

In 1991, an independent accounting study confirmed the debt. Regrettably, after promising to honor the results of the study, Prince Abdul Aziz never paid up.

Bob Burch had been a great friend to the Royal family, supporting them through medical and personal crises, college degrees and even a plane crash.

This is a time of great challenge in the U.S. relationship with Saudi Arabia. Never before have we asked the Saudis to work so closely with us to fight terrorism. It is in that spirit of cooperation that I urge the Saudi Ambassador to work to put this longtime dispute behind us.

INTRODUCING THE AFFORDABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 2003

**HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 16, 2003*

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong support for the Affordability in Higher Education Act, legislation I authored to address the college cost crisis that is facing our Nation. This bill moves beyond the rhetoric, and offers real solutions that will hold colleges accountable and empower consumers as we all work together to keep higher education affordable.

For decades, the cost of higher education has been rising dramatically. Tuition increases have far outpaced increases in the rate of inflation and the growth in family incomes, and these skyrocketing costs are having a devastating impact on American students and families. This is not a new problem. Over half a decade ago I stood here and voiced these same concerns. And several years before that, Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG was leading a similar charge to keep college affordable. Yet in all that time, we have been unable to find solutions, and the cost of college just keeps going up.

According to the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, cost factors are preventing 48 percent of college-qualified low-income students from attending a four-year institution, and 22 percent from having access to any college at all. At the rate we are going, by the end of the decade 2 million students will lose out on the chance to achieve the dream of a college education. This is unacceptable, and I believe we can no longer stand idly by while our Nation's students, the future of our country, are being priced out of the promise of higher education.

The Affordability in Higher Education Act is simple in its purpose, but monumental in its potential to help struggling students and families. The bill proposes to empower the consumers of higher education—students and parents—with significant information on higher education, and hold colleges and universities accountable for the dramatic cost increases that are hampering our Nation's ability to make the dream of higher education a reality for needy students.

The bill establishes a "College Affordability Index," a standard measure by which the consumers of higher education can understand and compare tuition increases in real terms. Using data already being reported by colleges and universities, the U.S. Department of Edu-

cation will make information about college costs, including the College Affordability Index, publicly available through a user friendly website.

The bill provides colleges and universities with ample time to meet the challenge of affordability, and beginning in 2008, schools will begin to be held accountable for their cost increases. Using the College Affordability Index, schools that increase their tuition and fees by more than twice the rate of inflation over a three year period will be required to provide more information and undertake actions to improve affordability.

I believe one of the most important factors in addressing the college cost crisis is the need to empower consumers. Parents and students simply do not have access to adequate information necessary to make informed decisions in the higher education marketplace. And as we empower consumers and encourage accountability, we must also embrace innovation.

That's why the Affordability in Higher Education Act includes a demonstration program that will encourage schools to look for innovative strategies to hold down costs without sacrificing quality. The bill would grant waivers to schools which apply and are chosen to participate—allowing these institutions to have the freedom to find new ways to improve affordability and ultimately, increase access.

The face of higher education has changed significantly in recent years, and while college costs are a formidable barrier, the fact is, today's students face other obstacles as they work to reach their higher education goals. One of the most needless and often frustrating obstacles is an inability to transfer credits among institutions.

Recent data from the Department of Education tells us that over half of the nation's postsecondary education students attend more than one college or university. Yet many of these students struggle to transfer their credits, and as a result must retake coursework which costs both time and money. The bill recognizes that students deserve to have freedom and flexibility, and would make it easier for students to transfer credits. Let me be clear—the bill does not mandate coursework, nor does it require that particular credits be accepted to or from particular institutions. It simply makes it clear that credits cannot be denied based solely on what organization accredited the institution, so long as it is recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. Such territorial or political practices are harming students, and must not continue.

As colleges and universities strive to meet the challenge of affordability, I also believe we must also do our part at the Federal level to make that possible. Schools often tell us that they are burdened by voluminous and often unnecessary regulations and paperwork requirements. We must ease that burden by eliminating such cumbersome requirements. Last year, through the FED UP initiative, we made great strides in reducing red tape and eliminating unnecessary and costly regulations. The bill I'm offering today will continue that effort, and help institutions as they work to increase affordability.

Taken together, the reforms in this bill will make a real difference to the millions of students and families who are counting on us. The future of our Nation—today more than ever—depends on our ability to educate our

students. We cannot allow the continued explosion of college costs to go unchecked. The time has come to find solutions, and today, I believe we are taking a step in the right direction.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this important measure, Mr. Speaker; and I look forward to a higher education system that is accessible to every single American student who strives for it, regardless of financial circumstances. Our students, and our Nation, deserve nothing less.

TRIBUTE TO DUB RITER

**HON. RALPH M. HALL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 16, 2003*

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a truly great American, great leader and dear friend—A.W. "Dub" Riter of Tyler, Texas—whose passing on September 23, was mourned by friends and admirers from East Texas to the White House. Dub was admired and respected not only for his many civic contributions and professional success but also for his goodness, compassion and humility. Dub truly cared about people and wanted to make life better for everyone. He gave selflessly of his time, talent and financial backing to countless civic, business and educational causes locally, statewide and nationally, and in doing so he sought to help others—not call attention to himself.

Dub was my dear friend and advisor for many years. He was a highly recognized and successful banker, retiring from his 50-year banking career as senior chairman of the Board of NCNB in Tyler (now Bank of America) in 1988. Throughout his career and after his retirement, he was tirelessly devoted to a host of community and State activities and organizations.

Education was particularly important to Dub. In 1997 Gov. George W. Bush appointed him to serve as a member of the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System for a six-year term ending Feb. 1, 2003. Gov. Rick Perry then asked him to extend his term through the legislative session this year. He was a vice chairman of the board and a member of the Finance and Planning Committee, Facilities Planning and Construction Committee and the Student, Faculty and Staff Campus Life Committee. Dub was currently serving as a member of the Governor's Select Task Force on Public Education.

Dub and his wife, Betty Jo, also were devoted to The University of Texas at Tyler, where Dub served as chairman of the development board. Dr. Rodney Mabry, UT Tyler President, said that Dub was the "heart and soul" of the university the past several years. Dub and Betty Jo donated a \$1.35 million gift to UT Tyler to create the Dub and B.J. Riter Millennium Carillon Tower and Plaza and were involved in many activities at the university.

Dub also served as chairman of the University of Texas Health Center at Tyler Development Board and was a past president of the