

Maloney	Peterson (PA)	Slaughter
Markey	Petri	Smith (MI)
Marshall	Pitts	Smith (NJ)
Matheson	Platts	Smith (TX)
Matsui	Pombo	Smith (WA)
McCarthy (MO)	Pomeroy	Snyder
McCarthy (NY)	Porter	Solis
McCollum	Portman	Souder
McCotter	Price (NC)	Spratt
McCrery	Pryce (OH)	Stark
McDermott	Putnam	Stearns
McGovern	Quinn	Stenholm
McHugh	Radanovich	Strickland
McInnis	Rahall	Stupak
McIntyre	Ramstad	Sullivan
McKeon	Rangel	Sweeney
McNulty	Regula	Tanner
Meehan	Rehberg	Tauscher
Meek (FL)	Renzi	Tauzin
Meeks (NY)	Reyes	Taylor (MS)
Menendez	Reynolds	Terry
Mica	Rodriguez	Thomas
Michaud	Rogers (AL)	Thompson (CA)
Miller (FL)	Rogers (KY)	Thompson (MS)
Miller (MI)	Rogers (MI)	Thornberry
Miller (NC)	Ros-Lehtinen	Tiahrt
Miller, Gary	Ross	Tiberi
Miller, George	Rothman	Tierney
Mollohan	Roybal-Allard	Turner (OH)
Moore	Royce	Turner (TX)
Moran (KS)	Ruppersberger	Udall (CO)
Murphy	Rush	Udall (NM)
Murtha	Ryan (OH)	Upton
Musgrave	Ryan (WI)	Van Hollen
Myrick	Ryan (KS)	Velazquez
Nadler	Sabo	Visclosky
Napolitano	Sanchez, Linda	Vitter
Neal (MA)	T.	Walden (OR)
Nethercutt	Sanchez, Loretta	Walsh
Neugebauer	Sanders	Wamp
Ney	Sandlin	Waters
Northup	Saxton	Watson
Norwood	Schakowsky	Watt
Nunes	Schiff	Waxman
Nussle	Schrock	Weiner
Oberstar	Scott (GA)	Weldon (FL)
Obey	Scott (VA)	Weldon (PA)
Olver	Sensenbrenner	Weller
Ortiz	Serrano	Wexler
Osborne	Sessions	Whitfield
Ose	Shadegg	Wicker
Oxley	Shaw	Wilson (NM)
Pallone	Shays	Wilson (SC)
Pascrell	Sherman	Wolf
Pastor	Sherwood	Woolsey
Payne	Shimkus	Wu
Pearce	Shuster	Wynn
Pelosi	Simmons	Young (AK)
Pence	Simpson	Young (FL)
Peterson (MN)	Skelton	

absent. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye".

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2211.

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

There was no objection.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN ENGROSSMENT OF H.R. 2211, READY TO TEACH ACT OF 2003

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that in the engrossment of the bill, H.R. 2211, the Clerk be authorized to make technical corrections and conforming changes to the bill.

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

There was no objection.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ACT OF 2003

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 309, I call up the bill (H.R. 438) to increase the amount of student loans that may be forgiven for teachers in mathematics, science, and special education, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 309, the bill is considered read for amendment.

The text of H.R. 438 is as follows:

H.R. 438

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 "Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act of 2003".

SEC. 2. ADDITIONAL QUALIFIED LOAN AMOUNTS.

(a) FFEL LOANS.—Section 428J(c) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1078-10(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(3) ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS FOR TEACHERS IN MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, OR SPECIAL EDUCATION.—Notwithstanding the amount specified in paragraph (1), the aggregate amount that the Secretary shall repay under this section shall not be more than \$17,500 in the case of—

"(A) a secondary school teacher—

"(i) who meets the requirements of subsection (b); and

"(ii) whose qualifying employment for purposes of such subsection is teaching mathematics or science; and

"(B) an elementary or secondary school teacher—

"(i) who meets the requirements of subsection (b), other than paragraphs (1)(B) and (C);

"(ii) whose qualifying employment for purposes of such subsection is teaching special education; and

"(iii) who, as certified by the chief administrative officer of the public or nonprofit private elementary or secondary school in which the borrower is employed, is teaching children with disabilities that correspond with the borrower's training and has demonstrated knowledge and teaching skills in the content areas of the elementary or secondary school curriculum that the borrower is teaching."

(b) DIRECT LOANS.—Section 460(c) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087j(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(3) ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS FOR TEACHERS IN MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, OR SPECIAL EDUCATION.—Notwithstanding the amount specified in paragraph (1), the aggregate amount that the Secretary shall repay under this section shall not be more than \$17,500 in the case of—

"(A) a secondary school teacher—

"(i) who meets the requirements of subsection (b)(1); and

"(ii) whose qualifying employment for purposes of such subsection is teaching mathematics or science; and

"(B) an elementary or secondary school teacher—

"(i) who meets the requirements of subsection (b)(1), other than subparagraphs (A)(ii) and (iii);

"(ii) whose qualifying employment for purposes of such subsection is teaching special education; and

"(iii) who, as certified by the chief administrative officer of the public or nonprofit private elementary or secondary school in which the borrower is employed, is teaching children with disabilities that correspond with the borrower's training and has demonstrated knowledge and teaching skills in the content areas of the elementary or secondary school curriculum that the borrower is teaching."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in the bill is adopted.

The text of the amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

H.R. 438

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 "Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act of 2003".

SEC. 2. INCREASED QUALIFIED LOAN AMOUNTS.

(a) FFEL LOANS.—Section 428J(c) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1078-10(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(3) INCREASED AMOUNTS FOR TEACHERS IN MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, OR SPECIAL EDUCATION.—

"(A) SERVICE QUALIFYING FOR INCREASED AMOUNTS.—Notwithstanding the amount specified in paragraph (1), the aggregate amount that the Secretary shall repay under this section shall not be more than \$17,500 in the case of—

"(i) a secondary school teacher—

"(I) who meets the requirements of subsection (b), subject to subparagraph (D) of this paragraph; and

"(II) whose qualifying employment for purposes of such subsection has been teaching mathematics or science on a full-time basis; and

"(ii) an elementary or secondary school teacher—

"(I) who meets the requirements of subsection (b), subject to subparagraph (D) of this paragraph;

"(II) whose qualifying employment for purposes of such subsection has been as a special education teacher whose primary responsibility is to provide special education to children with

NOES—17

Bartlett (MD)	Hefley	Paul
Bishop (UT)	Jones (NC)	Rohrabacher
Flake	King (IA)	Tancredo
Franks (AZ)	Kingston	Taylor (NC)
Gilchrest	Manzullo	Toomey
Gutknecht	Otter	

NOT VOTING—13

Cramer	Harman	Moran (VA)
Edwards	Hastings (FL)	Owens
Gephardt	Janklow	Pickering
Gibbons	Millender-	Towns
Goss	McDonald	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD) (during the vote). Two minutes remain to vote.

□ 1424

Mr. ROHRBACHER changed his vote from "aye" to "no."

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 339 and 340, I was unavoidably

disabilities (as those terms are defined in section 602 of the Individuals with Disabilities Act); and

“(III) who, as certified by the chief administrative officer of the public or nonprofit private elementary or secondary school in which the borrower is employed, is teaching children with disabilities that correspond with the borrower’s special education training and has demonstrated knowledge and teaching skills in the content areas of the elementary or secondary school curriculum that the borrower is teaching.

“(B) ACCELERATED PAYMENT.—Notwithstanding the requirements of subsection (b)(1) and paragraph (1) of this subsection that 5 consecutive complete years of service have been completed prior to the receipt of loan forgiveness, in the case of service described in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, the Secretary shall repay a portion of a borrower’s loan obligation outstanding at the commencement of the qualifying service under this subsection, not to exceed a total of \$17,500, in the following increments:

“(i) up to \$1,750, or 10 percent of such outstanding loan obligation, whichever is less, at the completion of the second year of such service;

“(ii) up to \$2,625, or 15 percent of such outstanding loan obligation, whichever is less, at the completion of the third year of such service;

“(iii) up to \$4,375, or 25 percent of such outstanding loan obligation, whichever is less, at the completion of the fourth year of such service; and

“(iv) up to \$8,750, or 50 percent of such outstanding loan obligation, whichever is less, at the completion of the fifth year of such service.

