

necessary to make college more affordable and to ensure our Nation's future economic competitiveness and prosperity.

HEA reauthorization bills typically include all mandatory and discretionary programs in the HEA, and H.R. 609, as reported by the House Education and Workforce Committee, included both mandatory and discretionary programs. The recently enacted Deficit Reduction Act (P.L. 109-171) reauthorized the mandatory Federal student loan programs, but cut Federal student aid programs by \$12.7 billion—the largest cut ever in the Federal student loan program.

Specifically, P.L. 109-171 doubles the origination fee for students getting Direct Loans from an effective 1.5 percent to 3 percent in 2006. Additionally, P.L. 109-171 requires lenders to collect a 1 percent fee on Federal Family Education Loans (FFEL) that may come directly from students' pockets or the lenders' own operating expenses. P.L. 109-171 also increases the fixed rate on parent loans to 8.5 percent (Under current law, beginning in July 2006 parent loans would have a fixed rate of 7.9 percent). Finally, P.L. 109-171 eliminates all mandatory spending for administration of all higher education programs, which shows a savings of \$2.2 billion; however, the only way these savings can occur is if Congress chooses not to appropriate this money—which could jeopardize not only student loan programs, but also programs like Pell Grants, TRIO, and Work Study programs.

H.R. 609 presented the House with an opportunity to correct these misguided increases in fees and rates on students and their families. Unfortunately, the House approved a rule for consideration of H.R. 609, which prohibited amendments from being offered addressing the fee and rate increases for students and their families.

Additionally, while H.R. 609 authorizes a maximum Pell Grant scholarship award of \$6,000, the bill does not include any mandatory spending increases for Pell Grant funding, which will ensure that the amount actually appropriated remains frozen. For instance, the Bush Administration's FY 2007 budget proposes to freeze maximum Pell Grant scholarship award at \$4,050, where it has been held since 2003. This is troubling because, during this same period, the average tuition and fees at a four-year public college have risen by \$1,393. Further, when adjusted for inflation, the maximum Pell Grant award is actually worth \$900 less than the maximum scholarship 30 years ago.

I instead supported the Miller-Kildee-Scott-Davis-Grijalva substitute amendment that boosts college opportunities and makes college more affordable. Specifically, this legislation would offer the 3.4 percent fixed interest rate to students who take out subsidized loans between July 1, 2006, and June 30, 2007, which would lower the cost of college by \$2.4 billion for students and their families. This amendment would have also repealed the single holder rule, which requires student borrowers to consolidate their loans with their existing lender. Under the substitute amendment, the borrower could choose which lender he or she wished to use to consolidate loans. Additionally, this substitute amendment would have provided loan forgiveness for nurses, highly qualified teachers in bilingual and low-income communities, librarians, first responders, and other public servants.

With our Nation is facing increasing competition from rising economic powers, such as China and India, it is more important that ever that Congress work to improve the accessibility and affordability of a college education. Funding for higher education is an investment, not a cost, which will produce an educated, talented workforce to ensure our nation's future economic competitiveness and prosperity.

TRIBUTE TO STAFF SERGEANT
RICHARD A. BOETTCHER

HON. MARILYN N. MUSGRAVE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 5, 2006

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the patriotism and self sacrifice of Staff Sergeant Richard A. Boettcher of Greeley, Colorado because of his service to our country during World War II.

Boettcher was drafted into the U.S. Army his senior year of high school in 1945 and sent to Ft. Joseph T. Robinson, Arkansas for basic training. At first, his training focused on fighting the Germans in Europe, but when the European war ended, he was transferred to Camp Maxey, Texas. This camp trained soldiers to fight the Japanese in house-to-house combat in anticipation of a ground invasion of Japan.

After his training was completed, he was shipped to the Pacific with the intent to join up in Okinawa with an infantry division known as "Timber Wolf." This group had fought in Europe and had been sent to Okinawa to invade Japan. Yet shortly before Boettcher arrived, President Harry Truman ordered the dropping of two atomic bombs, and Japan surrendered shortly thereafter.

Instead of fighting his way into Japan, Boettcher became part of the occupation force. He worked in an office position and was responsible for preparing payroll for over 500 military personnel using a small Royal typewriter. In rank he started as a Private 1st Class and rose to Staff Sergeant in less than one year. He returned home to Lincoln, Nebraska in October of 1946.

Boettcher attended the University of Nebraska for two years and then transferred to the University of Northern Colorado to complete his education. He continued to serve his country as a member of the Colorado National Guard and received a commission in 1953.

After owning a business for 46 years, Boettcher retired in Greeley, Colorado with his wife Irene of 58 years. Boettcher has three children, seven grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to represent Mr. Boettcher and the other men and women who have given so much for our freedom. Like so many other members of his generation, Mr. Boettcher set aside his ambitions in service to our nation. I urge my colleagues to join me in expressing my heartfelt gratitude, sincere appreciation, and utmost respect for the patriotic service of Mr. Richard A. Boettcher.

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF
ERMA ORA JAMES BYRD

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 5, 2006

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and remembrance of Erma Ora Byrd, loving wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and dear friend and mentor to many. Her passing marks a great loss for her family and friends, and also for the people of West Virginia, whom she served with the highest level of commitment, concern, integrity and honor.

The daughter of a coal miner, Mrs. Byrd remained deeply connected to the foundation of her childhood—one based on family, faith and community. Whether greeting kings at state dinners or meeting with neighbors at the town hall, Mrs. Byrd reflected a certain grace, kindness and warmth. She shied away from the harsh glare of politics, preferring instead to focus on family and close friends, gently inspiring and teaching by example. Mrs. Byrd and Senator ROBERT BYRD were married for 68 years. They met in grade school and married at the tender age of 19.

Together, they raised two daughters, Mona and Marjorie. Mrs. Byrd's limitless love for her daughters, grandchildren and great-children extended to every child in West Virginia, upon whose behalf she advocated. Though awards and accolades held no significance to her, Mrs. Byrd's outreach and advocacy work has been honored numerous times. Both West Virginia University and Marshall University have established academic scholarship programs in her name.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and remembrance of Mrs. Erma Ora James Byrd. I extend my deepest condolences to her husband, United States Senator ROBERT BYRD; to her daughters, Mona Carole Byrd Fatemi and Marjorie Ellen Byrd Moore; to her sons-in-law, Mohammed Fatemi and Jon Moore; and to her grandchildren, great-grandchildren and extended family members and many friends. Mrs. Byrd's boundless love for her family, friends and for the people of West Virginia will be remembered always.

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE DENNIS
REYNOLDS

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 5, 2006

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great American, dedicated family man, proud Oregonian, outdoorsman, and a good friend of mine, Judge Dennis Reynolds. Over the last decade, Judge Reynolds has played a significant role in shaping the future of Grant County. Today, as the Judge approaches retirement from elected public service, we thank him for his years of dedication and recognize the numerous contributions he has made during his 12 years in office.

Mr. Speaker, people in my part of the country have a long and rich heritage of being caring stewards of the land and responsible managers of the environment. This is a way of life