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## House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PALAZZO).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
July 24, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVEN M. PALAZZO to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 8, 2018, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

### NEW LEADERSHIP IS NEEDED IN CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it seems every morning we are greeted by another outrage from the Trump administration. Today, we find that the Department of the Interior deliberately manipulated the information surrounding the decision to amend the boundaries of national monuments. They withheld information about the

benefits of the monument designation, benefits for Native Americans, for wildlife, for the local economy, and for the environment.

The only way we found out about this manipulation is because they inadvertently disclosed the entire memorandum, exposed for everybody to see how they blatantly manipulated the process. But this is just another example.

This last week, we have seen attacks on our long-time friends and allies in Europe, undermining the NATO alliance, questioning the integrity of our American intelligence service, and assaulting American business and consumers with this ill-advised trade war and the tariffs, which are just taxes on American families. This is, in part, due to the fact that we are not getting any pushback on these outrages from most Republicans in Congress, not standing up to Trump for America and for our values.

It appears that most of my Republican friends are held hostage to the most extreme elements in their districts. They are given enhanced influence because of the practice of partisan gerrymandering, drawing boundaries to enhance the power of the Republican majority, so you only have to worry about voters in the primary.

I have long supported independent commissions to draw these boundaries, have proposed legislation federally. Although there appears to be little appetite in Congress, luckily, people out in the States are taking matters into their own hands. We are watching citizen initiatives in Michigan, in Utah, and in Colorado. Voters, this year, will have a chance to vote on fair and honest redistricting if the U.S. Chamber and the Republican Party are not able to block it from being voted on, as they are trying to do in Michigan.

When voters, again, pick the politicians instead of politicians picking the voters, it is much more likely that

Congress will do its job. Mr. Speaker, until we get fair districts, we will have to rely on renewed, energized voter engagement to elect a Congress that will do its job.

The good news is that the evidence all across America is that people are responding to a new generation of political leadership. They are getting involved in unprecedented numbers—more voters, more activism. They are going to elect, as leaders, new Members who will provide the accountability to hold in check this reckless administration.

It is too bad it looks like we will have to wait for the election for the next Congress to do its job.

### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE TO HOST INNOVATION FORUM AND SHOWCASE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the House Education and the Workforce Committee will host innovators from across the country for the bipartisan Innovation Forum and Showcase. The Innovation Forum will begin at 10 a.m. in room 2175 of the Rayburn House Office Building. Five panels of innovators will speak and answer questions from committee members about their work. From 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., members of the public are invited to tour the Innovation Showcase in the Rayburn foyer, where the innovators will be available to share information about their work.

As a senior member of the committee, I am so proud of the bipartisan Innovation Forum and Showcase. This event will certainly highlight hard-working American innovators from all walks of life. Tomorrow, there will be 24 innovators who have traveled to

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Washington to discuss how they run career and technical education and workforce development programs in their communities.

I am incredibly honored to have Joe Luther, from the Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology located in Pleasant Gap, Centre County, Pennsylvania, be there. Mr. Luther is the horticulture and landscaping instructor at CPI. He is well loved by his students and has received numerous accolades for his performance in the classroom.

In 2014, Mr. Luther was named the ACTE New Career and Technical Education Teacher of the Year for Pennsylvania. In December, he was awarded the National Career and Technical Education Teacher of the Year from NOCTI, which is presented annually to recognize career and technical education teachers for their outstanding service.

I visited Mr. Luther in his classroom at CPI and out in the community, where his students routinely work on projects or participate in competitions. In January, Mr. Luther's landscaping students secured their fourth consecutive first place win at the Pennsylvania Farm Show as a part of the agricultural education landscape exhibits.

Mr. Speaker, the Pennsylvania Farm Show is the Nation's largest indoor agriculture event, and the CPI students beat a total of seven other schools to take the top prize for their exhibit. I know these students are talented, and it is their teacher, Mr. Luther, who truly inspires them to reach great heights. Through his hands-on instruction, Mr. Luther affords students in his classroom the ability to design, build, and maintain their landscaping projects. He lets them interact with customers and discuss real transactions. He brings real-life scenarios into the classroom at every opportunity to show students what their futures can be like in the workforce.

I look forward to having Mr. Luther here in Washington for tomorrow's Innovation Forum and Showcase. I know that, because of dedicated teachers like him, scores of students will be set on a path to success in life through career and technical education programs.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to all the innovators who will participate tomorrow to share with Congress and the public how they are addressing the Nation's education and workforce development challenges. As co-chair of the bipartisan House Career and Technical Education Caucus and a consistent advocate for high-quality career and technical education, I know these programs not only shape the future of our Nation's youth, but will be the foundation for a new era of economic growth in the United States. And the future looks bright.

Mr. Speaker, on a related note, I was thankful to the Senate last evening, which passed my legislation which already passed out of this body almost a year ago, H.R. 2353, the Strengthening

Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. I look forward to ironing out just a few minor differences, some good refinements that the Senate made, and we will see about getting that to the President's desk, quite frankly, providing greater access to more effective, skills-based education for all Americans seeking the American Dream of opportunity.

#### WORKFORCE CHALLENGES ON GUAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Guam Temporary Workforce Act. A near 100 percent denial of temporary H-2B petitions on Guam has hindered our island's ability to grow the economy and provide affordable and timely services for our civilian population.

While our community fully supports providing job opportunities and career advancement for those already living on Guam, we do not have the population or the organic workforce to fill the labor demands of our island. Local companies have tried to recruit from other territories and mainland United States, all to no avail.

I am pleased that we made some progress in alleviating these workforce challenges in the defense bill that we are considering this week, but, Mr. Speaker, we need to do more. The Guam Temporary Workforce Act would make sure that local labor needs are met by giving the Governor of Guam more input in temporary labor need determinations. Specifically, it would allow him to certify the temporary needs of Guam's civilian labor market while safeguarding the local economy from overreliance on temporary workers.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass this very, very important measure and to support our island economy.

#### TRILATERAL ALLIANCE OF GEORGIA, UKRAINE, AND MOLDOVA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, our friends in Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia are facing major threats to their sovereignty from the Russian bear. These young democracies are striving to build peaceful, civil societies and effective governing institutions after decades of Soviet tyranny. Yet Vladimir Putin, the Napoleon of Siberia, refuses to accept their independence and sovereign rights as free nations.

For years, Russian troops have occupied each of these nations and incited violence within the borders. Moscow has used corruption and coercion to undermine the rule of law in democratic institutions of each of these nations. Putin continues to use cyber warfare against each of these nations.

We, as leaders of the free world and guarantors of the international, rules-based order, have a duty to stand by these sovereign states. In some cases, Mr. Speaker, we have signed pledges to do so.

Their struggle for freedom is not some distant battle that does not concern our well-being. Their fight for self-determination is a battle for the global order and the survival of democracy in the face of foreign tyranny, specifically Putin's tyranny.

Nations and the people they represent have the sole right to determine their own fates. Foreign bullies like Putin should not threaten or dictate their way of life or the futures of those children.

If we allow Russia to so blatantly break international law, particularly the fundamentals of sovereignty and territorial integrity, where will it end? When will the Russian bear march in the streets of some other friend, a NATO ally, perhaps?

We must recognize their courage in the face of such a daunting challenge and send a message to the Kremlin that we stand with our Eastern European friends on their quest to be a free nation and more integrated into the West. That is why I have introduced H. Res. 955, to affirm U.S. support to the nations of Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova in their effort to retain political sovereignty and territorial integrity.

I am joined in sponsoring this important bipartisan resolution by Georgia Caucus co-chair, Representative CONNOLLY from Virginia; as well as the co-chairs of the Moldova Caucus, Representative OLSON from Texas and Representative PRICE from North Carolina; and the co-chairs of the congressional Ukrainian Caucus, Representatives KAPTUR of Ohio, HARRIS of Maryland, FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania, and LEVIN of Michigan.

Our resolution reaffirms the commitment of the United States to support the democratically elected governments of these three nations. It condemns Russia's violation of the Budapest Memorandum, a commitment it made in 1994 to ensure the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Putin has lied. He lied in his commitment. Our legislation calls for the immediate and complete withdrawal of all Russian military and security personnel and equipment from the nations of Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova. It calls for Moscow to end its destabilizing activities in all regions of these three countries. It commends the ongoing trilateral cooperation between the Governments of Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova to confront Russia's destabilizing activity, and it voices our support for U.S. assistance to these three nations, assistance that strengthens their capacity to resist Russia's aggression.

□ 1015

The resolution calls on all free nations of Europe, the United Nations,

and international partners to continue to apply pressure on the totalitarian state of Russia to uphold its obligations, and it reaffirms U.S. support for these three nations integrating into the European Union.

This implies that Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova must also meet their obligations under EU association agreements to commit first and foremost to meaningful progress on economic reforms, strengthening democratic institutions, combating corruption, building independent judicial systems, and holding to the rule of law.

This resolution marks our shared commitment to democracy in these great countries to be united to stand against Putin's aggression.

Freedom-loving countries must stop the Russian bear and Putin's desire to be czar of a new Putinland. As John F. Kennedy said many years ago: "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty."

And that is just the way it is.

#### UNDERMINING INSURANCE IN THE MARKETPLACE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GALLEG0) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GALLEG0. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about a brave young woman, an Arizonan named Vanessa Ramirez.

When she was just 23 years old, Vanessa received a devastating diagnosis. Doctors told her that she had ovarian cancer, yet Vanessa refused to put her dreams on hold. She somehow managed to fit in chemotherapy sessions between her classes at Arizona State.

Eventually, Vanessa pulled through. She beat cancer, and, today, she has two happy, healthy kids.

Vanessa has overcome a lot in her young life, but thanks to the Affordable Care Act, there is one challenge she won't be forced to endure: going without health insurance.

Despite her preexisting condition, Vanessa was able to purchase an affordable plan through the ObamaCare marketplace. Her children are also covered under KidsCare, our State's Children's Health Insurance Program. However, if Donald Trump gets his way, Vanessa's story soon could take a sad turn.

Having abolished the individual mandate, Republican State attorneys general, backed by President Trump, are now arguing in court that rules prohibiting insurers from charging higher rates on the basis of a preexisting condition or even denying coverage completely should be ruled unconstitutional.

The mandate is so central to ObamaCare, Republicans claim that, without it, the courts should simply throw out the whole Affordable Care

Act altogether. Their arguments are clearly baseless. But if Republicans succeed, millions of Americans like Vanessa could quickly lose their coverage.

Of course, that is not all the Trump administration is doing to undermine the Affordable Care Act. President Trump blocked cost-sharing reduction payments to insurers, sending shock waves of uncertainty through insurance markets across the Nation and raising costs for consumers in premiums. Trump also cut open-enrollment periods and slashed funding to help Americans sign up for insurance.

Trump and the GOP don't care about the people they are hurting. His only objective is to erase the legacy of his predecessor.

Mr. Speaker, no issue crystallizes the differences between our two political parties like this one. Democrats don't think your insurance company should be allowed to drop you because you get sick. Democrats don't believe you should go bankrupt and lose your home simply because you get in an accident. Democrats are committed to the belief that healthcare is a right, not a privilege, for every single American.

On the other hand, Republicans want to turn back the clock to a time when a minor diagnosis could lead to the loss of coverage, when young people were kicked off their parents' plan as soon as they turned 18, when simply being a woman somehow qualified as a pre-existing condition. That is not right.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans couldn't repeal the Affordable Care Act in Congress. Now they are just trying to sabotage it from the White House, and millions of Americans, like Vanessa Ramirez, could lose access to lifesaving care as a result. We can't allow that to happen.

#### HONORING DAVID ALEXANDER HOGUE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and privilege to recognize a true American, David Alexander Hogue. David is the son of Grady and Dovie Hogue, born in 1946 in Blacksburg, South Carolina. He attended Blacksburg public schools and was elected president of his high school senior class.

He then enrolled at the University of South Carolina School of Pharmacy, where he graduated in 1970. After working in a drugstore in York, South Carolina, and Cherokee drug store in Gaffney, South Carolina, he returned to Blacksburg, where he became the owner of Iron City Pharmacy, which was a 75-year-old business.

Among his many accomplishments, he formed the Iron City Band where he played piano and toured the entire Southeast with his band. As a member of the Blacksburg First Baptist

Church, he was a member of the choir; he was a deacon; he was a trustee; and he was chairman of his Sunday school class.

In 1989, David entered the political arena, where he was elected to the Blacksburg City Council, where he was appointed mayor pro tempore. He was then appointed mayor by then-Governor Carroll Campbell after his predecessor was removed from office, and he won a special election for mayor in June of 1990, where he has served honorably for the last 28 years.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize, in the 115th session of Congress, a true American, David Alexander Hogue.

#### RESHAPE TRADE DEALS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, on the important economic challenge of renegotiating NAFTA, once again, the Trump administration is leading us down a chaotic and unstable path. Our Nation must fix bad trade deals to create good jobs and stop the wage race to the bottom.

President Trump is taking a "shoot first, ask questions later" approach. It reminds me of his recent backward walk of words diminishing our NATO allies and his brash capitulating performance in Helsinki.

Closer to home, our continent has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape our trade deals that have resulted in lowered wages for the American people. Starting with NAFTA, we must re-create agreements that raise wages and lift up workers in our Nation and across the world.

Current trade deals exact huge profits for transnational companies that outsource jobs but continue the race to the bottom on wages for workers. So far, Trump's unsteady actions on trade just create more chaos, with businesses putting hiring plans on hold or scaling back whole projects because of their confusion about tariffs. Is his trade rhetoric producing a good outcome for the American people or is it just continuing the red ink of worse trade deficits, suppressed wages, and rising costs for consumers?

According to the PayScale Index, the paychecks of working Americans have fallen 1.4 percent just since 2017 when you adjust for the rising costs of essentials like healthcare, prescription drugs, gas, and groceries. In fact, wages have fallen, actually, 9.3 percent since 2006, as costs go up and up and up but wages stay flat or go down for so many families.

This is not what the American people were promised. They were promised bigger paychecks, more reshoring of jobs—remember Carrier in Indiana—better trade deals, and a President who was on their side. So far, we have just unfulfilled promises and confusion.

NAFTA negotiations press on, but there is concern President Trump will

go the way of his recent NATO meeting. Reports from his trade ambassador seem encouraging, but will this administration follow through on its promises to turn NAFTA into a job-insourcing deal? If his promise to fix healthcare or promises that the GOP tax giveaway to the top 1 percent would raise wages is any indication, then count me as a sceptic.

Since NAFTA's passage in 1993, there has not been a single year in which our Nation has achieved a trade balance with Mexico or Canada. These massive billion-dollar trade deficits power the harmful push of living-wage jobs beyond our borders and reduction in our wages. This low wage race to the bottom pits our workers against those making poverty-level wages in other nations.

Talk is cheap, Mr. President. In Ohio, people judge people by their actions. Words aren't enough to help working families. Our workers and the middle class that powers this country should not be the victim of an ill-thought-out trade war or attacks on our allies.

President Trump, listen to the people in places like Ohio, in both the industrial and agricultural sectors. Listen to the voters who took a chance on you because of trade. More trade chaos is not the path we were promised.

Renegotiate a NAFTA that will result in trade balances, insourcing of jobs to this country with higher paying jobs in our country and rising wages for our workers, and with continental efforts to gain stability working with our trade partners in both Canada and Mexico. That is what a renegotiated NAFTA should look like. Let's hope we get it.

#### RECOGNIZING PAUL KRUSS AND HUSSAIN MOHAMMED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate Paul Kruss and Hussain Mohammed on their recent recognition by Boys Town Jerusalem.

Paul and Mo are the proprietors of Mo's Bagels and Deli located in beautiful south Florida. Although some may know these two for serving up some of the best bagels and lox in Aventura, many know them for their world-class philanthropy and community involvement.

Most recently, Paul and Mo have joined forces to support Boys Town Jerusalem, a phenomenal academic institution transforming the lives of disadvantaged boys into productive members of Israeli society.

Whether it be involvement in local causes at home or ensuring success for the next generations abroad, Paul and Mo's dedication and commitment to helping those who need it the most is unwavering. Paul Kruss and Hussain Mohammed are champions of noble

causes, champions for Israel, and champions for our south Florida community.

Mr. Speaker, I am so proud of the work accomplished by Paul and by Mo, and I congratulate them on this much-deserved recognition by Boys Town Jerusalem.

Mazel tov, amigos.

#### RECOGNIZING THOIS KIEL AND MARGARET YAEGER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize two exceptional members of our community in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, who are working to make life better for homeless youth throughout our community.

Thois Kiel and Margaret Yaeger, residents of Neshaminy Manor Nursing Home, both decided to create a community outreach project in order to give back to those in need. Working together, they knit a large red and black afghan one square at a time before connecting them and presenting it to Robert "Woody" Wood of the Synergy Project of Bucks County, an organization that seeks to assist and counsel homeless youth and young adults.

Mr. Speaker, we commend Thois and Margaret for their compassion for our community's most vulnerable members and for their work to improve lives with such a personal touch.

I would also like to thank Neshaminy Manor's assistant director of activities, Heather O'Donnell, for all of her work in facilitating outreach projects, and Woody Wood for his work in bettering the lives of homeless youth in our community.

#### RECOGNIZING BACKYARD BEANS COFFEE COMPANY

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a small business in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, that was recently recognized as Business of the Month by the Lansdale Borough Council.

Backyard Beans Coffee Company started in the backyard of co-owners Matt and Laura Adams with only a Weber grill and one goal in mind: to create high-quality, dynamic coffee and coffee products.

Located on West Main Street in Lansdale, Backyard Beans Coffee takes community responsibility personally and works diligently to ensure it is using products that are not only sourced responsibly and ethically but that also promote sustainability.

To date, Backyard Beans' popular roasts, which source beans from Central America, Africa, South America, and Asia, are sold in nearly 100 restaurants and retail locations, along with regional farmers' markets.

I applaud Matt and Laura for contributing to an already thriving community of businesses in Montgomery County, and we congratulate Backyard

Beans Coffee Company on their recognition as Business of the Month.

#### RECOGNIZING BENT METAL CUSTOMS

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a small business in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, that was recently recognized as Business of the Month by the Lansdale Borough Council.

Bent Metal Customs, located on West Third Street in Lansdale, was founded in 2002 in Hatfield before moving to its current, larger location. A classic car restoration shop, Bent Metal Customs specializes in vehicle customization and restoration.

□ 1030

Bent Metal Customs has influenced the motor vehicle industry in Montgomery County and beyond. Publications, such as Street Trucks, Chevy High Performance, and Diesel World, have all featured the work of Bent Metal Customs. The quality work of its employees has drawn customers from as far as Michigan and Florida, and is even showcased yearly at an auto show in Las Vegas, Nevada.

I would like to recognize Bent Metal Customs' owner, Justin Brenner, for this distinction, and thank him and the entire Bent Metal Customs family for their contributions to our local economy and community.

#### PRESIDENT TRUMP MUST STEP DOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to read an op-ed from former EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman, who worked for Richard Nixon and George Bush:

President Trump's disgraceful performance in Helsinki, Finland, and, in the days since, is an indication that he is not fit to remain in office. Trump's 2016 "America First" platform might be more aptly named "Russia First" after the disaster that occurred last week.

Trump's turn toward Russia is indefensible. I am a lifelong Republican. I have campaigned and won as a member of the party, and I have served more than one Republican President. My Republican colleagues—once rightfully critical of President Obama's engagement strategy with Russia leader Vladimir Putin—have to end their willful ignorance of the damage Trump is doing, both domestically and internationally. We must put aside the GOP label, as hard as that may be, and demonstrate the leadership our country needs by calling on the President to step down.

Trump's sycophantic relationship with Putin is unsurprising given his previous comments about Russia and its dictator. What is shocking is how long he has possessed, and disregarded, hard evidence of Putin's direct role in undermining our elections. According to New York Times reporting, he saw dispositive emails and texts early in January 2017.

Trump's repeated public dismissals of the intelligence coming from his own deputies is deeply disturbing. Along with his walk back

of statements last week, and then walking back the walk backs, it's impossible to keep up, and his behavior warrants a fresh evaluation of whether the President can be trusted with the future of the United States.

His apologists will argue that the current outcry is just another attempt by moderates and "establishment" Republicans to discredit the President. But what does this man have to say or do for his supporters to finally see that his actions are detrimental to the country?

We must put aside the GOP label, as hard as that may be, and demonstrate the leadership our country needs.

Trump's avowed respect for the word of a dictator who has spent decades undermining the U.S. and its allies is utterly dangerous. Putin is not our ally. Despite the President's dismal attempt to change the narrative by explaining that he misspoke in Helsinki, the pattern is clear: As a candidate and as President, he has constantly praised Putin just as he has constantly undercut the core of our democracy: the courts, the media, and the FBI. He has a history of discrediting members of his own Cabinet and the agencies they lead. These are not the actions of someone who should be navigating delicate diplomatic discussions and setting foreign policy.

If the President did genuinely misspeak on Monday, it demonstrates his inability to articulate accurately U.S. foreign policy at the highest level, for the highest stakes. As the leader of the free world—as ridiculous as that title sounds when applied to Trump—his words matter. If he cannot take his place at a podium next to an adversarial foreign leader and stand up for America's interests and principles, he should not be President.

Trump has alienated our true allies in Europe and undermined the United States' reputation as a consistent, reliable moral force for good in the world. He disdains democracies and admires dictatorships. What appears to matter to him is not what leaders represent but how they flatter him. North Korea's Kim Jong Un and Putin have cracked that code and fan Trump's ego in a way that respected heads of state do not.

Yet many Republicans continue to defend him. In this election year, opposing Trump is risky for GOP candidates. Invoking the need to choose country over party is an overused trope. But it is essential now.

The Republican majority in Congress can fully implement promised sanctions against Russia to show its opposition to Russia's meddling in our election. Putin needs economic growth in Russia because it benefits the oligarchy. Tougher, tangible sanctions would weaken him and hurt those who benefit from his power. House Speaker PAUL RYAN indicated earlier this week that additional sanctions were on the table. This would be a start.

Congress can also ensure that the Robert S. Mueller, III, investigation is not compromised. Any interference in it after this week should raise many red flags. The special counsel and his team, who, despite the President's attacks, show every sign of unbiased professionalism, need to finish their work without tampering.

Finally, even if the Russian efforts to undermine State voting systems were unsuccessful in 2016, this is a vulnerability that may be exploited in the future. With the help of Congress, States must strengthen their processes and security to stop future meddling from Russia or other foreign actors.

Republican voters, including those who supported Donald Trump, have the obligation to demand action from their elected officials. Vocal opposition is expected from Democrats, but it is Republicans' disapproval that will have the most sway on Capitol Hill and at the White House.

Those Members of the party in Congress who have stood up to the President should be commended. More must follow, with more than private talk and tepid tweets. Only bold leadership can put the United States back on a path that values freedom and democracy, and truly puts America first.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 35 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

#### PRAYER

Imam Seyed Ali Ghazvini, Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno, Fresno, California, offered the following prayer:

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim, in the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful, Almighty God, I thank You for having led me to this great Nation, whose history of welcoming immigrants makes it possible for me to give today's prayer. I thank You for inspiring our Founding Fathers and the governments that followed to acknowledge civil liberties and minority rights.

I ask You, God, to bless the Members of this Hall, and I pray that You continue to inspire our elected officials so that their decisions meet Your approval. I pray that You inspire them to continue to uphold the democratic values of fairness and compassion that have made our Nation great, so that no one seeking refuge from war is banned from stepping on our soil based on faith affiliation or race, so that desperate families seeking refuge are not separated.

God, empower our lawmakers to promote peace, starting in our own cities and emanating to the rest of the world.

Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SCHNEIDER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### WELCOMING IMAM SEYED ALI GHAZVINI

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today and it is my honor and privilege to welcome Imam Ghazvini as the guest chaplain to the United States House of Representatives.

For the past 14 years, Seyed Ali Ghazvini has served as imam, or spiritual leader, of the Islamic Cultural Center in Fresno, a very important Islamic center in the San Joaquin Valley.

In addition to leading prayers and Qur'anic study, the Imam Ghazvini has distinguished himself as a prominent, prominent community leader. Since the beginning of his ministry, the imam has worked intently to facilitate meaningful interfaith dialogue and understanding throughout the valley, among all religions.

As the co-chair of the Interfaith Alliance of Central California, he has brought together numerous religious and social justice organizations to host mixed-faith events and spread tolerance and inclusivity throughout the San Joaquin Valley. I know because I have had the wonderful pleasure and honor to participate.

It has been with great honor, again, that many of us who have been able to participate in these interdenominational meetings have witnessed a renewed commitment to social justice firsthand. I urge my colleagues to welcome me in joining him and in thanking him this morning for his opening prayer.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NORMAN). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

#### PLANO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AWARDED 2018 CHAMBER OF THE YEAR

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that the cities of north Texas are frequently named some of the best places to live in the whole country. Of course, this is no surprise to the folks who live there.

There are many reasons that north Texas continues to draw people and businesses to the area. These reasons include good schools and low taxes, but people are also attracted to our business-friendly environment. In fact, just last week, the Plano Chamber of Commerce was nationally recognized as the

2018 Chamber of the Year. Now, that has to be outstanding.

I want to congratulate Jamee Jolly, the president of the Plano Chamber, as well as the entire Plano Chamber of Commerce team, for all your hard work to make our business community such a thriving success.

God bless you, and I salute you.

#### PALESTINIAN CHILDREN

(Ms. McCOLLUM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, over the past decade, Congress has provided Israel with more than \$30 billion in security assistance. Israel's security is important, but according to UNICEF, Israel is the only country in the world that systematically uses its military to arrest, interrogate, and imprison children—Palestinian children—some as young as 12 years old. Countless cases of mistreatment, solitary confinement, and forced confessions have been documented by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and our own State Department.

We must ensure that no U.S. tax dollars are supporting the mistreatment and abuse of Palestinian children. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 4391, a bill to prohibit U.S. funds from supporting Israel's violent military detention and abuse of Palestinian children.

This abuse must stop. Peace in the Middle East can be achieved only by ensuring Israel's security, respecting human rights, and promoting equality and justice for all Palestinians.

#### U.S. INSTITUTE OF PEACE PLAYS CRITICAL ROLE IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today at 12:30, the U.S. Institute of Peace will offer an educational briefing for Members and staff on the Institute's role in reducing violent conflict abroad. As a strong supporter of the U.S. Institute of Peace, I am pleased to welcome President Nancy Lindborg to the Hill today. She will explain the history and relevance of the Institute's congressional mission and how it helps our country find non-violent solutions to international conflicts.

President Lindborg will provide an update on the Institute's programs and how its training and educational functions are building long-term capacities for nonviolent conflict resolution that help countries solve their own problems. She will be joined by colleagues, who will provide policy updates and explain how the Institute's efforts are having an impact in both Africa and the Middle East.

In 1984, the U.S. Institute of Peace was created by Congress as an independent, nonpartisan institute to prevent, mitigate, and resolve violent international conflict.

Mr. Speaker, conflict management and resolution skills are essential in today's volatile international security environment, and I am grateful for the Institute's work.

#### HOLD SUDAN ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE MURDER OF JOHN GRANVILLE

(Mr. HIGGINS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I have proudly stood before this House on many occasions to honor the life and legacy of south Buffalo native John Granville. John was a young diplomat with the United States Agency for International Development and, tragically, was murdered by Islamic extremists in Khartoum, Sudan, in 2008.

At the time of his death, John was working with the people of South Sudan to prepare them for elections and their eventual independence as the newest country in the world in 2011.

A decade after John's death, the Granville family is still fighting the international justice system to hold the Government of Sudan accountable for his death.

The Trump administration's Department of State is now considering removing Sudan from the list of state-sponsored terrorists. If the State Department allows for that removal, Sudan's responsibility for John's death and the escape of his convicted murderers must be a condition for the State Department's action in this matter.

#### 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF EASTON AIRPORT

(Mr. HARRIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Easton/Newnam Field Airport on its 75th anniversary. Easton Airport on Maryland's Eastern Shore is a fixture in the Talbot County community and celebrates a rich and patriotic history.

Originally constructed by the military during World War II, the Easton Airport was used as one of the hundreds of bases for military planes patrolling the East Coast for Nazi submarines. After the war, the Federal Government sold the Easton Airport, and others like it, to the local jurisdictions in which they were located for just \$1.

Since the end of World War II, the Easton Airport has grown to be one of the busiest general aviation facilities in Maryland, serving local businesses, the military, corporate pilots, and aviation enthusiasts.

Congratulations to the Easton Airport on this tremendous anniversary, and cheers to another 75 years of serving Talbot County, the State of Maryland, and the United States of America.

#### ELECTION SECURITY LETTER

(Mr. SCHNEIDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, Special Counsel Robert Mueller indicted 12 Russian intelligence operatives for their activities hacking Democratic email and computer networks during the 2016 election.

In Illinois, our State Board of Elections was also targeted and its voter registration database breached. Data on tens of thousands of Illinois voters was taken. This breach and the taking of voter data is an unacceptable, malicious attack on our Nation and its people.

We must not only hold the attackers accountable; we need to ensure that attacks on our next election are defended against. Personally, I have met with county clerks for the district I represent, and I know they are taking action, treating this threat seriously.

We need to ensure that our Federal Government is responding with the same level of urgency. That is why, today, I led my Illinois colleagues in a letter requesting a briefing from the Department of Justice on their election security efforts in our State.

Protecting the integrity of our election is fundamental to our democracy. I urge the Department of Justice to work with Illinois to secure our election infrastructure and prepare for this serious national threat.

#### ABIY AHMED ALI REVIVES ETHIOPIAN REFORMS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed Ali has made positive changes in the country since his April inauguration. Prime Minister Ali has released thousands of political prisoners and ended a state of emergency.

Critically, Dr. Abiy has stated that Ethiopia will fully comply with the Algiers Agreement, the peace agreement signed for the formal end of the war of 12 years between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which, gruesomely, has killed more than 100,000 people.

Prime Minister Abiy's leadership and initiative to personally visit with the Eritrean leadership and offer direct airline routes has melted away a nearly 18-year cold war between the two states.

The United States will continue to support Prime Minister Abiy's diplomatic outreach and reform, which will



also contribute to regional stability. New hope and opportunity with free market reforms are now available to the people of Ethiopia.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

Welcome, Pastor John Hagee and Christians United for Israel, to Washington, addressed last night by Ambassador Nikki Haley.

#### FLINT WATER CRISIS IS NOT OVER

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank my House colleagues who visited my hometown of Flint, Michigan, last week to get an update on the city's ongoing water crisis. I want to specifically thank Leader NANCY PELOSI; Assistant Democratic Leader JIM CLYBURN; Representatives BARBARA LEE, JIM MCGOVERN, DENNY HECK, DWIGHT EVANS, JARED HUFFMAN; and, of course, the members of the Michigan delegation, including SANDY LEVIN, BRENDA LAWRENCE, and DEBBIE DINGELL. I want to thank them all for visiting Flint.

I appreciate all my colleagues who have come to Flint to visit with families, and I am especially grateful that Congress passed much-needed help for this community as it struggles to overcome this water crisis.

Today, there is progress in Flint, thanks to this body. Nearly 7,000 of those dangerous lead pipes have been replaced so far using the Federal funds that we provided.

The recovery does continue. The Flint water crisis has faded from the national headlines, and this congressional delegation is a reminder that the crisis isn't over. That visit was an opportunity for us to hear directly from families that there is still much to be done.

What happened in Flint is not some anomaly. It is a warning to the rest of the country and to this Congress that we have to do more to rebuild America's critical infrastructure. Otherwise, we run the risk of more Flint, Michigans to come.

□ 1215

#### GIVING AMERICANS MORE CHOICES ON HEALTHCARE EXPENSE SAVINGS

(Mrs. WAGNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of giving Americans more choices when deciding how to save for healthcare expenses.

The legislation we are voting on this week will increase the number of Americans who are eligible to contribute to tax-free health savings ac-

counts and expand the use of HSAs to cover direct primary care and over-the-counter medicines.

HSAs make it easier for people to take a proactive approach to their own healthcare. It is time to give Americans more access and more choice and affordability when spending their hard-earned paychecks.

Our legislation will also reduce premiums, roll back burdensome ObamaCare regulations, and give Americans more options and control when dealing with personal issues of healthcare.

I look forward to casting my vote for all Missouri, especially those in Missouri's Second Congressional District. They deserve the freedom to do what is best for their families.

#### RECOGNIZING PUBLIC SAFETY AIRCREWS

(Mr. BILIRAKIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize a group of unsung heroes who help keep our country and communities safe.

Public safety aircrews fly every day across the Nation to ensure the safety of our domestic airspace, often in very hazardous conditions. They also support first responders during disaster response and rescue missions throughout the country.

We honor the commitment of those public servants, both past and present, and recognize that some have made the ultimate sacrifice. It is only fitting that a day be set aside to honor the thousands of public servants, both past and present, who have served.

To this end, I introduce H. Res. 991, to recognize June 26 of each year as National Public Safety Aviation Day.

#### PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 184, PROTECT MEDICAL INNOVATION ACT OF 2017, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 6311, INCREASING ACCESS TO LOWER PREMIUM PLANS AND EXPANDING HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS ACT OF 2018

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1011 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1011

*Resolved*, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 184) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on

the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 6311) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to modify the definition of qualified health plan for purposes of the health insurance premium tax credit and to allow individuals purchasing health insurance in the individual market to purchase a lower premium copper plan. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-83 shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 1011 provides for the consideration of two bills aimed at removing some of the most burdensome aspects of the Affordable Care Act, and, as a result, moving toward lowering healthcare costs for the millions of Americans who are confronted daily with rising premiums, rising deductibles, and rising drug prices.

With each bill, we take one step closer to ultimately eliminating the Affordable Care Act's government-run approach to healthcare and return to a market-driven solution that puts patients first.

The first bill in today's rule, H.R. 184, the Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2017, would repeal the excise tax on medical devices imposed on American companies by the previously mentioned Affordable Care Act.

The second bill in today's rule, H.R. 6311, the Increasing Access to Lower Premium Plans and Expanding Health

Savings Accounts Act of 2018, expands the availability and the use of health savings accounts to allow individuals and their families to save their own money and budget for the healthcare needs they have that otherwise would not be part of their budget.

Today's resolution provides for a closed rule for H.R. 184, the Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2017. This is the standard practice for a tax-related measure on the House floor. The rule provides for 1 hour of debate, equally divided and controlled by the chair and the ranking minority member on the Committee on Ways and Means. The rule does provide the minority with the customary motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The second part of today's resolution provides for a closed rule for H.R. 6311, the Increasing Access to Lower Premium Plans and Expanding Health Savings Accounts Act of 2018. The rule provides for 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and the ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. The customary motion to recommit with or without instructions is provided to the minority.

This week, Republicans in the House continue our efforts to increase more healthcare options while driving down premiums in the individual market. According to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the Department of Health and Human Services, premiums on the exchange are 105 percent higher, on average, in calendar year 2017, compared to premiums in the individual market in calendar year 2013, which was the last year before the Affordable Care Act took effect.

It is important that we continue to address the negative impact that the Affordable Care Act has had on the individual market and to help Americans across the country be more in charge of their healthcare purchases.

Thus far, the Republican Congress has been successful in nullifying the individual mandate, repealing the Independent Payment Advisory Board, and delaying many of the harmful taxes on American businesses and American consumers. I am also encouraged by the actions of the administration in permitting more low-cost limited duration insurance plans and allowing access to association health plans for more small businesses.

These are choices that are provided to the American people so that they, the American people, can be in the driver's seat, not the other way around with the ACA's government-approved one-size-fits-all healthcare model.

With that in mind, two bills we are considering this week seek to expand and improve health savings accounts. Under the current rule, H.R. 6311, the Increasing Access to Lower Premium Plan and Expanding Health Savings Accounts Act of 2018, will enhance the benefit of tax-preferred health accounts so that individuals can better

plan and save for their healthcare needs, and, also, these individuals will see lower premiums on their healthcare plans.

For the last several Congresses, I have argued to improve the utility of health savings accounts, and so I am pleased to see that these important policies are being advanced through the House this week.

In addition to offering health insurance, many employers often arrange to reimburse their employees and their dependants some of their medical expenses that are not covered by health insurance. Health flexible spending accounts and health reimbursement arrangements are two of the more common arrangements offered by employers.

I have heard the frustration of employees, many of whom are my constituents in north Texas, over forfeiting the remaining amounts in their flexible spending account at the end of each plan year. We can all agree that the healthcare needs and purchases vary from year to year, where one year a person may have more medical expenses than the next or the other way around.

One of the provisions in H.R. 6311 eliminates the arbitrary "use it or lose it" rule and allows flexible spending account balances to be carried over to the next plan year within a reasonable annual flexible spending account contribution limit.

Another provision allows working seniors that are covered under an HSA-eligible high deductible health plan and enrolled in Medicare part A to continue to contribute to their health savings account. Just because someone becomes eligible for Medicare because of age, they should not be prohibited from continuing to contribute to a health savings account.

Under current law, there are annual health savings account contribution limits. In 2018, the limit for an individual was \$3,450. For families, that amount was \$6,900. While these limits are updated annually for inflation, they are significantly less than the combined limit on annual out-of-pocket deductible expenses.

H.R. 6311 would allow individuals to increase their contributions to equal to the combined annual limit on the out-of-pocket and deductible expenses under their HSA-qualified insurance plan. That would be \$6,550 for an individual and \$13,300 for a family this year.

The Affordable Care Act limits the option of individuals enrolled in bronze and so-called copper, or catastrophic, plans to make HSA contributions. Also, only those under 30 or those that qualify for a hardship exemption are actually able to purchase the so-called copper health plan. That is a 50 percent actuarial value health plan.

So, today, I am pleased that a bill that I introduced with Representative ROSKAM, H.R. 6314, the Health Savings Act of 2018, to expand the eligibility

and the access to health savings accounts by allowing plans categorized as catastrophic and bronze plans in the individual and small group markets to qualify for HSA contributions. That is included in this bill.

Lastly, I appreciate working with the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee Chairman PETER ROSKAM on H.R. 6311. One of the key provisions of the bill is to provide an off-ramp from ObamaCare's rising premiums and limited choices by allowing the premium tax credit to be used for qualified plans offered outside of the law's exchanges and healthcare.gov.

In addition, it expands access to the lowest premium plans available, so-called copper or catastrophic plans, for all individuals purchasing coverage in the individual market and allows the premium tax credit to be used to offset the cost of such plans.

□ 1230

I recognize not everyone will choose to have a health savings account, but they should have the option because HSAs represent a powerful tool to lower prices and improve access to quality care for everyone, and those are goals that we can all share.

Now, it is well documented that many of the provisions contained within the Affordable Care Act have negative consequences on patients, both in access to care and in affordability. One of the provisions that has been universally criticized is that, on a large, bipartisan nature, its repeal was called for almost immediately after the passage of the Affordable Care Act. This is the tax on medical device manufacturers, or more commonly referred to as the medical device tax.

It seems illogical that within a piece of legislation that was purported to make medical care available, more accessible to all Americans, the Federal Government would want to tax the very providers of medical innovation that create devices to improve the delivery of healthcare, but, nevertheless, that is exactly what happened when ObamaCare passed in 2010, and it was done as a means to pay for the astronomical price tag that accompanied the Affordable Care Act.

This tax burden is unfair, and it actually increases costs that consumers pay at their doctors' offices. The tax has also been cited by dozens of medical device manufacturers who have or are considering moving their operations overseas so that they can continue to innovate without the heavy burden of this tax stifling their growth. This tax slows the creation of new techniques and devices, which will make the delivery of medicine more efficient, and it puts at risk the jobs that were created by the creation of such devices.

For anyone who thinks that we are merely talking about the largest and most expensive pieces of technology found within a hospital—basically, your MRI, CAT scans, and some surgical equipment—let's be clear that



this tax covers every piece of medical equipment, from those large machines to the smallest of items, including syringes used to deliver lifesaving antibiotics and vaccines. It continues to negatively impact a number of constituents in my district and, I am certain, in districts around the country, and it does continue to create a burden on a number of companies.

The medical device tax has led to the elimination of thousands of good-paying jobs, and repealing it would be the first step to bringing those jobs back and stem the loss of future jobs within this vital industry that is helping to mitigate rising costs of healthcare due to the burdensome provisions within the Affordable Care Act.

This is a tax on business, a tax on consumers, and a tax on innovation. To date, 33,000 jobs have been lost in the medical device industry since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, and it is projected that over 130,000 additional jobs are on the chopping block.

Why would anyone be surprised about this? Excise taxes—and that is what this is, an excise tax—are meant to lead to a reduction in the consumption of the goods being taxed. We place an excise tax on cigarettes. We want to discourage people from smoking. We make it burdensome to afford a smoking habit.

Did we really intend, with the passage of the Affordable Care Act by congressional Democrats in 2010, to make it more burdensome to use more efficient medical devices?

H.R. 184 has bipartisan, bicameral support, with currently 277 cosponsors. Republican leadership in the House has heard this request and heard the calls from many Members within this body and is moving this bill in a responsible way to put Americans back to work and lower healthcare costs for all.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support today's rule and the underlying bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me the customary 30 minutes for debate.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to debate this rule, but I would urge my colleague from Texas to be mindful that this ain't going nowhere, so we really are, when all is said and done, wasting our time. This is not likely to be taken up by the Senate in August, and why we are not doing other things, I simply cannot understand.

The Protect Medical Innovation Act and the Increasing Access to Lower Premium Plans and Expanding Health Savings Accounts Act are worth considering. The gentleman from Texas certainly is an expert in this area and is most sincere. It is regrettable that the legislation, ultimately, that will pass the House of Representatives ain't going nowhere.

Taken together, these measures do nothing to ameliorate the Republican

attempt to eviscerate the Affordable Care Act, do nothing to curb rising drug costs, and do nothing to curtail skyrocketing premium hikes. Instead, H.R. 6311 continues the Republican majority's destructive path of undermining and destabilizing our health insurance markets.

This package of six bills will likely lead to fewer choices and competition for moderate- and low-income families who do not have the disposable income to pay premium costs up front.

In bringing up the second measure, H.R. 184, my friends across the aisle seem intent on ignoring the pressing issues facing our country, like passing sensible legislation that will address the country's ongoing gun violence epidemic, passing legislation that will protect our election infrastructure from hostile foreign hacking, or passing legislation that will help reunite the more than 2,500 separated children with their families. Rather, the Republican majority wants to waste valuable legislative time in repealing a tax that won't even be active until 2020.

This is the last week before we go on a 5-week recess and we are doing nothing. Even worse, these bills are not offset and, taken together with tomorrow's bills, will add up to \$90 billion to our deficit. They are not paid for. And I challenge my colleague on the floor handling this rule to tell me where the pay-fors are, and, if there are none, why are they not paid for—\$90 billion.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that the epidemic of gun violence that plagues our communities must be addressed in a comprehensive manner and without further delay. Unfortunately, our Nation has witnessed far too many senseless deaths caused each day by firearms, and that continues to rise.

Under a Republican majority, many commonsense reforms, such as the assault weapons ban—and somebody please tell me why anyone other than the military and law enforcement needs an assault weapon; I just, for the life of me, cannot understand it—were allowed to expire. I might add, flood insurance is getting ready to expire. We are not taking that measure up.

Providing nearly unfettered access to a variety of firearms does not make any sense. Someone said to me, well, there are 103 kinds of automatic weapons; and I say ban them all because they don't have any business in the hands of people in the streets at all.

While we need to preserve the rights of responsible gun owners—and I am one of them; I believe in the Second Amendment—we must focus more of our attention and efforts on keeping weapons out of the hands of dangerous individuals instead of attacking and undermining the healthcare for millions of hardworking Americans.

While the present administration works to further the majority's aim of dismantling the most popular aspects of the Affordable Care Act, like keeping children on their parents' health insurance until the age of 26 and pro-

tecting people with preexisting conditions, these bills continue to balloon Federal spending and deficits.

While we were promised increased revenue from the GOP tax cuts of 2017, with the GOP falling back on tired talking points like tax cuts paying for themselves, we now have the Congressional Budget Office projecting over \$1 trillion in budget deficits in 2020, even before legislation like this passes.

Whatever happened to the conservative Republicans? Where did the fiscal conservative Republicans go, who are blowing up the deficit in this country? The amount of fiscal irresponsibility demonstrated by my friends across the aisle is shocking and will be a great detriment to all Americans in the future.

Moreover, these pieces of legislation do nothing to holistically solve the most pressing concerns hardworking Americans have with healthcare: ever-increasing premiums, unstable health markets, and exploding drug costs. In fact, in the last year and a half, the majority has gone out of their way to destabilize health markets as much as they can.

Instead of encouraging Americans to enroll in health insurance, the Department of Health and Human Services has created an advertising campaign explicitly undermining the individual insurance markets created under the Affordable Care Act. Republicans have cut the Department's budget for those grassroots organizations whose sole purpose is to assist folks in signing up for health insurance. How much of the budget did they cut? 92 percent.

In addition to this, HHS has threatened States that try to lower premiums, and the Trump administration has even canceled cost-sharing reduction payments to insurers, which the CBO projects will leave 1 million more people uninsured, raise premiums by 20 to 25 percent over the next 2 years, and increase the Federal deficit by \$200 billion.

