

## GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Sergio Jose Martinez was trolling a parking garage in sanctuary city Portland, Oregon, armed with a knife. He set his sights on his prey, a defenseless 65-year-old woman, and he attacked her.

But the woman fought back and pressed the panic button in her car. Martinez, the coward, fled the scene, but he was caught. Get this, Mr. Speaker: Martinez, after serving several stints in U.S. penitentiaries, has been deported over 20 times. But the criminal does his time, gets deported, and just comes back into the United States.

Our border protectors do the best they can, but they are outmanned, outgunned, and outfinanced by the drug cartels, criminal gangs, and outlaws trying to enter the United States.

The Border Security for America Act authorizes a border wall, both physical and virtual, puts more boots on the ground, more boats in the water, and gives more equipment to our law enforcement.

We must keep criminals like Martinez out of the United States.

And that is just the way it is.

#### DIVERSITY IMMIGRANT VISA PROGRAM NEEDS TO END

(Mr. DONOVAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to mourn those lost and injured in yesterday's terror attack in New York City. The New York City Police Department is truly the greatest police force in the world, and they showed us why yesterday.

It is this body's obligation to pursue policies that help prevent and recover from terrorist attacks. It is a responsibility I am privileged to share as chairman of the Homeland Security Committee's Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications.

The alleged perpetrator came to our country legally using the Diversity Immigrant Visa program. As a matter of security and commonsense, an immigration system that selects winners like a game of bingo should end.

I also ask that Congress consider the bipartisan STOP Act, legislation I proposed with Mr. ESPAILLAT from New York to help local jurisdictions install protective bollards in areas with high pedestrian traffic. Vehicle attacks are tough to prevent, but the STOP Act will protect Americans and make them safer.

Mr. Speaker, I send prayers for the injured and the families of the lost.

#### COLLEGES NEED TO BE MORE TRANSPARENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, today is the early action deadline for many colleges in the United States. Thousands of students who are submitting their applications are anxiously hoping for entry into a college, community college, or postsecondary school.

As students try to determine what schools are right for them, it is clear they are missing some key information—information we all wish we had for our children: How likely are they to graduate? How long will it take to earn a degree or their certificate? How likely are they to find a job? How much money will they earn if they do find a job?

As a parent, I know this information will be helpful. That is why I introduced the College Transparency Act. My legislation would utilize and make meaning out of the data we currently gather at the Federal level to enable students and parents to make informed decisions.

I have over 35 years in workforce development and postsecondary education. I understand the difficulties that people have in making informed decisions about what is best for their future career. I also understand the reporting expectations for career colleges and universities. I understand which institutions have the information available and how they provide it. I also understand the burdens that occur in providing that information.

Despite the incredible investment involved and the risk in pursuing a postsecondary education, we and students are left with too little information to answer the most basic questions: What can students expect to pay out of pocket? Can you imagine that really they cannot determine how much it will cost them to complete a postsecondary program? How do students fare in the labor market after leaving college? How likely are they to fare in order to enter into the labor market? How do students fare on other metrics of success we all consider important, like earnings, and loan repayment?

A prospective student doesn't have the information about which programs at which institutions provide an adequate return on their investment, and on their parents' investment.

As a consumer and a father, it is difficult for me to wrap my head around the idea that Americans have so little information about potentially what may be the largest investment they make in their lives, and certainly, the second largest. I am the father of six children. The reality is that we are investing and putting six children

through a college or a postsecondary program. Think about how much money goes into that. Yet we operate in a vacuum on information.

When you shop online, you are able to compare products, you are able to compare costs, you are able to compare features, the value to the consumer. At this point in time, try to do that about programs at a college, university, or career school. Try to compare one university's nursing program to another; or the architecture program, or history program, or the nursing program in a college. Try to find that information. You won't find it online. Try to call the university. Good luck on that.

It is not that they don't try to provide it. In fact, they provide reams of data. The reality is that the current system simply doesn't gather that data in a manner that is useful to consumers, the people that ultimately pay the bill.

The College Transparency Act would enable students to answer crucial questions, such as how likely they are to enter the workforce successfully, or what their chances are of transferring from a community college to a 4-year college and being able to graduate.

