

means a stepped-up embargo and working for a commitment from our allies to cut off Castro's economic lifeblood.

The ultimate solution to the refugee problem and the key to a free and democratic life for Cubans is not to bring them all to America. The solution is to bring Cuba out of the cold war by ending the regime of Fidel Castro. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the bottom line. Fidel Castro is still what is wrong. We cannot escape that fact, but we can help change it.

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#### CONGRESS MUST SAVE STUDENT LOANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, today, House Republicans will release their long-awaited and overdue budget proposal. While much of the public attention has focused on the Republican plan to cut Medicare, there is another aspect of the plan that is equally troublesome. The GOP budget plan cuts \$12.4 billion over the next 5 years from the Stafford Student Loan Program. These cuts translate into the largest increase in college tuition costs in history.

In Connecticut, the Republican cuts in student aid would mean that 39,000 students would pay \$127 million more for college over 5 years. By eliminating interest-deferred Stafford loans, Republicans will add \$4,547 to the cost of an education for the average college student in Connecticut. Now, \$4,500 may not be much money to NEWT GINGRICH or DICK ARMEY, but I assure you that \$4,500 is plenty to working families in my district. It is plenty of money to Gail Baxter of West Haven, CT.

Just recently, I met Gail at a student loan forum I sponsored. Gail told me that she was worried about what cuts in student loan programs would mean for her family. And, it is no wonder she is worried. You see, Gail is a single mother who, in the fall of 1995, will have four children in college. That means four college tuitions. And, under the Republican plan, it means four increases of \$4,500. All totaled the Republican plan to cut student loans, could cost this working family nearly \$20,000.

But, any single mother who can get four children to college, is not someone who throws up her hands when faced with an obstacle. And, Gail Baxter wasn't about to take these student loan cuts sitting down. So, she got to work and started a petition drive. I told her if she collected the signatures that I would deliver them to the chairman of the House Budget Committee. In just a few weeks time, Gail collected the signatures of 630 parents, like herself.

The petition simply reads: We the undersigned oppose any attempts to cut

Federal student assistance that assist hard-working American families.

Like the parents who signed Gail Baxter's petition, students in my district are also concerned about cuts in student aid. They do not think it is right that government cut student loans in order to pay for another tax cut for the wealthy. And, they are right.

Students from Quinnipiac College in Hamden, CT, organized a letter writing campaign to bring their message to Congress. They wrote hundreds of letters to various leaders in Congress. Here is one sample from Laurel Drumm of Quinnipiac College. She writes:

Recent reports suggest you are considering the biggest cuts in the history of student aid. While we applaud congressional efforts for responsible deficit reduction, cuts in student aid just don't make sense. Student aid actually saves taxpayers money by stimulating economic growth, expanding the tax base and increasing productivity. That's why every major opinion poll shows strong support for student aid programs.

The cuts under consideration would increase the student loan indebtedness by up to 50 percent and reduce grants and work-study funding. The bottom line is these cuts will make a college education unobtainable for many of us.

The opportunity to go to college is a privilege that should be everyone's right. Please don't cut our future short. Don't cut student aid.

Mr. Speaker, student loans are the ladder to the American dream. Many of us in this body relied on student loans to pay for our educations. Let us not pull up the ladder of opportunity behind us. The Gail Baxters and the Laurel Drumms of the world are counting on us to do what is right and save student loans.

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#### JOB SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1995

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. KNOLLENBERG] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Job Skills Development Act of 1995. This bill amends the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to ease the restrictions on volunteers.

The FLSA requires covered employers to compensate individuals defined as "employees" according to mandatory minimum wage and overtime requirements. While there are exceptions to the employer-employee relationship for volunteers, the restrictions on permissible volunteer activities are excessively rigid.

As a result, individuals seeking to gain valuable work experience and exposure in a competitive profession by volunteering their services to an employer are often prohibited from doing so, even if the individual has no expectation of receiving compensation and adamantly denies that they are an employee.

When determining whether or not an individual is a volunteer and exempt from the minimum wage and overtime requirements of the FLSA, the Department of Labor and the Federal courts take into consideration the type of services provided by an individual, who benefits from the rendering of the services, and how long it takes to provide the services.

Because business-related services are not considered to be typical volunteer activities, individuals are often prohibited from volunteering their services to businesses in exchange for work experience.

The Department of Labor has carved out exceptions for student learners and trainees. However, if an employer gains an immediate advantage from the services provided by a volunteer, the Department of Labor will consider the volunteer to be an employee and require that the individual be paid the minimum wage.

The restrictions on volunteer activities are intended to safeguard against employer coercion. Protecting workers from unscrupulous employers is an important goal and must be preserved in our labor laws. However, the current immediate advantage test is too restrictive and should be altered.

The Job Skills Development Act eases the restrictions on volunteer activities without jeopardizing the important safeguards against employer coercion and worker displacement. These changes will help recent college graduates and individuals who have been out of the work force develop professional skills and gain experience.

Today, individuals face many obstacles in landing good jobs. Unfortunately, the FLSA imposes unnecessary burdens on ambitious individuals. Allowing businesses to provide opportunities for volunteers will benefit both employers and individuals attempting to break into a crowded job field.

Capitol Hill provides an excellent example of the benefits of allowing individuals to volunteer their services to employers. Young individuals participating in unpaid congressional internships gain a better understanding of the legislative process, develop office skills and make contacts that are invaluable in securing employment.

In my Washington office, six of my eight employees were unpaid interns before landing jobs on Capitol Hill. Two of my staffers volunteered in my office for several months before they were hired on as full-time paid employees. Both of these individuals have been promoted twice during the last year.

Because these two staffers were recent college graduates and produced work that benefited my office during their internships, they would have been prohibited from volunteering their services if I would have been forced to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

On the opening day of the 104th Congress, we passed legislation that brings