

Fund, which shall be conducted at least once every 3 years, unless the Chairman or the Ranking Member of the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate or the Secretary of the Senate requests that an audit be conducted at an earlier date.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ) and the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CHAFFETZ. 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 under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Government Accountability Office is a great aide to the United States Congress. They help by auditing and examining government programs and reporting its findings to Congress. They serve a valuable position in the work that we do.

The GAO is responsible for 102 recurring annual statutory mandates and receives over 700 additional requests each year. It's quite a demand on the resources that we've given them.

This bill eliminates or decreases the recurrence of several GAO reports and auditing requirements for eight Federal programs or commissions. In recent years, we've been asking GAO to do more with less, as we should; but GAO will become more efficient by reducing obligations that once served an important purpose but now needlessly consume its limited resources. Eliminating these mandates will also allow GAO to more quickly respond to Congressional requests for assistance. GAO handpicked these reports as overly burdensome with modest benefits, and the related committees of jurisdiction concur.

Senator CARPER introduced Senate bill S. 3315, the GAO Mandates Revision Act, in June of this year, and the measure passed the United States Senate by unanimous consent in September. We urge all of our colleagues to support this measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of the bill before us today. S. 3315 amends certain statutes which require the Government Accountability Office to submit annual audits or reports to Congress. While the annual reporting requirements previously mandated are no longer necessary, this bill will require GAO to report its findings to Congress on issues covered by the reports every 3 years. This requirement will provide GAO

with a more streamlined approach in reporting to Congress and will reduce the unnecessary costs and time spent to conduct annual audits or reports on these particular issues.

It is important to know that all the committees affected by this legislation have been consulted and have agreed to these changes. At a time when constituents are rightly demanding a more efficient government, now is the time to enact this legislation.

I thank the majority for bringing this bill to the floor and the Senate for passing the underlying measure. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I have no speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, we urge passage of S. 3315 introduced by Senator CARPER. It is a good, common-sense piece of legislation. The committees of jurisdiction concur. It is bipartisan in its approach. We urge its passage.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3315.

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.

D.C. COURTS AND PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICE ACT OF 2011

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1379) to amend title 11, District of Columbia Official Code, to revise certain administrative authorities of the District of Columbia courts, and to authorize the District of Columbia Public Defender Service to provide professional liability insurance for officers and employees of the Service for claims relating to services furnished within the scope of employment with the Service.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1379

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 “D.C. Courts and Public Defender Service Act of 2011”.

SEC. 2. AUTHORITIES OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS.

(a) PERMITTING JUDICIAL CONFERENCE ON BIENNIAL BASIS; ATTENDANCE OF MAGISTRATE JUDGES.—Section 11-744, District of Columbia Official Code, is amended—

(1) in the first sentence, by striking “annually” and inserting “biennially or annually”;

(2) in the first sentence, by striking “active judges” and inserting “active judges and magistrate judges”;

(3) in the third sentence, by striking “Every judge” and inserting “Every judge and magistrate judge”; and

(4) in the third sentence, by striking “Courts of Appeals” and inserting “Court of Appeals”.

(b) EMERGENCY AUTHORITY TO TOLL OR DELAY JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS.—

(1) PROCEEDINGS IN SUPERIOR COURT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of Chapter 9 of title 11, District of Columbia Official Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 11-947. Emergency authority to toll or delay proceedings.

“(a) TOLLING OR DELAYING PROCEEDINGS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In the event of a natural disaster or other emergency situation requiring the closure of Superior Court or rendering it impracticable for the United States or District of Columbia Government or a class of litigants to comply with deadlines imposed by any Federal or District of Columbia law or rule that applies in the Superior Court, the chief judge of the Superior Court may exercise emergency authority in accordance with this section.

“(2) SCOPE OF AUTHORITY.—(A) The chief judge may enter such order or orders as may be appropriate to delay, toll, or otherwise grant relief from the time deadlines imposed by otherwise applicable laws or rules for such period as may be appropriate for any class of cases pending or thereafter filed in the Superior Court.

“(B) The authority conferred by this section extends to all laws and rules affecting criminal and juvenile proceedings (including, pre-arrest, post-arrest, pretrial, trial, and post-trial procedures) and civil, family, domestic violence, probate and tax proceedings.

“(3) UNAVAILABILITY OF CHIEF JUDGE.—If the chief judge of the Superior Court is absent or disabled, the authority conferred by this section may be exercised by the judge designated under section 11-907(a) or by the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration.

“(4) HABEAS CORPUS UNAFFECTED.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.