Students past and present are owners of the \$1.4 trillion outstanding Federal debt, and the clock is ticking. It is time for students, families, and guidance counselors involved in the college decisionmaking process to be able to assist students and have access to information that will make this huge investment make sense. Otherwise, we leave young people to make decisions based on: Well, those colors on the band uniform are really cool; or they have a good football team; or it seems like they have a really nice social life.

But, ultimately, what we are making is an investment into the future of our children and the future of this country. They have massive money invested, and let's be honest, we all do as taxpayers as well. We have a huge investment in the preparation of young people for the workforce.

It is time to streamline and update our higher education information system so that families and students can make better decisions on their path to long-term success. It is time to utilize and make meaning out of the data we currently collect to assist them in making the choice.

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The question I am asked is: Why did I submit the College Transparency Act? I spent 35 years operating a private career school group and working in workforce development. I worked at Chrysler Corporation, moved to another company, and also retired out of that field.

The point is, I have worked in the field for 35 years. I understand the data that is reported. I understand the challenges that people have in trying to sort out what is the best career path for them, how likely are they to succeed in that career path, and what is it going to cost to go to school?

This information all exists—and we will talk about that tonight—but it isn't made available in some coherent manner to students, and we need to fix that.

We also can't tell students how long, on average, it takes them to complete their program. It used to be the day where they used to call them 4-year colleges. The reality, as you well know, Mr. Speaker, is 4-year colleges are now a dream, 5 years is the norm, and 6 years is not uncommon, yet we don't talk about the cost it takes to do that. Again, we don't talk about the likelihood of completing even if you attend 6 years. The reality is we have to fix that.

In my 35 years of dealing with the system, what became clear to me is it is outdated, it is burdensome, it is unhelpful, and it conflicts. It led me to start working on the College Transparency Act as soon as I came to Congress. It was the first bill that I dropped and submitted in Congress. It is the one I spent the most time on. Why? Because we have a huge investment in postsecondary education, and, even more importantly, we have a huge investment preparing a labor force.

I have not gone to an employer since I was sworn into office that has not said to me: We can't find people with the skills to go to work.

Yet we have people who have graduated from college who can't find jobs that relate to their degree. We have people who will go to college for an extended period of time or to a postsecondary program who don't complete, but they meander their way through. They get lost. They don't have the information to make an informed decision, and then somehow, sometimes, frankly, we blame the consumer.

It is our fault. It is our fault here. It is our fault at the Federal Government. We are making a huge investment, and we expect everybody else to cure the problem. Better information on outcomes in student success will certainly assist in closing the skills gap that we talk about nearly every day here in Congress and certainly every day in the Education and the Workforce Committee when we meet.

Senators HATCH, WARREN, CASSIDY, and WHITEHOUSE share my concern. On the Senate side, they have introduced a similar bill—almost identical—to address this critical issue. I believe on this issue we can get bipartisan support to move forward with an approach to inform the public and the consumers about the decision they will make with their money and, to be honest with you, our investment in their future.

The current system is massively broken. This chart will show the current reporting system for higher education in the United States today. If you can possibly read it from there—and we will get it submitted for the RECORD—these are all the groups that gather data, all the places it goes, and all the information that is exchanged about students going to postsecondary education in the United States.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, can you make any sense of that? I have worked 35 years in that field. I will tell you that a student enrollment for one system doesn't match the definition of enrollment in another system, it doesn't match the definition in the State system, yet we all report that information. Graduate information is all different depending on the system. None of the definitions match.

Now, if we can't get definitions to match internally in a system between State accrediting agencies and the Federal Government, how is it we expect students and how are parents to understand whether they are likely to complete the program? And, by the way, none of this information adequately reports student outcomes in terms of employment and doesn't provide them any information on what they are likely to earn. And guess what? Earnings matter in terms of their ability to pay their student loans back. News flash to everybody: it helps if they know what they are going to make.

A 2015 study completed by Boston Consulting Group indicated \$11.1 billion is spent by institutions to comply with regulations specific to colleges and universities. We don't need more regulations. Good God, help us. We have plenty—we have plenty of reporting.

One of the most significant findings of the study was that small and medium colleges are disproportionately impacted by those Federal regulations with compliance eating up a much larger share of expenditures than the wealthier institutions.