“(C) PROMISE TO COMPLETE SERVICE REQUIRED FOR ACCELERATED PAYMENT.—Any borrower who receives accelerated payment under this paragraph shall enter into an agreement to continue in the qualifying service for not less than 5 consecutive complete school years, or, upon a failure to complete such 5 years, to repay the United States, in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary, the amount of the loans repaid by the Secretary under this paragraph, together with interest thereon and, to the extent required in such regulations, the reasonable costs of collection. Such regulations may provide for waiver by the Secretary of such repayment obligations upon proof of economic hardship as specified in such regulations.

“(D) HIGHER POVERTY ENROLLMENT REQUIRED.—In order to qualify for an increased repayment amount under this paragraph, section 465(a)(2)(A) shall, for purposes of subsection (b)(1)(A) of this section, be applied by substituting ‘40 percent of the total enrollment’ for ‘30 percent of the total enrollment’.”

(b) DIRECT LOANS.—Section 460(c) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087j(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) INCREASED AMOUNTS FOR TEACHERS IN MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, OR SPECIAL EDUCATION.—

“(A) SERVICE QUALIFYING FOR INCREASED AMOUNTS.—Notwithstanding the amount specified in paragraph (1), the aggregate amount that the Secretary shall repay under this section shall not be more than \$17,500 in the case of—

“(i) a secondary school teacher—

“(I) who meets the requirements of subsection (b)(1), subject to subparagraph (D) of this paragraph; and

“(II) whose qualifying employment for purposes of such subsection has been teaching mathematics or science on a full-time basis; and

“(iii) an elementary or secondary school teacher—

“(I) who meets the requirements of subsection (b)(1), subject to subparagraph (D) of this paragraph; and

“(II) whose qualifying employment for purposes of such subsection has been as a special education teacher whose primary responsibility is to provide special education to children with

disabilities (as those terms are defined in section 602 of the Individuals with Disabilities Act); and

“(III) who, as certified by the chief administrative officer of the public or nonprofit private elementary or secondary school in which the borrower is employed, is teaching children with disabilities that correspond with the borrower’s special education training and has demonstrated knowledge and teaching skills in the content areas of the elementary or secondary school curriculum that the borrower is teaching.

“(B) ACCELERATED PAYMENT.—Notwithstanding the requirements of subsection (b)(1)(A) and paragraph (1) of this subsection that 5 consecutive complete years of service have been completed prior to the receipt of loan forgiveness, in the case of service described in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, the Secretary shall repay a portion of a borrower’s loan obligation outstanding at the commencement of the qualifying service under this subsection, not to exceed a total of \$17,500, in the following increments:

“(i) up to \$1,750, or 10 percent of such outstanding loan obligation, whichever is less, at the completion of the second year of such service;

“(ii) up to \$2,625, or 15 percent of such outstanding loan obligation, whichever is less, at the completion of the third year of such service;

“(iii) up to \$4,375, or 25 percent of such outstanding loan obligation, whichever is less, at the completion of the fourth year of such service; and

“(iv) up to \$8,750, or 50 percent of such outstanding loan obligation, whichever is less, at the completion of the fifth year of such service.

“(C) PROMISE TO COMPLETE SERVICE REQUIRED FOR ACCELERATED PAYMENT.—Any borrower who receives accelerated payment under this paragraph shall enter into an agreement to continue in the qualifying service for not less than 5 consecutive complete school years, or, upon a failure to complete such 5 years, to repay the United States, in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary, the amount of the loans repaid by the Secretary under this paragraph, together with interest thereon and, to the extent required in such regulations, the reasonable costs of collection. Such regulations may provide for waiver by the Secretary of such repayment obligations upon proof of economic hardship as specified in such regulations.

“(D) HIGHER POVERTY ENROLLMENT REQUIRED.—In order to qualify for an increased repayment amount under this paragraph, section 465(a)(2)(A) shall, for purposes of subsection (b)(1)(A)(i) of this section, be applied by substituting ‘40 percent of the total enrollment’ for ‘30 percent of the total enrollment’.”

SEC. 3. IMPLEMENTING HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHER REQUIREMENTS.

(a) AMENDMENTS.—

(1) FFEL LOANS.—Section 428J(b)(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1078-10(b)(1)) is amended—

(A) by inserting “and” after the semicolon at the end of subparagraph (A); and

(B) by striking subparagraphs (B) and (C) and inserting the following:

“(B) if employed as an elementary or secondary school teacher, is highly qualified as defined in section 9101(23) of the Elementary Secondary Education Act of 1965; and”

(2) DIRECT LOANS.—Section 460(b)(1)(A) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1087j(b)(1)(A)) is amended—

(A) by inserting “and” after the semicolon at the end of clause (i); and

(B) by striking clauses (ii) and (iii) and inserting the following:

“(ii) if employed as an elementary or secondary school teacher, is highly qualified as defined in section 9101(23) of the Elementary Secondary Education Act of 1965; and”

(b) TRANSITION RULE.—

(1) RULE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) of this section to sections 428J(b)(1) and 460(b)(1)(A) of the Higher Education Act of

1965 shall not be applied to disqualify any individual who, before the date of enactment of this Act, commenced service that met and continues to meet the requirements of such sections as in effect before such date of enactment.

(2) RULE NOT APPLICABLE TO INCREASED QUALIFIED LOAN AMOUNTS.—Paragraph (1) of this subsection shall not apply for purposes of obtaining increased qualified loan amounts under sections 428J(b)(3) and 460(b)(3) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as added by section 2 of this Act.

SEC. 4. INFORMATION ON BENEFITS TO RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

The Secretary shall—

(1) notify local educational agencies eligible to participate in the Small Rural Achievement Program authorized under subpart 1 of part B of title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 of the benefits available under the amendments made by this Act; and

(2) encourage such agencies to notify their teachers of such benefits.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. After 1 hour of debate on the bill, it shall be in order to consider the further amendment printed in House report 108-189 if offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), or his designee, which shall be considered read, shall not be subject to a demand for a division of the question, and shall be debatable for 10 minutes, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 438.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 438, the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act of 2003. I congratulate my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Columbia, South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), for introducing this bipartisan legislation and shepherding it through the committee process.

H.R. 438 is simple in its purpose and structure, but monumental in its potential to improve the lives of our Nation’s students. The bill before us provides for increased loan forgiveness for highly qualified math, science, and special education teachers teaching in high-need schools. These teachers must agree to teach for 5 consecutive years in schools that many of our disadvantaged students attend.

In January of 2002, President Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act, the bipartisan kindergarten through 12th grade education reform package that, for the first time, demands accountability and results in exchange for the billions of Federal dollars invested in the education of our

Nation's students. In No Child Left Behind, we call for a highly qualified teacher in every public school by the 2005–2006 school year. We have been providing resources to meet that goal and, in fact, a 35 percent increase in funding for teacher quality grants in the first year of No Child Left Behind, and the funding increases continue to come.

Now, with the bill before us today, we are building on that unequivocal financial commitment by increasing the loan forgiveness for teachers we need the most: in our high-needs schools. It is just one more way that this Congress is showing unwavering support for the Nation's schoolteachers.

Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree that there are few more important issues in this country than education of our Nation's children. More importantly, we want our children to be taught by caring, committed, and educated professionals. This bill will enable high-need elementary and secondary schools to attract highly qualified teachers and get the best and brightest into our classrooms.

H.R. 438 will provide up to \$17,500 in loan forgiveness for math, science, and special education teachers. These particular subject areas are facing extreme shortages, and our children are the ones who are suffering because of it. We must address this crisis in our classrooms. We recognize that teachers often face the greatest financial hardships in their early years of their career, and, for that reason, these teachers will begin to receive this assistance after the second year of teaching service is completed, which will continue annually through the completion of the required 5 years. This is yet one more way we are trying to assist teachers by reducing the financial burdens and in providing a more effective incentive for these much-needed teachers to remain in our poorer schools.

Mr. Speaker, a lack of highly qualified math, science, and special education teachers leaves our schools with large vacancies and shortchanges our children, and the success of our Nation depends on being able to compete in a global economy, and by providing a quality education to all of our children is where this must begin.