Listen, people, when we started this business of the Affordable Care Act—as much as my friends on the other side who have the prerogative, in the majority, to be in disagreement with this measure as well as any others and to offer this thing that ain't going nowhere here today—the simple fact of the matter is, some few years back, we had 42 million Americans who were uninsured. We now have more than 42 million Americans uninsured, and that is wrong.

I said yesterday in the Rules Committee, all of us, 535—the Senate and the House—and the six delegates, ought to be locked up up here until we come up with a sensible solution for the American people with reference to a crisis.

It was said yesterday by the chair of this committee that the plan that is going to be offered—that we did offer and then they voted against—would be the best healthcare plan in the world. Well, it ain't the best healthcare plan

in the world. The best healthcare plans in the world are in Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Australia, and a whole bunch of other places other than America.

And while the Trump administration has pushed junk healthcare plans, even the organizations that originally lobbied the administration for access to these plans now say they no longer want to use them.

All in all, as a result of these policies, as I have indicated, 4 million fewer Americans have health insurance than when Donald John Trump took office, and healthcare costs continue to rise unabated.

I need not remind my colleagues that people in the United States pay far more for healthcare than in any other industrialized nation on Earth, and, in most cases, they get far less. We spend over 18 percent of our gross domestic product on healthcare, compared to most other countries, which spend less than 10 percent, with much of the disparity occurring thanks to higher drug prices and administrative overhead.

□ 1245

Despite the money we pour into our healthcare, the United States has the shortest life expectancy and highest infant mortality of any modern industrialized nation—let me repeat that—the shortest life expectancy, and the highest infant mortality of any modern industrialized nation.

We have far fewer physicians—and we had better do something about that; not in this measure, not in the Affordable Healthcare Act. We had better get busy trying to figure out how to provide more physicians, more nurses, more research for a variety of measures that are oncoming that our Nation is going to be confronted with.

We have fewer hospital beds and, in perhaps what is the most depressing statistic of all of U.S. healthcare, the United States is one of only 13 countries in the world where the rate of maternal mortality, defined as the death of a mother in the year after she gives birth, is now worse than it was 25 years ago.

And here we are, continuing to jaw jack about something that ain't going nowhere, and we have situations in our country that all of us know something about, all of us care about. There is no Republican in the House or Democrat in the House that doesn't care about their constituents and their healthcare. And at the very same time, what we are winding up doing is arguing with each other and nothing is getting done, and that is just dead wrong for this country.

Black women, in particular, are three times more likely to die from health-related issues to their pregnancy. How can we seemingly pay for more healthcare now than at any point in our Nation's history and, yet, at the same time, be getting worse care than we were decades ago?

We have a fundamentally broken system. The majority doesn't seem to

have any way of fixing it, and I am not even sure that they want to fix it. Indeed, they seem to be going out of their way making it somehow worse.

Now I hear all of the voices out there. I had a constituent call the other day to tell me that I wasn't as liberal as his people were, liberal, and that I didn't understand this whole healthcare system.

And I told him: Listen, man, in 1992, when I ran for office, I ran on the premise of universal healthcare for every American, period. And when we did the Affordable Healthcare Act, it ultimately got called the ObamaCare Act.

I have said in the Rules Committee repeatedly, it probably should have been called the Hastings/ObamaCare Act, or perhaps we would have done what Dr. BURGESS asked us to do and it would be called the Burgess Healthcare Act.

I don't care what it is called. It needs to be called something that is going to help every American, and not just a handful, and certainly not the richest people in this country who don't even need any healthcare. They have been at the socialized healthcare business for all of their lives and, therefore, people like Donald John Trump don't need to worry about this kind of thing.

It is those people that are vulnerable. It is those people on Medicaid in Florida and other States that didn't expand Medicaid, 900,000 of them in my State, that are left to the mercies of the system.

And what do they do? All of us know what they do. When they have healthcare, they go to the hospital, to the emergency room, generally speaking, they are treated, and then those taxpayers in those respective jurisdictions wind up paying for it.

So why don't we get our act together and try to do something about it now?

I have proudly advocated for multiple pieces of legislation that will improve and strengthen the Medicare system, including H.R. 676, the Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act, which will provide all individuals residing in the United States and the United States territories, with affordable healthcare, including that which is medically most necessary, such as primary and preventative care, dietary and nutritional therapies, prescription drugs, emergency care, long-term care, mental health services, dental services, and vision care. Underscore preventative care. And if we did more in that arena, we wouldn't have as much of a problem as we do today.

Medicare for All will save taxpayers hundreds of dollars a month. Now, I firmly believe that we must focus priorities in the interest of the American people to ensure that our citizens have continued access to healthcare services.

So when we come back here in September, when we finish all of our fighting in November, and we have somebody that is going to get elected, 435 of

us will return here and be sworn in in January. Let's all make a commitment that we are going to work together, together, to get all of the resources, the tremendous minds, the incredible staffs that work here in this institution together, and try to make sure that we do the right thing by the American people and pass a measure that will cause everyone to have affordable care.

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

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

The gentleman is quite correct in identifying the other body as sometimes an obstacle to good public policy, for it was 1 year ago that the other body blocked a health care reform that this body had passed the previous May.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to draw the House's attention to an article in today's Wall Street Journal. The title of the article is "TrumpCare beats ObamaCare." And I just want to quote a little bit from this article.

To set the stage, in December, with the repeal of the individual mandate, and quoting here: "But while many people didn't realize it at the time, it turns out that Mr. Trump has been helping to improve an important source of insurance coverage since virtually the moment he took office."

Continuing to quote here: "By prioritizing economic growth and reducing the tax and regulatory burdens on U.S. business, Mr. Trump has helped create an economy with more job openings than ever before. As if by magic, the invisible hand of a freer marketplace is now generating new benefits as employers compete to fill all those open positions."

Continuing to quote here: "For the first time in six years, the share of U.S. workers offered health insurance through their employer has risen, a sign a tighter labor market is prompting businesses to offer more generous benefits."

So, Mr. Speaker, I simply submit that the activities of the Trump administration have, indeed, improved the healthcare landscape in this country. That is something we should acknowledge and embrace.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I am going to offer an amendment to the rule that would change the rules of the House to prevent any legislation from being considered that would reduce the guaranteed benefits for individuals enrolled in either Medicare or Medicaid programs.

I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" and defeat

the previous question so that we may protect these critical programs for this generation and the next.

Mr. Speaker, I would be prepared now to advise my colleague from Texas that I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close when, and if, he is.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close as well.

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

Mr. Speaker, in closing, this place, the people's House, should be about approaching our congressional responsibilities and daily activities in a manner that is fair and respectful to all Americans; in a manner where the appropriate committee of jurisdiction holds hearings and markups; in a manner where experts in the field are respected and consulted; in a manner where Members of both political parties have the ability to offer amendments and debate the contents of bills that come to the House floor.

Unfortunately, in this historically closed-off, Republican run House, that is not the case. And let me make it very clear. Even though in the Ways and Means and the Appropriations Committee, as a matter of practice, we allow for closed rules, we now have, with these three rules that are likely to be finished today, we have 95 closed rules. This is 2018, and not in the history of the people's House has the process been as closed.

When the Speaker of the House of Representatives began this session, he indicated that it would be the most open session that we would have. And yet, it is not the case.

I spoke earlier about immigration, and I saw this morning where the majority leader has determined, even though having promised his own conference that he would have a vote on immigration, he ain't gonna do it.

Now, something is wrong with this process and it needs to be corrected, and we can correct it going forward. We will make 100, and then we will be historically referenced as the most closed Congress in the history of the United States of America.

What we see are my friends across the aisle, bending over backwards to reward a very specific and elite constituency. Week after week, the powerful gun lobby is rewarded as Republican leadership refuses to bring up even the most commonsense gun violence prevention legislation.

The next week, like today, the powerful medical insurance lobby chalks up a win as this Republican-led Congress votes in favor of special interests over the interests of hardworking Americans.

Some other people that make out like bandits that we never talk about are the insurance companies. I could spend a whole hour talking about how they are benefiting while we are about the business of tying each other in knots with verbiage rather than with substantive legislation.

Mr. Speaker, while there is no quick fix to any of these measures, not to

gun violence, opioid addiction, the immigration problems, and ongoing foreign cyber attacks on our election system's infrastructure, we simply must engage in the complicated and difficult process of improving our country's current policies.

I, as well as my colleagues on this side of the aisle, stand ready to work with Members of Congress to bring commonsense legislation to the floor that will benefit all Americans and not just the rarified few.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to urge a "no" vote on the rule and a "no" vote on the previous question. This measure we are debating here today ain't going nowhere, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The gentleman from Florida is making a point about open rules, and I do feel obligated to point out in the 111th Congress—that was the Congress that was the first 2 years of President Obama's administration—in the 111th Congress, under Speaker PELOSI, the majority had zero open rules. That is zero open rules in the 2 years in which we saw the passage of the Affordable Care Act, the passage of Dodd-Frank; the House-passed Waxman/Markey, which was a cap-and-trade global warming bill, so significant pieces of legislation passed the floor of this House, all under closed rules.

But, Mr. Speaker, today's rule brings forward two pieces of legislation that will have a meaningful impact on Americans' healthcare costs, including the premiums and the prices they pay for medicines.

□ 1300

H.R. 184, the Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2017, which will repeal the Affordable Care Act's ill-conceived medical device tax, and H.R. 6311, the Increasing Access to Lower Premium Plans and Expanding Health Savings Account Act of 2018, which will provide greater freedom for Americans to use their own money to pay for medical expenses out of their health savings accounts, both of these build on the House's work over the past 2 years to make healthcare a more patient-centered market.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to thank Representatives PAULSEN and ROSKAM for their work on these measures. I urge my colleagues to support today's rule and move the debate forward on this legislation.

The material previously referred to by Mr. HASTINGS is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 1011 OFFERED BY  
MR. HASTINGS

At the end of the resolution, add the following new section:

SEC. 3. Rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives is amended by adding at the end the following new clause:

“RESTRICTIONS ON CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATION THAT WOULD CUT MEDICARE OR MEDICAID.

13. (a) It shall not be in order to consider a bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment,

amendment between the Houses, or conference report which includes any provision described in paragraph (b).

(b) A provision referred to in paragraph (a) is a provision which, if enacted into law, would result in either of the following:

(1) a reduction of guaranteed benefits for individuals entitled to, or enrolled for, benefits under the Medicare program under title XVIII of 18 such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.); or

(2) a reduction of benefits or eligibility for individuals enrolled in, or eligible to receive medical assistance through, a State Medicaid plan or waiver under title XIX of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 5 et seq.).

(c) It shall not be in order to consider a rule or order that waives the application of paragraph (a). As disposition of any point of order under paragraph (a) or this paragraph (except a point of order against an amendment pursuant to paragraph (a)), the Chair shall put the question of consideration with respect to the measure, order, conference report, or rule as applicable. The question of consideration shall be debatable for 10 minutes by the Member initiating the point of order and for 10 minutes by an opponent, but shall otherwise be decided without intervening motion except one that the House adjourn.”

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308-311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as “a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.” To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that “the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition” in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: “The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.”

The Republican majority may say “the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.” But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: “Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule. . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member

who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment."

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled "Amending Special Rules" states: "a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate." (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: "Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon."

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

Mr. HASTINGS. 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.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 6199, RESTORING ACCESS TO MEDICATION ACT OF 2018, AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM JULY 27, 2018, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 3, 2018

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1012 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1012

*Resolved*, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 6199) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to include certain over-the-counter medical products as qualified medical expenses. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-82 shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one

motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. On any legislative day during the period from July 27, 2018, through September 3, 2018—

(a) the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved; and

(b) the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time, within the limits of clause 4, section 5, article I of the Constitution, to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment.

SEC. 3. The Speaker may appoint Members to perform the duties of the Chair for the duration of the period addressed by section 2 of this resolution as though under clause 8(a) of rule I.

SEC. 4. Each day during the period addressed by section 2 of this resolution shall not constitute a calendar day for purposes of section 7 of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1546).

SEC. 5. Each day during the period addressed by section 2 of this resolution shall not constitute a legislative day for purposes of clause 7 of rule XIII.

SEC. 6. Each day during the period addressed by section 2 of this resolution shall not constitute a calendar or legislative day for purposes of clause 7(c)(1) of rule XXII.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 1012 provides for the consideration of an important bill to return control of healthcare spending and budgeting back where it belongs: with the patient.

H.R. 6199, the Restoring Access to Medication and Modernizing Health Savings Accounts Act of 2018, would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to include certain over-the-counter medical products as qualified medical expenses for the purposes of spending one's own dollars within a health savings account.

Today's resolution provides for a rule to allow H.R. 6199, the Restoring Access to Medication and Modernizing Health Savings Accounts Act of 2018, the standard practice for a tax-related measure on the House floor. The rule provides for 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled between the chair and the ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. The rule does, however, provide the minority with the customary motion to recommit with or without instructions.

Also included in the resolution before us today are the standard provisions

allowing the House of Representatives to continue to operate while Members are home, working with their constituents during the August district work period.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of the rule on H.R. 6199, the Restoring Access to Medication and Modernizing Health Savings Accounts Act of 2018. This rule includes the work of various Members of Congress on the important issue of modernizing health savings accounts. While this legislation did not move through the Health Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee, my fellow members on the other Health Subcommittee, that of the Ways and Means Committee, have done quality work in moving this package. Each bill was reported favorably out of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I have long been a supporter of increasing flexibility within our healthcare system, especially through the use of health savings accounts. Health savings accounts allow patients to feel more involved and to have more control over their healthcare spending. As someone who has personally had a health savings account in the past, I believe it to be a powerful tool but that qualified expenses have been limited for too long.

This package will give more power to consumers by allowing them to use their hard-earned savings that they put into their health savings accounts on an expanded number of healthcare goods and services.

The first bill in this package, Promoting High-Value Healthcare Through Flexibility for High-Deductible Health Plans Act, introduced by Chairman ROSKAM, allows for first-dollar coverage flexibility for high-deductible health plans. Many individuals, especially in the post-Affordable Care Act world, have chosen to purchase high-deductible health plans. While this is a reasonable choice for many consumers, there are some who are faced with high out-of-pocket costs.

H.R. 6199 allows health plans to provide coverage for up to \$250 per year for individuals or \$500 per year for families before they meet their deductible. The goal of this provision is to incentivize services that could reduce future healthcare costs, such as primary care visits and telehealth services.

Additionally, under current law, individuals are unable to contribute to an HSA if they participate in a direct primary care service arrangement. Representative ERIK PAULSEN's Primary Care Enhancement Act, which is included in this rule, enables patients to be able to participate in a direct primary care service arrangement and remain qualified to contribute to a health savings account. It also includes direct primary care service arrangement fees as medical expenses.

Some individuals are fortunate enough to receive certain healthcare services at or nearby their workplace through their employer. Representative MIKE KELLY's bipartisan Health

Savings Account Improvement Act of 2018, which is included in this package, addresses this issue.

While it is convenient and helpful to have access to such services, these individuals should not be barred from having a health savings account. This package creates a special rule that individuals can receive free or discounted services offered by their employers on-site or at retail medical clinics. These services may include physical exams, immunizations, nonprescription drugs, treatment of employment-related injuries, drug testing if required as a condition of employment, hearing or vision screenings, or other services that are not considered significant benefits in the nature of medical care.

Mr. Speaker, the post-Affordable Care Act world is riddled with flaws, but one of the biggest problems is its failure to promote consumer-driven healthcare. Expanding the use of health savings accounts could go a long way to reverse this trend. Health savings accounts give consumers incentives to manage their own healthcare costs by coupling a tax-favored savings account used to pay medical expenses with a high-deductible health plan that meets certain requirements for deductibles and out-of-pocket expense limits. The funds in a health savings account are owned by the individual and may be rolled over from year to year.

Health savings accounts are not a novel idea. They have been around since 2004, but current health savings account policy is extraordinarily restrictive, making it harder for consumers to take advantage of it.

I have spent several years in developing extensive reforms to increase the potential for health savings accounts for consumers, and H.R. 6199 includes meaningful improvements that we can, in fact, get across the finish line now to help families now.

One of these improvements is the ability for spouses to contribute to a health savings account under certain circumstances even if their spouse has a flexible spending account. Under current law, one spouse can reimburse expenses for their spouses' and other dependents' medical expenses; therefore, the other spouse is considered to be ineligible for an HSA.

This provision enables the spouse without the flexible spending account to reimburse for medical expenses, with certain restrictions. This is critical, as it gives individuals increased flexibility to save for their own healthcare expenses that a shared flexible spending account for the whole family may not provide.

Additionally, this bill allows for individuals to terminate or convert their flexible spending account and health reimbursement accounts into a health savings account under certain circumstances. Employers would be able to allow their employees to convert their flexible spending account and health reimbursement account bal-

ances into health savings account funds if they enroll in a high-deductible health plan with an HSA. This is critical in empowering patients and allowing them the flexibility to change health plans without losing their savings.

There is a dollar limitation of \$2,650 for conversions for individuals, \$5,300 for families, and the funds transferred into the HSA would count toward the enrollee's HSA contribution for that taxable year.

H.R. 6199, the bill introduced by Representative LYNN JENKINS from Kansas, makes commonsense, patient-centered reforms to help defray costs for individuals. Over-the-counter medications, allergy and cold medicines, antibiotic ointment, and pain relievers are historically ineligible expenditures for HSA and other tax-favored healthcare accounts. The ACA created a requirement in Federal law that forced account holders to go to their doctor to obtain a prescription for over-the-counter medications before purchasing them with their health savings account or flexible spending account. Individuals who fail to jump through these hoops and purchase over-the-counter medications without a prescription, in fact, face a tax penalty for making a nonqualified distribution.

This policy drives unnecessary utilization of doctor services, decreases access to over-the-counter medications, and discourages people from taking control of saving for their healthcare needs. H.R. 6199 repeals this harmful provision, puts consumers back in the driver's seat, and allows them efficient access to appropriate medications.

Lastly, this legislation permits individuals to invest their hard-earned health savings account dollars into their physical fitness and well-being. In many ways, income is a hurdle for individuals and families who would like to participate in a physical activity, whether they would like to pay for a membership at a fitness facility or pay for their children to join a youth sports league. This legislation opens the door for paying for such activities with health savings account dollars.

Known originally as a standalone bill, the Personal Health Investment Today Act, introduced by Representative JASON SMITH, allows qualified sports and fitness expenses to count as qualified medical expenses. These particular expenses are capped at \$500 a year for individuals and \$1,000 on a joint return.

□ 1315

Passage of this provision will assist individuals and families across the Nation in investing in their physical fitness, which can lead them to healthier lives and stave off conditions such as diabetes and obesity. These bills are an important example of the work we are doing right now to advance Member-driven solutions that will improve healthcare for all Americans.

Deductibles, out-of-pocket limitations have been steadily growing. Con-

gress should be taking steps to make it easier for Americans to save, not restricting their options. The rule and the underlying bills included in this package strengthen consumer power and increase flexibility for patients in paying for their medical expenses.

I appreciate all of the work that the Members have put into the provisions of this bill. I urge my colleagues to support today's rule and the underlying legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, \$2 trillion, that is what this GOP Congress added to the debt last year when they passed their tax scam, \$2 trillion that has been taken away from our children and grandchildren to give tax breaks to corporations and the very wealthy.

And today, we take up three bills which are estimated to add another \$100 billion. I suppose in comparison to the tax scam, that may be small potatoes, but this is real spending with no offsets and no effort to even try to find an offset. When the 115th Congress finally ends, we will have to put trillions on the Nation's credit card—trillions.

Next year, those of us who may be lucky enough to be back will have the hard task of digging ourselves out of this hole, this wall of debt that will have been created by the 115th Congress. We will have new Members here who will need to deal with the decisions that we are making here today.

Let me tell you about my experience in having to deal with those very irresponsible decisions that put us and pushed us into debt.

In 2008, when I was first elected to the State legislature, I was elected with a wall of debt of \$15 billion. My first 30 days in office, we passed four different budgets, and none of it added up. We simply couldn't pay our bills. We had charged ourselves to a place that we could no longer continue.

No one got paid for 6 or 7 months—no one, not the small contractors doing business with the State of California, not the big contractors, not our State employees, not even the members of the legislature. As a matter of fact, I don't come from money, so every month I took a loan to make my mortgage. And this is where the 115th Congress is leading us today. There are no easy choices.

Mr. Speaker, this rule makes in order H.R. 6199, the Restoring Access to Medication and Modernizing Health Savings Accounts Act of 2018. H.R. 6199 claims to restore access to medication and modernizes health savings accounts. This bill makes minor changes that largely favor higher income-earning individuals who can afford to set aside that extra money for things like gym memberships.

This is not, however, the worst bill we have voted on this year. And some

of us may end up even voting for it. After all, I support fixes to the Affordable Care Act. We all do. However, it does not address the destructive actions by President Trump that have disproportionately affected low-income families.

After nearly 70 unsuccessful repeal attempts by this Congress, this administration has, sadly, turned to chipping away at the Affordable Care Act. President Trump has resorted to undoing key provisions of the healthcare law without offering any working fixes, which ultimately puts in jeopardy access to healthcare.

He has eliminated the individual mandate, which alone will increase premiums by 9 or 10 percent, and he is expanding plans that offer slimmer benefits and reduce consumer protection, also known as junk plans, as they cover nothing.

Healthcare plans that can charge you more for being a woman or for being older or for having a preexisting condition, these plans can also outright deny coverage to anyone, putting 130 million Americans' healthcare at risk. Expanding these volatile health plans into the marketplace will also increase premiums between 1 and 4 percent.

Almost a year ago, the Trump administration announced that they were canceling cost-sharing reduction payments which helped nearly 6 million low-income Americans better afford medical services by lowering deductibles and copayments. This alone caused premiums in 2018 to increase by 20 percent, all while this majority won't even try to find a \$100 billion offset. Cutting cost-sharing payments increased the deficit by \$200 billion. The administration also recently cut additional outreach and consumer education dollars to local organizations by \$10 million.

And this is not the first time that they cut these critical dollars. From the very beginning of this administration, millions of dollars in outreach, customer assistance and other help and total enrollment time was cut out. Additionally, we are still waiting on a solution to combat the rising prescription drug crisis, which was promised by this administration.

The increasing cost of prescription drugs in combination with the forecasted increase in medical price inflation will also raise premiums between 5.7 and 6.5 percent next year.

Earlier this month, President Trump announced yet another sabotage: that he will not make the \$10.4 billion in risk adjustment payments, which will also increase premiums. These risk adjustment payments protect consumers by ensuring insurance companies don't cherry-pick between the healthy and the sick.

It was very telling last week when the Ways and Means Committee chairman said that GOP lawmakers were exploring a possible legislative fix to restart the risk adjustment payments that President Trump abruptly sus-

pending. The House GOP leadership knows the harm President Trump is causing. Why don't we do something about it today?

The common theme here is an administration consistently undoing key provisions in our healthcare system, putting Americans' health at risk, increasing premiums, which fall squarely on the shoulders of our families and will add billions of dollars to our deficit.

This isn't the Affordable Care Act. This is TrumpCare. This bill is more of the same. Instead of finding solutions for the families that need it the most, this bill will add \$100 billion to the deficit.

We should be spending our time making positive, meaningful improvements to our existing healthcare system that ensures millions of Americans have access to affordable healthcare coverage.

We should be discussing legislation that puts downward pressure on premiums so families don't have to worry year after year if they will be able to afford healthcare coverage.

We should be helping to stabilize the marketplace so consumers can choose from a variety of options that meet their unique family needs.

Instead, today, we are, sadly, wasting time discussing a bill that fails to address the concerns of millions of Americans.

I am proud to be from California, a State that stands up for their residents to ensure that they have access to healthcare coverage. In fact, California's comprehensive outreach and marketing program was credited with lowering premiums by 6 to 8 percent—real money. California is proof that effective advertising and outreach can increase enrollment, expand coverage, stabilize risk pools, and lower premiums.

But this administration—and through inaction, this Congress—is driving up healthcare prices for every American, including Californians. So we will vote today on this bill, and it will probably pass, and then it will die in the Senate. And while we send the Senate more legislation that they will never take up, Americans will continue to suffer.

Like I said, this isn't a bad bill, but it only benefits 6 percent of Americans—6 percent, not the 14 percent who lack healthcare insurance at all.

We must do more. We must help those who are falling further and further behind while this Congress buries us in debt.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, once again, I want to draw attention to an opinion article in today's Wall Street Journal. The title of the article is "TrumpCare Beats ObamaCare," July 23, 2018, penned by James Freeman.

"By prioritizing economic growth and reducing the tax and regulatory burdens on U.S. business, Mr. Trump

has helped to create an economy with more job openings than ever before. As if by magic, the invisible hand of a freer marketplace is now generating new benefits as employers compete to fill all those open positions."

□ 1330

"For the first time in 6 years, the share of U.S. workers offered health insurance through their employer has risen, a sign a tighter labor market is prompting businesses to offer more generous benefits. . . ."

"The Trump plan is repairing at least some of the damage caused by ObamaCare. Notes the Journal:

"Among all private-sector workers offered medical benefits, 72 percent opted to take them," which is up from the 17 percent in 2010 when it began to decline.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is to point out that this is all occurring without a new government program. This is because of the strength of the economy. This is what happens when you put the focus on creating good jobs for American workers. This is the benefit that results.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to bring up Representative RUIZ's legislation, H.R. 6479, which will ban junk insurance plans.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. RUIZ) to discuss our proposal.

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, premiums are skyrocketing across the country, caused by this administration's sabotage of the Affordable Care Act. Just listen to the insurance company CEOs who are directly stating that not funding cost-sharing reductions for point of care for patients who are struggling to pay their bills will increase premiums. And also, by not outreaching to more people and low-risk individuals to come into the insurance pool, they are also increasing the premiums for everybody else.

But rather than making healthcare more affordable for all middle class families, this Congress is focusing on making healthcare more affordable for the wealthy few.

Instead of protecting the 130 million Americans with preexisting conditions, this Congress is sitting idly by as this administration once again allows insurance companies to sell junk plans that don't even cover basic healthcare services.



At a time when we should be stabilizing premiums by supporting risk-adjustment transfers and ACA enrollment outreach, the majority is refusing to act, simply ignoring the anticipated 18 percent increase in premiums for hardworking Americans throughout our country because, rather than help the American people, the majority would rather sabotage the Affordable Care Act for their own political gain.

This is wrong. So I offer the majority and all the Members of the House this choice: Members can support the previous question, ignore the people who will be priced out of healthcare, and ignore all the politically motivated actions by this administration to undermine access to affordable healthcare in our Nation; or Members can defeat the previous question so that we can bring up my bill, H.R. 6479, the Stop Junk Health Plans Act, which will lower costs and will ensure that Americans continue to have access to high-quality, affordable health plans. It is that simple.

You see, in general, there are three out-of-pocket or more than three out-of-pocket costs; in fact, one is the premiums, two is the deductibles, three is the co-pays, and four is the out-of-pocket costs Americans will have to pay if their health insurance doesn't cover those specific services.

So only focusing on premiums is a message deception. You see, with junk plans, that will increase out-of-pocket costs for patients because these junk plans may offer Americans a less expensive premium; however, the deductibles will be too expensive.

Also, if the majority goes after the essential health benefits and allows insurance companies not to cover things like emergency care, mental health, or prescription drugs, then they will be responsible for those out-of-pocket costs.

Also, if the majority does not defend the protections of people with preexisting illness—and insurance companies are now able to discriminate against those with diabetes, heart conditions, asthma, et cetera—then those individuals will have to pay more overall out-of-pocket costs either because they were denied or because health insurance companies will be able to charge them an exorbitant amount of money.

So this is why it is so important to keep patient out-of-pocket costs in perspective and not just focus on the political messaging tools of narrowly focusing on premiums, because someone can buy a low-cost premium health insurance, but, again, if it doesn't cover mental health, prescription drugs, emergency care, or other forms of guaranteed coverage under the Affordable Care Act, then they are going to have to pay that completely out of pocket.

If the majority doesn't protect patients with preexisting illness, then that is 180 million people in this country who have preexisting illnesses who

are going to have to pay more out of pocket.

So, therefore, we must focus and stabilize the health insurance market; we must lower insurance costs by increasing enrollees into the insurance market by low-risk individuals; we must protect essential coverage and protect people with preexisting illness; and we must lower drug prices and the cost of overall care.

I urge all my colleagues to make the right choice—the only choice—that supports the American people, in this case, the out-of-pocket costs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from California an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to defeat the previous question. I urge Members to do the right thing, to think strategically, and to think about the overall out-of-pocket costs.

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

Mr. Speaker, I was serving in the United States House of Representatives when the congressional Democrats passed the Affordable Care Act. I was serving in the House of Representatives when the implementation of ObamaCare happened at the end of calendar year 2013.

I have got to tell you something. The President told me I had a junk insurance plan. I was covered by a health savings account in those years. Then-President Obama told me I had a junk insurance plan and that I was going to get something better.

I have got to tell you something. I didn't get something better. I went through healthcare.gov. I bought an unsubsidized ObamaCare policy, the bronze plan. I am like any other consumer. I bought on price.

What is the cheapest thing I could afford? That was the bronze plan. The premium was unbelievable. It was three times what I had paid for a premium before for my so-called junk insurance which I had had for years, which had covered every medical contingency that had occurred in my family's life for a number of years. But now I have to buy this policy that the premium was unbelievably high. But that wasn't the worst part, Mr. Speaker. The worst part was the deductible.

Now, look, I had a health savings account. I bought one as soon as the old medical savings accounts were allowed with the passage of the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill in, I think it was, July of 1996. The rules got written the next year. People were allowed to buy medical savings accounts. I bought one. I converted to a health savings account in 2004.

I thought I knew what a high deductible was. That was the whole purpose, after all, of having that medical savings account and, now, health savings account. You have a higher deductible so your premiums are going to be a little bit lower.

My premium certainly wasn't lower, but that deductible was something unlike anything I had ever seen. I went from a \$3,500 deductible in my old health savings account with what then-President Obama said was a junk insurance policy. I went from a \$3,500 premium to a \$6,800 premium for just an individual. This is not a family policy, just for an individual.

Now, let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker. Someone wakes up at 3 in the morning with a kidney stone, the worst pain they have ever had in their life. They go to the emergency room basically to get a shot of morphine and an appointment with a urologist the next day and hopefully pass the darn thing. That exercise can cost in excess of \$4,000. If you have a \$6,800 deductible, guess what. That is all on you. Your coverage is meaningless at that point. And at the same time, you are having to pay a very expensive premium for coverage that is not there when you need it.

I am not an expert on this, Mr. Speaker, but I would call that junk insurance. That is what then-President Obama and the Congressional Democrats brought us with the passage of the so-called Affordable Care Act. I would far rather go back to those days before.

Most people don't understand why it is they have less coverage now and it costs them more money. Yeah, they heard the argument, if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor; if you like your coverage, you can keep your coverage. They recognize that perhaps that was political hyperbole. But what they do not understand is: Why am I having to pay so much more now to get so much less?

Mr. Speaker, I submit that the ability for individuals to buy health savings accounts is not junk insurance. That is coverage that people can use. That is help for right now.

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

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, in the first 12 months of this administration, 3.2 million people have lost their healthcare because of the sabotage of this administration. As a matter of fact, last year, we had the highest increase in the number of uninsured since the ACA was passed.

When the ACA was passed, I was not in Congress. I was a State legislator in California, where we embraced the ACA, where we made it work for our families, and where we reached out to our constituents and asked: How can we make it better?

This is not the ceiling; this is the floor.

As State representatives, we felt that we had an urgency to act, to make it better and make it work for our constituents. That is what we did, and that is why the California exchange is so successful.

But that didn't happen in other States controlled by Republican legislators and Republican Governors. Unfortunately, they chose to do the opposite, and that has hurt their constituents.

Mr. Speaker, the bill we are considering today will add another \$100 billion to our national debt. That is not a small thing.

When the bill comes due for this expenditure, how are we going to pay for it? What is the plan? Where is the budget? Where is the fiscal conservatism here?

Will the House GOP majority then go after the least fortunate Americans by cutting Medicaid? Or maybe they will go after American seniors and cut Medicare and Social Security.

These are the questions people will be asking themselves when they exercise their American civic duty this fall. Americans will have to decide: Are trillions in tax cuts for wealthy corporations worth it to me if it means that I can't go to the doctor?

That is why we have to offer real solutions, and we can start by paying for these bills today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose the previous question and the rule because we owe it to our future generations who will have to answer for our actions here today.

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

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

First off, Mr. Speaker, let me reference an article from the Investor's Business Daily from April 10 of this year. I am quoting Investor's Business Daily:

"When the Congressional Budget Office released its updated budget forecast, everyone focused on the deficit number. But buried in the report was the Congressional Budget Office's tacit admission that it vastly overestimated the cost of the Trump tax cuts because it didn't account for the strong economic growth they would generate.

"Among the many details in the report, the one reporters focused on was the Congressional Budget Office's forecast that the Federal deficit would top \$1 trillion in 2020. . . ."

Most of the news accounts blame the tax cuts.

I am continuing to quote here:

"But there's more to the story that the media overlooked.

"First, the CBO revised its economic forecast sharply upward this year and next.

"Last June, the CBO said GDP growth for 2018 would be just 2 percent. Now it figures growth will be 3.3 percent"—this was last April, Mr. Speaker; I suspect it is probably going to be higher at the end of this quarter—"a significant upward revision. It also boosted its forecast for 2019 from a meager 1.5 percent to a respectable 2.4 percent."

□ 1345

Mr. Speaker, the tax cuts are working to boost economic growth. Obvi-

ously, the story is far from completed, but the revenue generated by that increased growth is more than enough to offset the tax cuts that were passed by this body last December.

Mr. Speaker, today's rule allows the House to take another step in fixing the problems created by the Affordable Care Act and returning control of healthcare spending back to patients, where it belongs.

H.R. 6199, the Restoring Access to Medication Act of 2018, will allow those Americans with health savings accounts to use those accounts to pay for over-the-counter medications, the practice which existed up until the Democrats took away that ability in the Affordable Care Act. This is the right thing to do.

I want to thank Representative JENKINS for her leadership on this legislation and the Members who contributed to the package that is before us today. I urge my colleagues to support today's rule and support the underlying bills.

The material previously referred to by Mrs. TORRES is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 1012 OFFERED BY  
Ms. TORRES

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

SEC. 7. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 6479) to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to include short-term limited duration plans in the definition of individual health insurance coverage. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 8. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 6479.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT  
IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308-311), de-

scribes the vote on the previous question on the rule as "a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge." To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that "the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition" in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: "The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition."

The Republican majority may say "the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever." But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: "Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule. . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment."

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled "Amending Special Rules" states: "a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate." (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: "Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon."

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on ordering the

previous question on House Resolution 1012 will be followed by 5-minutes votes on:

Adoption of House Resolution 1012, if ordered;

Ordering the previous question on House Resolution 1011; and

Adoption of House Resolution 1011, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 224, nays 184, not voting 20, as follows:

[Roll No. 368]

YEAS—224

Abraham Goodlatte Palazzo  
 Aderholt Gosar Palmer  
 Allen Gowdy Paulsen  
 Amash Granger Pearce  
 Amodei Graves (GA) Perry  
 Arrington Graves (LA) Pittenger  
 Babin Griffith Poe (TX)  
 Bacon Grothman Poliquin  
 Banks (IN) Guthrie Posey  
 Barletta Handel Ratcliffe  
 Barr Harper Reed  
 Barton Harris Reichert  
 Bergman Hensarling Renacci  
 Biggs Herrera Beutler Rice (SC)  
 Bilirakis Hice, Jody B. Roby  
 Bishop (MI) Higgins (LA) Roe (TN)  
 Bishop (UT) Hill Rogers (AL)  
 Blum Holding Rogers (KY)  
 Bost Hollingsworth Rohrabacher  
 Brady (TX) Hudson Rooney, Francis  
 Brat Huizenga Rooney, Thomas  
 Brooks (AL) Hultgren J.  
 Brooks (IN) Hunter Ros-Lehtinen  
 Buchanan Hurd Roskam  
 Buck Issa Ross  
 Bucshon Jenkins (KS) Rothfus  
 Budd Jenkins (WV) Rouzer  
 Burgess Johnson (LA) Royce (CA)  
 Byrne Johnson (OH) Russell  
 Calvert Johnson, Sam Rutherford  
 Carter (GA) Jones Sanford  
 Carter (TX) Jordan Scalise  
 Chabot Joyce (OH) Schweikert  
 Cheney Katko Scott, Austin  
 Cloud Kelly (MS) Sensenbrenner  
 Coffman Kelly (PA) Sessions  
 Cole King (NY) Shimkus  
 Collins (GA) Kinzinger Shuster  
 Collins (NY) Knight Stimpson  
 Comer Kustoff (TN) Labrador  
 Comstock Labrador Smith (NE)  
 Conaway LaHood Smith (NJ)  
 Cook LaMalfa Smith (TX)  
 Costello (PA) Lamborn Smucker  
 Cramer Lance Stefanik  
 Crawford Latta Stewart  
 Culberson Lesko Stivers  
 Curbelo (FL) Lewis (MN) Taylor  
 Curtis LoBiondo Tenney  
 Davidson Loudermilk Thompson (PA)  
 Davis, Rodney Love Thornberry  
 Denham Lucas Tipton  
 DeSantis Luetkemeyer Trott  
 DesJarlais MacArthur Turner  
 Diaz-Balart Marchant Upton  
 Donovan Marino Valadao  
 Duffy Marshall Wagner  
 Duncan (SC) Massie Walberg  
 Duncan (TN) Mast Walden  
 Dunn McCaul Walker  
 Emmer McCaul Walorski  
 Estes (KS) McClintock Walters, Mimi  
 Faso McHenry Weber (TX)  
 Ferguson McKinley Webster (FL)  
 Fitzpatrick McMorris Wenstrup  
 Fleischmann Rodgers Westerman  
 Flores McSally Williams  
 Fortenberry Meadows Wilson (SC)  
 Foxx Mitchell Wittman  
 Frelinghuysen Moolenaar Womack  
 Gaetz Mooney (WV) Woodall  
 Gallagher Mullin Yoho  
 Garrett Newhouse Young (AK)  
 Gianforte Norman Young (IA)  
 Gibbs Nunes Zeldin  
 Gohmert Olson

NAYS—184

Adams Barragan Beatty  
 Aguilar Bass Bera

Beyer Gonzalez (TX) Norcross  
 Bishop (GA) Gottheimer O'Halleran  
 Blumenauer Green, Al O'Rourke  
 Blunt Rochester Green, Gene Pallone  
 Bonamici Grijalva Panetta  
 Boyle, Brendan Gutiérrez Pascarell  
 F. Hastings Payne  
 Brady (PA) Heck Pelosi  
 Brown (MD) Higgins (NY) Perlmutter  
 Brownley (CA) Himes Peters  
 Bustos Hoyer Peterson  
 Butterfield Huffman Pingree  
 Capuano Jackson Lee Pocan  
 Carbajal Jayapal Polis  
 Cárdenas Johnson (GA) Quigley  
 Carson (IN) Johnson, E. B. Raskin  
 Cartwright Kaptur Rice (NY)  
 Castor (FL) Keating Richmond  
 Castro (TX) Kelly (IL) Rosen  
 Chu, Judy Kennedy Roybal-Allard  
 Cicilline Khanna Ruiz  
 Clark (MA) Kihuen Ruppertsberger  
 Clarke (NY) Kildee Rush  
 Clay Kilmer Ryan (OH)  
 Cleaver Kind Sánchez  
 Clyburn Krishnamoorthi Sarbanes  
 Cohen Kuster (NH) Schakowsky  
 Connolly Lamb Schiff  
 Cooper Langevin Schneider  
 Correa Larsen (WA) Schrader  
 Costa Larson (CT) Scott (VA)  
 Courtney Lawrence Scott, David  
 Crist Lawson (FL) Serrano  
 Crowley Lee Sewell (AL)  
 Cuellar Levin Shea-Porter  
 Cummings Lewis (GA) Sherman  
 Davis (CA) Lieu, Ted Sinema  
 Davis, Danny Loeb sack Sires  
 DeFazio Lofgren Smith (WA)  
 DeGette Lowenthal Soto  
 Delaney Lowey Suozzi  
 DeLauro Lujan Grisham, Swallow (CA)  
 DelBene M. Takano  
 Demings Luján, Ben Ray Thompson (CA)  
 DeSaulnier Lynch Thompson (MS)  
 Deutch Maloney, Titus  
 Dingell Carolyn B. Tonko  
 Doggett Maloney, Sean Torres  
 Doyle, Michael Matsui Tsongas  
 F. McCollum Vargas  
 Engel McEachin Veasey  
 Españillat McGovern Vela  
 Esty (CT) McNerney Velázquez  
 Evans Meeke Visclosky  
 Foster Meng Wasserman  
 Frankel (FL) Moulton Schultz  
 Fudge Murphy (FL) Waters, Maxine  
 Gabbard Nadler Watson Coleman  
 Gallego Napolitano Welch  
 Garamendi Neal Wilson (FL)  
 Gomez Nolan Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—20

Black Jeffries Price (NC)  
 Blackburn King (IA) Rokita  
 Ellison Lipinski Smith (MO)  
 Eshoo Long Speier  
 Graves (MO) Messer Walz  
 Hanabusa Moore Yoder  
 Hartzler Noem

□ 1412

So the previous question was ordered. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:  
 Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present during rollcall vote No. 368 on July 24, 2018. Had I been present, on rollcall vote No. 368, I would have voted "no."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered. The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 229, noes 179, not voting 20, as follows:

[Roll No. 369]  
 AYES—229  
 Abraham Gottheimer Palazzo  
 Aderholt Gowdy Palmer  
 Allen Granger Paulsen  
 Amash Graves (GA) Pearce  
 Amodei Graves (LA) Perry  
 Arrington Griffith Pittenger  
 Babin Grothman Poe (TX)  
 Bacon Guthrie Poliquin  
 Banks (IN) Handel Posey  
 Barletta Harper Ratcliffe  
 Barr Harris Reed  
 Barton Hensarling Reichert  
 Bergman Herrera Beutler Renacci  
 Biggs Hice, Jody B. Rice (SC)  
 Bilirakis Higgins (LA) Roby  
 Bishop (MI) Hill Roe (TN)  
 Bishop (UT) Holding Rogers (AL)  
 Blum Hollingsworth Rogers (KY)  
 Bost Hudson Rohrabacher  
 Brady (TX) Huizenga Rooney, Francis  
 Brat Hultgren Rooney, Thomas  
 Brooks (AL) Hunter J.  
 Brooks (IN) Hurd Ros-Lehtinen  
 Buchanan Issa Roskam  
 Buck Jenkins (KS) Ross  
 Bucshon Jenkins (WV) Rothfus  
 Budd Johnson (LA) Rouzer  
 Burgess Johnson (OH) Royce (CA)  
 Byrne Johnson, Sam Russell  
 Calvert Jones Rutherford  
 Carter (GA) Jordan Sanford  
 Carter (TX) Joyce (OH) Scalise  
 Chabot Katko Schneider  
 Cheney Kelly (MS) Schweikert  
 Cloud Kelly (PA) Scott, Austin  
 Coffman King (NY) Smith (NJ)  
 Cole Kinzinger Smith (TX)  
 Collins (GA) Knight Smucker  
 Collins (NY) Knight Stimpson  
 Comer Kustoff (TN) Labrador  
 Comstock Labrador Smith (NE)  
 Conaway LaHood Smith (NJ)  
 Cook LaMalfa Smith (TX)  
 Costello (PA) Lamborn Smucker  
 Cramer Lance Stefanik  
 Crawford Latta Stewart  
 Culberson Lesko Stivers  
 Curbelo (FL) Lewis (MN) Taylor  
 Curtis LoBiondo Tenney  
 Davidson Loudermilk Thompson (PA)  
 Davis, Rodney Love Thornberry  
 Denham Lucas Tipton  
 DeSantis Luetkemeyer Trott  
 DesJarlais MacArthur Turner  
 Diaz-Balart Marchant Upton  
 Donovan Marino Valadao  
 Duffy Marshall Wagner  
 Duncan (SC) Massie Walberg  
 Duncan (TN) Mast Walden  
 Dunn McCaul Walker  
 Emmer McCaul Walorski  
 Estes (KS) McClintock Walters, Mimi  
 Faso McHenry Weber (TX)  
 Ferguson McKinley Webster (FL)  
 Fitzpatrick McMorris Wenstrup  
 Fleischmann Rodgers Westerman  
 Flores McSally Williams  
 Fortenberry Meadows Wilson (SC)  
 Foxx Mitchell Wittman  
 Frelinghuysen Moolenaar Womack  
 Gaetz Mooney (WV) Woodall  
 Gallagher Mullin Yoho  
 Garrett Newhouse Young (AK)  
 Gianforte Norman Young (IA)  
 Gibbs Nunes Zeldin  
 Gohmert Olson