While we say we need more options for continuing and postsecondary education, for career and technical education at the postsecondary level, we are killing those institutions with rules and regulations of reporting that give us that, that isn't useful to the public that has to make a decision. Imagine that.

We have an opportunity to fix that with the Higher Education Act. We have an opportunity to fix that with the College Transparency Act. We have an opportunity now.

There are three main goals of the bill. This chart will show you what the bill will collect. First and most importantly, the goal is to provide accurate and complete information that is searchable for students and can be customized. Think about it. How many people have shopped for an automobile? They have on the website a comparison of whatever vehicle to other similar vehicles sold by other manufacturers. You can compare them dealer to dealer. You can get an idea what features are there. Shop for whatever you want, and then tell me if you can find that about any educational program offered by postsecondary institutions.

This addresses that issue while reducing reporting burdens on institutions. I believe, and I think most of our party believes, that market competi-

tion works best when consumers can actually find out information and make rational decisions. They can compare complete information. They can compare the offerings, the costs, and the outcomes.

With that competition, we can, in fact, address one of the other concerns we have, which is: What is the cost of higher education? We can compare it not just on what you pay for tuition, room and board, but the return on investment. What do they get for their time and money in a postsecondary education program?

More importantly, choices will be made by consumers and not the Federal Government. We have seen how that works in so many ways, and the Federal Government should not be making choices about the future of Americans.

If we arm consumers with that information to make informed decisions, then we can remove the Federal Government from the business of determining quality in education and let consumers and accrediting agencies address that.

The bill also replaces a number of reporting requirements that the Federal Government has, most notably what is called the IPED survey. I did them for years. Routinely, we get questions that don't match their definitions because their definitions made no sense for many institutions.

Thirdly, the bill aims to provide transparency to its students by requiring they be posted in a searchable database, and the costs would be identified there.

Let me go through real quickly in that chart the information that will be available that is not currently available on a searchable basis. You can get enrollment patterns, you can get progress to completion, and you can get completion rates. Do you graduate from a program? Imagine that. You can find that out, and it is the same definition whether it is the University of Michigan or Michigan State where I attended. Wouldn't that be a great idea?

You can find out about their postcollege earnings. It is really helpful. Most people go to college or a postsecondary school to find a job, earn some money, and support their family. Can they do that? What is likely to be the outcome?

The cost of the program? I mentioned that a couple of times. It is not just tuition and room and board. The reality is that, depending on the program, your costs are significantly different. My 18- almost 19-year-old stepdaughter attends an art school. Well, beyond tuition and room and board, there are huge costs for art supplies. Now, we knew that. I have experience in education. There are a lot of people who start these programs who don't understand there are other costs and what those may be. This process requires reporting of that from the colleges.

Also, information about financial aid that is available for those institutions

so they can compare program to program, institution to institution, and make a decision that is best for them and their family. That is what we are trying to achieve here. It is achievable.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GARRETT) who will speak for a few moments on the bill and its advantages.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, Congressman MITCHELL, for his leadership in this amazingly important area, and also to point out the bipartisan nature of this bill not only, Mr. Speaker, to you, but to those people who might be watching at home at a time when it seems that we can't agree on anything, here we have an agreement in a College Transparency Act in how to ensure a better investment for the futures of our children.

Now, there are those who have opposed this bill, and I can't really wrap my brain around it, Mr. Speaker. Someone suggested that this might grow government. But that is absolutely not true. As a matter of fact, the data that would be made available in this act is already collected. But the problem is that that data is collected, and then it is siloed and accessible only to institutions or government entities and not to the end user. That strikes me as illogical, at best, and stupid, at worst.

Someone says it burdens colleges with data collection requirements, yet, again, the data is already being collected. What about personal privacy? Does it disclose individuals' private information? Well, if it did, I wouldn't be standing here today extolling the virtues of this bill which I cosponsored and Mr. MITCHELL sponsors that support it again across the aisle to include the likes of the distinguished gentleman, Mr. POLIS, from Colorado.

Instead of disclosing personal data of individuals, it discloses metadata of groups so what we would learn, for example, is that individuals who majored in X at college Y had an employment rate of Z, and that their earning potential was A as opposed to another university where it might be B.

What more pertinent information, Mr. Speaker, could there be to young people as they seek to choose an area of study and a place to engage in that area of study than their likelihood of success based on those who have done the same thing at the same college or university before them?

