PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 6429, STEM JOBS ACT OF 2012

Mr. NUGENT. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 821 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 821

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 6429) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to promote innovation, investment, and research in the United States, to eliminate the diversity immigrant program, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. An amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 112-34, modified by the amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) 90 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. It shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of December 6, 2012, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules as though under clause 1 of rule XV.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. NUGENT. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NUGENT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. NUGENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this rule, which will allow the House of Representatives to consider H.R. 6429, the STEM Jobs Act of 2012.

As I am sure my colleague from Colorado will point out, H. Res. 821 is a closed rule. The fact is that like Mr. POLIS, I prefer an open-amendment process. Open rules let us come together on both sides of the aisle and contribute ideas to help make a bill better.

Today's rule will be closed, but that's because the crafting of the STEM Jobs Act has been in a collaborative process for the last few months. Chairman SMITH, the author of this legislation, has already worked with his committee, Republicans, Democrats, and even the Senate to come up with a bill that, hopefully, everybody could support.

Unfortunately, we've since been informed that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle and in the other Chamber are looking to play politics with the STEM Jobs Act. However, that doesn't change the fact that Chairman SMITH worked diligently to make sure this legislation was filled with bipartisan ideas.

The STEM Jobs Act would eliminate the flawed Diversity Lottery Green Card program and reallocate up to 55,000 green cards a year to new green card programs for foreign graduates of U.S. universities with advanced STEM degrees.

According to a study by the National Science Foundation and the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, in 1990 about 91,000 full-time foreign graduate students were studying in STEM fields in the United States. That number had jumped to almost 149,000 by 2009. It was 149,000 in 2009. However, the vast majority of these highly skilled, highly educated innovators are leaving the United States where they once received their education.

We're training hundreds of thousands of highly skilled engineers, technicians, and scientists at American universities and then sending them back home to compete against us in other countries.

□ 1230

They aren't moving to other countries because they want to leave the United States. They're moving because the immigration system forces them out.

Currently, we only select 5 percent of our Nation's legal immigrants based on skills and education they bring to America. So the vast majority of foreign students who come to America for advanced degrees and get their education find themselves on a years-long green card waiting list and give up on the idea of staying here in the United States.

When they leave our country, they take with them all their training and all of their potential to go work for America's business competitors in Canada, Europe, and Asia. The exodus of U.S.-trained STEM professionals has been referred to as reverse brain drain.

The STEM Act of 2012 would reverse this trend. It would establish a program to prioritize green cards for immigrants with graduate-level degrees in the STEM fields. To offset the number of green cards that would be given to the STEM Visa program, the bill would eliminate the diversity lottery green card program, a program that has been repeatedly highlighted as a threat to our national security.

The result is that there would be no net increase in the number of green cards we give out as a Nation. The difference is that we will get immigrants who have the training and the skills that we need to keep American businesses competitive in a globalized and increasingly technical age. In the process, we will eliminate a visa lottery system that's rife with fraud and abuse and the State Department stated contains significant threats to our national security.

In the Rules Committee meeting last night, some opponents to H.R. 6429 said that fraud and security concerns are old problems and that they've been fixed. My colleagues were right in that these are old problems, but the State Department inspector general report published in 2003 listed the widespread abuse in the diversity lottery visa program. The inspector general pointed to identity fraud, forged documents, and national security threats. That's their words.

However, my colleagues were absolutely wrong to say that the problems have been fixed. In fact, just 2 months ago, the GAO released a study discussing the ways the State Department could reduce fraud in our immigration system, and it highlighted the diversity lottery program. Moreover, the STEM Jobs Act does this without putting American jobs at risk.

This legislation includes provisions that would require the petitioning of an employer to submit a job order to the appropriate State workforce agency. The job opening would then be posted in the agency's official Web site in an effort to publicize available jobs for Americans.

In addition to reforming the green card process for foreign students with advanced STEM degrees, H.R. 6429 also includes provisions that would help reunite families waiting on the immigration process. As it currently stands, family green cards can take 6 or 7 years to process and be approved. During these long years, families are separated. A spouse or parent can be living as a permanent resident in the United States while their loved ones wait back home hoping to be reunited somewhere down the line. This pro-family legislation would help reduce the time these families need to spend apart without speeding up or preempting the actual green card process.

Provisions contained within the STEM Jobs Act would expand the V nonimmigrant visa program to allow spouses and minor children of permanent U.S. residents to come to the United States to live with their loved ones once they have spent 1 year on the green card waiting list. The bill expressly states that these folks would not be allowed to work, taking jobs away from American citizens, nor would they inherently be entitled to any government welfare programs because of the V visa in and of itself.

Similarly, the expanded V visa program won't speed up or expedite the green card process in any way. All it does is this: It ensures that families don't have to live separately and in uncertainty as to when they can be reunited at an unknown time down the line. It brings families back together.

The simple fact is that our current immigration system is ineffective. We educate the world's best and brightest and then send them away to be our competitors. We only prioritize about 5 percent of our visas based upon what they actually contribute to our economy. We have a diversity lottery system that is subject to widespread abuse and opens up our country to entry of hostile intelligence officers, criminals, and terrorists. We separate spouses, parents, and minor children for unknown years on end.

We can do better with the STEM Jobs Act. It is an important step towards doing better. It makes the American green card process smarter, safer, and more family oriented. It protects American jobs and workers while still supporting the American innovation industry, which is why over 100 major companies and councils have supported H.R. 6429.

I support this rule, and I hope all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule for the underlying bill, H.R. 6429, the STEM Jobs Act of 2012. It is important to talk about, in consideration of this rule and this bill, what it is and what it isn't.

