for more students to qualify for Pell grants for short-term programs. This is what we do, Mr. Speaker. Pell grants are the grants that undergird most people going to college who don't come from very affluent families.

The maximum Pell grant in this country now is about \$6,000. But students can qualify for that if they are very, very poor.

What we would like to do is allow Pell grants to be used for shorter term programs, again, to get students to get into a program, help them gain certification so they can continue to earn and learn, so they can get a job, continue their education. So we make it possible for 7 million more people to qualify for Pell grants.

Many colleges and universities, unfortunately, have come out against the PROSPER Act.

Why is that, Mr. Speaker, when we make 7 million more students eligible for Pell grants? It is because, Mr. Speaker, we also ask for more accountability on the part of the schools and universities, and I will talk a little bit more about that in a minute.

And what do we do for the schools? We say to them: Help these Pell grant students graduate on time, meaning 4 years. And guess what. We will give you a little bonus for this.

Right now, the schools get no rewards for helping their students graduate on time. In fact, they get rewarded if they extend the amount of

time that students are in school. But that costs the students money in lost wages. It also encourages them to borrow more money, which is not a good thing.

We know right now that we have \$1.4 trillion in student debt in this country. We see the headlines every day in the newspapers about the problem with student debt. We don't want to encourage students to take out more debt. We want the students to get less debt.

So we simplify what we are doing in financial aid, Mr. Speaker. That is what we hear from schools, parents, students.

We just had a meeting with Members of Congress before I came up here, and Members of Congress who have had children go to college all talked about how complicated the FAFSA is, how invasive of privacy it is, and how we need to do better with the FAFSA, which is the financial aid form that students have to fill out to qualify. But we also have a complicated set of loans, grants, and campus-based programs.

So what do we do with PROSPER? We simplify things, Mr. Speaker.

Right now, we have six different loan programs, nine repayment options, 32 deferment and forbearance options—that means 32 different ways not to pay back your loan—and \$1.4 trillion in student debt.

What we do is we turn these six loan programs into one loan program. We make it much less complicated. Students and parents can understand.

We take the various grant programs and turn them into one grant program. It will all be called Pell grants. And we take a couple of the grant programs and put them in workstudy.

Why do we do that, Mr. Speaker? Because we have known for 50 years or more that workstudy is successful.

We have done studies to show that students who work are much more likely to graduate, they do better academically, they become better time managers, and they are much more likely to get a job when they graduate.

What we do with workstudy is we make it an even better program than it is now. We double the amount of money that is in workstudy, and we make it possible for the school to allocate up to 50 percent of the money into the private sector. What that will do, Mr. Speaker, is that will allow the students to work in the private sector, do an internship, a co-op, or an apprenticeship program.

We know that most of the time those programs result in a job, and that will start the student on a successful career, we believe, in the industry or business or area that the student wants to go into. It is better than just working on campus. Working on campus is a positive thing, and it helps the students a lot, but working in the private sector is even better because, again, those often lead directly into employment in the private sector.

So this is what we do. Mr. Speaker, we are responding to the public. We are

responding to the schools saying financial aid is too complicated. Parents and students say financial aid is too complicated. We are listening to both of those folks. The institutions have said it, and the students and parents have said it.

What else are we doing with the financial aid? We are putting \$14.5 billion back in the pockets of students.

How are we doing that? We are eliminating the origination fee for loans.

This was a hidden fee that most students didn't know anything about. They had to pay this up front out of the loans that they were getting, and very often it made a big difference to the students in terms of having the funds that they needed to be successful in their programs.

So we eliminate that, Mr. Speaker, and we think this is a very, very positive thing that we are doing.

In general, what we are doing with the PROSPER Act is we are responding to the American people. We are responding to employers who are saying to us: Please, help us with smoothing the way for students to go to colleges and universities to be able to gain the skills that they need to take these 6 million jobs that we have available out here.

Universities are not doing it for us. The colleges are not doing it for us. The colleges and universities are graduating approximately 1.4 million students every year. Yet what is happening is we have got all of these jobs unfilled out here, and we have got graduates being graduated but they don't have the skills that the employers need. Study after study after study, poll after poll after poll is telling us that. We are hearing it from everybody.

This is not a panacea. It is not going to answer every single need that is out there. We never said that it would. But it is a true reform of postsecondary education.

