

The question before us is will we make the student loan debt burden worse by allowing interest rates to double or will we take action to protect low and moderate income students.

We need to act fast. July 1 is only 81 days away. I urge all our colleagues to join us in supporting the Student Loan Affordability Act.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself and Mr. COONS):

S. 712. A bill to allow acceleration certificates awarded under the Patents for Humanity Program to be transferrable; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the American intellectual property system is rightly held as the global standard for promoting innovation and driving economic growth. This is particularly true of our patent system, which was recently updated and strengthened for the 21st century by the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act. The fundamental truth that our Founders recognized more than 200 years ago—that limited exclusive rights for inventors incentivize research and development—continues to benefit consumers and the American economy at large.

These limited rights can also be applied to incentivize research and discoveries that advance humanitarian needs. In my time in the Senate, I have worked to promote policies that encourage intellectual property holders to apply their work to address global humanitarian challenges. Today, I am pleased to join with Senator COONS in reintroducing the Patents for Humanity Program Improvement Act to again advance such policies.

This legislation improves on a program created by the United States Patent and Trademark Office, PTO, last year. The PTO's Patents for Humanity Program provides rewards to selected patent holders who apply their technology to a humanitarian issue that significantly affects the public health or quality of life of an impoverished population. Those who receive the award are given a certificate to accelerate certain PTO processes.

This year, the innovations that received awards touched on critical areas that will help improve the quality of life for people throughout the world. Award winners worked to improve the treatment and diagnosis of devastating diseases, improve nutrition and the environment, and combat the spread of dangerous counterfeit drugs. These are innovations that will make a real difference in the lives of people in the developing world and elsewhere.

Following a Judiciary Committee hearing last year, I asked PTO Director Kappos whether the Patents for Humanity program would be more effective, and more attractive to innovators, if the acceleration certificates awarded were transferable to a third party. He responded that it would, and that it would be particu-

larly beneficial to small businesses. The Patents for Humanity Program Improvement Act makes these acceleration certificates transferrable. It is a straightforward, cost-neutral bill that will strengthen this useful program.

When Congress can establish policies that provide business incentives for humanitarian endeavors, it should not hesitate to act. I urge the Senate to work swiftly to pass this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 712

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Patents for Humanity Program Improvement Act of 2013".

SEC. 2. TRANSFERABILITY OF ACCELERATION CERTIFICATES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—A holder of an acceleration certificate issued pursuant to the Patents for Humanity Program (established in the notice entitled "Humanitarian Awards Pilot Program", published at 77 Fed. Reg. 6544 (February 8, 2012)), or any successor thereto, of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, may transfer (including by sale) the entitlement to such acceleration certificate to another person.

(b) REQUIREMENT.—An acceleration certificate transferred under subsection (a) shall be subject to any other applicable limitations under the notice entitled "Humanitarian Awards Pilot Program", published at 77 Fed. Reg. 6544 (February 8, 2012), or any successor thereto.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 713. A bill to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to add Rhode Island to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today, along with my colleague Senator WHITEHOUSE, I am introducing the Rhode Island Fishermen's Fairness Act of 2013.

For nearly a decade, I have worked to give the fishermen of my state full participation in the management of the fish stocks that they rely on for their livelihoods.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act established eight regional fishery management councils to give fishermen and other stakeholders the leading role in developing the fishery management plans for federally-regulated species. As such, the councils have enormous significance on the lives and livelihoods of fishermen. To ensure equitable representation, the statute sets out the states from which appointees are to be drawn for each council.

Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the State of Rhode Island was granted

voting membership on the New England Fishery Management Council, NEFMC, as NEFMC-managed stocks represent a significant percentage of landings and revenue for the state. However, while Rhode Island's participation in the New England fishery remains important, its stake in the Mid-Atlantic fishery has become more critical. Yet, it does not have voting representation on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, MAFMC, which currently consists of representatives from New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina.

Rhode Island's stake in the Mid-Atlantic fishery is hardly incidental. According to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, data, Rhode Island accounted for approximately 20 percent of the commercial catch from this fishery in 2012, and its landings are greater than the combined total of landings for the States of New York, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. In fact, New Jersey is the only state currently represented on the MAFMC that lands more MAFMC-regulated species than Rhode Island.

While Rhode Island is represented on some policy-setting committees on the MAFMC, its position on those committees is not guaranteed nor does the state have a vote on matters as they come before the full council. Having that representation can be critically important to Rhode Island as decisions are made on critical stocks like squid, which comprised 40 percent of the state's annual landings in 2012 according to NOAA data, and is a major part of our commercial fishing sector.

This legislation offers Rhode Island that voice. Following current practice, the Rhode Island Fishermen's Fairness Act would create two seats on the MAFMC for Rhode Island: one seat appointed by the Secretary of Commerce based on recommendations from the Governor of Rhode Island, and a second seat filled by Rhode Island's principal State official with marine fishery management responsibility. To accommodate these new members, the MAFMC would increase in size from 21 voting members to 23.

There is precedent for this type of change. North Carolina was added to the MAFMC through an amendment to the Sustainable Fisheries Act in 1996. Like Rhode Island, a significant proportion of North Carolina's landed fish species were managed by the MAFMC, yet the state had no vote on the council.

With mounting economic, ecological, and regulatory challenges, it is more important than ever that Rhode Island's fishermen have a voice in the management of the fisheries on which they depend. I look forward to working with Senator WHITEHOUSE and my other colleagues to restore a measure of equity to the fisheries management process by passing the Rhode Island Fishermen's Fairness Act.