

name a few. In 300 years, czarist Russia just had 18 czars. Why do we need 34? We have an energy czar and a Secretary of Energy. We have a health czar and a Secretary of Health. Worse, 27 of the 34 czars have not even been confirmed by the Senate despite a constitutional requirement. These czars make \$172,000 yearly, and that doesn't include expensive, unchecked staff with zero accountability.

I backed legislation that would withhold funding from any czar not confirmed by the Senate. Americans want, need and deserve transparency and accountability. Let's rein in the czars.

THE STUDENT AID AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT WILL KEEP AMERICA ECONOMICALLY COMPETITIVE

(Ms. SCHWARTZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, today, the House will vote to save taxpayers nearly \$90 billion in making the Federal college loan system more efficient. This action, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, is the greatest investment in higher education ever.

This bill increases Pell Grants for students; it enables States to improve their early education system, and it reduces the Federal deficit by \$10 billion. It improves our Nation's education system for all children.

The Early Learning Challenge Fund supports safe efforts to invest in high-quality, integrated early education and to care for children birth through 5. Early education pays huge fiscal and social dividends in the long run, and this is an important step forward.

The College Access and Completion Innovation Fund promotes innovative strategies to improve student success in college, and this bill provides funding for much-needed school modernization and repair, which will be done in an environmentally energy-efficient manner by including legislation we approved earlier this year.

The Democratic majority is committed to stabilizing the economy, to lowering our deficit and to ensuring that America is economically competitive in the future. This plan helps us achieve these key goals.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. GUTHRIE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, over the recent district work period I traveled to each county in my district, listening to constituents' ideas and concerns and answering questions. I heard overwhelmingly that a government-run public option was not a viable answer to the problems Americans are facing.

The President gave a well-delivered speech last week, but left many ques-

tions in the minds of the American people: How do we pay for such a bill? How can you cut funding for Medicare without impacting the millions of seniors who receive the benefits? How will individuals who are happy with their coverage get to keep the care they have?

Everyone agrees on the need for improvement. However, we must move toward changes that make health care more affordable, more accessible and of higher quality. We have an opportunity to work together to improve the lives of all Americans by crafting a bipartisan, commonsense solution that our country can afford.

PERMISSION TO REDUCE TIME FOR ELECTRONIC VOTING DURING PROCEEDINGS TODAY

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that, during the proceedings today in the House and in the Committee of the Whole, the Chair be authorized to reduce to 2 minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any question that otherwise could be subjected to 5-minute voting under clause 8 or 9 of rule XX or under clause 6 of rule XVIII.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COHEN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

STUDENT AID AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT OF 2009

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 746 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 3221.

□ 1021

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 3221) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes, with Ms. DEGETTE (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole House rose on Wednesday, September 16, 2009, a request for a recorded vote on amendment No. 7, printed in House Report 111-256, offered by the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOX), had been postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MR. REYES

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 8 printed in House Report 111-256.

Mr. REYES. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 8 offered by Mr. REYES:

Page 191, line 15, after "students" insert "including students who are veterans or members of the National Guard or Reserves."

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 746, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. REYES. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

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

Mr. REYES. Madam Chair, the men and women who have made enormous sacrifices to serve our country deserve every opportunity to get a good education, and my amendment will help them do just that.

My amendment will encourage community colleges to use the funding provided through the new grant program to increase the level of training for our veterans and for our members of the National Guard and Reserves. This amendment will help community colleges do outreach to our veterans and to our National Guardsmen and Reservists who may be looking to obtain new skills and training in these difficult economic times.

This funding is also now intended to help our veterans realize the benefits of the post-9/11 GI Bill that Congress passed last year. The post-9/11 GI Bill was created by landmark legislation that makes good on America's promise to take care of those who have proudly served our Nation. It offers unprecedented benefits that will make college affordable to our Nation's veterans.

However, the legislation will not meet its full potential if eligible veterans are not aware or if they do not take advantage of the opportunities available in their communities. This amendment will help to promote a more veteran-friendly environment at our Nation's community colleges by encouraging this generation of American heroes to use the benefits that they have so rightly earned.

Community colleges provide the first postsecondary experience for many students, and are critical in providing them with the education and training that is required for the high-demand jobs that are needed to keep the United States competitive.

I am pleased that my colleague, Representative ADLER, has a similar amendment that will assist veterans who are seeking to attend 4-year colleges or universities. Making sure that veterans want to pursue an advanced degree and that they are able to do so is the right thing to do for our local economies and for our competitive future. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

I yield to my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank him for offering this amendment.