

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (c) of section 117 of the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-199; 126 Stat. 1475) is repealed.

(2) RETROACTIVE EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall take effect on November 26, 2017.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BLUM) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in 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 Iowa?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4043, the Whistleblower Protection Extension Act, a bill I introduced with Ranking Member ELIJAH CUMMINGS.

The Whistleblower Protection Extension Act reauthorizes the whistleblower ombudsman program.

Whistleblowers are the front line of defense against waste, fraud, and abuse in the Federal Government, but too many Federal employees are unaware of the laws that protect them and the options available for dealing with retaliation and other actions intended to silence them.

To address this problem, Congress created the ombudsman program in 2012. The program directs agency inspectors general to designate an ombudsman for whistleblower protections at the agency. They provide information to employees on whistleblower protections and remedies in the event of retaliation.

This program was originally a component of the 2012 Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act and was set to expire after 5 years. Over the past 5 years, the ombudsman program has received high marks from the inspector general community. This benefits the country as a whole and makes the Federal Government more efficient. For that reason, it is imperative that we pass H.R. 4043 and make the ombudsman program permanent.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the need for this bill comes into recent focus just today with reports, maybe unconfirmed, that one of the Trump Cabinet members is engaged in a witch hunt against a whistleblower. We need this kind of protection.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4043, the Whistleblower Protection Extension Act.

Representative BLUM and Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member ELIJAH CUMMINGS introduced this bill to extend the pilot program that requires every inspector general's office to have a liaison dedicated to assisting whistleblowers.

Under this legislation, the whistleblower protection coordinator would help educate agency employees about whistleblower protection laws. This bill would help employees who want to blow the whistle know their rights, and it would put agency management on notice that it is against the law to retaliate against whistleblowers.

This bill would require whistleblower protection coordinators to provide whistleblowers who have suffered retaliation information about options available to them to have their allegations evaluated.

□ 1545

No matter how strong we make our whistleblower protection laws, they will not help if whistleblowers do not know how to exercise their rights under those laws.

I urge my colleagues to pass this bipartisan measure to strengthen whistleblower protections. I urge passage of this commonsense bill, this good government bill coming out of our committee. I thank my friend from Iowa for collaborating with the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) on this commonsense piece of legislation, and I urge its adoption.

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

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BLUM) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4043, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ELIMINATING GOVERNMENT-FUNDED OIL-PAINTING ACT

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 188) to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the costs of painting portraits of officers and employees of the Federal Government, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 188

*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 "Eliminating Government-funded Oil-painting Act" or the "EGO Act".

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS FOR PORTRAITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 13 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“§ 1355. Prohibition on use of funds for portraits

“(a) No funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the Federal Government may be used to pay for the painting of a portrait of an officer or employee of the Federal Government, including the President, the Vice President, a Member of Congress, the head of an executive agency, or the head of an office of the legislative branch.

“(b) In this section—

“(1) the term ‘executive agency’ has the meaning given the term in section 133 of title 41; and

“(2) the term ‘Member of Congress’ includes a Delegate or Resident Commissioner to Congress.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for subchapter III of chapter 13 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding after the item relating to section 1354 the following new item:

“1355. Prohibition on use of funds for portraits.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BLUM) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the bill under consideration, including an exchange of letters on the House companion bill, H.R. 1701, between the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Committee on House Administration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 188, the Eliminating Government-Funded Oil-Painting Act, a bill introduced by Senator BILL CASSIDY. In years past, the Federal Government spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on portraits of government officials. Taxpayer funds should be invested in programs that benefit taxpayers and our country, not oil paintings of Cabinet members to boost their egos.

That is why today we consider S. 188, the Eliminating Government-Funded Oil-Painting Act, otherwise known as the “EGO Act.” The EGO Act makes clear, once and for all, that government agencies cannot spend taxpayer dollars on oil paintings.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense, bipartisan legislation.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,

Washington, DC, December 6, 2017.

Hon. GREGG HARPER, Chairman, Committee on House Administration, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: On September 13, 2017, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform ordered reported H.R. 1701,

the “Eliminating Government-funded Oil-painting Act” with an amendment, by voice vote. The bill was referred primarily to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, with an additional referral to the Committee on House Administration.

I ask that you allow the Committee on House Administration to be discharged from further consideration of the bill so that it may be scheduled by the Majority Leader. This discharge in no way affects your jurisdiction over the subject matter of the bill, and it will not serve as precedent for future referrals. In addition, should a conference on the bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on House Administration represented on the conference committee. Finally, I would be pleased to include this letter and any response in the bill report filed by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, as well as in the Congressional Record during floor consideration, to memorialize our understanding.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

TREY GOWDY.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,  
Washington, DC, December 6, 2017.

