

over inflation during the last five years. The rising cost of tuition causes approximately 200,000 students annually to delay beginning college or forgoing the chance to study for a higher degree altogether. This disturbing trend must change. The adoption of H.R. 2669 will help make college as affordable as possible for every qualified student who would like to earn an advanced degree, without new costs to taxpayers.

H.R. 2669 would authorize an increase to the maximum value of the Pell Grant scholarship by \$500 over the next five years. The legislation would also cut interest rates in half on need-based student loans, reducing the cost of those loans for millions of student borrowers. H.R. 2669, moreover, would prevent student borrowers from facing unmanageable levels of federal student debt. It does this by guaranteeing that borrowers will never have to spend more than 15 percent of their yearly discretionary income on loan repayments and by allowing borrowers in economic hardship to have their loans forgiven after 20 years.

H.R. 2669 also promotes the development of the next generation of high-quality teachers and public servants. It does this by authorizing tuition assistance for excellent undergraduate students who agree to teach in public schools and authorizing loan forgiveness for college graduates that enter public service professions.

Of particular importance to my constituents is the Upward Bound program which seeks to increase high school completion, college participation, and graduation rates among low-income and first-generation college students. H.R. 2669 would provide \$228 million in funding over four years for Upward Bound, restoring critical funding for programs that were not funded in fiscal year 2007, as well as fund over 100 new programs. Students from minority communities—including the Asian and Pacific Islander American community—make up nearly 50 percent of all Upward Bound participants.

What is more, this legislation would make significant and needed investments in Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions and other minority serving institutions. I commend my colleague from California (Mr. MILLER) for his commitment to assisting the minority serving institutions. I do, however, have two concerns with respect to this aspect of H.R. 2669. I respectfully request that they be favorably considered as this legislation proceeds through the legislative process.

First, section 311 of H.R. 2669 establishes categories of minority serving institutions that would be eligible to participate in a Centers of Excellence grant program that would provide funds to help recruit and prepare teachers. Institutions that traditionally serve Asian and Pacific Islander American students would benefit from eligibility for such grants. Unfortunately, the category Asian American and Pacific Islander-Serving Institution does not appear in the bill. I respectfully request that my colleagues support my efforts to make Asian American and Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions eligible for these grants.

Second, section 411 of H.R. 2669 establishes a College Access Challenge grant program for eligible students from underserved populations who enter and complete college. The term "State" is defined under this section as each of the several States of the United

States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Students who attend institutions of higher education in the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the Freely Associated States (FAS)—the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau—would be prohibited from participating in this grant program as a result of the limited definition for the term "State." I respectfully request that my colleagues support the efforts to expand the definition of the term "State" in this section of H.R. 2669 to include the U.S. territories and the Freely Associated States.

I support this bill. Its provisions will help ensure that many talented young Americans can afford the benefits of a college education. I urge my colleague to support H.R. 2669.

RESPONSIBLE REDEPLOYMENT FROM IRAQ ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS A. CARDOZA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 12, 2007

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act.

It is long past time for a change of direction in Iraq. For far too long, this institution merely acted as a rubber stamp and never asked the hard questions necessary of the Administration.

That begins to change today. The passage of this bill will require the Administration to confront the consequences of their bad choices and, more importantly, set us on a responsible path for ending our involvement in Iraq.

This legislation would begin the responsible redeployment of U.S. troops within 120 days and complete redeployment by April 1, 2008. In addition, troops could remain in Iraq for the limited purposes of fighting terrorism or to train Iraqi forces.

This bill is a measured response to the quagmire we find ourselves in. As has been clear for some time, Iraq is currently engulfed in a vicious civil war. This strife between Sunnis and Shiites goes back 1400 years and the American people never signed up for refereeing a civil war.

Moreover, this bill expressly allows for our troops to remain in the region for the purposes of fighting terrorism or to train Iraqi forces.

Our enemy in this conflict is Al Qaeda. They are the ones who attacked us on 9/11, they are the ones who declared war on the United States, and they are the ones we were told were in Iraq. This bill allows our troops to do whatever is necessary to root out Al Qaeda and ensure they will not be able to use Iraqi territory as a safe haven.

