rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR USE OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO BRING COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION TO MORE K–12 CLASSROOMS

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 95) expressing support for the use of public-private partnerships to bring computer science education to more K–12 classrooms, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 95

Whereas 9 in 10 parents want their child to study computer science, but only 40 percent of schools teach computer programming;

Whereas low-income students and students from small towns and rural communities are less likely to attend a school that offers computer science programming;

Whereas computing makes up two-thirds of all projected new jobs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields;

Whereas there are over 500,000 open computing jobs nationwide and such job openings are projected to grow at twice the rate of all other jobs;

Whereas significant workforce shortages in computing fields, particularly in cybersecurity, can pose significant threats to our national security; and

Whereas computing occupations are among the highest paying jobs for new graduates: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress expresses support for the use of public-private partnerships to bring computer science education to more K–12 classrooms throughout the country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 95.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 95, expressing support for the use of public-private partnerships to bring computer science education to more K–12 classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, science, technology, engineering, and math education, known collectively as STEM education, all play a critical role in how we educate and prepare the next generation of America's workforce.

Many of our Nation's most successful business leaders and entrepreneurs place an emphasis on modern coding and computer skills. These skills are a result of a STEM education.

As an engineer who worked for many years in the private sector, I would like to emphasize the need for more of our students to be equipped with backgrounds in STEM.

The American economy and workforce have undergone a rapid transformation, thanks to the rise of technology, and its role in America's future is only going to increase.

As advancement continues, it is critical that the country's students are equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to compete at the global level. These skills can be gained through the expansion of K–12 STEM education.

America has long been a pioneer of innovation in medicine, energy, agriculture, and other new technologies. We take pride in our ability to cultivate, innovate, and change the world for the better as new trends in every corner of the economy require a workforce equipped to meet those demands. However, if we do not adequately prepare our future scientists, mathematicians, engineers, and computer scientists, other countries will outpace us. We cannot allow this.

Of all the projected new jobs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematic fields, computing is estimated to make up two-thirds of those positions. At the present, there are over 500,000 unfilled computing jobs nationwide, and those numbers are projected to grow at twice the rate of other jobs.

In my district in Kansas, we need students to learn STEM in order to fill new jobs in advanced manufacturing.

When Congress passed landmark legislation earlier this year to strengthen career and technical education, or CTE, it sent a clear message to students and employers that Members of the House of Representatives recognize the growing skills gap in this country, and we are committed to improving alignment with in-demand jobs so that the 6 million job openings nationwide may be filled with students equipped with the necessary tools to make our workforce even stronger.

Congress has once again had the opportunity to help close the skills gap by launching more American students into fulfilling STEM careers. These careers are not only in high demand, but they are also high skilled and among the highest paying jobs for new graduates.

Students who enter this field are not only helping to close the skills gap in our country, but they are setting themselves up for a lifetime of meaningful work and personal fulfillment. In fact, 9 in 10 parents want their children to study computer science, but less than half—only 40 percent—of schools teach the subject. Low-income students and students hailing from small towns and rural communities are especially at a disadvantage. Their schools are much less likely to offer computer science courses than schools in urban areas and those that serve middle class students.

A ZIP Code and economic data does not determine whether a child will need to excel in computer science, and it should not determine whether that child receives computer science education. We need coders and computer scientists from a wealth of backgrounds to build the most capable and robust workforce in the world.

Encouraging public-private partnerships to bring computer science education to more K–12 classrooms nationwide is a commonsense solution to develop STEM education around the country.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will support this resolution to encourage efforts to provide more students access to these important skills so that they are prepared to join our Nation's workforce.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in appreciation of the sentiment that is expressed in the resolution. However, I just feel that the content of this resolution, if it is examined closely, particularly in juxtaposition with the Every Student Succeeds Act, which was the K–12 reauthorization signed into law almost exactly 2 years ago on December 10, 2015, a bipartisanship measure—Congressman Kline, who was the Republican chairman of the House Education Committee, was at the White House with his counterparts from the Senate at the bill-signing ceremony—if people go back and read that, they will see that actually the road map and the pathway to achieve the goal of this resolution was actually laid out by folks from both sides of the aisle in terms of boosting authorized funding for K–12, particularly for low-income students, raising the authorizing for title I schools, which has been the workhorse of the Federal Government in terms of trying to help target resources for kids who come from distressed sectors and areas in terms of urban areas and rural areas, and also had many voluntary permissive authorizations for STEM.

Now, if anything, this resolution understates the scope of the demand that is out there for computer science and for STEM skills. There is not a sector in the American economy, from agriculture, where the gentleman comes from in Kansas, farmers are out there using STEM skills every single day in terms of food production. It exists in manufacturing.

I come from a district that is a shipbuilding district. We are in the process of boosting submarine production up in Groton, Connecticut. The metal trades workers are out there using computer

skills on the shop floors to make sure that that precision manufacturing happens accurately.