“(b) CRIMINAL CASES.—In exercising the authority under this section for criminal cases, the chief judge shall consider the ability of the United States or District of Columbia Government to investigate, litigate, and process defendants during and after the emergency situation, as well as the ability of criminal defendants as a class to prepare their defenses.

“(c) ISSUANCE OF ORDERS.—The United States Attorney for the District of Columbia or the Attorney General for the District of Columbia or the designee of either may request issuance of an order under this section, or the chief judge may act on his or her own motion.

“(d) DURATION OF ORDERS.—An order entered under this section may not toll or extend a time deadline for a period of more than 14 days, except that if the chief judge determines that an emergency situation requires additional extensions of the period during which deadlines are tolled or extended, the chief judge may, with the consent of the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration, enter additional orders under this section in order to further toll or extend such time deadline.

“(e) NOTICE.—Upon issuing an order under this section, the chief judge—

“(1) shall make all reasonable efforts to publicize the order, including, when possible, announcing the order on the District of Columbia Courts Web site; and

“(2) shall send notice of the order, including the reasons for the issuance of the order, to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives.

“(f) REQUIRED REPORTS.—Not later than 180 days after the expiration of the last extension or tolling of a time period made by the order or orders relating to an emergency situation, the chief judge shall submit a brief report to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives, and the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration describing the orders, including—

- “(1) the reasons for issuing the orders;
- “(2) the duration of the orders;
- “(3) the effects of the orders on litigants; and
- “(4) the costs to the court resulting from the orders.

“(g) EXCEPTIONS.—The notice under subsection (e)(2) and the report under subsection (f) are not required in the case of an order that tolls or extends a time deadline for a period of less than 14 days.”.

(B) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of chapter 9 of title 11, District of Columbia Official Code, is amended by adding at the end of the items relating to subchapter III the following:

“11-947. Emergency authority to toll or delay proceedings.”.

(2) PROCEEDINGS IN COURT OF APPEALS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 7 of title 11, District of Columbia Official Code, is amended by adding at the end of the following new section:

“§ 11-745. Emergency authority to toll or delay proceedings.

“(a) TOLLING OR DELAYING PROCEEDINGS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In the event of a natural disaster or other emergency situation requiring the closure of the Court of Appeals or rendering it impracticable for the United States or District of Columbia Government or a class of litigants to comply with deadlines imposed by any Federal or District of Columbia law or rule that applies in the Court of Appeals, the chief judge of the Court of Appeals may exercise emergency authority in accordance with this section.

“(2) SCOPE OF AUTHORITY.—The chief judge may enter such order or orders as may be appropriate to delay, toll, or otherwise grant relief from the time deadlines imposed by otherwise applicable laws or rules for such period as may be appropriate for any class of cases pending or thereafter filed in the Court of Appeals.

“(3) UNAVAILABILITY OF CHIEF JUDGE.—If the chief judge of the Court of Appeals is absent or disabled, the authority conferred by this section may be exercised by the judge designated under section 11-706(a) or by the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration.

“(4) HABEAS CORPUS UNAFFECTED.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.

“(b) ISSUANCE OF ORDERS.—The United States Attorney for the District of Columbia or the Attorney General for the District of Columbia or the designee of either may request issuance of an order under this section, or the chief judge may act on his or her own motion.

“(c) DURATION OF ORDERS.—An order entered under this section may not toll or extend a time deadline for a period of more than 14 days, except that if the chief judge determines that an emergency situation requires additional extensions of the period during which deadlines are tolled or extended, the chief judge may, with the consent of the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration, enter additional orders under this section in order to further toll or extend such time deadline.

“(d) NOTICE.—Upon issuing an order under this section, the chief judge—

“(1) shall make all reasonable efforts to publicize the order, including, when possible, announcing the order on the District of Columbia Courts Web site; and

“(2) shall send notice of the order, including the reasons for the issuance of the order, to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives.

“(e) REQUIRED REPORTS.—Not later than 180 days after the expiration of the last extension or tolling of a time period made by the order or orders relating to an emergency situation, the chief judge shall submit a brief report to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives, and the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration describing the orders, including—

- “(1) the reasons for issuing the orders;
- “(2) the duration of the orders;
- “(3) the effects of the orders on litigants; and
- “(4) the costs to the court resulting from the orders.

“(f) EXCEPTIONS.—The notice under subsection (d)(2) and the report under subsection (e) are not required in the case of an order that tolls or extends a time deadline for a period of less than 14 days.”.