So we have addressed some of the things that this bill doesn't do, but let's speak briefly about what it does do. Without any ability to articulately argue, this bill increases transparency. When you step aside from the realm of national security, I can think of no reason that the Federal or State or local government should be in the business of collecting data that they don't share with the citizens who put them in office or the people who fund their endeavors. Indeed, this isn't national security, unless you contemplate the

fact that right now our children attend universities deprived of information that might help them make better choices.

So this increases transparency. It creates informed consumers. It allows individuals to decide for themselves which college or university might offer a program that they are interested in, is the best investment of their time, and perhaps their or their parents' or the government's money. It informs payers to that very end, whether that payer is the student, a family member, or the State of which they are a resident. It gives us a return on the investment.

The fact that this data has been collected low these many years, and it took the leadership of Mr. MITCHELL and good folks like JARED POLIS working across the aisle to get us to this point, is lamentable, but we have the opportunity in the College Transparency Act to correct these wrongs, not to burden our universities with more data collection requirements, but to take the data that is already being collected and give it to the end users, the students.

So it is with that that I again offer a hearty congratulations to Congressman MITCHELL, a begrudging "I wish I had thought of that," and I implore my colleagues on both sides of the aisle that while we already collect this data, we do not disseminate it where it would be most useful, and that is to the end users. I hope that all can find a way to join us from both parties in supporting this commonsense measure, the College Transparency Act.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the president of the University of Virginia in my district.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA,  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,  
Charlottesville, VA, June 1, 2017.

Hon. TOM GARRETT,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE GARRETT: On behalf of the University of Virginia (UVA), I thank you for your co-sponsorship of the College Transparency Act. I appreciate your support of transparency, good data, and enhanced consumer information in higher education, as well as the bipartisan efforts that led to the creation of this bill.

The College Transparency Act is a step in the right direction for improving federal data, which is currently limited, and at times, inaccurate. Improving data helps students and families with the important decisions associated with choosing a college, and also helps institutions of higher education improve student success. The Association of Public and Land Grant Universities, for which I serve as the Chair of the Council of Presidents, compiled case studies showing the importance of this type of data for improving student outcomes. I look forward to working with you, in your influential position as a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, on this issue and many others as Congress moves forward with reauthorizing the Higher Education Act.

Once again, thank you for your dedicated support of UVA.

Very truly yours,  
TERESA SULLIVAN,  
President.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I would note that institutions from the University of Virginia to the entire Virginia community college system have endorsed this commonsense piece of legislation. It is a shame we haven't done it sooner. Let us not miss the opportunity to pass this now.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague noting both the bipartisan nature of this legislation both in the House and the United States Senate, which, as you well know, Mr. Speaker, some days around here is hard to achieve.

Let me note real quickly we have a listing, which I will put up now, of the institutions and organizations that support the College Transparency Act. We are now at over 90 groups that have indicated their support for this legislation and the need for this legislation.

I know it is difficult to read from there, but in a moment I will talk more about some of these institutions.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STIVERS), who is my colleague and good friend. Yes, he is from Ohio and roots for Ohio State. I went to Michigan State, but I will certainly yield to Mr. STIVERS to talk further about the College Transparency Act.

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of H.R. 2434, the College Transparency Act. I want to thank my good friend from Michigan, Congressman MITCHELL, for his leadership and bipartisan work on this very important bill.

This time of year, parents and students are beginning to make important decisions about higher education for the next school year.

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Unfortunately, there is little information available about what can be expected from the large investment in a college or a university. This legislation will enable students and families to make informed choices about their education after high school.

The College Transparency Act will provide actionable, customizable information for students and families as they consider college and universities by accurately reporting on student outcomes, such as enrollment, completion, and postcollege success across colleges and majors.

Most importantly, this information will tell students how other prospective students have succeeded at an institution and help point them toward schools best suited for their unique needs and desired outcomes.

The current college reporting system is overly burdensome on institutions, yet it provides little practical information for students and families due to significant gaps in college data reporting.

Additionally, the data collected only reports graduation rates for students who begin as full-time students and finish at the same institution, leaving out successes of part-time students and

any student who transfers and completes a degree at an institution other than where they started. With more than half of bachelor's degree recipients attending more than one school and nearly two-thirds of community college students starting part-time, we have to ensure that these students count.