□ 1430

The National Science Foundation Director, Rita Colwell, said, "The lack of competitiveness of U.S. K–12 students has much larger ramifications than simply providing enough mathematicians and scientists for laboratories." And I will continue, "In these technological times, general scientific and mathematical literacy is crucial to the entire workforce and has implications for our economy into the future."

We must continue our efforts to recruit and retain the best and brightest into the field, and, more importantly, in high-need subject areas. H.R. 438 provides the right incentive for students to enter teaching and for those who are currently teaching to stay.

I am particularly pleased that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have worked closely with us to craft an amendment that recognizes a fundamental role that reading plays in a child's education. As the President has said, reading is the new civil right, and for that reason I am happy to support the amendment offered by our ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) that will include highly qualified State-certified reading specialists among those eligible for the increase in loan forgiveness. By recognizing that reading is the foundation of all other learning, this amendment will strengthen our efforts to improve results for students.

In addition, I strongly support this amendment because, despite the increased costs, it remains within our budget parameters without reducing the number of schools eligible that are eligible to receive this incentive. This is the key. It expands this vital resource without reducing opportunities for schools, which I think is the biggest downfall to other amendments that could have been offered to this bill today.

I want to urge my colleagues to support H.R. 438. A vote for this bill is a vote to support our Nation's students and our teachers, and H.R. 438 tells each and every one of them that their education, their future and the future of our country are vitally important, and that this Congress stands behind them.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 438. This legislation does provide much needed loan forgiveness for math, science and special education teachers in high need schools. It is critical that we provide school districts with the resources they need to recruit and retain the best teachers for our children, especially in these vital subject areas. In addition, legislation that we are debating today was improved over the introduced version through the adoption of an amendment by our colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT). This amendment provides for incremental loan forgiveness over the 5-year period of service as a teacher, rather than at the end of such service. This critical improvement will make loan forgiveness an attractive means to recruit and retain high-quality teachers in our most disadvantaged schools.

While H.R. 438 is a good start, we should be doing more. The scope of this bill is limited to math, science and special education teachers. These are critical areas in which we do have shortages of highly qualified teachers. However, we should also be extending loan forgiveness to other vital teaching areas such as Head Start teachers and all teachers who teach in our schools with extreme poverty. The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY) filed an amendment with the Committee on

Rules to expand loan forgiveness to Head Start teachers. During the latest year I have data for, nearly 8,000 teachers left Head Start programs. Over half the teachers who left Head Start programs did so due to low salaries. Clearly, the need for loan forgiveness in Head Start is evident. However, the Committee on Rules blocked consideration of this amendment.

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) also filed an amendment with the Committee on Rules to expand loan forgiveness to all teachers in extremely poor schools. Title I schools, especially the most disadvantaged of these schools, have enormous problems recruiting and retaining teachers of all subjects. These schools are the least likely to have certified teachers or teachers who know the subject matter that they are teaching. These schools are also the most likely to have high teacher turnover rates. Unfortunately, the Committee on Rules blocked consideration of this amendment as well.

The unwillingness to even debate these amendments here on the floor comes at the same time we are tragically underfunding our Federal education programs. Whether it is the No Child Left Behind Act, IDEA or Pell grant, the administration has failed to meet their education funding commitments.

President Bush and the House and the Senate Committee on Appropriations proposed funding Title I at \$12.35 billion. That is \$6 billion short of the \$18.5 billion promised in No Child Left Behind.

Repetition is the mother of study, so let me state again what I stated in the earlier bill, let me use this analogy again: An authorization bill, and this is a good authorization bill, is like that get well card which I will send to my friend who may be ill, and it does express my sentiments, and it expresses the value I have for my friend. But what my friend really needs is the Blue Cross card, and that is the appropriations bill. There is a real lag between authorization and appropriations. Just in Title I alone we are 30 percent below the bill that the President signed in Ohio, No Child Left Behind, and I think that we have to address that. We cannot address that here in the authorization bill. We did a good job in the authorization bill, a job that I think we enjoyed doing. But I think we as a Congress have to make sure that our appropriations come closer, if not match entirely, the authorization level.

The Republican budget resolution promised \$2.2 billion for new IDEA funding. The House and Senate Committee on Appropriations have proposed less than half that amount. In addition, Pell grants have been frozen by the House and Senate Committee on Appropriations despite increasing college costs.

While I again want to reiterate that I will support this legislation, the administration and the Republican Congress are missing an opportunity to

meet our education funding commitments.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the support of the ranking member of the subcommittee on the bill we have before us today, but once again we get into this other issue, and that is education funding.

Now, we all know about 90 percent of the funds for primary and secondary education, K-12, come from State and local sources. Federal Government's role has been to go in and help high-poverty schools and students who come from high-poverty neighborhoods. And if you look at the funding levels from fiscal year 2001, we spent \$28 billion in K-12 funding. If you are look at fiscal year 2003, some 2 years later, you will see that we are spending \$35.7 billion. Now, that is a great example of letting the perfect become the enemy of the good.

I think most Members on both sides of the aisle believe that we have done more than anyone could ever have expected the Federal Government to do in terms of increasing our funding for K-12 education programs so that we can meet our commitment to leave no child behind. We are doing our share. Unfortunately, the States are having great difficulty with their budgets, and some are having to cut education programs that they would rather not. But we cannot make up for the shortfalls and the problems that the States are having. We are doing our share. I am sure they will find a way to do theirs.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON), the subcommittee chairman, the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), a valuable member of subcommittee, for his work and leadership on bringing this important piece of legislation to the floor.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 438, the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act of 2003, which provides increased student loan forgiveness to those elementary and secondary public and private school teachers who teach math, science and special education in high-needs schools.

The bill is simple and straightforward. Under H.R. 438, teachers may receive up to \$17,500 in loan forgiveness if they agree to teach for 5 consecutive years in Title I schools with a poverty rate that exceeds 40 percent. This legislation simply expands upon what is in current law for all teachers in an effort to meet the dramatic shortage of teachers in these critical areas.

There is no question that we face a critical shortage of qualified math, science and special education teachers

across the country. The National Center for Education Statistics reported that in the 1999/2000 school year, 67 percent of public elementary and middle schools had vacancies in special education; 70 percent had vacancies in mathematics; 61 percent had vacancies in biology, and 51 percent had vacancies in the physical sciences.

Further, in a report called The Urban Teacher Challenge, virtually all of the Nation's largest urban school districts responding to a national survey reported to an immediate need for teachers in these high-need subjects; 95 percent reported an immediate need for math teachers; 98 percent report the need for science teachers; and 98 percent reported an immediate need for special education teachers.

With this kind of shortage, we must act quickly to do what we can to help fill this void. The Committee on Economic Development said in its recent report entitled Learning for the Future, Changing the Culture of Math and Science Education to Ensure a Competitive Workforce, "Improving the math and science skills of our young people is an important step toward innovative-led economic growth in the coming decades. While producing a more scientifically proficient citizenry, widespread math and science achievement will also widen the pipeline of scientists and engineers who drive innovation."

Mr. Speaker, the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act takes a big step in moving toward filling the gap in these vital areas. It is clear that we believe that all teachers are vital to our children and to the future of this country. That is why we have maintained the current law which allows for all teachers who teach in high-need schools to receive up to \$5,000 in loan forgiveness after 5 years of service. With limited Federal resources, we need to make difficult choices and set priorities. There is no question there is a critical need for math, science and special education teachers. There is no question that our children deserve the best education we can provide, and there is no question that this legislation will assist in meeting this goal.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote yes on H.R. 438 and stand firm in a commitment to our Nation's children and teachers.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time. I thank the chairman of the committee and the ranking member of the committee for a good bill.

H.R. 438 is a good bill as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. One thing it does not do is provide loan forgiveness for Head Start teachers, and this is a big mistake. As the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Education Reform, which is the committee working on the Head Start reauthorization, our committee has heard wit-

ness after witness, and both Republican and Democrat agree on the importance of having teachers with 4-year degrees in the Head Start programs. In fact, one of the provisions in the Head Start reauthorization bill that has strong bipartisan support is a goal to have 50 percent of Head Start teachers with a BA degree by the year 2008.

