

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

There was no objection.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the United States Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, honors the many members of the Marine Corps who have given their lives fighting for our country. This is one of the most popular memorials in the area, attracting over 1 million visitors annually and hosting several popular events, such as the Summer Sunset Parades and the Marine Corps Marathon.

Despite the popularity, the site only has portable toilets and no permanent bathroom facilities for visitors. This bipartisan, straightforward bill introduced by Congressman DON BEYER authorizes the construction of a visitor services center that includes permanent restroom facilities.

Due to a generous donation from billionaire David Rubenstein, this new visitor service center will come at no cost to the taxpayer. This new facility represents a more respectful and permanent solution to improve visitor experiences at this important site.

I urge the adoption of the measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4789 is an uncontroversial technical provision authorizing construction of a small restroom facility on the grounds of the Marine Corps Memorial, also known as the Iwo Jima Memorial.

Recently, billionaire David Rubenstein donated more than \$5 million to the National Park Foundation to be used for repairs and rehabilitation of the memorial and the surrounding grounds.

Because of the donation, the National Park Service was able to look closely at the needs of the memorial and the visitors who come there, and one amenity it clearly lacks is public restrooms. At the moment, the only restrooms available are Park Service-supplied porta potties.

With visitation steady and possibly increasing because of the memorial rehabilitation, there is a clear need to address this deficiency in visitor services, and this is especially concerning because this is a very popular destination for veterans, not all of whom are able-bodied.

The current statutory ban on additional structures on the Marine Corps Memorial dates to 2002, and it was part of this debate over the location of the Air Force Memorial. Well, in the meantime, the Air Force Memorial was ultimately located somewhere else, but we still need this legislation to authorize construction of restroom facilities.

The provision has already been passed by the Senate, and I am pleased by its consideration in the House. The National Park Service has long wanted

to build a small structure with water and restrooms at the Marine Corps Memorial because there are no such facilities within several miles, and this is in keeping with the broader policy of improving accessibility of all the memorials on and around the National Mall.

I am particularly thankful for Mr. COOK's support in putting this together and for Mr. THOMPSON's leadership and for the chairman's support.

I urge all Members to support this bipartisan bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4789.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1730

INNOVATION IN OFFSHORE LEASING ACT

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5577) to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct offshore oil and gas lease sales through Internet-based live lease sales, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5577

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 "Innovation in Offshore Leasing Act".

SEC. 2. INTERNET-BASED OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS LEASE SALES.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—Section 8 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1337) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(q) INTERNET-BASED OIL AND GAS LEASE SALES.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to modernize the Nation's offshore leasing program to ensure the best return to the Federal taxpayer, reduce fraud, and ensure a fair and competitive leasing process, the Secretary may conduct lease sales under this section through Internet-based, sealed-bidding methods.

"(2) SALE REQUIREMENTS.—Sales conducted under paragraph (1) shall ensure—

"(A) a publicly and freely accessible digital delivery of the bid reading process, such as live Internet streaming, and an option for bidders to submit bids electronically;

"(B) a bidder verification process that discloses to bidders, by no later than 5 p.m. Central Time of the day before each sale, a list of all bids submitted (including the person submitting each bid) on each lease tract without disclosing bid amounts;

"(C) the ability for a bidder to correct a possible misreading of a submitted bid;

"(D) a designee from within the Office of the Solicitor of the Department of the Interior to act

as an independent, third-party observer who will be present during the bid reading process to prevent wrongdoing, independently certify the bidding process, and maintain transparency;

"(E) data security measures to ensure bidder data is kept secure; and

"(F) a participant survey soliciting voluntary feedback from bidders on the bidding process.

"(3) TRANSPARENCY IN SALE-DAY STATISTICS.—

"(A) REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary shall publicly disclose statistical data regarding each lease sale under this subsection, on the day the sale is executed.

"(B) INCLUDED DATA.—Among data disclosed, the Secretary shall include—

"(i) the total value of high bids;

"(ii) the number of tracts offered;

"(iii) the number of acres offered;

"(iv) the number of tracts receiving bids;

"(v) the number of acres receiving bids;

"(vi) the total number of bids;

"(vii) the average number of bids per tract;

"(viii) the total number of bidders participating;

"(ix) bidding statistics by water depth;

"(x) the name of the entity that submitted each bid, the amount of the bid, and the tract for which the bid was submitted;

"(xi) of tracts receiving bids, the number of bids per tract by water depth;

"(xii) the tract receiving the greatest number of bids;

"(xiii) the tract receiving the highest bid; and

"(xiv) any other statistical data that may be disclosed in accordance with this Act.

"(C) DATA TRANSPARENCY.—The Secretary shall ensure all data regarding lease sales under this subsection is publicly available and easily accessible, free of charge, on the Internet, including for download and aggregation in machine-readable format."

(b) MODERNIZING LEASING THROUGH COLLABORATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Before conducting the first Internet-based lease sale under the amendment made by this section, the Secretary of the Interior shall issue a request for information from each company present for bidding at the ten most recent oil and gas lease sales conducted by the Secretary under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, in order to provide the bidding public sufficient opportunity to share innovative ideas, methods, and concerns regarding Internet-based leasing.

