

Mr. Speaker, as a proud cosponsor of H.R. 459, I believe it is well past time to change that policy. This legislation would simply require the Comptroller General to conduct a full audit of the Federal Reserve before the end of 2012.

At a time when the Federal Reserve has expanded its balance sheet to \$3 trillion as of last month, the American people deserve to have transparency and accountability when it comes to our monetary supply policy. I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 459.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, in America we believe in freedom, in democracy and in the belief that in this country the people rule. And in order for the people to rule responsibly they must have knowledge and information about the handling of our economy.

Unfortunately, the American people are denied the basic information they need on one of the most important pillars of our economy, the Federal Reserve.

Today the Federal Reserve operates in secrecy. It creates money out of thin air, it can make purchases of questionable assets from friendly Wall Street firms and it can loan hundreds of billions of dollars to foreign governments and central banks—all out of the sight of the American people and even policy makers in Washington.

It is time to lift the veil of secrecy by passing H.R. 459, the Federal Reserve Transparency Act.

This bill will allow for a thorough audit of the Fed, including transactions with foreign governments, central banks and the decision making process in setting monetary policy.

We should never fear transparency in a free society—it is vital—and we should embrace it. Today I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill which provides for a long overdue audit of the Fed.

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, the ability to provide oversight of the Federal Reserve's dealings is hindered by current law that prohibits the Government Accountability Office from auditing aspects of the Bank's activities including monetary policy matters and transactions with foreign entities. H.R. 459 would remove these and other restrictions on GAO audits of the Federal Reserve, increasing transparency.

It defies common sense that there is currently no full oversight over the Federal Reserve, which sets the monetary policy that impacts every American citizen and holds a balance sheet of \$3 trillion. H.R. 459 will increase transparency of the Federal Reserve by allowing a full audit of all aspects of the bank's dealings including the decision-making behind its monetary policy. The ability to fully audit the Federal Reserve is long overdue, and this bill is a victory for all who strive for a more transparent government.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of legislation that will provide greater transparency within our Federal Reserve System.

H.R. 459, the Federal Reserve Transparency Act, requires an audit of that agency. As a cosponsor, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for this crucial piece of legislation. In order to get our financial house in order, we must take all necessary steps to ensure the Federal Reserve, which sets the conditions for the free market to thrive; is operating in the most efficient manner possible. The auditing of the Federal Reserve is the first step in inspecting this important level of gov-

ernment for financial and regulatory waste and inefficiency.

It was recently revealed that the New York District Federal Reserve had previous knowledge of dangers threatening our financial markets before the financial market collapsed in 2007. The New York Fed, led then by Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, had knowledge that certain rates were being manipulated but failed to act. Auditing the Federal Reserve will pinpoint responsibility, foster accountability and provide Congress and the American people with transparency over this powerful Federal entity. Our Nation's central bank should not be exempt from financial audit, especially with the immense financial power it controls. In its hands lies the fate of our country's financial stability.

As I have worked to uncover waste throughout government as Chairman of the House Transportation Committee and as a senior member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, I must insist that our Nation's financial operators be subject to the same level of scrutiny. An audit is the first positive step in that direction, and I will continue to work for passage of the Federal Reserve Transparency Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 459, as amended. The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PRESERVING AMERICA'S FAMILY FARMS ACT

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4157) to prohibit the Secretary of Labor from finalizing a proposed rule under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 relating to child labor, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4157

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND FINDINGS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Preserving America’s Family Farms Act”.

(b) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) family farms have a long history and tradition of providing youth with valuable work experience;

(2) Department of Labor regulations should not adversely impact the longstanding tradition of youth working on farms where they can gain valuable skills and lessons on hard work, character, and leadership;

(3) the Department of Labor's proposed regulations would have curtailed opportunities for youth to gain experiential learning and hands-on skills for enrollment in vocational agricultural training;

(4) the proposed regulations would have obstructed the opportunity for youth to find

rewarding employment and earn money for a college education or other meaningful purposes;

(5) the proposed regulations would have limited opportunities for young farmers wishing to pursue a career in agriculture at a time when the average age of farmers continues to rise; and

(6) working on a farm has become a way of life for thousands of youth across the rural United States.

SEC. 2. RULE RELATING TO CHILD LABOR.

