On rollcall No. 173, (Rahall (D–WV) Amendment No. 5—Strikes section 3 of the bill eliminating the Keystone XL permit approval, allowing the President to continue to delay issuing a permit for the pipeline) had I been present, I would have voted ''no''.

On rollcall No. 174, (Esty (D–CT) Amendment No. 6—Strikes language in the bill that allows TransCanada to obtain certain permits for operation and/or maintenance of the pipeline, but continues to allow construction permits to be expedited) had I been present, I would have voted ''no''.

On rollcall No. 175, (Jackson Lee (D–TX) Amendment No. 7—Extends the time period for filing a claim under the Act from 60 days to 1 year) had I been present, I would have voted ''no''.

On rollcall No. 176, (Chu (D–CA) Amendment No. 8—Requires a GAO study of the Keystone XL project regarding the costs of cleanup activities from a pipeline spill and the potential impacts on health, environment, and water) had I been present, I would have voted ''no''.

On rollcall No. 177, (Holt (D–NJ) Amendment No. 10—Prohibits the export of any oil, or all refined petroleum products derived from the oil, transported by the Keystone XL pipeline unless the President finds that there is an exception required by law or it is in the national interest) had I been present, I would have voted ''no''.

On rollcall No. 178, (Democrat Motion to recommit H.R. 3 with instructions) had I been present, I would have voted ''no''.

On rollcall No. 179, (On Passage H.R. 3—Northern Route Approval Act is expected; please check at the leadership desk for details) had I been present, I would have voted ''yea''.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1911, SMARTER SOLUTIONS FOR STUDENTS ACT

Ms. FOXX, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113–89) on the resolution (H. Res. 232) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1911) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to establish interest rates for new loans made on or after July 1, 2013, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

IMPROVING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION DATA FOR STUDENTS ACT

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1949) to direct the Secretary of Education to convene the Advisory Committee on Improving Postsecondary Education Data to conduct a study on improvements to postsecondary education transparency at the Federal level, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1949

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Improving Postsecondary Education Data for Students Act''.

SEC. 2. STUDY ON IMPROVEMENTS TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION TRANSPARENCY AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL.

(a) FORMATION OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON IMPROVING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION DATA.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Education shall convene the Advisory Committee on Improving Postsecondary Education Data (in this Act referred to as the ''Advisory Committee''), which shall be comprised of 15 members who represent economically, racially, and geographically diverse populations appointed by the Secretary in consultation with the Commissioner for Education Statistics, including—

(A) individuals representing different sectors of institutions of higher education, including individuals representing undergraduate and graduate education;

(B) experts in the field of higher education policy;

(C) State officials;

(D) students and other stakeholders from the higher education community;

(E) representatives from the business community;

(F) experts in choice in consumer markets;

(G) privacy experts;

(H) college and career counselors at secondary schools;

(I) experts in data policy, collection, and use; and

(J) experts in labor markets.

(2) CHAIRPERSON.—The Secretary shall appoint the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee.

(b) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Advisory Committee shall conduct a study examining—

(1) the types of information, including information related to costs of postsecondary education, sources of financial assistance (including Federal student loans), student outcomes, and postgraduation earnings, the Federal Government should collect and report on institutions of higher education to assist students and families in their search for an institution of higher education;

(2) how such information should be collected and reported, including how to disaggregate information on student outcomes by subgroups of students, such as full-time students, part-time students, nontraditional students, first generation college students, students who are veterans, and Federal Pell Grant recipients under subpart 1 of part A of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a); and

(3) the ways in which the Federal Government may make such information more readily available to—

(A) students and their families in a format that is easily accessible and understandable, and will aid students and their families in making decisions; and

(B) States, local governments, secondary schools, individual or groups of institutions of higher education, and private-sector entities.

