

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

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on H.R. 1665, as amended, and 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. BARLETTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1665, as amended.

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. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

FEMA ACCOUNTABILITY, MODERNIZATION AND TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2017

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1679) to ensure that the Federal Emergency Management Agency's current efforts to modernize its grant management system includes applicant accessibility and transparency, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1679

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 “FEMA Accountability, Modernization and Transparency Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. REQUIREMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall ensure the ongoing modernization of the grant systems for the administration of assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) includes the following:

(1) An online interface, including online assistance, for applicants to complete application forms, submit materials, and access the status of applications.

(2) Mechanisms to eliminate duplication of benefits.

(3) If appropriate, enable the sharing of information among agencies and with State, local, and tribal governments, to eliminate the need to file multiple applications and speed disaster recovery.

(4) Any additional tools the Administrator determines will improve the implementation of this section.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—To the extent practicable, the Administrator shall deliver the system capabilities described in subsection (a) in increments or iterations as working components for applicant use.

SEC. 3. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

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GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on H.R. 1679.

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

There was no objection.

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

The purpose of H.R. 1679, the FEMA Accountability, Modernization and Transparency Act of 2017, is to enhance FEMA grant applicants' access to information.

I commend my colleague from Louisiana for working so hard for the people of his State to tackle the challenges those communities and individuals have been facing in the wake of last August's floods and other disasters.

On average, FEMA distributes almost \$6 billion a year in assistance to individuals, communities, and organizations impacted by disasters. That taxpayer money must be managed in an efficient and transparent way to prevent duplication and provide disaster survivors with needed access and visibility.

More efficient and transparent delivery of disaster assistance will help speed disaster recovery and reduce the administrative burden on applicants. This legislation requires the FEMA Administrator to include online access and information sharing as the agency modernizes its disaster grant delivery system.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 1679, the FEMA Accountability, Modernization and Transparency Act of 2017. Our State and local partners are the first responders to any emergency disaster or terrorist attack. They do an outstanding job, given their limited resources and irregular nature of the events to which they respond.

We need to make sure that our partners, States, local governments, first responders, and nonprofits have access to the latest equipment, technology, training, and other resources needed to address any gaps in preparedness and to ensure that they remain as responsive as possible in an emergency. To assist them in their efforts, the Department of Homeland Security provides several discrete types of preparedness

grants to help our partners meet the core capabilities needed to prepare our Nation for any hazard.

FEMA's 2016 National Preparedness Report found that much more work is needed in areas such as cybersecurity, economic recovery, housing, infrastructure systems, and supply chain integrity and security in order to meet our goal of being prepared and resilient.

Despite the valuable benefits these grants provide, President Trump proposed to cut funding for these grants in his so-called skinny budget. President Trump has proposed prioritizing a border wall over the lives and safety of our residents. I am pleased to note that this week Congress will be voting on an omnibus fiscal year 2017 appropriations bill that funds these programs at sufficient levels.

Since 2015, FEMA has been modernizing its management of these grant programs by making information technology platforms more user friendly. As FEMA continues to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its grants management, this bill will ensure that FEMA ensures that the system is more accessible and transparent to applicants.

The bill requires FEMA to include mechanisms to eliminate duplication of benefits and enable the sharing of information among agencies and with State, local, and tribal governments, where appropriate, while FEMA continues its modernization efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES).

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the subcommittee chairman and ranking member for their assistance, and I also want to thank our lead cosponsor, Mr. SIREs of New Jersey.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is an unfortunate situation, that Congress actually has to step in. I want to give you a little bit of background.

In August of last year, we had once again what was known as the fourth most costly flood disaster in U.S. history. We had areas of south Louisiana that actually experienced over 32 inches of rain within about a 36-hour period. By comparison, the average American, as I recall, receives somewhere between 26 and 28 inches of rain in a year, and we received that in approximately 36 hours—an extraordinary rainfall event.

As you can imagine, in a 1,000-year flood event, you had thousands and thousands of people that were flooded, people living well outside of the floodplain. So, yes, there were thousands of people that were seeking assistance, trying to do everything from buy clothes to buy food, essential needs.

We assisted thousands of constituents trying to get information and answers from FEMA, but the way that