

family, our staff, having a series of meetings with people who cared about the work. It was, for me, one of the most memorable experiences I have had as a Member of the House, both in terms of the delightful experience we had enjoying that wilderness area, but also being able to focus on things that were concrete, that would make a difference.

This is the remaining piece. In fact, it was 8 years ago in the first hours of the first Obama administration that the legislation that we worked on as part of the Wilderness Act was signed into law. And as has been referenced by our friend from California, we have been here before trying to complete this last piece.

The land exchange is necessary to be able to fully realize the benefits of the hard work of the stakeholders, to preserve the recreational benefits, to preserve the water, to be able to have a true win-win situation. All that remains is this little exchange.

I know my colleague is frustrated, as am I, that we have to be back here again with a piece of legislation. I am hopeful, as it was in the past, the House will approve, that our friends in the Senate will follow through, and that, somehow, this time it won't be a casualty in conference. It is important to be able to finish this land exchange to realize the potential of the hard work that people back in Oregon have done with us to be able to realize the benefit of this hard work.

I actually will just stop at this point. I look forward to hearing from my friend. I look forward to making sure we get this across the finish line so that this important, bipartisan piece of legislation is finally enacted into law and that we have the Forest Service follow through on the last elements of this critical land exchange.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I am now pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN), the author of this measure, whose dogged determination has brought us within reach of resolving this dispute.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker and Ranking Member TORRES, thank you for bringing this legislation to the floor once again.

I want to elaborate a little bit on what my friend and colleague from Portland talked about. It was more than just a camping trip. It was 3 nights with backpacks, 4 days, 41 miles, and 9,000 feet of gain and loss in elevation. We went all the way around Mt. Hood, which is an extraordinary piece of Oregon, and we had a wonderful time.

Along the way, we had our ornithologists there; we had geologists there; we had biologists; we had advocates for wilderness and advocates for recreation. We were met by, I think it was, the Mazamas with watermelons. One afternoon, they hiked them up I don't know how many thousand feet to share with us. It was really a kind of Oregon-

way experience, because we all care deeply about the watersheds, the jobs, the recreation, the beauty, the incredible piece of the world we live in around Mt. Hood.

It is my home area. I grew up around the Hood River. This land exchange has been a battle since the 1970s, in a sense, in that my community long ago said: We don't want a lot of development up in this Crystal Springs watershed and in this very pristine area around the Hood River upper valley. It really belongs around the corner of Mt. Hood, up in Government Camp where there already is development.

This fight has gone on for years; and all sides came together, as we did in our legislation, and said: We agree. And so we said: Fine, we will put that in the bill. They worked it out with the Forest Service and everybody else, and then we said: Okay. They have done the heavy lift for the last, I don't know, 30 years. Forest Service, you just make this transfer and do it in 16 months. That is what the law said.

We are nearly 8 years later and this is still languishing; and, unfortunately, we are back trying again, because we are never going to quit until we are done. We are getting much closer.

In fact, the law we passed back in 2009, Public Law 111-11, deals with this Public Lands Act. It said: "Deadline for completion of land exchange. It is the intent of the Congress that the land exchange under this subsection shall be completed not later than 16 months after the date of enactment of this Act."

Again, that was back in 2009. It is important to protect this watershed. It is important that where development occurs, it occurs in the right places. We have always felt that way in Oregon. And, indeed, facilitating this exchange resolves a decades-long controversy and puts development where it belongs, protects a special area in the upper Hood River Valley that needs protection, and finally brings certainty and resolution.

I hope you all will come out and see it, or you can come over to the Energy and Commerce Mt. Hood Room which soon will have a beautiful photograph there of Mt. Hood at Lost Lake, and I encourage you to come over. When you are tired of that, you can come over to the new Crater Lake room in the Energy and Commerce Committee suites as well. I have discovered being chairman of the full committee, you get to name rooms—at least briefly during your tenure—and show off some of the best aspects of your State.