(B) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of chapter 7 of title 11, District of Columbia Official Code, is amended by adding at the end of the items relating to subchapter III the following:

“11-745. Emergency authority to toll or delay proceedings.”.

(c) PERMITTING AGREEMENTS TO PROVIDE SERVICES ON A REIMBURSABLE BASIS TO OTHER DISTRICT GOVERNMENT OFFICES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 11-1742, District of Columbia Official Code, is amended by adding at the end of the following new subsection:

“(d) To prevent duplication and to promote efficiency and economy, the Executive Officer may enter into agreements to provide the Mayor of the District of Columbia with equipment, supplies, and services and credit reimbursements received from the Mayor for such equipment, supplies, and services to the appropriation of the District of Columbia Courts against which they were charged.”.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall apply with respect to fiscal year 2010 and each succeeding fiscal year.

SEC. 3. LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICE.

Section 307 of the District of Columbia Court Reform and Criminal Procedure Act of 1970 (sec. 2-1607, D.C. Official Code) is amended by adding at the end of the following new subsection:

“(e) The Service shall, to the extent the Director considers appropriate, provide representation for and hold harmless, or provide liability insurance for, any person who is an employee, member of the Board of Trustees, or officer of the Service for money damages arising out of any claim, proceeding, or case at law relating to the furnishing of representational services or management services or related services under this Act while acting within the scope of that person's office or employment, including but not limited to such claims, proceedings, or cases at law involving employment actions, injury, loss of liberty, property damage, loss of property, or personal injury, or death arising from malpractice or negligence of any such officer or employee.”.

SEC. 4. REDUCTION IN TERM OF SERVICE OF JUDGES ON FAMILY COURT OF THE SUPERIOR COURT.

(a) REDUCTION IN TERM OF SERVICE.—Section 11-908A(c)(1), District of Columbia Offi-

cial Code, is amended by striking “5 years” and inserting “3 years”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to any individual serving as a judge on the Family Court of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CHAFFETZ. 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 materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, S. 1379 would grant the District of Columbia courts and Public Defender Service greater administrative flexibility in several areas.

First, it authorizes the D.C. Superior Court and the Court of Appeals to hold judicial conferences either annually or biennially, eliminating the current mandate that they always hold such conferences each and every year.

It requires magistrate judges to attend these judicial conferences.

It authorizes the D.C. courts to delay judicial deadlines in certain emergency situations such as a natural disaster.

It also allows the D.C. courts to be reimbursed by the D.C. government for certain office expenses, and it gives the D.C. Public Defender Service authority to purchase liability insurance for its attorneys, and changes the term for family court judges from 5 years to 3 years.

Nearly identical legislation was approved unanimously by the House in the 111th Congress. There is no expected cost associated with the legislation.

I would like to thank Senator AKAKA for sponsoring this bill and guiding its passage in the other body. I would also like to thank our colleague, Ms. NORTON, for her work in getting this legislation to the floor today. She cares passionately about D.C. and has nothing but its best interests at heart. We listen to that, we hear that, and in part, because of that, we support this legislation and encourage our colleagues to do the same.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank the gentleman from Utah for his kind remarks.

(Ms. NORTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. NORTON. I rise today in strong support of the D.C. Courts and Public Defender Service Act of 2011. I would like to thank Senator JOE LIEBERMAN, the chair of the Senate Homeland Security Committee, which has jurisdiction over the District of Columbia, and particularly Senator DANIEL AKAKA, the chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight and Government Management and the Senate sponsor of the bill, the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia for ushering the bill through subcommittee and committee and getting it passed by voice vote.

Both Senators LIEBERMAN and AKAKA are retiring this year. They each will leave rich legacies of accomplishment to the Nation, and both Senator LIEBERMAN and Senator AKAKA have always been good friends of the District of Columbia. They will be very much missed in both Chambers by all of us, I know, but particularly by the residents of the District of Columbia.

S. 1379 is an important bill for the administration of justice in the District of Columbia. It will allow the chief judge of the superior court or the court of appeals to delay judicial proceedings in the event of a natural disaster, terrorist attack, or other emergency. It is clear that the Nation's capital is at risk to such emergencies. Most recently, Hurricane Sandy, the unprecedented storm that devastated the east coast, and was expected to hit the District much harder than what actually occurred.

S. 1379 also allows the chief judge of the court of appeals to hold judicial conferences biennially rather than annually as required by current law.

□ 0930

This option is common sense, considering the increase in the use of electronic communication today and the significant cost savings involved.