Here we are with a looming fiscal cliff, and yet Congress has allowed no issue to fester longer than immigration. Whether one is on the left or the right or in the middle, I'm sure my colleague from Florida would agree that whatever we're doing now in immigration is not working very well. We have over 10 million people here illegally. There is rampant violation of the law. There is lackluster enforcement. Families are torn apart.

What's before us, regardless of the merits, which we'll get into in a moment, clearly does not address the problems in our immigration system. Whether this bill becomes law or not, our immigration system will continue to have problems, and there will continue to be over 10 million people here in violation of the law, many working illegally, in some cases taking jobs away from American citizens.

So instead of a solution, we have a bill before us that asks us to weigh two goals of our immigration policy in many ways against one another. There might very well be room for a noncontroversial immigration bill that catches up and includes some of the less controversial provisions, including a STEM program, and there could very well be room for that short of comprehensive immigration reform.

I support and am a cosponsor of the IDEA Act, which does that. I tried to amend into this bill and allow for the consideration of this body yesterday in the Rules Committee a bill that I have for the permanent reauthorization of the EB–5 visa program, a program that is not very controversial and has strong support from both sides but suffers from temporary reauthorizations. This is a critical program for creating jobs for Americans because it allows companies to attract capital from investors, and those investors are able to be part of those companies and grow those companies, creating jobs for Americans.

This program could be much more successful if the Rules Committee yesterday had, on a party-line vote, not allowed that amendment to come to the floor. I'm confident that that amendment would have passed with near universal support, and certainly strong support from both sides.

Instead of trying to catch and move forward on some of the less controversial aspects of immigration which in no way, shape, or form, again, prevent the need for a comprehensive solution, but instead of even moving forward on the noncontroversial aspects, we have a bill before us that is controversial because it weighs two important goals of immigration against one another. So rather than create a STEM Visa program as the IDEA Act does, as the STAPLE Act, which I'm a cosponsor of with my colleague Congressman FLAKE from Arizona who has introduced it in past sessions, rather than do that, it asks the question of this body: Would we rather have a Diversity Visa concept or would we rather have a STEM Visa concept? In reality, I think many in this body would agree that both are desirable.

□ 1240

Diversity Visas essentially go to immigrants that are from countries other than the main countries that send us immigrants. What are the main countries that send us immigrants? Obviously, Mexico. In addition to that, there are China, Brazil, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Peru, and several others. We have a lot of immigrants from Mexico and these other countries. What the Diversity Visa says is, shouldn't we also give opportunities to some residents of countries, like the Ukraine or Albania or Ethiopia, and have them also come so that they're not just crowded out by applicants from Mexico, India, and China?

If we don't have a Diversity Visa, a higher percentage of our immigrants will be from Mexico, India, and China. Now, that's okay—it's certainly not the end of the world—but there is value in having immigrants from across the world. There is value in having Ukrainians come to this country. There is value in having Ethiopians. In addition, there is value in people having diverse social backgrounds and ethnic backgrounds coming to this country to facilitate assimilation into this country and integration into this country. So I think that it was well thought out in having a concept whereby people who don't happen to be from Mexico, India, China or the other main countries have a way of getting here. It's a good program.

So, too, having a STEM visa program is absolutely critical as it is important to our country to make sure that we can retain the talent that we attract to our universities. There is something that is so frustrating to me as an American and to many of our constituents, and I talk about it frequently back home with my representing both of our major State universities in Colorado as well as private universities in my district:

Here we are educating people from across the world, and if you look at our engineering grad schools, we see a high number of foreign nationals on student visas. We are educating computer programmers and aerospace engineers with the skills they need to compete in a 21st-century workforce. Upon giving them their master's degrees or Ph.D.s, we tell them, do you know what, you're not allowed to work here in this country. You have to move back to another country and compete against us. Guess what? The jobs follow them. In the digital age, employers care less where an employee is based. They care where the talent is. If the best computer programmer is only available for hire or if an aerospace engineer is only available for hire in India or in Mexico or in the U.K., the companies will—and increasingly are—setting up divisions in those countries to hire them rather than hiring here. So the lack of having a STEM job pathway is actively destroying American jobs every day.

Here we are as a body being asked to say under a closed rule, Is it more important to have immigrants from countries other than Mexico, India, and China? Is it more important to have some Ukrainians and Ethiopians and Albanians? I use those examples because those are some of the leading countries that have used the Diversity Visa, but there are a broad number of countries that do. Is that something that's important? How does its importance compare to making sure that those we train here are able to deploy their talents here and create jobs in America rather than overseas?

Again, it's a very frustrating proposition in the way the Republicans have chosen to bring this to the floor: a, it obviously doesn't address the underlying issues of our immigration crisis in this country. It doesn't change the fact that there are 10 million people here illegally, and it doesn't prevent people from coming here illegally; b, it asks us to choose between two valuable programs. Rather than simply passing the Staples Act, rather than passing the IDEA Act, it says that we're going to have to choose as a country to benefit either from STEM graduates or from people from other countries other than Mexico, India, and China. It's a false dilemma.

There were amendments that were offered by ZOE LOFGREN that would

have addressed that which were turned down by the Rules Committee. Again, there were strong bipartisan concepts like EB–5 permanent authorization that I offered, put forward, that were also shut down in committee. In addition, at a time of budget deficits and the looming fiscal crisis, this bill would increase the budget deficit by over $1 billion over the next 5 years; and that is unpaid for as well.