(c) SCOPE OF STUDY.—In conducting the study under this Act, the Advisory Committee shall, at a minimum, examine—

(1) whether the current Federal transparency initiatives on postsecondary education—

(A) are reporting consistent information about individual institutions of higher education across Federal agencies; and

(B) are similar to transparency initiatives on postsecondary education carried out by States, individual or groups of institutions of higher education, or private-sector entities;

(2) whether—

(A) the collection and reporting of postgraduation earnings by the Federal Government is feasible, and if feasible, the options for collecting and reporting such information;

(B) collecting and reporting such information would improve the use of Federal transparency initiatives and ease decisionmaking for students and their families; and

(C) collecting and reporting such information would have an impact on student privacy, and if so, how such impact may be minimized;

(3) whether any other information, including information relating to student outcomes or identified under the review required under subsection (d), should be collected and reported by the Federal Government to improve the utility of such initiatives for students and their families, and if so, how such information may be collected and reported, including whether the information should be disaggregated by subgroups of students;

(4) whether any information currently collected and reported by the Federal Government on institutions of higher education is not useful for students and their families and should not be so collected and reported;

(5) the manner in which the information from Federal transparency initiatives is made available to students and their families, and whether format changes may help the information become more easily understood and widely utilized by students and their families;

(6) any activities being carried out by the Federal Government, States, individual or groups of institutions of higher education, or private-sector entities to help inform students and their families of the availability of Federal transparency initiatives;

(7) the cost to institutions of higher education of reporting to the Federal Government the information that is being collected and reported through Federal transparency initiatives, and how such cost may be minimized; and

(8) the relevant research described in subsection (d).

(d) REVIEW OF RELEVANT RESEARCH.—In conducting the study under this Act, the Advisory Committee shall review and consider—

(1) research and studies, if any, that have been conducted to determine questions most frequently asked by students and families to help inform their search for an institution of higher education;

(2) the types of information students seek before enrolling in an institution of higher education;

(3) whether the availability to students and their families of additional information on institutions of higher education will be beneficial or confusing;

(4) results, if any, that are available from consumer testing of Federal, State, institution of higher education, and private-sector transparency initiatives on postsecondary education that have been made publicly available on or after the date that is 10 years before the date of enactment of this Act; and

(5) any gaps in the research, studies, and results described in paragraphs (1) and (4) relating to the types of information students seek before enrolling in an institution of higher education.

(e) CONSULTATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In conducting the study under this Act, the Advisory Committee shall—

(A) hold public hearings to consult with parents and students; and

(B) consult with a broad range of interested parties in higher education, including appropriate researchers, representatives of secondary schools (including college and career counselors) and institutions of higher education from different sectors of such institutions (including undergraduate and graduate education), State administrators, and Federal officials.

(2) CONSULTATION WITH THE AUTHORIZING COMMITTEES.—The Advisory Committee shall consult on a regular basis with the authorizing committees in conducting the study under this Act.

(f) REPORTS TO AUTHORIZING COMMITTEES.—

(1) INTERIM REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Advisory Committee shall prepare and submit to the authorizing committees and the Secretary an interim report describing the progress made in conducting the study under this Act and any preliminary findings on the topics identified under subsection (c).

(2) FINAL REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Advisory Committee shall prepare and submit to the authorizing committees and the Secretary a final report on the study, including—

(i) recommendations for legislative, regulatory, and administrative actions based on findings related to the topics identified under subsection (c); and

(ii) a summary of the research described in subsection (d).

(B) CONSULTATION WITH NCES.—The Advisory Committee shall consult with the Commissioner of Education Statistics prior to making recommendations under subparagraph (A)(i) with respect to improving the information being collected and reported by the Federal Government on institutions of higher education.

(g) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—The amount necessary to conduct the study under this Act shall be made available from amounts available to the Secretary for administrative expenses of the Department of Education.

(h) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this Act:

(1) AUTHORIZING COMMITTEES.—The term ''authorizing committees'' has the meaning given the term in section 103 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1003).

(2) FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT.—The term ''first generation college student'' has the meaning given the term in section 402A(h) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a–11(h)).

(3) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term ''institution of higher education'' has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002), except that such term does not include institutions described in subsection (a)(1)(C) of such section 102.

(4) SECONDARY SCHOOL.—The term ''secondary school'' has the meaning given the term in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

(5) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Education.

(6) STATE.—The term ''State'' has the meaning given the term in section 103 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1003).

(7) STUDENT.—The term ''student'' includes—

(A) a prospective student;

(B) a student enrolled in an institution of higher education;

(C) a nontraditional student (as defined in section 803(j)(2) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1161c(j)(2))); and

(D) a veteran (as defined in section 480(c)(1) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1087vv(c)(1))) who is a student or prospective student.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MESSER. 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. 1949.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 1949, the Improving Postsecondary Education Data for Students Act. I want to thank Chairman KLINE and Higher Education Subcommittee Chairwoman FOXX for their work on and support of this measure. I also want to commend Ranking Member MILLER, Subcommittee Ranking Member HINOJOSA, and our Democratic committee colleagues for their contributions to this bill.