The bill also allows the D.C. courts to enter into reimbursable agreements with the D.C. government for equipment, supplies, and other services, a measure to assure that reimbursement costs do not come from congressional appropriations.

The bill reduces the term of service, from 5 to 3 years, required of judges of the family court division of the superior court, a policy aimed at easing recruitment of able judges to the family court division.

In addition, the bill authorizes the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia, a federally funded government agency, to purchase professional liability insurance for its attorneys, staff, and board members, which is, of course, indispensable to all who practice law today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

I want to thank the gentleman from Utah for his work on this bill, and I particularly want to thank the chairman of the full committee, Mr. ISSA, who went to great lengths to make

sure that this bill, in fact, made the agenda of the Congress and who has been so important to understanding and making sure that particularly minor D.C. bills like this received quick treatment and, I must say, in addition to his work on very important bills for the District of Columbia that are still in progress like our budget autonomy bill.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, we urge passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 1379, the "The D.C. Courts and Public Defender Service Act of 2011," the purpose of which is to grant the District of Columbia (D.C.) Courts and Public Defender Service (PDS) greater administrative flexibility in several areas.

First, the bill authorizes the D.C. Superior Court and Court of Appeals to hold judicial conferences either annually or biennially, eliminating the current mandate that they always hold such conferences every year. Under S. 1379, magistrate judges are required to attend these judicial conferences.

Moreover, this bill authorizes the D.C. Courts to toll or delay judicial deadlines in certain emergency situations such as natural disasters, and allows the D.C. Courts to be reimbursed by the D.C. Government for certain office expenses.

Finally S. 1379 gives the D.C. Public Defender Service authority to purchase liability insurance for its attorneys and changes the term for Family Court judges from five years to three years.

Current law requires the D.C. Courts to hold a judicial conference annually "for the purpose of advising as to the means of improving the administration of justice within the District of Columbia."

Federal Courts, however, must hold a conference only every two years. The D.C. Courts have estimated that, in addition to the time spent by judicial personnel planning and attending the conference, they will spend approximately \$50,000 on the 2012 judicial conference.

We know that local governments, like D.C., are under tremendous budget constraints, and given Congress' Constitutionally-mandated duty to oversee the District, we should be solicitous to District concerns when it comes to what we require of its government, particularly where costs are concerned.

The requirement that D.C. Courts hold annual judicial conferences was enacted before 1975, long before the internet was created in addition to numerous other advances in communication.

D.C. Courts have determined that the funds, resources, and time required to prepare for and conduct such conferences would be more effectively used if the judicial conference were conducted biennially rather than annually.

With the significant improvement in the dissemination and exchange of information the D.C. Courts' judicial conference is no longer the primary means of obtaining advice pertaining to the administration of justice within D.C.

Specifically, the Courts have determined that electronic and other forms of communica-

tion, including the Courts' websites, enable them to regularly communicate with the various participants in the court system.

We should remove the burdensome requirement that D.C. Courts hold annual judicial conferences and, instead, require biannual conferences. Furthermore, despite their important role in the judicial system of the District, magistrate judges currently are not required to attend the D.C. Courts' judicial conference.

D.C. Court magistrate judges hear a variety of cases, including misdemeanor and traffic cases, criminal arraignments, small claims, child support orders, and protection orders.

The D.C. Courts have requested that magistrate judges be required to attend judicial conferences. Because of their importance to the judicial system, I believe that this request should be granted.

The D.C. Courts have also expressed concern with their inability to toll or delay judicial deadlines in the event of an emergency or terrorist attack.

For example, in recent years, snowstorms as well as Tropical Storm Sandy have resulted in devastation of the D.C. Metropolitan area, resulting in federal government closings.

To address this concern, S. 1379 authorizes the Chief Judges of the D.C. Court of Appeals and the D.C. Superior Court to toll or delay judicial proceedings in the event of natural disasters or emergency situations.

Emergency authority under this bill should be used sparingly, and only in extraordinary circumstances. Therefore, S. 1379 requires that if the emergency authority is used for 14 days or more, the Joint Judicial Committee must approve each extension and the courts must give Congress a written justification no later than 180 days after the expiration of the last extension granted.

Currently, there is no statutory authority to allow D.C. Courts, absent explicit authority from Congress, to enter into reimbursable agreements with anyone, including the D.C. government.

This is because the D.C. Home Rule Act prevents the obligation of funds without approval by an Act of Congress. To address this concern, S. 1379 modifies the D.C. Code to allow the D.C. Courts to enter into reimbursable agreements for certain office expenses.

