where there is smoke, there is fire. Mr. Speaker, I am here to tell you that there is a fire threatening our Republic.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake about it: Russia attacked our country when it tried to meddle in our elections. But we have a Commander in Chief who will barely acknowledge this act, much less condemn it.

Mr. Speaker, we hear tough talk from the President when it comes to Iran, North Korea, and China; but when Russia violates its obligations of treaty obligations, when a Russian spy ship patrols just outside our coastal waters, we hear crickets. As evidence mounts that Russia is interfering with the democracies of Europe, we hear crickets. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, this President sees no moral difference between our democracy and the Putin regime.

Mr. Speaker, there is smoke; there is fire. Our Republic is being threatened. We are the first responders, and we can only put this fire out with the truth. We need to establish an independent commission to investigate the Trump-Russia ties and find our way to the truth.

COMMEMORATING 20 YEARS OF THE GLUCK FELLOWS PROGRAMS OF THE ARTS

(Mr. TAKANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate 20 years of the Gluck Fellows Program of the Arts at the University of California, Riverside. Since 1996, the Max H. Gluck Foundation has supported undergraduate and graduate students as they bring innovative arts programming to schools, libraries, and community centers in my district.

The Gluck Fellows Program of the Arts has provided students, families, and other community members with the opportunity to experience art, music, dance, theater, and art history through workshops and performances. Over the past 20 years, more than 300,000 Inland Empire residents have benefited from this program.

I congratulate UCR’s Chancellor Kim Wilcox; Dean of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Milagros Pena; Gluck Fellows Director Erika Suderburg; and especially the Max H. Gluck Foundation and its chair, Dr. Jon Kaswick.

I wish continued success to the Gluck Fellows Program of the Arts at the University of California, Riverside.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:


HON. PAUL D. RYAN, THE SPEAKER, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 29, 2017, at 9:20 a.m.:

Appointments:
Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,
KAREN L. HAAS.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1431, EPA SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD REFORM ACT OF 2017

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 233 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk reads the resolution, as follows:

H. Res. 233
Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 1431) to amend the Environmental Research, Development, and Demonstration Authorization Act of 1978 to provide for Scientific Advisory Board member qualifications, public participation, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology; and (2) one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Washington is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. McGovern), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, the House Rules Committee met and reported a rule, House Resolution 233, providing for consideration of H.R. 1431, the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017. This legislation will reform the Environmental Protection Agency, or the EPA, Science Advisory Board to ensure that it is unbiased and transparent in performing its duties.

The SAB, the Science Advisory Board, was first established by Congress in 1978 and plays a vital role in reviewing the scientific foundation of EPA’s regulatory decisions, while also providing critical advice to us here in Congress as well as agencies like the Department of Energy. Information it reviews is meant to justify important policy decisions at the EPA and should be held to the highest standards because it is imperative that the regulated community and the public can have confidence that EPA decisions are grounded, that science should be both reproducible and transparent.

However, shortcomings with the current process have arisen in recent years, including limited public participation, EPA interference with expert advice, potential conflicts of interest, and serious deficiencies with the process to select the board members. Far too often, the SAB’s authority has been used by the EPA to silence dissenting scientists’ views and opinions, rather than promoting the impartiality and fairness that is the cornerstone of unbiased scientific advice.

At its inception, the SAB was intended to function independently in order to provide candid advice and guidance to the EPA. Yet, if the Agency undermines this autonomy, then the SAB’s value to both the EPA and Congress, I believe, is severely diminished.

Mr. Speaker, to address these issues, H.R. 1431 would reform the SAB and reaffirm its independence so the public and regulated entities can have that confidence that sound science is driving policy decisions at the EPA.

The bill makes several important reforms to the SAB, such as requiring board members to be qualified experts; disclosing conflicts of interest and sources of bias; and ensuring that the views of members, including the dissenting members, are available to the public. It provides the public with the opportunity to participate in the advisory activities of the board and gives people the ability to view the agency’s responses to issues raised by the SAB. Additionally, the bill requires that at least 10 percent of the board is comprised of State, local, and tribal experts; that board members do not participate in advisory activities that involve reviews or evaluations of their own work; and that EPA publicly disclose all board member recusals; and that reports are published in the Federal Register.

So these reforms will improve the existing regulatory process, while also reinvigorating the scientific judgements that are often directly linked to regulatory decisions.