Few decisions in life are bigger than whether to attend college and which college to attend, yet many families struggle to wade through the complicated maze of statistics available to find the information they need to make fully informed, cost-conscious decisions. Consequently, they may choose schools or programs that don't meet their needs and leave them with high debt and limited career potential.

Despite Federal efforts to improve data collection and transparency in the higher education system, families and students still struggle, and institutions of higher learning are spending more time and money than ever. During the 2012–2013 academic year, institutions spent an estimated 850,000 man-hours and almost $31 million to fill out required Federal surveys. Higher education leaders have highlighted several of these requirements as duplicative to State and local transparency efforts and may partially contribute to the increase in college costs.

Through the Improving Postsecondary Education Data for Students Act, we hope to simplify this process and help ensure students can access the information they need to make good decisions while lessening the burden on colleges and universities that have far too many reporting requirements today. The bill would require the Department of Education to evaluate the information colleges and universities are required to provide to determine what helps make students better consumers and what simply buries them in paper—and the schools they attend in paper, as well.

The information yielded by this report will play a critical role in assisting the Education and Workforce Committee's efforts to reauthorize the Higher Education Act. We need to ensure students have the information they actually need in a user-friendly manner to help them make the best decisions they can.

We also must streamline the current regulatory burden of unnecessary and unhelpful reporting requirements imposed on institutions of higher education. This bill will help guide that process.

I urge all of our colleagues to support the Improving Postsecondary Education Data for Students Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I'm pleased to rise in support of the gentleman's legislation. I think it's an example of how we can work together and achieve a benefit for the American people. I commend him for introducing the bill and would outline our reasons for our support.

Probably the second largest expenditure most Americans make in their lifetime is a college education for themselves or for their children, second only to their real estate, to the home that they buy. It's surprising how little consumer information is available to families before they make that choice.

If you buy a phone, you can find out what apps it can run, how much bandwidth it has, how much it can store, what it can do, what it can't do. You can find all this information about what the phone cost, what it does, and how it works. But if you're about to enroll in a school that purports to teach Web site design, or if you're about to send your son or daughter off to a college to major in philosophy or engineering, it's surprising how little you know about that school.

The gentleman's proposal is that there be an effort by the Department of Education to make those data more accessible and more transparent for students and their families, questions that are natural to ask: What does it cost to go to the school? What happens to students when they graduate from the

school? What kind of jobs do they get? How much money do they make? How much debt do they graduate with? Who transfers in and out of the school and what numbers? How many people finish their education at the schools?

I'm not suggesting that there is any one-size-fits-all list of questions, that it's the right list of questions. What I'm suggesting is that the maximum amount of information should be available to families and students to make reasonable decisions about this sort of thing.

The only comment that I would make further is that we would encourage, Mr. Speaker, the committee leadership to consider bipartisan legislation—that's been sponsored by Mr. DUNCAN HUNTER, Jr., on the majority side; I'm involved in it on the minority side; and the other body, it's sponsored by Senators WYDEN and WARNER, along with Senator RUBIO—that would create this kind of information in a user-friendly, Web-based environment as soon as possibly could be done.

□ 1910

I view this bill as complementary to this effort, and I look forward to working with the gentleman and the other leaders of the committee on this issue.

I would finally say that, on our side, we do strongly believe that the time has come for a full reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. There are a myriad of issues. Tomorrow, we will have student loan financing issues on the floor. There are questions about Pell Grants, the cost of college and numerous other issues that we think are best dealt with in an omnibus and comprehensive fashion.

Having said that, we commend the gentleman for his introduction of the bill, urge its support, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MESSER. I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for his comments and his leadership on this important topic. It's certainly a pleasure to work with you on this bill and on the other bills that you mentioned.

I would now like to yield 1 minute to my good friend, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR).

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman for his leadership and for bringing this bill forward. I appreciate the ranking member's support on this as well.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the Improving Postsecondary Education Data for Students Act.

American moms and dads are working tirelessly to help their children achieve their dreams. For many, that dream includes college. However, the cost of a postsecondary education has become increasingly difficult for a lot of families to bear. Young graduates today are not only confronting a tough job market when they leave school, they are continually facing a growing mountain of debt that is financially burdensome and extremely difficult to pay back. Many students choose schools and their majors without ever knowing the earning potential of their fields of study. This leaves many young Americans with a lower than expected income and struggling to pay down their loans once they graduate. For some, it can take decades. This has got to change.

