

government-wide upgrade is only growing more important every day. That's because the people who need the most help are often on mobile devices. If you are young, if you have a lower income, or if you are a minority, you are much more likely to use a smartphone as your only entry point to the internet.

The gap is significant—people earning less than \$30,000 were 13 times more likely in 2015 to depend on a smartphone than people earning more than \$75,000. Yet websites that are intended to strengthen the social safety net like programs providing food assistance are nearly inaccessible on a phone.

A SMART GOVERNMENT BRINGS SERVICES TO PEOPLE WHEN THEY NEED THEM MOST—NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND

Last year we crossed a significant threshold—Americans are now more likely to access the internet on their mobile device than on their desktop computer. If people rely on mobile devices, our services should be designed for mobile devices, and that's why agencies with consumer-facing websites should be designed with an eye towards mobile first. These mobile sites can make it easier for people who may not have the time to wait in line at a government office.

In order to bring government up to speed, we have introduced the Connected Government Act, which ensures that all new federal agency websites are designed to work well on mobile devices. These federal sites would serve as an example to the states who need to do more to modernize their own technology. This simple change can have a big impact—from shorter lines and faster service, to providing more help to more people. Mobile friendly websites will ultimately help build a stronger democracy.

Today, our bill is expected to clear a crucial committee vote in the House. And our colleagues Senators Maggie Hassan (D-NH) and Cory Gardner (R-CO) recently introduced a companion bill in the Senate. With this progress, our path to a smarter government is within reach. Congress should act soon to get this bill passed.

In the wake of these recent disasters, we need to ensure that anyone looking for assistance from a federal agency can get the information they need through their mobile device. This is the least we can do to help alleviate some of the stress people feel in times of need.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the coleader on this bill, Congressman FRANK PALLONE, who has been a strong supporter every step of the way, from the bill's drafting through today's floor consideration. I also thank my good friend Congressman MARK MEADOWS, a cosponsor of the bill, and I thank Senator HASSAN, who introduced the Senate companion.

Mr. Speaker, this is a simple bill that will ensure all government websites are accessible to all Americans. It simply requires that any new or updated Federal websites be mobile friendly. It is 2017. We need Federal websites to work for all Americans.

In the past 90 days, there were 2.61 billion visits to Federal websites. Almost 40 percent of those came from mobile devices. That is over 1 billion hits from mobile devices like tablets and smartphones. But today, according to a report by the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, 40 percent of government websites don't work on smartphones or are mobile unfriendly.

Alarming, many of these sites are critical to serving the American people, like the application for Federal student aid and the launch point for bidding on Federal Government contracts. For millions of Americans without access to reliable broadband or without a desktop computer, smartphones are their doorway to the internet.

A recent Pew report found that younger Americans, low-income Americans, rural Americans, and people of color are more likely to rely only on smartphones to browse the web.

Today, 77 percent of Americans own and use smartphones to access the internet. For 10 percent of Americans, it is their primary access to the internet. That is 32 million Americans. It is unacceptable for 32 million Americans to have difficulty reaching their government simply because we couldn't keep up with technological trends.

Recently, Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria showed just how vital smartphones have become, especially during disasters. In the aftermath of these storms, millions of Americans relied on their smartphones to find assistance. Imagine the frustration of navigating SBA, FEMA, or HUD websites, looking for assistance on a 5-inch screen, and the site not working because it is only designed for desktop browsing.

In my time serving as the ranking member of the Information Technology Subcommittee, it has been clear that the Federal Government's IT systems are not working and have not kept up with even the most basic technology trends that are common in the private sector.

Americans deserve a modern American Government that is accessible and responsive to their needs. This bill takes us one step closer to realizing this goal.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense bill that the CBO has said will have no significant cost to taxpayers.

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

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her great work on this bill, I urge adoption of it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, this year's natural disasters have devastated millions of Americans across the country, leaving so many with little more than the smartphone in their pocket. But when these people look to the government for help, they find that too many of the governments' websites aren't made for the computers they have with them all the time—their phones. Our bill takes a big step forward in fixing that issue and helping these Americans get back on their feet. I want to thank Congresswoman KELLY for championing the Connected Government Act in the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. I urge my colleagues to support this common sense bill, and I hope we can secure passage in the Senate soon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JODY B. HICE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2331, 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. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. 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.