□ 1445

This is another of the Republicans' classic case of not putting their money where their mouth is. We can talk all we want about a good goal and how much this goal will help our kids, but if the teachers cannot get their BA degrees and at the same time afford to teach in Head Start, then what does that goal mean?

Salaries for Head Start teachers are much lower than the salaries for other similar teaching positions. Currently, the average salary for teaching in a public school prekindergarten program is close to double the average salary of a Head Start teacher with the exact same education. I think that anyone who becomes a preschool teacher is a pretty selfless, devoted person, but let us get real. Very few people, no matter how devoted they are, can afford to choose a job that pays half of what another job pays for almost the exact same work.

If we would offer Head Start teachers help with paying their Federal student loans, that could make up for some of the salary difference. Student loan forgiveness would allow more teachers with 4-year degrees to teach in a Head Start program, and current Head Start teachers at the same time could go on and get their BA degrees while continuing to work at Head Start.

I worry that 5 years from now, unless we invest in these teachers, when we are again reviewing Head Start, Members are going to say, see, it does not do any good to try to get teachers with BA degrees into Head Start and use that as a mark against a Head Start program.

Democrats offered amendments to include Head Start teachers in H.R. 438 every step along the way when we were considering the Head Start bill; but regrettably, the majority defeated these inclusions on a party line vote over and over again. Including Head Start teachers in H.R. 438 would make it a much better bill.

Mr. Speaker, including Head Start teachers in the bill would help millions of low-income children get the head start that they need in life.

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

Another wonderful example of let us let the perfect become the enemy of the good. The President in his proposal, and Senator GRAHAM when he was a former House Member, made it clear that the focus here was to look at high-poverty schools and look at the basics, math, science and special education.

In committee, and I am sure on the floor today, we are going to hear calls

for, well, this is a good bill but: but we need loan forgiveness for Head Start teachers; we need loan forgiveness for librarians; we need loan forgiveness for reading teachers, and the list went on and on and on. If we were to have done all of those, one, we would have not the budget to do it or, secondly, so few schools would qualify that maybe one out of 10 schools under this bill would actually get some help.

Our job is to make decisions, and what we are trying to do here is to focus in on the highest needs in our poorest schools.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), our good friend and a member of the committee and the author of this bill.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to sponsor this important bill that is a product of the President's leadership and dedication to educate all of our country's children. I would like to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON), working with the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), for their leadership and guidance on this issue.

H.R. 438, the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act, is a straightforward bill which increases the amount of loan forgiveness for secondary math and science teachers and K through 12 special education teachers to a maximum of \$17,500 from the \$5,000 currently provided in the Higher Education Act for all teachers in qualified schools.

The purpose of this bill is to ensure our future workforce is scientifically literate and competent, skills that the Committee for Economic Development and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers have identified as keys to our country's ability to compete in the global marketplace. Unfortunately, our high school students consistently test toward the bottom in math and science compared to the rest of the world.

Teachers working in the schools that face the greatest difficulty in recruiting math, science and special ed teachers will be eligible for the increased amount of loan forgiveness. Teachers will begin to receive loan forgiveness after their second year of teaching, with annual payments thereafter. To further assist children in low-income schools, eligible teachers must be highly qualified as required by the No Child Left Behind Act.

I look forward to the day when a cohort of math, science and special ed teachers begins teaching in our neediest schools inspired by the incentives of this bill. Those teachers will clearly know they are part of a national program designed to ensure all American children are equipped with the life skills necessary to contribute and succeed in a technologically driven world economy.

This bill is a first step to help students teach. It would be great if no

teacher had student loans; but those who do have debt, we need to make sure every student loan borrower has a real opportunity to consolidate their loans. Later, during the reauthorization of a different part of the Higher Education Act, we will need to make sure we repeal the single holder rule. It will be part of my commitment to teachers everywhere that they can have the benefit of competition from the more than 1,000 lenders in the program when they consolidate their loans and thus allow them to further reduce their debt burden by taking advantage of historically low, fixed-interest rates.

My goal with this bill is to ensure our Nation remains a competitive force in the world. I hope a secondary effect will be to send a strong signal that America honors and respects those who accept the calling to teach.

I want to thank the professionals of the Committee on Education and the Workforce for its hard work to make this bill professional and possible, especially Kathleen Smith, Rick Stombres, Holli Traud, Alison Ream, Jo Marie St. Martin, Kris Ann Pearce and Sally Loverjoy, along with Rachel Post of the gentleman from Michigan's (Mr. EHLERS) office and Laurin Groover, Dino Teppara and Trane McCloud of my office.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 438, the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I, first of all, would like to commend the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), from Columbia, the principal author of this bill for his fine work on the bill; and I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS).

(Mr. ANDREWS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Michigan for yielding me the time.

I also would like to congratulate the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) on his outstanding work on this bill. I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON), the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) for their great work in bringing this forward.

We are very much in favor of saying to teachers who teach math and science and special education in schools that are plagued with difficult challenges that they should get increased loan forgiveness. That is a great idea, and we are happy to support it.

We believe that that loan forgiveness should be extended further. Democrats offered amendments that would have extended that loan forgiveness to Head Start and other preschool teachers. It would have extended it to teachers in rural schools and some other areas.

The chairman of the full committee was on the floor a few minutes ago and

said that we are here to make decisions and that the perfect should not be the enemy of the good. Implicit in his remarks, of course, are that there are trade-offs for decisions that we make. Let me explore the trade-off that I think the majority's unwisely making by excluding our amendments from this bill.

If we were to adopt the Democratic amendments that would provide this same loan forgiveness for teachers who teach in our preschool programs, who teach in our rural schools and in other areas that we raise as amendments, we could make the choice of reducing the tax cut that the majority passed in this House last month. If we were to do so, how much of a reduction in tax cut would we have to make? The answer is to fund additional loan forgiveness for Head Start teachers, for rural teachers, for these other teachers it makes reference to, for every \$100 of the tax cut the majority passed, we would have to take away 30 cents. So for every \$100 worth of tax cuts people would get, they would still get \$99.70 of reduced taxes if we extended this benefit to those who teach our 3- and 4-year-olds prereading and premath, if those who go to rural districts worked especially hard to recruit teachers.

We commend the majority for bringing forth this bill, and we support it; but we must say, the benefits of extended loan forgiveness should not stop with this bill. What should stop is the raid on the Federal Treasury, as I said, the worshipping at the altar of fiscal irresponsibility. We support the bill, but we know that we could do more.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS), my good friend, one of the few scientists we have serving in the House.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

I am very pleased to rise in support of this bill. It is something which is very badly needed, and the reason it is needed is very simple. The good jobs of the future are going to require a basic understanding of math and science. I will address specifically the math and science portion of the bill, although I recognize full well that special education also is in great need of teachers. This bill will address these issues through the loan forgiveness program.

Let me give some of the facts on why it is important that we improve our K-12 education in math and science. First of all, we have had a decline in undergraduate enrollments and graduation rates for the past 17 years in engineering. Currently, our graduation rates in all the physical sciences, which includes engineering, computer science, space science, physics and chemistry, are well below what they were 10 years ago. The only field that has higher enrollments is the life sciences.

If my colleagues ask why we are graduating fewer people, it is because the sciences are not being taught properly in the K-12 system, and the reason

is that many teachers, good hearted as they are and try as they may, have not had the proper training and they cannot do the job. So it is very important that we reward and attract better-trained teachers to these positions and also give them the tools to work with.

The teacher shortage in math and science is real. According to the latest figures, 70 percent of our schools have vacancies in mathematics teachers; 61 percent have vacancies in biology or life sciences; and 51 percent have vacancies in physical science.

Even when teachers are available, a high percentage are not adequately prepared to teach the math and science courses. At the current time, for junior and high schools combined, 57 percent of those who teach the physical sciences do not have either an undergraduate major or a minor in the subject they are teaching. So how can they be expected to inspire students to a career in science and engineering?

Inadequately trained teachers leads to students who are unprepared. According to the "Third International Math and Science Study," 12th grade U.S. students' test scores rank at or near the bottom of all developed countries in math, science and physics achievement.

