

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE NEW DIRECTION CONGRESS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

2007-
2010

MAKING COLLEGE MORE AFFORDABLE

COLLEGE COST REDUCTION AND ACCESS ACT (PL 110-84)

- Cuts the interest rates on need-based student loans in half, from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent over four years, saving the typical student borrower \$4,400 over the life of the loan
- Increases the maximum Pell Grant scholarship and expands eligibility to cover more low-income students
- Makes student loan payments more affordable for borrowers by guaranteeing that borrowers will not have to pay more than 15 percent of their discretionary income in loan repayments
- Provides loan forgiveness for public servants after 10 years of public service and loan repayment for military service members, first responders, law enforcement officers, and others

HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY ACT (PL 110-315)

- Makes it easier to apply for federal student aid, by streamlining the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) process down from 100 questions and creating a two-page FAFSA-EZ form
- Gives colleges incentives to rein in tuition increases
- Includes provisions to make textbook costs more manageable
- Makes college more affordable for low-income and non-traditional students by allowing students to receive Pell Grants year-round

STUDENT AID AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT (PL 111-152)

- Makes the largest investment in college aid in history, at no cost to the taxpayer
- Invests \$36 billion over 10 years to increase the maximum Pell Grant to \$5,550 in 2010 and to nearly \$6,000 by 2017; starting in 2013, the maximum grant will be linked to match the rising cost of living by indexing it to the Consumer Price Index
- Takes another step in making student loan payments more affordable for borrowers by providing that, starting in 2014, borrowers will not have to pay more than 10 percent of their discretionary income in loan repayments
- Invests \$500 million a year for the next four years in improving our community colleges
- Is paid for by ending wasteful subsidies to banks through the federal guaranteed student loan programs
- Reduces the deficit by \$10 billion over the next 10 years

AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (PL 111-5)

- Improves higher education tax credits, by creating a new “American Opportunity” tax credit with a maximum of \$2,500 rather than the previous maximum of \$1,800
- Provides this new “American Opportunity” tax credit to more than 4 million low-income students who had not had any access to higher education tax credits in the past – by making it partially refundable

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A NEW FOUNDATION FOR OUR ECONOMY

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE (PL 110-28)

- Provided the first minimum wage increase in 10 years -- raising the minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25 an hour in three increments over two years
- This minimum wage increase has helped many of America’s young people, including those working in part-time and/or summer jobs as they are going to school

AMERICAN CLEAN ENERGY AND SECURITY ACT (H.R. 2454, 111TH CONGRESS) – PASSED BY HOUSE

- Unleashes private sector investment in clean energy to create millions of new clean energy jobs that can't be shipped overseas and to make America the global leader in clean energy technology
- Estimated to create 1.7 million clean energy jobs (along with Recovery Act)
- Reduces global warming by placing achievable, realistic limits on carbon emissions from electric utilities, oil refineries and other major sources
- Reduces our dangerous dependence on foreign oil that is funding terrorism
- Invests in cost-saving energy technology to save consumers money
- Keeps costs low for Americans; with EPA estimating the bill would cost the typical American household less than a postage stamp per day – or \$98-\$140 a year; even before cost-savings are factored in

HOME STAR JOBS ACT (H.R. 5019, 111TH CONGRESS) – PASSED BY HOUSE

- Provides immediate incentives for consumers to make their homes more energy-efficient
- According to the Alliance to Save Energy, creates 168,000 jobs in construction and manufacturing

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY ACT (PL 110-140)

- Increases vehicle fuel efficiency standards (CAFÉ standards) to 35 miles per gallon by 2020, the first congressional increase in 32 years – reducing global warming
- Provides new energy efficiency standards for buildings, homes, appliances, and lighting
- Makes an historic commitment to American-grown biofuels
- Creates a Green Job Corps, training workers for a 'green' revolution

DISASTER RELIEF AND YOUTH JOBS ACT (H.R. 4899, 111TH CONGRESS) – PASSED BY HOUSE

- Creates about 300,000 job opportunities for young people – critical with the unemployment rate for those ages 16 to 19 currently at 26.3 percent and those ages 20 to 24 currently at 14.9 percent.
- Gives disaster-stricken communities aid to rebuild their homes, infrastructure and local economies

AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (PL 111-5)

- According to the nonpartisan CBO, has been responsible for up to 3.3 million jobs as of June 2010
- More than one-third of the Act has been tax cuts for 98 percent of Americans
- Invests in rebuilding America, including roads, bridges, and mass transit; in clean energy jobs, such as the smart power grid and advanced batteries; and in science and technology
- Significantly enhanced the tax credit for first-time homebuyers by removing the repayment requirement and increasing it to \$8,000

WORKER, HOMEOWNERSHIP, & BUSINESS ASSISTANCE ACT (PL 111-92)

- Extends the homebuyer tax credit through April 30, 2010 (which otherwise would have expired on November 30, 2009) and expands the homebuyer tax credit to more families
- Boosts the economy with emergency relief for Americans hit by the recession
- Provides additional tax relief for small businesses through a net operating loss provision