NOES—179

Adams Butterfield Cooper  
 Aguilar Capuano Correa  
 Barragan Carbajal Costa  
 Bass Cárdenas Courtney  
 Beatty Carson (IN) Crist  
 Bera Cartwright Crowley  
 Beyer Castor (FL) Cuellar  
 Bishop (GA) Castro (TX) Cummings  
 Blumenauer Chu, Judy Davis (CA)  
 Blumenauer Blunt Rochester Cicilline  
 Bonamici Clark (MA) DeFazio  
 Boyle, Brendan Clarke (NY) DeGette  
 F. F. Delaney  
 Brady (PA) Cleaver DeLauro  
 Brown (MD) Brown (MD) Clyburn  
 Brownley (CA) Cohen DelBene  
 Bustos Connolly Demings  
 DeSaulnier

Deutch	Larsen (WA)	Quigley
Dingell	Larson (CT)	Raskin
Doggett	Lawrence	Rice (NY)
Doyle, Michael F.	Lawson (FL)	Richmond
Engel	Lee	Rosen
Eshoo	Levin	Roybal-Allard
Espallat	Lewis (GA)	Ruiz
Esty (CT)	Lieu, Ted	Rush
Evans	Loeb sack	Ryan (OH)
Foster	Lofgren	Sánchez
Frankel (FL)	Lowenthal	Sarbanes
Fudge	Lowe y	Schakowsky
Gabbard	Lujan Grisham, M.	Schiff
Gallego	Luján, Ben Ray	Schrader
Garamendi	Lynch	Scott (VA)
Gomez	Maloney, Carolyn B.	Scott, David
Gonzalez (TX)	Maloney, Sean	Serrano
Green, Al	Matsui	Sewell (AL)
Green, Gene	McCollum	Shea-Porter
Grijalva	McEachin	Sherman
Gutiérrez	McGovern	Sires
Hastings	McNerney	Smith (WA)
Heck	McNerney	Soto
Higgins (NY)	Meeks	Swalwell (CA)
Himes	Meng	Takano
Hoyer	Moulton	Thompson (CA)
Huffman	Nadler	Thompson (MS)
Jackson Lee	Napolitano	Titus
Jayapal	Neal	Tonko
Jeffries	Nolan	Torres
Johnson (GA)	Norcross	Tsongas
Johnson, E. B.	O'Halleran	Vargas
Kaptur	O'Rourke	Veasey
Keating	Pallone	Vela
Kelly (IL)	Panetta	Velázquez
Kennedy	Pascarell	Visclosky
Khanna	Payne	Wasserman
Kihuen	Pelosi	Schultz
Kildee	Perlmutter	Waters, Maxine
Kilmer	Peters	Watson Coleman
Kind	Peterson	Welch
Krishnamoorthi	Pingree	Wilson (FL)
Kuster (NH)	Pocan	Yarmuth
Langevin	Polis	

NOT VOTING—20

Black	King (IA)	Rokita
Blackburn	Lipinski	Ruppersberger
Diaz-Balart	Long	Smith (MO)
Ellison	Messer	Speier
Graves (MO)	Moore	Walz
Hanabusa	Noem	Yoder
Hartzler	Price (NC)	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1420

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN MEMORY OF OFFICER JACOB J. CHESTNUT AND DETECTIVE JOHN M. GIBSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair asks that the House now observe a moment of silence in memory of Officer Jacob J. Chestnut and Detective John M. Gibson of the United States Capitol Police who were killed in the line of duty defending the Capitol on July 24, 1998.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 184, PROTECT MEDICAL INNOVATION ACT OF 2017, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 6311, INCREASING ACCESS TO LOWER PREMIUM PLANS AND EXPANDING HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS ACT OF 2018

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 1011) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 184) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 6311) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to modify the definition of qualified health plan for purposes of the health insurance premium tax credit and to allow individuals purchasing health insurance in the individual market to purchase a lower premium copper plan, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 223, nays 188, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 370]

YEAS—223

Abraham	Cramer	Hensarling
Aderholt	Crawford	Herrera Beutler
Allen	Culberson	Hice, Jody B.
Amash	Curbelo (FL)	Higgins (LA)
Amodei	Curtis	Hill
Arrington	Davidson	Holding
Babin	Davis, Rodney	Hollingsworth
Bacon	Denham	Hudson
Banks (IN)	DeSantis	Huizenga
Barletta	DesJarlais	Hultgren
Barr	Diaz-Balart	Hunter
Barton	Donovan	Hurd
Bergman	Duffy	Issa
Biggs	Duncan (SC)	Jenkins (KS)
Bilirakis	Duncan (TN)	Jenkins (WV)
Bishop (MI)	Dunn	Johnson (LA)
Bishop (UT)	Emmer	Johnson (OH)
Blum	Estes (KS)	Johnson, Sam
Bost	Faso	Jordan
Brady (TX)	Ferguson	Joyce (OH)
Brat	Fitzpatrick	Katko
Brooks (AL)	Fleischmann	Kelly (MS)
Brooks (IN)	Flores	Kelly (PA)
Buchanan	Fortenberry	King (NY)
Buck	Fox	Kinzinger
Bucshon	Frelinghuysen	Knight
Budd	Gaetz	Kustoff (TN)
Burgess	Gallagher	Labrador
Byrne	Garrett	LaHood
Calvert	Gianforte	LaMalfa
Carter (GA)	Gibbs	Lamborn
Carter (TX)	Gohmert	Lance
Chabot	Goodlatte	Latta
Cheney	Gosar	Lesko
Cloud	Gowdy	Lewis (MN)
Coffman	Granger	LoBiondo
Cole	Graves (GA)	Loudermilk
Collins (GA)	Graves (LA)	Love
Collins (NY)	Griffith	Lucas
Comer	Grothman	Luetkemeyer
Comstock	Guthrie	MacArthur
Conaway	Handel	Marchant
Cook	Harper	Marino
Costello (PA)	Harris	Marshall

Massie	Renacci	Stefanik
Mast	Rice (SC)	Stewart
McCarthy	Roby	Stivers
McCaul	Roe (TN)	Taylor
McClintock	Rogers (AL)	Tenney
McHenry	Rogers (KY)	Thompson (PA)
McKinley	Rohrabacher	Thornberry
McMorris	Rooney, Francis	Tipton
Rodgers	Rooney, Thomas J.	Trott
McSally	Ros-Lehtinen	Turner
Meadows	Roskam	Upton
Mitchell	Ross	Valadao
Moolenaar	Rothfus	Wagner
Mooney (WV)	Rouzer	Walberg
Mullin	Royce (CA)	Walden
Newhouse	Russell	Walker
Norman	Rutherford	Walorski
Nunes	Sanford	Walters, Mimi
Olson	Scalise	Weber (TX)
Palazzo	Schweikert	Webster (FL)
Palmer	Scott, Austin	Wenstrup
Paulsen	Sensenbrenner	Westerman
Pearce	Sessions	Williams
Perry	Shimkus	Wilson (SC)
Pittenger	Shuster	Wittman
Poe (TX)	Simpson	Womack
Poliquin	Smith (NE)	Woodall
Posey	Smith (NJ)	Yoho
Ratcliffe	Smith (TX)	Young (AK)
Reed	Smith (NJ)	Young (IA)
Reichert	Smucker	Zeldin

NAYS—188

Adams	Gallego	Neal
Aguilar	Garamendi	Nolan
Barragán	Gomez	Norcross
Bass	Gonzalez (TX)	O'Halleran
Beatty	Gottheimer	O'Rourke
Bera	Green, Al	Pallone
Beyer	Green, Gene	Panetta
Bishop (GA)	Grijalva	Pascarell
Blumenauer	Gutiérrez	Payne
Blunt Rochester	Hastings	Pelosi
Bonamici	Heck	Perlmutter
Boyle, Brendan F.	Higgins (NY)	Peters
Brady (PA)	Himes	Peterson
Brown (MD)	Hoyer	Pingree
Brownley (CA)	Huffman	Pocan
Bustos	Jackson Lee	Polis
Butterfield	Jayapal	Quigley
Capuano	Jeffries	Raskin
Carbajal	Johnson (GA)	Rice (NY)
Cárdenas	Johnson, E. B.	Richmond
Carson (IN)	Jones	Rosen
Cartwright	Kaptur	Roybal-Allard
Castor (FL)	Keating	Ruiz
Castro (TX)	Kelly (IL)	Ruppersberger
Chu, Judy	Kennedy	Rush
Ciциlline	Khanna	Ryan (OH)
Clark (MA)	Kihuen	Sánchez
Clarke (NY)	Kildee	Sarbanes
Clay	Kilmer	Schakowsky
Cleaver	Kind	Schiff
Clyburn	Krishnamoorthi	Kuster (NH)
Cohen	Kyburn	Schneider
Connolly	Lamb	Schrader
Cooper	Langevin	Scott (VA)
Correa	Larsen (WA)	Scott, David
Costa	Larson (CT)	Serrano
Courtney	Lawrence	Sewell (AL)
Crist	Lawson (FL)	Shea-Porter
Crowley	Lee	Sherman
Cuellar	Levin	Sinema
Cummings	Lewis (GA)	Sires
Davis (CA)	Lieu, Ted	Smith (WA)
Davis, Danny	Lipinski	Soto
DeFazio	Loeb sack	Suozzi
DeGette	Lofgren	Swalwell (CA)
Delaney	Lowenthal	Takano
DeLauro	Lowey	Thompson (CA)
DelBene	Lujan Grisham, M.	Thompson (MS)
Demings	Luján, Ben Ray	Titus
DeSaulnier	Lynch	Tonko
Deutch	Maloney, Carolyn B.	Torres
Dingell	Maloney, Sean	Tsongas
Doggett	Matsui	Vargas
Doyle, Michael F.	McCollum	Veasey
Engel	McEachin	Vela
Eshoo	McGovern	Velázquez
Espallat	McNerney	Visclosky
Esty (CT)	Meeks	Wasserman
Evans	Meng	Schultz
Foster	Moulton	Waters, Maxine
Frankel (FL)	Murphy (FL)	Watson Coleman
Fudge	Nadler	Welch
Gabbard	Napolitano	Wilson (FL)
		Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—17

Black King (IA) Rokita  
 Blackburn Long Smith (MO)  
 Ellison Messer Speier  
 Graves (MO) Moore Walz  
 Hanabusa Noem Yoder  
 Hartzler Price (NC)

Ros-Lehtinen Smith (NE)  
 Roskam Smith (NJ)  
 Ross Smith (TX)  
 Rothfus Smucker  
 Rouzer Stefanik  
 Royce (CA) Stewart  
 Russell Stivers  
 Rutherford Taylor  
 Sanford Tenney  
 Scalise Thompson (PA)  
 Schweikert Thornberry  
 Scott, Austin Tipton  
 Sensenbrenner Trott  
 Sessions Turner  
 Shimkus Upton  
 Shuster Valadao  
 Simpson Wagner  
 Sinema Walberg

Walden  
 Walker  
 Walorski  
 Walters, Mimi  
 Weber (TX)  
 Webster (FL)  
 Wenstrup  
 Westerman  
 Williams  
 Wilson (SC)  
 Wittman  
 Womack  
 Woodall  
 Yoho  
 Young (AK)  
 Young (IA)  
 Zeldin

□ 1436

So the resolution was agreed to.  
 The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.  
 A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on July 24, 2018, due to delayed travel on account of inclement weather. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: “Yes” on rollcall No. 368, “Yes” on rollcall No. 369, “Yes” on rollcall No. 370, and “Yes” on rollcall No. 371.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE  
 The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1429

So the previous question was ordered. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 225, noes 184, not voting 19, as follows:

[Roll No. 371]

AYES—225

Abraham Duncan (TN) Labrador  
 Aderholt Dunn LaHood  
 Allen Emmer LaMalfa  
 Amash Estes (KS) Lamb  
 Amodei Faso Lamborn  
 Arrington Ferguson Lance  
 Babin Fitzpatrick Latta  
 Bacon Fleischmann Lesko  
 Banks (IN) Flores Lewis (MN)  
 Barletta Fortenberry LoBiondo  
 Barr Foxx Loudermilk  
 Barton Frelinghuysen Love  
 Bergman Gaetz Lucas  
 Biggs Gallagher Luetkemeyer  
 Bilirakis Garrett MacArthur  
 Bishop (MI) Gianforte Marchant  
 Bishop (UT) Gibbs Marino  
 Blum Gohmert Marshall  
 Bost Goodlatte Massie  
 Brady (TX) Gosar Mast  
 Brat Gowdy McCarthy  
 Brooks (AL) Granger McCaul  
 Brooks (IN) Graves (GA) McClintock  
 Buchanan Graves (LA) McHenry  
 Buck Griffith McKinley  
 Bucshon Grothman McMorris  
 Budd Guthrie Rodgers  
 Burgess Handel McSally  
 Byrne Harper Meadows  
 Calvert Harris Mitchell  
 Carter (GA) Hensarling Moolenaar  
 Carter (TX) Herrera Beutler Mooney (WV)  
 Chabot Hice, Jody B. Mullin  
 Cheney Higgins (LA) Newhouse  
 Cloud Hill Norman  
 Coffman Holding Nunes  
 Cole Hollingsworth Olson  
 Collins (GA) Hudson Palazzo  
 Collins (NY) Huizenga Palmer  
 Comer Hultgren Paulsen  
 Comstock Hunter Pearce  
 Conaway Hurd Perry  
 Cook Issa Pittenger  
 Costello (PA) Jenkins (KS) Poe (TX)  
 Cramer Jenkins (WV) Poliquin  
 Crawford Johnson (LA) Posey  
 Culberson Johnson (OH) Reed  
 Curbeo (FL) Johnson, Sam Reichert  
 Curtis Jones Renacci  
 Davidson Jordan Rice (SC)  
 Davis, Rodney Joyce (OH) Roby  
 Denham Katko Roe (TN)  
 DeSantis Kelly (MS) Rogers (AL)  
 DesJarlais Kelly (PA) Rogers (KY)  
 Diaz-Balart King (NY) Rohrabacher  
 Donovan Kinzinger Rooney, Francis  
 Duffy Knight Rooney, Thomas  
 Duncan (SC) Kustoff (TN) J.

Adams Fudge  
 Aguilar Gabbard  
 Barragán Gallego  
 Bass Garamendi  
 Beatty Gomez  
 Bera Gonzalez (TX)  
 Beyer Gottheimer  
 Bishop (GA) Green, Al  
 Blumenauer Green, Gene  
 Blunt Rochester Grijalva  
 Bonamici Gutiérrez  
 Boyle, Brendan Hastings  
 F. Heck  
 Brady (PA) Higgins (NY)  
 Brown (MD) Himes  
 Brownley (CA) Hoyer  
 Bustos Huffman  
 Butterfield Jackson Lee  
 Capuano Jayapal  
 Carbajal Jeffries  
 Cárdenas Johnson (GA)  
 Carson (IN) Johnson, E. B.  
 Cartwright Kaptur  
 Castor (FL) Keating  
 Castro (TX) Kelly (L)  
 Chu, Judy Kennedy  
 Cicilline Khanna  
 Clark (MA) Kihuen  
 Clarke (NY) Kildeer  
 Clay Kilmer  
 Cleaver Kind  
 Clyburn Krishnamoorthi  
 Cohen Kuster (NH)  
 Connolly Langevin  
 Cooper Larsen (WA)  
 Correa Larson (CT)  
 Costa Lawrence  
 Courtney Lawson (FL)  
 Crist Lee  
 Crowley Lewis (GA)  
 Cuellar Lieu, Ted  
 Cummings Lipinski  
 Davis (CA) Davis (CA)  
 Davis, Danny Lofgren  
 DeFazio Lowenthal  
 DeGette Lowey  
 Delaney Lujan Grisham,  
 M. M.  
 DelBene Luján, Ben Ray  
 Demings Lynch  
 DeSaulnier Maloney,  
 Deutch Carolyn B.  
 Dingell Maloney, Sean  
 Doggett Matsui  
 Doyle, Michael McCollum  
 F. McEachin  
 Engel McGovern  
 Eshoo McNerney  
 Espaillat Meeks  
 Esty (CT) Meng  
 Evans Moulton  
 Foster Murphy (FL)  
 Frankel (FL) Nadler

Napolitano  
 Neal  
 Nolan  
 Norcross  
 O'Halleran  
 O'Rourke  
 Pallone  
 Panetta  
 Pascrell  
 Payne  
 Pelosi  
 Perlmutter  
 Peters  
 Peterson  
 Pingree  
 Pocan  
 Polis  
 Quigley  
 Raskin  
 Rice (NY)  
 Richmond  
 Rosen  
 Roybal-Allard  
 Ruiz  
 Ruppertsberger  
 Rush  
 Ryan (OH)  
 Sánchez  
 Sarbanes  
 Schakowsky  
 Schiff  
 Schneider  
 Schrader  
 Scott (VA)  
 Scott, David  
 Serrano  
 Sewell (AL)  
 Shea-Porter  
 Sherman  
 Sires  
 Smith (WA)  
 Soto  
 Suozzi  
 Swalwell (CA)  
 Takano  
 Thompson (CA)  
 Thompson (MS)  
 Titus  
 Tonko  
 Torres  
 Tsongas  
 Vargas  
 Veasey  
 Vela  
 Velázquez  
 Visclosky  
 Wasserman  
 Schultz  
 Waters, Maxine  
 Watson Coleman  
 Welch  
 Wilson (FL)  
 Yarmuth

NOES—184

NOT VOTING—19

Black Levin  
 Blackburn Long  
 Reed Messer  
 Ellison Moore  
 Graves (MO) Noem  
 Hanabusa Price (NC)  
 Hartzler Ratcliffe  
 King (IA)

Rokita  
 Smith (MO)  
 Speier  
 Walz  
 Yoder

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 589. An act to establish Department of Energy policy for science and energy research and development programs, and reform National Laboratory management and technology transfer programs, and for other purposes.  
 H.R. 2353. An act to reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2503. An act to establish Department of Energy policy for science and energy research and development programs, and reform National Laboratory management and technology transfer programs, 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.

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO CARE AND HEALTH ACT

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1201) to amend section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an additional religious exemption from the individual health coverage mandate, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1201

*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 “Equitable Access to Care and Health Act” or the “EACH Act”.

**SEC. 2. ADDITIONAL RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION FROM HEALTH COVERAGE RESPONSIBILITY REQUIREMENT.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 5000A(d)(2)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

“(A) RELIGIOUS CONSCIENCE EXEMPTIONS.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Such term shall not include any individual for any month if such individual has in effect an exemption under section 1311(d)(4)(H) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act which certifies that—

“(I) such individual is a member of a recognized religious sect or division thereof which is described in section 1402(g)(1), and is adherent of established tenets or teachings of such sect or division as described in such section; or

“(II) such individual is a member of a religious sect or division thereof which is not described in section 1402(g)(1), who relies solely on a religious method of healing, and for whom the acceptance of medical health services would be inconsistent with the religious beliefs of the individual.

“(ii) SPECIAL RULES.—

“(I) MEDICAL HEALTH SERVICES DEFINED.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the term ‘medical health services’ does not include routine dental, vision and hearing services, midwifery services, vaccinations, necessary medical services provided to children, services required by law or by a third party, and such other services as the Secretary of Health and Human Services may provide in implementing section 1311(d)(4)(H) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

“(II) ATTESTATION REQUIRED.—Clause (i)(II) shall apply to an individual for months in a taxable year only if the information provided by the individual under section 1411(b)(5)(A) of such Act includes an attestation that the individual has not received medical health services during the preceding taxable year.”

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2018.

(c) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in the amendment made by subsection (a) shall preempt any State law requiring the provision of medical treatment for children, especially those who are seriously ill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM) and the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

**GENERAL LEAVE**

Mr. ROSKAM. 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 H.R. 1201, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to see this bipartisan bill is getting a vote today.

H.R. 1201, the EACH Act, or Equitable Access to Care and Health Act, introduced by my colleague, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS from Illinois, provides commonsense relief from ObamaCare's mandate to purchase insurance from those who object on religious grounds.

This bill extends the religious conscience exemption from ObamaCare's

individual mandate to those individuals who rely solely on a religious method of healing. Receiving medical health services, as we traditionally think of them, is inconsistent with the religious belief of Christian Scientists.

This bill says that for people who choose not to use traditional healthcare or services, they are fully exempted from the Affordable Care Act's requirement to buy insurance. For Christian Scientists, if they bought the insurance plan, they wouldn't use it anyway. If you don't believe in something, why should the government force you to participate.

In healthcare, so many of our choices have been restricted because of the Affordable Care Act's domino effect across the entire healthcare sector. The EACH Act takes a step in the right direction by restoring freedom for people who had to face a dire decision of either violating their conscience by purchasing ObamaCare or violating the law. This is an unfair position that the law should not put them in, and I hope we can finally resolve this by passing the EACH Act today.

We must come together to help those who have been hurt by this intrusion into their lives. This bill has widespread bipartisan support. In fact, the House passed a similar bill last Congress by voice vote. Once more, passing the EACH Act will reduce the deficit by \$31 million.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the House has passed this bill before, making clarifications on the existing religious exemptions for healthcare. I understand that religious groups have important healthcare concerns that must be taken seriously.

I support this bill. But we should be talking about issues in healthcare that our constituents are bringing up to us every day, like skyrocketing prescription drug costs, increasing premium costs, and threats to guaranteed coverage for preexisting conditions, a direct result of efforts by my Republican colleagues.

The Trump administration continues to raise costs and reduce access to affordable healthcare in its never-ending effort to sabotage the Affordable Care Act.

In just the last few weeks, the administration has refused to defend protections for Americans with preexisting conditions, stopped risk adjustment payments to health plans covering sicker patients, and again slashed payments to the navigators that help people access healthcare insurance. These and many other misguided efforts are raising the costs for those Americans who need healthcare coverage the most.

We should be examining and responding to this growing threat to affordable care, not ignoring it.

I encourage my Republican colleagues to bring to the floor bills that truly address the healthcare cost crisis that middle class Americans and seniors are facing. After all, that was their promise to our constituents.

In 2015, the President promised:

We're going to terminate ObamaCare. We're going to terminate it, it's going to be terminated. It's going to be replaced with something much better and something much less expensive for you and for the country.

Republicans and the President have failed to present the public with a better plan, and they have failed to drive down the cost to patients.

As a matter of fact, their work has driven costs up. The cumulative ACA sabotage by the Republican Congress and the administration are adding as much as 24 percent of healthcare premium increases in my home State of California.

Now they should work with us to strengthen and protect existing programs so that our constituents can go to the doctor when they need to or get surgery or a drug that their lives depend on. As Members of Congress, this is our responsibility.

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

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, the good news for my friend from California is that tomorrow he will have an opportunity to vote on bills that will lower the costs of healthcare with the health savings account agenda that is forthcoming.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), a longstanding advocate on behalf of Christian Scientists, who has tried to bring rescue to them.

□ 1445

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM) for yielding me time, and I thank another gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) for introducing this legislation.

The Equitable Access to Care and Health Act is a bill that I strongly support. It expands the religious conscience exemption in the Affordable Care Act.

The bipartisan legislation has broad support in the House and in the Senate. It has passed the House by voice vote in the last two Congresses.

The ACA currently provides for a religious conscience exemption, but the exemption is unduly narrow and applies only to a few faiths. This exemption should be expanded to accommodate other religions whose sincerely-held religious beliefs could cause them not to purchase healthcare insurance.

With the recent repeal of the individual mandate, the CBO now estimates that the bill will result in about \$30 million in cost savings. I hope my colleagues will support this piece of legislation. It will help advance the cause of religious freedom.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.



I just want to mention that my friend and committee member was half right in what he said about tomorrow's vote. We will be voting on some healthcare bills tomorrow, and they are bills that will help. But they will help people that either have the money to pay for healthcare or people who are healthy, not the folks who need access to quality, affordable healthcare.

I would be remiss if I didn't point out that, contrary to this party's position for decades, these bills aren't paid for, and they are going to add about \$70 billion worth of costs to our national debt.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS).

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ROSKAM for his leadership on this issue. I also want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON), because this bill that we are talking about today is and has been rife with nothing but bipartisan support. It is issues like this that we can work together to correct. No matter what the bill is, no matter what some of the other outlying issues of implementation of certain laws that may or may not affect our constituents and how they do so, but the fact that we are trying to fix this once and for all, for many in this country, is a testament to what good happens here in a bipartisan fashion.

I also want to thank the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, KEVIN BRADY, my good friend, for his continued leadership on this issue and helping to make sure this bill comes back to the floor.

This Congress has an opportunity to continue the bipartisanship I just talked about and promote religious liberty and fairness by passing the EACH Act, because the EACH Act modestly expands the religious conscience exemptions under the Affordable Care Act to include individuals who rely solely on religious methods of healing.

The current religious conscience exemption under the Affordable Care Act exclusively applies to only a few select faiths. As a result, some Americans, including Christian Scientists, are required to purchase medical health insurance that does not cover the healthcare of their religious practice and choice. They are, therefore, forced with the choice of violating their conscience by purchasing traditional health insurance or violating the law by not complying with any individual mandate.

Under the EACH Act, applicants must attest annually that they are a member of a religious group, that they rely solely on a religious method of healing, and that they have not received medical health services during the preceding taxable year.

This is a very important point, Mr. Speaker. Additionally, with the help of input from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the bill makes it clear that

the legislation does not preempt any State laws requiring the provision of medical treatment for children. Further, if a parent needs to provide a necessary medical service to a child, doing so would not invalidate the individual's exemption.

The EACH Act, again, is truly an example of bipartisan legislation with input from stakeholders that actually made it better. I am proud to have worked with my friend and colleague, Mr. KEATING, on moving this legislation forward. He knows this issue well. His home State of Massachusetts established a similar religious conscience exemption in State law more than 10 years ago.

I also represent Principia College, a college for Christian Scientists in Elmhurst, Illinois, one that we have a few graduates of right here in Congress, including the last speaker, Mr. LAMAR SMITH. While working on this bill, I have heard from both students and professors from Principia on the importance of passing this legislation and what it would mean to their lives.

One such student wrote: "I feel religious liberty is such a vital part of the American exceptionalism that permeates worldly thought, and the passing of this bill will only contribute to the commitment of our government to preserve that right. My family has paid excessive amounts for healthcare, among other expenses, that we do not use due to our reliance on the Christian Science healing for prayer. I do not believe Christian Scientists should feel that they are being punished in some way for expressing their First Amendment right."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand up here today for their First Amendment right.

This legislation is about as straightforward as it gets. It is broadly bipartisan, promotes religious liberty and fairness, and it also saves the taxpayers money. The Congressional Budget Office estimated passing the EACH Act would save taxpayers an additional \$31 million, if signed into law.

The EACH Act passed this House in both the 113th and 114th Congresses, but, unfortunately, it was held up in the Senate. It is time that Congress finally passes the EACH Act out of both Chambers and sends it to the President's desk for his signature.

I urge a "yes" vote.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close. Does the gentleman from Illinois have further speakers?

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close. I yield myself the balance of my time, and I thank the sponsors for their work on this bill. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

We hold conscience in this House tenderly. Our Founders were wise. In the

First Amendment to the Bill of Rights, the first freedom that they articulated was our freedom to worship. What you are hearing today is a bipartisan consensus that we value that, and we recognize the power of conscience, the power of religious liberty, the power of being able to worship as one pleases. That is something that Mr. DAVIS from Illinois is advocating today, Mr. THOMPSON is supporting as well, along with the longstanding work of Mr. SMITH from Texas.

Passing this bill will give those who object to health insurance on religious grounds the ability to opt out of the system that they don't want to participate in, in its entirety. They won't have to face a choice between violating their belief and violating the law anymore. I urge its passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1201, 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.

#### NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH SAVINGS IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1476) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permit individuals eligible for Indian Health Service assistance to qualify for health savings accounts, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1476

*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 "Native American Health Savings Improvement Act".

#### SEC. 2. INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE FOR INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE ASSISTANCE NOT DISQUALIFIED FROM HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 223(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(D) SPECIAL RULE FOR INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE FOR ASSISTANCE UNDER INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE PROGRAMS.—For purposes of subparagraph (A)(ii), an individual shall not be treated as covered under a health plan described in such subparagraph merely because the individual receives hospital care or medical services under a medical care program of the Indian Health Service or of a tribal organization."

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2018.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM) and the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROSKAM. 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 H.R. 1476, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to stand before you today as we consider H.R. 1476, the Native American Health Savings Improvement Act, a bipartisan bill introduced by Mr. MOOLENAAR of Michigan, that makes commonsense improvements to current rules surrounding health savings accounts and those who get care through the Indian Health Service.

Generally, anyone covered solely by a high-deductible health plan that meets certain requirements is allowed to make tax-free contributions to a health savings account. But for certain individuals who receive care through the Indian Health Service, this isn't the case.

Under IRS guidance, an individual who has received medical services at an Indian Health Service facility at any time during the previous 3 months is ineligible to make contributions to an HSA. This practice could discourage those who rely on care delivered at an Indian Health Service facility from participating in an HSA. This should be fixed so that these enrollees can avail themselves to the benefits of Health Savings Accounts.

High-deductible health plans and health savings accounts are critical components of consumer-driven healthcare. Together, they empower individuals and families to shop around. They unleash the power of choice and competition that are so badly needed in healthcare to lower costs and improve quality today. These are the elements we need to encourage in the system, if we are going to start bending the cost curve in the right direction, and if we want to lower barriers to these types of accounts and encourage individuals who are otherwise eligible not to forgo treatment at an Indian Health Service facility simply because of confusion over when they might be able to resume contributing to their HSA.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bipartisan legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the House has passed this bill before. It allows individuals eligible for Indian Health Service, or IHS, to participate in a health savings account if they are enrolled in a high-deductible health plan.

I support this bill. We should be talking about issues in healthcare that strengthen our healthcare system for all Americans while addressing the issues in the Indian Health Service program, and there should be no exception to that today.

Given the important role IHS plays providing primary care to our Native American population, we should be working to ensure that all participants in IHS have access to high-quality care. Reports of underfunding and resulting substandard care need to be addressed, so we make sure that all individuals that this healthcare program serves benefit from the congressional action that we take, not just those who happen to have the money to put in an HSA, to pay for an HSA.

We shouldn't overlook the important role Medicare and Medicaid play in providing healthcare to these populations. Thousands of IHS beneficiaries are also enrolled in Medicare, Medicaid, or some combination of both.

Republicans are looking to dramatically cut and undermine these critical programs. Offering IHS enrollees a savings account won't make up for damage inflicted by the cuts to Medicaid or Medicare.

Instead, we should strengthen both of these programs and coordinate care with IHS to make sure individuals are getting the best care possible.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MOOLENAAR).

Mr. MOOLENAAR. Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank Chairman BRADY of the House Committee on Ways and Means for his leadership of the committee, and also Mr. ROSKAM and Mr. THOMPSON for their support here on the floor today.

I also want to thank Congressman RAUL RUIZ for cosponsoring this legislation and making it bipartisan.

This legislation before us today, H.R. 1476, will improve access to health savings accounts for Native Americans who choose to receive care at Indian Health Service facilities by ending an unnecessary penalty against them.

Mr. Speaker, if you or I were to use a health savings account, we would be able to immediately make a contribution to it the day after you receive care at a doctor's office. There is no prohibition on making those contributions.

However, right now, Native Americans across the country, including my constituents, cannot do the same thing if they receive treatment from a doctor at the Indian Health Service. Instead, they are prohibited from immediately saving the money they earned and must wait for 3 months before they can make another contribution into the personal account they use to provide for their health and that of their family.

This makes no sense. Instead, this commonsense legislation eliminates the problem. If this bill becomes law, Native Americans will no longer have

to wait 3 months. They will be able to receive treatment from Indian Health Service doctors near them and save money in their HSAs whenever they want.

This is a bipartisan, patient-centered solution to a government-created problem.

□ 1500

It will benefit the Saginaw Chipewas in my district as well as Tribes throughout Michigan and across the country. It will help those who work hard to save money and take care of their families.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their support of this legislation.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the sponsors of this bill, and I want to give a particular shout-out to Congressman RAUL RUIZ, also Dr. RUIZ when he is not in Congress, for his cosponsorship of this bill and all the hard work that he has put into this effort.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to cast an "aye" vote for this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, about 22 million Americans are covered by high-deductible health plans with an HSA. These are options that are increasingly popular across the spectrum because they lower premiums and they are a vehicle to save for other healthcare expenses.

I think this is a good bill. It has been well articulated this afternoon, particularly by the bill's sponsor and by Mr. THOMPSON, and I urge its passage.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1476, 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.

WATER AND AGRICULTURE TAX  
REFORM ACT OF 2018

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 519) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to facilitate water leasing and water transfers to promote conservation and efficiency, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 519

*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 "Water and Agriculture Tax Reform Act of 2018".

**SEC. 2. FACILITATE WATER LEASING AND WATER TRANSFERS TO PROMOTE CONSERVATION AND EFFICIENCY.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (12) of section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(J) TREATMENT OF MUTUAL DITCH IRRIGATION COMPANIES.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a mutual ditch or irrigation company or of a like organization to a mutual ditch or irrigation company, subparagraph (A) shall be applied without taking into account—

“(I) any income received or accrued from the sale, lease, or exchange of fee or other interests in real and personal property, including interests in water (other than income derived from the sale, lease, or transfer of water to nonmembers outside the river basin or basins within which the mutual ditch or irrigation company operates),

“(II) any income received or accrued from the sale or exchange of stock in a mutual ditch or irrigation company (or in a like organization to a mutual ditch or irrigation company) or contract rights for the delivery or use of water, or

“(III) any income received or accrued from the investment of income described in subclause (I) or (II),

except that any income described in subclause (I), (II), or (III) which is distributed or expended for expenses (other than for operations, maintenance, and capital improvements) of the mutual ditch or irrigation company or of the like organization to a mutual ditch or irrigation company (as the case may be) shall be treated as nonmember income in the year in which it is distributed or expended. For purposes of the preceding sentence, expenses (other than for operations, maintenance, and capital improvements) include expenses for the construction of conveyances designed to deliver water outside of the system of the mutual ditch or irrigation company or of the like organization.

“(ii) TREATMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL GOVERNANCE.—In the case of a mutual ditch or irrigation company or of a like organization to a mutual ditch or irrigation company, where State law provides that such a company or organization may be organized in a manner that permits voting on a basis which is pro rata to share ownership on corporate governance matters, subparagraph (A) shall be applied without taking into account whether its member shareholders have one vote on corporate governance matters per share held in the corporation. Nothing in this clause shall be construed to create any inference about the requirements of this subsection for companies or organizations not included in this clause.”

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2018.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM) and the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 519, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT), and I ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to control that time.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 519, which would provide tax-exempt mutual irrigation companies with more flexibility in respect to funding their operations, maintenance, and improvement of their water infrastructure, especially in drought-stricken areas.

Tax-exempt mutual ditch or irrigation companies are important to rural communities and to agriculture. These companies allow farmers, ranchers, and others, including water users and even some urban water users, to collaborate and pool resources to install and maintain vital infrastructure for the delivery of water.

To maintain their tax-exempt status, however, mutual ditch or irrigation companies must satisfy Tax Code requirements that the bulk of their income, which is used to fund operations and capital improvements, must be from the shareholders of these irrigation and water delivery districts.

H.R. 519 allows these companies to receive other sources of income and still maintain their tax-exempt status. The bill provides that, for the income from other sources to receive this preferential tax treatment, it generally must be used for operations and maintenance to ensure that these funds will be reinvested in irrigation infrastructure systems.

This bill would provide mutual irrigation companies with more flexibility with respect to funding their operations and maintaining improvements to their water infrastructure, especially in the drought-stricken areas, and it will facilitate more efficient water allocation in support of these rural economies.

This bill also clarifies that governance matters in regard to these mutual ditch or irrigation companies may be arranged as permitted under the State laws.

This bill supports local economies, promotes more efficient use of water, helps farmers and ranchers in many arid areas, and actually is just much fairer in how these resources are maintained and the ability to maintain these districts under the understanding of the current Tax Code.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before us will allow certain entities to retain their tax exemption so long as they are generally reinvesting that revenue in oper-

ations and maintenance, including capital projects.

As a farmer from California, I know well how critical water infrastructure improvements are to small irrigation districts. This change will help irrigation districts continue to invest in drought-resilient projects instead of relying on rate increases.

In States like mine, both drought-stricken and reliant on irrigation districts for water deliveries, infrastructure investment is a critical tool to help us prepare for future droughts. But we must also ensure that Federal policy changes do not create unintended consequences for water users.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Representative BUCK and Chairman BRADY for working with me to include guardrails in this bill that will eliminate financial incentives to transfer water among regions in a way that disadvantages agricultural enterprise, impairs water quality, or causes environmental harm. This protection against potential for abuse resulting from the policy changes in H.R. 519 should prevent undue harm to my northern California constituents.

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

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, just sort of a quick commentary.

I want to thank the gentleman from California for his input, his observations. He has been incredibly constructive and paid a lot of attention to protecting his constituents. Those of us from arid areas, we care a lot about this.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BUCK).

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) for giving me this opportunity to speak on behalf of H.R. 519, the Water and Agriculture Tax Reform Act of 2018.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. THOMPSON for his work on this and making sure that this is, in fact, a bipartisan effort and a much better bill than it started out as.

I also want to thank Chairman BRADY in the Ways and Means Committee for working with me to bring this bill to the floor. I introduced this bill last year, and Chairman BRADY has been a good partner in assisting with its passage from the committee.

Mr. Speaker, farmers, ranchers, and families, businesses, sportsmen, everyone in my district relies on water for their livelihood, but in the arid prairies of the Great Plains, water is running short. Under the blistering Colorado Sun, poorly watered crops quickly become less productive and may die altogether.

Farmers around my district tell me they are moving operations elsewhere because they don't have access to water or they simply can't afford it. Agricultural communities around the Nation will face economic crisis if farmers and ranchers cannot afford water.

H.R. 519 is a key step towards solving this problem. It offers farmers and ranchers an affordable water supply; and in doing so, it supports not only our agricultural communities, but everyone in America who relies on farms and ranches for food.

My bill seeks to help farmers by empowering them to support each other. Many farmers rely on nonprofit, member-owned cooperatives to supply their water. These mutual irrigation and ditch companies give farmers ownership in their water supply. However, current IRS regulations prohibit these nonprofits from generating more than 15 percent of their revenue from nonmember sources. If they exceed this 15 percent threshold, they lose their tax-exempt status.

H.R. 519 responds by removing caps on how much revenue these water companies can raise from nonmember sources, allowing them, for example, to sell water access for recreational use or raise funds through crossing fees. The only requirement is that this revenue must be reinvested in maintenance, operations, and infrastructure improvements, keeping water prices affordable for the members and upholding the nonprofit ideals of the cooperative. With this financial freedom, mutual irrigation and ditch companies can continue to play a vital role in supporting our Nation's farmers.

The bill also reforms the IRS treatment of member voting eligibility for cooperatives, protecting mutual associations that have complied with State law for years. By empowering nonprofit mutual irrigation ditch companies to raise revenue from nonmember sources, H.R. 519 will reduce the cost of water for cash-strapped farmers.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to help our rural communities and, frankly, all of America by passing the Water and Agriculture Tax Reform Act.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the sponsors of this bill, in particular Congressman BUCK for his good work working with me to ensure that we were able to take care of some concerns that we had in the original drafting of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote for this piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for a very quick closing.

In a previous life, I was the treasurer of Maricopa County. We had 3,300 taxing districts in this county. A substantial number of those taxing districts were actually just these, irrigation and water delivery. Many of them were in the rural parts of my county, but a lot of them, you would be surprised, were actually in the suburban and even some in downtown Phoenix.

I have actually had a conversation with a couple of them, one asking if they had an excess water allocation that year, could they actually sell it to the local pond, the little conservation reserve in our riverbed, and those things; and if they did so, if that amount of money exceeded 15 percent of their revenues, would they blow up their tax status.

In this case, this legislation would prevent that, but they still have to use that money to constantly improve their infrastructure, therefore, I believe, being more water economical.

So this is a good thing for our communities, particularly rural, particularly the uniqueness of those of us in the desert Southwest.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes," and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 519, 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.

#### ENSURING INTEGRITY IN THE IRS WORKFORCE ACT OF 2018

Ms. JENKINS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3500) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prohibit the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service from rehiring any employee of the Internal Revenue Service who was involuntarily separated from service for misconduct, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3500

*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 "Ensuring Integrity in the IRS Workforce Act of 2018".*

##### SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON REHIRING ANY EMPLOYEE OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE WHO WAS INVOLUNTARILY SEPARATED FROM SERVICE FOR MISCONDUCT.

*(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7804 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:*

*"(d) PROHIBITION ON REHIRING EMPLOYEES INVOLUNTARILY SEPARATED.—The Commissioner may not hire any individual previously employed by the Commissioner who was removed for misconduct under this subchapter or chapter 43 or chapter 75 of title 5, United States Code, or whose employment was terminated under section 1203 of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 (26 U.S.C. 7804 note)."*

*(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to the hiring of employees after the date of the enactment of this Act.*

##### SEC. 3. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

*No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this Act and the amendments made by this Act. Such requirements shall*

*be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Kansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JENKINS 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 include extraneous material on H.R. 3500, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. JENKINS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today we are taking up H.R. 3500, the bipartisan Ensuring Integrity in the IRS Workforce Act. This bill seeks to provide additional safeguards within the IRS by prohibiting the agency from rehiring any individual previously employed by the IRS but removed for misconduct or terminated for cause.

□ 1515

Before we talk more about this bill, I would like to take a moment just to thank the bill's sponsor, Representative KRISTI NOEM from South Dakota, for her tireless work on this bill.

Last Congress, a version of this bill passed the House of Representatives with overwhelming, bipartisan support. This Congress, we made some small changes to the bill to address some of my colleagues' concerns and we hope that they will continue to support the bill in its new form. We are also encouraged to see its presence in the bipartisan Taxpayer First Act, introduced by chairman and ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee just last week.

As we all know, IRS employees have access to Americans' most sensitive information, such as our Social Security numbers, home addresses, and how much we are paid. Given the magnitude of the sensitive information that the IRS holds, hiring employees of high integrity is essential to maintaining public trust in tax administration and safeguarding taxpayer information.

In 2017, work by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, or TIGTA, raised serious concerns about the IRS's continued practice of rehiring former employees with conduct and performance issues. The inspector general concluded that the IRS does not have effective hiring policies to fully consider past employee conduct and performance issues prior to making a tentative decision to rehire them.

I should note that this is the second such report that the inspector general has published. In 2014, the inspector general first alerted Congress to this

issue, finding that the IRS was rehiring former employees with significant conduct or performance issues.

So what types of conduct are we talking about here? We are talking about IRS employees who threatened their coworkers, didn't pay their own taxes, were excessively absent, falsified employment forms, or were so deficient in their jobs that the IRS had no choice but to terminate their employment. There were also instances where employees accessed sensitive taxpayer information without authorization to do so. I think we can all agree that those are not the types of people that the IRS should be seeking to rehire.

While Congress has repeatedly sought to signal to the IRS its concern on this issue through legislation such as the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998, and the IRS Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016, the IRS continues to struggle.

TIGTA's most recent findings suggest that further congressional action is needed. As a result, we have before us today a bill which will seek to guarantee that this practice does not continue. It also ensures greater integrity within the IRS's workforce, something that I think all Members of Congress can easily support.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, today's debate reminds me of the words of Will Rogers who used to say that: "The only difference between death and taxes is that death doesn't get worse every time Congress meets."

Although I concede that he had a point during most of the past year, hopefully, today will be an exception to the Rogers rule. That is because we are taking up H.R. 3500, a good bill that would prevent the IRS from rehiring employees who have previously been terminated due to poor conduct or performance.

I want to say at the outset that I know most, if not overwhelmingly all, IRS employees tend to be ethical and diligent public servants who have, in recent years, been asked to do much more with much less. That is exactly what the American people deserve and expect from them and we all appreciate those efforts.

The IRS employees collecting our Nation's revenue enable the Federal Government to support veterans benefits, pave roads, protect the environment, fund medical research, care for needy children, and meet all of the other needs our Federal Government asks. This is an enormous task, and we need intelligent men and women of integrity in those roles who will administer our Tax Code in a fair, even-handed, reasonable, and ethical manner. Most IRS employees meet this standard with the utmost attention to their professional responsibilities and we honor their contributions to the country.

When we learn of situations that fall short of those high standards or employees who have conducted themselves dishonorably, though, it is critically important to rectify the situation swiftly. Jobs at the IRS are positions of great public trust, and last year the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration alerted us to a practice of hiring individuals who had previously violated that trust.

During 15 months covering parts of 2015 and 2016, TIGTA found that the IRS hired almost 7,500 people, including 2,000 rehires. About 10 percent of the rehired employees, who were mostly seasonal workers, had been terminated or separated while under investigation for substantiated conduct or performance issues. Four of the more than 200 rehired employees failed to file their own tax returns. Four were under investigation for unauthorized access to taxpayer information. Twenty-seven failed to disclose a prior termination or conviction on their applications, as required.

Although these hires represent but a fraction of IRS employees overall, it is important that we rectify the situation swiftly and prevent this from happening in the future.

So I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3500, and at the same time remind them that the outliers we are addressing today should not diminish our respect for the men and women at the IRS who serve the public with, I think, dignity every single day.

Mr. Speaker, let me thank those Internal Revenue Service employees for their hard work.