Moreover, by augmenting our ability to train Iraqi police forces, this bill places the onus for Iraqi security squarely where it belongs—on the Iraqis themselves. This Administration has only given lip-service to the importance of training Iraqi soldiers and has allowed the bulk of the security responsibility to rest on the shoulders of our brave American men and women.

This is not only unfair, it is counter-productive. We keep hearing—"we'll stand down when the Iraqis stand up." This bill, by beginning the belated shift of responsibility from the American military to the Iraqis, will finally force the Iraqis to stand up.

As many have said, the problem of Iraq will not be solved militarily. No less than our military commander in Iraq—General Petraeus—has said that Iraq will not be solved with military means. Only by engaging the full weight of our diplomacy we will be able to force the political compromises necessary that will bring some measure of stability to Iraq. This bill, by redeploying our troops and thus signaling our recognition of the importance of diplomacy, will finally put the Iraqis on a path towards peace.

The time is now. The American people are clamoring for a change in our Iraq policy and, despite the recalcitrance of the Administration, a change in policy will come. After close to 5 years, billions of dollars spent, thousands of our soldiers dead, maimed, or wounded—we simply must chart a new course.

As always, this Congress stands ready to work the President to find a bipartisan solution to Iraq. However, veto threats and refusals to deal with the reality on the ground are no longer tolerable. We must all negotiate an end to this conflict in good faith with a clear and honest recognition of the challenges we face. For my part, I stand ready to work with my colleagues to engage in such a constructive dialogue.

Mr. Speaker, let's end this. Let's bring our soldiers home and thank them for a job well done. Let's pass the Responsible Redeployment Act.

RESPONSIBLE REDEPLOYMENT FROM IRAQ ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 12, 2007

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2956, and I appreciate the fact that we are again addressing this important issue today. I want to start by recognizing the ongoing sacrifices and tremendous bravery of the men and women of our armed forces. Their dedication inspires us all and we owe them a debt of gratitude.

Very simply put, it is time to bring our troops home. The effort they are making has not been met by the Iraqi government, and there is no reason to believe that the situation is going to improve there in the foreseeable future. The various reports we have received just this week underscore this point. As I have said for some time, we are beyond the point of being able to impact events in a meaningful way militarily. The political decisions that the Iraqis need to make will not be made as long as our soldiers are there, and I seriously doubt they will be made when we are gone. All we are doing is letting an untenable situation drag on, with our soldiers caught in the crossfire. We are spending over \$329 million every day in Iraq. That is a staggering sum of money. We can redirect that money to better fighting the war on terror and also addressing important domestic initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, I did not vote to authorize this war, I did not vote for the troop surge and I have voted for a time line to bring our troops home. The vast majority of the American people see that the President's dream for Iraq is not going to happen. They want him to wake up and face reality. This bill provides a plan on how to do that. I support the approach in this bill, and I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for it.

TRIBUTE TO THE "FLIGHT 93
AMBASSADORS"

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 13, 2007

Mr. SHUSTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the "Flight 93 Ambassadors," a community organization that has dedicated countless hours to the Flight 93 memorial site in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. This organization, created by members of the Somerset community after the tragic events of September 11th, serves both the country and the memory of those aboard Flight 93 by protecting the site and recounting the heroic story of the passengers' brave intervention against the terrorists to the memorial's visitors.

The Flight 93 Ambassadors will be honored for their service on July 26th at the Somerset County Chamber of Commerce's Third Annual Summer Barbeque. Somerset County has been trademarked "America's County" after two major national events took place there. For the past three years the Chamber of Commerce has used this distinction to recognize American heroes. Previously the Chamber paid tribute to the nine miners who were rescued from the Quecreek Mine accident. This year's recognition of the Flight 93 Ambassadors by "America's County" is fitting and appropriate as these volunteers are responsible for maintaining one of the most distinguished symbols of American courage and unity.

The Flight 93 Ambassadors contribute much of their time to the preservation of the Flight 93 memorial and serve as a link to the families of the Flight 93 victims. These selfless volunteers plan events and work tirelessly to maintain the integrity of this important site and in doing so, ensure that the heroism of the passengers of Flight 93 is never forgotten. The ambassadors are the epitome of American unity and strength in the wake of tragedy, and their initiative and persistent work with the Flight 93 site is greatly appreciated by the community.

