

to take advantage of lower interest rates. That would put billions of dollars back into the pockets of people who invested in their education. Refinancing would help an estimated 24 million borrowers save an average of almost \$1,900.

Second, the RED Act would make 2 years of community college tuition-free, helping students earn an associate's degree, the first half of a bachelor's degree, or get the skills they need to succeed in the workforce, all without having to take on so much debt. Free tuition at community college would save a full-time student an average of \$3,800 per year and could help an estimated 9 million college students.

Third, the RED Act would help ensure that Pell grants—named for our great Rhode Island Senator Claiborne Pell—keep up with the rising costs by indexing part of the Pell grant to inflation permanently. By indexing the Pell grant, compared to current law, the maximum Pell grant award would increase by \$1,300 for the 2026–2027 school year, resulting in larger awards for over 9 million students, helping to reduce their debt.

We think the RED Act is a critical step toward an essential goal: debt-free college.

The American middle class was built in part on the opportunity provided by higher education. Believe it or not, it was once common to be able to go to college and graduate with no debt. We owe it to today's college students to be able to leave college and begin to build their lives free of debt and ready to achieve their dreams.

We look forward to bipartisan participation on this issue in the Senate, although regrettably it has virtually never appeared in the Republican Presidential debates as an issue. There are 40 million students with \$1.3 trillion in debt—not interested, not compared to Benghazi. So I am hoping we will do better than those candidates in this Chamber and be able to pull a bipartisan solution together that will relieve that burden of debt on our next generation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I see the senior Senator of Rhode Island.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, first, I commend Senator WHITEHOUSE, my colleague from Rhode Island, for his very thoughtful leadership on this issue of education and particularly the situation where so many young people are so deeply in debt after a college education.

It was Senator WHITEHOUSE who organized a meeting in Rhode Island. I was there and I listened to the story he just related. It is astounding, the debt these young people and in some cases middle-aged people are shouldering. We have to do something. I would like to commend and thank him for his leadership and urge a bipartisan effort in this regard.

Mr. President, I was on the floor last week, and I spoke about a series of two amendments that I was working with Senator HELLER on, and they are all focused on enhancing energy storage. I thank Senator HELLER for his efforts in so many ways but particularly this bipartisan effort to enhance the Energy bill that is before us. Indeed, earlier this week, we were able to pass one of these amendments, No. 2989, that we introduced together to improve coordination of Department of Energy programs and authorities in order to maximize the amount of money that goes toward energy storage research and development.

Let me particularly thank Energy and Natural Resources Committee chairperson LISA MURKOWSKI and ranking member MARIA CANTWELL for their great efforts overall and particularly for their help in getting the Reed-Heller amendment through. They have done an extraordinary job on this legislation.

As I have indicated, we have two amendments. I have also joined Senator HELLER on another amendment. He is the lead author. This amendment would amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act—or PURPA, as it is known—to require industry and State regulators to consider energy storage when making their energy efficiency plans. By encouraging energy storage usage by public utilities, we will help expand the reach of this needed technology.

There are many technical, financial, and security benefits to energy storage, including: improving grid utilization by storing and moving low-cost power into higher priced markets, thereby reducing the amount we all pay on our utility bills; increasing the value and the amount of renewable energy in the grid, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and enhancing the security of the grid, thereby ensuring critical access to power in an emergency. We are all each day much more cognizant of the threat not just through natural disasters but through particular cyber intrusions which could affect our energy grid. This would be another way in which we could not only protect ourselves but respond more quickly in the case of any of these natural or manmade disasters.

I want to conclude by again thanking my colleague and friend Senator HELLER and urge our colleagues to work with us in a bipartisan fashion to adopt this amendment.

With that, Mr. President, I thank you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 757

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following morning business on Wednesday, February 10, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 359, H.R. 757; that there be up to 7 hours of debate equally divided in the usual form; that following the use or yielding back of that time the committee-reported amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time, and the Senate vote on the bill with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I would just say what we have just done is lock in a vote on the North Korea sanctions bill that has been crafted by Chairman CORKER and Senator GARDNER, a very important piece of legislation that I am pleased to say the whole Senate thinks ought to be taken up, voted on, and passed. It will be an important change in our policy toward this rogue regime.

#### UNITED STATES-JORDAN DEFENSE COOPERATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 907 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 907) to improve defense cooperation between the United States and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Rubio amendment at the desk be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 3278) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015”.

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) As of January 22, 2015, the United States Government has provided \$3,046,343,000 in assistance to respond to the Syria humanitarian crisis, of which nearly \$467,000,000 has been provided to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

(2) As of January 2015, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, there were 621,937 registered Syrian refugees in Jordan and 83.8 percent of whom lived outside refugee camps.