

Kosmas speaks on health care and education

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Congresswoman Suzanne Kosmas called students “the lucky ones” during the economic recession, because of the educational opportunities ahead of them.

College and high school students gathered in the Pegasus Ballroom to hear Kosmas discuss higher education, the economy and health care at a forum hosted by the Lou Frey Institute Monday.

Some students voiced their opinions during an open question-and-answer segment of the event.

“You personally approved spending and now we have a record deficit. Why should we trust you?” Kelly Riordan, a sophomore communication sciences and disorders major, said.

“You committed generational theft. You’re stealing from my kids, you’re stealing from me and you’re stealing from my grandchildren.”

Kosmas said the deficit was inherited and Congress intends to reduce it and make health care solvent in time.

“I feel it is very important, especially as young voters, we need to get out there. It’s our future so we need to get involved,” Riordan said.

Kosmas said it’s because of this generation that she decided to run for Congress and try to bring about change in areas that she said are important to her and today’s generation. One of those areas is the economy.

Daniel Leonard, a freshman engineering major, said because Kosmas represents Florida’s 24th District, he wanted to be more politically aware and listen to what Kosmas had to say about health care and higher education.

“I see that she definitely shares a lot of my values and goals for where I want our country to go,” he said.

Kosmas said a new economy can be created through energy projects and reduced energy consumption. She said she personally believes any kind of job or opportunity or idea related to alternative energy has potential to be a winner.

“You want to keep a clean environment that we can be proud of as a place for future generations to live [in],” she said.

Kosmas said there are signs of economical improvement and growth but said the “new economy” will require new skills and opportunities.

“You all are the lucky ones,” she said. “You’re in a situation where you are able to continue to work on your education, build your skills, build your knowledge and gain all that you need in order to succeed in the new economy.”

She said she is working on the students’ behalf because getting the best education possible is



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important for the future.

Through the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, additional money will be available to students by cutting out the middleman so they can get lower interest rates on loans and more money from the the Federal Pell Grant Program, according to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor's Web site.

She said many Pell Grants go unused because people don't want to go through the paperwork. However, SAFRA will reduce the application process for financial aid, which will make it much easier to take advantage of.

Kosmas also discussed health care and said her first priority is to reduce cost of care to make it affordable for everyone. According to Kosmas, health care consumed 17 percent of the United States' gross domestic product and is expected to jump to 25 percent by 2025.

Everyone has a different perspective on health care reform, Kosmas said. The goal is to come to a consensus on a plan by the end of this year.

"Hopefully we'll end up with something that will bring us on the right track to getting what we want to accomplish and be fiscally responsible at the same time," she said.

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