I am sure that every American, in addition to the members of the Shanksville community, would join me in thanking the Flight 93 Ambassadors for their selfless dedication and leadership in immortalizing the memory of September 11th and all of the heroes of Flight 93.

INTRODUCTION OF THE AGROFUEL
RURAL ENERGY EMPOWERMENT
ACT

HON. JOHN M. McHUGH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 13, 2007

Mr. MCHUGH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Agrofuel Rural Energy Empowerment Act, which is designed to help American farmers better meet the economic and environmental challenges inherent in the handling and disposal of manure. The bill is also intended to spur investments in another source of much-needed renewable energy.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), American concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) and animal feeding operations (AFOs) generate over 335 million tons of dry matter annually. While animal manure provides important nutrients for crop production and organic matter that enhances soil properties, its improper management can pose a threat to soil, water, and air quality. Moreover, manure can negatively impact human and animal health and associated odors can decrease quality of life.

Anaerobic digestion technologies can help improve the manner in which American farms manage manure, reducing water pollution, odors, and the emissions of greenhouse gases while producing energy. As our nation is seeking ways to reduce its dependence on carbon-based fuels and particularly foreign oil, we should encourage the development of anaerobic digestion technologies.

The Agrofuel Rural Energy Empowerment Act would further the development of these important technologies. First, the bill would make anaerobic digestion business ventures eligible for guaranteed loans. Secondly, it would make anaerobic digestion projects eligible for monies available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The bill would be particularly beneficial to the handling of manure on the 72,500 dairy farms in the United States, nearly 2,000 of which are in my Central and Northern New York Congressional District.

Accordingly, I ask my colleagues to join with me to enact the Agrofuel Rural Energy Empowerment Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 13, 2007

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I regret that I was unable to participate in votes on the floor of the House of Representatives on July 11, 2007. I was absent to attend a military funeral and to be present for a major announcement from the National Science Foundation in South Dakota. I submit this statement today to establish for the record how I would have voted had I been present for these votes.

On the morning of July 11, 2007, the House of Representatives held four votes for which I was absent.

The first vote was a motion on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule. Had I been

present, I would have voted 'yea' on that question.

The second vote was on the H. Res. 531, a Rule Providing for the Consideration of the College Cost Reduction Act of 2007. Had I been present, I would have voted 'yea' on that question.

The third vote was on a motion to suspend the rules and agree to the H. Res. 526, supporting home ownership and responsible lending. Had I been present, I would have voted 'yea' on that question.

The fourth vote was on a motion to suspend the rules and agree to the S. 1701, a bill to provide for the extension of transitional medical assistance (TMA) and the abstinence education program through the end of fiscal year 2007, and for other purposes. Had I been present, I would have voted 'yea' on that question.

RECOGNIZING 2007 AS THE YEAR
OF THE RIGHTS OF INTERNALLY
DISPLACED PERSONS IN COLOM-
BIA

SPEECH OF

HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 11, 2007

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I am glad to rise in support of House Resolution 426, recognizing 2007 as the Year of the Rights of Internally Displaced Persons in Colombia.

Internal displacement is a massive problem in Colombia. As noted in this resolution, the number of displaced over the past 20 years is roughly equivalent to eight percent of the Colombian population. If we applied this ratio to the population of the United States, this would equal twenty-four million displaced persons roughly the population of the State of Texas.

Unfortunately, this tragically large number continues to grow by about 200,000 every year.

The civil conflict, of course, is at the root of the problem, but this explanation is worth a closer look. There is a guerrilla war being waged by the group calling itself the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, in conflict with the Colombian government and their paramilitary allies and surrogates, and combat has displaced many Colombians. Also, resorting to violence as a means of resolving conflicts over land and other resources has become commonplace and exacerbates the problem.

Afro-Colombians, whose rights to communal land holdings were not properly recognized until 1991, have been hit particularly hard by deliberate displacement aimed at securing valuable or strategic land areas, principally by paramilitaries and the Colombian state. The FARC has also been known to engage in this reprehensible practice. Often the land at issue is stolen from its residents because it is favorable to agriculture, has sub-surface resources, or is needed for the completion of large construction projects.

Due to economically motivated displacement and other factors, including their general political marginalization in Colombian society, Afro-Colombians are disproportionately over-represented in the displaced population, as noted in the resolution.