#### FEDERAL ACQUISITION SAVINGS ACT OF 2017

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3071) to require executive agencies to consider equipment rental in any cost-effectiveness analysis for equipment acquisition, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3071

*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 "Federal Acquisition Savings Act of 2017".

#### SEC. 2. COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS OF EQUIPMENT RENTAL.

(a) COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS OF EQUIPMENT RENTAL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—With respect to any cost-effectiveness analysis for equipment acquisition conducted on or after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the head of each executive agency shall consider equipment rental in such cost-effectiveness analysis.

(2) FEDERAL ACQUISITION REGULATION.—The Federal Acquisition Regulation shall be revised to implement the requirement under paragraph (1).

(b) STUDY OF COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a comprehensive report on the decisions made by the executive agencies with the highest levels of acquisition spending, and a sample of executive agencies with lower levels of acquisition spending, to acquire high-value equipment by lease, rental, or purchase pursuant to subpart 7.4 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) EQUIPMENT RENTAL.—The term "equipment rental" means the acquisition of equipment by contract from a commercial source for a temporary period of use with no fixed duration.

(2) EXECUTIVE AGENCY.—The term "executive agency" has the meaning given that term in section 102 of title 40, United States Code.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JODY B. HICE) and the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. 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 material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3071, introduced by my colleague from Georgia (Mr. CARTER), and which I have cosponsored.

The Federal Acquisition Savings Act of 2017 would require the government to consider renting equipment over buying or leasing that equipment. The Government Accountability Office reported that agencies annually spend an average of more than \$200 billion on purchasing or leasing equipment, with purchasing accounting for almost all of that spending.

The Federal Acquisition Savings Act of 2017 provides an opportunity to save money when obtaining equipment. The current rules encourage agencies to consider the most cost-effective way to obtain equipment, but only between purchasing or leasing. Renting is not an option.

H.R. 3071 requires agencies to consider renting equipment as a cost-saving measure over purchasing or leasing. The bill also directs that the Federal Acquisition Regulation be revised to implement this policy. Renting equipment can provide a more cost-effective and flexible alternative to buying or leasing.

When purchasing equipment, the purchaser makes a long-term investment and assumes the total cost of ownership for that equipment. However, some short-term needs can be met without assuming the cost of purchasing and maintaining equipment. Leasing or renting are options in such cases. Leasing should be considered, but, depending on an agency's needs, leasing may not be the best low-cost option. Typically, leases involve defined leasing periods and are specific to a single piece of equipment.

In addition, leasing may require a large upfront outlay of capital, and, under a lease, the government is generally responsible for the cost of maintenance, insurance, and storage of the equipment. Alternatively, rental for a temporary period with no fixed duration may fit the need and provide a more flexible option.

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Renting equipment may be cost-effective because rental agreements typically cover costs such as storage, maintenance, insurance, transport, and licensing.

Other State and local governments have used the equipment rental option with great success, but the Federal Government has not widely adopted this low-cost option. For example, the Texas Department of Transportation reported saving \$10.8 million due to a rental program. They reported renting more than 1,200 pieces of equipment at a cost of \$18.9 million and purchasing 931 assets costing more than \$40 million.

The Mississippi Department of Transportation commissioned a study on their equipment management processes and systems, and that study found that renting equipment, such as bulldozers and motor graders, to supplement their fleet was the most cost-effective option. In fact, that study found that Mississippi could realize over \$13,000 in annual cost savings and \$180,000 in lifecycle cost savings per bulldozer unit.

H.R. 3071 presents an opportunity to realize cost savings in obtaining equipment by directing agencies to consider the rental option.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Representative BUDDY CARTER for his leadership on this bill. I urge my colleagues to support it, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 3071, the Federal Acquisition Savings Act, as amended, would require Federal contracting officers to consider short-term rentals in addition to long-term leasing or purchasing when acquiring equipment agencies need. I would like to thank Chairman GOWDY and Representative CARTER for working with the minority in a bipartisan manner to address concerns that were raised about the bill as introduced.

The Federal Acquisition Regulation is currently unclear about whether short-term rentals are permitted. Rental equipment, as opposed to purchasing or leasing, can be a cost-effective option for Federal agencies in certain circumstances.

This bill would provide additional flexibility by allowing such rentals. It would also improve efficiency by requiring the cost-effectiveness of renting to be considered by Federal contracting officers. I support giving contracting officers additional tools to make the most cost-effective decisions.