HIRING INCENTIVES TO RESTORE EMPLOYMENT (HIRE) ACT (PL 111-147)

- Is estimated to create 300,000 jobs by providing a payroll tax holiday for businesses that hire workers who have been unemployed for eight weeks or longer, and an income tax credit of \$1,000 for businesses that retain these employees; also unleashes tens of billions of dollars to rebuild infrastructure

LILY LEDBETTER FAIR PAY ACT (PL 111-2)

- Helps to better ensure equal pay for women by rectifying a 2007 Supreme Court decision that had made it much more difficult for women and other workers to pursue pay discrimination claims
- Restores the longstanding interpretation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act

EDUCATION JOBS AND MEDICAID ASSISTANCE ACT (PL 111-226)

- Creates and saves about 319,000 jobs – saving 161,000 teacher jobs this coming school year and providing state aid that will create and save another 158,000 jobs, including police officers, firefighters, and private sector workers
- Closes tax loopholes that encourage corporations to ship American jobs overseas

AMERICA COMPETES ACT (INNOVATION AGENDA) (PL 110-69)

- Makes key investments to help ensure our global economic competitiveness for generations to come
- Puts us on a path to doubling funding for basic scientific research over the next 10 years
- Creates scholarships for 25,000 new highly qualified math and science teachers over the next 5 years

AMERICA COMPETES ACT REAUTHORIZATION (H.R. 5116, 111TH CONGRESS) – PASSED BY HOUSE

- Keeps our nation on the path to double funding for basic scientific research over 10 years
- Creates the next generation of entrepreneurs by improving science, math, technology, and engineering education at all levels

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IMPROVING HEALTH CARE

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (PL 111-148)

- Allows young people to stay on their parents' health plan until their 26th birthday; this will help to cover the one in three young adults who are currently uninsured; (between now and 2014, this provision applies to a young person only if their employer doesn't offer them coverage)
- Includes new patient protections that will save consumers money – such as eliminating lifetime limits on how much insurance companies cover if you get sick and phasing out annual limits
- Promotes preventive care by requiring insurers to cover preventive services without charging deductibles or co-payments, for those in new plans; also invests \$15 billion in a Prevention and Public Health Fund
- Offers access to affordable health insurance to those without job-based coverage, starting in 2014, and provides substantial premium assistance to those who still can't afford it; young adults are just starting jobs and careers, and often don't have access to job-based coverage
- Is fully paid for, so the younger generation is not stuck with paying the bill for health reform; indeed, according to the nonpartisan CBO, the Act will reduce the deficit by \$1.3 trillion over the next 20 years

AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (PL 111-5)

- Invests \$10 billion in critical health research, in order to advance research capable of making breakthroughs in the areas of such illnesses as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, cancer, and heart disease
- Invests \$19 billion to accelerate the adoption of Health Information Technology (HIT) systems by doctors and hospitals, in order to modernize the health care system, save billions of dollars, reduce medical errors and improve quality

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FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

STATUTORY PAY-AS-YOU-GO (PL 111-139)

- Puts in federal statute a pay-as-you-go requirement, imposing tough fiscal discipline, that new policies that increase mandatory spending or reduce revenues must be fully offset with reduced spending or increased revenues elsewhere, giving this requirement the force of law
- When Statutory Pay-As-You-Go was in effect during the 1990s, helped to create the record budget surpluses the nation enjoyed under President Clinton

WEAPON SYSTEMS ACQUISITION REFORM ACT (PL 111-23)

- Saves taxpayers money by cracking down on Pentagon waste and cost overruns, which an independent watchdog says amount to \$296 billion just for the 96 largest weapons systems

IMPROPER PAYMENTS ELIMINATION AND RECOVERY ACT (PL 111-204)

- Saves taxpayers money by helping identify, reduce and eliminate improper payments by federal agencies, as well as recovering lost funds, on behalf of U.S. taxpayers, that federal agencies have spent improperly

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NEW CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTIONS

WALL STREET REFORM (PL 111-203)

- Establishes an independent Consumer Financial Protection Bureau that is able to act fast to:
 - Ensure American consumers get the clear, accurate information they need to shop for mortgages, credit cards, student loans, payday loans and other financial products, and
 - Protect them from hidden fees, abusive terms, and unfair and deceptive practices

CREDIT CARDHOLDERS' BILL OF RIGHTS (PL 111-627)

- Provides tough protections for credit cardholders, including prohibiting retroactive interest rate hikes on existing balances and banning double-cycle billing (charging interest twice for balances paid on time)

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A COMMITMENT TO OUR VETERANS

NEW GI BILL (PL 110-252)

- Provides full, four-year college scholarships for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, on a par with the educational benefits for veterans provided after World War II, covering up to the cost of the most expensive in-state public school

FY 2010 MILITARY CONSTRUCTION-VA APPROPRIATIONS (PL 111-117)

- Strengthens health care for 6 million veterans, including 419,000 veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan, by investing 11% more for VA medical care; 70% of those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are under 30