What we want to do is say to the postsecondary institutions: We have heard you. We have heard what you have said. You have said reduce or eliminate a lot of the rules and regulations that we have. That is what is driving up the cost of tuition.

Well, guess what, Mr. Speaker. We have revised or eliminated 59 percent of the 59 rules that were presented to us by the colleges and universities. But when they talk to our colleagues here, we never hear them mention that to them. But we are doing that. So we are responding to them.

They said: Simplify financial aid.

We are doing that. So we are doing what the schools asked us to do. We are doing what employers asked us to do. We are providing funds for short-term programs that will result in certificates that will result in the ability for students to gain the skills they need and go to work after as short a period of time as 10 weeks and 300 hours. This is a huge change in the way financial aid has been offered in the past.

We have listened to parents and students. We have simplified financial aid. We are making it much easier for students to apply for financial aid. We make it simpler for them to understand exactly the aid that they are going to be getting, what their obligations are going to be, and we know that, ultimately, it is going to bring down the cost of postsecondary education because we remove incentives for the colleges and universities to keep raising tuition and fees because we are saying to the colleges and universities: We want you to help these students succeed. We want you to encourage these students to take out less debt, and we are providing you the vehicle for doing that.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are responding to all the segments of the population that have asked us to change the way postsecondary education is delivered in this country.

We are going to help fulfill these 6 million unfilled jobs and we are going to bring down the cost of tuition and fees and make financial aid less complicated.

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

□ 1845

RECOGNIZING ASIAN AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO) for 30 minutes.

HONORING ANDREW JENG

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, I would like to recognize Andrew Jeng.

Hornq "Andrew" Jeng has been extensively involved with different communities and organizations. He is owner of Uptech Computers, the President of Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs of Central Florida, APAPA; president of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Central Florida; principal of Kissimmee Chinese School; and president of Kiwanis Club of Kissimmee, Florida.

In the past, Andrew was involved with the Boys & Girls Club; Seniors First Inc.; the Asian American Heritage Council; Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce; International Association of Chiefs of Police; and American veteran groups.

As the president of Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Central Florida, he supported the business community with facilities and intimate knowledge of the community as well as supporting businesses through advocating for positive business legislation, hosting network events and seminars, and international outreach.

Andrew received the award of Outstanding Asian American from Orange County, Orlando in 2016; and in 2009,

the community service of Asian American Heritage Council in Orlando, he earned a bachelor's of law from Central Police University in Taiwan, and a master's degree of computer information from the New York Institute of Technology.

For that, Mr. Andrew Jeng, we recognize you.

HONORING DR. SAJID CHAUDHARY

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, I would like to recognize Dr. Sajid Chaudhary.

Dr. Sajid Chaudhary is an infectious disease specialist providing healthcare services in the Kissimmee area since 2004. He completed his internal medicine training from Brown University and his infectious disease fellowship training from the University of Massachusetts.

Dr. Chaudhary is on faculty at the UCF College of Medicine, teaching medical students and resident doctors. Dr. Chaudhary has served, also, on the board of Osceola Regional Medical Center, and he is a founding board member and served as president of the Association of Pakistani Americans of Central Florida.

He has served as president of the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America, known as APPNA, and launched projects for four mobile clinics to help uninsured people in four States in the United States, including Florida.

Dr. Chaudhary is very active in the community through volunteering and most recently helped raise funds for the victims of Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria in 2017.

Earlier this year, I joined Dr. Chaudhary in the opening of a free healthcare clinic in Kissimmee, in our district, which he was very actively involved in establishing.

For that, Dr. Sajid Chaudhary, we honor you.

HONORING JOSE FABRICANTE, JR.

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, I would like to recognize Jose Fabricante, Jr.

Jose, "Joed" Fabricante, Jr., is currently the president of the Asian American Chamber of Commerce of Central Florida. He has been involved with the chamber since 2010 and has taken multiple leadership roles within the organization.

The Asian American Chamber of Commerce of Central Florida's mission is to provide leadership, support, and encouragement to the Asian American business community of Orlando so that the members of that organization may prosper and grow.

Jose currently works for Universal Orlando Resort in the security division as an entry-screening sergeant. He has also worked in various departments at Universal Orlando Resort and has had an impressive career with the company for close to 15 years.

Jose is also on the board of directors for the Orlando Economic Partnership since 2018, this year.