The Secretary of Labor shall not reissue in substantially the same form, or issue a new rule that is substantially the same as, the proposed rule entitled “Child Labor Regulations, Orders and Statements of Interpretation; Child Labor Violations—Civil Money Penalties” (published at 76 Fed. Reg. 54836 (September 2, 2011)).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DOLD). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 4157.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to first thank my colleague from Iowa, Congressman TOM LATHAM, for introducing this very important legislation. Representative LATHAM is a long-time advocate for farmers and agribusiness, and his leadership in Congress is greatly appreciated.

According to a report on MLive.com, which is a new site from my home State of Michigan, parts of the country are experiencing the worst drought in more than 20 years. Jim Spink, a sixth-generation farmer from Michigan's Liberty Township, said:

It's going to be one of the years that separates those that are positioned well financially and those that are not.

Unpredictability in the weather and harvest is not a new challenge for American farmers. Quite the contrary, it's a way of life. Farmers work each day under difficult circumstances, growing the food and resources necessary to power this Nation and this world. Often the presence of a son or a daughter working with his or her parents is important to a farm's long-term success.

Federal labor policies recognize the support youth provide to family farms by exempting farmworkers between 14 and 16 years of age from restrictions on agriculture activities. For decades, this exemption has applied to youth working on a farm owned or operated by the parent or an individual standing in place of his or her parent. With farmers facing a tough year with high temperatures and low rainfall, we should continue to support the ability for youth

to experience safe employment in American farming. That's why many were shocked when the Obama administration announced new rules that would make it difficult for young people to work on family farms.

Last September, the Department of Labor proposed regulatory changes that would negatively affect youth employment in agriculture, such as narrowing the parental exemption, restricting the rules of farm ownership, and prohibiting the use of certain equipment central to a farm's operation, even for young people who have received safety training through the Federal Services Extension program. The Labor Department even tried to prevent youth from working with non-toxic pesticides available at the local hardware store.

These proposed regulatory shifts fail to reflect the changes in farming that have occurred in recent years. We all want to keep young people safe from harm, especially when they work in an inherently dangerous environment. However, the administration's proposal would deny youth an opportunity to gain hands-on experience that is crucial to a farm's survival.

Throughout our history, farms have been handed down from one generation to the next through the knowledge a future farmer gained from working alongside his or her parents. Public policy should promote this great American tradition, not dismantle it.

Mr. Speaker, across the country, many farmers are struggling. While I recognize the Department has withdrawn its proposal for now, we owe it to these hardworking men and women to remove as much uncertainty as we can, especially the uncertainty caused by flawed government policies. I am proud to support the Preserving America's Family Farms Act, and I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Last September, the Department of Labor published a proposed rule on children employed in agriculture. I saw it as an important regulation that would protect young people working in one of the top three most hazardous industries in the Nation—agriculture. But in May, the Department withdrew the rule. I want to say this again: in May of this year, the Department withdrew the rule.

That wasn't enough, apparently, for the Republican majority. Today, they've decided to waste precious legislative time on a bill that tells the Department of Labor not to issue this regulation—again, a regulation the Department already withdrew. Today's debate gives new meaning to the idea of government waste. Not only did the Department of Labor withdraw this rule; the administration has said it will not reissue the rule.

I was disappointed that the Department chose not to pursue the rule in the first place because the rule sought

to implement specific recommendations made by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, OSHA, and increase parity between the agriculture and non-agriculture child labor provisions.

Agriculture is dangerous, Mr. Speaker. Children working on farms, like their adult counterparts, work with or around toxic pesticides. They carry very heavy materials, and they use dangerous equipment. The fatality rate for child farmworkers is four times higher than for children in other industries. There are an estimated 400,000 children working on farms that are not owned by family members, and those children deserve health and safety protections. That is all this rule would have required. Children under 16 should not be permitted or required to work with hazardous pesticides or dangerous equipment—period.

But let's be clear. Nothing in the proposed rule would have applied to children working on their parents' farms in the first place. I've been a steadfast supporter of family farms throughout my 20 years in Congress. We have many family farms in California's Sixth Congressional District.

□ 1610

They are the important economic engine and a part of the fabric of our beautiful and diverse community.