In my home State of Virginia, we've become a leader in attempting to address this problem. In 2012, Virginia enacted a requirement that schools in our State publish information regarding the proportion of graduates with employment, their average salaries and higher education debt at 18 months and 5 years after graduation.

I expect that this data will become extremely useful to parents and students alike. Unfortunately, the data available to Virginia is limited to graduates who remain in the Commonwealth. This means that information available in the State database fails to fully capture students that graduate from a school, like the University of Richmond, which attracts students from 46 different States. Very often, they go on to take jobs throughout the country where they become leaders in their fields.

We can help resolve this situation. The Federal Government currently has a significant amount of data that could help parents and students make better decisions regarding the financial benefits of prospective schools and majors, but this information is often hard to understand or is difficult to access.

This bill requires the Secretary of Education to convene a 15-member advisory panel to provide recommendations on how to improve the information available to parents and students when deciding on their schools and majors. This panel will provide an interim report within 6 months and a final one within 1 year for Congress' consideration during the reauthorization of the Higher Ed Act.

This legislation will serve to kickstart the process of improving transparency in higher education and will provide students and parents with the information that they need to make informed decisions so that a college education can continue to be a source of empowerment for millions of Americans. This bill is a great step in the right direction.

I want to thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER) for his leadership, Chairman JOHN KLINE, Chairwoman VIRGINIA FOXX, and the rest of the Education and the Workforce Committee for their work on this issue, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. ANDREWS. I would just ask my friend, Mr. Speaker, if he has any other speakers.

Mr. MESSER. I have two others.

Mr. ANDREWS. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MESSER. I yield such time as she may consume to my friend and colleague from the great State of Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS).

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Improving Postsecondary Education Data for Students Act.

I am the mother of a current college student and a recent college graduate as well as a former general counsel and senior vice president at Ivy Tech Community College in Indiana. I personally and professionally understand the difficult and often life-defining decisions our young people make when they decide where to attend college. Students want to make the most educated decisions they can, but currently, they struggle to access and process all of the data they need to make the best decisions for themselves and their futures, and it's not because there is a lack of data being reported.

Currently, the Federal Government requires colleges and universities to report overwhelming amounts of information. As Congressman MESSER has already said, rather than having institutions across the country spend over 850,000 hours and almost $31 million to fill out all of these required Federal surveys, why not allow our higher ed institutions to spend those hours and those dollars doing a better job serving our students in classrooms, advising students and figuring out ways to lower tuition costs? The problem is that the Federal Government is not requiring the right information and putting it in a readable and understandable format for students.

This bill directs the Department of Education to conduct a survey on which factors students and families want and need when researching their postsecondary options. It's common sense. I appreciate that it's a bipartisan piece of legislation that will benefit students and our higher ed institutions. This bill is simple, and it helps Congress improve transparency as we approach the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

I applaud the work of my fellow Hoosier and colleague Mr. MESSER, and I urge the adoption of this important bill.

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

Mr. MESSER. I would now like to yield 2 minutes to my good friend from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS).

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation.

I have a personal take on this. I have a 17-year-old son, Copeland, and my wife and I are in the process of guiding him through the difficult and often complex process of choosing a higher education institution to attend.

As families across America know, there are a lot of factors to consider when assessing what institution will provide my son with the best opportunity to graduate college and be set on a path to professionally succeed. In this economy, our children deserve the best possible chance we can give them to find jobs that will allow them to provide for themselves and their future families.

The key to good decisionmaking is having accurate information, and this

legislation will provide my son Copeland and all of the other students of northeast Georgia with the best possible data that they and their parents can use to select the right postsecondary education paths for them.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and I would like to thank the gentleman from Indiana for his leadership. The nature in which we bring this forward is a positive solution for our country and is a positive solution for the families looking at this decision of higher education.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, in closing, this is an example of how we can work together and accomplish something constructive for the American people. I am pleased to support this bill, and I would urge a ''yes'' vote.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MESSER. I am a former State legislator from Indiana. They used to say on the House floor back there, ''Good bill. Should pass,'' and it's great when you have the opportunity to work together across the aisle on a bill that just makes sense.

My colleague from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) made the comment that there is a lot of data out there for families but that there is a difference between data and information. Our goal with this bill is to help bring this data together, to get past the data dump and to try to get families the information they need while at the same time lessening the regulatory burden on our colleges and universities. They're doing the best they can with limited resources as well.

