

people permanent status in the Marianas, and just in the Marianas, so they could continue to live and work as they have for years as part of our community.

I introduced that legislation, H.R. 559, and the administration submitted a statement for the hearing record to the Natural Resources Committee supporting passage, which I include in the RECORD.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
HOMELAND SECURITY,  
Washington, DC, February 21, 2019.

Hon. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA,  
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE GRIJALVA: This letter sets forth Department of Homeland Security (DHS) views with regard to H.R. 559, the "Northern Mariana Islands Long-Term Legal Residents Relief Act."

Thank you for seeking the Department's input on this new legislation. We appreciate the opportunity to review H.R. 559 as the Committee begins the legislative process in the 1st session of the 116th Congress.

As you are aware, H.R. 559 would provide for the admission of certain aliens who are currently present in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and who had been parolees as CNMI residents. In doing so, the bill would establish an alternative regime to the now-terminated categorical parole program for the CNMI. DHS believes that the bill would address the discrete needs of this alien group in an equitable and lawful manner—more so than any other bill that is now pending Congressional consideration.

In light of the aforementioned, DHS supports H.R. 559. DHS would respectfully urge the Committee to consider the bill favorably. Further, it is the Department's hope that the full House of Representatives will take up and pass the measure expeditiously.

The Department is pleased to inform you that the Office of Management and Budget has no objection to the presentation of this letter to Congress. Nonetheless, I appreciate your interest in the Administration's concerns on this matter. Fortunately, there are none.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to review and share the Department's position on H.R. 559. An identical letter has been sent to Representatives Sablan and Bishop.

Respectfully,

CHRISTINE M. CICCONE,  
Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs.

Mr. SABLÁN. Mr. Speaker, let me read from the administration's letter. "H.R. 559 would provide for the admission of certain aliens who are currently present in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, CNMI, and who had been parolees. . . . In doing so, the bill would establish an alternative regime to the now-terminated categorical parole program for the CNMI. DHS believes that the bill would address the discrete needs of this alien group in an equitable and lawful manner. . . . It is the Department's hope that the full House of Representatives will take up and pass the measure expeditiously." Signed: Christine M. Ciccone, Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security.

To be completely transparent, the bill before us has been altered slightly from the original. The bill now includes an administrative appeal procedure

if an applicant believes an error was made in processing their petition for permanent status. But that new language was also drafted, at my request, by the administration. So the bill remains 100 percent as drafted by the administration.

Again, the bill provides permanent status in the Marianas only, with no right of entry to any other part of the United States and no right to any public assistance, to a small group of people who have lived and worked in the Marianas, always lawfully present, since before U.S. immigration law was ever extended to our islands.

The Trump administration agrees. These individuals should be allowed to stay, but not by administrative fiat. They should be allowed to stay under the rule of law.

Today, I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass that law. Do as the administration advises. Vote "yes" on H.R. 559.

Mr. KEVIN HERN of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as has been documented, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands' workforce has historically been comprised of U.S. citizens as well as a nonimmigrant, temporary foreign population.

Until 2009, the CNMI controlled its own immigration policy for the foreign workforce. Today, the Department of Homeland Security manages the applications and eventual permits for any foreign people entering the Commonwealth for work. Since 2009, the transitional worker program was forward-looking, which left a certain portion of the existing foreign workforce that has resided and worked in the Commonwealth for many years in a gray area.

H.R. 559 is an approach to resolve any uncertainty for these long-term foreign workers. I thank the Governor of the Commonwealth, Ralph Torres, for his help and Mr. SABLÁN.

While the policy contained in this measure is fair for long-term foreign workers in the Mariana Islands, I am deeply disappointed that the majority did not consider this bill through regular order. Neither the Natural Resources Committee nor the Judiciary Committee, which received an additional referral of this bill, have acted on this measure—no hearings, no markups. It is my hope that the majority truly believes in following their rules that are supposed to provide for an open and transparent process because this bill did not meet that test.

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

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

I commend my colleague from the Northern Mariana Islands for so ably representing his people. As the Representative proudly representing Hawaii, I recognize him and his constituents as members of our Pacific Islands ohana, and I commend him also for working very closely with the adminis-

tration to get this bill right from both sides' perspectives. It is a truly bipartisan bill.

It is a necessary bill, and I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

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 Hawaii (Mr. CASE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 559, 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.

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#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

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□ 1830

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. TITUS) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

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#### REPORT ON H.R. 3055, COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2020

Mr. SERRANO, from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 116-101) on the bill (H.R. 3055) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020, and for other purposes, which was referred to the Union Calendar and ordered to be printed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1, rule XXI, all points of order are reserved on the bill.

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#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Motion to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 2157;

Motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 2940; and

Agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.