Teachers want to do the job right. They want to teach well. They want to be in the schools; but if they have not been properly trained and if they are feeling the lure of higher pay in industry for the skills that they do have, it puts the schools in an impossible situation. This is not true, incidentally, of all schools. This bill only addresses the problem in title I schools, but that is extremely important because these are the students who really need an opportunity in life; and if we want to give them a real opportunity in life, we have to train them properly, and that means training in the jobs of the future, training in math and science.

In conclusion, this is a good bill. I support it. I hope it passes. Above all, I hope it has the effect we anticipate.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. EHLERS. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a moment to thank the gentleman from Michigan and his colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT), before all of our colleagues, because these two scientists, who happen to both sit on our committee, have been relentless in their efforts to get Congress to fund math and science education; and whether it be in the bill that we have before us for title I schools or in broader programs that affect teachers in other schools, these two gentlemen have really, relentless does not even begin to describe their tenacity in ensuring that Congress steps up to what is needed to help math and science education in all of our schools. I just want to say thanks.

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Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, if I had known the gen-

tleman was going to be so complimentary, I could have yielded more time.

I want to also finally compliment the sponsor of the bill, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), who has done yeoman work in preparing a good bill, one that will really meet the needs of the children and provide jobs for them in the future.

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT), and let me just say that it is interesting, as a Latin teacher, to stand here with a physicist on each side of me, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague from Michigan for yielding me this time, and I am pleased to follow my other friend, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS). I want thank the chairman for his kind words, and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) and I, I am sure, will continue to persist in seeing that science and math education are well represented in our legislative activities.

Over the next 10 years, as you have heard, Mr. Speaker, we will have to hire nationally more than 2.2 million teachers just to stay even, to make up for the number of people leaving the teaching force, even without making efforts to bring down the class sizes. The problem is especially acute in special education, where there is a chronic annual shortage of tens of thousands of teachers nationwide.

This bill will create incentives to help ensure that we have enough teachers, especially in the areas of math, science, and special education. Loan forgiveness is one of the most effective incentives available to us. In the subcommittee I offered an amendment to provide loan forgiveness incrementally over 5 years of teaching service, as opposed to the original bill that provided loan forgiveness only after a full 5 years. I am pleased that the committee included this incremental loan forgiveness in the final version of the bill. I think it will help with teacher recruitment and retention.

Many teachers, especially in the math and sciences field, leave in the first few years. By spreading this incentive, this loan forgiveness, over 5 years, I think it will provide an incentive for teachers to stay instead of leaving the profession or moving to school districts that can afford to pay more. And while I would have liked the bill to cover teachers working in more districts and teaching in other subjects beyond math and science and special education, I still support this legislation.

Now, I must say to the chairman, who said that to cover other districts or other subjects or to help with Head Start teachers, the money just was not available, please, I never want to hear that argument again this year. We

have just been told by the majority over the last 2 years that there are several trillion dollars that they found, that are more than we know what to do with, and they have to be given back. It has to go back in the form of tax cuts. Well, that is several trillion dollars, with a T, that we are talking about.

Now, perhaps the majority thinks that the people who receive these tax cuts will pay to recruit teachers and will pay for their professional development, will pay for Head Start competitive salaries, will pay for special education, because, as the majority says, it is their money, they know how to use it better. And if I sound a little sarcastic, it is because I get very impatient with this argument. Trust me, we will not see these tax cuts end up in the hands of the Head Start teachers, we will not see these tax cuts coming back to provide for the training and professional development of teachers or for the recruitment of teachers.

This bill will, however, help, and, Mr. Speaker, I do support it.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE), my good friend, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Education Reform.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I congratulate all those who were involved with this, particularly the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON), the chairman, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

Things have changed in education, and they have changed a lot because of what we have done right here, and a lot of people, frankly, do not like it. The No Child Left Behind is a tough piece of legislation. For those who do not believe it, just go talk to your school superintendents and hear some of the complaints they have about it. It is tough because we have standards and assessments, we are doing testing, we are making demands, and if you do not make the mark, then you will be penalized for that. And indeed, it has taken a lot of steps to educate kids better than we ever have before, and that is very commendable.

One thing that has been missing in all of this has been identified in this legislation which we have before us is the fact that we need to have teachers, particularly in specialized areas, who will fill the niches of being able to teach in those areas and who are themselves prepared in those particular areas. This loan forgiveness in this excellent piece of legislation which we have before us which is going to give us, we hope, more science teachers, more math teachers, and more special education teachers and, perhaps, more reading specialists is of extraordinary importance to make sure that we are meeting the concerns and problems we

have with educating all of our young people. And for that reason, I think we should all support it in every way we can.

It adds to all that we have done in recent years in education. It is going to bring the best and the brightest to teaching. But by giving them loan forgiveness over a period of 5 years, first of all, they will be there for 5 years; and, secondly, it is my judgment that when they have taught for 5 years, they will look around and say, this is a good profession, and they will want to continue to teach after that.

This does cost money, and quite frankly, we on this side should be very proud of the increases which we have had in education that we have pushed for in the last 6 or 7 years. A lot of mention has been made that we are not doing enough about the funding of education. We have done a lot about the funding of education, increases of 16 percent a year for the last 6 or 7 years in the Congress of the United States.

The time has come to educate better. This legislation helps with that. Let us all support it.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have spent 27 years in the Congress and 27 years on the Committee on Education and the Workforce, formerly called the Committee on Education and Labor. And in those 27 years, I always felt and discovered that we do our best work especially in the area of education, sometimes we have some differences in areas of labor, but in areas of education we do our best work when we work together in a bipartisan way.

I think the last few months have demonstrated that we are able to bring to the floor a bipartisan bill. It was an exercise of civility and, as I mentioned earlier, actually enjoyable writing this bill. I think, again, we can demonstrate that bipartisanship does work, and it has worked here again today.

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

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES).

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the Chamber about the critical need to attract qualified teachers to the education profession.

Over the next decade, a large percentage of teachers will retire, depriving our schools and our children of the knowledge and leadership gained through years of experience. This problem affects both urban and rural schools, but especially high-needs schools with large numbers of children below the poverty level.

Teachers are saddled with the responsibility of educating our children in their classroom studies, teaching morals and values, and making them productive members of society. Our teachers are instrumental in influencing our children's development, and yet there is little acknowledgment or reward for this responsibility they carry.

As the husband of a kindergarten teacher and the father of three, I understand that a teacher who remains in the classroom and has a passion for teaching is a great benefit to our children. We need to find ways to attract young professionals to teaching careers by offering incentives to keep them in the teaching profession and develop them into talented educators. H.R. 438 encourages those going into the teaching profession to stay in a career they are passionate about while affording them the financial ability to do so.

Teachers are the foundation of our children's education and development, and, therefore, it is necessary to invest in the well-being of their careers. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 438.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) also. I have enjoyed working together with him. I want to thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) for the great work he has done as a new member of the committee for bringing this bill to the floor. And I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and the chairman, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

This is just the start of what we are doing on reauthorizing the Higher Education Act. These are the two teacher bills that we are doing today. We will also be doing three more bills, hopefully get them wrapped up this fall, and then, when the other body does their work, we will be able to early next spring, hopefully, complete the higher education reauthorization.

With that, I would like to thank all those who have participated and ask that our colleagues all join us in support of this bill.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 438, which aims to bring highly qualified teachers to low-income areas. I rise in support of the bill but I am disappointed that this may become yet another unfunded mandate by the other party. It is my hope that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will not simply vote in favor of this bill now only to deprive the underlying programs of the financial support they need.

I support this bill, because the classrooms in our country are in great jeopardy and we must act to rescue them. All of our children deserve a good education that prepares them for the future as productive members of their society and of the global economic community. A proper education is needed in order to mold our children into future leaders. There is a lack of highly qualified teachers in math, science, and special education, which is leaving our children unprepared in going onto higher education and the workforce. This shortage of qualified teachers is mainly in rural and urban areas where many of the families are low-income. Many of these teachers are unqualified to teach these subjects and the new teachers that come to these schools, do lack expertise in science, math, and special education.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics in 1999–2000, 67 percent of public middle school and high schools had va-

cancies in special education, 70 percent had vacancies in mathematics, and 61 percent had vacancies in biology. This means that the vast majority of our public schools need teachers to teach these vital courses. The Committee for Economic Development also reported that almost a third of high school math classes are taught by teachers who did not major or minor in mathematics, and 45 percent of biology classes are taught by instructors who did not major or minor in biology. These statistics show that these courses are not taught by the teachers with the most experience and can help our children reach their full potential.