The bill, as amended, also would require GAO to produce a report card on the use of renting or leasing by Federal agencies. The requirements for that report were very burdensome for GAO in the bill as introduced. I know we all value GAO's work and want to make the best use of its resources. I am glad that those reporting requirements have been streamlined.

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

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and privilege to yield such time as he may consume

to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER), the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my legislation, H.R. 3071, the Federal Acquisition Savings Act of 2017. This legislation seeks to modernize our government's outdated acquisition strategies, while simultaneously acting as good stewards of valuable taxpayer dollars.

My bill would simply require Federal agencies to consider renting as a cost-effective alternative in equipment acquisition, giving the government options that the private sector has undertaken and has seen success and cost savings with.

As previously reported by the Government Accountability Office, the GAO, the Federal Government spends more than \$200 billion, on average, either purchasing or leasing equipment. Of those acquisition decisions, purchasing of equipment accounts for more than 99 percent of that share.

Federal agencies are instructed to consider the cost-effectiveness of these strategies as they move through the process, but even that has been found to be lacking. The GAO has found that, in many instances, Federal agencies don't even bother to undertake these analyses. That means that the taxpayers are the ones who lose out as Federal agencies sidestep these responsibilities and undertake what is, many times, the easiest but most expensive route—purchasing.

This is an issue the committee and this body have been looking at for years. In 2012, the GAO issued a report finding that contracting officials from the Air Force and Department of the Interior did not perform the lease-versus-purchase analysis for many of the contracts awarded. In July of 2013, GSA issued an RFI seeking to determine if there is a distinction between leasing and renting of equipment. The overwhelming response to the RFI indicated that amending the Federal Acquisition Regulation, the FAR, to include renting would be pertinent. However, the GSI did not act on that recommendation.

These actions have resulted in this legislation and the good-faith effort to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and that the Federal requirements for Federal acquisition are followed.

Under subpart 7.4 of the FAR, agencies are directed to conduct a case-by-case evaluation of the cost between leasing and purchasing. As I mentioned earlier, many of those analyses aren't conducted.

Amending this part of FAR will open up new avenues and will allow them to pursue successes and cost savings being used in the private sector. For instance, the Texas Department of Transportation reported savings of \$10.8 million within the fleet operations division. These savings are realized when the additional costs of ownership are factored, including maintenance, transportation, and other areas.

In addition to this example, the Mississippi Department of Transportation commissioned a study finding that they could find significant cost savings per unit if they utilized renting equipment as an option. Rental agreements are often thought of as short-term transactions with no fixed duration. This gives the renter—in this case, the Federal agencies—more say in how the equipment is used and the duration of the need for that equipment. For instance, specialized equipment that is only needed several times a year or is needed in varying locations can be sourced via renting to reduce overhead costs.

As this body continues to pursue meaningful legislation to reduce the burden on our constituents and streamline the government, this is a great step forward. My bipartisan legislation will reduce waste in the Federal Government while giving them the opportunity to pursue new and innovative ways to source equipment.

Too often, we see areas of mismanagement within the Federal Government that can and should be addressed, and this is a chance to help correct the ship one step at a time.

This bipartisan legislation passed the Oversight and Government Reform Committee with overwhelming support, and I thank my colleagues on the committee and on this bill for their support and persistence in addressing shortfalls in the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in support of this legislation and help us ensure future acquisition decisions are done with the taxpayers in mind.

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

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for this bill, and I urge its adoption.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JODY B. HICE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3071, 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. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. 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.

#### PRESIDENTIAL ALLOWANCE MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3739) to amend the Act of August 25, 1958, commonly known as the "Former Presidents Act of 1958", with respect to the monetary allowance payable to a former Presi-

dent, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3739

*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 "Presidential Allowance Modernization Act of 2017".

#### SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS.

(a) FORMER PRESIDENTS.—The first section of the Act entitled "An Act to provide retirement, clerical assistants, and free mailing privileges to former Presidents of the United States, and for other purposes", approved August 25, 1958 (commonly known as the "Former Presidents Act of 1958") (3 U.S.C. 102 note), is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (f) and (g) as subsections (h) and (i), respectively;

(2) by striking the matter preceding subsection (e) and inserting the following:

“(a) ANNUITIES AND ALLOWANCES.—

“(1) ANNUITY.—Each former President shall be entitled to receive from the United States an annuity, subject to subsections (b) and (c)—

“(A) at the rate of \$200,000 per year; and

“(B) which shall commence on the day after the date on which an individual becomes a former President.