Hon. TREY GOWDY,  
Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 1701. As you know, the bill was received in the House of Representatives on March 23, 2017, and referred primarily to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and in addition to the Committee on the Committee on House Administration. The bill seeks to restrict funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the Federal Government from being used to pay for the painting of a portrait of an officer or employee of the Federal Government, including the President, the Vice President, a Member of Congress, the head of an executive agency, or the head of an office of the legislative branch. On September 13, 2017, your Committee ordered H.R. 1701 to be reported with an amendment by voice vote.

I realize that discharging the Committee on House Administration from further consideration of H.R. 1701 will serve in the best interest of the House of Representatives and agree to do so. It is the understanding of the Committee on House Administration that forgoing action on H.R. 1701 will not prejudice the Committee with respect to appointment of conferees or any future jurisdictional claim. I request that your letter and this response be included in the bill report filed by your Committee, as well as in the Congressional Record.

Sincerely,

GREGG HARPER,  
Chairman.

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

This is a sad day in the swamp, to eliminate oil paintings of men and women who consider themselves very important, to make sure that taxpayer funds are never used for such a thing; sad day for the swamp in Washington.

One can come to the Capitol and look at oil paintings that bestride every corridor and wall, in hearing rooms here in the Capitol, and not know most of these people. We haven't got a clue who most of them are. We recognize John Adams, but when we go to committee hearing rooms, one or two chairmen past, we often don't know who they are.

I guess it was an attempt to achieve immortality, but it really is an act of ego that is a little embarrassing, even for Washington, D.C.

This is an important bill, a common-sense bill, that brings us all back to Earth; that none of us is expendable and that, frankly, we make our contribution and we move on.

This bill strikes at the uncontrolled egos and, I hope, sends a message to those narcissists among us that they can stay that way if they wish, but the taxpayer is not going to pay for their oil painting.

I thank my friend from Iowa for bringing up the bill. I support the bill, and urge its passage.

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

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make the gentleman from Virginia aware that I have no further speakers and I am prepared to close. I enjoy my colleague from Virginia's rather dry sense of wit and humor.

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

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Iowa, with whom I share a dry sense of humor. I will remind him, being Irish, that leprechauns are always on the shoulder, especially this time of year.

Mr. Speaker, I like this bill. I think most taxpayers are going to like this bill. I think it is high time we acted on this kind of improvement and injected a sense of humility and humanity into our enterprise here in the United States Capitol. I urge passage of this bill.

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

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 188, the Eliminating Government-funded Oil-painting Act, an acronym for the EGO Act.

S. 188 is the Senate companion to H.R. 1401, legislation that I introduced along with Representatives JIM BRIDENSTINE, CHERI BUSTOS, WALTER JONES, LEONARD LANCE, DAVID MCKINLEY, PETE OLSON, and TOM RICE.

My friend and former House colleague, Senator BILL CASSIDY, is the lead sponsor of S. 188 which passed the Senate unanimously on September 18, 2017.

The EGO Act would prohibit Federal funds from being used to pay for the costs of painting portraits of officers and employees of the Federal Government. Federal agencies have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on portraits that are displayed within agency buildings, often in secure locations that are not open to the public. Although this money is only a fraction of a percentage of the federal budget, it represents a failure to exercise fiscal restraint. Every dollar the government spends on vanity projects for federal officials is a dollar that is not spent improving the lives of everyday Americans.

Congress has the responsibility to ensure that taxpayer dollars are being used efficiently and effectively. For these reasons, I am proud to sponsor the EGO Act, and urge the House

to pass S. 188, sending it to the President's desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BLUM) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 188, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: “An Act to amend title 31, United States Code, to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the costs of painting portraits of officers and employees of the Federal Government, and for other purposes.”

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

The motion to recommit on H.R. 4607; and

Passage of H.R. 4607, if ordered.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The second electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

COMPREHENSIVE REGULATORY REVIEW ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to recommit on the bill (H.R. 4607) to amend the Economic Growth and Regulatory Paperwork Reduction Act of 1996 to ensure that Federal financial regulators perform a comprehensive review of regulations to identify outdated or otherwise unnecessary regulatory requirements imposed on covered persons, and for other purposes, offered by the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK), on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk will redesignate the motion.

The Clerk redesignated the motion. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 182, nays 228, not voting 20, as follows:

[Roll No. 94]

YEAS—182

Adams	Brady (PA)	Clark (MA)
Aguilar	Brown (MD)	Clarke (NY)
Barragán	Brownley (CA)	Clay
Bass	Bustos	Clyburn
Beatty	Butterfield	Cohen
Bera	Capuano	Connolly
Beyer	Carbajal	Cooper
Bishop (GA)	Cárdenas	Correa
Blum	Carson (IN)	Costa
Blumenauer	Cartwright	Courtney
Blunt Rochester	Castor (FL)	Crist
Bonamici	Castro (TX)	Crowley
Boyle, Brendan	Chu, Judy	Cuellar
F.	Ciçilline	Davis (CA)