With that, Mr. Speaker, thank you for bringing this to the floor. I look forward to House passage, Senate passage, and getting this puppy signed into law.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 699 clarifies the terms of the land exchange between the Forest Service and Mt. Hood Meadows, a privately held ski resort. The ex-

change was authorized by Congress in 2009, but due to lack of clarity, here we are 7 years later and the exchange still has not been executed.

Last year, the Forest Service and Mt. Hood Meadows engaged in mediation to resolve the issues that have held up the exchange. This bill is a result of that mediation, and its passage will ensure that, after 7 long years, the exchange will finally move forward.

I want to thank the sponsors, Representative WALDEN and Representative BLUMENAUER from Oregon, for their hard work and commitment to resolving this issue.

Last year, this bill passed the House and Senate as part of S. 2012. Given all the positive momentum this legislation has seen in recent years, I hope that we can get this bill across the finish line as soon as possible and finally complete the land exchange. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, we have no further speakers and yet another show of bipartisan comity.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for adoption 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 California (Mr. McCLINTOCK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 699.

The question was taken.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

□ 1700

COLTSVILLE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK DONATION SITE AMENDMENT

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 863) to facilitate the addition of park administration at the Coltsville National Historical Park, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 863

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

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT TO COLTSVILLE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK DONATION SITE.

Section 3032(b)(2)(B) of Public Law 113-291 (16 U.S.C. 410qqq) is amended by striking "East Armory" and inserting "Colt Armory Complex".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. McCLINTOCK) and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 863 was introduced by Representative JOHN LARSON of Connecticut. Originally, the National Park Service was required to acquire 10,000 square feet of space in East Armory of Coltsville. This measure would allow the National Park Service to acquire that space within any part of the Colt Armory Complex in Hartford, Connecticut.

Coltsville was the home of Samuel Colt's industrial enterprise, Colt's Manufacturing Company. In Hartford, Samuel Colt developed the use of the assembly line and highly mechanized techniques. Colt's Manufacturing Company not only transformed the firearms industry, but it was a major contributor to the industrial revolution by pioneering the use of interchangeable parts and precision manufacturing.

Colt's success brought him fame and wealth. He became one of the 10 wealthiest businessmen in the United States, a pillar of the Hartford community, and was given the honorary title of colonel by the Governor of Connecticut.

This small modification to current law would provide the Park Service flexibility in selecting a location for park administrative offices and visitor services at the Coltsville site. A nearly identical bill passed the House last Congress by voice vote.

I commend Representative LARSON for his work on this legislation. I urge passage of the bill.

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

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON), the bill's sponsor.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative TORRES, Representative MCCLINTOCK, Chairman BISHOP, and Ranking Member GRIJALVA for all of their hard work on this.

As the chairman indicated, this bill did pass on a voice vote last year. Unfortunately, our colleagues in the Senate did not take it up last year. This year they have, and I am glad that it is before us again. This is truly a collaborative effort.

Especially from a small State like Connecticut, I want to thank the larger States. We just heard two Members from Oregon talking about Mount Hood. In most of the national parks in the West, you could fit the entire State of Connecticut.

I especially thank the committee for understanding the historic significance of Coltsville itself, and also the work not only of Samuel Colt, who gets most of the credit for a gun that was aptly named the gun that won the West, but of who it actually was brought to market by, Elizabeth Colt.

Samuel Colt died in 1862 at the beginning of the Civil War. Of course, that gun and those weapons that they produced also played a critical role in the North's victory.

Elizabeth Colt, however, continued the company. While she could not vote, she was part of what back then would have been a top 10 manufacturing company in the entire Nation. They ended up being the first American manufacturer to establish a plant abroad because their production scheme was that great.

She also established the concept of firewalls, which was important to a then-budding insurance industry in the State of Connecticut.