Given these overwhelming statistics, I would like to extend my support to the "Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act". This program will give qualified teachers loan forgiveness when they commit to teaching in a low-income school for five years. A qualified teacher can receive loan forgiveness of up to \$5,000 of the outstanding loan obligation after the fifth complete school year of teaching. Teachers must also meet the "highly qualified" criteria before receiving any loan forgiveness.

If we do not bring highly qualified teachers to these schools, we do a great disservice to our nation and children. We hurt our Nation by not adequately preparing our future leaders and our children by not giving them the best public education possible, which they truly deserve. Our economy is becoming very competitive and higher education is necessary to become successful in our society. It is our responsibility to fully educate our children in math, science, and special educations so they can help reach their full potential academically.

In addition, I offered an amendment in the Rules Committee yesterday, which unfortunately, was thwarted by the import of the Rule as debated this morning that also kept other very viable and important amendment proposals from consideration. The amendment proposed to add to the list of qualification criteria of FFEL loan forgiveness teachers who have attended Historically Black Colleges and Universities and those serving large portions of Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian-Pacific Americans, or other underrepresented populations to pursue continuous teaching careers. I offered this amendment for the purpose of creating an incentive for former students of Historically Black Colleges and Universities and those serving large portions of Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian-Pacific Americans, or other underrepresented populations to pursue continuous teaching careers. The increase in teachers from these backgrounds increase the diversity and cultural background of the pool of recruited and/or retained high quality teachers of applied subjects.

Therefore I stand in strong support of H.R. 438 and hope that my Congressional colleagues will also offer support for this legislation.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act and the principles behind it. I am pleased to see the House working to align the Higher Education Act with the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act, and I hope to see continued efforts to this end. By increasing the amount of student loans that may be forgiven for teachers in mathematics, science and special education that agree to teach in Title I schools for at least 5 years, we send a strong message of support to those teachers

who accept the challenges of teaching in some of our most disadvantaged schools—schools that do not have the resources to attract and reward high quality teachers.

Supporting these teachers in every possible way is critical to the vision of No Child Left Behind. While H.R. 438 provides some relief to math, science and special education teachers in Title I school districts, more should and must be done. Ensuring that every child, regardless of his or her income or background, has highly qualified teachers—whether they are in elementary or secondary schools, head start or other pre-kindergarten programs—is essential to ensuring their achievement. I applaud the message and the meaning behind the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act and I hope we will continue to show support for teachers that take on the challenge of service in underprivileged areas as we take up appropriations, Head Start reauthorization and other related legislation. I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 438.

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act (H.R. 438), which will help improve the education of children attending public schools in high poverty areas.

Research has demonstrated that highly qualified teachers and high retention rates improve the performance of our schools. This will require additional incentives for our nation's college students to enter the teaching profession.

The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act will increase the amount of student loans that can be forgiven from \$5,000 to \$17,000 for "highly qualified" math, science or special education teachers serving in schools with special needs.

For the past two years, Congress has been working to ensure that no child is left behind. We must also ensure that we do not leave minority teachers behind.

Currently minority students account for 33 percent of American public school enrollment. But minorities only account for 13 percent of America's public school teachers. It is estimated that more than 40 percent of the nation's public schools have no minority teachers at all.

This gap between the percentage of minority students and teachers will not close on its own. In fact, it will grow wider every day.

By the year 2025, minority students will account for half of American public school enrollment. But one bleak estimate has minority teachers representing just 5 percent of the future teaching force.

If attracting and retaining high quality teachers is necessary for our children to have a high quality education, and we continue to value equal opportunity and diversity in our public workplace, then more must be done to correct this disparity.

That is why I have worked to secure funding for innovative programs on Long Island.

In 2002, I secured \$800,000 for a new Institute for Minority Teacher Training, based at St. Johns University, to attract a new cadre of minority math and science teachers.

Last year, I secured \$400,000 in funding for Dowling College to continue the development of an innovative program to attract minority students from economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, help the students obtain an undergraduate degree, and return them to the same neighborhoods to teach in underserved public schools.

I am hopeful that this legislation will work in concert with my efforts on Long Island to ensure that our teachers become as diverse as the student body they mentor.

We cannot make the mistake of leaving minority teachers behind.

I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort by creating similar programs in their districts and by expanding incentives for people to teach in previously neglected schools.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 438, the "Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act of 2003." The bill increases from \$5,000 to \$17,500 the maximum amount in which student loans can be forgiven for math, science and special education teachers in Title I schools. While the bill is clearly a step in the right direction, the Republican majority has failed once again to fully fund key education programs. Prior to the enactment of the "No Child Left Behind Act" (NCLB) President Bush and the Republican leadership promised to provide funding to place a "highly qualified" teacher in every classroom. Tomorrow the House will vote on the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill which freezes funding for the Teacher Quality State Grant programs for FY04.

Several weeks ago the Republican leadership forced through a monstrous tax cut with the promise that vital domestic programs would not be cut. However, the bill which was reported out of the Appropriations Committee freezes funding for Teacher Quality State Grants at \$2.9 billion in FY04, the bill falls far short of the \$3.175 billion promised in the "No Child Left Behind Act" funding schedule. Overall, the Republican leadership is more than \$8 billion below the amount authorized for the "No Child Left Behind Act" for FY04. The \$24.3 billion authorized for FY04 is consistent with the Republican leadership's attack on domestic programs. The 1.6 percent increase over FY03 continues a downward trend for key education programs. Instead of rewarding "corporate fat cats" the Republican party should rescind the tax cut and support increased funding for key education programs.

Mr. FALCOMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 438, a bill to increase the amount of student loans that may be forgiven for teachers in mathematics, science, and special education. The Higher Education Act of 1965 currently provides that teachers at schools designated as "low-income" may cancel up to \$5,000 of his/her student loans. H.R. 438 would increase this amount to \$17,500 for mathematics, science, and special education teachers.

American Samoa currently has 37 schools designated as "low-income" and I have encouraged our teachers to take advantage of the opportunity to have portions of their student loans forgiven. A good education is crucial to our children's development as individuals and as members of this community, and we need to begin with providing our children with quality teachers who are well educated and committed to teaching.

H.R. 438 will allow us to continue to recruit and attract qualified teachers committed to educating our children. I only hope that in the future we will be able to extend this increased amount to all teachers. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 438.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act, which would provide math,

science, and special education teachers with up to \$17,500 in Federal student loan forgiveness if they teach for 5 consecutive years in a Title I school.

Classrooms in poor areas are facing a crisis. A lack of qualified teachers in math, science, and special education is leaving schools without options and students without the educational opportunities they deserve. The shortage affects children both in urban and rural schools, and while the demand for teachers remains very high, the number of them entering classrooms remains low, particularly in depressed areas. There is an obvious need to provide incentives for educators to teach these subjects in lower-income neighborhoods.

If signed into law, the legislation before us will benefit children in nearly every part of my congressional district. The Bakersfield City School District, for example, has 41 eligible schools, the fifth-most of any district in California. Sixteen of the eighteen schools in the Lancaster Unified School District are eligible. The bill will also benefit schools in Atascadero, Mojave, California City, Taft, San Luis Obispo, and Ridgecrest, CA.

Our President said that, "when it comes to educating our children, failure is not an option." As such, the goal of the Federal Government with regard to education should be to help bring good teachers to schools that desperately need them, and that is why I am a cosponsor of and look forward to voting for this legislation.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, each one of us has had a special teacher that touched our lives as children—a teacher who managed to capture our minds and create in us a hunger for more information.

Mr. Speaker, I rise here today in support of H.R. 438, the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act of 2003, which will create incentives for our nation's best and brightest teachers to educate students in our poorest and most disadvantaged school districts.

It will also ensure that our children with special needs are taught by educators who are trained to work with their unique disabilities, so that they can succeed along with their peers in the classroom.

