

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3669.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. 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 and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3669, the bill just considered.

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

There was no objection.

#### STUDENT GRANT HURRICANE AND DISASTER RELIEF ACT

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3668) to provide the Secretary of Education with waiver authority for students who are eligible for Federal student grant assistance who are adversely affected by a major disaster.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3668

*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 "Student Grant Hurricane and Disaster Relief Act".

##### SEC. 2. WAIVERS OF STUDENT GRANT ASSISTANCE REPAYMENT BY STUDENTS AFFECTED BY DISASTERS.

Section 484B(b)(2) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1091b(b)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(E) WAIVERS OF GRANT ASSISTANCE REPAYMENT BY STUDENTS AFFECTED BY DISASTERS.— In addition to the waivers authorized by subparagraph (D), the Secretary may waive the amounts that students are required to return under this section with respect to any other grant assistance under this title if the withdrawals on which the returns are based are withdrawals by students—

"(i) who were residing in, employed in, or attending an institution of higher education that is located in an area in which the President has declared that a major disaster exists, in accordance with section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170);

"(ii) whose attendance was interrupted because of the impact of the disaster on the student or the institution; and

"(iii) whose withdrawal ended within the academic year during which the designation occurred or during the next succeeding academic year."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3668.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill to provide additional relief to students whose higher education plans have been put on hold as a result of the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina.

Yesterday, the House unanimously approved a bill to ensure that students who were forced to withdraw from college because of a natural disaster are not forced to repay Pell grant aid. I think that bill will provide critical relief to students who are already facing tremendous hardships as a result of this tragedy.

I am pleased today to be taking the next critical step by providing this type of flexibility and protection for students receiving all types of grant aid under title IV of the Higher Education Act.

□ 1230

We need to provide the Secretary of Education the utmost flexibility to meet the needs of students who have lost their homes and communities, and that is exactly what this bill will do.

Each year millions of American students gain access to higher education with the help of Federal student aid. The Federal Government is providing more than \$73 billion in direct financial aid to students for fiscal year 2005 in order to ensure college access for students from all walks of life. I am proud of our tremendous investment in higher education.

Unfortunately, the tragic events of the scope like that which we are seeing on the Gulf Coast were not anticipated in the structure of the Federal student aid programs. The Department of Education lacks the flexibility to waive student aid repayment requirements for students who are forced to withdraw from higher education as a result of a natural disaster.

Waiver authority does exist within student loan programs, and yesterday we provided similar flexibility within the Pell grant program. Today, we are addressing the remaining discrepancy for other types of student financial aid that play a critical role in providing college access to low- and middle-income students.

The bill will protect students from being forced to repay other types of

grant aid under title IV of the Higher Education Act. Some examples of the types of programs protected under this bill would be TRIO, GEAR UP, and the Supplemental Educational Opportunity grants.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is but one small step in what will be a comprehensive, long-term relief effort. However, for many students and families this bill will provide critical relief as they work to rebuild their homes and lives and, ultimately, as they do return to higher education in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I supported the Keller bill to offer relief to Pell grant recipients affected by natural disasters. I rise today to support the Jindal bill to offer relief to those benefiting from other Title IV grant programs like TRIO, LEAP and HEP/CAMP.

It is vital that grant recipients affected by this tragedy be spared the further hardship of repaying a grant they were never able to benefit from. This bill represents a good first step and I am pleased to be a cosponsor.

There is no question that we need to reassess what students and families can actually pay for college after the disaster, since many have lost jobs, homes, resources and valuables. In addition, we must also address the needs of student borrowers stuck paying loans despite job loss, lost income, and other financial hardship.

The 100,000 low- and middle-income students who depend on loans will feel the financial crunch of Katrina. Furthermore, we must address the needs of students with parents in the affected area, but who are attending schools in other parts of the country. Thousands of affected students and graduates will be unable to make payments on their Stafford or Perkins loans.

Currently, Mr. Speaker, students in repayment who are suffering from economic hardship can seek deferment, but we must cut the red tape by allowing any student impacted by a natural disaster to receive an automatic deferment of both the accumulation of interest and the payments.

The Miller/Kildee Katrina College Relief Act does just that. This change would save the average borrower much over the life of their loan.

Graduates already struggling to dig themselves out of their student loan debt must not be penalized because of this tragedy. Enrolled students who are currently receiving Federal aid had their financial aid package calculated based on their expected family contributions, the so-called EFC, which includes parent contributions and contributions of working students. With hundreds of thousands unemployed, including the one in five undergraduates