Mr. Speaker, my intent here is simply to protect children who are in danger of being exploited and injured. The withdrawal of this rule was disappointing. Today's debate, however, is a disgrace. There are nearly 24 million Americans unemployed or underemployed. Instead of addressing the real issues that affect them, we are debating legislation that does nothing that hasn't already been done. It prevents a rule that has been already prevented by powerful special interests—and talk about a waste of taxpayer money.

With the Republican majority taking floor time with meaningless legislation like this, it's no wonder Congress has an approval rating in the low teens.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa, the sponsor of the bill, Mr. LATHAM.

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I'm pleased to stand today in support of H.R. 4157, Preserving America's Family Farm Act. This is a very bipartisan bill that I think really gets to what we're concerned about in agriculture today. Anymore these days, it seems like armies of Federal bureaucrats are drawing up new regulations, often with little or no consideration or understanding of the very industries that they're trying to regulate.

While some regulations do serve a legitimate purpose, others do little more than create uncertainty and additional costs for hardworking taxpayers, farmers, and small business owners. I be-

lieve if we want to put America back in business, back to work, one of the first things we must do is crack down on overregulation.

I've introduced a proposal called the Regulatory Accountability and Economic Freedom Act that would take a number of steps to reverse our government's direction and overregulation. Unfortunately, we're standing here today to fight one of those misguided regulation attempts. Last September, the Department of Labor proposed rules that would have dramatically limited the ability of America's youth to contribute to work on their family's farm or agricultural operations, and it would have restricted, if not completely eliminated, educational training opportunities for youth in rural America. As a result, I introduced H.R. 4157 as the solution to block the DOL's overly burdensome regulations.

We can't allow Federal bureaucrats, many of whom have never set foot on a farm, to tell Iowa farm families how they can run their operations. As a person who grew up on a family farm and later became a farmer myself, I can attest to the valuable skills that are developed through days of bailing hay and detassling cornfields and showing cattle at the county fair. I, like so many thousands of youth across this country today, utilized my own farm experience to learn the often difficult lessons of hard work, character development, problem solving skills, and leadership.

Life on the farm is never easy, but the valuable lessons learned while producing America's food, feed, and fiber make for a rewarding way of life. I think it goes without saying that the safety and well-being of all farmworkers, especially our youth, is of the utmost importance to our Nation's farmers and ranchers. However, the regulations proposed by the DOL went beyond all common sense and would have destroyed opportunities for youth across the agricultural economy. This bill will ensure the Department cannot reissue a proposed rule substantial in nature to its version released last year.

Our youth deserve an opportunity to learn and grow through on-farm experience, and my bill ensures that that opportunity will remain available. And I urge support for Preserving America's Family Farms Act.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY).

Mr. DUFFY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the American family farm.

Wisconsin farms are the bedrock of our society. They are the cornerstone of the Wisconsin economy. Look at our family farms. If we don't have the whole family and the youth working on the family farm, oftentimes they can't be successful in this very challenging economy. If you look at the life skills and the work ethic that our youth get

from the family farm, it is amazing. They learn how to milk cows, how to plant, how to harvest, how to balance the books, how to manage risk. They learn how markets work on the family farm.

Here again is a great example of Big Government getting bigger and more intrusive, telling American families whether or not their kids can engage in the family farm and the family business. When you talk to employers in Wisconsin, they tell me some of their best workers are workers who grew up on a family farm. If you look back, thank goodness that we didn't have my friends across the aisle who are now going to complain about the family farms. The Greatest Generation was raised on the family farm.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BOSWELL).

Mr. BOSWELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me time. I appreciate this opportunity.

I rise in support of H.R. 4157, Preserving America's Family Farms, or I should say farm family traditions. Passing this legislation today will codify our successful effort to prevent the Department of Labor from undercutting the structure of our Nation's family farms.

For generations, the contributions of young people have led to family success and bright futures on household farms. However, late last year, our family farmers faced a sweeping regulation that would have prevented children and grandchildren from participating in the very important lessons and traditions that have stabilized not only our families but also our economy.

The short-sighted ruling proposed by the Department of Labor would have affected a wide variety of subsectors within agriculture, work with livestock and grain production, commodity transportation, youth agriculture education, and a number of other sectors that train and educate our youth in family-farm settings with hands-on experience.

Not only did this ruling admit in its own text that there was little or no data available to back the proposal being made, it would, as stated by Future Farmers of America—our youth—limit, if not eliminate, opportunities to effectively teach students to be safe when working in agriculture.