She also came up with the concept of housing workers. A large number of immigrants who poured into the country, who were skilled workers from all around the globe, but mostly from Europe, who came to Hartford at that time, were able to settle in housing.

The Park Service has been magnificent in setting up and reviewing this. I thank James Woolsey, who is the park's superintendent, but also the people in the area: Larry Dooley of Colt Gateway; the Church of the Good Shepherd; the Sheldon Charter Oak neighborhood groups; and, of course, the current mayor, Mayor Bronin; and Governor Malloy. Three other mayors have come before Congress and before the committee to testify on this bill, its importance, its significance, and its heritage. We are extraordinarily proud of this.

I would be remiss if I didn't point out the extra effort that Chairman BISHOP put into this, especially his understanding in grappling with a very small State like Connecticut and what one would consider, by National Park Service standards, a very small piece of history with an enormous impact.

Henry Ford came there to take a look at the assembly line techniques that were developed there. Pratt and Whitney were both interns there, which led to, in my hometown of East Hartford, the most incredible aerospace engines, the arsenal for democracy in the State of Connecticut, a company that went on to produce 70 percent of all the engines utilized in the Second World War.

All this from Samuel Colt and, of course, Elizabeth Colt, who took over and became such an incredible philanthropist.

Hartford, at that time—because of all the manufacturing, including typewriters, bicycles, and even the automobile—got its start there. It also led this incredible sage from Missouri to locate there, write, and publish books, named Mark Twain.

So there is quite a story that comes, and it just demonstrates the value of manufacturing. We all know here and we talk frequently about value added, a four-to-one enterprise today.

Beyond that, everything else—the ideas that it spun, the innovation that it spun, and the creativity—is something that is very much worth celebrating and remembering. I thank the committee in general for all of their hard work. I am thrilled with this.

I know, having worked with Speaker RYAN on a number of important issues, that he would be happy to know that AmeriCorps is also involved in the area as well.

I thank the committee for sticking with this. It took over 14 years to get this passed. Now, with the passage of this legislation, it will officially open this spring.

I hope the committee will come out, and we will plan a great celebration and welcome you there as well.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, certainly none that could match the detailed knowledge and eloquence of the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON). I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Congress established the Coltsville National Historical Park at the end of 2014. The law that established the park also authorized the National Park Service to utilize a 10,000-square-foot building, known as the East Armory for the purpose of park administration.

However, during the planning phase for establishing this new park, local stakeholders and the Park Service have determined that the Colt Armory Complex is better suited for this purpose. This bill simply makes that change and authorizes use of the Colt Armory Complex.

I support this simple fix to the enabling legislation that responds to the on-the-ground dynamics of this particular park. I want to thank the majority and my colleagues on the Natural Resources Committee for expediting review of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) for his hard work on moving this bill forward. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 863.

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the measure and look forward to taking Representative LARSON up on his kind invitation for the great opening.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 863.

The question was taken.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

OPEN BOOK ON EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1033) to amend titles 5 and 28, United States Code, to require the maintenance of databases on, awards of fees and other expenses to prevailing parties in certain administrative proceedings and court cases to which the United States is a party, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1033

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 "Open Book on Equal Access to Justice Act".

SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE PROVISIONS.

(a) AGENCY PROCEEDINGS.—Section 504 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)(1), by striking "United States Code";

(2) by redesignating subsection (f) as subsection (h);

(3) by striking subsection (e); and

(4) by inserting after subsection (d) the following:

"(e) The Chairman of the Administrative Conference of the United States shall create and maintain online a searchable database containing the following information with respect to each award of fees and other expenses under this section:

"(1) The case name and number of the adversary adjudication, if available.

"(2) The name of the agency involved in the adversary adjudication.

"(3) A description of the claims in the adversary adjudication.

"(4) The name of each party to whom the award was made, as such party is identified in the order or other agency document making the award.

"(5) The amount of the award.

"(6) The basis for the finding that the position of the agency concerned was not substantially justified.