One example of this impact from my alma mater, The Ohio State University, is a veteran named Tami. Tami returned to school to complete her social work degree after her military service. She completed an associate of arts degree at Columbus State, a community college, and transferred and eventually graduated with a social work degree from The Ohio State University. She had a 3.9 grade point average in the classroom and excelled in her two-semester field placement at the university's Office of Military and Veterans Services.

Under this system, Tami's success story would not count toward Ohio State success. Under the new system, it will. Today, the system would not count Tami because she started at one school and transferred to another school. Under the legislation that Mr. MITCHELL is working on and that I am talking about today, Tami would count again.

We need to make people count again. Tami served our country. Tami got out of the military, came back, went to school part-time, then transferred schools, went to school full-time, and completed her practical experience. Under the current reporting system, Tami doesn't count.

Let's fix that. That is what this bill would do. Under the updated system, institutions would securely report privacy-protected student level data to the National Center for Education Statistics, or NCES. NCES would be responsible for presenting summary information on a user-friendly website for students and families, while securely storing student information.

This legislation will help countless students and families make better decisions about where to go for higher education, where they should attend.

I want to thank Congressman MITCHELL and Congressman POLIS for introducing this important, bipartisan legislation that will help so many students and families, students like Tami.

I hope we can roll up our sleeves, work together, and get this bill passed. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. MITCHELL. I appreciate the gentleman's notation of the groups that support this bill. I was surprised, frankly, with the number of groups that stepped forward—as I said, over 90—to support the College Transparency Act. Some of the groups I would like to stress today include veterans groups.

The Student Veterans of America and Veterans Education Success, among others, have endorsed the bill because it helps veterans determine

which institutions and programs best serve their unique needs and improve their ability to make progress in the workforce to be successful, something that, frankly, we owe them as part of their service to our country.

As Chris Cate, vice president of research at Student Veterans of America, said: "Based on recent research, the value of the Post-9/11 GI Bill is clear, as student veterans across the country succeed at rates higher than traditional students. Yet, determining these outcomes is currently a significant effort and not easily accomplished without abundant resources. Basing policy on research and data is imperative, and it shouldn't take as much effort as it does today, as we have the answer to this challenge staring us in the face." It is the College Transparency Act.

We currently collect the data that people are begging to get to make informed decisions for themselves and, frankly, in this case, to assist veterans in making wise decisions on their GI bill.

Let me talk a little more about some of the groups that support the bill, and then I will yield to another colleague of mine.

Colleges, universities, and postsecondary institutions support this bill, which sometimes surprises me, given what we are trying to do, which is re-make a reporting system and make transparent their performance. Think about it. They support the bill without exception. These institutions want more comprehensive information on student progress, completion, and outcomes so they can better understand and evaluate how well they are serving their students and identify areas for improvement.

Institutions also know best student-level data collection will decrease the reporting burden and the financial and human resources necessary to report and complete the requirements of the Federal Government, State government, and accrediting agencies.

Associations representing institutions serving the majority of college students support lifting the ban on connecting student-level data to help build evidence and improve the quality of the program.

As my colleague Mr. STIVERS indicated, as well as others, this information is disseminated and developed only at the metadata level. It is not like we are going to send your Social Security number out and post it on a Facebook page with your employment status; although, in your case, Mr. Speaker, everyone knows well your employment status.

According to the Michigan Association of State Universities, which serves as the coordinating board for Michigan's 15 public universities in my home State: "The College Transparency Act of 2017 represents a much-needed modernization of the Federal Government's college reporting system for postsecondary data. The current ban on student-level data in the Higher Edu-

cation Act represents a gross injustice to students and families who require and deserve more accurate data on postsecondary institutional outcomes in order to be adequately equipped to make one of the most important decision in one's life—whether and where to attend college. By providing more accurate information about institutional graduation rates, salary levels, and other employment outcomes, and additional information on how students fare at individual institutions and in academic programs, the College Transparency Act will enable the creation of an essential resource for student and consumer information."

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the Michigan Association of State Universities.

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF  
STATE UNIVERSITIES,  
Lansing, MI, July 10, 2017.