There are many ways that immigration can be looked at to reduce our budget deficit, and there are many concepts of comprehensive immigration reform either through fees paid by those who violate the law, penalties paid. Increased taxes going forward for those who would have to pay taxes under immigration reform would actually reduce our deficit; but here we are with a solitary idea around immigration that forces all Members of this body to weigh two valuable programs against one another, and at the same time it costs taxpayers over $1 billion over the next 5 years. It's a choice that Congress shouldn't face.

There are also very legitimate concerns that, not only does this bill weigh two valuable programs and asks us to choose, but, in effect, it's a backdoor way to reduce the number of legal immigrants. There should be no hesitation in saying that, by reducing the number of legal immigrants, we will increase the number of illegal immigrants. This bill will likely increase the number of illegal immigrants to this country because the math doesn't work.

Now, why doesn't the math work? The bill purports to offset 55,000 STEM green cards by eliminating 55,000 green cards in the Diversity program. Now, if that were a one-on-one trade, that would be the same net number of immigrants. The issue is, as to our institutions of higher education that give master's degrees and Ph.D.s in the eligible areas to students on foreign visas, there are not 55,000 foreign students who receive them every year. There were, in fact, 29,904 last year, so about 30,000. There is a backlog so that, after several years, the 55,000 would no longer be able to be met; but then after 3 or 4 years and after the backlog was met, this would likely lead to a reduction in legal immigration and to an increase in illegal immigration because only 29,000 foreign nationals are matriculating with master's and Ph.D.s in the included areas; yet 55,000 visas would be removed from the program that allows Ukrainians, Ethiopians, and people from countries that are not Mexico, India, China, and the other 12 from coming to this country legally.

So I have very sincere concerns that, rather than addressing the issue of illegal immigration, this bill because of the math and because of the numbers that have been brought to my attention could actually increase illegal immigration by reducing legal immigration, which is the last thing that we need to do with regard to solving in a bipartisan way our immigration crisis.

As a former Internet entrepreneur myself and in representing our universities, I know firsthand about the critical need to pass a STEM visa program. Not only would it create more high-paying, high-tech jobs for Americans, but it would produce tax revenues. It would make our country stronger and our economy stronger. Yet rather than take up the IDEA Act or the Staples Act, we're here with a backdoor attempt by the Republicans to increase the number of illegal immigrants in our country, which I would argue is not the right direction for immigration reform. Immigration reform should be predicated around solving the crisis of illegal immigration. Rather than increasing the number of illegal immigrants from 10 million to 12 million to 14 million, we need to find a way to reduce that number to as close to zero as is feasible, and that should be the goal of immigration reform.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NUGENT. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. It is my honor to yield 3 minutes to a leader on immigration issues, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ).

Mr. GUTIERREZ. I thank the gentleman from Colorado and distinguished member of the Rules Committee for yielding time to me.

Despite bipartisan support for a clean STEM visa bill, this is a partisan bill that picks winners and losers in our immigration system and requires the elimination of the Diversity Visa program before a single STEM visa can be issued. In other words, we want to pick immigrants we like and then eliminate immigrants we don't like as though some are better than others. The interesting thing is that most of the Members of the House can look back into their own personal histories and find their own family members and ancestors who come from the countries that are being eliminated.

□ 1250

After the historic elections we've just witnessed, it flies in the face of our diverse American electorate to precondition STEM visas on the elimination of Diversity Visa immigrants, 50 percent of whom come from the continent of Africa. Like STEM graduates, they have much to contribute to the United States.

We've seen this poison pill before—pitting immigrant against immigrant—when the House voted down H.R. 6429 under suspension. But it gets worse. Inserted in the new version of the bill is an amendment to the V Visa program that the majority claims helps families and makes the bill balanced and bipartisan.

Let me be clear: this was not a provision negotiated with us on the Democratic side. It was negotiated with anti-immigrant groups and extremists in the Republican Party.

H.R. 6429 takes the V visa, a bipartisan visa created more than 10 years ago, and amends it to deny V visa holders eligibility to work and cuts out of the program spouses and minor children already living in the U.S. This backhanded, so-called family fix should offend anyone who truly cares about families.

But the family provisions are even worse than that. Families of STEM visa holders are treated fairly, but the families of ''ordinary'' green card holders are treated as second class. If you are a STEM degree holder, your spouse and minor children can immediately come to the United States and your spouse is granted a work permit. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle know this. However, if you're an ''ordinary'' green card holder who applies to bring your spouse and children to the United States through our regular family immigration channels, you will make your spouse and children wait at least a year before joining you in the U.S., and we will not allow your spouse to work once he or she gets here.

I agree that STEM holders should be able to bring their families—their children and their wives or their husbands—and that their spouses should be able to work legally in the United States. However, I resent that the spouses and children of other family-based immigrants are treated differently and unfairly. Apparently Republicans' devotion to family extends only to families where the principal immigrant is smart enough to earn a Ph.D. or master's degree in a STEM field, and that is something that I resent. And that is something that all Americans should abhor. It goes against the immigration diversity that we have, as a Nation, created.

Mr. NUGENT. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CURSON), a new Member of our body.

Mr. CURSON of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 6429 because I have grave concerns with the bill's elimination of the Diversity Visa program. The Diversity Visa program has given people from around the world the opportunity to win the most precious lottery: the chance to come to the United States, to work hard, and to earn the right to be an American. The program increases our Nation's ethnic diversity and provides one of the few legal pathways for immigration from countries that are impoverished, persecuted, or unfree.

I do support increasing STEM visas to foreign graduates. That will increase our pool of high-skilled workers that will promote new ideas, new technologies, and help our businesses stay on the cutting edge of new things to come. But we should not reward one class of individuals and deny another class that's not so blessed with the opportunity to prove themselves.

