



April 27, 2012

Bill to Combat Cyber Attacks Passes House

Every day, U.S. companies are being targeted by foreign hackers seeking to steal proprietary information and data. These cyber threats undermine U.S. competitiveness and cost American jobs. While the federal government has classified cyber threat intelligence that could help the private sector defend its networks, there are significant obstacles that hinder the sharing of that critical information. On Thursday the House passed legislation to enable the government to share this information with private sector companies that voluntarily choose to receive the proper clearances to access this information. The bill does not require companies to participate, nor does it require participating firms to share information with the government. In addition, the bill strictly limits the usage of information passed along to the government by the private sector. During consideration of the legislation, a number of amendments were adopted to strengthen the bill's civil liberties and privacy protections and to ensure that information shared under the bill would only be used to protect U.S. cybersecurity. Furthermore, an amendment to sunset the bill's provisions after five years was passed, ensuring that Congress will have to review the program's performance before it may be extended. Congressman Miller will continue working to protect the security of our country's electronic infrastructure, which is vital to our 21st century economy, without compromising Americans civil liberties.

House Passes Responsible Student Loan Interest Relief Measure

The weak Obama economy has had a devastating impact on recent college graduates, with an estimated 50 percent either unemployed or underemployed. To make matters worse, soaring tuition costs are forcing college students to accumulate ever-increasing amounts of debt to finance their education. In 2007, a law was passed that gradually reduced the interest rate on subsidized Stafford Loans from 6.8 % to 3.4%. On July 1st, the rate is scheduled to reset to 6.8%. The Democrat-controlled 111th Congress did nothing to prevent the looming rate increase while diverting billions in financial aid funding from the private sector federal loan program to cover the costs of the President's health care law. Today, House Republicans passed a bill that extends the 3.4% rate through June 30, 2013, while also cutting billions of dollars in additional spending. Specifically, the House-passed bill eliminates funding for a \$12 billion slush fund established by the President's health care law. Half of the savings from the slush fund repeal will be used to fully offset the cost of the interest rate extension, while the remaining savings will be dedicated to deficit reduction. Congressman Miller supported this short-term fix to help student borrowers while Congress continues to focus on pursuing policies that will grow our economy and improve the job prospects for college graduates.

Conference Negotiations to Begin on Highway Bill

On Wednesday, the House voted to convene a conference committee with the Senate in order to reach an agreement on the reauthorization of our nation's highway and transit programs. Last week, the House passed an extension of surface transportation programs that includes a directive to the National Energy Regulatory Commission to approve the Keystone XL pipeline project. During consideration of the highway extension, an amendment was adopted to include language Congressman Miller has championed to streamline duplicative and onerous environmental regulations. As the conference committee meets to resolve differences on highway and transit policy, he will continue to fight for these important provisions that will create jobs, improve U.S. energy security, and strengthen our country's deteriorating infrastructure.