Finally, unlike Federal public defender service organizations, D.C. Public Defender Service does not have explicit authority to purchase liability insurance for its attorneys; consequently, its attorneys are unable to protect themselves from potential lawsuits arising during the course of their official duties.

Individuals who provide professional advice and services, such as attorneys, typically carry liability insurance in order to offset the risks arising as a result of the advice or services they render.

To address this, S. 1379 provides the D.C. Public Defender Service explicit statutory authority to purchase professional liability insurance, allowing its staff to be protected from the financial risk of potential lawsuits by clients and others.

The accommodations sought by the D.C. Courts and Public Defender Service Act are reasonable and will ameliorate several deficiencies under current law. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to support S. 1379.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr.

CHAFFETZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1379.

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.

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 9 o'clock and 31 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1002

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK) at 10 o'clock and 2 minutes a.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

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

H.R. 3783. An act to provide for a comprehensive strategy to counter Iran's growing hostile presence and activity in the Western Hemisphere, and for other purposes.

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. 3677. An act to make a technical correction to the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973.

The message also announced that the Senate agreed to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2838. An act to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal years 2012 through 2015, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate recedes from its amendment of December 4, 2012, returned to the Senate by the House of Representatives on December 12, 2012 to the bill (H.R. 4310) "An Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 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."; and insists upon its amendment of December 12, 2012 to the above entitled bill and requests a conference with the House of Representatives on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. REED, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. NELSON (NE), Mr. WEBB, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. UDALL (CO), Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. MANCHIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr.

WICKER, Mr. BROWN (MA), Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. VITTER to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 4310, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Armed Services, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 4310) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 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, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the conference requested by the Senate.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to instruct at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mrs. Davis of California moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 4310 be instructed to agree to section 1249 of the Senate amendment (relating to a plan for promoting the security of Afghan women and girls during the security transition process).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

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

Five years ago, I led a congressional delegation of female Members to Afghanistan on Mother's Day to visit our troops and meet with Afghan women, and I've continued to participate in this trip every year since.

On that first trip, we flew to Qalat in the southwestern region of Afghanistan and met the Provincial Reconstruction Team and the women of the village they worked with. Like much of Afghanistan, Qalat is rural and impoverished. The women we met had the same aspirations of women across the globe: they seek to send their children to school and learn a trade in order to support themselves and their family.

During that first visit in 2008, the school headmaster told us stories of how acid was thrown into the faces of

several female students who attended the school. These young girls overcame enormous challenges in coming to school every day, but their desire to learn surmounted the obstacles they faced. And there, just like at home, we heard these young girls talk of being doctors and teachers and anything else that they could dream of.

Each year, we have continued to visit the women of Qalat, and their message remains clear and consistent: they need security for themselves and their families if they are going to succeed.

During these visits, we have seen slow but steady progress being made as security in the area has improved. This year, during our visit, instead of talking about wanting the kids to come to school and being fearful that their parents would keep them at home, the school headmaster spoke about the 4,000 students who are coming to school each day and the need for additional desks and supplies. What a tremendous turnaround in such a short period of time.

But, Mr. Speaker, steep challenges remain for women in Afghanistan. Security, especially for women, has been at the heart of the problem that needs to be addressed as we transition responsibility to Afghan forces. Just this week, we had a reminder of those security concerns.

On Monday, the Director of Women's Affairs was killed in the Laghman province. She replaced the previous director, who was also assassinated just 6 months ago. It is heartbreaking to hear of these female leaders being assassinated in an area that is trying so hard to move their people and their country forward. A country cannot disenfranchise nearly 50 percent of their population while seeking to achieve a strong prosperous economy.

The language included in the Senate bill is a step in the right direction. So many organizations have been active in the transformation of Afghanistan, and I would encourage my colleagues at the Department of Defense and the Department of State to ensure that this is a multi-pronged effort. We must involve all the entities, not only here in the United States and Afghanistan, but also in Pakistan and India, where women there understand the daily challenges that Afghan women face, and create opportunities for these groups to work together. It is the least that we can do to support the women of Afghanistan and leave their country with a sustainable path for stability.

But, Mr. Speaker, this is more than the security of women and their ability to prosper in Afghanistan. It is also about our military servicemembers. Women on Provincial Reconstruction Teams have worked hard to help the women of Afghanistan, and members of the Female Engagement Teams have been tremendous role models for young Afghan children.

Our brave military men and women have sacrificed so much in Afghanistan, and to leave without the ability