Re Endorsement of College Transparency  
Act, H.R. 2434/S. 1121.

Hon. PAUL MITCHELL,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN MITCHELL: On behalf of the presidents and chancellors of the 15 public universities of Michigan and the nearly 300,000 students they collectively enroll, I write to express strong support for the College Transparency Act of 2017, H.R. 2434, which you have sponsored, and its companion bill in the Senate, S. 1121.

The College Transparency Act of 2017 represents a much needed modernization of the federal government's college reporting system for postsecondary data. The current ban on student-level data in the Higher Education Act represents a gross injustice to students and families who require and deserve more accurate data on postsecondary institutional outcomes in order to be adequately equipped to make one of the most important decision in one's life—whether and where to attend college. By providing more accurate information about institutional graduation rates, salary levels and other employment outcomes, and additional information on how students fare at individual institutions and in academic programs, the College Transparency Act will enable the creation of an essential resource for student and consumer information.

Introduced in both Congressional chambers, this bipartisan legislation will also serve as an indispensable tool in helping institutions assess and enhance their academic programs. Michigan public universities rely heavily on data to inform institutional policy and to better serve our students.

We commend your leadership and those co-sponsoring the College Transparency Act and offer our support in advocating passage of the legislation. America's students, families, taxpayers and postsecondary institutions will all benefit greatly from its enactment.

Sincerely,

DANIEL J. HURLEY,  
Chief Executive Officer.

Mr. MITCHELL. For similar reasons, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, the American Association of Community Colleges, the Association of Community College Trustees, the Dallas County Community College District, State University of New York system, University of Virginia, Virginia Community College System, Ohio State University, Louisiana State

University, St. Clair County Community College, and many others support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER) to talk further about his views on the College Transparency Act.

Mr. SMUCKER. I thank my friend from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) for hosting this Special Order on the College Transparency Act.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken on the floor a number of times about the House's work to improve education in the country. I have been proud to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in the Education and the Workforce Committee to improve career and technical education, and I have also spoken about my own experience with higher education as a nontraditional student taking classes at night while I ran a construction company during the day.

Tonight, I am happy to be here to talk about ensuring that students, parents, guidance counselors, and legislators like us have access to information that can help students make informed decisions about what college to attend so that policymakers have access to research and data that will better inform our work on higher education policy.

Today, colleges and universities report data to the U.S. Department of Education that has been collected by a voluntary survey available only to a limited group of graduates. The survey is not offered to any student who is attending college part-time, who is not seeking a degree, who has transferred from another college, or who doesn't have Federal loans.

In today's economy, we are trying to make higher education more available and accessible to nontraditional students, yet we omit a large group of nontraditional students from this data. That is just one of the reasons why we need to pass the College Transparency Act.

This bipartisan legislation seeks to modernize higher education reporting so that students and families can make responsible choices about what college or university to attend. It will help empower students and families to determine how much they need to take out in student loans and which programs at different schools provide the best paths toward their dream job or a career.

Too many students today are graduating with massive amounts of debt. Too many students graduate with majors offering too few opportunities. At the very least, students need to have this data available to them to make informed decisions.

This bill, as has been pointed out by Mr. MITCHELL, is endorsed by more than 80 education and business organizations, including Advance CTE and the Association for Career and Technical Education, organizations that represent great schools like Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology in my district.

This bill has bipartisan support in our committee, in the Senate, and the

House, and it is essential for transforming our higher education system to meet the needs of a 21st century economy. So, again, I am happy to rise to speak in support of this act.

I would like to thank my friend from Michigan for hosting this Special Order this evening, and I urge my colleagues to consider supporting this important piece of legislation.

Mr. MITCHELL. I thank my colleague, Mr. SMUCKER, for taking time out of his busy schedule to come here tonight to talk about the act and its importance nationally and in his district.

He made reference to something I wish to stress, Mr. Speaker, which is that, annually, at the Federal level, we spend \$160 billion a year on student aid. We currently spend it into a vacuum, into a giant black hole, in which we hope we get outcomes and which students hope they get outcomes. Certainly, parents hope they get outcomes so they don't continue to live at home. We all hope that we can get success for our young people, and we don't have the information to determine that.

Let me also stress that, beyond educational groups, veterans, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Business Roundtable have both endorsed this bill as being critical to the success of our Nation going forward.