Certainly, financial services up in Hartford, Connecticut, the home of insurance companies like Travelers and The Hartford, they just started a couple years ago the Insurance and Finance Academy, which is a magnet school that brings in Travelers, Smith Barney, and The Hartford to collaborate with the public school system to make sure that kids, particularly low-income kids, from Hartford, Connecticut, are getting the opportunity to learn about things like finance, banking—giving them those skills—which are intrinsically connected to computer science.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that there is great appetite in the private sector for public-private partnerships. I would stipulate to that and again argue that, in fact, the resolution almost understates what is out there.

What is missing is the public investment, which ESSA authorized, whether it was title I, whether it is funding to boost teaching skills in the STEM area. We try to give permissive authority to school districts to find math teachers, science teachers, computer science teachers, engineering folks and their curriculum, which every school district is crying out for. There isn't a Member in this body who isn't hearing about that back home.

We want to solve that problem. A resolution like this is certainly not going to get in the way of that, but what we need to do is make sure we fund the authorizations that, on a bipartisanship basis, we passed in 2015.

Unfortunately, if you look at the budget that came over from the White House back in May, the White House proposed a 13.5 percent cut to the Department of Education, elimination of all Federal funding for K–12 teacher professional development, and after-school programs, which I was up at one of them, the 21st Century Learning After School Program in Norwich, Connecticut, a distressed municipality. They had kids, after school, working on their computer skills, their math skills, their science skills to give them the chance to keep up with their grade level and to be school ready when they go into high school.

□ 1700

Again, the big one was the cut to title 1, which, as I said, is the workhorse making sure that low-income kids actually have funding levels that at least come somewhat close to their counterparts in more wealthy parts of the country in wealthy school districts. So, again, this resolution is not certainly going to be a negative, but it certainly misses the opportunity that we really should be focused on as Members of Congress for bolstering the public side of the public-private partnership.

As I said, the private sector is speaking loud and clear that they are looking for these skills and actually stepping forward like companies like General Dynamics at the shipyard that I described in southeastern Connecticut or The Hartford and Travelers up in the capital city of the State of Connecticut.

What we need to be doing is match them in terms of our commitment to make sure we are funding magnet school programs, again, title 1 programs, that help the 90 percent of kids who are in public schools so that we actually are going to achieve the goal which this resolution sets forward.

So, again, I certainly commend the sentiment of the sponsors of this, but it leaves out, really, what I think is the real question of the day, which is whether or not we are going to step up as a nation and truly fund public-private partnerships to boost computer science skills.

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

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FLEISCHMANN).

Mr. FLEISCHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 95, and I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their advocacy in this regard. We need a strong public-private partnership to address computer science education in this country.

I want to talk about a school in my district, Howard High School. The great Reggie White went there. It is a school that I proudly adorned the hat when we played baseball. It is an inner city school. I went there this year, as I also did at Barger Elementary in Chattanooga—inner city schools.

The students have a great desire for computer science literacy. They actually taught me to code. I am basically computer science illiterate. I use pads and the like, and that is okay. But we know that the jobs of the future—no, the jobs of today—are not being filled due to a lack of skill. It is projected that, by 2020, we are going to have about 1 million unfilled jobs that require computer science education. We are filling about 10 percent—only 10 percent of them.

What does that mean? I am a champion of workforce development, and I know my colleagues on both sides of the aisle champion workforce development. What does that mean? That means that we will have jobs to fill that we can't fill. For national defense, we will need computer science literacy. This is something that we have got tremendous bipartisan support for.

I can say this: as a proud appropriator—to my friend from the other side of the aisle—as a proud appropriator and a member of the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee on Appropriations, I am committed to that funding. We actually have language this year in that bill.

So let us all come together, I would say in not only a bipartisan and nonpartisan way, to support computer science literacy. The private sector is there, the public sector will step up, and America's children in K–12 will be the beneficiaries. It will truly make America a greater and stronger place.

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

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TAYLOR).

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, in Thomas Friedman's latest book, he gives this anecdote that I believe helps to define the world that we live in today. He says that in 1999, the world's strongest supercomputer was the size of a tennis court, and the power to power that supercomputer could power the equivalent of 800 homes. Fast forward to 2005 or 2006, and that same computing power was found in the Sony PlayStation.

Think about that for a second. Each one of us has the same computing power of the world's strongest nation-state just 20 years ago. If we don't see how that affects business, national security, public policy, or education, then we are already behind.

Throughout its history, America has faced struggles that define a generation. Economic depressions, world wars, dying industries, and new technologies have changed the way that we view and respond to the new period. For this digital native generation growing up now, and for the foreseeable future, the first challenge for them will be education.

Now, education and lifelong learning are not only requirements in this changed world, they are the difference between failure or success, hopelessness or optimism, pessimism or ambition. Our children are and will grow up in a fast world, faster than ours, very different, and a blurring reality between the physical and virtual worlds. We need a revolution in the way that we educate our Nation.

By 2020, there will be 1 million more computing jobs than graduates. This gap represents $500 billion that our children will never see because they were never taught, and that gap is only growing, and it is growing larger. Right now, only one out of four schools in America teaches computer science. Low-income and rural students have even less access.