This legislation more than triples the maximum amount of Federal student loan forgiveness available for math, science and special education teachers who commit to teaching math, science, and special education in a low-income community school for 5 years.

This dramatic increase in loan forgiveness—from \$5,000 in current law to \$17,500—will provide schools with an effective tool to recruit and retain high quality teachers in areas of critical need.

Student loan forgiveness for high-need teachers, such as math, science, and special education, provides an effective incentive and can be a critical link in increasing the supply of these essential educators.

At a time when our States are facing a growing fiscal crisis with fewer resources available in their own budgets for recruiting teachers, this legislation will provide an additional recruitment tool for schools serving low-income students in inner cities and rural areas.

It is my hope that this legislation will also attract intelligent young men and women, including those from minority communities, to enter the teaching profession and to specialize in math, science, or special education.

Helping our States and local communities recruit excellent teachers can have dramatic results. Students in these schools are generally those that would benefit most from having a highly qualified teacher, and these schools often face the most difficulty in attracting quality educators.

Studies show that teachers with advanced degrees are less prevalent in high-poverty schools. Other studies also demonstrate that a knowledgeable and qualified teacher is a critical determinant in closing the achievement gap for students.

H.R. 438, the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act provides a meaningful incentive to attract teachers in key subjects to Title I schools in our nation's inner cities and rural areas, where they are desperately needed.

The two bills that the House has considered today make critical reforms to help States and school districts ensure that every child has the chance to learn from a highly qualified school teacher.

H.R. 438, the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act and H.R. 2211, the Ready to Teach Act demonstrate the commitment of the House to offer new tools to schools and communities by strengthening teacher training programs and creating significant new incentives for math, science, and special education teachers to educate students in disadvantaged school districts.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, as a mother of a teacher, and the granddaughter of one of my district's most noteworthy educators, I rise today in support of H.R. 438, the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act.

Our teachers lay the foundation for our future, and must be adequately compensated in whatever field they teach.

However, math, science, and special education are subjects in which many rural and urban school districts, including my own, are facing shortages. In fact the entire Nation faces such shortages.

According to the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, 31 percent of math teachers, 33 percent of life sciences teachers, and 57 percent of physical science teachers currently teaching grades 7–12 do not have a major or minor in the field they are teaching.

The U.S. demand for scientists and engineers is expected to increase at more than double the rate for all other occupations during the next decade. The need for a scientifically literate population is essential to boost our economy and strengthen our national security. Technology and the innovation it creates drive productivity and economic growth.

If the U.S. is to retain its competitive edge and maintain its leadership role in the world, we must do a better job teaching our children science and mathematics, as well as providing every child who has special needs the opportunity to develop and learn to his or her fullest potential.

To do this effectively a concerted effort must be made to recruit, train, reinvigorate, and retain teachers in these fields.

H.R. 438 provides an important step in meeting these challenges by expanding loan forgiveness provisions in the Higher Education Act to \$17,500 for math, science, and special education teachers teaching in Title I schools.

I introduced similar legislation last Congress. H.R. 789 which would expand the eligibility of individuals to qualify for loan forgiveness for teachers in order to provide additional

incentives for teachers currently employed or seeking employment in economically depressed rural areas, territories, and Indian reservations.

H.R. 438 does a part of that, and I am pleased to support it. I also look forward to joining Mr. THOMPSON on his Rural Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act and taking even further steps to better compensate teachers and to ensuring that all of our children are prepared to meet the challenges of this century.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are making teacher preparation the first order of business for the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. Teachers are the common thread running through all of our education efforts.

Quality teaching is essential if we are to fulfill our promise to leave no child behind. Head Start, IDEA, bilingual education, adult education, and higher education, all depend on high quality instruction by well-prepared teachers.

I support loan forgiveness of up to \$17,500 for math, science, and special education teachers. However, I believe the scope of this bill is too narrow.

It does not address other equally pressing priorities, such as early childhood education or the growing need for teachers for an expanding population of limited English proficient children.

During committee consideration, my colleagues and I attempted to expand the loan forgiveness programs, but we lost every amendment on a party-line vote.

We were told by the other side that increasing loan forgiveness for bilingual teachers and Head Start teachers was a worthwhile Federal investment, but they said because we have limited resources, we have to make choices.

I'm all for making choices; that's what we're here to do. Making choices means setting priorities. The Hispanic community, and the low-income community are asking us: When are our children going to be considered a priority?

Through the No Child Left Behind Act, we require that schools across the country close the achievement gap between limited English proficient children and their peers. This is absolutely the right thing to do. Unfortunately, there are not enough teachers to do the job.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there are approximately 4.5 million limited English proficient children in our schools, and the number is growing. Sadly, only 12.5 percent of the teachers who have these LEP students in their classrooms have had 8 or more hours of preparation in the last 3 years on how to teach students who are limited English proficient.

It is unfortunate that the majority has insisted on a budget and a series of tax cuts that have drained the treasury and knocked Hispanic and LEP children from the priority list.

My hope is that we will put resources behind all the good intentions of this legislation.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Education and Workforce Committee, I supported H.R. 438, the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act of 2003 and I am pleased to have the opportunity to support it on the House Floor today.

The 1998 Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act established a loan forgiveness program for teachers in title I schools. Bor-

rowers with no outstanding loan balance as of 1998 could receive up to \$5,000 in loan forgiveness after teaching for 5 years in a title I school with at least 30 percent poverty.

This legislation would increase the amount of loan forgiveness for math, science and special education teachers from \$5,000 to \$17,500. It is critical that we ensure all classrooms have highly qualified teachers, especially in schools with high populations of students disadvantaged by poverty. This bill, however, could be significantly improved by expanding loan forgiveness to teachers of all disciplines in high poverty schools, to Head Start teachers, and to teachers in rural schools.

Rural schools across America are struggling as they attempt to provide a strong and sound educational experience for their students. Their remoteness, limited resources and small faculties present numerous challenges for school administrators and school boards. In addition, rural teachers in Wisconsin earn 11 percent less than teachers in urban school districts. School loan forgiveness for teachers in rural schools would allow new teachers to view careers in small rural school districts as positive professional options.

During committee consideration of H.R. 438, and again during Rules Committee yesterday evening, I offered an amendment that would have helped small rural school districts increase their competitiveness for recruitment of teachers. This amendment would have expanded the eligibility of the loan forgiveness provision to teachers in rural schools. Moreover, because this amendment did not increase the cost of the bill, I am disappointed that it was prevented from being considered on the House Floor.

Ensuring that all of our children have highly qualified teachers is critical to ensuring their achievement. In the 1999–2000 school year, over a fifth of secondary students took at least one class from a teacher who neither majored nor minored in that subject in college; over a third received instruction in at least one class from a teacher who was not certified in the subject nor had academic training in that subject.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 438 will help put qualified math, science, and special education teachers in the classroom and although I am concerned that H.R. 438 does not go far enough in assisting our local schools and teachers, it is a step forward. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to support this bill and I hope we can continue to work to ensure that all our students have highly qualified teachers.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). All time for debate on the bill has expired.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GEORGE MILLER OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I offer an amendment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California:

Page 2, line 24, strike "and"; on page 3, line 24, strike the period and insert "and" and after such line insert the following:

"(iii) an elementary or secondary school teacher who primarily teaches reading and—

“(I) who meets the requirements of subsection (b), subject to subparagraph (D) of this paragraph;

“(II) who has obtained a separate reading instruction credential from the State in which the teacher is employed; and

“(III) who is certified by the chief administrative officer of the public or nonprofit private elementary or secondary school in which the borrower is employed to teach reading—

“(aa) as being proficient in teaching the essential components of reading instruction as defined in section 1208 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; and

“(bb) as having such credential.

Page 6, line 18, strike “and”; on page 7, line 17, strike the period and insert “; and” and after such line insert the following:

“(iii) an elementary or secondary school teacher who primarily teaches reading and—

“(I) who meets the requirements of subsection (b), subject to subparagraph (D) of this paragraph;

“(II) who has obtained a separate reading instruction credential from the State in which the teacher is employed; and

“(III) who is certified by the chief administrative officer of the public or nonprofit private elementary or secondary school in which the borrower is employed to teach reading—

“(aa) as being proficient in teaching the essential components of reading instruction as defined in section 1208 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; and

“(bb) as having such credential.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 309, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I offer this amendment, along with the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER). This is to provide loan forgiveness for those teachers who specialize in teaching reading.