H.R. 6429 would actually reduce legal immigration levels by not allowing the rollover of unused visas. It's disappointing that there's no opportunity

to craft sensible, bipartisan legislation on an issue that so many Democrats and Republicans agree on.

H.R. 6412, the Democratic version, requires that employers offer wages to STEM graduates that do not undercut actual wages paid to U.S. workers with similar levels of experience. I have witnessed over the last decade unscrupulous employers who dramatically eroded wages, not for competitive reasons, but solely to transfer wealth from workers to executives. They were successful only because workers were hungry for jobs and willing to work for nearly any wage. The median household income dropped by $3,700 in that time while executive pay skyrocketed, even as our economy tanked. By contrast, the bill we are debating today does not include wage protections and does not adequately ensure that American workers are protected.

Equally important is that H.R. 6412 preserves the Diversity Visa program, ensuring equal opportunity to work in our great land. Democrats and Republicans alike have forwarded great wisdom towards this issue. Now is the time to cooperate with one another and craft a truly bipartisan approach to immigration reform that provides for equality of opportunity for all those who seek the benefit of U.S. citizenship.

Mr. NUGENT. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. It is my honor to yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy for yielding me this time, and I identify with a number of the reservations that he mentioned about this legislation.

A costly, inhumane, and broken immigration system is a shadow over the American landscape. The current system denies the reality of nearly 12 million immigrants, who, for the most part, are already part of the fabric of American life. They work in American business and are often already integrated into existing families.

A consequence of this recent election may well be a new reality on the American political scene when it comes to immigration, a willingness to soften hard-edged positions and move us in a more thoughtful direction. We are already hearing some of these signals from the Senate this week. In a small way, the legislation before us today may provide an additional opportunity to move forward.

I voted against its earlier incarnation—reluctantly—because it was designed to fail. While I will vote today against the rule, tomorrow I will be voting for the legislation which would create the STEM Visa program and give 55,000 green cards a year to doctoral and masters graduates in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematical fields. Dealing with this in regular order is encouraging. The bill was also made marginally better. I think we have an opportunity here for us all to help break this logjam. Creating a STEM Visa program should be a no-brainer.

This legislation is certainly not perfect, and I agree, as I mentioned, with some of the reservations that have been advanced. Frankly, unless our objections are addressed, it will not pass the Senate. We don't support the philosophy that immigration needs to be zero sum. We need not eliminate the Diversity Visa program in order to add this program. The Senate, as I said, will fix these provisions, if they take it up at all. Frankly, I hope they do take it up and they do fix it. This would be an important signal to the next Congress that we can and must move forward on broader immigration reform, like the comprehensive immigration reform, that Senator MCCAIN previously supported with the late-Senator Kennedy.

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

Mr. POLIS. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. America needs to unite families, to protect and give justice to young people, strengthen business from high tech to agriculture and help us live up to our ideals as a Nation of immigrants.

A costly, inhumane, and broken immigration system is a shadow over the American landscape. The current system denies the reality of nearly 12 million immigrants, who for the most part are already part of the fabric of American life. They work in American business and are often already integrated into existing families. Strengthening and expanding legal immigration even helps grow our economy. Conservative economists for the Cato Institute project that a comprehensive imigration reform with a pathway to citizenship would add $1.5 trillion to the U.S. economy over 10 years. Unfortunately, rational immigration policy has fallen victim to some of the most extreme political cross currents in our country which not only deny our roots, but violate fundamental fairness and reality.

Recent immigration legislation is costly, inefficient, and cruel as it relates to families already here. Young people brought here as children who know no other life and are American in every sense, but are still denied the American dream.

A consequence of the election may well be a new reality on the American political scene when it comes to immigration and a willingness to soften hard-edged positions and move us in a more thoughtful direction.

There have been shifts in public attitude embracing comprehensive solutions for some time, but in the political arena this is a more recent phenomenon. It will take time to do this right, but a willingness by some on the other side of the aisle to offer their own version of the DREAM Act in the Senate, for example, is reason for optimism.

While I strongly support a comprehensive solution that provides a path to citizenship for people who are willing to play by the rules, work hard, pay their taxes, and demonstrate citizenship skills, there are two intermediate steps that should get us moving in the right direction. The DREAM Act and the creation of a STEM visa program should be low-hanging fruit that almost everyone can embrace.

The deferred action announced by the administration to give a sliver of hope to these bright young people who study hard and play by the rules and who are good citizens was a good step but should be followed by early action on the DREAM Act. I am proud this was passed by the previous Congress and I hope it will be the first order of business in the new Congress. These young people are the lifeblood of America's future and we should welcome them and do everything possible to ensure their success.

I will vote for H.R. 6429, the STEM Jobs Act, which creates a STEM visa program and would give 55,000 green cards a year to doctoral and master's graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematical fields. I reluctantly voted against this in September because it was brought forward as a last minute suspension bill designed to fail and create unnecessary political divisions. This time, dealing with this in regular order is encouraging. It was also made marginally better. For example, the new version of the legislation decreases the wait time for certain spouses and children who are planning to join their loved ones with permanent residency in the United States. It also removed a concerning provision that forced STEM visa applicants to commit to working in the United States for five years. While prospects in the Senate are still dim, the most important change has been the willingness of my friends on the other side of the aisle to take another look at immigration and maybe dial down the political rhetoric. I was personally willing to meet them halfway.

Creating a STEM visa program should be a no-brainer. It will make a huge difference in keeping the best and brightest from around the world in the United States. These students come to our colleges and universities to receive the best education available and it is insane to send them back home or to other countries if they want to stay here. It has been said that we should staple a green card to every diploma for an advanced degree. We should certainly do whatever is necessary for appropriate verification to ensure national security, but the overwhelming majority should be welcome to reside, be productive, create families, and support businesses right here.