"(f) The online searchable database described in subsection (e) may not reveal any information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law or court order.

"(g) The head of each agency shall provide to the Chairman of the Administrative Conference of the United States, no later than 60 days following the Chairman's request, all information requested by the Chairman to comply with the requirements of subsections (e) and (f)."

(b) COURT CASES.—Section 2412(d) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(5) The Chairman of the Administrative Conference shall create and maintain online a searchable database containing the following information with respect to each award of fees and other expenses under this section:

"(A) The case name and number.

"(B) The name of the agency involved in the case.

"(C) The name of each party to whom the award was made, as such party is identified

in the order or other court document making the award.

"(D) A description of the claims in the case.

"(E) The amount of the award.

"(F) The basis for the finding that the position of the agency concerned was not substantially justified.

"(6) The online searchable database described in paragraph (5) may not reveal any information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law or court order.

"(7) The head of each agency (including the Attorney General of the United States) shall provide to the Chairman of the Administrative Conference of the United States, no later than 60 days following the Chairman's request, all information requested by the Chairman to comply with the requirements of paragraphs (5) and (6)."

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—Section 2412 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (d)(3), by striking "United States Code,"; and

(2) in subsection (e)—

(A) by striking "of section 2412 of title 28, United States Code," and inserting "of this section"; and

(B) by striking "of such title" and inserting "of this title".

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) shall first apply with respect to awards of fees and other expenses that are made on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) ONLINE DATABASES.—The online databases required by section 504(e) of title 5, United States Code, and section 2412(d)(5) of title 28, United States Code, shall be established as soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, but in no case later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 1033, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I begin by thanking Representative DOUG COLLINS of Georgia and the Constitution and Civil Justice Subcommittee Ranking Member STEVE COHEN of Tennessee for introducing this important government transparency legislation.

Every year, pursuant to the Equal Access to Justice Act, the Federal Government, through settlement or court order, pays millions of dollars in legal fees and costs to parties to lawsuits and administrative adjudications that involve the Federal Government.

However, despite the large amount of taxpayer dollars paid out each year,

the Federal Government no longer comprehensively keeps track of the amount of fees and other expenses awarded pursuant to the Equal Access to Justice Act, nor does the government compile and report on why these fees and expenses were paid and to whom these costs were awarded.

This is because, in 1995, Congress repealed the Department of Justice's reporting requirements and defunded the Administrative Conference of the United States, the agency charged with reporting this basic information.

The Administrative Conference was established in 2010, but the requirements to report on fee and cost payments have not been reenacted. Accordingly, there has been no official governmentwide accounting of this information since fiscal year 1994, over 20 years ago.

This lack of transparency is troubling, given that the Equal Access to Justice Act is considered by many to be the most important Federal fee-shifting statute. Fundamentally, the act recognizes that there is an enormous disparity of resources between the Federal Government and individuals and small businesses who seek to challenge Federal actions.

□ 1715

Congress enacted the Equal Access to Justice Act to provide individuals, small businesses, and small nonprofit groups with financial incentives to challenge the Federal Government or defend themselves from lawsuits brought by the Federal Government. As the Supreme Court has noted, the act was adopted with the specific purpose of eliminating for the average person the financial disincentive to challenge unreasonable governmental actions.

But how can we know if the act is working well toward this end if we have no data on awards? Without the data this bill requires the Administrative Conference to compile and report, we have nothing more than anecdotal evidence as to whether the act is providing some measure of relief to the financial disincentive to seeking judicial and administrative redress against the Federal Government.

The legislation we are considering today will end this lack of transparency and restore the reporting requirements that were repealed in 1995. I want to, once again, thank Representatives COLLINS and COHEN for introducing this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support its passage.

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

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

I rise in support of H.R. 1033, the Open Book on Equal Access to Justice Act.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by echoing the praise that the chairman offered to Mr. COLLINS and Mr. COHEN for their leadership on this important legislation which I support for several reasons.