I'm proud that many of us join in a bipartisan effort to tell the Secretary of Labor through multiple letters that this ruling is wrong. Fortunately, the Department did rescind this ruling, as it was stated a little while ago, so that the youth in our districts could continue to learn important lessons taking place in the most successful sector of our economy.

I support H.R. 4157 because it will codify this effort. This bill will clarify the intention of Congress with respect to youth education on farms, and it will prevent the Department of Labor

from implementing or enforcing this very specific proposal. In codifying our intention and passing this bill, we ensure that all farmers have access to education and retain their family's traditions, two things that are critical in our changing society.

I often think back when I returned home from the Army to the farm and realized the changes that had taken place in farm technology while I was away. The farmers we are nurturing now will acquire even more skills and adjust to faster changes than ever before. Young people today, and even some of us who aren't too young, are maintaining high-tech GPS programs, aerial mapping, and biotechnology that create greater efficiencies in farming, increase output, and reduce the cost of food at our local grocery store. These young farmers are taking their experience on the farm to study and create the software that improves farming and acquire the financial skills it takes to run a farm, and they are gaining the entrepreneurial spirit that is needed to be part of one of America's greatest economic sectors. These youth, backed by their experience on the farm, are not just farmers. They're agronomists, engineers, economists, and international liaisons.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. WOOLSEY. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Iowa.

Mr. BOSWELL. We must ensure these young farmers have access to the education they deserve, to the traditions and lessons that so many of us hold dear and have treasured our entire lives.

However, I not only call on my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation today, to ensure our young farmers have access to the education they need, but I also call on us to demand that the farm bill, passed with 35 ayes out of the House Agriculture Committee, be brought to the House floor for debate.

Farming in America requires a great deal of capital for major investments, access to land and credit, the ability to hire and purchase. American farmers create jobs and make investments in communities that keep jobs. The primary and perhaps only difference between a farmer and a businessman is that the farmer's revenue and profits are more subject to the whims of the climate, such as the drought that is devastating our Nation this summer.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has again expired.

Ms. WOOLSEY. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. BOSWELL. I thank the gentlewoman from California.

So if we care about the future of our farmers and our young farmers, we must pass a 5-year farm bill, and we must do it before the August work period. So let's pass this bill today, and let's move on to the farm bill next.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to yield 1 minute to my colleague and farmer friend from Kansas (Mr. HUELSKAMP).

Mr. HUELSKAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the family farms of Kansas and all of America.

The proposed Department of Labor rule, restricting children from working on family farms, presented a direct threat not only to the continuity of our Nation's ag tradition, but to a way of life in rural America. Though the bureaucrats have put it off for now, such a reprieve may only be temporary.

The family farm is one of the best places for a child to learn and develop a strong work ethic. I know this as a former farm kid myself, now a fifth-generation farmer who hopes that my children will be the sixth.

With our aging crisis facing agriculture, the last thing we need is for Washington bureaucrats who know next to nothing about the family farm—or rural America, for that matter—to regulate it into oblivion. Parents, not bureaucrats, know what's best for their children. Moms and dads should be trusted to raise their kids as they see fit.

I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. WOOLSEY. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes, at this time, to a former rancher kid, rancher, and colleague of mine, the gentlelady from South Dakota, KRISTI NOEM.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, it's often through debate here on different bills and legislation that comes that we learn things about each other. We may learn facts about a bill that we're discussing or about experiences that we've all had. What a lot of people probably don't know about me is that I care deeply about this subject because I lost my dad in an accident on a farm. It was devastating to our family. But I thank God every single day for every moment that I had working beside him, growing up on the family farm. It was there that I learned how to pick out good land and look for good soil. It's where I learned how to identify a cow that would be a good mother or a good milk-er. And it was there that I learned to look at a problem and not just talk about it, but to actually solve it and to fix it.

So my children are having that same experience with me. We get the chance, when I go home from here, to work together, to work with our livestock and our animals, and we love it.

I would be devastated if a Washington bureaucrat came and told me that no longer could I teach my children the way of life that was passed on to me by my father because of a decision that they decided they would be safer, that that was no longer allowed. So that is why I stand here today in support of H.R. 4157, Preserving America's Family Farms Act.