The legislation is certainly not perfect and unless our objection is addressed will not pass the Senate. We need comprehensive immigration overhaul, not a piecemeal approach. I also do not support the philosophy that immigration needs to remain zero-sum: we should not need to eliminate the diversity visa in order to add this program. I am confident the Senate will fix these provisions.

This would be an important signal to the next Congress that we can and must move forward on broader immigration reform. America needs to unite families, to protect and give justice to young people, strengthen business from high-tech to agriculture, and help us live up to our ideals as a Nation of immigrants.

Mr. POLIS. I would like to inquire if the gentleman from Florida has any remaining speakers he's expecting.

Mr. NUGENT. I do not.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, seeing as I am the last speaker from my side, I yield myself the balance of my time.

As articulated by the gentleman from Oregon, this bill presents a difficult decision for Members of this body, and I certainly have great respect for people on both sides of the issue.

□ 1300

I want to go over, again, some of the pros and cons. The program that allows Ukrainians, Ethiopians, and Albanians to come in to make sure that a disproportionate number of our immigrants are not just from a small number of countries is important. Absent that, a higher percentage of our immigrants will be from Mexico, India, and China. So again, if this bill passes, a higher percentage of our immigrants will be from the major countries that send people here.

Now, it's not the end of the world, but there's added value in having people from all corners of the world come here to become part of our great country and, in many cases, this is the only way that people from Nepal or Albania or Ethiopia have a shot at coming to this country and succeeding.

We also need people in this country across all different skill levels in our labor market. And whether that labor includes toiling in the field or toiling in downtown buildings at night or programming computers or designing aircraft, we have needs across all sectors of our economy—yes, in STEM, but not just in STEM.

So we are asked to choose, asked to choose between people with graduate degrees whom we want to keep here in science, technology, engineering, and math. In many cases, if they're not allowed to stay, they will have to return to other countries, and the jobs will follow them, costing our country jobs.

Choose between them and allowing people here from countries other than Mexico, India, and China, some of whom are high-skilled, some of whom are low-skilled, a diverse group across the board. Looking back at many of our own forebears, certainly mine, my family came to this country in the late 19th century, and early 20th century, 1890s, 1905. They didn't have master's degrees. They didn't have Ph.D.s. They didn't have college degrees. And that's the case for many of our forebears.

Here today their great-grandson sits as a Member of Congress, and had a program not existed whereby they could arrive at Ellis Island and be here, I wouldn't be here today.

Now, my father has a Ph.D., but that's the legacy of his hard-working immigrant grandparents that came to this country without a college degree and, in many cases, without something that's the equivalent of even a high school degree today. To work hard, to live the American Dream, and for their descendents, to be able to serve in this august body.

So it's a cause for reflection. Both are important. And again, the closed process of the bill doesn't allow for a discussion of the IDEA Act or the STAPLE Act, which would simply create a new STEM immigrant visa program.

My other concern with this bill, as I mentioned, is that it would increase the number of illegal immigrants here in this country. Simply by the way that the math works, the number of STEM graduates is lower than the number of STEM visas that are available each year.

Now, it would be one thing if that was allowed to trickle down to other categories, or, for instance, the overflow was allowed to be used for diversity visas. There might be room for compromise. But instead, those excess visas disappear. So after the backlog of three or 4 years is dealt with, these 55,000 visas that are being taken away from Albania and the Ukraine and Ethiopia and Africa and Asia, the back of those 55,000 visas will only result in 20,000 or so net immigrants.

Now 29,000 graduates graduating from institutions of higher education. Now, keep in mind, not everybody wants to stay here. As attractive as our country is, some people do want to learn here and go back to their other countries, and that's certainly fine as well. But many will want to stay here.

But in losing some of those visas, again, we are only increasing the immigration problem, the illegal immigration problem, and moving in the opposite direction of addressing immigration in this country. There is little to be proud of with regard to the current state of affairs in immigration.

It's very different than when my great-grandparents came here and got off at Ellis Island and registered and, albeit with a misspelled name, were able to go to work the next day. It's becoming harder and harder.

The absence of a legal way of immigrating that is in touch with our labor market in this country, the lack of having an operative immigration system has led to over 10 million people being here illegally, working illegally, as my colleague from Oregon said, in many cases, integrated into our communities. Many of them have American children, are parents of American kids, and yet, without any way, currently, of getting right with the law.

What we need to do in immigration reform is require that people who are here illegally get right with the law, rather than prevent them from getting right with the law, which is what we do currently.

So, again, while STEM immigration is very important, my colleagues are being asked, in a closed process, to weigh that with the issue of immigrants from countries like the Ukraine and Albania. At the same time, again, this bill will increase the number of illegal immigrants in this country. Perhaps increasing the number of illegal immigrants will redouble the efforts of this Congress to address this issue.

But, given the enormous dimension of the problem already and the complete lack of consideration of any meaningful immigration bill by this Congress to solve a broken immigration system, I'm certainly not holding my breath.

The zero-sum bill on the floor asks us to weigh one class of immigrants at the expense of another, in effect, trying to play politics and avoid solving our immigration crisis.

I think it's time for a transparent and open debate. It's time for compromise. It's time to work in a bipartisan fashion to actually replace our broken immigration system with one that works for our country, one that strengthens our economy, one that creates jobs for Americans, one that makes our Nation's immigration system more humane and makes it workable and enforceable.

This bill, for all its merits, for all its problems, I think, we, both proponents and opponents can agree it falls short on that account of fixing our broken immigration system and replacing it with one that works. It has no additional enforcement provisions, no border security provisions. It provides no requirement for people who are here illegally to get right with the law.