Mr. Speaker, I urge our colleagues on both sides to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

In closing, I would like to point out that this legislation has enjoyed wide bipartisan support in the past, and for good reason. It is a commonsense bill that will help build trust with the IRS and integrity within our tax system.

I want to, again, thank my colleague from South Dakota, Representative KRISTI NOEM, for being a leader on this issue and for sponsoring this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 3500, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3500, 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.

#### IMPROVING SOCIAL SECURITY'S SERVICE TO VICTIMS OF IDENTITY THEFT ACT

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and

pass the bill (H.R. 6084) to amend title VII of the Social Security Act to provide for a single point of contact at the Social Security Administration for individuals who are victims of identity theft, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6084

*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 Social Security's Service to Victims of Identity Theft Act".*

#### SEC. 2. SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT FOR IDENTITY THEFT VICTIMS.

*(a) IN GENERAL.—Title VII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 901 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:*

#### "SECTION 714. SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT FOR IDENTITY THEFT VICTIMS.

*"(a) IN GENERAL.—The Commissioner of Social Security shall establish and implement procedures to ensure that any individual whose social security account number has been misused (such as to fraudulently obtain benefits under title II, VIII, or XVI of this Act, in a manner that affects an individual's records at the Social Security Administration, or in a manner that prompts the individual to request a new social security account number) has a single point of contact at the Social Security Administration throughout the resolution of the individual's case. The single point of contact shall track the individual's case to completion and coordinate with other units to resolve issues as quickly as possible.*

*"(b) SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT.—*

*"(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of subsection (a), the single point of contact shall consist of a team or subset of specially trained employees who—*

*"(A) have the ability to coordinate with other units to resolve the issues involved in the individual's case, and*

*"(B) shall be accountable for the case until its resolution.*

*"(2) TEAM OR SUBSET.—The employees included within the team or subset described in paragraph (1) may change as required to meet the needs of the Social Security Administration, provided that procedures have been established to—*

*"(A) ensure continuity of records and case history, and*

*"(B) notify the individual when appropriate."*

*(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BISHOP) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 6084, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here today and pleased that we are considering this bipartisan legislation that I introduced with a friend of mine from Connecticut, Ranking Member LARSON, H.R. 6084, the Improving Social Security's Service to Victims of Identity Theft Act.

This is an issue that is important to all of us in all of our districts. As you well know, Mr. Speaker, identity theft is a crime that is growing at very alarming rates around the country. Supporting victims of identity theft is something I have long championed. As a former local prosecutor and advocate for victims, I gained a real understanding of the plight of many Americans and what they face in recovering from identity theft and from other forms of exploitation.

In response, I spent a large part of my legislative career working on victim's rights and ensuring justice. I am pleased that we are considering H.R. 6084 today.

Mr. Speaker, Americans who are victims of identity theft often face an uphill battle when they contact the Social Security Administration for help. All too often, these individuals find themselves being bounced around in phone trees from recording to recording, person to person, only to start all over again with each new person with whom they speak.

In many cases, an individual will speak to multiple people at the Social Security Administration by phone, only then to be told that they need to go to a field office to resolve the situation.

Mr. Speaker, I just think that is wrong. These are victims of identity theft who urgently need assistance from the Social Security Administration so that they can get their lives back on track. But too many of these victims are being revictimized by the Social Security Administration's cumbersome and disorganized system. It is high time that the Social Security Administration improves its customer service to victims of identity theft.

That is why I introduced H.R. 6084, the bipartisan legislation which will require the Social Security Administration to provide a single point of contact at the agency to an individual who needs to resolve a problem with the Social Security Administration because of the misuse of his or her Social Security number.

This important bill will help Americans get the assistance they need from the Social Security Administration by implementing a customer-focused process. I am pleased to have the support of AARP, the National Council of Social Security Management Associations, and the Association of Mature American Citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD statements of support for my bill from those groups.

AARP,

Washington, DC, June 21, 2018.

Hon. KEVIN BRADY,  
Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means, Washington, DC.

Hon. RICHARD NEAL,  
Ranking Member, House Committee on Ways and Means, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BRADY AND RANKING MEMBER NEAL: On behalf of AARP's 38 million members, we are writing in support of the H.R. 6084, the Improving Social Security's Service to Victims of Identity Theft Act of 2018. The bill directs the Social Security Administration (SSA) to provide a single point of contact and a team of SSA staff to help redress any problems faced by Social Security ID theft victims. AARP is strongly committed to protecting consumers from identity theft and supports your efforts to improve the assistance offered to individuals whose Social Security number has been compromised.

An individual's Social Security number is critical financial information and integral to everyone's personal identity. The range of fraud that can be committed when an individual's Social Security number has been compromised is truly staggering, and the time and effort required to reassert one's financial identity can be daunting. Streamlining and simplifying the assistance that the SSA offers an identity theft victim will be welcomed by individuals who are caught in an often overwhelming situation.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to promote the integrity of the Social Security program, and to protect the identities of American workers and their families.

Sincerely,

JOYCE A. ROGERS,  
Senior Vice President,  
Government Affairs.

AMAC,  
June 18, 2018.

Hon. MIKE BISHOP,  
8th Congressional District, Michigan, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN BISHOP: On behalf of the 1.3 million members of AMAC, the Association of Mature American Citizens, I am writing in support of H.R. 6084, the Improving Social Security's Service to Victims of Identity Theft Act. This important piece of legislation will make it easier for seniors to track the status of their identity theft claims at the Social Security Administration (SSA). By establishing a single point of contact for an identity theft case, H.R. 6084 is a smart, senior-focused solution to a growing problem.

Every year, millions of Americans, and particularly seniors, fall victim to identity theft. While being victimized is bad enough, the process of restoring financial security and recovering peace of mind can be a long, arduous, and convoluted process. For seniors, these problems are particularly acute as they primarily work with SSA—one of the nation's largest federal bureaucracies—to restore their financial security.

H.R. 6084 seeks to improve customer service to identity theft victims in a way that is both smart and practical. Under this proposal, when an identity theft victim requests a new Social Security number, they will be assigned a single point of contact at SSA to manage their case until it is resolved. For seniors, this will prove invaluable as they will no longer have to navigate SSA's massive federal structure to resolve their identity theft case. Seniors can have a singular, reliable, and approachable case manager who can answer their questions, monitor the status of their claim, and help seniors in need of assistance.

As an organization committed to representing mature Americans and seniors, AMAC is dedicated to ensuring senior citizens' interests are protected. We applaud Congressman Bishop for his practical and timely solution to help identity theft victims in their most vulnerable time. AMAC is pleased to offer our organization's full support to the Improving Social Security's Service to Victims of Identity Theft Act.

Sincerely,

DAN WEBER,  
President and Founder of AMAC.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SECURITY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS, INC.,

Arlington, VA, July 16, 2018.

Hon. MIKE BISHOP,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. SAM JOHNSON,  
Chairman, House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Social Security, Washington, DC.

Hon. JOHN B. LARSON,  
Ranking Member, House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Social Security, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN BISHOP, CHAIRMAN JOHNSON AND RANKING MEMBER LARSON: On behalf of the National Council of Social Security Management Associations (NCSSMA) and our members throughout the nation, I would like to thank you for your introduction and original cosponsorship of H.R. 6084, the Improving Social Security's Service to Victims of Identity Theft Act. We very much appreciate your leadership on this important legislation to ensure a measure that will not only benefit and protect the American public, but also ease the administrative burden on the hardworking employees of the Social Security Administration (SSA) by establishing a single point of contact for an identity theft case. H.R. 6084 is a commonsense solution to a growing problem.

NCSSMA is pleased to support H.R. 6084 as it reinforces NCSSMA's own efforts and initiatives to provide the best service to the American people, through the effective and efficient administration of SSA's programs. Millions of Americans fall victim to identity theft every year. We believe this legislation will help identity theft victims work with a single point of contact at SSA to assist in resolving their identity theft case.

As an organization that is committed to improving management and program administration in SSA while advocating for an agency that remains customer focused with an emphasis on excellent public service, we commend you for your practical and timely solution to help identity theft victims. NCSSMA is pleased to offer our organization's support to the Improving Social Security's Service to Victims of Identity Theft Act.

Thank you again for your leadership. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if we can provide additional assistance.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER DETZLER,  
NCSSMA President.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6084, which will provide needed assistance to victims of identity theft. The Committee on Ways and Means has been engaged for some time on the issue of identity theft. In particular, we are stewards of the Social Security



number which is a target for identity thieves because it is the key to unlocking a stolen identity.

Identity theft is a growing problem and online hacking has led to major security breaches in both government, and extensively in the private sector. Americans of all ages, even children, are vulnerable to having their identity stolen. This can wreak havoc in people's lives.

One thing we can do, which we are doing today, is to make sure that individuals can get the assistance they need from the Social Security Administration, SSA, when identity theft has caused problems with their benefits, or if their number has been severely compromised.

For example, fraudsters have been able to steal a Social Security number and use it to file a fraudulent benefit application or to file a false tax return and claim a refund. For some individuals, the theft of their identity creates such damage that they are forced to request a new Social Security number.

Right now, identity theft victims trying to resolve an issue related to the misuse of their Social Security numbers may have to contact SSA multiple times, speaking to several different people, before the issue can be fully resolved.

This legislation provides individuals with a single point of contact in the Social Security Administration that will be responsible for resolving all Social Security-related issues in connection with a theft. This unit will be accountable to identity theft victims until completion, and will track the individual's case and coordinate with other units to resolve all of these issues as quickly as possible.

I certainly support this legislation, which was reported out of the Ways and Means Committee by a unanimous vote. I urge support for H.R. 6084, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), one of the great leaders of this body.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friends, Representative BISHOP, and Ranking Member LARSON, for their work on this commonsense bill.

I have heard firsthand how hard it can be for victims of identity theft to work with the Social Security Administration.

□ 1530

Recently, a man told me about his experience of someone trying to claim his benefit. First, he got a letter from Social Security telling him to call them about his claim. He hadn't made a claim, so he called Social Security at the number they gave him, and he never heard back. Later, when he tried to file a claim of his own, he ended up having to make four separate calls. Then, Social Security told him they couldn't help him over the phone. Because of the fraudulent claim, they

said he had to go to a field office. As a result of all this hassling, he decided to just put off filing his claim.

If this bill had been in place, he would have had someone in Social Security to help him. Instead, he got the runaround. Having a single point of contact at Social Security for victims of identity theft just makes sense.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the sponsors for their hard work, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, as today's debate on this legislation has shown, victims of identity theft in this country are facing an uphill battle in getting assistance from the Social Security Administration. Simply put, the current disconnected structure at the Social Security Administration isn't working for the American people. In response, my bill would require the Social Security Administration to assign a single point of contact at the agency to those who need to solve a problem with the Social Security Administration because of the misuse of his or her Social Security number.

This simply put but important reform will bring an added level of comfort to victims of identity theft and will ensure that they are receiving the quality care that they deserve.

In closing, I thank Ranking Member LARSON for assisting in this bill and joining me in offering the bill. I also thank Chairman BRADY, Ranking Member NEAL, and my fellow Ways and Means members for their support.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in supporting this important bipartisan legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BISHOP) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6084, 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.

#### IMPROVING SENIORS ACCESS TO QUALITY BENEFITS ACT

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4952) to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct a study and submit a report on the effects of the inclusion of quality increases in the determination of blended benchmark amounts

under part C of the Medicare program, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4952

*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 Seniors Access to Quality Benefits Act".*

#### SEC. 2. DETERMINATION OF BLENDED BENCHMARK AMOUNT STUDY.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—*It is the sense of Congress that the inclusion of quality increases in the determination of blended benchmark amounts under section 1853(n)(4) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w-23(n)(4)) undermines the goal of delivering high-quality care under the Medicare program under title XVIII of such Act.*

(b) STUDY AND REPORT.—*Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall conduct a study and submit to Congress a report on the effects of the inclusion of quality percentage increases under section 1853(n)(5) of such Act in the determination of blended benchmark amounts under section 1853(n)(4) of such Act. Such study and report shall include an analysis of the following:*

(1) *The authority of the Secretary to remove such increases from the determination of such amounts.*

(2) *The effects of including such increases in the determination of such amounts on Medicare Advantage organizations (including the effects on any contracts entered into by such organizations).*

(3) *The financial impact of including such increases in the determination of such amounts by county.*

(4) *The effects of including such increases in the determination of such amounts on individuals enrolled in a plan under part C of title XVIII of such Act.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. 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 H.R. 4952, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this bill, H.R. 4952, the Improving Seniors Access to Quality Benefits Act, will allow us to take a deeper look at how the Medicare Advantage benchmark cap is affecting people across the Nation. I have been working with Mr. KIND and other Members to address this inequity that affects seniors in high-quality plans across the country.

The Medicare Advantage program was designed to give seniors a choice in their healthcare and utilize the private

sector to provide better care and benefits. Medicare Advantage plans receive a capitated payment rate to cover the patient's total cost of care. In order to encourage quality, seniors enrolled in high-quality plans receive a quality bonus payment that goes directly to seniors in the form of reduced cost sharing or extra benefits.

The Medicare Advantage program is very popular and has been working well for many years. In my district in western Pennsylvania, more than half of Medicare beneficiaries choose Medicare Advantage. Nationwide, Medicare Advantage enrollment has grown to 30 percent of Medicare beneficiaries. That number is even higher with 48 percent of the Hispanic and 38 percent of African American Medicare beneficiaries choosing Medicare Advantage.

Unfortunately, the Affordable Care Act implemented a cap on payments to Medicare Advantage plans. This misguided benchmark cap policy has penalized approximately 5.8 million American seniors being denied important benefits like care coordination, vision, dental, and wellness programs.

This issue has cost seniors in my district and across the country millions of dollars in benefits that they are entitled to. We talk often about paying for value in the Medicare program, and this policy undermines that goal.

The benchmark cap is clearly a problem, and we need more information on it. The Improving Seniors Access to Quality Benefits Act requires the Secretary of HHS to analyze and report to Congress on the impact of including quality bonus payments in the Medicare Advantage benchmark cap. It also establishes a sense of Congress that this issue undermines the goal of delivering high-quality care in the Medicare program.

It is my understanding that the Department of Health and Human Services has limited secretarial authority to make this change on its own. I hope to work together with the Secretary on policies such as this to encourage high-quality plans for seniors.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation has broad support from many stakeholders, including America's Health Insurance Plans, the Better Medicare Alliance, the Healthcare Leadership Council, Meals on Wheels America, the National Minority Quality Forum, the Alliance of Community Health Plans, and many others.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, July 13, 2018.

Hon. GREG WALDEN,  
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN WALDEN: I write to you regarding H.R. 4952, the "Improving Seniors Access to Quality Benefits Act" the Committee on Ways and Means ordered favorably reported that was also referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

I ask that the Committee on Energy and Commerce waive formal consideration of the

bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House Floor.

I acknowledge that by waiving formal consideration of the bill, the Committee on Energy and Commerce is in no way waiving its jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in those provisions of the bills that fall within your Rule X jurisdiction. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees on any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will include a copy of our letters in the Congressional Record during consideration of this legislation on the House floor.

Sincerely,

KEVIN BRADY,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COM-  
MITTEE ON ENERGY AND COM-  
MERCE,

Washington, DC, July 16, 2018.

Hon. KEVIN BRADY,  
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BRADY: Thank you for your letters regarding H.R. 4952, the "Improving Seniors Access to Quality Benefits Act," H.R. 6138, the "Ambulatory Surgical Center (ACS) Payment Transparency Act of 2018," and H.R. 6311, the "To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to modify the definition of qualified health plan for purposes of the health insurance premium tax credit and to allow individuals purchasing health insurance in the individual market to purchase a lower premium copper plan."

The Committee on Energy and Commerce will forgo consideration of both bills so that they may proceed expeditiously to the House Floor.

I appreciate your assurance that by forgoing action on these bills, the Committee is in no way waiving its jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in the bills. I also appreciate your offer of support for the appointment of conferees from the Committee to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

Sincerely,

GREG WALDEN,  
Chairman.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4952, the Improving Seniors Access to Quality Benefits Act.

More than 19 million Medicare beneficiaries were enrolled in Medicare Advantage plans in 2017—that is almost one-third of all Medicare beneficiaries—and that number is growing every year. This bill would require the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct a study and submit a report to Congress on the effect of including quality bonus payments in the benchmark cap.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS, believes the benchmark payments made to Medicare Advantage plans include the bonuses Medicare Advantage plans may earn from delivering care that meets certain basic quality standards. On the other hand, plans argue that these quality bonuses should not be included in the benchmark cap. The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission has recommended, among other things, that this interaction be investigated.

This bill, by requiring a study of the issue, will help Congress come to a conclusion on possible solutions.

In closing, I thank the sponsors for their hard work. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support H.R. 4952, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that the ACA's benchmark cap negatively impacts more than 40 percent of counties across our country. The Improving Seniors Access to Quality Benefits Act will require the Secretary to fully evaluate the impact of including quality bonus payments under the benchmark cap on our seniors residing in these counties.

This bill was brought through the committee process in a bipartisan fashion. Now on the floor, I strongly recommend my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote in favor of H.R. 4952 to ensure seniors are not missing out on additional healthcare benefits or reduced cost sharing as a result of the ACA's benchmark cap.

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 Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4952, 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.

#### AMBULATORY SURGICAL CENTER PAYMENT TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2018

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6138) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for ambulatory surgical center representation during the review of hospital outpatient payment rates under part B of the Medicare program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6138

*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 "Ambulatory Surgical Center Payment Transparency Act of 2018" or the "ASC Payment Transparency Act of 2018".

#### SEC. 2. ADVISORY PANEL ON HOSPITAL OUTPATIENT PAYMENT REPRESENTATION.

(a) ASC REPRESENTATIVE.—The second sentence of section 1833(t)(9)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l(t)(9)(A)) is amended by inserting "and at least one ambulatory surgical center representative" after "an appropriate selection of representatives of providers".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to advisory panels consulted on or after the date that is 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

**SEC. 3. REASONS FOR EXCLUDING ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES FROM ASC APPROVED LIST.**

Section 1833(i)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l(i)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following: “In updating such lists for application in years beginning with the second year beginning after the date of the enactment of this sentence, for each procedure that was not proposed to be included in such lists in the proposed rule with respect to such lists and that was subsequently requested to be included in such lists during the public comment period with respect to such proposed rule and that is not included in the final rule updating such lists, the Secretary shall cite in such final rule the specific criteria in paragraph (b) or (c) of section 416.166 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation), based on which the procedure was excluded. If paragraph (b) of such section is cited for exclusion of a procedure, the Secretary shall identify the peer reviewed research, if any, or the evidence upon which such determination is based.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. NUNES) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 6138, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, ambulatory surgery centers provide patients with high-quality, same-day surgical and preventive care. H.R. 6138, the Ambulatory Surgical Center Payment Transparency Act of 2018, makes two simple and straightforward ASC reforms.

The bill adds an ASC representative to the advisory panel on hospital outpatient payment, which will allow ASCs proper representation and a seat at the table for future CMS payment policy changes. This bill also requires the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to disclose their criteria for inclusion or exclusion of procedures on the ASC approved list.

Currently, CMS does not fully provide explanations for their decisions, leading to a lack of transparency in the process. These simple changes will continue to protect patient access to cost-effective and high-quality services performed in the ASC setting.

I hope that this legislation marks the first of many steps in further bolstering ASC and patient access to these high-quality facilities.

I thank Chairman BRADY, Ranking Member NEAL, and the Ways and Means

staff for working to provide transparency in this space. I also thank Mr. LARSON for his work and partnership on this important bill.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, July 13, 2018.

HON. GREG WALDEN,  
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN WALDEN: I write to you regarding H.R. 6138, the “Ambulatory Surgical Center (ACS) Payment Transparency Act of 2018” the Committee on Ways and Means ordered favorably reported which was also referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

I ask that the Committee on Energy and Commerce waive formal consideration of the bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House Floor.

I acknowledge that by waiving formal consideration of the bill, the Committee on Energy and Commerce is in no way waiving its jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in those provisions of the bills that fall within your Rule X jurisdiction. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees on any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will include a copy of our letters in the Congressional Record during consideration of this legislation on the House floor.

Sincerely,

KEVIN BRADY,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,  
Washington, DC, July 16, 2018.

HON. KEVIN BRADY,  
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BRADY: Thank you for your letters regarding H.R. 4952, the “Improving Seniors Access to Quality Benefits Act,” H.R. 6138, the “Ambulatory Surgical Center (ACS) Payment Transparency Act of 2018,” and H.R. 6311, the “To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to modify the definition of qualified health plan for purposes of the health insurance premium tax credit and to allow individuals purchasing health insurance in the individual market to purchase a lower premium copper plan.”

The Committee on Energy and Commerce will forgo consideration of both bills so that they may proceed expeditiously to the House Floor.

I appreciate your assurance that by forgoing action on these bills, the Committee is in no way waiving its jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in the bills. I also appreciate your offer of support for the appointment of conferees from the Committee to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

Sincerely,

GREG WALDEN,  
Chairman.

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

Mr. Speaker, the House has passed this bill before, making clarifications on existing religious exemptions for healthcare. I understand that religious groups have important healthcare concerns that should be taken seriously.

While I support this bill, we should be talking about issues in healthcare

that our constituents bring up every day: skyrocketing prescription drug costs, increasing premiums, and threats to guaranteed coverage.

I just wanted to make those points, never losing the opportunity.

This bill is pretty simple, Mr. Speaker. Right now the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS, has an advisory panel for hospital outpatient issues that is comprised of outside experts. The problem is this panel does not include representation for an ambulatory surgical center, or ASC, in its membership, despite the panel counseling on Medicare or ASC payment issues.

This legislation would require the addition of someone from ASC on the advisory panel on hospital outpatient concerns.

Given that Medicare pays ASCs more than \$4 billion a year through the outpatient payment rule, it just makes sense that ASCs be represented on this panel.

The bill requires more transparency in determining what types of surgeries are safe to perform on an outpatient basis. More than 3 million Medicare beneficiaries receive care at an ASC for cataract surgery and other surgeries. This bill makes sure that Medicare hears the voice of the ASC provider, so that millions of Medicare beneficiaries can continue to receive the outpatient care they want.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of H.R. 6138, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1545

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

I want to reiterate the small but important step we are taking here today in passing this legislation. Ambulatory surgical centers provide excellent care at lower cost to patients and taxpayers.

While there is a much longer conversation that needs to happen regarding parity in reimbursement in outpatient settings, what we are doing here is simple. ASCs are an integral part of the healthcare system, and we are saying that, as stakeholders, they deserve a seat at the table when changes to payment policies are being debated and when decisions are being made by CMS on the services they are able to provide patients. We believe they should get a transparent explanation as to why those decisions were made.

Mr. Speaker, this is a commonsense bill. I urge all my colleagues to support it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEBER of Texas). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. NUNES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6138, 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.

**TRIBAL SOCIAL SECURITY  
FAIRNESS ACT OF 2018**

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6124) to amend title II of the Social Security Act to authorize voluntary agreements for coverage of Indian tribal council members, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6124

*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 "Tribal Social Security Fairness Act of 2018".*

**SEC. 2. VOLUNTARY AGREEMENTS FOR COVERAGE OF SERVICES BY AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS.**

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 218 the following new section:

*"VOLUNTARY AGREEMENTS FOR COVERAGE OF  
INDIAN TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS*

*"Purpose of Agreement*

*"SEC. 218A. (a)(1) The Commissioner of Social Security shall, at the request of any Indian tribe, enter into an agreement with such Indian tribe for the purpose of extending the insurance system established by this title to services performed by individuals as members of such Indian tribe's tribal council. Any agreement with an Indian tribe under this section applies to all members of the tribal council, and shall include all services performed by individuals in their capacity as council members.*

*"(2) Notwithstanding section 210(a), for the purposes of this title, the term 'employment' includes any service included under an agreement entered into under this section.*

*"Definitions*

*"(b) For the purposes of this section:*

*"(1) The term 'member' means, with respect to a tribal council, an individual appointed or elected to serve as a member or the head of the tribal council.*

*"(2) The term 'tribal council' means the appointed or elected governing body of a federally recognized Indian tribe.*

*"Effective Date of Agreement*

*"(c)(1) Any agreement under this section shall be effective with respect to services performed after an effective date specified in such agreement, provided that such date may not be earlier than the first day of the next calendar month after the month in which the agreement is executed by both parties.*

*"(2) At the request of the Indian tribe at the time of the agreement, such agreement may apply with respect to services performed before such effective date for which there were timely paid in good faith (and not subsequently refunded) to the Secretary of the Treasury amounts equivalent to the sum of the taxes which would have been imposed by sections 3101 and 3111 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 had such services constituted employment for purposes of chapter 21 of such Code. No agreement under this section may require payment to be made after the effective date specified in such agreement of any taxes with respect to services performed before such effective date.*

*"Duration of Agreement*

*"(d) No agreement under this section may be terminated on or after the effective date of the agreement."*

(b) *CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.*—

(1) *SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.*—Section 210(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 410(a)) is amended—

(A) *in paragraph (20), by striking "or" at the end;*

(B) *in paragraph (21), by striking the period at the end and inserting ";" or"; and*

(C) *by inserting after paragraph (21) the following new paragraph:*

*"(22) Service performed by members of Indian tribal councils as tribal council members in the employ of an Indian tribal government, except that this paragraph shall not apply in the case of service included under an agreement under section 218A."*

(2) *INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986.*—The Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(A) *in section 3121(b)—*

(i) *in paragraph (20), by striking "or" at the end;*

(ii) *in paragraph (21), by striking the period at the end and inserting ";" or"; and*

(iii) *by inserting after paragraph (21) the following new paragraph:*

*"(22) service performed by members of Indian tribal councils as tribal council members in the employ of an Indian tribal government, except that this paragraph shall not apply in the case of service included under an agreement under section 218A of the Social Security Act.";* and

(B) *in section 3121(d)(4), by inserting "or 218A" after "section 218".*

(c) *RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.*—Nothing in this Act or the amendments made by this Act shall be construed to affect application of any Federal income tax withholding requirements under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. REICHERT. 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 H.R. 6124, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today in support of my bill, the Tribal Social Security Fairness Act. This bipartisan bill supports our community's Tribal leaders and their fair access to the Social Security system and the benefits they have earned by ensuring Tribal governments have the same opportunity to participate in the Social Security Program that so many others across the country rely on. It was unanimously approved by the Ways and Means Committee in late June.

This bill provides a simple solution to a problem facing Tribal leaders across the country, including in my home State of Washington. In Washington State, many Tribal leaders have been paying into the Social Security system with the expectation of future benefits. However, a Social Security Administration policy ruling issued in 2006 prevented them from continuing to

pay into the program and have their earnings count toward future benefits.

This problem was brought to my attention a few years ago when I met with Virginia Cross. Virginia Cross is the chairwoman of the Muckleshoot Tribal Council in Washington State. After this meeting, we discovered other Tribal leaders in Washington and across the country face the same challenges, including the Snoqualmie Tribe in Washington. Hearing these examples, it just didn't seem fair that those who wanted to pay into the system could not pay into the system. That is when my staff and I went to work to find a solution.

Thanks to the dedicated advocacy of the Muckleshoot and the Snoqualmie Tribes and the leadership of fellow Washingtonians, Representatives DELBENE and KILMER, as well as Representatives COLE and SCHWEIKERT, we were able to find a bipartisan, comprehensive solution to the problem. I would also like to thank Chairman BRADY and Ranking Member NEAL of the Ways and Means Committee and their staff for all the hard work they have put in on this most important bill.

I urge my colleagues to join me today in righting this wrong so our Tribal leaders can receive the Social Security benefits they deserve.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6124, which closes a longstanding gap in Social Security coverage for members of Indian Tribal councils.

Let me thank Representatives DAVE REICHERT and SUZAN DELBENE for their good work to resolve this issue.

H.R. 6124 allows Indian Tribal councils to voluntarily cover their members under Social Security in a way that is similar to how State and local governments do so today. This would allow individuals employed as members of Tribal councils to contribute to Social Security and Medicare and, therefore, earn benefit protection.

I want to emphasize that the decision to participate would be voluntary. Each Tribal council will have the right to decide for itself.

In addition, because there has been confusion around this issue for many years, the legislation allows Tribal council members to receive benefit credit if they have erroneously paid Social Security taxes in the past, even though they were not required to. This is only fair, and I am pleased that the legislation addresses this problem as well.

Social Security and Medicare coverage are valuable protections for all Americans. I am pleased that this bipartisan legislation is moving forward, and I urge its support.

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

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the

gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON).

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. REICHERT, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. COLE, and Mr. KILMER for introducing this commonsense bill.

As chairman of the Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee, I held a hearing last year on Social Security coverage for some State and local governments. During the hearing, we discussed how State and local governments were initially excluded from Social Security. But over time, the law was changed to provide State and local governments the choice to extend Social Security coverage to their employees.

However, Tribal councils don't have this same option. The IRS and Social Security have a rule that Tribal council members are not eligible for Social Security coverage. That isn't right. Tribal councils should be able to participate in Social Security if they want to. The bill on the floor today fixes this by giving Tribal councils the choice.

I also want to be clear that this bill does not mandate Social Security coverage. Tribes will still have the ability to make their own decision.

This bill treats Tribal council members fairly when it comes to Social Security benefits and is the result of a request from several Tribal councils. I encourage my colleagues to support this bill. It is a bipartisan bill.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT), a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I will do this really quickly.

Being from Arizona, where I have, functionally, 23 Tribes, 21 or 22 reservations, it is surprising how often this becomes a subject and trying to understand how big and complex many of our Tribal communities are. We think our lives are sometimes complex. Imagine having to operate in the world of multiple layers, where you have to deal with State and local, Federal, and then Tribal politics, issues, and those things.

I was visiting some of my friends on a Tribal community called Ak-Chin. It was interesting. One of the gentlemen there basically said: I am on council. I can't participate in Social Security. But before I was on council, I managed one of the Tribal operations, and there I could participate in Social Security.

I know this is sort of a glitch, but this is one of those honorable things where we step up and we create some optionality. Within that optionality, I think we respect Tribal sovereignty, and we are just doing the right thing here.

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

I want to thank the sponsors for their hard work. I urge colleagues on

both sides of the aisle to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 6124, the Tribal Social Security Fairness Act, is a straightforward, commonsense, bipartisan bill. It ensures our Tribal leaders have access to Social Security benefits that they so deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bipartisan bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GALLEGOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6124, the Tribal Social Security Fairness Act.

I am pleased to support this common sense, bipartisan bill that will extend a basic right to tribal leaders across the country: the ability to retire with dignity and security.

Astonishing as it may seem, elected tribal leaders, including those who have already paid into Social Security, can no longer contribute to—or access the benefits of—this critical safety net program.

After a lifetime of service to their communities, tribal leaders shouldn't have to struggle to make ends meet.

They deserve the same access to Social Security as every other American.

This speaks to a broader problem, Mr. Speaker.

As the first inhabitants of our homeland, the interests of Native Americans should be a primary consideration when federal policy makers go to work—not an afterthought.

But, too often, the unique considerations of Indian Country are just that . . . an afterthought.

Nevertheless, every decision we make in this body—from the Farm Bill to healthcare to tax policy—every decision we make impacts our Native American brothers and sisters.

Earlier today, in the Subcommittee on Indian Affairs, we heard from the tribe whose members helped the Pilgrims survive that first winter in Plymouth. Their good will is part of the reason you and I are here today.

Moving forward, it's incumbent upon us to demonstrate the same generosity of spirit that was shown to our nation's founders.

And we can start here and now.

I urge my colleagues to support this common sense legislation today, and to fully consider the implications of new policies on Indian Country in the future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6124, 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.

#### PROTECT MEDICAL INNOVATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1011, I call up the bill (H.R. 184) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the

excise tax on medical devices, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1011, the amendment printed in House Report 115-860 is adopted, and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 184

*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 "Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2018".

#### SEC. 2. REPEAL OF MEDICAL DEVICE EXCISE TAX.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 32 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking subchapter E.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Subsection (a) of section 4221 of such Code is amended by striking the last sentence.

(2) Paragraph (2) of section 6416(b) of such Code is amended by striking the last sentence.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of subchapters for chapter 32 of such Code is amended by striking the item relating to subchapter E.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to sales after December 31, 2019.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill shall be debatable for 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

The gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PAULSEN. 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 H.R. 184, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, today, the House will vote on H.R. 184, the Protect Medical Innovation Act, which will finally repeal the medical device excise tax and eliminate a burden on patients and the companies that create and produce life-saving medical devices for people all over the world.

The medical device industry is truly an American success story, directly employing more than 400,000 people. In Minnesota alone, more than 35,000 people are employed at almost 700 companies, mostly small companies that you have never heard of. Many of them were started by a doctor or an engineer or an entrepreneur in the garage or in the backyard with an idea to improve or help save someone's life. In fact, 80

percent of all medical device companies have less than 50 employees, and 93 percent have less than 500 employees. The jobs they provide are good, rewarding jobs that pay above-average salaries.

Mr. Speaker, America is a net exporter in medical devices, one of the other reasons why it is an American success story. But back in 2013, the Affordable Care Act imposed a new 2.3 percent excise tax on all medical devices.

□ 1600

Mr. Speaker, 2.3 percent may not sound like much, but it wasn't a tax on profits; it was a tax on sales, on revenue. Usually the government puts an excise tax on things we want to discourage, like tobacco, alcohol, or gas-guzzling automobiles.

Why would we want to discourage medical innovation? Only in Washington would you impose a tax on lifesaving medical devices and then think you are going to help reduce healthcare costs.

Guess what? The device tax caused the loss of over 29,000 jobs. Now, with strong bipartisan support, we have been able to eliminate this onerous tax with suspensions. The last time we suspended this tax, companies responded by hiring more engineers and more technicians and putting more money into research and development projects for these new, lifesaving technologies.

But these innovators need certainty. They need predictability. And a permanent repeal is needed to especially help startup companies from where the next generation of inventions and innovation will come.

Investors will hold back capital in new companies when there is a threat of an excise tax starting back up because it already takes 8 to 10 years, Mr. Speaker, for these companies to become profitable in the first place. This tax raises the bar and makes it even more difficult for them to become profitable.

I have had many conversations with companies that I represent in my community about what this excise tax means to them. I remember having a conversation with a medium-sized company owner who said that without this tax they would be able to have a few more projects online, which meant they would hire two more engineers and two more technicians. Other companies to which I have spoken said they would be able to directly invest more in research and development, creating more high-paying jobs, invent better products. Ultimately, it is about helping more patients.

The good news, Mr. Speaker, is there is strong recognition that we need to eliminate this tax on a bipartisan basis, because it is such bad policy. In fact, very few bills have such strong bipartisan support: 277 cosponsors. Mr. Speaker, 44 of those cosponsors are Democrats across the aisle.

I pledge that I will continue working with Senator KLOBUCHAR in the Senate

across the aisle, and my colleagues, to get this over the finish line, because there are very few issues that would unite an ELIZABETH WARREN and a TED CRUZ, but this, Mr. Speaker, is one of them.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all Members to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, this week has been dubbed "health week" on the House floor. However, based on the legislation we are considering, it is hard to take that challenge seriously. The bills before us today simply don't do very much. Instead, we should be considering measures that go to the heart of what Americans need: lower healthcare costs and high-quality care. That includes lower drug costs and prescription benefits that should be extended to all members of the American family based on the following notion that we should continue to make sure that pre-existing conditions remain part of the Affordable Care Act.

More and more families are facing difficult healthcare decisions. All too often, it comes down to not going to an important doctor appointment or cutting pills in half or stopping the taking of prescription medicines altogether. This, coupled with other challenges Americans face at home, like retirement security, addiction issues, and education costs, will make it harder, not easier, for them to move forward.

At home in western Massachusetts, I hear about how people need to make complicated decisions for their families. Congress can simplify these things by bringing bills to the floor that truly address the cost of healthcare without making consumers shoulder more of the cost and give tax benefits to the wealthy, leaving patients to ever growing medical bills.

Unfortunately, I have not seen any efforts to address these growing costs in a meaningful way. Instead, our Republican colleagues continue to lead efforts to sabotage critical health programs. This has led to more uncertainty for American families. This uncertainty also impacts the marketplace and leads to premium increases and adds to the burden for American families already having trouble making ends meet.

Instead of placing more anxiety on individuals facing discrimination for preexisting conditions, we should protect and strengthen already existing programs like Medicare and Medicaid.

The legislation before us is another billion, billion, billions of dollars in unpaid tax cuts. This is on top of the \$2.3 trillion this Congress has already passed into law, all with borrowed money. Republicans are using the deficit, which they keep making larger, to justify the deep cuts they plan to make to Medicare, Social Security, and Medicaid. These bills will only intensify Republican calls for further cuts to those critical programs.

American families need certainty, Mr. Speaker. What is happening to our Nation's healthcare at the moment is anything but. It is another obstacle for families to get a leg up and ensure their children and grandchildren are safe and have opportunities well into the future.

The same is true for our seniors and those working to prepare for retirement. They should be in a place knowing they can retire without anxiety and have health programs they can count on in their later years.

The bills before us this day do nothing to solve problems for everyday Americans. Instead, it leaves them further behind, with increased healthcare costs, lower coverage, and certainly sacrifices the quality of care they might receive.

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BANKS), someone who represents a State that is steeped in medical technology jobs and has been a leader in championing the repeal of this tax.

Mr. BANKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Minnesota, who has been the foremost leader in the House of Representatives for a very long time to permanently repeal the medical device tax.

Mr. Speaker, there are more than 7,000 medical device companies in the United States that contribute hundreds of billions of dollars to our economy every year. These companies employ over 400,000 Americans, while creating lifesaving technologies that benefit patients around the world.

Many of these manufacturers are located, as my colleague said, in my home district of northeast Indiana. In fact, Warsaw, Indiana, in my district, is known as the orthopedic capital of the world.

There is no doubt that this tax was incredibly destructive while it was in effect. Data from the U.S. Department of Commerce indicates that 29,000 jobs were lost in the industry between 2012 and 2015. Suspension of the tax has reduced some of the damage, but long-term investments and planning are impossible without full repeal.

Without permanent repeal, we will never be able to fully recover the jobs destroyed by ObamaCare, and patients will continue to be denied new, lifesaving products.

The Protect Medical Innovation Act will ensure that the medical device industry does not just survive but thrives, and this commonsense and bipartisan legislation would permanently repeal the medical device tax and, thereby, remove a mindless roadblock to economic growth and patient health.

I want to thank my friend again, Representative PAULSEN, for his tireless efforts on this issue, and I urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 184.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New



Jersey (Mr. PASCARELL), who is a well-known champion of Americans' healthcare plans.

Mr. PASCARELL. Mr. Speaker, I know the great intentions of the sponsor of this legislation. That is not in question. What is in question is that we have very, very short memories when it comes to healthcare.

We made a commitment when we put the Affordable Care Act together. We knew it wasn't perfect, and obviously since then we have tried to make some changes, but we haven't had much cooperation from the other side.

It wasn't mindless. In fact, the medical device industry agreed to the conclusion. In sitting down in negotiations we started out with one thought in mind, regardless of what we were talking about: we shall pay for what we vote on, unlike some other legislation that will go nameless right now.

We devised the Affordable Care Act so that it could be paid for and we would not have to add to the deficit. In fact, one of these taxes, in order to pay for the Affordable Care Act, we are discussing right now, the medical device tax. It started out at 5 percent. In working with the industry, we came to a conclusion of 2.3 percent.

So we went from \$40 billion raised for the Affordable Care Act to \$20 billion, see, because we knew we had to pay for this. That is what healthcare is all about, and that is why you guys on the other side—you people have not come up with an alternative, because you don't know how to pay for anything. So we paid for this.

The Protect Medical Innovation Act. Well, when the Affordable Care Act was being crafted, the medical device industry—and by the way, the medical device industry is probably the most scrutinized industry in the United States. Most of those companies, the 7,000 in the United States—most of them—are good actors, but a lot of them were not.

Ten years ago I stood on this floor, Mr. Speaker, and pointed out all the cases against the medical device companies who were bribing doctors in order for those doctors to recommend the device. That is a fact of life. I didn't make that up. That is not a political injection here. This is what happened.

You could shove it off all you want. If I have to come back to the floor on another occasion and cite chapter and verse the court cases, you won't be so happy. That is not my purpose today.

What I am saying is, they agreed to the deal. They knew that the increase in health coverage of millions more Americans would directly increase the demand for medical devices.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 2 minutes.

Mr. PASCARELL. By the way, Mr. Ranking Member, many medical devices are sold to people old, like myself, who are on Medicare. You con-

tinue to cut Medicare, and you will be cutting off your nose to spite your face.

Congress most recently passed a delay of the medical device tax as part of the continuing resolution. This extended the time that they wouldn't have to pay a dime to the health system through the end of next year, costing taxpayers \$4 billion. Nothing to sneeze at.

Additionally, this year, the industry has stood to benefit tremendously from the reduction in the corporate tax rate, down to 21 percent. You didn't get that break, and I didn't get that break.

There is nothing that will lead me to believe these benefits will trickle down to help patients afford the devices they need to survive or lower the price of those devices in the first place, regardless of who is paying for them, out of what plan.

I'll go back to the point. We put the ACA together so that it would be paid for. That is why we had to come up with that money, and we did, so you couldn't repeal it. And what you are trying to do is choke it to death. You are trying to bleed it.

What you are doing is forcing more and more people—you just went from 20 million down to 17 million because of the subsidies that you wouldn't put through that were in the law, because of the mandate that was originally in the law.

And what is the alternative? Silence. Health issues are the biggest issue this year, Mr. Speaker. I am glad I am on the right side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, contrary to some of the claims we heard a little bit before about the bill doing nothing to help everyday, average Americans, I will just remind Members that this bill reverses a harmful tax that is hurting job growth and innovation across the country.

Access to good-paying jobs and innovative medical products is critically important, and I would argue that that is really important for everyday Americans.

I would agree, also, with what was said earlier. Americans need certainty. This is an industry that needs certainty if we are going to be able to invest in new innovations, new inventions, to keep patients at the forefront of lifesaving and life-improving technology, to make sure their healthcare is the model of the rest of the world.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Utah (Mrs. LOVE), who has been a strong voice for innovation, not only in her State but within our conference here in the House of Representatives, in repealing the device tax.

Mrs. LOVE. Mr. Speaker, this is about the medical technology industry and a manufacturing success story, one of the last expanding manufacturing enterprises in the United States. While

the U.S. is the current worldwide leader in medical technology innovation, that leadership is being threatened.

I am speaking to you today about the medical device tax. This industry has a huge presence in Utah, and this unfair tax would have a negative effect on my district and the country as a whole.

□ 1615

In Utah, this industry has created more than 10,300 jobs and contributes over \$5 billion to the State's economy.

Recently, Congress has been focused on reducing taxes to make the United States a more attractive place to do business, but the medical technology industry would get a significant tax increase. Even with the recent tax changes, industry gains would be neutralized by this tax.

Under the 2.3 percent excise tax, medical device manufacturers would be required to pay the IRS an estimated average of \$194 million per month in medical device tax payments. In Utah, BD's total impact of the device tax is about \$90 million on an annualized basis. For Edwards Lifesciences, this would be a \$30 million expense.

In a competitive global economy, this tax threatens the industry that directly employs 400,000 Americans, generates \$25 billion in payroll, and invests nearly \$10 billion in research and development annually.

American companies represent 38 percent of the global market, and the suspended tax looms over our Nation's ability to innovate and to stay competitive. As companies look to make cuts to offset the tax, research and development is often the first one to go. This tradeoff undermines the future of the industry and puts discovery of new breakthrough medical technologies at risk. In other words, it is putting the livelihoods of people and their health at risk.

According to figures from the U.S. Department of Commerce, the United States medical technology industry lost nearly 29,000 jobs while the medical device tax was in effect. When the medical device tax was suspended, most medical device companies reinvested most of their savings into their innovative strategies and improving United States facilities. But long-term investment has been postponed because of the threat that it might come back.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said that, by repealing the medical device tax, we are going to be taking money out of Medicare. That is absolutely ridiculous. As a matter of fact, there was a \$700 billion cut to Medicare to pay for the Affordable Care Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Utah.

Mrs. LOVE. Mr. Speaker, Utah's Merit Medical was planning on spending \$1.5 million for salary increases and 401(k) benefits for hourly workers, but they can't, unless this tax is repealed.

Merit Medical is also planning a \$60 million R&D facility, but it is now on hold because of the tax. In Utah, with the last suspension, BD increased R&D spending from 6 percent to 6.5 percent in sales.

If this tax does not get repealed, the industry is forced to start making payments. Investments will be the trade-off, and innovation will be stifled. This means less jobs for Americans, a less competitive America in the medical device industry, and, potentially, an increase in the medical cost for our constituents so that this industry can pay for the tax.

It is time to make sure that we put money back into the hands of Americans, American businesses, and out of the hands of government.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, anybody who doesn't understand what \$2.3 trillion of tax cuts and further tax cuts of this measure mean as a threat to Medicare and Social Security and Medicaid down the road, that is a short-term view of where we are headed financially in America.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA).