So, with that, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1949, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1920

RESOLVING ENVIRONMENTAL AND GRID RELIABILITY CONFLICTS ACT OF 2013

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 271) to clarify that compliance with an emergency order under section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act may not be considered a violation of any Federal, State, or local environmental law or regulation, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 271

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Resolving Environmental and Grid Reliability Conflicts Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS TO THE FEDERAL POWER ACT.

(a) COMPLIANCE WITH OR VIOLATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS WHILE UNDER EMERGENCY ORDER.—Section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 824a(c)) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(1)'' after ''(c)''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) With respect to an order issued under this subsection that may result in a conflict with a requirement of any Federal, State, or local environmental law or regulation, the Commission shall ensure that such order requires generation, delivery, interchange, or transmission of electric energy only during hours necessary to meet the emergency and serve the public interest, and, to the maximum extent practicable, is consistent with any applicable Federal, State, or local environmental law or regulation and minimizes any adverse environmental impacts.

''(3) To the extent any omission or action taken by a party, that is necessary to comply with an order issued under this subsection, including any omission or action taken to voluntarily comply with such order, results in noncompliance with, or causes such party to not comply with, any Federal, State, or local environmental law or regulation, such omission or action shall not be considered a violation of such environmental law or regulation, or subject such party to any requirement, civil or criminal liability, or a citizen suit under such environmental law or regulation.

''(4)(A) An order issued under this subsection that may result in a conflict with a requirement of any Federal, State, or local environmental law or regulation shall expire not later than 90 days after it is issued. The Commission may renew or reissue such order pursuant to paragraphs (1) and (2) for subsequent periods, not to exceed 90 days for each period, as the Commission determines necessary to meet the emergency and serve the public interest.

''(B) In renewing or reissuing an order under subparagraph (A), the Commission shall consult with the primary Federal agency with expertise in the environmental interest protected by such law or regulation, and shall include in any such renewed or reissued order such conditions as such Federal agency determines necessary to minimize any adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable. The conditions, if any, submitted by such Federal agency shall be made available to the public. The Commission may exclude such a condition from the renewed or reissued order if it determines that such condition would prevent the order from adequately addressing the emergency necessitating such order and provides in the order, or otherwise makes publicly available, an explanation of such determination.''.

(b) TEMPORARY CONNECTION OR CONSTRUCTION BY MUNICIPALITIES.—Section 202(d) of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 824a(d)) is amended by inserting ''or municipality'' before ''engaged in the transmission or sale of electric energy''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials in the RECORD on H.R. 271.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in support of H.R. 271, Resolving Environmental and Grid Reliability Conflicts Act of 2013.

My colleagues and I carefully drafted this bill last year to resolve a conflict between the Federal Power Act and environmental rules that, if left unresolved, could create serious problems for the reliability of our Nation's electric grid. With the hot summer coming and power demands set to surge, the potential for dangerous power outages is rising, alongside the mercury.

Just last week, States like California and my own State of Texas were warned by regulators that electricity reserve margins could dip dangerously low. Texas faces critical electricity shortages in the next few years. We simply won't have enough reliable power to guarantee our grid. Rolling blackouts in Texas alone would impact over 25 million people. As coal plants continue to be shut down, pockets of areas across the country could quickly experience blackouts. When the power fails and the AC shuts down on a hot 100-degree day, it's the elderly, the young, and the poor who suffer first.

Prior experience shows that in rare and limited circumstances, emergency actions have been needed to ensure the reliable delivery of electricity. When an emergency exists due to a sudden increase in a demand for electricity or a shortage of supply, the Department of Energy has a tool of last resort to address the emergency. That tool is an emergency order under section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act.

DOE can order a grid connection to be made or power plant to generate electricity when outages occur due to weather events, equipment failures, or the electricity supply is too low to avoid a blackout. As they should, DOE can mandate a company to comply with a 202(c) order, even if it means a brief violation of environmental laws.

Unfortunately, under current law, a company or individual can be penalized for violating environmental laws even when they're following a Federal order to avoid a blackout. In recent years, these conflicting Federal laws have resulted in lawsuits and heavy fines for electricity providers complying with legal orders. Unless Congress passes this legislation to resolve the potential conflict in laws, the section 202(c) tool is in jeopardy.

H.R. 271 eliminates the uncertainty facing power generators and their customers by providing a needed safety valve which clarifies that compliance with an emergency order under section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act may not be considered a violation of any