

levels—much higher than they should be. The fact is, we need to reform this program—and we need to encourage work. The 1996 welfare-reform law brought millions of children out of poverty. By strengthening work requirements in SNAP, we can build on the bipartisan work started in the 1990s and reduce poverty. This farm bill is a missed opportunity. Despite making modest changes, the legislation doesn't pursue real reform.

I want to commend Chairman LUCAS for bringing good ideas to the table. But I'm afraid this bill has serious flaws, and therefore I must vote no.

IN HONOR OF THE STATE OF
WEST VIRGINIA'S SESQUICENTENNIAL

HON. DAVID B. MCKINLEY

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 20, 2013

Mr. MCKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 150th birthday of West Virginia's statehood. As a seventh generation West Virginian, I am proud of the special history of the Mountain State.

On June 20, 1863, West Virginia became the 35th state in the country. While the Civil War divided the nation, few states faced more internal strife because of the conflict than Virginia. Bitter relations between eastern and western Virginians had been growing for years before the Civil War as people living in both regions were divided geographically, culturally, economically and politically. After Virginia voted to secede from the Union on April 17, 1861, people living in western Virginia pushed for the creation of a new state by formally petitioning President Abraham Lincoln for statehood.

A public referendum on the issue of statehood passed on October 24, 1861, and a constitutional convention held in my hometown of Wheeling in February 1862 produced a constitution that was intensely debated, with one controversial issue being the emancipation of slaves. The first draft of the new state constitution was not well received by the U.S. Senate because it contained no emancipation clause, so the Willey Amendment, which called for the gradual emancipation of slaves, was added. It apparently worked. The measure passed by a vote of 23 to 17. After another contentious debate, the measure passed the House on December 10, 1862, by a vote of 96 to 55.

In late December 1862, President Lincoln turned to his Cabinet for advice on whether the legislation that would create the state of West Virginia was constitutional. He received contradictory opinions, and no consensus. Lincoln agonized over his decision and weighed arguments from both sides before announcing his decision. On New Year's Eve 1862 he signed the bill that gave birth to West Virginia.

It was a controversial decision that scholars continue to debate to this day, mainly because the petition for statehood was approved by the government representing the territory that would become West Virginia and not the territory that would remain Virginia. Lincoln recognized the questionable nature of the state's creation, noting that "a measure made expedient by a war, is no precedent for times of

peace." But he said he signed the bill because he could not afford to lose the support of loyal West Virginians.

"Her brave and good men regard her admission into the Union as a matter of life and death," the president said in his written opinion. "They have been true to the Union under very severe trials.

"We have so acted as to justify their hopes; and we cannot fully retain their confidence, and cooperation, if we seem to break faith with them."

After the Civil War, the new state experienced an era of unprecedented industrial development with burgeoning industries based on its rich natural resources—coal, oil, natural gas and timber—along with the construction of hundreds of miles of new railroads that helped to open up the Mountain State to trade with the world. By the turn of the century, West Virginia had grown to become a significant contributor to the nation's industrialization and expansion.

While the state remains a leader in energy, it also is a global supplier of chemicals and a national hub for biotech industries. Its diverse economy now includes aerospace, automotive, healthcare and education, metals and steels, media and telecommunications, manufacturing, hospitality, biometrics, forestry, and tourism.

West Virginia also is a great place for outdoor recreation with 32 state parks, Alpine and Nordic ski areas, whitewater rafting, and other attractions, such as The Greenbrier resort in White Sulphur Springs and the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve in Glen Jean. The state's beautiful mountains, lakes and rivers, low crime rate, and other lifestyle factors continue to draw tourists and retirees alike.

From its difficult beginnings until today, West Virginians have remained "true to the Union," as Lincoln said. More than 500,000 West Virginians have answered the call of duty since the Revolutionary War. More than 10,000 West Virginians have given their lives in combat, and the state, though only 1.8 million strong, leads the country in the number of military veterans per capita.

As the only state born of the Civil War and the only state formed by presidential decree, West Virginia proudly celebrates its sesquicentennial.

LETTER TO THE SPEAKER URGING
THE CREATION OF A HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE TERRORIST ATTACK ON THE U.S. CONSULATE IN BENGHAZI, LIBYA

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 20, 2013

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I submit a copy of my June 19, 2013 letter again urging the creation of a bipartisan Select Committee to investigate the terrorist attack on the U.S. consulate and annex in Benghazi last September.

There are only five legislative weeks left before the one-year anniversary of the attacks. Yet there remain too many unanswered questions resulting from too few public hearings with key witnesses who were present the night of the attack.

That's why 158 Members have cosponsored H. Res. 36 to create a Select Committee to conduct a full investigation with public hearings. The Select Committee has also been endorsed by family members of the Benghazi victims, more than 700 retired Special Operations officials and the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association.

I urge the prompt creation of a Select Committee to ensure the American people learn the truth.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

June 19, 2013.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives,
The Capitol.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: The American people are losing confidence in their government. The tragedy in Benghazi, along with a stream of recent controversies, including the IRS and the Justice Department's targeting of reporters at Fox News and the Associated Press, as well as the ambiguity about recently disclosed programs at the National Security Agency, are eroding public trust in the institutions of government.

This diminishing of public confidence isn't limited to the Executive Branch. Congress' approval rating is at an all-time low. A June 14 National Journal article said, "Nearly 8 in 10 Americans told Gallup pollsters this month that they disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job, the 45th consecutive month that more than two-thirds of Americans graded Congress poorly. The problem isn't as much what Congress is doing as what it is not getting done." I believe most Americans would agree that one of the items "not getting done" is a thorough, comprehensive and ultimately definitive investigation into the response to the Benghazi attacks.

That is why I have been pushing so hard for a bipartisan Select Committee to investigate the September 11, 2012 terrorist attack in Benghazi. The response among most of our colleagues and the public has been overwhelming. Since January, when I proposed including the Select Committee in the House Rules package for the 113th Congress, more than two-thirds of House Republicans—a majority of the majority—have cosponsored my bill, H. Res. 36, to create the Select Committee. Since that time, there has been a growing chorus of support. The bill has been endorsed by the parents of some of the victims, by more than 700 retired Special Operations officials, by the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Associations, which represents the State Department security officers who were on the ground in Benghazi, and by The Wall Street Journal editorial page in addition to dozens of other commentators, former diplomats and military officials. I believe this broad support speaks to the public's hunger for clear answers on Benghazi—answers which to date have been elusive. That is why more than nine months after the devastating attack, my resolution continues to add new cosponsors; it now has the support of 158 Republicans.

I recognize that "regular order" has made some progress over the last six months; most notably Chairman Issa's constructive hearing with several State Department whistleblowers. I also understand that Chairman McKeon has planned a hearing with Gen. Carter Ham for next week, but like so many of these hearings, this, too, will be held behind closed doors. There is no reason Gen. Ham's testimony shouldn't be public. This latest classified hearing is symptomatic of a broader problem with respect to the current congressional approach to investigating Benghazi: Too much has been done in a piecemeal fashion, behind closed doors,