

Mr. LATHAM. Objection.

The CHAIR. Objection is heard.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Chair, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentlewoman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Chair, if I had an opportunity to offer my amendment today, an amendment that passed with the support of both parties in last year's T-HUD appropriations bill, I would raise the fact that the Department of Housing and Urban Development, in many communities across the country, has taken a step back from their mission.

They have a very important mission when it comes to homelessness among veterans, ensuring affordable housing partnerships, and combating the foreclosure crisis.

Still, last year, we were disserved by the leadership at the Department when they closed a number of field offices all across the country, including the field office in the Tampa Bay area, that I represent, and in the Orlando area.

Now, Florida has a population of almost 20 million people. We have 1.5 million veterans, and it is estimated that about 8,000 of them are homeless. We have 47,000 people in Florida that are battling homelessness, and our foreclosure rate is still too high. Nearly 9 percent of all Florida homes with mortgages are in some state of foreclosure.

So it was very disturbing last year when HUD pulled back on the ground, closed community offices in Tampa and Orlando. In fact, they shut down 16 field offices. The problem was that they didn't consult Congress, as they were supposed to. They came, they talked with us, but they didn't really allow us any adequate input.

I encourage the leaders, like the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. PASTOR), who has been on this issue, to continue this dialogue with the Department and the U.S. Senate in conference.

My amendment would have cut the executive office budget of HUD here in Washington, D.C., by \$3.5 million and, instead, devoted those funds back to our local communities to fight homelessness among veterans, foreclosures, and the other challenges we face.

The shift of these dollars out of D.C. to our local communities would have sent a very strong message. You know, those field offices, especially the one I had in the Tampa Bay area, was a critical access point for my neighbors and for many of the community's non-profits.

We are being hurt by their decision, and all my amendment would have done—and I hope this dialogue will continue—is ensure that the Department remains focused on backing up what they said that they would do to ensure that our local communities would not be hurt by taking away people on the ground that interact on an everyday basis with the people we represent.

So at this time, I want to thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. PASTOR)

for his involvement in this issue and urge everyone involved in the negotiations to emphasize the importance of having HUD focused on their mission on the ground in our neighborhoods, in our cities and towns and not on the bureaucracy here in Washington, D.C.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent that we go back to page 70 for the purpose of offering an amendment.

The CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

Mr. LATHAM. There is an objection.

The CHAIR. Objection is heard.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from North Carolina is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Chairman, if I would have been able to offer my amendment today, it would have clarified an existing Federal highway priority corridor between Raleigh, North Carolina, and Norfolk, Virginia.

It would have also codified the corridor as a future interstate highway. This designation, Mr. Chairman, could eventually improve transportation and commerce and economic development in North Carolina and Virginia.

Eastern North Carolina, Mr. Chairman, remains one of the poorest areas in the country, despite the economic resurgence many other areas of the country have seen. My amendment, if it had been made in order, would enable future construction between Raleigh and Norfolk to build on an existing corridor where half of the route already meets Federal freeway standards.

Improving on existing infrastructure can save taxpayer money and help expedite the project's completion.

Mr. Chairman, I urge colleagues in future debates to consider this request.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BROUN of Georgia) having assumed the chair, Mr. HOLDING, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4745) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

□ 1600

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to sus-

pend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

#### URGING AFGHANISTAN TO PURSUE A TRANSPARENT, CREDIBLE, AND INCLUSIVE RUN-OFF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 600) urging the Government of Afghanistan, following a successful first round of the presidential election on April 5, 2014, to pursue a transparent, credible, and inclusive run-off presidential election on June 14, 2014, while ensuring the safety of voters, candidates, poll workers, and election observers.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

#### H. RES. 600

Whereas on April 5, 2014, the Government of Afghanistan held the first round of the presidential election in which voter participation was 60 percent;

Whereas on May 15, 2014, Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission (IEC) certified the results, and announced that a run-off election would be held on June 14, 2014, because no candidate received more than 50 percent of the votes;

Whereas on May 14, 2014, the IEC invalidated votes from 331 polling stations and removed them from the final tabulation, based on Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) decisions;

Whereas there have been widespread reports of voter and election monitor intimidation, including the killing of members of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) during an attack at the Serena Hotel in Kabul on March 20, 2014, as well as attempts to bribe members of the IEC, the ECC, and other election monitoring organizations;

Whereas investigations by the ECC, and its coordination with the IEC, have not been conducted in a transparent manner;

Whereas 17 members of the Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF) were killed in Taliban and insurgent attacks while supporting the April 5, 2014, elections;

Whereas the United States and Afghanistan signed the Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement to strengthen Afghan sovereignty, stability, and prosperity, while emphasizing a shared goal to defeat al-Qaeda and its terrorist affiliates;

Whereas United States and coalition armed forces have greatly contributed to the stability and security of Afghanistan at a considerable personal sacrifice; and

Whereas the United States has contributed more than \$100,000,000 toward the 2014 Afghan presidential election: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends the Government of Afghanistan for holding a successful first round of the presidential election and expresses strong support for a credible, inclusive, and transparent second round on June 14, 2014;

(2) supports the mandate of Afghan electoral bodies such as the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) to administer, adjudicate, and manage polls, as well