

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 4¼ minutes remaining.

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

Mr. Speaker, our community financial institutions play a vital role in our local communities, particularly in rural areas like the Fifth District of Texas, our east Texas counties, and yet they are being crushed, crushed by the sheer weight, volume, complexity, and expense of regulation brought about by Dodd-Frank.

I hear so much from the ranking member about how much her side of the aisle cares about community banks, but their words are belied by their actions in supporting Dodd-Frank, supposedly meant for Wall Street, but it is hurting Main Street.

We have a bill before us today, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4771, that will give a little bit of ability for community banks to protect themselves from the onslaught of this regulatory burden. The whole idea, again, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that community banks can at least gather and merge amongst themselves so they are not gobbled up by the big banks that are vilified by the other side of the aisle in the first place.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is actually—you wouldn't know it from the ranking member—a bipartisan proposal, supported by almost half—half—of the Democrats on the Financial Services Committee. And again, there is great bipartisan work on our committee. Almost three-quarters of our bills are bipartisan; it is just few of them that are supported by our ranking member.

Let's do one small thing today. Let's have the House do one small thing today, Mr. Speaker, that will help them survive a day more so that they can lend money to a hardworking family to buy that first home, so that they can lend money to somebody to realize their American Dream of perhaps starting their own small business. After having to get that paycheck at the local factory for so many years, now they can finally go out and start their own small business. Maybe it is a matter of sending the first kid to college.

But all of this, all of this disappears. These hopes and dreams disappear with our community banks who are still failing, unfortunately, at the rate of one approximately every other day. This is unacceptable. This is totally unacceptable.

So we have one deregulatory measure here—one—to help our community banks survive. And we hear from so many of them, Mr. Speaker.

Here is one from Indiana that says:

Regulations have significantly reduced our ability to make judgment calls on credit decisions. When I first came to First Savings Bank, I had a number of people tell me that the First Savings Bank gave them their first loan, probably when they didn't deserve it. Today, they are business and civic leaders. And I guess we made the right call then. However, today we cannot make that call. Washington has made that call, and the answer is no.

One reason, one voice of one banker telling us why we need the bill from the gentlewoman from Utah.

Here is another from a banker in Texas, who said:

When I started banking, the community bank business model was built around bankers helping their communities to thrive. Today, customers are confused when they have to sign so many papers to open a deposit account or borrow money. I can only think of one explanation, and that is our government thinks our customers are too stupid to come into the bank and negotiate a private transaction with their banker, the community banker that they go to church with, the community banker whose kids go to school with the customers' kids, and the community banker whose wife is in the local charity with the wives of the banker's customers' wives.

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Here is another one from Nevada:

I have been a banker for over 30 years, and I have never been more discouraged than I am now. Good bankers are fleeing the industry. The days of making a commonsense decision for the benefit of a customer are gone. For me, retirement can't come soon enough.

I have got binders and binders full of these testimonies, Mr. Speaker. As the local community banks leave, so leave the credit opportunities of so many low-and moderate-income Americans. It has got to stop.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for the House to enact H.R. 4771. Let's stop the carnage, let's encourage community bank living, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 725, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HENSARLING. 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 question will be postponed.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 582. An act to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to require multi-line telephone systems to have a configuration that permits users to directly initiate a call to 9-1-1 without dialing any additional digit, code, prefix, or post-fix, and for other purposes.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

IMPROVING RURAL CALL QUALITY AND RELIABILITY ACT OF 2017

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 96) to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to ensure the integrity of voice communications and to prevent unjust or unreasonable discrimination among areas of the United States in the delivery of such communications.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 96

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 "Improving Rural Call Quality and Reliability Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. ENSURING THE INTEGRITY OF VOICE COMMUNICATIONS.

Part II of title II of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 251 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 262. ENSURING THE INTEGRITY OF VOICE COMMUNICATIONS.

"(a) REGISTRATION AND COMPLIANCE BY INTERMEDIATE PROVIDERS.—An intermediate provider that offers or holds itself out as offering the capability to transmit covered voice communications from one destination to another and that charges any rate to any other entity (including an affiliated entity) for the transmission shall—

"(1) register with the Commission; and

"(2) comply with the service quality standards for such transmission to be established by the Commission under subsection (c)(1)(B).

"(b) REQUIRED USE OF REGISTERED INTERMEDIATE PROVIDERS.—A covered provider may not use an intermediate provider to transmit covered voice communications unless such intermediate provider is registered under subsection (a)(1).

"(c) COMMISSION RULES.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—

"(A) REGISTRY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Commission shall promulgate rules to establish a registry to record registrations under subsection (a)(1).

"(B) SERVICE QUALITY STANDARDS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, the Commission shall promulgate rules to establish service quality standards for the transmission of covered voice communications by intermediate providers.

"(2) REQUIREMENTS.—In promulgating the rules required by paragraph (1), the Commission shall—

"(A) ensure the integrity of the transmission of covered voice communications to all customers in the United States; and

"(B) prevent unjust or unreasonable discrimination among areas of the United States in the delivery of covered voice communications.