The Department of Labor talked about putting this regulation in place. They withdrew it because of pressure from the American people who recognized that it was not the way to go about regulating family farms. And this act is just going to ensure that they can no longer take this action and put it into place.

So with that, I proudly stand here, protecting our family farms and our way of life by endorsing this act.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. BOREN).

Mr. BOREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4157, the Preserving America's Family Farms Act.

I commend my friend from Iowa (Mr. LATHAM) and his entire staff for all of their hard work on ensuring that the Department of Labor's proposed rule to restrict family farm tradition be reversed.

In December, the U.S. Department of Labor proposed updated regulations on labor practices for minors in agricultural operations, including a rule that would have prevented children under the age of 16 from performing certain duties on farms. Historically, family farms have been exempted from such rules, but the new proposal could have been interpreted broadly to exclude operations that are partly owned by extended family members.

In response to the proposed rule, Congressman LATHAM and I introduced H.R. 4157. The bill protects the family farm tradition by directing the Secretary of Labor to recognize and understand the unique circumstances of family farm youth and multigenerational family partnerships when drafting regulations now and in the future.

In April, the administration announced that, as a result of loud opposition, they would not finalize the proposed rule. Although I am very pleased that they have decided to abandon the flawed rule and listen to thousands of voices among our rural communities, passage of H.R. 4157 will ensure that, in the future, the Department of Labor does not reissue this proposal or any other rule that would have a similar effect on our family farms.

This legislation encourages the administration to work collaboratively with rural stakeholders, such as farmers and ranchers, to understand issues that affect our communities and our way of life.

Family farms have a long history of providing invaluable work ethic and leadership experience to future farmers. Many of these young folks dedicate their entire lives to providing us with an abundant and safe marketplace, so we owe it to them to protect the foundation on which this American spirit of hard work is built.

Please join me, my friend Congressman LATHAM, and the over 93 bipartisan cosponsors to pass this legislation.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, in a point of personal privilege, I would ap-

plaud my colleague and friend from Oklahoma for his comments.

The concept of "trust, but verify" is carried out here. We trust what has been said by the Department and the administration, but we verify with the action that we are taking today.

It gives me a privilege now to yield 2 minutes of time to a friend from Tennessee (Mr. DESJARLAIS), a colleague who cares about people and their safety, and especially young people, as a medical doctor.

Mr. DESJARLAIS. I thank the gentleman.

Earlier this year, the Department of Labor issued a misguided rule that would effectively ban children from working on family-owned farms. While I'm sure there were some kids in rural areas across our Nation who were overjoyed by this news, I think it would be horribly unfair to deprive our youth of the same valuable work experience many of us were afforded.

Growing up in a rural community, I spent a lot of time doing work on farms, and I will be the first to admit that it wasn't always fun. But the values and appreciation for hard work that it instilled in me played an important role in shaping me as a person.

That is why I was proud to support Preserving America's Family Farms Act. This legislation will prevent the Department of Labor from issuing this rule or any similar rule, preventing children from working on their parents' farm.

If this proposal from the Department of Labor were actually implemented, not only would it rob our young farmers of important educational opportunities, but it would erode part of our Nation's rural culture. These actions by the Department of Labor serve as yet another reminder of the troubling pattern of government overreach and intrusion we have seen from this administration.

I thank the Tennessee Farm Bureau for their efforts in speaking out against this misguided notion and working with me to ensure that farming decisions are left to farmers, not bureaucrats in Washington.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I just want to repeat what I said in my opening remarks. Nothing in the proposed rule would have applied to children working on their parents' family farm. The proposed rule maintains the parental exemption.

But again, to remind everybody, the Department of Labor withdrew their proposal. We are wasting time today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes of time to my friend from New York, RICHARD HANNA.

Mr. HANNA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4157, the Preserving America's Family Farms Act. I am pleased to cosponsor this legislation.

This rule, had it been enacted, would be one more sad example of how far our government is willing to go to protect us from ourselves.

□ 1630

The Preserving America's Family Farms Act would prohibit the Department of Labor from issuing a rule prohibiting young people from working on their own family farms.

Mr. Speaker, like so many children growing up in rural America, I spent many of my summers working on my grandparents' modest dairy farm in Herkimer County, New York. By my grandfather's side, I learned personal responsibility, accountability, gained character and a sense of accomplishment, as well as the pride and dignity that results from a day's work.