Now, you don't have to be able to view the future to see the writing on the wall. As the education gap widens, the American Dream shrinks. We as Members of Congress have a duty and responsibility to reject that path for our country and help and lead to chart a new course for our American future. Ninety percent of parents want computer science taught in their kids' schools. This resolution today calls for exactly that.

I am grateful for the support of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, Representatives LIPINSKI, FLEISCHMANN, and KILMER, as we stand together to help bring computer

science education to classrooms across America.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for and support this important measure, H. Con. Res. 95.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, this resolution is a sentiment that is hard to dispute or argue, but, unfortunately, it is just that, a resolution that really, beyond sort of expressing a goal, an aspirational goal, doesn't move the ball forward in terms of actually implementing what I think this resolution seeks to do, which is to make sure that school districts—every school district—particularly those with low-income kids from urban areas and rural parts of the country, have the resources which the Every Student Succeeds Act signed into law 2 years ago and laid a pathway out for us to achieve, but, unfortunately, because of the funding levels that have not come close to the authorized levels, we are falling short.

I couldn't agree more with the speakers, the proponents of this, that what is at stake here, really, I think, pervades almost every priority and every sector of our country's economy and our national policy.

In 1958, when the Russians fired Sputnik, then-President Dwight Eisenhower stepped forward and advocated the National Defense Education Act because he recognized that, from a national security standpoint, having a national policy to make sure that there are adequate resources out there for our Nation was really central to our national defense. That triggered, again, a revolution in American education, whether at the higher education level or even at the elementary level; and following that lead in 1965, we passed the ESEA Act, which funded, for the first time, title 1 that gave resources to low-income districts.

That commitment has deteriorated. It has deteriorated over the last 6 years with budgets that have underfunded this program. If you really took title 1 in terms of the full measure of eligibility for low-income students and school districts, we are funding it at about half of what the real need is out there for those types of school districts.

So, again, hopefully maybe this resolution will be an awakening for people in this Chamber, particularly as we are on the verge of taking up the 2018 budget, that funding education is as important to our economy and is as important to our national defense, frankly, as any other part of the Federal budget, because that gives us the tools to succeed as a nation, not just in 2018, but in many years forward.

So, again, I certainly am friends with some of the sponsors of this resolution. I salute the sentiment that was offered when this was introduced just a week or so ago, but, frankly, it falls short of the true commitment that we need to make as a Congress to fund and give the resources to make sure that this aspirational goal is achieved.

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

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remainder of my time.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Education and the Workforce Committee, we try to endeavor to look at how do we prepare students and young adults for their career and look at ways to prepare them not just from starting with an engineering degree or a technical degree at college, but actually making sure that in their K–12 education they are better prepared as well.

As an engineer, I saw this firsthand how my education through high school and into college helped prepare me for the career that I had in the private sector before I went into the public service role. We see this continuously with the importance of having a trained workforce ready to work in our industries.

In my district, Wichita is known as the Air Capital of the World, and the one thing that I hear over and over again from aerospace companies is there is a shortage of trained, skilled workforce ready to work.

STEM education plays such a critical role in terms of how we educate and prepare the next generation of America's workforce, and so we need to encourage public and private partnerships in order to increase computer science education in K–12 classrooms. It is just a commonsense solution to try to increase STEM education in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H. Con. Res. 95, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 95, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

KEEP AMERICA'S REFUGES OPERATIONAL ACT

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3979) to amend the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 to reauthorize the volunteer services, community partnership, and refuge education programs of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3979

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 ''Keep America's Refuges Operational Act''.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM VOLUNTEER SERVICES, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP, AND REFUGE EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

Section 7 of the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742f) is amended in subsection (g), by striking ''2011 through 2014'' and inserting ''2018 through 2022''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) and the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. HANABUSA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days 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 Virginia?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3979, the Keep America's Refuges Operational Act, reauthorizes the National Wildlife Refuge System volunteer, community partnership, and education programs for fiscal years 2018 through 2022.

I am proud to have joined with my good friend from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) to support conservation efforts at our Nation's wildlife refuges in a way that is also fiscally responsible.

Each year the refuge system's volunteer, community partnership, and education programs facilitate more than 1.4 million hours of service from more than 40,000 volunteers in support of our Nation's wildlife refuge system. The valuable contributions of these volunteers help maintain our Nation's 566 refuges, 14 of which I am proud to say are in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

These programs help ensure that Americans can visit, explore, fish, hunt, and study wildlife for generations to come. As a kid, I spent most of my time outdoors, and today, I still frequently visit the Rappahannock River Wildlife Refuge in my district. I have long appreciated the value of nature and wildlife in our society as well as the importance of environmental stewardship.

Volunteers perform a wide variety of tasks to assist with our refuge operations. Examples of these tasks include habitat improvement projects, laboratory research assistance, leading refuge tours, conducting fish and wildlife population surveys, and much more. All of these tasks help the Fish and Wildlife Service more efficiently fulfill its mission while also providing an opportunity for individuals and groups to contribute to the preservation and protection of our Nation's wildlife and public lands.

□ 1715

H.R. 3979 reauthorizes the cost-efficient resource that helps the U.S. Fish