I want to stress for you and everyone in this Chamber, when you get the level of support from such a broad range of people, we have to start asking ourselves: Why have we not already moved on this? Why has it not already taken place? We need to move on this issue sooner rather than later. We can't afford not to.

Let me talk about one other group that supports this bill passionately. Students want to know which schools are best fit for their needs. Deciding where to spend their time, their precious dollars, and incur debt is critically important to them.

Surprisingly enough, these folks want to do more than go to college, meet new friends, and have a little party every now and then. The vast majority—85 percent—of college freshmen rate getting a better job as very important in their decision to go to college; yet the day-to-day need, as we have talked about repeatedly tonight, to discern which program's institutions will best address that objective is lacking.

The ability to provide that information is at our hands. We have the technology. We have the data. We just don't provide it in a usable format.

Groups that support this bill include the Big Ten Student Association, Campaign for College Opportunity, Young Invincibles, Institute for College Access and Success, the United Negro College Fund, Achieving the Dream, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, Institute for Higher Education Policy, and the National Association for College Admission Counseling. They support the College Transparency Act.

I would ask: How many more groups do we need to gather before we decide to act here in Congress?

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In the time I have left, I want to address some myths. And if my colleague, Mr. SMUCKER, who is still here, wants to weigh in on this, I invite him to join at any point in time he wants to weigh in, because we heard a number of myths put forward about the terrible things that the College Transparency Act may arise.

One that amazes me is that while the bill requires institutions collect and report tons of new information on students—well, can we bring that chart back up of what we already collect? Let's look at that gem of what we collect currently. We are doing this now. Institutions are doing this now.

So tell me, how are we going to collect tons more? In fact, every student who attends a postsecondary education institution in the United States has information reported on them now, whether they take student financial aid or not, because a 1098-T is filed by that institution with the IRS so, in fact, if they claim credit for going to school, tuition tax credit, they can claim that.

There is no information that is not currently with one agency or another. The astonishing thing is the discussion that somehow there is some secret about whether someone is attending a postsecondary institution. It is astonishing.

College universities, also, because of this reporting, hold the student-level data. They report much of it to the Department of Education, to NCES, and to the State Department of Education to accredit the agencies in a variety of formats. The number of formats, the array of those, will totally amaze you. If you would like, I can get those reports for you. You can spend the afternoon looking through the joys of reporting on educational activities in a postsecondary institution, and none of it makes any sense to anybody that isn't actually in the system, and I will admit, that data doesn't make any sense to me either.

Colleges and universities also don't know if their graduates actually get a job, unless half the students come back happily and say they went to work and how much they are making. They don't get that information. They couldn't assist the student with that information if they tried in any accurate basis other than anecdotally. So they don't try. Why would you? You wouldn't do that. You wouldn't make that mistake.

That information exists. Why? Because the IRS has a 1098-T on everyone who went to college or a postsecondary institution. That data can be matched by the Treasury Department to whether that student is employed, what they are making, and they can report that, as was noted earlier, through metadata to the Department of Education for development of reports without reporting one individual student's information.

So I am lost in understanding how it is we lose our minds around here about student information being disseminated. It exists. It can be protected.

Let me talk real briefly about another myth that exists, that somehow tracking the student data will lead to a Federal rating system, the Federal rating system of educational programs of institutions.

Well, first, the Department of Education has tried a number of rating systems over there, all with mixed success, at best, and I am trying to be polite. It is late in the evening. Let's not be too blunt. But they failed miserably in doing so. They tried to rate institutions based on cohort default rates, and those are being repealed by many as being inaccurate.

They tried to rate institutions on something called gainful employment, but they only do gainful employment for career schools, because, hey, you know, no one goes to a university for gainful employment. I assure you, my guess is the Speaker did as well, you went to the university hoping for gainful employment. I doubt there is anyone in the room who didn't go to a college or university in hopes of gainful employment.

The reality is the Department of Education, as they have implemented this, has tried to create these Federal rating systems and failed miserably. So I tell you what, we did something unique. The College Transparency Act explicitly prohibits the creation of a single database by the Department of Education and expressly prohibits using that database for a Federal rating system.

