Additionally, this act serves as a deterrent for potential bad behavior in any government agency because the information database would ensure that bad behavior could not be hidden.

We work in an office of public trust, and the best way to ensure that the people trust us and listen to us, is to be as transparent as possible in any actions we take.

H.R. 300 helps the people to keep the government and check and hold us accountable.

By becoming transparent in how settlements are paid, taxpayers can be confident in how their money is being spent and what ways settlement agreements are impacting fiscal health.

It is important that we know the financial burden these settlements have on state and local governments.

The people deserve to be informed on where their money is being put and how that affects their communities and public services.

This way, when the people feel violated or that a community issue is not addressed, they can better advocate for themselves and participate in the democratic process.

As elected officials, our job is to make sure we are helping our constituents and advocating for their issues.

If we limit information, we are stopping our citizens from getting the help they need from us or understanding who they should hold accountable for a problem.

That would be a detriment to democracy.

H.R. 300 is necessary because it is an important step in creating government transparency which is crucial to the democratic process.

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I would say, in closing, that I was moved by what Mr. PALMER had to say, that democracy is based on consent, and consent is based on access, but there is no access if you don't have transparency.

I think about something that James Madison said: ''And a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power that knowledge gives.'' So people need to have knowledge of everything that our government is doing. We don't want government entities entering into secret, sweetheart settlements with different litigants. It has got to be open to the whole public.

Mr. Speaker, I thank him and I thank the chairman for bringing this forward, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I am happy we could expedite the Settlement Agreement Information Database Act's consideration today.

This Chamber has passed the SAID Act with broad support three separate times, in the 115th, 116th, and 117th Congresses. It is time the Senate acted on this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this necessary, bipartisan legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Settlement Agreement Information Database Act, which I'm co-leading with my colleague from Alabama, Mr. PALMER.

This bipartisan legislation was considered under suspension and agreed to in the House of Representatives by a voice vote in previous Congresses.

I am glad to note that the first couple of bills from the Oversight and Accountability Committee coming to the Floor in the 118th Congress are bipartisan measures.

That continues the tradition from the 117th Congress, when the first bill on the Floor from the Oversight Committee was the FedRAMP Authorization Act (117th), a bipartisan bill I wrote, co-led, and passed with now-Chairman JAMES COMER.

Federal settlement agreements, negotiated behind closed doors, cannot continue to be shrouded in secrecy when they directly affect States, municipalities, and local stakeholders.

The SAID Act bring these binding agreements into the light by requiring federal agencies to publicly publish their documents or provide the public with written justification to keep the records confidential.

Details of the settlement agreements would remain public until 5 years after the termination of the agreements.

Increased transparency and better intergovernmental collaboration help form the foundation of good government, and this bill is one more tool to ensure government accountability.

I am a former local government official who served on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for 14 years, including 5 years as Chairman.

I currently chair the Congressional Caucus on Former Local Elected Officials, and I have authorized legislation, the Restore the Partnership Act, which would revive the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations.

I am committed to enhancing the intergovernmental partnership, which often entails requiring the federal government to be more transparent and proactive in its relationship with local governments.

When it comes to settlement agreements that have the potential of tying the hands of local governments on everything from stormwater management to public education the default should be transparency.

I welcome this bipartisan legislation, urge my colleagues to support it, and ask the Senate to act on this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 300, 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. COMER. 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.

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 5 o'clock and 53 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

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

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:

Motions to suspend the rules and pass:

H.R. 159; and

H.R. 300; and

Agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

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.

CHANCE TO COMPETE ACT OF 2023

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 159) to implement merit-based reforms to the civil service hiring system that replace degree-based hiring with skills- and competency-based hiring, and for other purposes, as amended, 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 motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 422, nays 2, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 32]

YEAS—422

Adams	Bost	Cherfilus-McCormick
Aderholt	Bowman	Cicilline
Aguilar	Boyle (PA)	Ciscomani
Alford	Brecheen	Clark (MA)
Allen	Brown	Clarke (NY)
Allred	Brownley	Cleaver
Amodei	Buck	Cline
Armstrong	Bucshon	Cloud
Arrington	Budzinski	Clyburn
Auchincloss	Burchett	Clyde
Babin	Burgess	Cohen
Bacon	Burlison	Cole
Baird	Bush	Collins
Balderson	Calvert	Comer
Banks	Cammack	Connolly
Barr	Caraveo	Correa
Barragán	Carbajal	Costa
Bean (FL)	Cárdenas	Courtney
Beatty	Carey	Craig
Bentz	Carl	Crane
Bera	Carson	Crawford
Bergman	Carter (GA)	Crenshaw
Beyer	Carter (LA)	Crockett
Bice	Carter (TX)	Crow
Biggs	Cartwright	Cuellar
Bilirakis	Casar	Curtis
Bishop (GA)	Case	D'Esposito
Bishop (NC)	Casten	Davids (KS)
Blumenauer	Castor (FL)	Davidson
Blunt Rochester	Castro (TX)	Davis (IL)
Boebert	Chavez-DeRemer	