Just last week we saw the scores on the National Assessment of Education Progress that were released by the Department of Education, and the scores obviously show that we have a long way to go. While the scores of fourth-graders were up slightly, the scores of eighth-graders were stagnant, and the scores for high school students were actually down. This is not acceptable, but I think it does demonstrate that in some areas we are making progress.

I think we also understand that one of the basic tenets of the Leave No Child Behind was that good, qualified teachers in areas of specialties were an absolute cornerstone to the success of this legislation. All of the data suggests to us that where a child is exposed in succeeding years to well-qualified teachers, those children do much better than the children who receive teachers who may or may not be qualified to teach the subject matters.

This legislation to provide loan forgiveness goes a long way in helping us to provide the incentives not only to attract individuals to teaching, but also to make sure that we have a

chance to retain those teachers for a period of 5 years. As many Members have said, after 5 years, if the school districts are doing the other things they should be doing in terms of supporting these teachers and providing other efforts at retention, and providing professional development, making sure that teachers are not isolated throughout the school year, that they have a chance to talk with their peers and learn the skills of teaching and learn what they are doing right and what they are doing wrong, then those individuals will tend to stay.

It is not just about money, but, clearly, these teachers also have to make a rational decision about their futures and their careers. This effort to give loan forgiveness to teachers who specialize in math and science and reading, to provide over \$17,000 of loan forgiveness over 5 years, I believe, can be very helpful to the retention of those teachers and to the attraction of those individuals to the teaching profession.

I believe this amendment is consistent with the idea that we are trying to do these in the areas of high need, where extra specialization is necessary, and to make sure that we start to develop a corps of individuals who are properly qualified to teaching.

Obviously, reading, whether you are going to be studying math or science or social studies, or whatever else you are going to be doing throughout your educational career, the ability to read is going to determine how successful you navigate your education as an elementary school student, as a high school student, and later, perhaps, as a college student. The ability to read is also identified by employers as a concern as to whether or not employees are flexible enough to learn additional skills as they move through a career and as jobs change so that they are able to adapt.

So this investment in these reading specialists, I think, goes a long way toward improving this legislation, and I believe will be very helpful to school districts who are trying to focus on the requirements and the incentives in the Leave No Child Behind on trying to improve reading at the earliest grade levels. One of the objectives of everybody on the committee is to improve the ability of young people to read so that they can learn to read, and then, as Secretary Reilly used to say, read to learn. We want to accomplish that.

It is also clearly the goal of the President in this bill with the sections that he pushed very hard for on reading and reading readiness in this legislation. And so I would urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

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

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time in opposition, even though I am not opposed to the amendment.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, let me congratulate my good friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), the ranking member of our committee, on our ability to put this amendment together and bring it to the floor. As we were looking at the loan forgiveness bill and the budget we were given to work with it, we realized in committee that we had a little more room, and so the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and I had a discussion about these reading specialists.

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They do provide a very important service in many of our poorer schools in terms of helping students to read, helping to train those others who teach reading, and I do think it is an important addition to the bill.

As the President said the other day and has said on a number of occasions, reading is the new civil right, a quote given to him by a lady on the campaign trail at one time. We all know if you cannot read, trying to learn any subject, trying to function in our society is not going to happen.

When we look at the test scores that the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) referred to several minutes ago, they are basically flat. We have a real serious problem in many of our schools because kids are not being taught to read. Now this is somewhat incomprehensible to many of us; but we are engaged with our kids, or in the case of the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), his grandchildren. We are working with our kids, exposing them to books and exposing them to reading. Unfortunately, many kids in America are not being exposed. Their parents have two jobs, or a single parent having to work. The extra focus that we put into No Child Left Behind on increasing the amount of funds available to target kindergarten through third graders is critical if we are serious about leaving no child behind. I congratulate the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) on his amendment, and urge my colleagues to adopt it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), a former chairman of the school board of the State of Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) for their hard work on this legislation.

I came to the floor, though, because of some comments I heard in other speeches. I think there is unanimity that this is a great bill. There are some people who talk of its inadequacies and how it could do more, and there have been some who say we are not doing

enough because we have given tax breaks to rich people and we have not prioritized education, and I have to address that briefly.

Public education in America is paid for in my State and in most States, about 67 percent of the property tax bill that is paid in my State goes to education. About two-thirds of every dime that taxpayers pay goes to public education. Our State's budget for public education is \$6 billion. The Federal Government in IDEA and title I puts about 7 percent in, and all those monies come from these taxpayers.

The fact that we gave a tax break to create jobs, growth and opportunity in this country inures itself to the benefit of education as much or more than what we are doing in this legislation because those taxpayers are school teachers. The tax break for a family of two or four making \$44,000 a year, which ends up being \$11,000 a year, can go to help pay that student loan off rather than send it to the government.

The corporation that takes benefits for expenses or takes benefits for advanced depreciation that is a partner in education is also somebody that is employing someone else who can buy a home and pay taxes to finance the schools. So I understand the argument, but to me it hurts that we take a bill that is quality and that is good and that everybody here would like to make a little better, and all of a sudden blame the very people who are funding education, who are paying for our teachers, who make it possible for us to have a nationwide public education system, end up being criticized that we cannot broaden the scope of the benefit we are offering in the forgiveness of the first \$17,500 of those who go into 40 percent title I schools and teach math or science or special education.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to come to the floor to say the American taxpayer is the reason we have quality public schools. America's school teachers are taxpayers, and the fact that our tax policy is for them to keep more of their money is just as much of an incentive to help them in the job that they perform to pay the taxes they pay as the forgiveness of a loan might have been. I enjoy working with every member of our committee, and I am proud to join with the other Members here today to see that we focus on our title I schools, we focus on quality teachers, and we focus on leaving no child behind.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) for managing both of these bills on the floor today and for his contributions to this legislation. I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) for all their cooperation on this legisla-

tion. I think these bills are consistent with what we have been saying about the importance of teachers in the classroom. I think they finally put some resources in place to help those individuals who want to become teachers and who want to remain teachers, and I would urge passage of this amendment.

Finally, I would say when we see a young child who can read and master these strokes, it is a wonderful feeling. I was very happy when I saw that my granddaughter was actually excited because Harry Potter was almost 800 pages. She was worried that it might be only 300 to 400 pages, but she was excited that the latest book was almost 800 pages so she could rip through it and read it. To see that kind of excitement on a child's face who is comfortable with reading is something that we hope for all of our Nation's children. Hopefully, this amendment will provide a little bit of help to do that.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). Pursuant to House Resolution 309, the previous question is ordered on the bill and on the amendment by the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2657, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 311 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 311

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 2657) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes. All points of order against the bill and against its consideration are waived. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate on the bill equally di-

vided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations; and (2) one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 311 is a closed rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 2657, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act of 2004. H. Res. 311 provides 1 hour of debate in the House on the bill equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. The resolution waives all points of order against the bill and against its consideration, and it provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by first noting the first-class work of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee in bringing this legislation forward to the House floor. It was particularly refreshing to see the chairman of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON), and the ranking minority member, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN), testifying in support of their work product before the House yesterday.

It is a fiscally responsible bill that will ultimately encourage greater productivity and meaningful savings, and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) is to be commended for his management oversight that will certainly ensure that organizational changes are administered better within the legislative branch's agencies.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the largest appropriations bill and it is not the most important. However, this appropriations bill is important because it sets the tone for what the House leadership and the Republican House are working towards in terms of fiscal responsibility, effective organization, and result-focused management across the Federal Government.

In brief, this appropriations bill provides \$2.7 billion in funding for fiscal year 2004, including funding for the House, the Capitol Police, the Congressional Budget Office, the Architect of the Capitol, the Library of Congress, the Government Printing Office, and the General Accounting Office. It is important to note, however, that this \$2.7 billion figure is 1.2 percent less in total dollars than in the current fiscal year. This decrease represents a reduction in funding of almost \$34 million compared to the current fiscal year.

While Congress at times has demonstrated difficulty in restraining itself from spending money, it strikes me as a significant event that this bill before us today cuts the congressional