I give up. I don't want the Department of Education telling us what a good education system is because look how well they have done so far. We will let consumers decide. We will give them information so they can decide. They can make a wise decision rather than thinking that Big Brother can make that decision for them.

If the government were doing so well with it, why is it that every Member in this room has heard from their employers the terrible shortage we have of people in current technical education, of workers? If they were doing such a great job of ratings and informing people what their opportunities were, why are we currently struggling with the workforce we have?

It is a disaster. Let's stop thinking we can fix it, and let's let consumers have the information they need to fix it.

The bill enables the NCES to aggregate student information from relevant agencies with the responsibility that they had to protect that data, which they have done for years.

So now they are doing—not create some massive Federal database in which everybody's name, Social Security number, is accessible so we can determine whether or not you are a successful student. It doesn't do that, not even close to that, never has. It pro-

vides information on an accurate basis by a program institution of what your likelihood of success is.

Last but not least, I talked a little bit about it, is keeping personal information private, the fears about privacy, and that somehow we can't achieve that under the College Transparency Act.

The College Transparency Act requires that data collection should be led by the National Center for Education Statistics. I apologize. I have been using the abbreviation NCES because it has been burned into my memory over the years. It is a statistical agency with strong protocols for securing data and protecting student privacy. It has an excellent track record for doing so.

They have consulted with the private sector, pretty good folks, about how to continue to work on student privacy in that data. NCES is already required by law to develop and enforce standards to protect individual level data. As added protection, the act requires, the College Transparency Act requires, an institute utilize the latest Federal data security standards developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. We require that they implement those on an ongoing basis and they maintain those.

I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that is not commonplace in the Federal Government at this point. We are going a step beyond what happens every day in many agencies.

Further, your personal information, Mr. SMUCKER's or anybody else's, will never be available to the Department of Education or to the public. Your employment status will never be available. What will be available is whether all of us who took a program in Michigan State University—come on up, you would love the school, some time—whether or not you graduated, you got a job, and whether you are gainfully employed and making money. Now, wouldn't that be a great idea for the money you put into a college education? All the aggregate information is available on the programs and institutions we are talking about here.

The data developed by the Treasury Department on income and employment, once it is transmitted to NCES, is literally blown up. The file no longer exists. You can't hack what isn't there.

So I would ask, at this point in time, rather than continue to extol the virtues of the College Transparency Act, I would ask all the Members to look at the act. We have a number of cosponsors at this point in time that I am very proud of. It is a bipartisan bill. I would ask them to look at the act, look at what it is achieving, and if they have questions, let's hear those questions, and let's make an effort to move this forward.

We are already well into the decisionmaking process for young people to go to a postsecondary education program next year. It is too late for them to get this information, but, you know

what, we can get it the following year. And the question I would ask is: How long are we going to wait while we are spending \$160 billion in direct student aid alone hoping to get an outcome when we can do better and the ability to do that is at our fingertips?

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### CLIMATE SOLUTIONS CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a member of the Climate Solutions Caucus to speak on the issue of climate change. The caucus is a bipartisan group of members committed to implementing economically viable options to reduce climate risk.

The caucus has a "Noah's Ark" membership rule. Members can only join in pairs, one from each party. Under the leadership of co-chairs Mr. CURBELO and Mr. DEUTCH, the caucus is helping to break the partisan gridlock on this issue and show that promoting climate solutions can be truly bipartisan.

The formation and rapid growth of the Climate Solutions Caucus represents a recognition of both the challenges and opportunities and has demonstrated that there is bipartisan will to take action.

In recognition of the fact that 60 Members of Congress have come together to fight climate change in a bipartisan fashion, I organized this time for my colleagues to join me on the floor to let the American people know what we, as their elected leaders, are doing to address climate change.

We know, from scientific evidence, that our climate is changing. The global average temperature has increased by about 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit over the last 100 years. Sea levels are rising, the ocean is becoming more acidic, precipitation patterns are changing, and heat waves are becoming more frequent and longer in duration.

Each of these changes produces a cascade of effects that impact our lives and livelihoods, including flooding, changes in crop yields, power shortages, declines in fisheries, and increases in cardiovascular disease.

Recent events in our own country, such as devastating hurricanes in the Southeast and wildfires in the West have brought this issue to the forefront of everyone's minds. Now climate