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to say I represent the Golden State of California, and I am proud to say that California was the first State in the Union to implement, to accept the Affordable Care Act a number of years ago, and when we did so, we knew it was a work in progress. After all, Medicare continues to be a work in progress after 60 years. One of those areas we knew we had to change was the medical device tax.

In California, there are over 1,000 medical technology companies, many of which are small to medium, that employ more than 70,000 Californians. Many of those live and work in my district, and these are good-paying middle class jobs.

The research and development of groundbreaking medical technology helps improve patient care and treatments not only for Americans, but for folks throughout the world.

In recognition of the medical tax device's negative impact on innovation and investment, Congress delayed its implementation on two separate occasions. Unfortunately, the temporary suspension of this tax is scheduled to expire at the end of this year. If reinstated, this tax will impede future investments and domestic innovation and restrain hiring and job growth.

Since research and development in this area of technology takes a number of years, the uncertainty about the future of this tax will delay essential research and development and growth in many areas of the State of California. That is why repealing the medical tax device permanently will encourage economic growth and hiring in Orange County and in my area.

The medical device industry represents jobs not only for the next gen-

eration, but for the next 20 to 30 years in this country. Mr. Speaker, therefore, I urge passage of H.R. 184.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for sharing his perspective from California. I think of Minnesota and California and Massachusetts and some other States that have a propensity of strong ecosystems of medical technology, and those jobs, we know, are very, very important. We want to see those continue.

I just want to mention, Mr. Speaker, what we don't want to go back to, because these are the stories we were hearing prior to our suspension, why we need to permanently repeal this tax.

I remember speaking to a company in Plymouth, Minnesota. They were pretty clear. They said: Instead of 10 projects, we are only going to have 6 projects funded with this tax in place. That means too few engineers, too few technicians while that device tax was in effect.

I talked to another company that was actually in Texas. They had laid off an employee that had been employed for 22 years, and then they had laid off 25 people, deferring the hiring of another 15 employees because of that tax being put in place.

Another medical company in Shoreview, Minnesota, told me they had to borrow \$100,000 a month from the bank just to pay the device tax because the tax was on sales and revenue, not on profits. That is a high-risk tragedy, Mr. Speaker, in order to keep these companies alive.

There is a company in New York that was trying to finance a new cancer therapy using gamma radiation, and they struggled to raise the necessary funds that were necessary to complete the project because the medical device tax was discouraging investment in lifesaving innovation.

And then, Mr. Speaker, I remember having a conversation with an employee, someone from my district, and he came up to me and said: Mr. PAULSEN, I have been employed at this medical device company for 21 years, a strong medical device manufacturer, but because of the tax, I have lost my job. Now his family struggled at his new job because his wages were \$40,000 less than where he was before he was laid off, all because of that device tax. His vacation time was cut in half, and his healthcare costs also went up.

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

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time, but I am prepared to close.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume while we wait for one additional speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let me just remind folks where we are right now. Think back to 2013, 2014 when this tax was first put in place. We heard earlier from one of our

colleagues who had said: Do you know what? The medical device industry was a part of putting together the Affordable Care Act, and they agreed to this.

Actually, that is a myth. It is not true. I have talked to numerous medical device manufacturers, small, medium, and large, as well as the associations, that said they had no part in agreeing to that. In fact, when this dollar amount came up as a part of the Affordable Care Act, they backed into it. There was some dollar amount assigned, and that is how he backed into a 2.3 percent excise tax.

And, again, just a reminder, an excise tax is a tax on your sales and revenue, not on your profits. For companies that take 8 to 10 years to become profitable in the first place, that is a high hurdle when you are trying to attract new capital, new investors in order to take the risk that this new technology is going to be successful.

You have already got to go through the FDA. You have got to go through a rigorous process, go through a gold standard, and then you have to make sure that you are going to potentially have CMS offer a reimbursement policy for your devices.

So there is a whole host of, or a multitude of, risk factors that go in already when companies are thinking of starting up to actually be a part of this strong ecosystem of providing medical technology and lifesaving innovation that goes out to help our patients.

The good news is, if we keep this industry strong in America, if we can repeal this tax permanently, we will not only be improving healthcare outcomes around the world; we will be keeping those jobs here. We will be keeping the headquarters here in the United States.

So it is not just some of the tax reforms you pass, Mr. Speaker. It is about giving more certainty and more predictability by repealing a tax that never should have been put in place in the first place.

And I think with strong bipartisan support, both on a vote today in the House and potentially once again in the Senate—I think the last time we had a vote leading up to President Obama signing a temporary suspension of the device tax, we had enough votes in the House to override a Presidential veto. That is what got the attention of the Senate. That is what got the attention of the President at that time, and we actually made it the law of the land, 2-year suspension. We renewed another 2-year suspension.

But now is the time, Mr. Speaker, to actually make this permanent, to put ourselves in a position to make this repeal permanent, to put ourselves in a position where we can guarantee that American innovation is going to be strong and steadfast for years and decades to come. We can keep this American success story alive.

We have got a host of other challenges, I know, as we look towards the medical device industry. We have a hearing going on right now on trade,

for instance. We don't need to do anything else with potential tariffs or quotas in different areas that put additional uncertainty on this industry, on these high-paying, high-quality jobs. So this is one initial effort that we can make today on the House floor, with a strong bipartisan vote, to make sure a permanent repeal is also the law of the land.

Mr. Speaker, I am looking around for my colleague from Indiana, who I think is on the way right now.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are directed to remove their conversations from the floor.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address the reference that my friend from Minnesota offered a moment ago when he referred to the device tax as mythology.

I negotiated that agreement with the industry. They asked for the following: that it be applied to foreign competition. We said yes. This was done in Speaker PELOSI's office with the industry.

They suggested at the time that the 5 percent tax be cut to 2.3 percent. We went along with that. Even though the United States Senate had sent over a revenue package of \$40 billion, we cut it by \$20 billion.

So that wasn't mythology. It was the way the institution once worked, how we negotiate, go back and forth, discuss, and then come to rational conclusions that might help and acknowledge the 20 million more Americans who have coverage now under the Affordable Care Act—20 million Americans.

I want to say something at this point, Mr. Speaker, if I may.

In the State of Massachusetts, do you know what we are really proud of on this day? One hundred percent of the children in Massachusetts are covered with health insurance, and 97 percent of the adults in our State are covered with health insurance. It is a remarkable statistic, and it is based, in some measure, on the negotiations we had with respective industries to get this legislation over the goal line.

So I know exactly what happened here, and I understand fully what negotiations mean. But we rejected the \$40 billion price tag that came from the U.S. Senate, cut it in half and said to the industry: This is, we hope and expect, your share of making sure that 20 million more Americans have health insurance.

That is what this issue is about: accessibility, earlier stages of prevention, getting people into health insurance earlier in life. That is precisely what we did with the Affordable Care Act.

And let me just say this, if I may, as well. Let me talk about the mandate, while they are waiting for their next speaker to arrive. Here is what makes the mandate and its importance.

Why should the rest of us in America pay \$1,000 a year in our health insurance plans because there are those who don't want to buy health insurance and end up in the emergency rooms of America, and they thumb their noses at us on the way out because of uncompensated care and they don't pay the bill?

So do you know what would be great, Mr. Speaker? If we all knew the day that our house was going to burn down, then—do you know what?—the day before, we would buy homeowners insurance.

□ 1630

If we all knew the day that we were going to get in that accident, we would buy automobile insurance. But the truth is that insurance spreads risk, and we all know we don't know when those things might occur, so we buy insurance in advance.

So, today, 20 million more Americans have insurance because of what we did with the Affordable Care Act. This idea that you can continually sabotage it and take it apart piece by piece makes no sense.

On this particular issue with the device revenue, I can tell you and I can state to you, under oath, Mr. Speaker, what we did to negotiate this contribution to making America's healthcare more effective and better for all members of the American family, the understanding being that, at the end of life, if you have earlier intervention with healthcare, the end of life might be a heck of a lot more pleasant along the way.

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI), who has been a champion of not only repealing this tax, but fighting hard for the medical device industry in her home State.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 184, the Protect Medical Innovation Act.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will permanently repeal the job-killing medical device tax. Hoosiers are proud to be leaders in medical innovation with more than 300 medical device manufacturers in our State that support nearly 55,000 jobs. These are high-paying jobs, with workers in the industry earning about \$50,000 per year, on average.

However, after ObamaCare's medical device tax took effect, the industry lost almost 29,000 good-paying jobs nationwide from 2012 to 2015, according to Department of Commerce data. That is why Congress took bipartisan action in 2015 to suspend the tax for 2 years, and did so again earlier this year. But if it goes back into effect after 2019, it will impede new discoveries and stifle medical innovation while destroying good jobs.

Right now, our economy is booming because of historic tax cuts and regulatory reforms, and we need to keep that momentum going. It is time to

end the medical device tax once and for all. Permanently repealing this job-killing tax will protect American workers and help patients access the lifesaving medical technology they need.

Mr. Speaker, the medical device tax would have a devastating impact on Hoosier workers and people from across the country who depend on these products. The Protect Medical Innovation Act will boost American innovation and manufacturing, and it will encourage medical research and development that make a real difference in people's lives.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this vital piece of legislation.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that the gentlewoman from Indiana, my friend, just mentioned the tax cut, so let me just point this out. We have gone from a rate of 35 percent in the corporate world to 21 percent, a 14 point cut in the corporate tax rate, and we are being asked to do this on top of it.

Now, Medicare purchases most of the medical devices in America—taxpayer supported. It is an earned benefit. But here is the other important part of it that I think bears some noting today. It is a terrific industry. It is not in dispute. It is an important industry in America.

But when the gentlewoman says: "Well, the economy is booming because of these tax cuts," a reminder, a fact, not from my Twitter account, but stated on the House floor: The American economy has been growing for 94 straight months.

The idea that this all happened 500 days ago doesn't stand up underneath the magnifying glass of critical analysis. The stock market has been going up since March of 2009.

So when I look at the corporate cut—astounding, by the way—remember, President Obama said we should have a corporate rate of 28 percent and the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, a good friend of mine, a Republican, he said, no, we should have 25 percent.

So what did the other side do? Let's see, the difference between 28 and 25? Aha, it is 21. I mean, I haven't figured that out yet.

So, day after day, we roll through here with another tax cut proposal, and we watch the deficits and the debt go to \$20 trillion. Whatever happened to the Republican idea of fiscal rectitude, which year after year they lectured us on?

We negotiated this agreement over the device tax, Mr. Speaker, guaranteed. It was accepted by the industry. Again, we applied it to foreign competition. They would be taxed at the same rate. Medicare would remain the largest vendor, the largest purchaser of medical devices.

This is a step backward on America's healthcare plan. If they would just give the Affordable Care Act a chance to

work, instead of these deliberate efforts day after day to sabotage it, we could move on with the business of the country.

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, as I close, let me remind my colleague, because he had mentioned eliminating the individual mandate as a part of the tax reform that was enacted recently, according to the IRS, 79 percent of the 6.6 million people who paid the penalty in 2015 had incomes below \$50,000. These are middle class people.

Mr. NEAL. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PAULSEN. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, what did the Republican majority do to the cost subsidies for those people?

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, on the individual mandate, 6.6 million people who paid the penalty had incomes below \$50,000. These are middle class people who had to pay the fine instead of buying overpriced ObamaCare coverage that they could not afford. Now, starting in 2019, they are not going to have to do that anymore. Republicans think that is a good thing.

Let me close back on the bill, though, Mr. Speaker.

The good news is that both Republicans and Democrats here today agree and understand that the medical device excise tax does more harm than good, and it has to be repealed. We heard testimony and speakers today on both sides of the aisle. We will have a strong, bipartisan vote to repeal this tax permanently.

We have already had a suspension twice. But we need to give this industry certainty so that we can make sure that this American success story not only survives, but thrives.

It is about high-paying jobs with net exports around the world. This makes sure that patients not only in the United States are going to have access to new medical technology devices, for baby boomers, seniors, and those getting up in their elder years with new devices. This is really critical for the innovation that is going to help to make sure that we are protecting patients around the world, keeping headquarters here, keeping jobs here, and improving healthcare outcomes.

Today, we have an opportunity to help. It is helping those small startups that are part of the very ecosystem that has made this industry so strong in the United States that provides these jobs, and making sure that entrepreneurs, doctors, engineers, and folks who come up with an idea in the backyard or in the garage can see their idea come to fruition.

So let's remove this threat to innovation. Let's remove this job-killing tax once and for all. There are 277 cosponsors in the House. How many bills actually get that many cosponsors of Democrats and Republicans? Let's continue to show the American public that

what we are doing here in Washington on this issue is results oriented, is solution oriented, and we are sensitive, and we understand that.

Mr. Speaker, I ask everyone to vote for the passage of H.R. 184, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Pursuant to House Resolution 1011, 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 the passage of the bill.

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

Mr. PAULSEN. 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.

#### REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 2069

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name as a cosponsor of H.R. 2069, the Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act of 2017.

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

There was no objection.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for a period of less than 15 minutes.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 39 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1650

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WEBER of Texas) at 4 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.

#### PROTECT MEDICAL INNOVATION ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on passage of the bill (H.R. 184) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 283, nays 132, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 372]

YEAS—283

Abraham	Goodlatte	Palazzo
Aderholt	Gosar	Palmer
Aguilar	Gottheimer	Panetta
Allen	Gowdy	Paulsen
Amash	Granger	Pearce
Amodei	Graves (GA)	Perry
Arrington	Graves (LA)	Peters
Babin	Green, Gene	Peterson
Bacon	Griffith	Pittenger
Banks (IN)	Grothman	Poe (TX)
Barletta	Guthrie	Poliquin
Barr	Handel	Polis
Barragán	Harper	Posey
Barton	Harris	Ratcliffe
Bera	Hensarling	Reed
Bergman	Herrera Beutler	Reichert
Biggs	Hice, Jody B.	Renacci
Bilirakis	Higgins (LA)	Rice (NY)
Bishop (GA)	Hill	Rice (SC)
Bishop (MI)	Holding	Roby
Bishop (UT)	Hollingsworth	Roe (TN)
Blum	Hudson	Rogers (AL)
Bost	Huizenga	Rogers (KY)
Boyle, Brendan	Hultgren	Rohrabacher
F.	Hunter	Rokita
Brady (TX)	Hurd	Rooney, Francis
Brat	Issa	Rooney, Thomas J.
Brooks (AL)	Jenkins (KS)	Ros-Lehtinen
Brooks (IN)	Jenkins (WV)	Rosen
Brownley (CA)	Johnson (LA)	Roskam
Buchanan	Johnson (OH)	Ross
Buck	Johnson, Sam	Rothfus
Bucshon	Jordan	Rouzer
Budd	Joyce (OH)	Royce (CA)
Burgess	Katko	Ruiz
Bustos	Keating	Russell
Byrne	Kelly (MS)	Rutherford
Calvert	Kelly (PA)	Sanford
Carbajal	Khanna	Scalise
Cárdenas	Kilmer	Schneider
Carter (GA)	King (IA)	Schweikert
Carter (TX)	King (NY)	Scott, Austin
Chabot	Kinzinger	Scott, David
Cheney	Knight	Sensenbrenner
Clark (MA)	Krishnamoorthi	Sessions
Cloud	Kuster (NH)	Sewell (AL)
Coffman	Kustoff (TN)	Shimkus
Cole	Labrador	Shuster
Collins (GA)	LaHood	Simpson
Collins (NY)	LaMalfa	Sinema
Comer	Lamb	Sires
Comstock	Lamborn	Smith (NE)
Conaway	Lance	Smith (NJ)
Cook	Latta	Smith (TX)
Correa	Lawson (FL)	Smucker
Costello (PA)	Lesko	Stefanik
Cramer	Lewis (MN)	Stewart
Crawford	Lieu, Ted	Stivers
Crist	Lipinski	Suozi
Cuellar	LoBiondo	Swalwell (CA)
Culberson	Loeb	Taylor
Curbelo (FL)	Loeb	Tenney
Curtis	Loudermilk	Thompson (PA)
Davidson	Love	Thornberry
Davis (CA)	Lucas	Tipton
Davis, Rodney	Luetkemeyer	Tonko
Delaney	Lynch	Torres
DelBene	MacArthur	Trott
Denham	Maloney, Sean	Turner
DeSantis	Marchant	Upton
DesJarlais	Marino	Valadao
Diaz-Balart	Marshall	Vargas
Dingell	Massie	Veasey
Donovan	Mast	Vela
Duffy	McCarthy	Wagner
Duncan (SC)	McCaul	Walberg
Duncan (TN)	McClintock	Walden
Dunn	McHenry	Walker
Emmer	McKinley	Walorski
Estes (KS)	McMorris	Walters, Mimi
Faso	Rodgers	Weber (TX)
Ferguson	McSally	Webster (FL)
Fitzpatrick	Meadows	Westerman
Fleischmann	Messer	Williams
Flores	Mitchell	Wilson (SC)
Fortenberry	Moolenaar	Wittman
Fox	Mooney (WV)	Womack
Frelinghuysen	Moulton	Woodall
Gabbard	Mullin	Yoho
Gaetz	Murphy (FL)	Young (AK)
Gallagher	Newhouse	Young (IA)
Garrett	Nolan	Zeldin
Gianforte	Norcross	
Gibbs	Norman	
Gohmert	Nunes	
Gonzalez (TX)	O'Halleran	
	Olson	

NAYS—132

Adams	Gallego	Nadler
Bass	Garamendi	Napolitano
Beatty	Gomez	Neal
Beyer	Green, Al	O'Rourke
Blumenauer	Grijalva	Pallone
Blunt Rochester	Gutiérrez	Pascarell
Bonamici	Hastings	Payne
Brady (PA)	Heck	Pelosi
Brown (MD)	Higgins (NY)	Perlmutter
Butterfield	Himes	Pingree
Capuano	Hoyer	Pocan
Carson (IN)	Huffman	Price (NC)
Cartwright	Jackson Lee	Quigley
Castor (FL)	Jayapal	Raskin
Castro (TX)	Jeffries	Richmond
Chu, Judy	Johnson (GA)	Roybal-Allard
Cicilline	Johnson, E. B.	Ruppersberger
Clarke (NY)	Jones	Rush
Clay	Kaptur	Ryan (OH)
Cleaver	Kelly (IL)	Sánchez
Clyburn	Kennedy	Sarbanes
Cohen	Kihuen	Schakowsky
Connolly	Kildee	Schiff
Cooper	Kind	Schrader
Costa	Langevin	Scott (VA)
Courtney	Larsen (WA)	Serrano
Crowley	Larson (CT)	Shea-Porter
Cummings	Lawrence	Sherman
Davis, Danny	Lee	Smith (WA)
DeFazio	Levin	Soto
DeGette	Lewis (GA)	Takano
DeLauro	Lofgren	Thompson (CA)
Demings	Lowenthal	Thompson (MS)
DeSaulnier	Lowe	Titus
Deutch	Lujan Grisham,	Tsongas
Doggett	M.	Velázquez
Doyle, Michael	Luján, Ben Ray	Visclosky
F.	Maloney,	Wasserman
Engel	Carolyn B.	Schultz
Eshoo	Matsui	Waters, Maxine
Espallat	McCollum	Watson Coleman
Esty (CT)	McEachin	Welch
Evans	McGovern	Wilson (FL)
Foster	McNerney	Yarmuth
Frankel (FL)	Meeks	
Fudge	Meng	

NOT VOTING—13

Black	Hartzler	Speier
Blackburn	Long	Walz
Ellison	Moore	Yoder
Graves (MO)	Noem	
Hanabusa	Smith (MO)	

□ 1715

Mr. POLIS changed his vote from "nay" to "yea."

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, because I am at home recuperating from a medical procedure, I unavoidably missed the following vote on July 24. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: on rollcall No. 372, I would have voted "yea" (Passage of H.R. 184—Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2017).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent on rollcall Votes 368, 369, 370, 371 and 372. I would have voted "no" on all five rollcall votes.

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 additional 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.

THE AMERICAN LEGION 100TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1182) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the 100th anniversary of The American Legion, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1182

*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 "National Flood Insurance Program Extension Act of 2018".

SEC. 2. PROGRAM EXTENSION.

(a) FINANCING.—Section 1309(a) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4016(a)) is amended by striking "September 30, 2017" and inserting "November 30, 2018".

(b) PROGRAM EXPIRATION.—Section 1319 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4026) is amended by striking "September 30, 2017" and inserting "November 30, 2018".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to do something I do not often do, and that is: I have asked my leadership to put a bill on the floor that I do not support.

I am talking about the bill that would provide for a non-reform reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program through the end of November. To make it very clear, Mr. Speaker, I believe this program needs to be reauthorized, and the House has done its work. The House passed a bill with reforms last November. Never underestimate the Senate's capacity to do nothing.

Unfortunately, the Senate has done nothing. But this is a program, Mr. Speaker, that continues to be in dire need of reform. And now, we have reauthorized it without reforms, not once, not twice, not three times, not four times, not five times, but six times since the Financial Services Committee first reported this bill out. Enough is enough.

Mr. Speaker, in America, we lost 116 lives last year to flooding, with billions

and billions of dollars of property loss, and, yet, we have a program unreformed that incents people to live in harm's way. We should not be doing this, Mr. Speaker.

I went and I visited with those who survived Hurricane Harvey, people that were close to your district, people whose homes had flooded three times in the last 8 years, and I heard harrowing tales of survival. And, yet, we have a program that says, you know what? We are going to help rebuild your same home in the same fashion in the same place. Hope you survive next time. That is just wrong, Mr. Speaker.

And, yes, we need more mitigation money. We need better flood control projects. The House bill had more flood mitigation money than any other reform bill, but this bill before us has no reforms.

Finances: This is a program that the taxpayer has subsidized so far by \$40 billion. Some of the debt has been forgiven, but it runs a billion-and-a-half dollar deficit every single year, Mr. Speaker. It is unsustainable. The Congressional Budget Office says it, the GAO says it, the OMB says it. It is an unsustainable program. The finances do not work.

And then last, but not least, Mr. Speaker, it is a government monopoly. It is a government monopoly when people could, through a competitive marketplace, actually get more affordable flood insurance. And that is just not a theory. That is happening as we speak.

In the small little bit of the marketplace that is open to competition, people are saving hundreds, if not thousands of dollars in places like Pennsylvania, and in places like Florida. We had testimony in our committee. And so it is just rather disappointing that, again, we face the seventh time of not reforming a program that has no market competition, and that is fiscally unsustainable, and, yet, we continue to see premiums skyrocket in the government monopoly.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman on the other side of the aisle, Mr. BLUMENAUER from Oregon. They tried to put together a reform package with the most minimal level of reforms, and, unfortunately, it did not appear to carry the day.

I suspect we will soon cast, with an overwhelming vote, a clean reauthorization, but I don't think they are going to take it up in the Senate. Maybe I am wrong, in which case, we will have to deal with this. And I would just simply again ask, particularly for the people on my side of the aisle—I think it helps maybe once or twice a month if we ask ourselves Ronald Reagan's eternal question: "If not us, who? If not now, when?"

Mr. Speaker, I invite somebody to answer that question for me, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, since the National Flood Insurance Program's multiyear authorization expired on September 30, 2017, ideological differences have led Congress to pass six short-term extensions, and have even allowed the program to briefly lapse twice since the government shutdowns.

More than 5 million families rely on the NFIP for affordable flood insurance coverage. Communities rely on the NFIP for flood maps and mitigation assistance, and small businesses rely on the NFIP to pick up the pieces when the inevitable storm hits. Yet, the long-term stability of this critical program continues to fall victim to partisan politics.

Mr. Speaker, 2017 was an absolutely catastrophic year in terms of hurricanes and other national disasters. In 2017, for the first time on record, three Category 4 hurricanes made landfall in the United States, serving as painful reminders of the importance of affordable and accessible flood insurance.

While Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria may be a distant memory for some, families affected by these storms are still just beginning their long road to recovery, and we continue to learn about the challenges that families in Puerto Rico face with no signs of leadership from the Trump administration.

We are here today in the midst of the 2018 hurricane season with no credible plan to do anything differently from the partisan gamesmanship that has brought the NFIP to the brink of a lapse several times already this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I am deeply disappointed that Congress continues to miss opportunities to responsibly help homeowners, businesses, and renters who all need access to affordable flood insurance by taking sensible steps to stabilize flood insurance premiums, deal with the NFIP's debt and invest in up-to-date and accurate flood maps.

Instead, the House has passed controversial and ideological reforms that make flood insurance more expensive, less available, and less fair, which is, obviously, going nowhere in the Senate.

Given the critical importance of the NFIP to our housing market, I am pleased that we are taking the small step today of reauthorizing the program for 4 months to at least provide some level of certainty to businesses and families, but let us not be fooled into thinking that our work is done. I have led the effort for years to provide long-term reauthorizations of the NFIP that also ensure the affordability and the availability of flood insurance, and I will continue to do so when this latest short-term extension expires in November.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I am now very pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE), the majority whip.

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding,

and I really want to thank my colleague, Mr. MACARTHUR from New Jersey, for his leadership in bringing this amendment forward, which would reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program on a short-term basis through hurricane season.

Why are we here, Mr. Speaker? We are here because, first of all, the House did take strong action to pass a 5-year reauthorization of NFIP that included really important reforms, reforms that I was happy to work with the chairman on to pass through the House.

□ 1730

But, ultimately, as the bill went over to the Senate, we kept hearing story after story that the Senate was going to pass something, and then a month would go by and another month would go by, and, ultimately, the Senate still hasn't passed anything to reauthorize this program. So it leaves us here literally days before the program expires.

Mr. Speaker, we can't play some game of chicken with the lives of millions of families that represent, by the way, all 50 States. All 50 States participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. This isn't something that just applies to coastal communities. You have got every inland State as well that have families that rely on this program to work.

Mr. Speaker, what kind of program would we like to see? I would love to see a vibrant marketplace with private sector company after private sector company that would offer options to families just like we have with car insurance or homeowners insurance. But we don't have that today. So what we need to do is usher in reforms like the Ross-Castor legislation, Mr. Speaker, that I am a cosponsor of. Ross-Castor, by the way, was included in the House-passed bill.

There are other important reforms that encourage communities to get better mapping from FEMA. Some of those reforms were included in the Royce-Blumenauer legislation which, was also in the House-passed bill.

So we could talk about the reforms that are needed, and I encourage us to get those kind of reforms done. But at the midnight hour, let's at least keep this program going for a few more months while we continue negotiating, and let's get a long-term deal that actually has the reforms that will make this a sustainable program with private sector involvement for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLEAVER), who is the ranking member of the Housing and Insurance Subcommittee of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to support the House amendment to S. 1182, the National Flood Insurance Program Extension Act of 2018. This bill would provide a clean, 4-month extension for the NFIP.

Now, I do plan to vote in favor of this bill, but I do so with deep consternation that we are, yet again, passing a short-term reauthorization. This will be the seventh short-term extension for the NFIP in the last 10 months. This is somewhat embarrassing, or should be, to all of us.

If we fail to reauthorize the program, the NFIP will not be able to issue new policies, and borrowing authority would be limited. A lapse in authorization during the height of hurricane season could have serious ramifications for communities that have already weathered last year's severe storms.

When the Financial Services Committee began to consider the NFIP reauthorization, I had advocated for a long-term reauthorization. I met with Mr. DUFFY many, many times. We discussed that a long-term reauthorization of 5 or even 10 years would provide policyholders and stakeholders with certainty. It would give industry stability, communities a chance to develop mitigation plans, and policyholders peace of mind.

Affordability must remain a central component of any long-term plan to revamp the NFIP. Rates are already increasing for many policyholders, and we need to ensure that homeowners who rely on the NFIP for protection are not priced out of the program.

Additionally, I have urged my colleagues to consider the forgiving of the NFIP's debt. Though the NFIP has been self-sustaining for many years, extreme and unexpected damage following Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy left the NFIP with a \$20 billion debt. Now the NFIP continues to pay over \$400 million a year in interest, and this is ridiculous.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Missouri an additional 1 minute.

Mr. CLEAVER. The NFIP continues to pay over \$400 million a year in interest. That is money that could go towards making improvements in the program or helping enhance affordability. We need to wipe the slate clean and give the NFIP a fresh start.

Lastly, enhancing mapping technology and increasing litigation resources will go a long way in improving the program and preparing communities for prevention and recovery efforts.

To be sure, I am pleased that we are voting to keep the NFIP up and running for the next 4 months, but I remain concerned that we have been unable to agree on a long-term plan. I again urge my colleagues to come to the table in a bipartisan manner for a solution and for the updating of the NFIP.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA), who is the chairman of our Capital Markets, Securities, and Investments Subcommittee.



Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with deep hesitation in supporting another clean extension of the National Flood Insurance Program through November of this year. While I completely agree that letting this program lapse in the middle of hurricane season is deeply problematic, it is inconceivable to me that even extremely modest reforms to this troubled program are not included in this legislation.

The House amendment to S. 1182 is a simple piece of legislation with a simple extension. What is notable, however, is the fact that the legislation contains none of the reforms passed by this House in a bipartisan manner in November, nor does the legislation contain any of the more modest reforms recently introduced by my colleagues from California and Oregon, Representatives ROYCE and BLUMENAUER.

Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman from Missouri said, this will be extension number 7 in less than a year. This is even after Congress forgave that \$16 billion in NFIP debt, all while fewer than 2 percent of the 5 million policies that are out there have absorbed more than \$8 billion in payments.

These numbers are staggering. Instead of passing clean extension after clean extension, the Senate should—no, wait a minute—the Senate must do its job and take up bipartisan reform that we passed in November.

I urge my colleagues to be responsible and work toward crafting a long-term reauthorization of this, a program that needs to shift towards risk-based rates, increasing private sector involvement in the program, and to address repetitive loss properties, all of which will put the program on a more sustainable financial path.

I grew up in a floodplain in Michigan right along Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes. This is real for those of us in west Michigan. But at the end of the day, with this legislation, a “no” vote is not a lack of willingness or interest to address this issue, as it may be portrayed; but, equally, a “yes” vote should not be acceptance of the status quo. Hopefully, by this bill moving forward, there may be action in the Senate.

Frankly, at the end of the day, Members are being put in an impossible no-win situation; not for us, Mr. Speaker, but for our constituents, the taxpayers, it is a no-win situation.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN), who is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I, too, am not enthralled with the idea of a temporary fix. My preference is a long-term remedy.

While we have different reasons for being opposed to a temporary fix, the truth is we have no choice at this point. In about a week, the program will expire.

I know what happens when we are, unfortunately, coping with hurricanes such as Katrina, which cost us \$160 billion. I saw what happened in New Orleans, Louisiana, after Katrina. The ranking member and I were there on the ground to see how people who had been quite prosperous were now having to abandon what was their home, and they had to move to other places. The Astrodome in Houston, Texas, became the home for many thousands of people who were fleeing the aftermath of Katrina.

I saw what happened after Harvey and how people were suffering and trying to go back into homes that were completely devastated. They had nowhere else to go.

So we have no choice. We must reauthorize. And 4 months, while it seems like it is an inappropriate amount of time, does give us some additional time. My hope is that we will come to some conclusion that will be acceptable such that we can have a long-term extension.

The Realtors are constantly calling to my attention the need for certainty in this program. It helps the economy to have certainty. My belief is we can have certainty, and we must extend.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. My belief is we must have certainty and we must extend. My belief also is this: If not us, who will extend it? If not now, when will we extend it?

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), who is the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and a very senior member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, we stand here doing what we have done, I guess, 38 times now since 1998, and that is passing an extension of the National Flood Insurance Program without the much-needed reforms that should be in that program. This is unacceptable.

Subsidized flood insurance represents what economists call a moral hazard, and let me tell you why. We tell Americans that if you buy flood insurance from Uncle Sam, no matter how many times your house floods, we will give you money to rebuild it.

We haven't worked to decrease that moral hazard through reform; rather, we have embraced and refueled it, and we make it more difficult for people to move than rebuild.

We fail to encourage communities to mitigate flood risk. We continue to build in high-risk areas. The clearest sign of moral hazard is the number of repeatedly flooded properties that are rebuilt with little deference to mitigation.

I will give you some examples:

A \$90,000 home in Missouri has been flooded, now, 34 times, at a cost of more than \$600,000;

A \$56,000 home in Louisiana flooded more than 40 times at a cost of \$430,000; A \$72,000 home in Texas that flooded again last year cost taxpayers over \$1 million in payouts.

I came to the floor today hoping to support a bill that Mr. BLUMENAUER and I authored that would have extended the flood program with what The Wall Street Journal called de minimis policy changes that have broad, bipartisan support, which would do something about the fact that you have got fewer than 2 percent of the 5 million policies that have absorbed more than \$8 billion of the payments because we don't have these reforms. That is not in this bill before us.

Unfortunately, I oppose this can-kicking exercise, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), who has long pushed for reducing flood risk in this country.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman's courtesy in permitting me to speak on this, and I am pleased to follow my friend from California (Mr. ROYCE).

This is troubling for me, his reference here to 38 extensions without reform. I have been working on this for 20 years. This is the 41st time, and we had one back in 2004 with my friend, Doug Bereuter, where we had some small steps, but they were anticipatory of being able to make greater reforms.

I am vexed that we continue to move forward and dodge some hard facts. We are subsidizing too much for people who grow complacent.

I am concerned about affordability. There are things we can do to deal with affordability, but that doesn't mean to have massive subsidization for people who don't need it and, in fact, encourage people to be in harm's way and, in fact, after they are flooded out, to go back, putting them in harm's way again.

There are simple, commonsense steps we can take. There were things that Mr. ROYCE and I had that are sort of the lowest common denominator. I am deeply troubled that we are going to do this again without dealing with the problems.

I just want to say that it is not just financial hardship and it is not just wasting of money. Our failure to reform the Flood Insurance Program puts people at risk. Every one of these massive events shows that people will go back, trying to deal with a family member; they are dealing with their business, or they are dealing with a pet.

□ 1745

People die because we fail to take steps to reform and make it work right.

I appreciate the ranking member, the chair, Mr. DUFFY, and Mr. ROYCE. There is a path forward. This bill is not the path forward.

I don't want it to lapse. I don't want disruption. But it is hard for me to sit here and vote "yes" for something that doesn't do the minimum. We don't do anybody any favors along this path.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LUTKEMEYER), the chairman of our Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit Subcommittee.

Mr. LUTKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, the National Flood Insurance Program is critical to millions of Americans who need access to affordable flood insurance, but it is also in desperate need of reform. The current construct of the NFIP doesn't serve anyone well. Taxpayers are left unprotected, and the program continues to offer antiquated policies and provides insufficient coverage. FEMA continues to hold a monopoly in the flood insurance space, leaving policyholders with no freedom to choose a policy that works best for them.

Mr. Speaker, last year, we came together as a body and passed comprehensive NFIP reform. Unfortunately, the Senate has failed to do anything with those even modest reforms that we had in that bill. Tomorrow, we are probably going to pass another bill and kick the can down the road. We will probably do the same thing in November.

Mr. Speaker, I oppose this bill because I think it is time to make some reforms. It is time to take a stand and do something to protect the taxpayers who are on the hook for all of what I call the mismanagement of this agency and for these continued risks to individuals who are policyholders of these policies who continue to live in dangerous areas.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), who has been a true leader on the National Flood Insurance Program. He comes with a very, very important background. He was chairman of Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority. So I am pleased to have worked with him, to have talked with him, and to understand that we need him when we are working on the reforms that we will work on after we pass this bill.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this discussion needs to have a reset. It needs to have a reset because I keep hearing people sit here talking about repetitive floods and how there is a certain set of these flood victims who are costing this program all sorts of problems and money.

Mr. Speaker, do you really believe people want to be flooded? Do you think people want to have everything they own underwater and have to throw it all out?

Anybody who believes that has obviously never stepped foot in a flooded home, never spoken to a flood victim.

Do you really think people intentionally want to build their home in a

place that is going to flood so all their family heirlooms are flooded and lost? That whole concept is irrational.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that all of us want this program to be solvent. We all want to have a solution. We all want to have reforms. The things that are being pushed aren't the reforms that are going to result in solvency. The reforms that are being pushed are strictly a defense. You don't go out on the field and just play defense.

We need to lean forward. We need to integrate some of our efforts on mitigation, some of our Corps of Engineers levee projects, some of our hazard mitigation grant program funds through FEMA, look where we can protect areas and where that is the most cost-effective solution, and not tell everyone: You are out of your house, or we are going to charge you unaffordable rates.

Mr. Speaker, think about this for just a minute. I represent the State of Louisiana. We drain from Montana to two Canadian provinces to New York. All that water comes and drains down through our State. It is one of the largest watersheds in the world. More water is coming to us now.

So, yes, we are more vulnerable. But the people who live in these homes and businesses are innocent. Folks are trying to charge them more for something they have no control over. That is not American. That is not okay.

We are in hurricane season right now, Mr. Speaker. We are in hurricane season, where we need to provide people certainty. Let's be crystal clear on what this bill is and what it is not. A "yes" vote provides people certainty during hurricane season. It provides certainty to Realtors, homeowners, and homebuilders. A "no" vote kills the National Flood Insurance Program and leaves people with complete uncertainty and in limbo.

I want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey for proposing this bill and for bringing it up, because this is so important. We have had 220 disasters, each costing more than \$1 billion since 1980. In total, we spent approximately \$1.5 trillion responding to these disasters.

Mr. Speaker, there are similar programs that exist. Right now, there is Price-Anderson for nuclear power plants and TRIA for terrorism risk insurance, where the government provides a safety net. I agree that we need to reform these programs, but we need to do it in a way that does not penalize the innocent. Until we get to that point, we need to do an extension to provide certainty and to ensure we make it through hurricane season, and we have a rational debate.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MACARTHUR), who is also the author of the legislation for the reauthorization bill before us.

Mr. MACARTHUR. Mr. Speaker, I spent about 30 years in the insurance

industry. A good deal of that time, I worked on this program. I know it, I would guess, better than anyone here, and I know what it does for people. I know its weaknesses as well.

Mr. Speaker, 140 million Americans live in coastal counties today. They are ordinary Americans, mostly of moderate means. I represent many of these folks in Ocean County, New Jersey. These are the victims of disasters like Sandy, and they absolutely depend upon this program.

In October, the House passed a bill that I worked on and I supported, a 5-year reauthorization with modest increases in premiums, increased mitigation dollars, and instilled some accountability at FEMA. It was too much reform for some, not enough for others. But it was absolutely necessary that we do that. The Senate has totally failed to act.

So, what do we do today? We hold every homeowner along the coast hostage? We cannot do that.

The NFIP program has \$30 billion of borrowing capacity. That drops to \$1 billion if this lapses. That is a modest event in this country. How do we look the American people in the eye after a storm and say: We don't have the money that you have been paying premiums for. How do we do that? How do we shut down the real estate market?

If you can't get a mortgage, you can't buy a home. And you cannot get a mortgage in coastal counties without flood insurance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from New Jersey an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. MACARTHUR. Mr. Speaker, we cannot pull the rug out from underneath the people depending on this program.

I will continue to work with the committee, with our chairman, and with the Senate, which needs to get off their back sides and do something. They have done nothing on this. I will continue to work. But in the meantime, we must continue this program until the end of hurricane season. That is why I chose the date November 30 on this bill. That is the last day of hurricane season.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues, whatever your reservations, support it, and we will keep working on reforms.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. PALAZZO), continuing in this bipartisan effort to pass a clean bill. He has long been a champion of the National Flood Insurance Program.

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

We are 1 week away from July 31—that is 7 days—which means the deadline to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program is nearing very fast.

I would like to thank Mr. MACARTHUR for understanding the importance of avoiding a lapse in the NFIP

program and for introducing legislation that will continue coverage for millions of policyholders.

We know that flooding always has been and will continue to be the most costly natural phenomenon humanity faces.

I support this amendment to extend the National Flood Insurance Program through the end of the 2018 hurricane season and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Policyholders who rely on the program to insure their homes from flooding should not be caught in limbo while Congress works on coming together in a bipartisan manner to reauthorize the program.

While I, along with many of my colleagues, support reform in the program, the time to enact bipartisan reforms is gone for now. We have to take immediate action. If the NFIP lapses, policyholders will not have the opportunity to renew their policies and tens of thousands of home sale closings would be negatively impacted by a program lapse. We are in the middle of the 2018 hurricane season, and a major disruption in the program will be detrimental to homeowners in every corner of the United States.

It is our duty to ensure that flood insurance remains affordable and available to our constituents. Since 1968, this program has helped protect against flooding. Since its inception, the NFIP has saved the government billions of dollars.

We are providing our constituents with certainty by supporting this bill, and I urge my colleagues to join me in voting to extend the NFIP through the end of the 2018 hurricane season.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS), the vice chairman of the Financial Institutions Subcommittee.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the House amendment to S. 1182, the National Flood Insurance Program Extension Act.

This summer has been a challenging time for western Pennsylvania, where summer storms have caused devastating floods. Residents are still recovering from the damage. At the same time, the NFIP, the National Flood Insurance Program, is close to lapsing. That is because, like so many things we have done in the House, the Senate has failed to act.

We know the NFIP is in need of reform. As a member of the Financial Services Committee, I applaud Chairman HENSARLING and DUFFY for their work to craft a bipartisan bill that we have passed. Many of these reforms in this bill are bipartisan. They are non-controversial. Pennsylvania's own insurance commissioner, a Democratic appointee, even testified before our committee in support of the private flood insurance provisions that are essential to improving consumer choice. Unfortunately, the Senate is stalled. We should continue urging Senators to take action, in the meantime.

I urge my colleagues to support the passage of this temporary extension, and I urge the Senate to get back to work.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN).

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I represent a working coastal community. Our communities in Texas District 36 were hit very, very hard by Hurricane Harvey, and our Nation's energy security relies on those communities.

Coastal energy and petrochemical refining facilities like the 150 that I represent cannot function without a steady and reliable workforce, and that workforce cannot exist without a stable housing market.

I am hopeful that my House colleagues will have the wisdom to see the necessity of passing S. 1182, so that we can maintain this national security issue.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. ABRAHAM).

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, allowing the NFIP to expire is simply not an option. It would be catastrophic on financial markets. But more importantly, for that family sitting around the table, it would be catastrophic.

Chairman HENSARLING and Majority Whip SCALISE had a good reform bill, but the Senate needs to act. Until that happens, we have to reauthorize this, so that the next hurricane doesn't have a devastating effect on the economy and families.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. HIGGINS).

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I have a map in my office that shows the areas of the United States that have been impacted by flood. It is virtually the entire country.

This is the House of "We the People." This is an easy "yes" vote. I urge my colleagues on my side of the aisle to try to explain to the American people how you can vote "yes" six times on an extension and "no" the seventh time.

We did our job in November. We passed some comprehensive reforms to the NFIP, a 5-year authorization. The Senate has failed. We serve the people. This is right for the people.

I urge my colleagues to step up and vote "yes" on this extension. We don't like it, but we serve the people. This bill is for the people.

□ 1800

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY), the chairman of our Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance and the author of the real flood reform bill.

Mr. DUFFY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding. This is a rich conversation. I am hearing my colleagues saying: We are almost out of time. We have to reauthorize the program. We can't let it expire.

The truth is, we have known for months that this program was going to expire. We have known. And many of us have tried to go to those who have disagreed on any kind of flood reform to craft a deal, to craft a compromise, but, lo and behold, there was no willingness to come together and find a compromise on flood reform.

It was: No, no. We want to come to the very end and pretend like it is a crisis and we have to extend the program because we can't put people in harm's way.

By the way, this program puts people in harm's way. We know that people don't want to flood, just like people don't want to get in a car crash and they don't want their house to burn. But if 2 times, 4 times, 10 times someone's house burns, we might say: Hey, we have got a problem with that. Maybe we should look at where you are living.

If someone gets in a car crash 2 times, 5 times, 10 times, 15 times, we might say: Hey, you have got a problem, maybe, with your driving.

But with flood insurance, we say: Listen, you can flood 1 time, 5 times, 10 times—and guess what? You can flood 10 times, 15 times, and your premiums don't go up at all. You are grandfathered in.

When my daughter crashed our car twice, guess what happened to my premiums? They went through the roof. But with flood insurance, your premiums don't go up.

Let's fix this program. There are commonsense reforms that we can implement. We are not asking for the bill that I introduced last year. We have said: Hey, maybe we can look at the severe repetitive loss properties, the ones that are only 3 percent of those in the NFIP but account for 25 percent of the losses. Maybe we could address those properties.

Maybe we could find some little bit of reform that could make the program work better. It is \$20.5 billion in debt, and we already forgave \$16 billion in debt. It is under water, to use a pun.

Let's work on fixing it. Let's help people get out of harm's way. Reform does that, Mr. Speaker. Let's get it done.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to hear that some of my friends on the opposite side of the aisle are going to cooperate in a reauthorization bill, taking into consideration many of the concerns.

I do want you to know that I sent a letter out just July 18, Mr. Speaker, 61

Members signed this letter for reauthorization. I want you to know that I understand that we have differences, and I understand that I am focused on affordability as one of the important aspects of any reauthorization bill.