Rather, it does create an excellent program to keep high-tech graduates here. It destroys another valuable program to keep people from countries other than Mexico and India and China and the UK here. It likely will increase illegal immigration by 10 or 20,000 a year, and provides no solution.

So a difficult decision for all Members of this body. And I'd like to think that Members on both sides, hopefully, would agree that we can do better. We need to do better. We've been called upon by the voters of this country to do better.

And I encourage, whether it's in this Congress or the next Congress, to take up the difficult but critical issue of replacing our broken immigration system with one that works for our country, creates prosperity for America, helps reduce our budget deficit, is humane, is enforceable. No one said it would be easy, but that's what the people send us here to do.

And regardless of the outcome of this particular bill, we are simply taking another week in avoiding addressing the real issues of the immigration crisis in this country.

I encourage my colleagues to vote against the rule, which was a closed process and doesn't allow for consideration of even noncontroversial amendments such as my EB–5 amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

To my good friend from Colorado, we agree on so many issues, particularly as it relates to immigration reform. We agree. I think this is the first step in regards to where we need to go. You have sold a very persuasive argument in regards to why it is so important, so important, that we have a STEM visa program; why it's important to us to keep that brain power that we educated in the United States, keep them

here in this country to support our businesses and our manufacturing so we can be more competitive on a global market. You have made my case on that argument.

I'll agree with you that this immigration system that we have is broken. I wasn't here 2 years ago or 4 years ago when the Democrats were in power in both the House and the Senate and the Presidency, and they moved nothing forward that we're talking about today.

□ 1310

It's disappointing when you have all the levels of government and you don't accomplish anything as it relates to this. And now we want to turn it around and say that this is a flawed bill. At the end of the day, this meets the needs of our corporations of creating more jobs here in America, about putting more people to work, and it also rectifies an issue on the V-Visa program in regards to instead of having families split because someone has a legitimate green card as a resident here, that he has to be split or she has to be split from their family. The mother of their children or their children are kept from coming in the United States. Because today, the way the program is, they are kept from coming to the United States. So they don't have an opportunity to get a job, anyhow.

But what this does do is it rectifies a problem that allows parents to be reunited with their children. I don't know, but that's important to me as a father of three. I would much rather have had my family here if I was a resident alien here. I would rather have my family here so I could reach out and touch them and help encourage them and move them forward in the American principles—that's what I would want to do—versus trying to talk across great distances to try to bring a family together. That's no way to raise a family. But they do it because they have to. This rectifies that problem. While it doesn't allow them to go out and get a job, it does bring the family unit back together again. I know, Mr. POLIS, you have a son. You would rather have your son with you than a thousand miles away, as I would.

So this is a step in the right direction. This is moving us forward, not moving us backwards. This is actually taking an approach that should have been taken 4 years ago, and the Democrats punted it down the field. In September, we voted on this initial STEM bill and we had 30 Democrats across the aisle vote with us. We didn't meet the threshold of two-thirds because it was under suspension.

I truly believe that this bill has the ability to cut across the aisle. And we heard our good friend from Oregon talk about it—for the right reasons. Just because it's not perfect doesn't mean we should just throw it in the scrap heap. And I agree that we can pass this bill and send it to the Senate. The Senate has the option to bring it up, debate it, vote on it, amend it, and send it back to the House. Do your job. I agree that that's what they should do. At least have the discussion. When the Senate comes out and says, We're going to ignore it, we're not going to do anything with it, that's a disservice to the American public, it's a disservice to those that create jobs, and those Americans that need jobs.

You talk about a zero sum game. This is not a way to reduce immigration. I don't know where my good friend got the numbers about how this is going to increase the number of illegal immigrants to this country. I've never heard that before. I've never seen anything in writing as relates to that. I'm not saying it's not true, but I don't know that. I think it just sounds like a good number. What we don't want to do is scare people to be opposed to something that is good for America.

We made an investment as a Nation in these foreign students when they came here, when we allowed them here in the STEM fields. Why let that investment leave? Why would we ignore that investment and say, you know what? we don't care, when it has a direct negative impact on this country—not on any other country—on this country it has a direct negative impact. It's just common sense. And I guess that's the problem. Sometimes common sense and Washington, D.C., are vast worlds apart.

While looking at this, it's just a small, commonsense reform to our immigration policy. But what it does do is addresses a dangerous Diversity Visa problem. Even the former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Visa Services testified in front of the Judiciary Committee that visa lottery fraud includes multiple entries, fraudulent claims to education and work experience, pop-up spouses or family members, and false claims of employment or financial support in the United States. His words, not mine.

For example, one third-party agent in Bangladesh entered every single name from a phone book in Bangladesh into the lottery system in order to extort money. If your name got pulled he would go to you and extort money so you can come to the United States. Or, guess what? Sell that winning slot to someone else.

That's not what the whole program was designed for. I would suggest to you that students that are coming from foreign countries come across-the-board. We have them from China, we have them from the Ukraine, as you like to keep pointing out, and from all over the world to come to our universities, particularly for those STEM degrees, advanced degrees. So I would suggest to you that you're going to continue that diversity by getting people that have gone to the max that are going to be so productive here in America to help us. It's not a sum game. It's just a rational game.

I really wish that I knew that if we passed this today, that it would become law. The President has already kind of said he wouldn't sign it. I don't know how you can have it both ways, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about STEM, those individuals who have come to our universities and graduate with a degree in those STEM sciences, how we can just ignore them and say, Listen, this is good for America.

