Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the District of Columbia Paperwork Reduction Act. This legislation eliminates the wasteful congressional review process for legislation passed by the District of Columbia Council and to align the Congress' review period with the D.C. Council's review period.

The congressional review process for D.C. legislation is ignored by Congress providing it no benefit, but imposes substantial costs (in time and money) on the Council. Congress has almost always used the paperwork process instead of the disapproval process and has never abandoned the D.C. review process as its mechanism for retuning D.C. legislation twenty-three years ago, and only used it three times before that, preferring riders on D.C. appropriation bills instead. Yet Congress still requires the D.C. Council to use Kalka-esque make-work procedures to comply with the congressional review process established by the Home Rule Act of 1973.

Our bill would eliminate the congressional review process for legislation passed by the D.C. Council. However, Congress would lose no authority it currently exercises because, even upon enactment of this bill, Congress would retain its authority under clause 17 of section 8 of article I of the U.S. Constitution to amend or overturn any D.C. legislation at any time.

The congressional review process (30 days for civil bills and 60 days for criminal bills) includes those days when either house of Congress is in session, delaying D.C. bills from becoming law, often for many months. The delay forces the D.C. Council to pass most bills several times, using a cumbersome and complicated process to ensure that the operations of this large and rapidly changing city continue uninterrupted, avoiding a lapse of the bill before it becomes final. The review period, based on legislative, not calendar, days means, for example, that a 30-day period usually lasts three calendar months and often much longer because of congressional recesses. The congressional review period for a bill that changed the word “handicap” to “disability” lasted nine months. The Council estimates that 50–65 percent of the bills the Council passes could be eliminated if the congressional paperwork process were eliminated.

My bill would do no more than align the Home Rule Act with congressional practice over the last twenty-three years. Of the more than 5,000 legislative acts transmitted to Congress since the Home Rule Act, only three resolutions disapproving D.C. legislation have been enacted—in 1979, 1981, and 1991—and two of those mistakenly involved federal interests in the Height Act and the location of chancerries. Placing a congressional hold on 5,000 D.C. bills is unnecessary, but has imposed fruitless costs on the D.C. government, residents and businesses. District residents and businesses are also placed on hold because they have no certainty when D.C. bills, from taxes to regulations, will take effect, making it difficult to plan. Instead of using the congressional review process to overture D.C. legislation, Congress has preferred to use appropriation riders. Therefore, it is particularly unfair to require the D.C. Council to engage in a labor-intensive and costly process that Congress has itself long abandoned. My bill would only eliminate the automatic hold placed on D.C. legislation and the need for the D.C. Council to use a process initially passed for the convenience of Congress, but that Congress has since eliminated in all but law. This bill would promote efficiency and cost savings for Congress, the District, its residents, and businesses without reducing congressional oversight, and would carry out a policy stressed by Congress of eliminating needless paperwork and make-work redundancies.

I urge my colleagues to support this good-government measure.

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor the rich culture and heritage of Dominicans, during the month of Carnival, the most important period of religious celebration in the Dominican Republic. Dominicans are dedicated members of our communities and have contributed so much to our country. This month, we take the opportunity to acknowledge and applaud their service to our nation and their many great achievements.

Dominicans in our nation have been motivated by the value of hard work and the bonds of family—the same pillars that have formed the foundation of our society for over 230 years. From Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez, the first Dominican-American to serve in the Cabinet, to Pedro Martinez, a former pitcher for the New York Mets who was recently elected to the Hall of Fame, Dominicans are trailblazers who strengthen America’s diverse cultural heritage.

Dominicans are one of the fastest growing Hispanic groups in America. 1.5 million people of Dominican descent currently live in the United States. With over 700,000 people, Dominicans is the third largest Hispanic group in New York City. I am honored to serve a congressional district with a significant Dominican population. They bring vibrant and rich cultural and economic contributions to every neighborhood in my district, from Washington Heights to Inwood.

I am fortunate to have many excellent organizations in my district, that promote Dominican culture and empower Dominicans living in Manhattan and the Bronx. The Dominican Women’s Development Center, New York Dominican Officers’ Organization, Dominican Medical Association, National Dominican Women’s Caucus, Community Association of Progressive Dominicans, Alianza Dominicana, Dominican Bar Association, Association of Dominican Classical Artists, Dominican Cultural Civic Center, Mirabal Sisters Cultural and Community Center all help strengthen their communities and improve the lives of Dominicans in New York.

Like so many generations of immigrants, Dominicans have fought tirelessly to achieve the American Dream. They come to this great nation seeking a home, a place to raise their families, and a community that will nurture their dreams. From the initial wave of Dominican migration in the 1960s to the most recent arrival of today, Dominicans have graced our nation with their culture and traditions. Their contributions are integral to the success of our great nation and to strengthening the American fabric.

HON. BOB GOODLATTE
OF VIRGINIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues Representatives PETE WELCH, STEVE WOMACK and JIM COSTA as we introduce the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) Reform Act, a common sense solution to ensure that renewable fuels compete fairly in the marketplace and avoid causing unintended and negative consequences for American consumers.

The federal government’s creation of an artificial market for the ethanol industry has quite frankly triggered a domino effect that is hurting our nation’s consumers, energy users, livestock producers, food manufacturers, retailers, and natural resources. Renewable fuels play an important role in our all-of-the-above energy policy, but should compete fairly in the marketplace and not be the beneficiary of an anti-competitive government mandate.