I do know that some on the other side are concerned about how many times flooding will take place where people will have to be reestablished, the homes rebuilt, repairs done, how many times. I know all of that. We know all of that. But we are here now, and we have no choice. We have got to pass this bill this evening. A clear bill that will reauthorize for 4 months, and then let's have Mr. DUFFY have another shout out loud about how we are going to do a long-term reauthorization bill when we take up the bill after the 4 months.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. I am prepared to close, Mr. Speaker. I think I have the right to close.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers, and I am prepared to close.

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

Mr. Speaker, partisan gamesmanship and harmful reforms passed out of the house stalled the NFIP's long-term reauthorization for long enough. While I would prefer a longer term reauthorization of this important program, I strongly support today's 4-month extension to provide homeowners, businesses, renters, and communities with the certainty they deserve.

But make no mistake. This short-term reauthorization does not absolve Congress of its responsibility to reauthorize the flood insurance program for the long term. It is past time for Congress to do its job and pass a long-term reauthorization that will ensure Americans are protected this and every hurricane season to come.

Mr. Speaker, flooding is truly a humbling and equalizing force. It brings out the best of America during the worst of times, with everyone putting aside their differences to come together to help one another in our time of need.

Now it is time for Congress to do the same thing. We must put partisanship and ideology aside and ensure the continued affordability and availability of coverage for millions of Americans. The long-term reauthorization of the NFIP that ensures affordable flood insurance continues to be available to communities across our country must be Congress' priority when we return from the August recess.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 1½ minutes remaining.

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

Mr. Speaker, déjà vu all over again. This House has been here many times

before. In fact, we have had 41 reauthorizations of this program, 38 with no reforms.

So, a vote for S. 1182 is a vote for the status quo. And what is the status quo? The status quo is people in harm's way who have homes that flood five, six, seven, and eight times, putting their lives in danger and burdening the taxpayer at the same time.

A vote for S. 1182 is a vote to ensure that we continue to have more red ink as far as the eye can see. Mr. Speaker, \$40 billion of taxpayer subsidies to the program already. A vote for S. 1182 is a vote to protect a government monopoly.

The ranking member spoke about affordability. Well, the irony is, if we had market competition, we would have more affordable flood insurance, but we don't have market competition.

When is enough enough? When do we finally act? If we can vote down this, we can vote in favor of reforms, which is what we should have done in the first place. For us to do the same thing over and over again and expect a different result, we all know, Mr. Speaker, is the very definition of insanity.

I have no doubt this thing will be voted "aye," but it shouldn't be, and it is a sad day for the House.

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 Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1182, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas 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 motion will be postponed.

#### ALLOWING SERVICEMEMBERS TO TERMINATE THEIR CABLE, SATELLITE TELEVISION, AND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE CONTRACTS

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2409) to allow servicemembers to terminate their cable, satellite television, and Internet access service contracts while deployed, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2409

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. TERMINATION OF MULTICHANNEL VIDEO PROGRAMMING AND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE CONTRACTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 305A of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. 3956) is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by inserting “, MULTICHANNEL VIDEO PROGRAMMING, AND INTERNET ACCESS” after “TELEPHONE”;

(2) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUALS COVERED.—For purposes of this section, the following individuals shall be treated as a servicemember covered by paragraph (1):

“(A) A spouse of a servicemember who dies while in military service or a spouse of a member of the reserve components who dies while performing duty described in subparagraph (B).

“(B) A member of the reserve components performing military service or performing full-time National Guard duty, active Guard and Reserve duty, or inactive-duty training (as such terms are defined in section 101(d) of title 10, United States Code).”;

(3) in subsection (b), by striking “cellular telephone service or telephone exchange service” and inserting “commercial mobile service, telephone exchange service, Internet access service, or multichannel video programming service”;

(4) in subsection (c), by inserting “for commercial mobile service or telephone exchange service” before “terminated”;

(5) in subsection (d), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “cellular telephone service” and inserting “commercial mobile service”;

(6) in subsection (e)—

(A) by striking “For any” and inserting the following:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—For any”;

(B) by striking “If the” and inserting the following:

“(2) REINSTATEMENT OF SERVICE.—If the”;

and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(3) RETURN OF PROVIDER-OWNED EQUIPMENT.—If a servicemember terminates a contract under subsection (a), the servicemember shall return any provider-owned consumer premises equipment to the service provider not later than 10 days after the date on which service is disconnected.”; and

(7) in subsection (g)—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (4); and

(B) by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

“(1) The term ‘commercial mobile service’ has the meaning given that term in section 332(d) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 332(d)).

“(2) The term ‘multichannel video programming service’ means a subscription video service offered by a multichannel video programming distributor, as that term is defined in section 602 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 522), over a system the distributor owns or controls.

“(3) The term ‘provider-owned consumer premises equipment’ means any equipment that a provider of Internet access service or multichannel video programming service rents or loans to a customer during the provision of that service, including gateways, routers, cable modems, voice-capable modems, CableCARDS, converters, digital adapters, remote controls, and any other equipment provided.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(1) TITLE HEADING.—The heading for title III of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act is amended by striking “TELEPHONE” and inserting “COMMUNICATIONS”.

(2) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act is amended—

(A) by striking the item relating to title III and inserting the following:

“TITLE III—RENT, INSTALLMENT CONTRACTS, MORTGAGES, LIENS, ASSIGNMENT, LEASES, COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE CONTRACTS”;

and

(B) by striking the item relating to section 305A and inserting the following:

“Sec. 305A. Termination of telephone, multichannel video programming, and Internet access service contracts.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2409, as amended.

The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, SCRA, was enacted by Congress to protect Active Duty servicemembers and members of the National Guard and Reserve from financial charges and judicial obligations that could incur due to their military service.

As most Americans know, cell phone companies charge early-termination fees if a user cancels an agreement for service with the carrier before their contract has expired. SCRA currently allows a servicemember who is ordered to move or deploy for longer than 90 days to cancel their cell phone contract without paying those fees. However, it does not explicitly protect servicemembers from having to pay early-termination fees for cable, satellite TV, or Internet access contracts.

H.R. 2409, as amended, which is sponsored by Congressman RYAN COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, would fix this inequity. I am grateful for his efforts in this bill to acknowledge that servicemembers would be given the same type of protections for cable, satellite TV, and Internet contracts as those already in place for cell phone devices.

The bill would also extend those protections to surviving spouses of servicemembers who are killed while on Active Duty.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman COSTELLO for bringing this bill forward, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2409, as amended, to allow certain servicemembers to terminate their cable, satellite television, and Internet service contracts while deployed. This is an important part of modernizing the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act and helps it reflect the current lifestyle of servicemembers.

Internet and television access have become necessities in the modern world. The SCRA is key to protecting

the rights of servicemembers and allowing them to fulfill their service obligations.

I would like to thank the chairman for working with the minority to match this bill to the changes we are making under H.R. 5882, as amended, the Gold Star Spouses Leasing Relief Act, which we will also be voting on today.

I would also like to thank the chairman for working with us on including National Guard and reservist servicemembers who are killed while on duty.

Lastly, I want to recognize Mr. KILMER and Mr. MCGOVERN for working with Mr. COSTELLO to bring this important bill forward.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO), author of the bill and former member of the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2409, bipartisan legislation I introduced with Congressman KILMER.

I want to thank Congressman KILMER for his work with me on this bill. I also want to recognize the very stellar leadership of Chairman ROE on the VA Committee and Ranking Member TAKANO, as well as all the VA staff seated behind me and those not seated behind me, but who work every day to make that a highly performing committee here in the House.

When our brave servicemembers are preparing to relocate or deploy because of Active Duty orders, they should not have to navigate costly and time-consuming cancellation fees and policies. Under current law, protections are granted to servicemembers with military orders for certain civil agreements, including rental leases or cell phone contracts; but they cannot terminate their cable, satellite television, and Internet access service contracts while deployed without incurring early-termination fees.

Our legislation, very simply, fixes this by updating the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to include pay TV and Internet service contracts. While some States already do provide relief for pay TV or Internet services, this legislation would update the act to enact a policy at the Federal level, ensuring servicemembers and their families receive uniform assistance no matter in which State they reside.

Mr. Speaker, I would again like to thank Chairman ROE for his support and his work to pass H.R. 2409. I would also like to thank Andrew and Erica in my office for their work on this important bill as well.

Mr. Speaker, it is our responsibility to help provide peace of mind to our servicemembers and their families when they prepare to deploy, so I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. KILMER), my good friend,

□ 1815

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this bill, which will allow our servicemembers to terminate their cable, satellite television, and internet contracts once they receive orders to relocate for more than 90 days.

Listen, we ask a lot of our military personnel and their families. I know that because my district is home to so many veterans and Active-Duty servicemembers. I met with these amazing, talented men and women, and they are so impressive. They step up and they sacrifice. They are constantly being asked to uproot themselves and their families across this country and all over the world, often on very short notice; and when their country calls, the members of our Armed Forces drop everything. They have our backs, and we should have their backs, too.

Deployed servicemembers and their families shouldn't have to worry about bills piling up at home when they are gone because they are locked into contracts for television and the internet. In the last few days at home with their kids and spouses, they shouldn't have to spend a second on hold or haggling with a customer service representative.

I am very proud to have worked across the aisle on this bill with Representative RYAN COSTELLO. Taking care of our military families is an issue that all Americans, regardless of party, can stand behind, and I want to express my gratitude to the chairman for his leadership on those issues and Ranking Member TAKANO and others on that committee.

Listen, this bill will provide a small measure of relief to our military members and to their families. It is the least we can do. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 2409, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I was thinking here, as we were listening to the testimony, when I went into the Army many, many years ago to go to Southeast Asia, there was no internet, there was no cable TV, and there were no cell phones, so it was pretty easy for me to leave then. There wasn't much to leave. But things have changed a lot since then. I encourage all Members to support H.R. 2409, as amended.

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 Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2409, 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.

**VETERANS-SPECIFIC EDUCATION FOR TOMORROW'S HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ACT**

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2787) to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a pilot program instituting a clinical observation program for pre-med students preparing to attend medical school, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2787

*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 “Veterans-Specific Education for Tomorrow’s Health Professionals Act” or the “Vet HP Act”.

**SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT PROGRAM FOR CLINICAL OBSERVATION BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS.**

It is the sense of Congress that the pilot program described in section 3(a) should be designed to—

- (1) increase the awareness, knowledge, and empathy of future health professionals toward the health conditions common to veterans;
- (2) increase the diversity of the recruitment pool of future physicians of the Department; and
- (3) expand clinical observation opportunities for all students by encouraging students of all backgrounds to consider a career in the health professions.

**SEC. 3. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT PROGRAM FOR CLINICAL OBSERVATION BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS.**

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program for a one-year period, beginning not later than August 15, 2021, to provide certain students described in subsection (d) a clinical observation experience at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) **MEDICAL CENTER SELECTION.**—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program under this section at not fewer than five medical centers of the Department. In selecting such medical centers, the Secretary shall ensure regional diversity among such selected medical centers.

(c) **CLINICAL OBSERVATION SESSIONS.**—

(1) **FREQUENCY AND DURATION.**—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall—

(A) provide at least one and not more than three clinical observation sessions at each medical center selected during each calendar year;

(B) ensure that each clinical observation session—

- (i) lasts between four and six months; and
- (ii) to the extent practicable, begins and ends concurrently with one or more academic terms of an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)); and

(C) ensure that the clinical observation sessions provided at a medical center have minimal overlap.

(2) **SESSIONS.**—The Secretary shall ensure that the pilot program consists of clinical observation sessions as follows:

(A) Each session shall allow for not fewer than five students nor greater than 15 students to participate in the session.

(B) Each session shall consist of not fewer than 20 observational hours nor greater than 40 observational hours.

(C) A majority of the observational hours shall be spent observing a health professional. The other observational hours shall be spent in a manner that ensures a robust, well rounded experience that exposes the students to a variety of aspects of medical care and health care administration.

(D) Each session shall provide a diverse clinical observation experience.

(d) **STUDENTS.**—

(1) **SELECTION.**—The Secretary shall select to participate in the pilot program under subsection (a) students who are—

(A) nationals of the United States;

(B) enrolled in an accredited program of study at an institution of higher education; and

(C) referred by their institution of higher education following an internal application process.

(2) **PRIORITY.**—In making such selection, the Secretary shall give priority to each of the following five categories of students:

(A) Students who, at the time of the completion of their secondary education, resided in a health professional shortage area (as defined in section 332 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254e)).

(B) First generation college students (as defined in section 402A(h)(3) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067q(a))).

(C) Students who have been referred by minority-serving institutions (as defined in section 371(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067q(a))).

(D) Veterans (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code).

(E) Students who indicate an intention to specialize in a health professional occupation identified by the Inspector General of the Department under section 7412 of title 38, United States Code, as having a staffing shortage.

(3) **ASSIGNMENT TO MEDICAL CENTERS.**—The Secretary shall assign students selected under paragraph (1) to medical centers selected under subsection (b) without regard for whether such medical centers have staffing shortages in any health professional occupation pursuant to section 7412 of title 38, United States Code.

(e) **OTHER MATTERS.**—In carrying out the pilot program under this section, the Secretary shall—

(1) establish a formal status to facilitate the access to medical centers of the Department by student observers participating in the pilot program;

(2) establish standardized legal, privacy, and ethical requirements for the student observers, including with respect to—

(A) ensuring that no student observer provides any care to patients while participating as an observer; and

(B) ensuring the suitability of a student to participate in the pilot program to ensure that the student poses no risk to patients;

(3) develop and implement a partnership strategy with minority-serving institutions to encourage referrals;

(4) create standardized procedures for student observers;

(5) create an online information page about the pilot program on the internet website of the Department;

(6) publish on the online information page created under paragraph (5) the locations of such centers, and other information on the pilot program, not later than 180 days before the date on which applications are required to be submitted by potential student observers;

(7) identify medical centers and specific health professionals participating in the pilot program; and

(8) notify the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate of the medical centers selected under

subsection (c) within 30 days of selection, to facilitate program awareness.

(f) **REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the completion of the pilot program under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the results of the pilot program, including—

(1) the number and demographics of all applicants, those accepted to participate in the pilot program, and those who completed the pilot program; and

(2) if participating institutions of higher education choose to administer satisfaction surveys that assess the experience of those who completed the pilot program, the results of any such satisfaction surveys, provided at the discretion of the institution of higher education.

**SEC. 4. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.**

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the requirements of this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

**GENERAL LEAVE**

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2787, as amended, the Veterans-Specific Education for Tomorrow’s Health Professionals Act. The bill would create a pilot program to provide undergraduate students with a clinical observation experience at the Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

The pilot would give prospective providers a window into the healthcare profession that would help inform their educational paths and careers. It would also provide them an early introduction to both the VA healthcare system and the medical conditions common among our Nation’s veterans.

VA has a number of recruitment and retention challenges, one of which is an aging workforce that is increasingly retirement eligible. Given that, it is imperative that VA take every available opportunity to engage young clinicians and make a concerted effort to attract them to a career serving veterans within the VA healthcare system.

This bill is sponsored by the Congresswoman from Ohio, MARCY KAPTUR, and I appreciate her efforts. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

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



Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2787, as amended, the Vet MD Act.

The Department of Veterans Affairs, like the Nation, is experiencing a shortage of healthcare providers. With shortages in areas like mental healthcare and medical administration, it can become increasingly difficult to maintain a facility's efficiency and quality. That is why it is increasingly important to promote medical education and employment within VA as soon in a student's educational career as is possible.

This bill allows VA to capture students as they complete their premedical undergraduate degrees by offering them the opportunity to shadow medical professionals in VA facilities. Not only does this create a familiarity with VA among the students, but allows VA to continue to do one of the things it does best: educate the Nation's future healthcare providers.

I appreciate the hard work of my colleague, Representative KAPTUR, and urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the Vet MD Act.

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

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), the author of this bill.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member TAKANO for his great support and for yielding me the time, and I thank Chairman ROE very much for moving this bill through his committee.

H.R. 2787, the Vet MD Act, also called the Veterans-Specific Education for Tomorrow's Health Professionals Act, I am honored to speak on its behalf this evening.

The Vet MD Act works to break down barriers and expand opportunities for healthcare professionals to get training to care for our veterans. The bill creates a 3-year pilot program for pre-health undergraduate students to gain clinical observation experience within at least five VA medical centers.

Health schools recommend or require clinical observation hours, but there is no formal process to apply for these hours. Opportunities to shadow are limited and are based on where you go to school or whom you know; and students who attend schools outside major cities, as well as those whose families lack connections to the medical community, find it harder and harder to shadow and are disadvantaged in medical school admissions. This places an unfair burden on otherwise qualified students who come from less affluent communities or rural areas.

Several years ago, two premedical undergraduate students highlighted to my team the struggles disadvantaged, minority, and other young people who lack personal connections face as they apply for medical school. So I thank Seamus Carragher and Andrew Frank for bringing this serious omission to our attention, and I thank Carrie

Swope, my legislative assistant, on this important issue, for her work throughout.

Through their own struggle, these students struggled to gain access to clinical observation, experience so critical in medical circles, and they realized an immense opportunity was missing. The bill prioritizes students in medically underserved areas; first-generation college students, of which I was one; students referred by minority-serving institutions; and, of course, veterans.

The Vet MD Act creates a pipeline for future physicians and medical professionals and prioritizes training for students who specialize in a health profession where there is a serious staffing shortage. This important step will help narrow the gap and ensure we are training pre-health students in careers that are in demand and necessary.

I can tell you, in every hospital system I represent, there is an unmet demand. Thousands and thousands of individuals are needed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 45 seconds to the gentlewoman from Ohio.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, importantly, pre-health students in the pilot will gain a deeper understanding of veterans' specific health needs and experiences, which is critical for health professionals who treat veterans, many of whom have complex conditions, as the chair and ranking member know.

One of our top responsibilities as a Congress is to ensure that our veterans, those who have sacrificed so much for our country and for liberty's cause, receive high-quality healthcare from highly trained health professionals. This bill furthers that effort, and I am pleased it will get a vote this evening.

I thank my colleagues: Mr. TAKANO, for his diligent work on this bill; Ranking Member WALZ; and Chairman ROE, for bringing this bill to the floor so expeditiously. On behalf of our health professionals, our veterans, myself, and all the cosponsors, I can't thank you enough.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

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

Mr. Speaker, as I was listening to my friend from the State of Ohio, I was struck by just how the process of legislating in this body works, how ideas come from very real people seeking to solve problems through their Representative. And I watched this legislation move through committee, the gentlewoman graciously accepting the changes and approving the bill.

I know that my colleague from Tennessee, a doctor himself, cares so much about medical education. We worked together on expanding the number of medical residencies.

I am delighted this bill has come to the floor so expeditiously. Often, legis-

lation takes so much time to win its way through, but an idea that was very worthy moved through and, I think, in record time.

So, again, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 2787, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

In closing, I, too, came from rural America, and I, too, am a first-generation college graduate and had an opportunity to use the public education system to go to college and medical school. After that, then mentored and taught for over 25 years in medical school, so I had a chance to see young students, and I think this is a fantastic idea.

I thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for bringing this forward. To bring a young person in who has never had a chance to be in that sort of environment and expose them to this, you don't know what sort of light bulb you are going to turn on in their head to encourage them and mentor them. And many of them will become passionate about medicine, nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, audiology, PTSD treatment. I could go on and on. I think this is a great idea. I strongly encourage all Members to support H.R. 2787, as amended.

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 Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2787, 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.

#### INCLUDING ADDITIONAL PERIODS OF ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5538) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the inclusion of certain additional periods of active duty service for purposes of suspending charges to veterans' entitlement to educational assistance under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs during periods of suspended participation in vocational rehabilitation programs.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5538

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. INCLUSION OF CERTAIN ADDITIONAL PERIODS OF ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE FOR PURPOSES OF SUSPENSION OF CHARGES TO ENTITLEMENT DURING PERIODS OF SUSPENDED PARTICIPATION IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMS.**

Section 3105(e)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “or 12304” and inserting “12304, 12304a, or 12304b”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

**GENERAL LEAVE**

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5538.

Under current law, if a member of the Guard or Reserve is called to Active Duty under certain orders while receiving training through the Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program, the charges for that training are waived. However, those charges are not waived for members of the Guard or Reserve who are called up under orders regarding emergency response or augmentation of overseas combat forces. This creates a disparity.

H.R. 5538 would address that disparity and level the playing field by waiving training charges for all servicemembers, regardless of which Active-Duty orders they are serving under.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5538, the Reserve Component Vocational Rehabilitation Parity Act.

This bill protects an overlooked provision related to our National Guard and Reserve servicemembers who are mobilized under 12304b authorities. This bill allows servicemembers to pause the clock on the 12-year limit to use vocational rehabilitation programs while mobilized on Active Duty orders. Currently, this is allowed for mostly mobilization authorities, but this particular authority was overlooked. Simply, the bill adds to 12304a and 12304b authorities to the 12304 provision already listed within the statute.

This is an important fix because of the increased use of 12304b authority by the Department of Defense over the past few years, and the increases planned for the future. As we move the

Reserve components from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve concept, it is critically important that we modernize our statutes to ensure benefits parity while servicemembers are in uniform. This is a step in the right direction.

With this bill, Congress has the opportunity to be proactive, instead of reactive, to the needs of our servicemembers.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. PETERS for bringing this issue forward and identifying a fix. He is a reliable and critical advocate for our country's National Guard and Reserve servicemembers. I also thank Mr. BERGMAN for reaching across the aisle and joining Mr. PETERS in introducing this bill. And I thank the co-chairs of the House's National Guard and Reserve Components Caucus, Mr. WALZ and Mr. PALAZZO, for supporting the initiative. Lastly, I thank the six other members of our committee who were original cosponsors of the bill, including Mr. O'ROURKE, Ms. BROWNLEY, and Ms. KUSTER.

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

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS), a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, the author of this bill, and my good friend.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. TAKANO for yielding. I appreciate his commitment to improving the lives of veterans, their families, and the communities. The Reserve Component Vocational Rehabilitation Parity Act, my bill before the House today, aims to continue investing in veterans, specifically those still fighting for our Nation.

Our veterans have served our country, and it is our duty to make sure they can access the resources that they have earned. Many guardsmen and reservists have realized that they didn't qualify for all their benefits after the Department of Defense began using their new authority created to call up Reserve components for involuntary service. This new authority unintentionally excluded these reservists.

Thankfully, Ranking Member WALZ and Mr. PALAZZO took the lead to fix several of these inconsistencies. We passed a few of these fixes in the Forever GI Bill last year. This week, we are also passing other bills to make sure benefits are properly extended.

One unresolved issue, though, was access to vocational rehabilitation. This VA program provides access to education and critical job training that helps servicemembers and veterans develop their career plan after service.

Vocational rehab helps veterans determine transferable skills that will lead to good jobs and what additional skills they need to fulfill their career goals.

Upon separation, a veteran must use his or her vocational rehab benefits

within 12 years. Any months or years spent deployed should not count against this time clock.

Currently, two reservists serving side by side in Active Duty may not have access to the same vocational rehab benefits just because of the authority under which they have been mobilized. Additionally, reservists involuntarily called up may be leaving their family or a civilian job without notice, compared to a reservist who volunteered.

In both cases, these guardsmen and reservists served honorably in missions to support combat zones. They have earned the same employment and education benefits as every other reservist throughout their service.

My bill, the Reserve Component Vocational Rehabilitation Parity Act, ensures that reservists and guardsmen have access to the full 12 years of vocational rehab benefits by pausing the clock during their service.

I am happy to have received the support of the National Guard Association of the United States and the Reserve Officers Association in this effort.

I urge Congress to pass this bill so that all of our veterans can access the education benefits they earned.

Mr. Speaker, I thank General Bergman, who joined me to introduce this bill, and seven of our committee colleagues who cosponsored the bill, as Mr. TAKANO said. I also thank Chairman ROE, a wonderful chairman; Ranking Member WALZ; and the Veterans' Affairs Committee staff for their steadfast work to support our Nation's veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their strong support of the bill, and I urge its passage.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 5538, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. PETERS for bringing up this much-needed piece of legislation and correcting this inequity. It wasn't intended, but now this Congress has a chance, in a bipartisan way, to correct this.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support H.R. 5538, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5538.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

**NAVY SEAL CHIEF PETTY OFFICER WILLIAM "BILL" MULDER (RET.) TRANSITION IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2018**

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the

bill (H.R. 5649) to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to amend the Social Security Act, and to direct the Secretaries of Veterans Affairs, Defense, Labor, and Homeland Security, and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, to take certain actions to improve transition assistance to members of the Armed Forces who separate, retire, or are discharged from the Armed Forces, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5649

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 “Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William ‘Bill’ Mulder (Ret.) Transition Improvement Act of 2018”.

#### SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title.

Sec. 2. Table of contents.

Sec. 3. Definitions.

#### TITLE I—IMPROVEMENTS TO TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

Sec. 101. Access for the Secretaries of Labor and Veterans Affairs to the Federal directory of new hires.

Sec. 102. Pilot program for off-base transition training for veterans and spouses.

Sec. 103. Grants for provision of transition assistance to members of the Armed Forces after separation, retirement, or discharge.

Sec. 104. Study of community-based transition assistance programs for members of the Armed Forces after separation, retirement, or discharge.

Sec. 105. One-year independent assessment of the effectiveness of TAP.

Sec. 106. Longitudinal study on changes to TAP.

#### TITLE II—EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Sec. 201. Improvements to assistance for certain flight training and other programs of education.

Sec. 202. Elimination of the period of eligibility for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 203. Educational assistance during extended school closures due to natural disasters.

#### SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) The term “TAP” means the Transition Assistance Program under sections 1142 and 1144 of title 10, United States Code.

(2) The term “military departments” has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 10, United States Code.

#### TITLE I—IMPROVEMENTS TO TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

##### SEC. 101. ACCESS FOR THE SECRETARIES OF LABOR AND VETERANS AFFAIRS TO THE FEDERAL DIRECTORY OF NEW HIRES.

Section 453A(h) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 653a(h)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) VETERAN EMPLOYMENT.—The Secretaries of Labor and of Veterans Affairs shall have access to information reported by employers pursuant to subsection (b) of this section for purposes of tracking employment of veterans.”.

##### SEC. 102. PILOT PROGRAM FOR OFF-BASE TRANSITION TRAINING FOR VETERANS AND SPOUSES.

(a) EXTENSION OF PILOT PROGRAM.—Subsection (a) of section 301 of the Dignified Burial

and Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–260; 10 U.S.C. 1144 note) is amended—

(1) by striking “During the two-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the” and inserting “During the five-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William ‘Bill’ Mulder (Ret.) Transition Improvement Act of 2018, the”; and

(2) by striking “to assess the feasibility and advisability of providing such program to eligible individuals at locations other than military installations”.

(b) LOCATIONS.—Subsection (c) of such section is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “not less than three and not more than five States” and inserting “not less than 50 locations in States (as defined in section 101(20) of title 38, United States Code)”; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking “at least two” and inserting “at least 20”.

(c) CONFORMING REPEAL.—Subsection (f) of such section is repealed.

##### SEC. 103. GRANTS FOR PROVISION OF TRANSITION ASSISTANCE TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AFTER SEPARATION, RETIREMENT, OR DISCHARGE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make grants to eligible organizations for the provision of transition assistance to members of the Armed Forces who are separated, retired, or discharged from the Armed Forces, and spouses of such members.

(b) USE OF FUNDS.—The recipient of a grant under this section shall use the grant to provide to members of the Armed Forces and spouses described in subsection (a) resume assistance, interview training, job recruitment training, and related services leading directly to successful transition, as determined by the Secretary.

(c) ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS.—To be eligible for a grant under this section, an organization shall submit to the Secretary an application containing such information and assurances as the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor, may require.

(d) PRIORITY FOR HUBS OF SERVICES.—In making grants under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to an organization that provides multiple forms of services described in subsection (b).

(e) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—A grant under this section shall be in an amount that does not exceed 50 percent of the amount required by the organization to provide the services described in subsection (b).

(f) DEADLINE.—The Secretary shall carry out this section not later than six months after the effective date of this Act.

(g) TERMINATION.—The authority to provide a grant under this section shall terminate on the date that is five years after the date on which the Secretary implements the grant program under this section.

(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated \$10,000,000 to carry out this section.

##### SEC. 104. STUDY OF COMMUNITY-BASED TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AFTER SEPARATION, RETIREMENT, OR DISCHARGE.

(a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with State entities that serve members of the Armed Forces who are retired, separated, or discharged from the Armed Forces, shall enter into an agreement with an appropriate non-Federal entity to carry out a study to identify community-based programs—

(1) that provide transition assistance to such members; and

(2) operated by nonprofit entities.

(b) TRANSMISSION TO MEMBERS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall transmit the list of programs identified under this section to the Secretary of Defense so the Secretaries of the

military departments may provide information in the list to members of the Armed Forces who participate in TAP.

(c) ONLINE PUBLICATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish the most recent version of the list of programs identified under this section on a public website of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

##### SEC. 105. ONE-YEAR INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TAP.

(a) INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the covered officials, shall enter into an agreement with an appropriate entity with experience in adult education to carry out a one-year independent assessment of TAP, including—

(1) the effectiveness of TAP for members of each military department during the entire military life cycle;

(2) the appropriateness of the TAP career readiness standards;

(3) a review of information that is provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs under TAP, including mental health data;

(4) whether TAP effectively addresses the challenges veterans face entering the civilian workforce and in translating experience and skills from military service to the job market;

(5) whether TAP effectively addresses the challenges faced by the families of veterans making the transition to civilian life;

(6) appropriate metrics regarding TAP outcomes for members of the Armed Forces one year after separation, retirement, or discharge from the Armed Forces;

(7) what the Secretary, in consultation with the covered officials, veterans service organizations, and organizations described in section 203(a) of this Act, determine to be successful outcomes for TAP;

(8) whether members of the Armed Forces achieve successful outcomes for TAP, as determined under paragraph (7);

(9) how the Secretary and the covered officials provide feedback to each other regarding such outcomes;

(10) recommendations for the Secretaries of the military departments regarding how to improve outcomes for members of the Armed Forces after separation, retirement, and discharge; and

(11) other topics the Secretary and the covered officials determine would aid members of the Armed Forces as they transition to civilian life.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the completion of the independent assessment under subsection (a), the Secretary and the covered officials, shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives and the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and House of Representatives—

(1) the findings and recommendations (including recommended legislation) of the independent assessment prepared by the entity described in subsection (a); and

(2) responses of the Secretary and the covered officials to the findings and recommendations described in paragraph (1).

(c) COVERED OFFICIALS DEFINED.—In this section, the term “covered officials” is comprised of—

(1) the Secretary of Defense;

(2) the Secretary of Labor;

(3) the Administrator of the Small Business Administration; and

(4) the Secretaries of the military departments.

##### SEC. 106. LONGITUDINAL STUDY ON CHANGES TO TAP.

(a) STUDY.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretaries of Defense and Labor and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, shall conduct a five-year longitudinal study regarding TAP on three separate cohorts

of members of the Armed Forces who have separated from the Armed Forces, including—

(1) a cohort that has attended TAP counseling as implemented on the date of the enactment of this Act;

(2) a cohort that attends TAP counseling after the Secretaries of Defense and Labor implement changes recommended in the report under section 205(b) of this Act; and

(3) a cohort that has not attended TAP counseling.

(b) **PROGRESS REPORTS.**—Not later than 90 days after the day that is one year after the date of the initiation of the study under subsection (a) and annually thereafter for the three subsequent years, the Secretaries of Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Labor, and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives and the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and House of Representatives a progress report of activities under the study during the immediately preceding year.

(c) **FINAL REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the completion of the study under subsection (a), the Secretaries of Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Labor, and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives and the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and House of Representatives a report of final findings and recommendations based on the study.

(d) **ELEMENTS.**—The final report under subsection (c) shall include information regarding the following:

(1) The percentage of each cohort that received unemployment benefits during the study.

(2) The numbers of months members of each cohort were employed during the study.

(3) Annual starting and ending salaries of members of each cohort who were employed during the study.

(4) How many members of each cohort enrolled in an institution of higher learning, as that term is defined in section 3452(f) of title 38, United States Code.

(5) The academic credit hours, degrees, and certificates obtained by members of each cohort during the study.

(6) The annual income of members of each cohort.

(7) The total household income of members of each cohort.

(8) How many members of each cohort own their principal residences.

(9) How many dependents that members of each cohort have.

(10) The percentage of each cohort that achieves a successful outcome for TAP, as determined under section 205(a)(6) of this Act.

(11) Other criteria the Secretaries and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration determine appropriate.

## TITLE II—EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

### SEC. 201. IMPROVEMENTS TO ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN FLIGHT TRAINING AND OTHER PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION.

(a) **USE OF ENTITLEMENT FOR PRIVATE PILOT'S LICENSES.**—Section 3034(d) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1) by striking the semicolon and inserting the following: “and is required for the course of education being pursued (including with respect to a dual major, concentration, or other element of a degree); and”;

(2) by striking paragraph (2); and

(3) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (2).

(b) **ACCELERATED PAYMENTS FOR FLIGHT TRAINING.**—Section 3313 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(k) **ACCELERATED PAYMENTS FOR CERTAIN FLIGHT TRAINING.**—

“(1) **PAYMENTS.**—An individual enrolled in a program of education pursued at a vocational

school or institution of higher learning in which flight training is required to earn the degree being pursued (including with respect to a dual major, concentration, or other element of such a degree) may elect to receive accelerated payments of amounts for tuition and fees determined under subsection (c). The amount of each accelerated payment shall be an amount equal to twice the amount for tuition and fee so determined under such subsection, but the total amount of such payments may not exceed the total amount of tuition and fees for the program of education. The amount of monthly stipends shall be determined in accordance with such subsection (c) and may not be accelerated under this paragraph.

“(2) **EDUCATIONAL COUNSELING.**—An individual may make an election under paragraph (1) only if the individual receives educational counseling under section 3697A(a) of this title.

“(3) **CHARGE AGAINST ENTITLEMENT.**—The number of months of entitlement charged an individual for accelerated payments made pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be determined at the rate of two months for each month in which such an accelerated payment is made.”.

(c) **FLIGHT TRAINING AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.**—Subsection (c)(1)(A) of such section 3313 is amended—

(1) in clause (i)—

(A) by redesignating subclauses (I) and (II) as items (aa) and (bb), respectively;

(B) by striking “In the case of a program of education pursued at a public institution of higher learning” and inserting “(I) Subject to subclause (II), in the case of a program of education pursued at a public institution of higher learning not described in clause (ii)(II)(bb)”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subclause:

“(II) In determining the actual net cost for in-State tuition and fees pursuant to subclause (I), the Secretary may not pay for tuition and fees relating to flight training.”; and

(2) in clause (ii)—

(A) in subclause (I), by redesignating items (aa) and (bb) as subitems (AA) and (BB), respectively;

(B) in subclause (II), by redesignating items (aa) and (bb) as subitems (AA) and (BB), respectively;

(C) by redesignating subclauses (I) and (II) as items (aa) and (bb), respectively;

(D) by striking “In the case of a program of education pursued at a non-public or foreign institution of higher learning” and inserting “(I) In the case of a program of education described in subclause (II)”; and

(E) by adding at the end the following new subclause:

“(II) A program of education described in this subclause is any of the following:

“(aa) A program of education pursued at a non-public or foreign institution of higher learning.

“(bb) A program of education pursued at a public institution of higher learning in which flight training is required to earn the degree being pursued (including with respect to a dual major, concentration, or other element of such a degree).”.

(d) **CERTAIN PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION CARRIED OUT UNDER CONTRACT.**—Section 3313(c)(1)(A)(ii)(II) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (c)(2)(E), is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“(cc) A program of education pursued at a public institution of higher learning in which the public institution of higher learning enters into a contract or agreement with an entity (other than another public institution of higher learning) to provide such program of education or a portion of such program of education.”.

(e) **APPLICATION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided by paragraph (2), the amendments made by this section

shall apply with respect to a quarter, semester, or term, as applicable, commencing on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) **SPECIAL RULE FOR CURRENT STUDENTS.**—In the case of an individual who, as of the date of the enactment of this Act, is using educational assistance under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, to pursue a course of education that includes a program of education described in item (bb) or (cc) of section 3313(c)(1)(A)(ii)(II) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsections (c) and (d), respectively, the amendment made by such subsection shall apply with respect to a quarter, semester, or term, as applicable, commencing on or after the date that is two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

### SEC. 202. ELIMINATION OF THE PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY FOR THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 3103 of title 38, United States Code, is repealed.

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 31 of such title is amended by striking the item relating to section 3103.

### SEC. 203. EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE DURING EXTENDED SCHOOL CLOSURES DUE TO NATURAL DISASTERS.

Section 3680 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(h) **SCHOOL CLOSURE DURING NATURAL DISASTERS.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—An individual described in paragraph (2) shall be entitled to a monthly stipend in the amount to which the individual would be entitled were the individual pursuing a course of education at an institution of higher education through resident training but for a school closure described under paragraph (4).

“(2) **INDIVIDUAL DESCRIBED.**—An individual described in this paragraph is an individual pursuing a course of education at an institution of higher education using educational assistance under chapter 32, 33, 34, or 35 of this title, who—

“(A) is forced to discontinue pursuing such course at such institution by reason of a school closure described under paragraph (4); and

“(B) opts to—

“(i) pursue that course of education solely by distance learning; or

“(ii) pursue an alternative course of education solely by distance learning.

“(3) **DURATION.**—The duration of the monthly stipends payable to an individual under paragraph (1) shall be the shorter of the following:

“(A) The period of time necessary to complete the quarter, semester, term or academic period during which the school closure described in paragraph (4) occurs.

“(B) Four months.

“(4) **SCHOOL CLOSURE.**—A school closure described in this paragraph is the closure of an institution of higher education—

“(A) by reason of a natural disaster;

“(B) for a period of time that—

“(i) the institution confirms will last for four weeks or longer; or

“(ii) the institution describes as indefinite and that endures for a period of four weeks or longer; and

“(C) that the Secretary confirms is covered for purposes of this subsection.

“(5) **NATURAL DISASTER DEFINED.**—In this subsection, the term ‘natural disaster’ means a specific weather event or earth process, including a hurricane, tornado, wildfire or forest fire, earthquake, avalanche, mudslide, hailstorm, thunderstorm, lightning storm, freeze, blizzard, sinkhole, or other disastrous event that occurs as a result of such an event or process, that the President or the governor of a State declares a natural disaster.

“(6) **NO CHARGE TO ENTITLEMENT.**—No charge shall be made to the entitlement of any individual to educational assistance under chapter

32, 33, 34, or 35 of this title by reason of a payment under this subsection.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5649, as amended, the Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William “Bill” Mulder (Ret.) Transition Improvements Act of 2018.

One of the most important things our government can do to help our Nation’s servicemembers is to ensure that their transition from military to civilian life is as smooth and seamless as possible. We all know that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and I know that so many of the problems that veterans encounter later in life could have been mitigated if they had a more supportive and successful transition.

I know that the goal of this bill, and of provisions that are aimed at improving the transition period in the House version of the National Defense Authorization Act, are to help servicemembers have as smooth a transition as possible to civilian life.

I will allow Congressman JODEY ARRINGTON of Texas, who is the sponsor of this bill, to go into the specifics of it in a moment. But before I do, I want to thank him, Congressman BETO O’ROURKE of Texas, and all of the members of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity for taking the time earlier this session to sit down with stakeholders and really examine the transition process from the very beginning and look at the need for improvements.

While this bill is a culmination of bipartisan review and work, it is only a step in the process to ensure a successful transition for all servicemembers. I know we will remain dedicated to making improvements to this process to reach this goal.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman BRADY for helping to expedite the consideration of the bill today, and I thank Congressman ARRINGTON for his work.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS,

Washington, DC, July 16, 2018.

Hon. KEVIN BRADY,  
Chairman, House Ways and Means Committee,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: On July 12, 2018, the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs ordered re-

ported H.R. 5649, as amended, the Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William “Bill” Mulder (Ret.) Transition Improvement Act of 2018. The bill was referred to the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee with additional referrals to the House Ways and Means Committee and the House Armed Services Committee. Based on our previous consultation, we intend to request H.R. 5649, as amended, be scheduled for floor consideration.

To expedite floor consideration, I ask that you forego further consideration of H.R. 5649, as amended. This 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 House Ways and Means Committee 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 H.R. 5649, as amended, as well as in the Congressional Record during floor consideration to memorialize our understanding.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

DAVID P. ROE, M.D.,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,  
Washington, DC, July 17, 2018.

Hon. DAVID P. ROE, M.D.,  
Chairman, Committee on Veterans’ Affairs,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROE: Thank you for your July 16, 2018 letter regarding H.R. 5649, the “Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William “Bill” Mulder (Ret.) Transition Improvement Act of 2018” which was ordered favorably reported to the House on July 12, 2018.

As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions in H.R. 5649 that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means, I agree to waive formal consideration of this bill so that it may move expeditiously to the floor. The Committee on Ways and Means takes this action with the mutual understanding that we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and the Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues that fall within our jurisdiction. The Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation, and requests your support for such request.

Finally, would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 5649.

Sincerely,

KEVIN BRADY,  
Chairman.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5649, as amended, the Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William “Bill” Mulder (Ret.) Transition Improvements Act of 2018.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee chairman, Mr. ARRINGTON, and ranking member, Mr. O’ROURKE, for their bipartisan focus on this issue and the bipartisan way they have crafted this piece of legislation and have moved it forward.

This bill was generated out of feedback from our veteran service organi-

zation partners, rigorous oversight, and many, many hearings. It includes a number of curriculum changes, expansion of services, as well as first steps to making TAP a part of a larger transition effort.

It also includes Ms. BROWNLEY’s Reduce Unemployment for Veterans of All Ages Act, which eliminates the period of eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services. Currently, veterans have only 12 years after their military service to utilize vocational rehabilitation services. This removes that deadline and allows anyone who qualifies for vocational rehabilitation to access those services in perpetuity.

It also includes Mr. POB’s Veterans Education Disaster Act that provides continued educational assistance to students impacted by natural disasters. This is similar to the benefits that are provided for veterans whose schools suddenly close their doors, in order to ensure that veterans are not struggling while they seek to restart their education. This would also allow veterans to continue collecting their housing benefits even though their schools closed from natural disasters, and allow them to stop and restart their tuition benefits once their schools reopen.

We also pay for this bill by closing a loophole in flight school costs, while also making modifications to law that allows for the unique nature of flight schools.

All of these provisions have been crafted to fix issues we have seen in the field, and they will make life a little bit easier for our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, again, I thank Mr. O’ROURKE and Mr. ARRINGTON for these necessary improvements to the Transition Assistance Program. A testament to their work is the broad support they have received from committee members for this bill, including Ms. KUSTER, Mr. PETERS, and Ms. ESTY. I look forward to their future work on this as they continue to focus on and refine the program.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON), chairman of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee on the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee, and my good friend.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, I can’t thank the chairman enough for the opportunity to serve with him, Mr. TAKANO, and Mr. WENSTRUP. I am looking out and seeing colleagues on both sides of the aisle who have worked in a bipartisan way to solve problems so that we can better serve our veterans. I have to say, it has to be the most productive bipartisan committee in all of the United States Congress, and that is refreshing. And there is no worthier customer to serve than those who wore the uniform, those who sacrificed their today so that we could have our tomorrow.

I think it is notable to remind my colleagues of the work under his leadership to produce more than 70 pieces of reform legislation. Seventy bills that have passed the House of Representatives is no small task. More than 20 bills have become law of the land.

Again, I thank Mr. TAKANO for his leadership, Mr. WALZ, and my friends on the other side of the aisle. This is truly a bipartisan committee and effort altogether.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to encourage my colleagues to support my bill, H.R. 5649. It is really not my bill; it is our bill. It is the bill of the committee, and it is the bill of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. This is a bill that was amended as the Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William “Bill” Mulder (Ret.) Transition Improvements Act of 2018.

Mr. Speaker, again, there is no greater honor for me than to serve the men and women who served our country with honor and distinction. I am pleased to be here today to debate the legislation I introduced, which I believe will significantly improve the lives of our servicemen and -women who are in transition from Active Duty to civilian life.

When our soldiers come home from war, it doesn't mean that the conflict necessarily is over for them. There is often a battle that continues to rage on inside of them. I think that is a big reason that we see, unfortunately, 20 veterans commit suicide every day in this country.

One of those veterans was my good friend and fellow Plainview Bulldog, Bill Mulder, after whom this bill was named. I am so proud that this is named after Bill, and I am grateful to Sydney and their family for allowing us to do so.

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Bill was a true American hero who served his country with honor and distinction. However, again, like many of our veterans, Bill returned home from service with an internal struggle, with scars that you couldn't see with the naked eye, and he was working through his transition to civilian life after 20 years as a combat Navy SEAL. That is tough. I can't imagine, to think about redefining your purpose and your mission after 20 years of fighting for our freedom in combat as a Navy SEAL.

Our country makes a tremendous investment, as Chairman ROE said, in preparing our citizens to be freedom fighters, to be part of the greatest fighting machine in the world, but we only invest a fraction of that helping soldiers in their transition back to civilian life.

I have often said, like the gentleman has stated, that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. And if we do a better job on the front end in their transition, and especially identifying the highest-risk individuals, I think that we can reduce the number

of veterans who struggle with unemployment, with homelessness, suicide, et cetera.