“(2) ALLOWANCE.—The General Services Administration is authorized to provide each former President a monetary allowance, subject to appropriations and subsections (b), (c), and (d), at the rate of—

“(A) \$500,000 per year for 5 years beginning on the day after the last day of the period described in the first sentence of section 5 of the Presidential Transition Act of 1963 (3 U.S.C. 102 note);

“(B) \$350,000 per year for the 5 years following the 5-year period under subparagraph (A); and

“(C) \$250,000 per year thereafter.

“(b) DURATION; FREQUENCY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The annuity and monetary allowance under subsection (a) shall—

“(A) terminate on the date that is 30 days after the date on which the former President dies; and

“(B) be payable by the Secretary of the Treasury on a monthly basis.

“(2) APPOINTIVE OR ELECTIVE POSITIONS.—The annuity and monetary allowance under subsection (a) shall not be payable for any period during which a former President holds an appointive or elective position in or under the Federal Government to which is attached a rate of pay other than a nominal rate.

“(c) COST-OF-LIVING INCREASES.—Effective December 1 of each year, each annuity and monetary allowance under subsection (a) that commenced before that date shall be increased by the same percentage by which benefit amounts under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) are increased, effective as of that date, as a result of a determination under section 215(i) of that Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)).

“(d) LIMITATION ON MONETARY ALLOWANCE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the monetary allowance payable under subsection (a)(2) to a former President for any 12-month period—

“(A) except as provided in subparagraph (B), may not exceed the amount by which—

“(i) the monetary allowance that (but for this subsection) would otherwise be so payable for the 12-month period, exceeds (if at all)

“(ii) the applicable reduction amount for the 12-month period; and

“(B) shall not be less than the amount determined under paragraph (4).

“(2) DEFINITION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the term ‘applicable reduction amount’ means, with respect to any former President and in connection with any 12-month period, the amount by which—

“(i) the earned income (as defined in section 32(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) of the former President for the most recent taxable year for which a tax return is available, exceeds (if at all)

“(ii) \$400,000, subject to subparagraph (C).

“(B) JOINT RETURNS.—In the case of a joint return, subparagraph (A)(i) shall be applied by taking into account both the amounts properly allocable to the former President and the amounts properly allocable to the spouse of the former President.

“(C) COST-OF-LIVING INCREASES.—The dollar amount specified in subparagraph (A)(ii) shall be adjusted at the same time that, and by the same percentage by which, the monetary allowance of the former President is increased under subsection (c) (disregarding this subsection).

“(3) DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENT.—

“(A) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph—

“(i) the terms ‘return’ and ‘return information’ have the meanings given those terms in section 6103(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; and

“(ii) the term ‘Secretary’ means the Secretary of the Treasury or the Secretary of the Treasury’s delegate.

“(B) REQUIREMENT.—A former President may not receive a monetary allowance under subsection (a)(2) unless the former President discloses to the Secretary, upon the request of the Secretary, any return or return information of the former President or spouse of the former President that the Secretary determines is necessary for purposes of calculating the applicable reduction amount under paragraph (2) of this subsection.

“(C) CONFIDENTIALITY.—Except as provided in section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary may not, with respect to a return or return information disclosed to the Secretary under subparagraph (B)—

“(i) disclose the return or return information to any entity or person; or

“(ii) use the return or return information for any purpose other than to calculate the applicable reduction amount under paragraph (2).

“(4) INCREASED COSTS DUE TO SECURITY NEEDS.—With respect to the monetary allowance that would be payable to a former President under subsection (a)(2) for any 12-month period but for the limitation under paragraph (1) of this subsection, the Administrator of General Services, in coordination with the Director of the United States Secret Service, shall determine the amount of the monetary allowance that is needed to pay the increased cost of doing business that is attributable to the security needs of the former President.”;

(3) by inserting after subsection (e) the following:

“(f) OFFICE STAFF.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of General Services shall, without regard to the civil service and classification laws, provide for each former President an office staff of not more than 13 individuals, at the request of the former President, on a reimbursable basis.

“(2) COMPENSATION.—The annual rate of compensation payable to any individual under paragraph (1) shall not exceed the highest annual rate of basic pay for positions at level II of the Executive Schedule under section 5313 of title 5, United States Code.