My family farm would not have been economically viable if my younger cousins and I had not worked and assisted during harvest and milking. I am concerned, along with many Americans, that the belief in personal accountability and responsibility, as well as hard work—which is best instilled at a young age—is being diminished. The lessons learned on a family farm should be reinforced and encouraged more, not less.

Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge farms are a dangerous place to work. But as a man who has employed hundreds of people, those who worked early and hard in their lives, regardless of where they worked, were my most eager and responsible employees. I could not have succeeded without those men and women, and neither will this country. We should not restrict young people from working. Character built early grows deeper and lasts a lifetime. Let's pass this bill and protect our family farms and the great Americans they produce.

Ms. WOOLSEY. I continue to reserve.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I'm privileged to yield 1 minute to my friend and colleague, the gentlelady from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER).

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, as a lifelong farmer, I rise today in support of H.R. 4157, Preserving America's Family Farms Act. This bill prohibits the Secretary of Labor from finalizing or enforcing a proposed rule that will fundamentally alter the way family farms have operated for decades, and is another example of Washington bureaucrats trying to tell farmers and ranchers how to operate their operations. If these rules are finalized in their current form, children in rural America will not have the opportunity to learn the important life skills and values that working on the farm provides.

As I talk with farm families in Missouri's Fourth District, they are frustrated by this rule. Their message is clear, plain and simple: Big Government should not tell hardworking Americans how to raise their children and care for their land.

I believe the government should ensure our basic liberties, not trample on them. Parents care more for their children than government bureaucrats and should make the ultimate decisions on the activities of their children, not Washington, D.C.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Again, Mr. Speaker, nothing in the proposed rule would have applied to children working on their parents' family farm, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, point of personal privilege: a family farm and a family farm sometimes isn't the same. If it's incorporated, it would come under this proposed rule initially, and for that reason we continue to offer this great piece of legislation. And that gives me the privilege to introduce another great farmer.

I yield 1 minute to my colleague, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING).

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

When I saw this rule, it was appalling to me to think about the attempt of the administration, this assault on the sanctity of the family and on the family farm all at the same time. And as we had a witness come before the Small Business Committee, the Assistant Secretary of Labor, under oath I asked her what was driving this rule. Her answer was: It's driven by data; the highest level of injuries in youth labor are on the farm, and so we have to do something to interrupt this injury that's taking on place on the farm.

So I asked her: What was the second-highest level of injury in youth labor? Her answer was: I don't know.

Not data driven; it's driven by some misguided ideology. It's also been supported by the Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, whose team has been working with the Department of Labor. And this has not been withdrawn by the administration, Mr. Speaker, for the sake of them understanding that this is a misguided policy decision; it's been withdrawn because it is a misguided political initiative. So I'm glad it's temporarily withdrawn, and I appreciate the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LATHAM) for bringing this legislation to prohibit this rule from being reintroduced again. Let's protect the tradition that made America great.

Ms. WOOLSEY. I understand, Mr. Speaker, that we're ready to close, so I yield myself the balance of my time.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, once again, at a time when there are so many Americans looking for work and so many middle class families struggling to make ends meet, Congress has better things to do than take up a redundant bill. It's wasteful, it's unnecessary, and it prevents us from doing the real work that our constituents have sent us here to do. Let's answer the important challenges facing the country. Let's start creating jobs for the American people. Let's start now, and let's stop wasting time on something that has already been satisfied.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate so much that we've had this time of debate. Again, trust but verify. This is a verifying opportunity. As has been

said, the proposed regulation was pulled because of political challenges. The American people generally understand common sense, and this wasn't common sense.

When we see the cost of regulations in this country right now being \$10,000 per employee, we add this to the impact on the farm family, those that have incorporated in order to carry on their business and ultimately carry on farming for generations, we see additional problems. So we want to make sure that this debate carries through and ultimately we don't have to do it again, but that we preserve the right to farm, we preserve the right to carry on the farming tradition, and the opportunity to train our young people to do something that is valuable long term and full of impact.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I yield the remainder of my time to the sponsor of this bill, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LATHAM).