This bill is the result, again, of Mr. TAKANO, Mr. O'ROURKE, my ranking member, my friend and fellow Texan, and it will make the following improvements: It will improve in the sense that we will engage our Active Duty personnel earlier in the process. We will have a more comprehensive assessment, including mental health. We will customize support for them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. I yield the gentleman from Texas an additional 1 minute.

Mr. ARRINGTON. It will not just be a one-size-fits-all, I think, like we have seen in the past. We will also connect them back to community organizations and we will track and we will measure the success and the outcomes so we will know what is working, where we can continue to make those investments.

Again, I want to thank my friend and fellow Texan, Mr. O'ROURKE, for working with me on this package, and Chairman ROE, and Mr. WALZ for helping bring this forward and to a vote here on the House floor.

I am proud to say that this bill is fully offset. It is budget neutral, and I believe it will have a positive impact; in fact, I pray it will actually save lives of our American veterans.

I urge all Members to support H.R. 5649, as amended.

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

The work of this subcommittee is the work of great heart, and I appreciate the heartfelt work that the chairman, Mr. ARRINGTON, has put forward.

I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'ROURKE), my good friend, the ranking member of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, a gentleman with great heart for veterans.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the vice-ranking member of the full committee, Mr. TAKANO, for this time to speak in favor of this bill.

As my colleague from Texas, and the chairman of the subcommittee pointed out, by the best estimate of the VA, which many believe is a conservative estimate, every single day in this country, 20 veterans will have taken their lives.

The purpose and the function and the dignity that they found as a member of the armed services, as a contributing member of their military unit, where the decisions that they made, the actions that they took, would literally save and determine the outcomes of the lives of their fellow servicemembers, to return that level of function and purpose to their lives when they come back to this country and reintegrate within our communities, that is the purpose of this legislation.

I want to thank my colleague, the chairman of the subcommittee, for his

diligent work on this, by convening stakeholders, veterans service organizations, veteran student service organizations, members of the VA, the Department of Labor, other colleagues from the committee to make sure that we got this right and that we help those servicemembers transition into a life that allows them to give to their full potential once back in their home community, once back in their country.

I want to make sure that we do everything we can to ensure the success of this legislation; that we follow the outcome assessments that are provided for in the legislation; that we meet the intention and the purpose that is described here, so that it is not a boxes checked at the end of a servicemember's career, but something that is pursued with thought, so that when that servicemember reintegrates, they are ready to hit the ground running.

Lastly, I want to thank the chairman of the full committee. Some will say that without Tennessee, there would be no Texas. Without Chairman ROE, there would be no H.R. 5649. The fact that you elevated this and that you spent so much of your time personally listening to these veteran service organizations and your colleagues on the committee, I think, helped to make it a much better bill than it would have been otherwise, and for that I am grateful.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP), my good friend, a former member of the committee, and chair of the Subcommittee on Health, also a member of the House Armed Services Committee and the Intelligence Committee.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5649.

As a member of the Army Reserve who served in Iraq, I know how difficult the transition to civilian life can be after service for so many of our servicemembers. I still remember the eerie feeling of the quiet and serenity of home life after returning from the battlefield.

For those servicemembers who don't have a clear cut path upon their return to civilian life, there is often a struggle for what I like to refer to as post-necessary stress.

When you go from being completely necessary, part of a team, part of something big, and you come home and you don't have that same feeling, it takes its toll on you. It is hard for many servicemembers to actually settle back into civilian life when they get back. This is what this is about.

We can combat this problem by encouraging servicemembers to focus on transition earlier. Even when they first join the armed services, imagine if you were being recruited and you are talking to a recruiter about what you plan to do when you enter the military, and if they also said to you, and what do you plan to do afterwards? If we were plotting a course for your life when in uniform and after.



So this gives us a chance to modernize our curriculum for those going through the Transition Assistance Program to ensure that the information they have is timely and specific to the servicemember.

I think this legislation is an important first step to better equip servicemembers with the skills needed to successfully transition into civilian life.

I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation. I want to thank the committee, all the members on the committee, and the staff, for pushing this along and doing such a great job of that.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY), my good friend, and the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5649, the Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William "Bill" Mulder Transition Improvement Act of 2018, a bill that will improve the transition process for servicemembers returning to civilian life to a life of purpose and meaning.

I want to thank my colleagues, the gentlemen from Texas, Mr. ARRINGTON and Mr. O'ROURKE, for introducing this important bill; and for including my own bill, the Job TOOLS for Veterans Act, as a provision within this larger legislation.

The Job TOOLS Act for veterans would ensure that veterans of all eras have access to transition assistance classes. The Transition Assistance Program, commonly known as TAP, was established to help current servicemembers transition to civilian life with job search and training information.

Prior to the establishment of TAP, very few servicemembers received any job training assistance during their transition at all.

We know that access to job training is essential to our mission of ensuring that all our servicemembers land on their feet when they return home from protecting our freedom. And given the transitions that veterans face over the years, especially in a changing economy, these job training programs are especially valuable throughout life; and that is why our bill would allow veterans, no matter when they served, to get access to this crucial assistance.

Additionally, it will allow veterans from any service era access to all TAP programs and will expand the TAP program to at least 50 locations across the United States.

The men and women who have admirably served our great Nation must know that we stand behind them when transitioning from military to civilian life, and that we stand behind them for life.

I want to thank Chairman ROE, Ranking Member WALZ, and Vice Ranking Member TAKANO for their work in getting this important bill to the floor today, for the outstanding bi-

partisan work of this committee, which I am so proud to serve on, and for our excellent staff.

I fully support H.R. 5649, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation, and to stand behind the veterans who will be assisted by this across the Nation.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) a former, very active member on the Veterans Affairs Committee, and a good friend.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5649, the Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William Mulder Transition Improvement Act.

In my time on the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, my colleagues and I heard from countless constituents, including Active Duty and separated servicemembers about how ineffective the Federal Government's comprehensive Transition Assistance Program was at placing our veterans in long-term, stable employment.

Under the leadership of Chairman ROE and Subcommittee Chairman ARRINGTON, the subcommittee held a number of roundtables, hearings, meetings to receive feedback from all the stakeholders. We heard from DOD, the Department of Labor, Veterans Affairs, community providers and, of course, veterans themselves.

One section of this bill that I would like to highlight and thank Chairman ARRINGTON for including is section 203, which is bill language I introduced last year called the Veterans Armed for Success Act.

This section makes grants available to organizations that provide servicemembers transition assistance of their knowledge, skills, and abilities to private industry through such means as résumé building and interview training, and it is mirrored off an organization called Operation New Uniform that does just that in my district in Florida. This group has a 97 percent success rate in placing veterans in long-term employment.

As we learned through the information gathering process, a successful transition often relies on the community supporting our veterans and connecting with the resources that they need. We should help this and other similar organizations around the country use this model to help our veterans succeed.

I strongly commend Chairman ROE, Chairman ARRINGTON, Ranking Member WALZ, and all the members of the committee for their incredible work on this important piece of legislation. You all, along with the committee staff and other groups that worked so hard on this, should be proud of the real world impact that this legislation will have.

As I now serve as a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, I look forward to building on this important work with my col-

leagues to ensure our veterans are set up to succeed.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is a very special piece of legislation to me. I was once the ranking member of this very subcommittee, and I applaud the work of Ranking Member BETO O'ROURKE and Chairman ARRINGTON. This is a work of great heart, of great compassion, and we all know that we need to improve the transition from military service to civilian life for our servicemembers.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 5649, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1900

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I want to close by thanking Mr. ARRINGTON and Mr. O'ROURKE for bringing this great piece of legislation to the floor.

As I was listening to the debate and conversation, it sort of took me back a few years. I recall 53 years ago, when I was a college student, and I buried a very good friend of mine, who was my Scoutmaster, First Sergeant Thomas E. Thayer, who was killed in Vietnam. He won the Silver Star there. He had four children and a family at home. His life was worth, I think, \$10,000. I think that is what it was worth. I thought about what it did to his family and how little our country did for our Nation's heroes at that time, and I fast-forward to what we are doing now. We are making some things right.

I know Mr. ARRINGTON spoke very warmly of his friend, Chief Petty Officer Bill Mulder, a true American hero, who died.

I know when I separated from the military at the end of 1974, got back from Southeast Asia, separated from the Army, there was no transition. It was basically just out the front gate you went, and no one called, checked, whatever.

We are much better as a country, and we are much better now, Mr. Speaker, for what we are doing in this bill.

I agree with Mr. O'ROURKE and Mr. ARRINGTON. I really believe if you put these young men and women back in a job, in school, which we just passed the Forever GI Bill from this committee and the President has signed it into law, all of these things, I think, will make a huge difference in the future not only of these young people who have served our Nation so honorably, but it will also help this country, this Nation.

I know, as a veteran and as a person who did not benefit from this, I certainly am more than happy to support this. I think this is a great piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to thank Mr. WALZ, Mr. TAKANO, and others who have helped push this through, and I again encourage all Members to support H.R. 5649, as amended.

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 Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5649, 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.

#### GOLD STAR SPOUSES LEASING RELIEF ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5882) to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to provide for the termination by a spouse of a lessee of certain leases when the lessee dies while in military service, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5882

*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 "Gold Star Spouses Leasing Relief Act".

#### SEC. 2. TERMINATION OF LEASES OF PREMISES OF DECEASED SERVICEMEMBERS WHO DIE WHILE IN MILITARY SERVICE.

Section 305(a) of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. 3955) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking "BY LESSEE";

(2) in the heading for paragraph (1), by striking "IN GENERAL" and inserting "TERMINATION BY LESSEE"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(3) DEATH OF LESSEE.—The spouse of the lessee on a lease described in subsection (b)(1) may terminate the lease during the one-year period beginning on the date of the death of the lessee, if the lessee dies while in military service or while performing full-time National Guard duty, active Guard and Reserve duty, or inactive-duty training (as such terms are defined in section 101(d) of title 10, United States Code)."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5882, as amended, the Gold Star Spouses Leasing Relief Act.

The death of a servicemember can have a profound impact on their loved

ones. Our government should take every measure necessary to help family members through such a time of need.

In recognition of that, the Gold Star Spouses Leasing Relief Act would amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, the SCRA, to allow a spouse of a servicemember who has died due to military service to break their residential lease without penalty within 1 year of the servicemember's death.

Mr. Speaker, paying fees for breaking a lease should be the last thing on someone's mind when they are confronting life without their spouse.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the sponsor of this bill, Congresswoman CHERI BUSTOS of Illinois, for her commonsense solution to this problem. I also want to thank Ranking Member WALZ and his staff for their suggestion to improve the bill by including in it a provision that would extend protection to surviving spouses of members of the National Guard and Reserve whose death occurred while on Active-Duty orders.

We should recognize the service of all servicemembers on Active-Duty orders, and I am glad the amended version of this bill includes that provision.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5882, as amended, the Gold Star Spouses Leasing Relief Act.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to first start by thanking the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BUSTOS) for drafting this bill. It would allow the spouse of a servicemember to terminate their lease after the death of the servicemember.

Oftentimes, servicemembers and their families are required to move far away from home due to the needs of the service and where the servicemember is stationed. In the difficult time after the passing of a servicemember, spouses should not be stuck in a lease far away from their home and support network. This may seem like a small detail, but it is something that can make life just a little bit easier in a very trying time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the chairman for working with us on including National Guard and Reserve servicemembers who are killed while on duty.

As we move the Reserve components from a Strategic Reserve to an Operational Reserve concept, we are seeing too many deaths of National Guardsmen and -women and reservists while they are in uniform. It is critically important that we modernize our statutes to ensure benefits parity while servicemembers are in uniform.

Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to thank the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BUSTOS), for working on this issue and Mr. WENSTRUP for joining her in introducing the bill. I would also like to thank our fellow committee members, Ms. KUSTER, Ms. BROWNLEY,

and Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, for cosponsoring this bill and raising the profile of this issue.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP). He spoke a moment ago. He has previously served as chair of the Health Subcommittee of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Gold Star Spouses Leasing Relief Act, legislation that I am proud to have introduced alongside my colleague Congresswoman BUSTOS, and I thank her for bringing this situation to my attention so that we could bring this forward.

Part of our Nation's commitment to our men and women in uniform is a commitment to their families, especially if they endure the loss of life in the line of duty. As Gold Star families grieve, they should have the freedom to relocate to fit their family's needs. Sadly, that is all too often not the case.

Cindy Southern, a native of Portsmouth, Ohio, lost her husband while he was serving in the Navy overseas during the first Desert Storm war. As she grieved, all she wanted to do was move home, but she had signed a 1-year lease on a home in North Carolina. Her landlords refused to waive her lease without massive termination fees.

Cindy has suffered enough. Others have as well. This legislation would protect Gold Star families by ensuring they are not trapped in a jointly held residential lease after the death of a servicemember. They have grieved enough.

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

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BUSTOS), my good friend and the author of this bill.

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, the Gold Star Spouses Leasing Relief Act. This bipartisan bill would support the widows and widowers of our fallen heroes by allowing them to terminate residential leases without penalty in the wake of a servicemember's death.

This issue first came to my attention when I met a Gold Star spouse, Kylie Riney of Farmington, Illinois, which is in a central part of the congressional district that I serve.

Kylie's life was forever changed on October 19, 2016, when her husband, Sergeant Douglas Riney, tragically died defending our freedom in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Kylie and her two young children, James and Elea, were living in Texas at the time. This is their beautiful family before tragedy hit. They had moved there when Sergeant Riney was

assigned to Fort Hood before deploying in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

After her husband's death, Kylie chose to be back in Illinois with her family, surrounded by those whom she loves and love her so they could mourn together this inconceivable loss. But in the wake of this tragedy, their landlord refused to allow Kylie to terminate the lease that she and her husband had signed—I mean, it is just hard to even get those words out—refused to allow them to get out of their lease.

The families of our fallen heroes have already sacrificed far too much, and we should do everything in our power to ensure grieving spouses receive the support that they need. For this reason, I was proud to introduce this commonsense, bipartisan bill, the Gold Star Spouses Leasing Relief Act.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, Congressman BRAD WENSTRUP, who is also an Army Reserve officer and a physician, who helped introduce this with me. I would also like to thank Chairman ROE and Ranking Member TIM WALZ for their work in bringing this to the floor.

Currently, the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act protects servicemembers from lease termination fees when they deploy or receive a permanent change of station. Our legislation narrowly extends that law's residential leasing protections to the surviving spouses of servicemembers who are killed while serving their country.

Ranking Member WALZ helped ensure the bill would protect all these families, including those who lose a member of the National Guard or Reserves. He has been a tireless advocate for the National Guard in Congress, and it is a pleasure to be able to work with him.

I can hardly think of anything worse than taking advantage of a grieving widow or widower whose spouse made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support this bill to ensure this does not happen again.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 5882, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Illinois for introducing this important piece of legislation. I am dumbfounded that we have landlords who would not recognize the situation of a fallen soldier, but this law is necessary, and I urge all my colleagues to support it.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I, too, associate my comments with Mr. TAKANO.

I grew up in a military town, Clarksville, Tennessee, where, during the

Vietnam war, I saw all too many families broken apart, had to move. I find it almost unimaginable that a landlord would insist that somebody not separate, not do this when they have lost a spouse.

That beautiful family that she showed, their lives are changed forever, and the last thing that young widow needed to worry about was that. She needed to take care of those children, to explain why their father was not coming home or, in another case, their mother might not be coming home.

Mr. Speaker, I can't think of any bill that deserves the support more than this one does, and I encourage all Members to support H.R. 5882, as amended.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GAETZ). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5882, 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.

#### VA HOSPITALS ESTABLISHING LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5864) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish qualifications for the human resources positions within the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5864

*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 "VA Hospitals Establishing Leadership Performance Act".

#### SEC. 2. QUALIFICATIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCES POSITIONS WITHIN THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(1) establish qualifications for each human resources position within the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(2) establish standardized performance metrics for each such position; and

(3) submit to Congress a report containing the qualifications and standardized performance metrics established under paragraphs (1) and (2).

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the establishment of the qualifications and performance metrics under subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate a report containing—

(1) a description of the implementation of such qualifications and performance metrics; and

(2) an assessment of the quality of such qualifications and performance metrics.

#### SEC. 3. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the requirements of this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

□ 1915

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5864, the VA Hospitals Establishing Leadership Performance Act, or the VA HELP Act.

The significant recruitment and retention challenges facing the VA healthcare system are nothing new. One of my priorities as chairman has been to help the VA address those challenges and attract high-quality clinicians and support staff to VA medical facilities. To that end, I have worked to see two major pieces of legislation—the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act, and the VA Mission Act—signed into law this Congress include extensive improvements to the VA's hiring authorities.

However, those improvements will not be nearly as effective as they could be if the HR professionals that are administering them aren't operating at the top of their game. Unfortunately, the committee has found several instances where it appeared that some HR staff working in VA medical facilities had substandard education and professional backgrounds, including one HR director at a VA medical center who lacked both a college degree and relevant work experience.

To prevent that, the VA HELP Act would require the VA to establish qualification standards and standardized performance metrics for HR within the VHA. To ensure transparency and to aid the committee in our ongoing oversight efforts, it would also require the VA to provide Congress with a copy of those qualification standards and performance metrics, as well as require the Government Accountability Office to conduct an assessment of them.

I wholeheartedly believe that this bill will result in better staffed VA medical facilities, and, therefore, a

more accessible VA healthcare system for our Nation's heroes.

I am grateful to the sponsor of the VA HELP Act, my colleague and friend, Congressman MIKE BOST of Illinois. MIKE is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, a tireless advocate for veterans and their families, and, I might add, a veteran himself.

Mr. Speaker, I thank him for his leadership on this bill. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5864, as amended, the VA Hospitals Establishing Leadership Performance Act, or VA HELP Act.

Due to nationwide shortages, nuanced certification and licensing requirements, and complex position descriptions, human resource professionals working in the healthcare industry must possess a unique set of skills and qualifications.

Human resource professionals working within the VA must further develop their skills while learning how to leverage the many hiring initiatives, budgetary concerns, and Federal resources in a way that can compete with the private sector's financial incentives.

The VA HELP Act is an effort to assist the VA in finding the unique talent it needs to fill these health-specific human resource officers by requiring the VA to establish qualifications and standardized performance metrics for each human resource position within VHA.

By further defining the human resource positions within VHA and standardizing performance metrics, the VA will be able to more easily to attract, access, and retain quality human resource officers.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST), the chairman of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee, who also is a Marine veteran who has drunk from the Devil Dog fountain at Belleau Wood.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman. As all of us here know today, the mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs is the care for those who have borne the battle.

When our heroes transition from the military, they deserve to have access to quality healthcare and services. Unfortunately, the VA continues to fall short on the promises, due, in part, to failures in human resource offices. This issue hit close to home for me after the VA National Center for Patient Safety surveyed the Marion VA Medical Center in my district.

The Marion survey showed a decline in key factors, such as communication between management and staff, and reporting problems to management. The Veterans Affairs' Subcommittee on

Oversight and Investigations staff then visited Marion in order to get a firsthand look at the issues at the facility.

During that site visit, multiple employees raised concerns about poor management, poor communication, distrust between leadership and management, and the lack of accountability. Despite several efforts to encourage the VA headquarters leadership to address these problems, limited actions have been taken, and my office continues to receive complaints.

The common thread throughout has been the issue in the human resource department. HR management is a critical part of delivering quality healthcare. HR is responsible for recruiting and retaining highly qualified professionals, and the current status quo within the VHA's HR offices cannot continue.

That is why I introduced H.R. 5854, the VA HELP Act, with Representative SINEMA. This bipartisan, straightforward legislation instructs the VA Secretary to establish qualifications for HR positions within the VHA, and to set performance metrics for these positions.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members of the House to support H.R. 5864 to ensure that our Nation's veterans are being provided the best possible care from VA employees. I thank the chairman of the committee, Chairman ROE, and Ranking Member TAKANO for supporting this.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 5864, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support H.R. 5864, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5864, 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. ROE of Tennessee. 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.

#### VETERANS SERVING VETERANS ACT OF 2018

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5938) to amend the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a vacancy and recruitment database to facilitate the recruitment of certain members of the Armed

Forces to satisfy the occupational needs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to establish and implement a training and certification program for intermediate care technicians in that Department, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5938

*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 "Veterans Serving Veterans Act of 2018".

#### SEC. 2. RECRUITMENT DATABASE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Section 208 of the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act (Public Law 115-46; 38 U.S.C. 701 note) is amended as follows:

(1) In subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking "a single database" and inserting "and maintain a single searchable database (to be known as the 'Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs Recruitment Database')";

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking "and" and inserting a semicolon;

(C) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting "and"; and

(D) by adding after paragraph (2) the following new paragraph:

"(3) with respect to each vacant position under paragraphs (1) and (2)—

"(A) the military occupational specialty or skill that corresponds to the position, as determined by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense; and

"(B) each qualified member of the Armed Forces who may be recruited to fill the position before such qualified member of the Armed Forces has been discharged and released from active duty."

(2) By redesignating subsections (b), (c), and (d) as subsections (f), (g), and (h), respectively.

(3) By inserting after subsection (a) the following new subsections:

"(b) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.—Subject to subsection (c), the database established under subsection (a) shall include, with respect to each qualified member of the Armed Forces, the following information:

"(1) The name and contact information of the qualified member of the Armed Forces.

"(2) The date on which the qualified member of the Armed Forces is expected to be discharged and released from active duty.

"(3) Each military occupational specialty currently or previously assigned to the qualified member of the Armed Forces.

"(c) AVAILABILITY.—Information in the database shall be available to offices, officials, and employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs to the extent the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines appropriate.

"(d) EXPEDITED HIRING PROCEDURES.—The Secretary shall hire qualified members of the Armed Forces who apply for vacant positions listed in the database established under subsection (a) without regard to the provisions of subchapter I of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code.

"(e) RELOCATION BONUS.—The Secretary may authorize a relocation bonus, in an amount determined appropriate by the Secretary and subject to the same limitations as in the case of the authority provided under section 5753 of title 5, to any qualified member of the Armed Forces who has accepted a position listed in the database established under subsection (a)."

(4) In subsection (g)(1), as redesignated in paragraph (2), by striking "subsection (b)" and inserting "subsection (g)".

(5) In subsection (h), as redesignated in paragraph (2), by striking “of this Act” and inserting “of the Veterans Serving Veterans Act of 2018, and annually thereafter”.

(6) By adding after subsection (h), as redesignated in paragraph (2), the following new subsection:

“(i) **QUALIFIED MEMBER OF THE ARMED FORCES DEFINED.**—In this section, the term ‘qualified member of the Armed Forces’ means a member of the Armed Forces—

“(1) described in section 1142(a) of title 10;

“(2) who elects to be listed in the database established under subsection (a); and

“(3) who has been determined by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, to have a military occupational specialty that corresponds to a vacant position described in subsection (a).”.

(b) **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a plan to implement, including a timeline, section 208 of the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act (Public Law 115-46; 38 U.S.C. 701 note), as amended by this section.

### SEC. 3. INTERMEDIATE CARE TECHNICIAN TRAINING PROGRAM.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall implement a program to train and certify covered veterans to work as intermediate care technicians in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) **LOCATIONS.**—

(1) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary shall establish centers at medical facilities of the Department selected by the Secretary for the purposes of carrying out the program under subsection (a).

(2) **SELECTION OF MEDICAL FACILITIES.**—In selecting a medical facility of the Department under this subsection to serve as a center, the Secretary shall consider—

(A) the experience and success of the facility in training intermediate care technicians; and

(B) the availability of resources of the facility to train intermediate care technicians.

(c) **COVERED VETERAN DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “covered veteran” means a veteran whom the Secretary determines served as a basic health care technician while serving in the Armed Forces.

### SEC. 4. NO AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 208 of the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act (Public Law 115-46; 38 U.S.C. 701 note), as amended by section 2 of this Act, or to carry out section 3 of this Act. Such sections shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated for such purpose.

### SEC. 5. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the requirements of this Act and the amendments made by this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated.

The **SPEAKER pro tempore**. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5938, as amended, the Veterans Serving Veterans Act. This bill is sponsored by my friend and fellow committee member, the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Miss JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN).

Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful for her hard work and leadership on this bill on behalf of our Nation’s veterans in Puerto Rico and across the country. The Veterans Serving Veterans Act contains two provisions that would help alleviate staffing shortages at the Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities and create employment opportunities for servicemembers separating from the Armed Forces.

First, it would expand VA’s recruiting database to include information about soon-to-be separated servicemembers whose military training and experience match open positions within the VA healthcare system. It is common sense.

Second, it would expand an existing pilot program that recruits former medics to serve as intermediate care technicians in VA medical facilities. We all know that, all other things being equal, veterans prefer being seen and treated by their peers. This bill would create a pathway for that to happen more often, while addressing the serious recruitment issues that continue to hamper VA medical facilities coast to coast.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5938, as amended, the Veterans Serving Veterans Act of 2018.

Veterans exit the military with the highest quality of education and experience in their respective fields. We, along with the private sector, have worked diligently to ensure servicemembers are able to translate their skills to the private industry. However, this bill takes our efforts a step further by allowing the VA to create a searchable vacancy and recruitment database containing each VA vacancy and the corresponding military occupation code or skill that corresponds to the positions.

The database will also allow interested servicemembers to opt in to be included in the database, so that the VA may begin recruiting transitioning servicemembers to fill vacant positions before their discharges are complete.

In addition to the creation of the database, the bill also allows the Secretary to create a pilot program to train servicemembers who served as basic healthcare technicians while

serving in the Armed Forces to be trained as intermediate care technicians at the VHA.

By creating a pipeline from service to bedside, the VA can better treat the 9 million veterans who depend on its services.

I appreciate the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN) for her hard work on this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, before I yield to our next speaker, I want to tell Members about this young woman. She represents the island of Puerto Rico, and before one of the hurricanes hit, I called her on the phone just moments before the hurricane. I was amazed that I even got through.

Following that, we led a group. I came to visit the hospital and the island of Puerto Rico, and the passion that she shows for the people she represents, and the passion she shows for veterans, is second to none.

I wanted to pass that along. I saw something in this young woman down there that I had not seen before I visited her beautiful island.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN), a member of the Veterans Affairs’ Committee.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROE for, first of all, visiting the island. This is the first time ever the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs ever visited Puerto Rico. I thank the gentleman for that, for his leadership, and for his commitment, and the ranking member’s commitment, during the last months.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of my bill, H.R. 5938, the Veterans Serving Veterans Act of 2018. This bill seeks to alleviate chronic staffing shortages that currently affect the Department of Veterans Affairs, which hinders their ability to serve our veterans in an effective and timely manner.

This issue never fails to come up during those meetings with veterans residing in Puerto Rico and is often discussed by my colleagues here in the House. H.R. 5938 seeks a remedial option to this issue by doing two things.

First, amending section 208 of the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017 to include the military occupational specialties of soon-to-be discharged servicemembers that correspond to vacant positions at the VA in the recruiting database, as well as servicemembers’ contact information and the date of discharge. Inclusion in the database is completely optional for those servicemembers. If included, they will potentially be matched for vacant positions at the VA that correspond with the skills they acquired with the Department of Defense.

Second, the bill will also require the VA to implement a program to train

and certify former Department of Defense healthcare technicians as intermediate care technicians, ICTs, to address the large demand for healthcare providers at the Veterans Health Administration.

These very skilled technicians trained by the DOD have difficulty gaining employment in their field after separating from the Armed Forces due to the lack of a certification. At the same time, the VHA has a significant shortage of providers. The ICT program has a high satisfaction rate and helps fill this void.

Servicemembers are a remarkable asset upon transitioning from the Department of Defense. We should do everything we can do to foster this transition and facilitate this opportunity to our men and women in uniform to serve our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I need to again thank Chairman ROE for his leadership. For me, it is an honor to serve on this committee with a gentleman who has this commitment and who works in a bipartisan manner with Ranking Member WALZ and Congressman TAKANO. I thank the gentlemen for their support. It is an honor to improve so many bills like this with these amendments.

Their leadership and assistance in moving this bill forward make us all proud, so I urge all my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill.

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Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 5938, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support H.R. 5938, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5938, 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.

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CREATION OF ON-SITE TREATMENT SYSTEMS AFFORDING VETERANS IMPROVEMENTS AND NUMEROUS GENERAL SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS ACT**

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5974) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to use on-site regulated medical waste treatment systems at certain Department of Veterans Affairs facilities, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.  
The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5974

*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 "Department of Veterans Affairs Creation of On-Site Treatment Systems Affording Veterans Improvements and Numerous General Safety Enhancements Act" or the "VA COST SAVINGS Enhancements Act".

**SEC. 2. USE OF ON-SITE REGULATED MEDICAL WASTE TREATMENT SYSTEMS AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES.**

(a) IDENTIFICATION OF FACILITIES.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall identify Department of Veterans Affairs facilities that would benefit from cost savings associated with the use of an on-site regulated medical waste treatment system over a five-year period.

(b) REGULATED MEDICAL WASTE COST ANALYSIS MODEL.—For purposes of carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall develop a uniform regulated medical waste cost analysis model to be used to determine the cost savings associated with the use of an on-site regulated medical waste treatment system at Department facilities. Such model shall be designed to calculate savings based on—

(1) the cost of treating regulated medical waste at an off-site location under a contract with a non-Department entity, compared to

(2) the cost of treating regulated medical waste on-site, based on the equipment specification of treatment system manufacturers, with capital costs amortized over a ten-year period.

(c) INSTALLATION.—At each Department facility identified under subsection (a), the Secretary shall secure, install, and operate an on-site regulated medical waste treatment system.

(d) USE OF BLANKET PURCHASE AGREEMENT.—Any medical waste treatment system purchased pursuant to this section shall be purchased under the blanket purchase agreement known as the "VHA Regulated Medical Waste On-Site Treatment Equipment Systems Blanket Purchase Agreement" or any successor, contract, agreement, or other arrangement.

(e) REGULATED MEDICAL WASTE DEFINED.—In this section, the term "regulated medical waste" has the meaning given such term under section 173.134(a)(5) of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, concerning regulated medical waste and infectious substances, or any successor regulation, except that, in the case of an applicable State law that is more expansive, the definition in the State law shall apply.

**SEC. 3. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.**

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the requirements of this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

**GENERAL LEAVE**

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5974, as amended, the Department of Veterans Affairs Creation of On-Site Treatment Systems Affording Veterans Improvements and Numerous General Safety Enhancements Act, or perhaps the most creative naming of a bill since I have been in Congress, the VA COST SAVINGS Enhancements Act.

This bill will require VA to identify facilities that could benefit from onsite medical waste management and, in those facilities, install and operate onsite medical waste treatment capabilities.

The World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention both consider onsite medical waste management to be a best practice. However, only a relatively small percentage of VA medical facilities have installed onsite sterilization equipment to date.

By considering which VA medical facilities could find value in onsite medical waste management and making a deliberate effort to transition those facilities away from off-site medical waste management arrangements, VA could achieve considerable savings of taxpayer dollars that could, in turn, be used to fund other VA initiatives. It would also result in more VA facilities utilizing a waste disposal method that is both safer and more environmentally friendly.

This bill is sponsored by Congressman JEFF DENHAM from California, and I thank him for bringing this issue to the committee's attention. I applaud the gentleman for his creativity in coming up with an acronym for a bill of this size.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting it, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5974, as amended, the Department of Veterans Affairs Creation of On-Site Treatment Systems Affording Veterans Improvements and Numerous General Safety Enhancements Act, otherwise known as the VA COST SAVINGS Enhancements Act.

Mr. Speaker, the current funding issues currently surrounding VA are evidence of the need for creative cost savings measures. I must thank Representative DENHAM in identifying and championing one such creative solution.

The VA COST SAVINGS Enhancements Act simply asks VHA to review its current medical waste disposal system and determine whether hosting this disposal onsite would result in cost savings over the next 5 years. If so, then the facility is required to implement onsite disposal.

Onsite medical waste disposal is safer and far more efficient in most cases, and this bill would simply require VHA to ensure they are achieving the safest and most cost-effective method of medical waste disposal.

Again, I thank Representative DENHAM for his work on the bill, and I



urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the measure.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DENHAM), who is my friend and a fellow veteran.

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and ranking member for their support of H.R. 5974, the VA COST SAVINGS Enhancements Act.

This bipartisan bill improves care for our veterans. It also ensures that the VA is using the latest cost-saving technology. It directs the VA to install onsite medical waste treatment systems in facilities where this will result in a cost savings within 5 years. System-wide, this will save the VA millions of dollars each year and directly improve safety and healthcare for our veterans.

In addition to the significant cost savings, this technology is safer and increases crisis readiness. Safety is paramount when caring for our vets, and treating waste onsite prevents the spread of dangerous infections. Both the CDC and the World Health Organization recommend this technology, and this policy brings the VA in line with recommended practices for private medicine.

Likewise, in the event of an earthquake or a wildfire, which we saw in California, transportation infrastructure can be compromised and prevent hazardous waste from being trucked to a disposal site or through a city. We need to make sure that this is handled onsite. In a disaster scenario like this, treating waste is critical to preventing an outbreak and keeping the facility actually up and running without huge backloads of the waste.

Our veterans deserve the highest quality of care. This technology improves crisis-readiness and is safer, more efficient, more cost effective, and more environmentally friendly than traditional medical waste disposal. Installing these machines will immediately begin saving the VA millions of dollars per year and directly improve care for our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5974.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I ask my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 5974, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers.

At this time, I want to thank both minority and majority staffs for the hard work they have done on these eight bills. We once again have shown that we can work in a bipartisan way and close many loopholes that no one ever attempted in previous law or just common sense, like when a spouse has lost their loved one to be free to move along with a cable bill or a lease and other issues that we have dealt with here today.

I want to thank Mr. TAKANO, Mr. WALZ, the staff on the minority side, and the staff on the majority side for the hard work that they have done on all of these bills. The committee will continue to move forward with other bills later in the year.

Mr. Speaker, I once again encourage all Members to support H.R. 5974, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5974, 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.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will recognize Members for Special Order speeches without prejudice to the possible resumption of legislative business.

#### A BETTER DEAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity to address the House.

As I often do in these evenings in the Special Order hour, I try to first lay out what it is: what is the purpose, what is the goal, and what is the value in what we are trying to accomplish.

I find myself always harkening back to a quote that I saw many years ago, and then more recently found etched into the marble at the FDR Memorial here in Washington, D.C. It comes from Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and he talked about what he was trying to accomplish and what he thought America ought to accomplish during the Great Depression. His words are equally important during the Great Recession and the years thereafter.

He said: "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

It is kind of what we are all about as Democrats, and that is why we found the tax cut, the Republican tax cut which no Democrat voted for last December, so profoundly troubling. That tax cut, on top of the 2001 and the 2003 Republican tax cuts, added \$2 trillion to the wealth of the top 1 percent of Americans.

Let me say that once again. FDR was quite clear in his test of policy. He said: "The test of our progress is not

whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

The 2001 and the 2003 Republican tax cuts, together with the December 2017 Republican tax cuts, which no Democrat in the House of Representatives voted for, added \$2 trillion to the wealth of the top 1 percent of Americans.

I suppose that would be okay if the 99 percent had somehow seen their wealth grow. It didn't happen. In fact, what we have seen in the last decade since the Great Recession is that the great middle class of America and the poor have seen no real income growth.

In the last couple of years, yes, there has been a wage increase, about 2 percent, totally consumed by inflation, which was slightly more than 2 percent—no real income growth.

So what is happening here is that we Democrats are proposing a better deal for Americans. Yes, those words are similar to what FDR used. But we are proposing a better deal for Americans, not one that makes the rich richer, although that would be fine if the rest of America could also become richer.

But that is going to change in public policy, and that is what we are proposing to do, because our public policy going forward is going to be about a better deal for the American people.

We are proposing, as we go into this election year, that we push aside the Republican proposal, which is essentially a better deal for the superrich, and we want to bring about a better deal for the people.

Here are the three major elements of that deal:

We want to lower our healthcare costs and prescription drugs for the American people. We can do this. Unfortunately, our colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle are going in exactly the other direction. As they have ripped the guts out of the Affordable Care Act, we have seen the cost of healthcare in America skyrocket.

□ 1945

We have seen the cost of drugs skyrocket. We want to end that. One of the things we most definitely want to end is what the Republicans are now proposing and that is that we go back in America to the bad old days when, if you had a preexisting condition, you could not get healthcare; or, you would have to pay a small fortune just to get an insurance policy.

No, we don't want that, but that is what our Republican colleagues are trying to give us all across this Nation—a return to the insurance discrimination where, if you have a preexisting condition, you cannot get healthcare at an affordable price and quite probably couldn't get it at all.

Issue one, the cost of drugs. The 2003 improvement to Medicare part D provided prescription drugs at a reduced cost for seniors. All good. A clause was written into that which prohibited the

Federal Government from negotiating drug prices for the tens of millions of Americans on Medicare.

So we have seen the cost of prescription drugs soar. We have seen the stories about a drug that was acquired by some rip-off person who then took the cost of that drug from a few dollars per pill to several hundred or several thousand dollars per pill.

So that is point one. I am going to go down to point three, because I am going to spend time on point two.

What we want to do is clean up the corruption of politics in Washington and across this Nation. Just recently, the Treasury Department said that the NRA didn't have to reveal who its contributors were to its dark money program. Similarly, no other dark money PAC across the State had to reveal who their contributors were.

Citizens United opened the floodgates to hidden money, secret money. Millions upon millions of dollars pour into campaigns to influence the effect of those campaigns. So we want to deal with Citizens United. We want to deal with this problem of corruption in our political system. There are many ways we can do it, but until we can deal with it, we are going to continue to see more and more legislation that benefits the rich at the expense of the working men and women of America.

Now, let me go to this second one here. We want to increase and grow our economy and jobs through an infrastructure program rebuilding America. That will be the central focus of what I want to spend this evening on.

So, as we talk a better deal for the American people, we will be talking about healthcare issues, we will be talking about corruption and ending the dark money. We will also talk about rebuilding the infrastructure for America and creating jobs.

As we go into this, why is it important? Why is infrastructure important?

I suspect many of you remember just more than a year ago that the greatest waterfall in all the world was created at the Oroville Dam in California, just a few miles upstream from my district on the Feather River. Yes, an infrastructure failure. The Oroville Dam spillway was about to give way, just to the side of this, creating a 30-foot wall of water, because the main spillway had collapsed.

I suppose if you are interested in waterfalls, this was quite an event. But it was dangerous. Two hundred thousand of my constituents had to immediately evacuate in the cities of Marysville, Yuba City, and Live Oak, and other small communities in that area, for fear that that infrastructure project would fail. Well, it did, but not totally.

For the folks in Seattle, Washington, or anybody who was traveling on Interstate 5 from Washington State to British Columbia, it turned out it was a tough day to get there. This is the Interstate 5 bridge. Well, I suppose if you had pontoons or maybe water wings, you could stay on Interstate 5.

This is just one example of the tens of thousands of bridges across America that are considered to be unsafe and structurally unsound. This one proved it.

A similar bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the Twin Cities area, resulted in deaths as that bridge collapsed.

Infrastructure. American infrastructure, according to Duke University and the study they published a couple of years ago, ranks in the Ds. I do think we have one C. This is going to require glasses to try to find the one C in our infrastructure system.

Our ports are a C-plus. The rail systems, the private rail systems are a B. The rest of them are Ds and Fs. Roads, bridges, dams, on and on, sanitation systems, water systems.

All of us have heard about the problem in Michigan with the water system there. Well, it is repeated in California up and down the Central Valley of California with water systems that are contaminated in multiple ways, as they are in Michigan.

So, what are we going to do about it? Well, we have the good fortune of an opportunity presented to us by Democratic leaders. Let me start with a couple of examples of what can be done if we were to Make It In America.

Take, for example, an American success story of Make It In America. The Tappan Zee Bridge in New York, they did it right. They did it with U.S.-manufactured steel. It was a \$3.9 billion project and 7,728 American jobs created.

Out in California, we do things a little differently and not always better. You have heard of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. Well, they decided that the Chinese steel would be cheaper. It turned out it wasn't, and there were thousands of American jobs that didn't happen. It was \$3.9 billion over budget, as that Chinese steel was used. There were 3,000 jobs created in China, and the most modern steel mill in the world to produce steel that was badly welded and flawed in many ways.

So, we have a choice: We can make it in America, as New York did with the Tappan Zee Bridge, or you can have it made in China, as California did with the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, not our proudest moment.

For you who are not aware, I am a Californian. I was the Lieutenant Governor when this disaster was going on. I screamed and yelled and jumped up and down and said, What in the world are you doing? Oh, but it is cheaper. It is supposed to be by 10 percent. Cheap is not always better—an example of what could be done if we were to make it in America.

Now, this idea of Make It In America actually started with STENY HOYER, our minority whip. I am going to put up a couple of things. He has renewed his program that he and I worked on beginning in 2010.

Over the years we have talked about Make It In America. We have talked

about various ways it can be done, policies and the like. This Monday, Minority Whip STENY HOYER re-energized Make It In America. I think it is Make It In America 4.0.

So we have encouraged entrepreneurship by assuring access to workplace benefits like healthcare and retirement security, and providing more and stronger boosts to businesses with ideas and successful businesses.

I just came across one of these earlier today. I was talking to a friend out in California, Phil Wyatt, a Ph.D. guy who worked out of the University of California, Santa Barbara for some time. He came across a way of using a machine to analyze what is in something—a chemical analysis, an analysis of biological components, and the like. He started a company called Wyatt Technology.

It is an analytical machine that is used all around the world. It is used in healthcare. It is used in biology. It is used in chemical analysis and the like. The company is an American company, an entrepreneurship that was developed in this country. There are 88 straight quarters of profitability, and no way in hell is he going to allow the Chinese to steal it from him, even though his equipment is broadly used throughout the world. A great success story, Wyatt Technology.

So, where did it come from?

Well, it was an entrepreneurial program. We need more entrepreneurs. We need more entrepreneurs who are out there developing new businesses like Phil did several years back. They can do it. They are going to need support from their government. They need sound tax policy. They need the education and research that is going on in our universities.

They need to be able to accept the risk of starting a new business, whether it is a high-tech business or maybe it is somebody that wants to go out and work at a taco stand. But they ought to be able to have their healthcare and they ought to have their retirement security available to them as they go through that time.

So, that is one of the things that Mr. HOYER has talked about as he renews the Make It In America plan. We are going to hold infrastructure for a few moments and pick up the third element in his plan, which is education, which ties directly to what I talked about with Mr. Wyatt.

Wyatt's business, almost more than a decade old, actually came out of the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he was a professor and he was doing research. And so it is the educational system, not only at the high level, but also all the way down the line, promoting pathways for career opportunities.

A lot of this is something you might find in the career technical education field, where a man or woman learns to be a welder and then says, Well, I can start my own welding shop. I can become my own boss. So they do.

Or, maybe it is somebody that has learned hairstyling or cosmetics and decides they want to open their own shop. If they are able to have portable healthcare, if they have their retirement benefits, they can run the risk of starting their own business.

The training programs and education and the research all fit into this focus on education. So Mr. HOYER has outlined that as the second element.

The third element in the renewal of the Make It In America plan that he and I worked on in the beginning of 2010, and continued working on these many years, is a focus on infrastructure.

As I said earlier, as I talked about the failure of our basic infrastructure systems—water, sanitation, bridges, highways, reservoirs and dams—is this problem, also this opportunity. As I said, with this report coming out of Duke University, where they rated the infrastructure systems—as did the Society of Civil Engineers—it is a fact that if we are building our infrastructure system, for every dollar we invest in the infrastructure, we will be able to create 21,671 jobs. And for every billion dollars we invest, we will create those jobs. For every dollar we invest, we will improve the economy by \$3.54.

□ 2000

So the return on that \$1 investment is 3.5 to 1, so it makes a lot of sense to do that. Besides that, the bridges won't fall down and the dams won't crumble.

This one is extremely important: repairing and rebuilding our aging infrastructure. It also gives us the opportunity to innovate in the infrastructure of the future.

Well, as Mr. HOYER wants to talk about the infrastructure of the future, I want to talk about, for my remaining time here, the infrastructure of the past.

You may be aware that America is now a nation that exports a strategic national asset. It is our petroleum products. For fracking and other reasons, we are now an export nation when it comes to crude oil, gasoline, diesel, and, above all, natural gas. We have succeeded in turning this around from an importing nation to an exporting nation.

Some of these statistics lead me to an opportunity that we could rebuild, reenergize, a critical national infrastructure.

We don't often think about our maritime industry as being infrastructure, but it really is. It supports, to be sure. And we often talk about ports. We talk about intermodal, from the ship to the port, to the trail, to the train and rail, and then on to the highways. All true, but we often ignore the ship itself.

So here we are. The future of American shipbuilding actually resides in the export of oil and natural gas. By 2020, the U.S. is expected to be the world's third largest exporter of LNG, liquified natural gas.

Mr. Speaker, 225 LNG vessels are expected to be added to the world fleet by

2020. Those are big ships. There is a little picture there of one.

Due to the eroded capacity of American shipyards, not one—none, nada, none—of those 225 LNG ships, vessels, will be built in American shipyards unless there is a law that requires that just a small part of that export of LNG be on American-built ships.