(2) INTEGRATION OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall review, evaluate, and integrate suggestions and concerns collected under paragraph (1) as the Secretary works to modernize the offshore leasing process through Internet-based leasing options.

(3) USER WORKSHOP.—The Secretary shall conduct not less than one user workshop with viable bidders prior to conducting an Internet-based lease sale to provide the bidding public with an opportunity to beta test any prototype of an Internet-based leasing platform.

(c) DEADLINE FOR GULF OF MEXICO LEASE SALE.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall conduct at least one Internet-based lease sale under the amendment made by subsection (a) for leaseable acreage in the Gulf of Mexico.

(d) EVALUATING INTERNET-BASED OFFSHORE LEASING.—Not later than 90 days after the third Internet-based lease sale conducted under the amendment made by subsection (a), the Secretary of the Interior shall analyze all such Internet-based lease sales and transmit to Congress a thorough analysis of the sales. The analysis shall include—

(1) estimates of increases or decreases in such lease sales, compared to sales conducted by non-Internet-based bidding, in—

(A) the number of bidders;

(B) the average amount of bids;

(C) the highest bid; and

(D) the lowest bid;

(2) an estimate of the total cost or savings to the Department of the Interior as a result of such sales, compared to sales conducted by non-Internet-based bidding;

(3) voluntary and anonymous feedback from persons participating in such sales, on the Internet-based leasing process and potential areas for improvement in such sales; and

(4) an evaluation of the demonstrated or expected effectiveness of different structures for lease sales that may provide an opportunity to better maximize bidder participation, ensure the highest return to the Federal taxpayers, minimize opportunities for fraud or collusion, and ensure the security and integrity of the leasing process.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BEYER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5577, introduced by Congressman GARRET GRAVES, will increase transparency and efficiency regarding the Federal Government's current process for conducting lease sales while also saving Federal tax dollars in the development of oil and gas on the Outer Continental Shelf.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), the author of the bill.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, my fourth grader's homework is online. We go up on a Web site and pull down homework. My ninth grader can check out books from the library and download it to his Kindle. Our 6-year-old takes my iPhone and sends text messages, unbeknownst to me, to her aunts and uncles. Everything is now evolving to online—everything is.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that there is this reputation that the Federal Government has that we are incredibly inefficient and behind the times, and unfortunately that reality is well earned. Everything is going online now. We can go on different Web sites and have things delivered to our homes the same day or the next day. We can order things online and go to stores and go pick them up. That is how the world is evolving, and what the online presence does is it provides for transparency.

Now, this bill addresses offshore lease sales. What are offshore lease sales? That is the second largest revenue

stream for the United States Treasury after taxes. It is a huge revenue stream. By some estimates, it has exceeded \$200 billion in revenues for the United States Treasury.

What this bill is designed to do is to bring us into the 21st century, to allow for potential bidders to go online to broaden access, to allow for the taxpayer's resource, the American public's resource, to have more bidders, to have more competition to ultimately make sure that the full value of that resource is realized by taxpayers.

I very much appreciate the gentleman from California (Mr. LOWENTHAL), my good friend, being our lead cosponsor on this bill, showing that this is a bipartisan bill, that we have strong support from very diverse ideologies across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to reiterate the fact that this simply puts it online. It simply allows for better access for information. This is an asset that belongs to the American public. It is worth billions and billions of dollars. It should have transparency in how the process takes place, in the amount that bidders put forth, the amount that bidders bid for different auctions or lease sales. I think it is very important.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I also want to make note of this. What this does, this whole transparency and openness and improved value and competition, it complements the public process because, Mr. Speaker, related to this last lease sale, lease sale 248, there were 18 opportunities for public participation, public comment, public meetings, 18 separate opportunities through the development of the lease sale, the development of the EIS, the development of the 5-year plan. So this complements all of that transparency and doesn't allow this to be done only by folks who can afford to go buy a plane ticket and go down into this facility, but that everyone can participate; and it allows for that public access to this last stage in the process that complements this very open and transparent process that takes place prior to.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to urge support for H.R. 5577. I think this is in the best interest of taxpayers. This is in the best interest of transparency and, certainly, the public.

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

H.R. 5577 is a bipartisan bill, introduced by two of my colleagues on the Committee on Natural Resources, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), and the gentleman from California (Mr. LOWENTHAL). It really would bring the offshore oil and gas leasing system into the 21st century.

Last month the Department of the Interior took one step in that direction by streaming the opening of leasing bids live on the Web. However, companies still submitted their bids by sticking them in an envelope and mailing them. This bill would direct Interior to start moving that process online and to provide much more transparency by

ensuring that the public has access to all the data from these sales in machine-readable and downloadable format.

H.R. 5577 will also ensure that people across the country can follow these sales in real time. I commend the sponsor of this bill for their efforts to improve government operations.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, once again, I urge passage of this measure.

I yield back the balance of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5577, 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.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 36 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the resignation of the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD), the whole number of the House is 432.

EXPRESSING THE CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE MARK TAKAI, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE STATE OF HAWAII

Ms. GABBARD. Madam Speaker, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 841

Resolved, That the House has heard with profound sorrow of the death of the Honorable Mark Takai, a Representative from the State of Hawaii.

Resolved, That the Clerk communicate these resolutions to the Senate and transmit a copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

Resolved, That when the House adjourns today, it adjourn as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.