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan for yielding once again. I will be submitting a letter here from 16 national farm groups in support of this legislation. I would also like to respond—the gentleman talked about farm families, that parents can still let their children be involved in the farming operation. That statement to me just shows a total misunderstanding and miscomprehension of what agriculture is today. Yes, you have family, Mom and Dad, but the highest percentage of all farms today are in partnership with their brothers, with their sisters. If their grandparents are still involved, if their parents are involved in that farming operation, this rule would have prohibited any child from working on the farm and being part of a family operation. Or, if you're a subchapter S corporation, any of the things that are so common today—partnerships, small business corporations—that these family farm operations are, it would have totally prohibited our youth from getting the kind of education, getting the knowledge, getting the experience that they can derive working with their parents on a family farm operation.

Mr. Speaker, last Saturday I had the opportunity to travel to three county fairs, one in Bedford, one in Red Oak, and one in Avoca, Iowa. It brought back so many memories from my own youth to go to those fairs and see young people showing livestock, either 4-H or FFA, and to see the experience, the love they have for those animals, the love of the farm and agriculture that they are developing in their youth. This is extraordinarily important.

While some people may dismiss the importance of this bill, it will prohibit, even in the proposal that was made, but also anything like it from happening.

□ 1640

That's what's very, very important, to give those families out there the

certainty, to give the 4-H and the FFA, the educational programs in agriculture today, a chance to continue this great legacy of agriculture and of family farm operations. That's really what this is all about.

Mr. Speaker, I, again, ask for support of all the Members for this bill. It is extremely important for family farms.

JULY 24, 2012.

The Honorable,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: This afternoon the House of Representatives will debate and vote on H.R. 4157, the Preserving America's Family Farms Act. The undersigned organizations support preserving the ability of youth to gain training and education by working on the farm. Accordingly, we urge all members of the House to vote in favor of H.R. 4157.

The safety of all workers is of utmost importance; however, in September 2011, the Department of Labor introduced regulations that took caution beyond recognition. The proposed regulations were overly burdensome to agriculture producers and would have limited, if not eliminated, training opportunities for youth in rural America. Fortunately, the administration listened to the concerns of farmers and ranchers by withdrawing the regulation in April. However, the threat to family farms still exists. H.R. 4157 protects an agricultural way of life from future child labor regulations that could limit the ability of youth to learn valuable skills by working on the farm.

While we all respect the obligations and responsibilities of the Department of Labor to ensure the safety of youth working on farms as delineated in the Fair Labor Standards Act, we believe that the approaches taken need to be well reasoned and not detrimental to the family farm or the youth participating in farm work. Thus, we urge all members of the House to vote in favor of this bill when it reaches the floor.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation, American Feed Industry Association, American Horse Council, American Seed Trade Association, American Soybean Association, Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association, International Association of Fairs and Expositions, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture.

National Cattlemen's Beef Association, National Council of Agricultural Employers, National Cotton Council, National FFA Organization, National Milk Producers Federation, National Pork Producers Council, United Fresh Produce Association, U.S. Apple Association.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4157, the Preserving America's Family Farms Act, and I thank Representative LATHAM for his work on this issue.

Like many Hoosiers who worked on a farm during their youth, I believe we must encourage young men and women to participate in family farming and ranching.

Last September the Labor Department proposed regulations that would significantly limit the ability of young men and women to work on farms and ranches. They have since backed-off, but the law does not currently prevent them from bringing it up again. This legislation will explicitly prohibit the Department of Labor from pursuing these types of regulations and ensure that family farming and youth employment will be continued traditions in Indiana and throughout our Nation.

Despite the severe drought we are currently experiencing, young Hoosiers continue to look

forward to summer jobs on the farm, where life lessons and a few dollars can be learned and earned along the way.

Mr. Speaker, I can think of few places better than an Indiana farm where a young person can truly learn the values of personal responsibility and hard work. And if America's farms are to continue to feed this nation and world, we must encourage young men and women to participate in farming and ranching. I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense, bipartisan legislation.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, America's Family Farmers have built the most productive agriculture sector in the world and this abundance helps feed not only our nation, but also the world.

Family farms are truly based on the family where each generation trains the succeeding generation.

Last year the Department of Labor tried to inject itself into the family farm by proposing onerous new regulations that would have basically denied family farmers the ability to train the next generation of farmers.