Similarly, oil, I don't have that up here, but none of the oil that will be exported from the United States will be on American-built ships unless there is a law.

So, are you surprised that we are proposing a law called the Energizing American Shipbuilding? It is a piece of legislation that I have introduced to deal with a critical infrastructure, the ships that America once had.

So, of 225 new LNG vessels, currently 70 percent of those orders are going to Korea and the rest to China, maybe a few to Japan, and none to the United States.

So, the legislation called Energizing American Shipbuilding Act, introduced by myself, H.R. 5893, was introduced a few weeks ago. It requires that a certain percentage of the liquified natural gas and crude oil exports be transported on United States-built ships and American-flag vessels, crewed by American mariners, from the captains to the engineers to the seamen, American men and women on these American-built vessels.

A similar bill was introduced in the Senate by Senator WICKER, and that bill also does exactly the same thing. Senator CASEY, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. COURTNEY, and Mr. WITTMAN—two Democrats, two Republicans—introduced the legislation. In the Senate, one Republican and one Democrat have introduced the very same legislation, bipartisan, bicameral, and, by God, we ought to do it.

What happens if we were to do it? Well, let's look at some of the very simple opportunities that exist.

Instead of China and Korea and Japan building the ships for the export of this strategic national asset, let's do it in America. Let's make them in America.

The Energizing American Shipbuilding Act, introduced in the House and the Senate this year, if we were to pass this legislation, we are talking at least 50 new ships built in America. Let's see. That is 3, 6, 9, 12—about 15 of them, LNG ships, would be built here in the United States. And when they are commissioned and they are on the oceans, they would have American mariners on board providing a strategic advantage to our American defense policy. I will talk about that a little later.

There would be many, many more on the crude oil side, perhaps more than 30. Probably closer to 35 ships would be built in the next decade and a half to two decades, providing, oh, I don't know, maybe more than 1,500 jobs for American mariners.

And we haven't yet been able to calculate all the jobs in the shipyards of

America, but we know that, for San Diego, at the shipyards in San Diego, they would be building these ships. We know that they would be building these ships in the shipyards of the Gulf Coast and in the shipyards on the East Coast, particularly in Philadelphia. These jobs would be spread around at the shipyards on the West Coast, the Gulf of Mexico, and the East Coast.

And, just as important, the bill would require that the engines, the hydraulic systems, the pumps, the pipes, the electronics, that those, too, also be built in America.

We are talking about a major opportunity to make it in America, to make it in America once again so that America can continue to be a major place for the construction of American-built ships, whether those are naval ships, as they are today, required to be built in the United States, or whether they are commercial ships requiring that a small percentage of the export of oil and natural gas be on American-built ships with American sailors. Bottom line: manufacturing matters.

So, when Mr. HOYER, our minority whip, talks about renewing the Make It In America agenda and he talks about the necessity for that to be focusing on infrastructure, we put forward that a critical piece of that infrastructure is the American maritime industry—just as important as the trucks that travel our highways, another piece of infrastructure; just as important as the trains that travel the rails, another critical piece of infrastructure; just as important as the barges that move up and down the Mississippi River system on the Ohio, the Missouri, or the Mississippi itself. All of that is infrastructure, as are the airports and the airlines.

We ought to start and always think about the fact that we are a maritime nation and that in our infrastructure we consider the American maritime, we consider the ships and the men and the women who are on those ships.

Now, this is a national security issue. TRANSCOM, responsible for moving American military supplies around the world, has stated categorically that, unless we revive our American maritime industry, unless we have sailors and captains and engineers on ships who are able to transport our military wherever they need to go around the world, we are going to be in a world of hurt.

Earlier today, I was talking to one of the officers of Liberty Maritime, one of the American shipping companies, owners of ships that will soon be transporting a brigade of Reserve men and women from the United States to Europe as part of our European defense issues.

So it becomes important that we deal with the infrastructure of the United States and that we do so keeping in mind that these are American jobs that fulfill this important policy position. This is the value that, as we go about our legislative work here, we keep in

mind that the test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide for those who have too little.

Among those who have too little are the working men and women of America. And if we carry out this infrastructure challenge, if we make it in America, if the steel is American made, if the locomotives are American made—and there is a marvelous example of what can be done with public policy that says, if we are going to build locomotives for the Amtrak system on the Northeast corridor from Washington, D.C., to Boston, that those locomotives will be American made, with 100 percent American-made equipment.

Interestingly, when this was part of the American Recovery Act back in 2010, a bill put forward by Democrats and President Obama, there was a requirement for \$700 million or \$800 million to be spent on American-built locomotives, 100 percent American made. A German company said: Whoa, \$700 million? \$800 million? Locomotives? American made? We could do that.

So, in Sacramento, California, Siemens, one of the great manufacturing companies in the world, said: Well, let's see. We make not locomotives, but we do make cars for the transit systems. We can do locomotives.

And they did. Just this last week, I got off one of the Amtrak trains from New York City, walked past a gleaming locomotive, brand-new, and on the side it said "Siemens." I am going: That locomotive was made in Sacramento, California, just outside my district, by a German company with American workers, American steel, American wheels, American engines—made in America.

How did it happen? Because Congress, with Democrats in control and a Democratic President, said: We are not going to talk about making America great again; we are going to actually pass a law that says this money will be spent on American-made locomotives.

And so it was. And now that plant is continuing to expand as they produce cars for transit systems all across this Nation.

FDR had it right, and we are going to follow. We are going to make sure that the laws of this Nation actually provide for the working men and women; for those who don't have a job, an educational program, job training programs, career development programs in community colleges and high schools, apprenticeship programs, so that the men and women of America can participate in the revitalization of the American infrastructure system.

Whether that is a highway, an interstate freeway, an airport, a dock, or a port, we are going to make sure that the American workers have a chance not only in building the infrastructure, but in using the steel and the concrete and the other elements that go into these infrastructure projects. Those should also be made in America so that that infrastructure program flows way beyond just those who are pouring the

concrete to those who are making the cement and making the manufacturing plant that will develop the cement.

□ 2015

This is where we are. And by the way, we want to make sure that tax policy does not do what the Republicans have repeatedly done—2001, 2003 tax cuts and again in the 2017 tax cuts that have transferred \$2 trillion of American wealth to the top 1 percent. That is shameful, but that has actually happened. And all the while the rest of Americans have seen virtually no improvement in their economic situation.

Tax policy—critically important. Policy that requires that when we spend your tax dollar, that your tax dollar is spent on American jobs in American factories, putting Americans to work in what we call a "Make It In America" agenda.

And so keep this in mind, Mr. Trump, this is how you make America great again, by making it in America. So we can work with our Republican colleagues, as we are with our shipbuilding program, the Energizing American Shipbuilding Act. Democrats and Republicans understand, together, that it is public policy. It is the laws that we write that set the pace for economic growth and spread that growth out across the great American population so that everyone—everyone can participate in the rebuilding of America's infrastructure, whether it is a ship at sea, a port that is being developed, an airport, a highway or a railway, water system, sanitation system, we must write into all of those laws that when American taxpayer money is used, it is spent on American manufacturing and American workers.

So we will make it in America, and America will make it when we follow these kinds of wise public policies, keeping in mind that our task is to make sure that we always focus not on those who have much, but, rather, on those that have too little.

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

#### THE FIGHT TO SAVE AMERICA'S PATENT SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, before I get into the subject that I will be discussing today, let me just note that "American made" is only important if there are Americans actually in the jobs.

Who is the friend and who is the enemy of American workers today? Certainly the party that is permitting massive flow of illegal immigrants into our country in order to take the jobs that are being created is not a friend of the American working people.

Let us take a look at why Americans have prospered. We have prospered because, yes, we have technology and we have jobs. But it is also because we

have not permitted this massive immigration that now seems to be flowing across and has been for the last 10 and 20 years.

If we have industries that are going to succeed and jobs that are going to be created, we must first control our borders so that all of the jobs that we hear about being created are given to Americans, not to people who come here illegally.

It is unfortunate that that part of the debate in how illegal immigration has been bringing down the quality of life, taking jobs away from Americans, that that has not been part of the debate that we have heard over the media.

In fact, last week, we had an example where the Democratic party members here were unable to support a bill on the floor commending those brave souls who are defending our border and trying to stem the flow—the massive flow of illegal immigration into our country. They couldn't get themselves to back that.

Now, I went to an ICE facility, which is the group in our government that actually runs the facilities and helps us control this massive flow into our country, and the people there, yes, there were over 300 being held, and they were going to be returned. They were doing a good job for us.

And the fact is, in California, the Democratic party has gone so far overboard, they won't even permit local law enforcement—they have actually outlawed—they call it the sanctuary State law—they won't even let local governments permit them to use their own law enforcement to cooperate with Federal authorities in order to deal with illegal alien criminals.

Now, something is wrong here. We can hear all this talk about attacking Republicans as if all the tax money that was saved in this tax bill went to rich people. No, that is not the case. And what is also not the case is that the very jobs that are being created by such programs are going to foreigners who are here illegally, unless we do something about it.

So with that said, I would like to get into the issue that I really would like to—that I was intending to discuss today, and it has everything to do also with American prosperity. American prosperity didn't just happen. So I call this the Fight to Save America's Patent System.

We Americans are blessed to be part of a Nation where average people who live right and work hard can expect safety, a decent standard of living, and opportunities beyond the dreams of those who just struggle to survive in so much of the world—which is also why we have to control the borders. Because we do have a high standard of living in this world and we have this high standard of living for average people, it is not just a gift from God, but it is also a result of fundamental policies and laws that have governed our

land, including immigration laws, I might add, that prevent this massive flow of illegals into our country that we have been having to deal with.

Policies were put into place by brave, hardworking, forward-looking patriots over the years who struggled to create this new country, the United States of America. And they put in place fundamental laws that were aimed at protecting the rights of each and every person in the country.

One of those rights, which is often overlooked, was delineated in Article I, section 8 of the Constitution. In fact, considering the fact that the Bill of Rights was added to the document as a package of amendments, it is the only place in the original body of the Constitution where the word “right” is used. This is that part of our basic law of the land that mandates that writers and inventors have the right to exclusively control their creation for a specified period of time. That is in the Constitution. And that specified period of time, which through most of our history was 17 years—17 years for our inventors to control and profit from what they have created.

Benjamin Franklin probably inserted this into the Constitution without much fanfare, yet it has been a factor that has made all the difference. Ordinary Americans have lived good and decent lives here, not necessarily because we have worked harder—because people work hard all over the world—but we have prospered because not only have our people worked hard, but they have had the technological edge. We have multiplied the impact of every hour of labor with machines and equipment that existed only as a result of the genius of our people.

Progress was shared by all because we have nurtured our inventors, protected their intellectual property rights, and permitted them to profit from their genius. Our standard of living as a people became the envy of the world, and all this can be traced to a strong, fair, and honest patent system.

I have got good news. American inventors, the folks who are so often taken for granted, are deeply appreciated by the new Trump administration. Secretary Wilbur Ross and the new director of the United States Patent Office, Andrei Iancu—I guess that is how you pronounce that—are making sure that America’s greatest assets, our inventors and our innovators, are protected. This is, of course, a reversal of what has been going on in recent years.

The United States Patent and Trademark Office, or the USPTO, is the Federal agency tasked with the job of protecting America’s new ideas and investments in innovation and creativity. Over the years, there have been 58 different men and women leading this agency.

Our newest USPTO director, Andrei Iancu, shows the promise to be perhaps one of the best in that long line that extends back more than 200 years. Di-

rector Iancu has a long history in innovation, from his work as an engineer at Hughes Aircraft Company and his legal career that focused on intellectual property litigation. He has assured me personally that he will fight to protect the intellectual property of our inventors, and he will demand that accountability and transparency are hallmarks in the patent office under his watch. His positive commitment is refreshing. That is, to make sure that we have this transparency and accountability that he is talking about is a refreshing contrast to past office leadership.

Most of my colleagues and most of my fellow Americans have rarely noticed the conflict that has been quietly raging here in Washington for the last three decades. It has been an ongoing struggle with major impact on the security of our country and the well-being of the American people.

Yet few Members of Congress are even aware of how critical this fight is, and because the fight is usually fought in legalese, the American people are unaware of the issues being determined. What I am talking about is an ongoing clandestine attack on America’s patent system by powerful multinational corporations. Their aim has been to gain a free hand to use any technology with no worry of compensating the inventor of that said technology.

American companies and American workers have succeeded by being on the cutting edge and a notch above foreign competition. This is because our innovators have been protected by the best patent system in the world. Yet, we hear these calls globally, and in collusion with domestic power brokers, demands that we harmonize our system with the rest of the world.

If there is any harmonization, it should be the rest of the world rising up to our long-held standards which have been instrumental in enabling our way of life and our country’s greatness. We absolutely should not lower America’s standards.

But that is exactly what a powerful coalition has been pushing for. And in 2012, with the America Invents Act, they finally were able to undermine significant protections of our patent system. The implications of that law are just now becoming evident.

So, for three decades, legislation aimed at weakening America’s patent protection has been pushed and re-pushed, whittling away, and restructuring with the goal to diminish the rights of our inventors. This establishment thinks these are people who are just in the way. The anti-patent juggernaut cabal even managed to change who will be issued a patent.

Up until 2012, up until that law, for more than two centuries, the actual inventor of new technology was legally considered the rightful owner of the invention and thus designated as the recipient of the patent for that new technology.

This longstanding and commonsense policy was shifted by that 2012 bill so

that now, not the inventor, but the first entity to file for the patent gets the patent. Hear that again: The actual inventor doesn’t get the patent. In an age of hacking and predatory corporations, this is a disaster in the making.

□ 2030

Even as we lost ground in the legislative fight to protect our inventors’ rights, there was even less awareness of a change in the way they were doing business inside the Patent Office. There has always been a strict guideline directing the decisions and actions of the professionals and civil servants of the Patent Office.

Approval of a patent application was not left up to the whims of those making the decision. If an application met the requirements, objective criteria, and the proper procedures were followed, if that happened, the Patent Office employee was mandated to do his or her duty, not to think how they should feel about the economic and societal changes that might be brought about when a new technology is introduced, or what groups would benefit and which ones wouldn’t, if this new technology was patented.

I am not certain what precipitated the power play, but, in 1994, changes began happening surreptitiously inside the Patent Office itself, even as overt legislative campaigns were taking place to weaken our patent system, and they were being launched on the outside.

So you had people working on the inside and the outside, trying to weaken the patent protection of American inventors.

A new procedure was quietly made part of the system inside. It was theoretically aimed at alerting senior patent personnel that a patent with serious consequences was soon to be granted and, thus, given more intense scrutiny. It was called SAWS, Sensitive Application Warning System. But, as you would imagine, as soon as this secretive new element was added to the Patent Office procedures, it began to have much more of an impact than supposedly intended.

Unauthorized and hidden SAWS rules and determinations were made that had a major impact on the basic business of the Patent Office, the issuing or denial of an inventor’s patent. Some Patent Office officials took it upon themselves to violate the clear legal boundaries that were in place specifically to prevent well-intended subjectivity from running wild. SAWS had a big impact, much bigger than they ever thought, and it had no scrutiny.

So inventors were being skewered from the outside by those legislators mobilized by powerful multinational corporations, and by other special interests as well, I might add, and on the inside by an in-the-shadows system that permitted unrestricted consideration, no visibility, and no accountability.

It took more than 20 years for this to come to light and officially ended. In

2015, the SAWS program was exposed and made public. And after congressional hearings and inquiries, the Patent Office announced the program had been retired. As one senior patent official told me, “That program had to go.”

So it has been an ongoing struggle on the outside and on the inside to maintain the strength and integrity of America’s patent system.

On the legislative side, there is a bipartisan coalition now, led by dedicated Representatives like MARCY KAPTUR of Ohio and THOMAS MASSIE of Kentucky. They just introduced H.R. 6264, Restoring America’s Leadership in Innovation Act of 2018, a bill that will, if we can get it enacted, undo many of the legislative setbacks America’s patent system has suffered in the last two decades. I am, of course, an original cosponsor of that bill, and I invite my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring it.

There is really good news—and here is some really good news—from the executive branch. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross is deeply committed to protecting the intellectual property of American inventors. He is willing to fight the good fight to protect us against foreign competitors who would steal our inventors’ genius and use it against our own hardworking people.

Secretary Ross is working with our new director of the Patent Office, Andrei Iancu, and he is committed to protecting inventors and creators. Both of them, with President Trump’s guidance and Vice President PENCE’s encouragement, are declaring that the patent system will be totally transparent and fully accountable.

I might say, Director Iancu has just reaffirmed that commitment in a written statement to Congress:

Today, at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, every action we take is on the public record and recorded in a publicly available database.

So there is reason for optimism that we have turned a corner in our long-term efforts to protect—and, yes, reclaim and maintain and repair—some of the damages that have been done from both the outside attack of our patent system and the inside, out-of-line actions that were taken without oversight or accountability, like the SAWS program.

It is not appropriate to cover up or withhold information. It is time to make up for those past errors and to

set a path for America’s Patent Office to offer efficient, honest, and totally above-board service.

The new director has his hands full. But he has the right game plan: total transparency and full accountability.

When it comes to innovation and technology, we are, with our American President, the Vice President, the Secretary of Commerce, and the team over at the Patent Office, together, making America great again.

So I would ask my colleagues, please, I know this is a complicated issue, we talked to the American people, we know that patent law seems like it should be complicated, but it is not. For someone who invents something, our Founding Fathers put into place a property right for those people who invent, an inventor, to be able, at least for 17 years, have control over his or her invention.

This has worked well for the United States. It is so sad that, for decades now, they have been trying to undermine it. But we are reclaiming that today with the Trump administration, the Secretary of Commerce, the head of the Patent Office, and the Vice President of the United States, who are dedicated to protecting the rights of our inventors and, thus, protecting the great standard of living and the safety of the United States of America, which is so dependent on having a technological edge against any competitor or enemy.

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

**RAISING A QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE PURSUANT TO ARTICLE I, SECTION 7, OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION**

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I offer a resolution constituting a question of the privileges of the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the resolution.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 1019

*Resolved*, That the conference report accompanying H.R. 5515, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2019 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, in the opinion of this House, contravenes the first clause of the seventh section of the first arti-

cle of the Constitution of the United States and is an infringement of the privileges of this House and that such bill be respectfully recommitted to the committee of conference.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The resolution presents a question of the privileges of the House.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

**RECESS**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 8 o’clock and 39 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2128

**AFTER RECESS**

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOODALL) at 9 o’clock and 28 minutes p.m.

**REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING A REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 6(a) OF RULE XIII WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS REPORTED FROM THE COMMITTEE ON RULES, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES**

Mr. SESSIONS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115–873) on the resolution (H. Res. 1020) waiving a requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules, and providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o’clock and 28 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, July 25, 2018, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

**EXPENDITURE REPORTS CONCERNING OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL**

Reports concerning the foreign currencies and U.S. dollars utilized for Official Foreign Travel during the second quarter of 2018, pursuant to Public Law 95–384, are as follows:

**REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, JOSH MARTIN, EXPENDED BETWEEN MAY 24 AND JUNE 4, 2018**

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem <sup>1</sup>		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>
Josh Martin	5/25	5/26	France		190.00				(3)		190.00



REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, JOSH MARTIN, EXPENDED BETWEEN MAY 24 AND JUNE 4, 2018—Continued

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem <sup>1</sup>		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>
	5/27	5/29	India .....	11,118.00	163.50			(3)		11,118.00	163.50
	5/29	5/30	Sri Lanka .....		97.00			(3)			97.00
	5/30	6/1	Philippines .....		270.00			(3)			270.00
	6/1	6/3	Singapore .....		220.00			(3)			220.00
Committee total .....					940.00						940.00

<sup>1</sup> Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.  
<sup>2</sup> If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.  
<sup>3</sup> Military air transportation.

JOSH MARTIN, July 2, 2018.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN APR. 1 AND JUNE 30, 2018

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem <sup>1</sup>		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>
Hon. Glenn Thompson .....	5/24	5/30	France .....		2,857.00			(3)			2,857.00
	5/30	5/31	England .....		382.00			(3)			382.00
Committee total .....					3,239.00						3,239.00

<sup>1</sup> Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.  
<sup>2</sup> If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.  
<sup>3</sup> Military air transportation.

HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY, Chairman, July 17, 2018.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN APR. 1 AND JUNE 30, 2018

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem <sup>1</sup>		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>

HOUSE COMMITTEES

Please Note: If there were no expenditures during the calendar quarter noted above, please check the box at right to so indicate and return.

<sup>1</sup> Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.  
<sup>2</sup> If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.

HON. VIRGINIA FOXX, Chairman, July 12, 2018.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON ETHICS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN APR. 1 AND JUNE 30, 2018

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem <sup>1</sup>		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>

HOUSE COMMITTEES

Please Note: If there were no expenditures during the calendar quarter noted above, please check the box at right to so indicate and return.

<sup>1</sup> Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.  
<sup>2</sup> If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS, Chairman, July 12, 2018.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN APR. 1 AND JUNE 30, 2018

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem <sup>1</sup>		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>
Hon. Lamar Smith .....	4/2	4/5	Chile .....	392,540	645.83			(3)			645.83
	4/5	4/8	Ecuador .....		1,375.80			(3)			1,375.80
	4/8	4/10	Colombia .....	1,468,000	524.29			(3)			524.29
Hon. Zoe Lofgren .....	4/2	4/5	Chile .....	392,540	645.83			(3)			645.83
	4/5	4/8	Ecuador .....		1,333.80			(3)			1,333.80
	4/8	4/10	Colombia .....	1,468,000	524.29			(3)			524.29
Hon. Ed Perlmutter .....	4/2	4/5	Chile .....	375,521	617.83			(3)			617.83
	4/5	4/8	Ecuador .....		1,305.80			(3)			1,305.80
	4/8	4/10	Colombia .....	1,356,000	484.92			(3)			484.29
Hon. Randy Hultgren .....	4/2	4/5	Chile .....	337,837	555.83			(3)			555.83
	4/5	4/8	Ecuador .....		1,305.80			(3)			1,305.80
	4/8	4/10	Colombia .....	1,244,001	444.29			(3)			444.29
Hon. Suzanne Bonamici .....	4/2	4/5	Chile .....	392,540	645.83			(3)			645.83
	4/5	4/8	Ecuador .....		1,333.80			(3)			1,333.80
	4/8	4/10	Colombia .....	1,468,000	524.29			(3)			524.29
Hon. Randy Weber .....	4/2	4/5	Chile .....	392,540	645.83			(3)			645.83
	4/5	4/8	Ecuador .....		1,333.80			(3)			1,333.80
	4/8	4/10	Colombia .....	1,468,000	524.29			(3)			524.29
Hon. Brian Babin .....	4/2	4/5	Chile .....	392,540	645.83			(3)			645.83
	4/5	4/8	Ecuador .....		1,333.80			(3)			1,333.80
	4/8	4/10	Colombia .....	1,468,000	524.29			(3)			524.29
Ashley Smith .....	4/2	4/5	Chile .....	392,540	645.83			(3)			645.83
	4/5	4/8	Ecuador .....		1,375.80			(3)			1,375.80
	4/8	4/10	Colombia .....	1,468,000	524.29			(3)			524.29
Cliff Shannon .....	4/2	4/5	Chile .....	392,540	645.83			(3)			645.83
	4/5	4/8	Ecuador .....		1,202.56			(3)			1,202.56
	4/8	4/10	Colombia .....	1,468,000	524.29			(3)			524.29
Ashlee Vinyard .....	4/2	4/5	Chile .....	392,540	645.83			(3)			645.83

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN APR. 1 AND JUNE 30, 2018—Continued

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem <sup>1</sup>		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>
Jenn Wickre	4/5	4/8	Ecuador		1,375.80		(?)				1,375.80
	4/8	4/10	Colombia	1,468,000	524.29		(?)				524.29
	4/2	4/5	Chile	392,540	645.83		(?)				645.83
Kristin Kopshever	4/5	4/8	Ecuador		1,202.56		(?)				1,202.56
	4/8	4/10	Colombia	1,468,000	524.29		(?)				524.29
	4/2	4/5	Chile	392,540	645.83		(?)				645.83
	4/5	4/8	Ecuador		1,202.56		(?)				1,202.56
	4/8	4/10	Colombia	1,468,000	524.29		(?)				524.29
Committee total					29,503.95						29,503.95

<sup>1</sup> Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.  
<sup>2</sup> If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.  
<sup>3</sup> Military air transportation.

HON. LAMAR SMITH, Chairman, July 9, 2018.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN APR. 1 AND JUNE 30, 2018

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem <sup>1</sup>		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>
Eric Burgeson	4/3	4/7	Australia		1,538.00						1,538.00
Kathy Dedrick	4/3	4/7	Australia		1,538.00						1,538.00
Hon. Garret Graves	4/3	4/7	Australia		1,538.00						1,538.00
Hon. Daniel Lipinski	4/3	4/7	Australia		1,538.00						1,538.00
Fleming Legg	4/3	4/7	Australia		1,538.00						1,538.00
Hon. Sean Patrick Maloney	4/3	4/7	Australia		1,538.00						1,538.00
Collin McCune	4/3	4/7	Australia		1,538.00						1,538.00
Hon. David Rouzer	4/3	4/7	Australia		1,538.00						1,538.00
Hon. William F. Shuster	4/3	4/7	Australia		1,538.00						1,538.00
Brittany Smith	4/3	4/7	Australia		1,538.00						1,538.00
Rebekah Sungala	4/3	4/7	Australia		1,538.00						1,538.00
Chris Vieson	4/3	4/7	Australia		1,538.00						1,538.00
CMTE Expenses	4/3	4/7	Australia		1,538.00		7,732.00		1,557.00		1,538.00
Total Australia					18,456.00		7,732.00		1,557.00		27,745.00
Eric Burgeson	4/7	4/8	New Zealand		431.00						431.00
Kathy Dedrick	4/7	4/8	New Zealand		431.00						431.00
Hon. Garret Graves	4/7	4/8	New Zealand		431.00						431.00
Hon. Daniel Lipinski	4/7	4/8	New Zealand		431.00						431.00
Fleming Legg	4/7	4/8	New Zealand		431.00						431.00
Hon. Sean Patrick Maloney	4/7	4/8	New Zealand		431.00						431.00
Collin McCune	4/7	4/8	New Zealand		431.00						431.00
Hon. David Rouzer	4/7	4/8	New Zealand		431.00						431.00
Hon. William F. Shuster	4/7	4/8	New Zealand		431.00						431.00
Brittany Smith	4/7	4/8	New Zealand		431.00						431.00
Rebekah Sungala	4/7	4/8	New Zealand		431.00						431.00
Chris Vieson	4/7	4/8	New Zealand		431.00						431.00
CMTE Expenses	4/7	4/8	New Zealand		431.00		3,292.00		1,439.00		4,731.00
Total New Zealand					5,172.00		3,292.00		1,439.00		9,903.00
Hon. Alan Lowenthal	4/13	4/16	Peru		2,022.36						2,022.36
Committee total					25,650.36		11,024.00		2,996.00		39,670.36

<sup>1</sup> Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.  
<sup>2</sup> If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.

HON. BILL SHUSTER, Chairman, July 12, 2018.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, JOINT COMMITTEE ON TAXATION, EXPENDED BETWEEN APR. 1 AND JUNE 30, 2018

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem <sup>1</sup>		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency <sup>2</sup>

HOUSE COMMITTEES

Please Note: If there were no expenditures during the calendar quarter noted above, please check the box at right to so indicate and return.

<sup>1</sup> Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.  
<sup>2</sup> If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.

HON. KEVIN BRADY, Vice Chairman, July 9, 2018.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

5742. A letter from the Under Secretary, Acquisition and Sustainment, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's report titled "Fiscal Year 2017 Purchases From Foreign Entities", pursuant to 41 U.S.C. 8305; Public Law 104-201, Sec. 827 (as amended by Public Law 111-350, Sec. 3); (124 Stat. 3833) and Public Law 115-31, Sec. 8029(b); (131 Stat. 253); to the Committee on Armed Services.

5743. A letter from the Chairman, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting the Board's Report to the Congress on the Profitability of Credit Card Operations of Depository Institutions, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 1637 note; Public Law 100-583, Sec. 8; (102 Stat. 2969); to the Committee on Financial Services.

5744. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — National Flood Insurance Program: Removal of Monroe County Pilot Inspection Program Regulations [Docket ID: FEMA-2018-0027] (RIN: 1660-AA93) received July 18, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-

121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

5745. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Office of Housing — Federal Housing Commissioner, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting the Department's final rule — Streamlining Inspection Requirements for Federal Housing Administration (FHA) Single-Family Mortgage Insurance: Removal of the FHA Inspector Roster [Docket No.: FR-5457-F-02] (RIN: 2502-AJ03) received July 12, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

5746. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — Student Assistance General Provisions, Federal Perkins Loan Program, Federal Family Education Loan Program, William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program, and Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grant Program; Corrections [Docket ID: ED-2017-OPE-0112] (RIN: 1840-AD28) received July 17, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868) and 20 U.S.C. 1232(f); Public Law 90-247, Sec. 437(f) (as added Public Law 91-230, Sec. 401(a)(10)); (84 Stat. 169); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

5747. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's Strategic Petroleum Reserve Annual Report for Calendar Year 2015, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 6245 Public Law 94-163, Sec. 165 (as amended by Public Law 106-469, Sec. 103(17)); (114 Stat. 2032) (114 Stat. 2032); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5748. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a Declaration that Circumstances Exist Justifying an Authorization Pursuant to Section 564 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5749. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, Diversion Control Division, DEA, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's temporary amendment — Schedules of Controlled Substances: Temporary Placement of NM2201, 5F-AB-PINACA, 4-CN-CUMYL-BUTINACA, MMB-CHMICA and 5F-CUMYL-P7AICA Into Schedule I [Docket No.: DEA-479] received July 17, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5750. A letter from the Assistant Administrator, Diversion Control Division, DEA, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's final rule — Controlled Substances Quotas [Docket No.: DEA-480] (RIN: 1117-AB48) received July 17, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5751. A letter from the Chief Executive Officer, U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, transmitting the Agency's 2017 Annual Report and Financial Audit, pursuant to 21 U.S.C. 2002(b); Public Law 109-469, Sec. 702(b); (120 Stat. 3534); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5752. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Medical Use of By-product Material — Medical Event Definitions, Training and Experience, and Clarifying Amendments [NRC-2008-0175] (RIN: 3150-AI63) received July 17, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5753. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Commerce, transmitting a report certifying that the export of the listed items to the People's Republic of China is not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2778 note; Public Law 105-261, Sec. 1512 (as amended by Public Law 105-277, Sec. 146); (112 Stat. 2174); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5754. A letter from the Assistant Legal Advisor, Office of Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting reports concerning international agreements other than treaties entered into by the United States to be transmitted to the Congress within the sixty-day period specified in the Case-Zablocki Act, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b(a); Public Law 92-403, Sec. 1(a) (as amended by Public Law 108-458, Sec. 7121(b)); (118 Stat. 3807); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5755. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 17-074, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5756. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a notification of discontinuation of service in acting role, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5757. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel, General Law, Ethics, and Regulation, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a notification of a designation of acting officer and nomination, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5758. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a notification of a designation of acting officer, and a notification of a discontinuation of service in acting role, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5759. A letter from the Chairman, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting the NCUA Strategic Plan 2018-2022 and 2018 Annual Performance Plan, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 306(a); Public Law 103-62, Sec. 3(a) (as amended by Public Law 111-352, Sec. 2); (124 Stat. 3866) and 31 U.S.C. 1115(b); Public Law 111-352, Sec. 3; (124 Stat. 3867); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5760. A letter from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's final rule — Federal Employees Health Benefits Program and Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program: Expiration of Coverage of Children of Same-Sex Domestic Partners; Federal Flexible Benefits Plan: Pre-Tax Payment of Health Benefits Premiums: Conforming Amendments (RIN: 3206-AN34) received July 17, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5761. A letter from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's Inspector General Semiannual Report for the period of October 1, 2017, to March 31, 2018, pursuant to Sec. 5 of Public Law 95-452, as amended; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5762. A letter from the Executive Director, United States Access Board, transmitting the Board's FY 2017 No FEAR Act report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 3242); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5763. A letter from the Chairman and CEO, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Organization; Funding and Fiscal Affairs, Loan Policies and Operations, and Funding Operations; Investment Eligibility (RIN: 3052-AC84) received July 18, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

5764. A letter from the Federal Liaison Officer, United States Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Removal of Rules Governing Trademark Interferences [Docket No.: PTO-T-2017-0032] (RIN: 0651-AD23) received July 17, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec.

251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

5765. A letter from the Impact Analyst, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the Secretary (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Schedule for Rating Disabilities: Skin (RIN: 2900-AP27) received July 17, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

5766. A letter from the Inspector General, Office of Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report entitled "The MEDIC Produced Some Positive Results but More Could be Done to Enhance its Effectiveness" (OEI-03-17-00310), pursuant to Public Law 114-198, Sec. 704(c)(2)(B); (130 Stat. 750); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

5767. A letter from the Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting an update on the ongoing monitoring of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' implementation of a new Medicare payment system for clinical diagnostic laboratory tests; jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

#### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 5649. A bill to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to amend the Social Security Act, and to direct the Secretaries of Veterans Affairs, Defense, Labor, and Homeland Security, and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, to take certain actions to improve transition assistance to members of the Armed Forces who separate, retire, or are discharged from the Armed Forces, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-864, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 5882. A bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to provide for the termination by a spouse of a lessee of certain leases when the lessee dies while in military service (Rept. 115-865). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 2409. A bill to allow servicemembers to terminate their cable, satellite television, and Internet access service contracts while deployed (Rept. 115-866). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 2787. A bill to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a pilot program instituting a clinical observation program for pre-med students preparing to attend medical school; with an amendment (Rept. 115-867). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 5693. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the placement of veterans in non-Department medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently; with amendments (Rept. 115-868). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 5974. A bill to direct the

Secretary of Veterans Affairs to use on-site regulated medical waste treatment systems at certain Department of Veterans Affairs facilities, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-869). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 5538. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the inclusion of certain additional periods of active duty service for purposes of suspending charges to veterans' entitlement to educational assistance under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs during periods of suspended participation in vocational rehabilitation programs (Rept. 115-870). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 5938. A bill to amend the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a vacancy and recruitment database to facilitate the recruitment of certain members of the Armed Forces to satisfy the occupational needs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to establish and implement a training and certification program for intermediate care technicians in that Department, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-871). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 5864. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish qualifications for the human resources positions within the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-872). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. SESSIONS: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 1020. Resolution waiving a requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules, and providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules (Rept. 115-873). Referred to the House Calendar.

## PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 6479. A bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to include short-term limited duration plans in the definition of individual health insurance coverage; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. BORDALLO:

H.R. 6480. A bill to allow the Governor of Guam to determine temporary need of non-immigrant workers on Guam, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DESAULNIER:

H.R. 6481. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, for the purpose of addressing public health crises, to require the manufacturers of covered products to develop, maintain, and update a plan to mitigate the effects of such products on public health, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. YOHO, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. MEADOWS, and Mr. BABIN):

H.R. 6482. A bill to prohibit Federal payments to a unit of local government that al-

lows individuals who are not citizens of the United States to vote in elections for State or local office, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER (for herself and Mr. KIND):

H.R. 6483. A bill to amend the Trade Act of 1974 to provide adjustment assistance to farmers adversely affected by reduced exports resulting from tariffs imposed as retaliation for United States tariff increases, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DEFAZIO (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. SCHRADER, and Ms. BONAMICI):

H.R. 6484. A bill to provide for the designation of the Devil's Staircase Wilderness Area in the State of Oregon, to designate segments of Wasson and Franklin Creeks in the State of Oregon as wild or recreation rivers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. KHANNA (for himself, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. MOORE, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. POCAN, Mr. SERRANO, and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi):

H.R. 6485. A bill to direct the Secretary of Labor to carry out a Federal subsidized employment program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. LAHOOD (for himself and Ms. SEWELL of Alabama):

H.R. 6486. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude certain post graduation scholarship grants from gross income in the same manner as qualified scholarships to promote economic growth; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico:

H.R. 6487. A bill to provide for greater consultation between the Federal government and the governing bodies of land grant-merced and acequias in New Mexico and to provide for a process for recognition of the historic-traditional boundaries of land grant-merced, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BARTON (for himself and Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 6488. A bill to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to exempt from certain criminal penalties the offering and use of certain pharmaceutical manufacturer copayment coupons to waive or reduce cost-sharing otherwise applied under the Medicare prescription drug benefit; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. BARRAGAN:

H.R. 6489. A bill to direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a grant program for the relocation of certain petroleum storage facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CARTER of Georgia (for himself, Mr. COLE, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, and Mr. SCALISE):

H.R. 6490. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to treat the service of Members of the United States Capitol Police who are

transferred directly to an administrative or supervisory position with the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center as a law enforcement officer service for purposes of the Federal Employees' Retirement System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. CASTOR of Florida (for herself and Mr. MCKINLEY):

H.R. 6491. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to require the Drug Enforcement Administration to report certain information on distribution of opioids to manufacturers and distributors to help identify, report, and stop suspicious orders of opioids and reduce diversion rates, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. DEGETTE:

H.R. 6492. A bill to designate certain lands in the State of Colorado as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. DESAULNIER:

H.R. 6493. A bill to amend titles 23 and 49, United States Code, to improve public understanding of how transportation investments are made by public agencies through establishing greater transparency and accountability processes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. ENGEL (for himself and Mr. CONNOLLY):

H.R. 6494. A bill to expose and deter unlawful and subversive foreign interference in elections for Federal office, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, Financial Services, and Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. GABBARD (for herself, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. SOTO, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. ROHRBACHER, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. NORTON, Ms. TITUS, Mr. CRIST, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. CORREA, Ms. LEE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. QUIGLEY, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. POLIS, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mr. COHEN):

H.R. 6495. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to enter into a 10-year arrangement with the National Academy of Sciences to conduct and update biennially a study on the effects of State legalized marijuana programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. JOYCE of Ohio (for himself and Mr. TURNER):

H.R. 6496. A bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to ensure that preexisting condition exclusions with respect to enrollment in health insurance coverage and group health plans continue to be prohibited; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. MENG:

H.R. 6497. A bill to enhance rail safety and provide for the safe and covered transport of materials in railroad cars, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. ROE of Tennessee (for himself and Mr. BLUMENAUER):

H.R. 6498. A bill to improve mental health services; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mrs. TORRES (for herself and Mr. POE of Texas):

H.R. 6499. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to authorize the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to issue loans to homeowners in areas at risk for disasters to carry out pre-disaster mitigation activities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. WALZ (for himself, Mr. DENHAM, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. BOST, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. O'ROURKE, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Mr. KIND, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. KILMER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, and Mr. CARBAJAL):

H.R. 6500. A bill to expand the availability of programs of the Department of Agriculture to veteran farmers and ranchers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania:

H. Res. 1017. A resolution requesting the President, and directing the Secretary of State, to transmit to the House of Representatives copies of all documents, records, communications, transcripts, summaries, notes, memoranda, and read-aheads in their possession referring or relating to certain communications between President Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. PASCRELL:

H. Res. 1018. A resolution requesting the President to transmit to the House of Representatives certain documents in the possession of the President relating to the determination to impose certain tariffs and to the strategy of the United States with respect to China; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BRADY of Texas:

H. Res. 1019. A resolution raising a question of the privileges of the House pursuant to article I, section 7, of the United States Constitution; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. JACKSON LEE:

H. Res. 1021. A resolution calling upon any agreement reached between the President and Vladimir Putin at their meeting in Helsinki, Finland, to be approved by Congress; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select), for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. JOYCE of Ohio:

H. Res. 1022. A resolution condemning the ongoing illegal occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, Oversight and Government Reform, Financial Services, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TED LIEU of California (for himself, Mr. JONES, and Mr. CASTRO of Texas):

H. Res. 1023. A resolution condemning Vladimir Putin's attack on United States officials and reaffirming support for those Americans who have served their Nation; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey:

H. Res. 1024. A resolution reaffirming the commitment of the United States to promote international religious freedom and marking the 20th anniversary of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TAKANO (for himself, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. POCAN):

H. Res. 1025. A resolution expressing support for policies that maintain a robust, fully-funded and staffed Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs and do not jeopardize care for veterans by moving essential resources to the private sector; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

## MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

231. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, relative to Senate Resolution No. 154, urging the Speaker and the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives to return to Tennessee a report compiled by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation on the Martin Luther King assassination known as "MLK Document 200472" that was submitted to the United States House Select Committee on Assassinations in 1976; to the Committee on House Administration.

232. Also, a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana, relative to House Resolution No. 219, memorializing the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to adopt and enact the legislation to be proposed in the 115th Congress, Second Session, that would establish the Caddo Lake National Heritage Area; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

233. Also, a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 48, memorializing the United States Congress and the Louisiana Congressional Delegation to take such actions as are necessary to rectify the revenue sharing inequities between coastal and interior energy producing states and to ensure the dependability of such revenue sharing; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

234. Also, a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 110, to memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to adopt and enact the legislation to be proposed in the 115th Congress, Second Session, that would establish the Caddo Lake National Heritage Area; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

235. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, relative to Senate Resolution No. 326, urging the Congress of the United States to adopt the National Park Service's recommendation to extend the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail to include the additional sites along the Lewis and Clark Expedition's Eastern Legacy; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

236. Also, a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana, rel-

ative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 87, to express support of the right of American citizens to keep and bear arms; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

237. Also, a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 110, to memorialize the United States Congress to pass legislation that supports efforts to build, modernize, and maintain the United States' infrastructure with consideration of certain principles; jointly to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, Education and the Workforce, Energy and Commerce, and Natural Resources.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 6479.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the United States Constitution, to provide for the general welfare and make all laws necessary and proper to carry out the powers of Congress.

By Ms. BORDALLO:

H.R. 6480.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. DESAULNIER:

H.R. 6481.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina:

H.R. 6482.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER:

H.R. 6483.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. DEFAZIO:

H.R. 6484.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress)

By Mr. KHANNA:

H.R. 6485.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. LAHOOD:

H.R. 6486.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1

"The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States . . . ."

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico:

H.R. 6487.





- H.R. 6251: Ms. DELAURO.  
 H.R. 6275: Mr. STIVERS.  
 H.R. 6278: Mr. COHEN.  
 H.R. 6294: Ms. ESHOO.  
 H.R. 6337: Mr. STEWART, Ms. STEFANIK, Mrs. LOVE, and Mr. BUDD.  
 H.R. 6344: Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia.  
 H.R. 6345: Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia and Mr. GUTHRIE.  
 H.R. 6354: Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia.  
 H.R. 6360: Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia.  
 H.R. 6364: Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia.  
 H.R. 6378: Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. QUIGLEY, and Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.  
 H.R. 6379: Mr. CURBELO of Florida and Mr. DIAZ-BALART.  
 H.R. 6396: Ms. DELBENE.  
 H.R. 6400: Mr. YOHO, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. OLSON, Mrs. HANDEL, Mr. RATCLIFFE, and Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.  
 H.R. 6417: Mr. RENACCI, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, and Mr. AMODEI.  
 H.R. 6421: Mr. FITZPATRICK and Mr. SCHNEIDER.  
 H.R. 6426: Mr. COHEN.  
 H.R. 6442: Miss RICE of New York.  
 H.R. 6449: Mr. COOPER.  
 H.R. 6455: Mr. COHEN and Mr. PERLMUTTER.  
 H.R. 6459: Mr. KATKO.  
 H.R. 6467: Ms. WILSON of Florida.  
 H.R. 6468: Mr. LOUDERMILK.
- H.R. 6469: Mr. KATKO.  
 H.R. 6474: Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. BORDALLO, and Ms. PINGREE.  
 H.J. Res. 31: Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY.  
 H.J. Res. 48: Ms. MATSUI.  
 H. Con. Res. 72: Mr. CALVERT.  
 H. Res. 257: Mr. WITTMAN.  
 H. Res. 274: Mr. COFFMAN.  
 H. Res. 413: Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. BERA, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. LOEBACK, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. CORREA, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. RUIZ, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. DESAULNIER, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. NADLER, Mr. COSTA, Ms. GABBARD, Ms. MENG, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. POLIS, and Mr. SMUCKER.  
 H. Res. 518: Mr. FASO.  
 H. Res. 766: Mr. FITZPATRICK and Mr. KING of New York.  
 H. Res. 826: Mr. RUSSELL and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.  
 H. Res. 864: Mr. RICHMOND and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.  
 H. Res. 869: Mr. HUFFMAN.
- H. Res. 932: Ms. DELAURO, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. SENBRENNER, and Mrs. COMSTOCK.  
 H. Res. 967: Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. KATKO, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. FASO, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. KINZINGER, and Ms. STEFANIK.  
 H. Res. 981: Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.  
 H. Res. 983: Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida.  
 H. Res. 993: Ms. MENG, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. SUOZZI, Ms. TITUS, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. SIRENS, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. QUIGLEY, and Mr. SERRANO.  
 H. Res. 1008: Mr. O'ROURKE, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. NORTON, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. COOPER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. PALLONE, and Mr. HIGGINS of New York.

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#### DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 2069: Mr. HASTINGS.