Instead of making this a Republican or Democratic idea, why don't we just pass it because it's the right idea? Let's do something for once that's good for America. Let's do something once that's good for those green card holders that are currently here in the United States, bringing their families together so they can become productive in whatever sense their family decides. Wouldn't we want to do that? I would want to do that. I want to see families reunited, not split apart, not kept because of some arcane rule that's going to take them 6 or 7 years, maybe, to get a green card so they can bring their family here in the United States, where this would allow them to come 1 year after being on the waiting list, they get the opportunity to come here and be reunited with their family.

For all that we hear about Democrats are always for families, this time I guess they're not. This time I guess because they're from some other country, maybe they're just not that important. They are to me. I think it's important. Here's once where the Republicans are stepping forward on an immigration issue that's good for America, it's good for the people that are currently here on green cards legally. It allows them to reinvest. How can this be bad for America? Is it because it's a Republican idea? Is that the reason why this is a bad piece of politics? I would hope not. I would hope that my colleagues across the aisle will be like Mr. BLUMENAUER from Oregon and look at the real merits of it.

While not perfect in any sense of the word, as is any legislation that comes out of this place, at least it's a move and a step in the right direction. And let the Senate do their job. Let the Senate bring it up. Let the Senate vote on it and amend it and send it back to the House. Let the Senate for once do their job. And then, Mr. President, you can make a decision whether you're going to veto it or not. But let's quit playing politics with immigration.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank my good friend from Colorado because we agree on so many issues as it relates to this. We just don't agree on everything.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose H. Res. 821, the Rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 6429 "STEM Jobs Act," a bill which eliminates the Diversity Visa Program.

Nearly 15 million people, representing about 20 million with family members included, registered late last year for the 2012 Diversity Visa Program under which only 50,000 visa

winners were to be selected via random selection process.

Each year, diversity visa winners make up about 4% of all Legal Permanent Resident (LPR) admissions.

SEEDS OF DIVERSITY

Unlike every other visa program, its express purpose is to help us develop a racially, ethnically, and culturally-diverse population. It serves a unique purpose and it works. In recent years, African immigrants have comprised about 50% of the DV program's beneficiaries.

Diversity Visa immigrants succeed and contribute to the U.S. economy. According to the Congressional Research Service, in FY 2009 Diversity Visa immigrants were 2.5 times more likely to report managerial and professional occupations than all other lawful permanent residents.

The Diversity Visa program promotes respect for U.S. immigration laws. It reduces incentives for illegal immigration by encouraging prospective immigrants to wait until they win a visa, as opposed to attempting to enter without permission.

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY INTERESTS

The Diversity Visa sustains the American Dream in parts of the world where it represents the only realistic opportunity for immigrating to the U.S.

Former Rep. Bruce Morrison—one of the architects of the Diversity Visa—testified in 2005 that the program advances a principle that is "at the heart of the definition of America"; the principle that "all nationalities are welcome."

Ambassador Johnny Young, Executive Director of Migration and Refugee Services, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, testified at a 2011 Judiciary Committee hearing: "The Program engenders hope abroad for those that are all too often without it—hope for a better life, hope for reunification with family in the United States, and hope for a chance to use their God-given skills and talents."

AMENDMENTS OFFERED IN JUDICIARY AND RULES

During the Judiciary Committee's markup of a bill earlier this year to kill the Diversity Visa program, I offered an amendment directing the Secretaries of Homeland Security and State to report to Congress on steps that could be taken to further eliminate fraud and security risks in the Diversity Visa program. Rather than vote to fix the program and defend legal immigration and diversity in our immigrant pool, every Republican on the Committee who was present voted down the amendment.

Once again I offered 2 amendments in Rules Committee to protect the Diversity Visa Program, and once again the Republican majority on the Committee voted against it.

NO SIGNIFCANT EVIDENCE OF A SECURITY RISK

No substantive evidence has been given that the Diversity Program poses a significant risk to our national security. There are organizations like Numbers USA who are not just advocating against illegal immigration but also wish to place caps on or decrease legal immigration as well.

As former Congressman Bruce Morrison testified in 2005: "[I]t is absurd to think that a lottery would be the vehicle of choice for terrorists." 12 to 20 million people enter the Diversity Visa lottery each year and no more than 50,000 visas are available.

In 2007, GAO "found no documented evidence that DV immigrants . . . posed a terrorist or other threat."

Diversity Visa recipients go through the same immigration, criminal, and national security background checks that all people applying for Lawful Permanent Residence undergo. They also are interviewed by State Department and Department of Homeland Security personnel.

FRAUD

Since the State Department OIG first raised concerns about fraud in 1993, significant changes have been made. In 2004, State implemented an electronic registration system. This allows State to use facial and name recognition software to identify duplicate applications and to share date with intelligence and law enforcement agencies for necessary immigration and security checks.

In 2012 there was an incident where 20,000 people were erroneously notified that they were finalists in the Diversity program. They would have the opportunity to enter the lottery. The OIG investigated and found this was due to a computer error. There was no evidence of intentional fraud, as a safety precaution and because of the principle of fairness the State Department did the lottery again.

The Diversity Visa program has led the way in applying cutting edge technology to reduce fraud and increase security. The program was one of the first in the government to use facial recognition software to analyze digital photographs.

I join the vast majority of my Democratic colleagues in supporting an expansion of the STEM program. H.R. 6429 attempt to increase the STEM Visa program is an admirable one; however, I firmly believe it should not come at the expense of the Diversity Immigration Visa Program and should include a broader range of institutions.

I firmly support Rep. LOFGREN's bill, H.R. 6412 which is a clean STEM Visa bill and creates a visa program for students graduating with advanced STEM degrees from U.S. research universities, without eliminating the Diversity Visa Program.