Some would have you believe that the Labor Department was just looking out for children, but does anyone truly believe that a bureaucrat in Washington cares more about a family's children than their parents, or aunts and uncles, or their grandparents?

Faced with overwhelming opposition earlier to this overreach the Department of Labor withdrew the proposed regulations and went back to the drawing board. The legislation we are considering today would stop these regulations in their tracks and keep the bureaucrats from getting between family farmers and their children.

I urge my colleagues to support the heritage of the family farm and join me in passing this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4157, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title was amended so as to read: "A bill to prohibit the Secretary of Labor from reissuing or issuing a rule substantially similar to a certain proposed rule under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 relating to child labor."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONGRESSIONAL REPLACEMENT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S ENERGY-RESTRICTING AND JOB-LIMITING OFFSHORE DRILLING PLAN

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 6082.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 738 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 6082.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1643

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 6082) to officially replace, within the 60-day Congressional review period under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, President Obama's Proposed Final Outer Continental Shelf Oil & Gas Leasing Program (2012-2017) with a congressional plan that will conduct additional oil and natural gas lease sales to promote offshore energy development, job creation, and increased domestic energy production to ensure a more secure energy future in the United States, and for other purposes, with Mr. DOLD in the chair.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, under the shadow of the Supreme Court's ruling on *ObamaCare*, the Obama administration on June 28 quietly announced the President's proposed final offshore drilling plan for 2012-2017.

Despite claims of their being proud of their energy record, the Obama administration deliberately chose to announce their plan on a day when it would get buried in the *ObamaCare* news coverage. This shows that even this administration is not proud of their plan that would place 85 percent of America's offshore areas off-limits to energy production.

Under section 18 of the Outer Continental Shelf Leasing Act, when any President proposes a new 5-year offshore drilling plan, it must be submitted to Congress for a mandatory 60-day review before it can become final and take effect. That 60-day clock is now ticking. It's now Congress' responsibility to take action and to reject President Obama's no-new-drilling, no-new-jobs plan and to replace it with a robust, responsible plan to safely develop our offshore energy resources.

According to analysis conducted by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Office, the President has proposed fewer leases in his plan than any President since this process began—that goes back to President Jimmy

Carter, so it's even worse than President Carter.

President Obama's proposal doesn't open up one new area for leasing and energy production. It would set our Nation's energy production back to the days before 2008 when two moratoria that prohibited drilling of a vast majority of American offshore areas were in place. Both moratoria were lifted after the summer of 2008 due to the outrage of the American people over the cost of \$4-per-gallon gasoline, and they demanded that the Federal Government take action. President Obama proposes to effectively reimpose that moratoria.

From nearly the day he took the oath of office, this President has put the brakes on new American energy production and job creation. In the first weeks of this administration, the Interior Department took a nearly complete new offshore lease plan and put it on hold for 6 months, and then they tossed out that draft plan entirely and started over. It took them over 3½ years to get a new proposed plan in place. And along the way, they delayed and canceled multiple lease sales.

For example, President Obama canceled the Virginia lease sale scheduled for 2011 last year and now refuses to include Virginia in his 2012-2017 plan. He is responsible for closing an entire new area of drilling and cheating the Commonwealth out of thousands of jobs and another industry. If President Obama has his way, Virginia will be left out in the cold in until 2017 at the earliest.

The bill being considered today, H.R. 6082, is entitled the Congressional Replacement of President Obama's Energy-Restricting and Job-Limiting Offshore Drilling Plan. In stark contrast to President Obama's plan, this bill represents a drill-smart plan that includes 29 lease sales and focuses energy production in specific areas containing America's greatest known oil and natural gas resources. What a novel idea: go to where the resources are.

The bill would replace the lease sales scheduled in the President's proposed plan and safely open new areas that were previously under moratoria—such as the Mid-Atlantic, southern Pacific, and the Arctic. It does this while ensuring that necessary and required environmental reviews are conducted.

The congressional replacement plan would generate \$600 million in additional revenue and create tens of thousands of new American jobs.

Tomorrow there will be a direct up-or-down vote on the President's proposed plan when we consider, under suspension, H.R. 6168. There will also, obviously, be a direct up-or-down vote on this legislation. So Members can decide if the President's plan meets the standards expected by the American people or if we should replace it with a real plan that creates jobs and grows our economy.

The House has taken action to replace the President's proposed plan,