

In tribute to Israel's 69th birthday, I rise today to honor the Jewish people and their long-standing struggle to build and expand their country.

Many of the Jews who lived in Israel in 1948 were survivors of the Second World War and the Holocaust, which pushed international opinion for the need for a homeland for the Jewish people where they could be free from persecution and free to build a better life.

Since that fateful day in Tel Aviv, Israel and its people have worked tirelessly to build a thriving democracy that is economically prosperous and at peace with neighboring nations.

Today, 69 years later, after many difficulties and hardships, a strong, resolute Israel has a population over 8 million.

The first nation to recognize Israel's independence, I am proud to say, was the United States, when Democratic President Harry Truman welcomed Israel into the community of nations just hours after its declaration.

The bonds between our two great nations, bound together by common interests and shared values, have only grown with time.

Through Democratic and Republican Administrations, we have continued to stand by our ally in the Middle East.

As most people know, I have been a long-time supporter of Israel and continue to advocate on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, I hope on this joyous celebration that we reflect on the need to redouble our efforts to bring peace to the region and continue to tangibly support our friend and ally in its request for peace.

#### HONORING PATSY CLINE

#### HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 3, 2017*

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, there are those whose lives shine so brightly and give us hope regardless of life circumstances and tragedies we may endure. Patsy Cline, who was also known as the First Lady of Country Music, was one of those inspiring and uplifting souls. She moved us all by her incredible voice and meaningful lyrics such as Crazy and Walking after Midnight that would continue to be cherished by generations to follow.

Patsy was a true treasure whose memory will forever be remembered by her fans and Tennesseans alike. Patsy Cline was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame, and was the first female soloist chosen for the honor. Her short yet remarkable music and television career paved a way for women to pursue their passion in the entertainment industry. The true strength she exemplified came from the genuine love in her heart to serve and entertain her family, friends, and fans. She lived a life worth living.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE EMERGENCY FINANCIAL MANAGER REFORM ACT OF 2017

#### HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 3, 2017*

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, the Emergency Financial Manager Reform Act of 2017

is intended to ensure that state-appointed emergency financial managers for municipalities in fiscal distress do not violate Constitutional protections, ensure public health and safety, and are accountable stewards of taxpayer funds. The bill responds to problems presented when unaccountable emergency financial managers usurp local elected officials and unilaterally make decisions that jeopardize public health and safety.

The bill accomplishes these objectives by authorizing the U.S. Attorney General to withhold ten percent of the funds that would otherwise be allocated to a state under the Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program (Byrne-JAG), which provides funding to states for law enforcement purposes, if the U.S. Attorney General determines that the state appointed an emergency financial manager who fails to meet any of the criteria as specified in the bill. These criteria, for example, include a requirement that the appropriate state official submit a certification to the U.S. Attorney General stating that the appointment of an emergency financial manager has neither the purpose nor the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race or color. Another condition specifies that the emergency financial manager receive prior approval from the governor of the state and the appropriate local elected officials before making decisions affecting public health or safety. A further condition protects the rights of employees under collective bargaining agreements from being impaired in violation of the U.S. Constitution.

#### SECTION-BY-SECTION EXPLANATION OF THE BILL

Section 1. Short Title. Section 1 sets forth the short title of the bill as the Emergency Financial Manager Reform Act of 2017.

Section 2. Findings. Section 2 of the bill sets forth a series of congressional findings explaining why this legislation is necessary.

Section 3. Safeguards Regarding State Appointment of an Emergency Financial Manager. Subsection (a) of section 3 authorizes the U.S. Attorney General to withhold ten percent of funds that would otherwise be allocated to a state under the Byrne-JAG grant program for the following fiscal year if the state has appointed an emergency financial manager and any of the following criteria are not met:

(1) The emergency financial manager is appointed and the chief legal officer or other appropriate state official has not prior thereto submitted a certification to the U.S. Attorney General that such appointment has neither the purpose nor the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race or color and the U.S. Attorney General has not interposed an objection within 60 days following the submission of such certification.

(2) The emergency financial manager is authorized to make decisions affecting public health or safety of the residents of a local government unit without receiving prior approval from the governor of the state and the appropriate local elected officials.

(3) The emergency financial manager fails to have adequate oversight to ensure against conflicts of interest, mismanagement, and abuse of discretion by the emergency financial manager. The bill, in section 4, defines adequate oversight to mean that a monthly, publically-available report accounting for all financial activities of the emergency financial manager, including possible conflicts of interest, mismanagement, and abuses of discretion. This report must be reviewed and approved by the governor. In addition, adequate oversight means that there must be an

independent, state-approved, and publically-available annual audit of the emergency financial manager's duty-related activities.

(4) The emergency financial manager is authorized to reject, modify, or terminate an existing collective bargaining agreement without mutual consent of all parties to such agreement.

(5) The emergency financial manager is authorized to reject, modify, or terminate an existing contract without mutual consent of all parties to such contract or such rejection, modification, or termination is approved by a federal bankruptcy court.

Subsection (b) provides that the amount of funding not allocated under subsection (a) is to be reallocated to other states that are not subject to any reduction under subsection (a).

Section 4. Definitions. Section 4 defines various terms used in the bill.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF MS. SPENCER'S 3RD GRADE CLASS

#### HON. DAVID A. TROTT

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 3, 2017*

Mr. TROTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the bright young artists in Ms. Spencer's 3rd grade class at Auburn Elementary in Auburn Hills, Michigan.

I know that artists get their start long before high school and college, learning to expand their imagination and foster their creativity in classrooms just like Ms. Spencer's.

In an effort to highlight young artists from across Michigan's 11th Congressional District, this year, I announced the 1st Annual "Color my Capitol" Program.

Brimming with talent, Ms. Spencer's students were eager to showcase their amazing artistic skills and take part in this one-of-a-kind program.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, Ms. Spencer's 3rd graders did not disappoint. Their creations are unique, innovative, and imaginative. Their colorful artwork embodies our country's bright and promising future with these sharp young minds leading the way.

It is my utmost honor to have their artwork displayed in my Congressional district office in Troy, Michigan for everyone who visits to enjoy. Each and every time I walk into my office, I am reminded of their talent.

Congratulations to Ms. Spencer and the young artists she has the pleasure of teaching.

#### IN TRIBUTE TO SHEILA DIANNE COCHRAN

#### HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 3, 2017*

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sheila Dianne Cochran, Milwaukee Area Labor Council, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer and Chief Operating Officer. She began service at the Council in March of 2009 and officially retired on March 31, 2017.

Ms. Cochran ran the largest Central Labor Council in Wisconsin. The Milwaukee Area Labor Council has about 110 affiliate Labor