Frankly, it appears there are Republicans who have been needlessly targeting this program, as a means to decrease legal immigration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 243, nays 170, not voting 19, as follows:

[Roll No. 611]

YEAS—243

Adams
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Bass (NH)
Benishek
Berg
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boren
Boswell
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brooks
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Buerkle
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Canseco
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cole
Conaway
Cravaack
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Denham
Dent
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donnelly (IN)
Dreier
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Emerson
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Flake
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guinta
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Hayworth
Heck
Hensarling
Herger
Herrera Beutler
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (IL)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Kelly
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kissell
Kline
Labrador
Lamborn
Lance
Landry
Lankford
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lewis (CA)
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meehan
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moran
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Myrick
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paul
Paulsen
Pearce
Peterson
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Quayle
Reed
Rehberg
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Rivera
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross (AR)
Ross (FL)
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Scalise
Schilling
Schock
Schweikert
Scott (SC)
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stearns
Stivers
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner (NY)
Upton
Walberg
Walden
Walsh (IL)
Webster
West
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NAYS—170

Altmire
Andrews
Baca
Baldwin
Barrow
Bass (CA)
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Castor (FL)
Chandler
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke (MI)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly (VA)
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Critz
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Curson (MI)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Farr
Fattah
Fudge
Garamendi
Gonzalez
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heinrich
Higgins
Himes
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hochul
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Israel
Jackson Lee (TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kildee
Kind
Kucinich
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski

Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Luján
Lynch
Maloney
Markey
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Moore
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Olver
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree (ME)
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Richardson
Richmond
Rothman (NJ)
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Sutton
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Woolsey
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—19

Ackerman
Austria
Barber
Costello
Filner
Frank (MA)
Gallegly
Lee (CA)
Manzullo
Murphy (CT)
Owens
Payne
Pence
Roybal-Allard
Schmidt
Stark
Sullivan
Towns
Turner (OH)

□ 1342

Messrs. HONDA, ELLISON, CARNEY, CLEAVER, and Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall 611, I was away from the Capitol due to prior commitments to my constituents. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

ELECTING MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 822

Resolved, That the following named Members be and are hereby elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

(1) COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.—Mr. Garamendi.

(2) COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY.—Mr. Curson.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HAMAS IS THE PUPPET AND IRAN IS THE PUPPETEER

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the eyes of the world were on the Gaza Strip for 8 days as sirens wailed and Hamas rained rockets down on Israel.

Iran's mullahs shipped long-range rockets into Sudan, sent them up into Egypt before smuggling them through tunnels and assembling them in Gaza. Israel responded by doing the only thing a responsible nation should do: it defended itself. Now the United States needs to show there are consequences for attacking this sovereign nation, consequences for Hamas and Iran, as well.

We should have stricter enforcement of sanctions against Iran. Iran and Hamas both need to be held accountable for these attacks. Israel had the moral right and legal duty to defend itself from attacks by the barbarians, Hamas. There is a ceasefire, but only until Hamas obtains more Iranian missiles.

Hamas is the puppet, and Iran is the puppeteer. The Iranian regime needs to go. The Iranian people need to rid themselves of the little fellow from the desert, Ahmadinejad, and his ways of war.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1350

NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the more than 65 million family caregivers across the Nation who work tirelessly and selflessly to care for loved ones who are chronically ill, disabled or aging. So this month, we celebrate National Family Caregivers Month, which is a time to thank all those heroes who sacrifice their time and effort in looking after others.

It is estimated that family caregivers provide 80 percent of our Nation's long-term care, saving families about $375 billion annually. Caregivers are the silent heroes of the family. They work day in and day out to ensure that those in need of care receive that support. Taking care of sick family members is, no doubt, a difficult job; and I encourage caregivers to continue to utilize the resources they have in their communities for support.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the family caregivers in Minnesota and of those helping families in America. Your work to support your families exemplifies the true meaning of putting someone else's needs first.

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, just about 40 minutes or so ago, we were in the midst of a debate concerning STEM, which is something that most Americans have come to now understand as the acronym for science, technology, engineering, and math.

As a longstanding member on the Subcommittee on Immigration and on Homeland Security, STEM is now a basis for expanding visas to ensure or to give opportunities to young people who are graduating from our research institutions of higher learning who have been born in other countries and to give them the ability to be able to stay here in order to help create jobs and to build this economy. That's a good thing. Yet on November 6, 2012, I think America spoke and said, We're ready to do more and go further.

I voted ''no'' on the rule because I believe we are ready for comprehensive immigration reform, not something that will hurt us, but something that will help us. For those who appreciated the Statue of Liberty that welcomed the poor and the downtrodden, that welcomed the Irish and the Germans and the Italians, we know that comprehensive immigration reform is the right way. This rule, H. Res. 821, is not the right way. So I ask my colleagues to look to comprehensive immigration reform, and I will speak about this bill tomorrow.

UPHOLDING THE SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS

(Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Twelve years ago, I took an oath to defend the Constitution of the United States. I am here today to urge my colleagues to uphold our Second Amendment right to bear arms.

Congress has to put aside partisan differences and act to uphold a citizen's right to bear arms in every State in the Union. Unfortunately, in my home State, residents are denied the ability to carry firearms even though the residents of every other State in the Union are allowed to protect themselves and their property. The Second Amendment is clear and concise, and it was meant to protect all residents no matter where they live.

I urge Congress and the States to uphold this fundamental and basic right.

THANK YOU, NOT GOODBYE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I begin this Special Order for those Members on this side of the aisle who are retiring or who are leaving at the end of 2012, so I rise today not to say goodbye, but to say thank you.

After 14 wonderful and productive years, I will be stepping away from this podium for the last time at the end of