The EPA relies on SAB reviews and studies to support new regulations, new standards, assessments, and other Agency actions. A transparent and accountable Science Advisory Board is critically important because it can assure the public that the data that Federal agencies rely on is scientifically sound and unbiased.
This legislation would reinforce that the SAB process is a tool to help policymakers with complex issues, while also preventing the EPA from taking actions that impede the free flow of impartial scientific advice.

Mr. Speaker, this rule provides for consideration of an important measure that will improve the peer review process and ensure sound science is used in the Federal rulemaking process. It is a simple, relatively straightforward bill that will make the SAB more consistent, transparent, and accountable to our bosses, the American people.

Transparency in regulations based on the highest quality science should not be a partisan issue. In the 114th Congress, a nearly identical version of this bill was passed by the House. I am glad to say, with bipartisan support. I hope we can join together again to pass this important bill with support from Members of both sides of the aisle, from both parties.

I urge my colleagues to support this rule as well as the underlying legislation.

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

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

Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Newhouse), my good friend, for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this rule and the underlying legislation. This is the 23rd closed rule of this short, new Congress. Both Democrats and Republicans have been denied the opportunity to amend nearly 60 percent of the legislation that has been brought to the floor through the House Rules Committee.

This effort by Speaker Ryan and the Republican leadership to halt a fair and open debate in the people’s House is outrageous. We are supposed to be a deliberative body where both parties get to deliberate. These Putinesque rules that shut down all debate need to stop. This isn’t the Kremlin.

You know, I think Representative Rooney, a Republican, said it best last week: “I’ve been in this job for 8 years, and I’m wracking my brain to think of one thing our party has done that’s been positive. That’s been something other than stopping something else from happening.”

Well, Mr. Speaker, today we are considering a piece of legislation that seeks to prevent the EPA from protecting public health and the environment—not exactly positive.

This bill was brought to the Rules Committee in an emergency meeting last night. And let me emphasize that, an emergency meeting.

Mr. Speaker, I think the American people have a pretty good idea of what is and what isn’t an emergency. A tree falls on your house, that is an emergency. Your rose bush needs pruning, not an emergency. Timmy fell down a well, that is an emergency. Timmy might stub his toe, not an emergency.

On April 28, the government will run out of money. That is an emergency, even if it is self-inflicted by the Republican Party. And in the wake of other actual emergencies that we should be dealing with: a devastating opioid epidemic, crumbling roads and bridges, mounting evidence of Russian meddling in our election, and people being killed every day due to gun violence. So, Mr. Speaker, the EPA is still dealing with the residual health effects of toxically polluted water.

These are just a few examples of actual emergencies that Congress is doing nothing to address. Instead, the underlying bill, the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act, is brought to the Rules Committee and to the House floor as an emergency piece of legislation.

As we learned last week, the American people are paying attention to what we do here. They are smart enough to know what an emergency is. And this bill isn’t addressing an emergency, Mr. Speaker; it is creating one.

The Science Advisory Board at the EPA is an agency to use sound, independent, and objective scientific data to help make their decisions. Science, Mr. Speaker—you may have heard of it—is kind of a big deal.

But this bill won’t help the EPA to include more scientists in the decisions. It will force them to include people with potential financial conflicts of interest on the Science Advisory Board so long as they disclose them. I mean, do we really want people on our advisory boards if they could profit from a decision that they are about to make? There is nothing scientific about corruption, and this is exactly what this bill will open the door to.

This bill also limits the participation of scientists at the EPA, leading to a disproportionate representation of big business and corporate special interests. Are these really the people we want making decisions about the health of our kids and the policies that should be protecting our environment? Is that what we want?

So what is this bill really about? Well, it is about allowing the Republicans’ big corporate cronies a direct route to the decisionmakers at the EPA, leading to a disproportionate representation of big business and corporate special interests. Are these really the people we want making decisions about the health of our kids and the policies that should be protecting our environment? Is that what we want?

This law is going to have real-life consequences. It undermines science, hurts the environment, and it helps polluters. We need to ensure that EPA is always free from financial conflicts, not making decisions based on fact. We need to ensure that EPA is always free from financial conflicts, not making decisions based on panels filled with industry insiders like the ones that this bill would create.

Mr. Speaker, this bill defies logic. It defies reason. It defies sanity. It will hurt the people who sent us here, and it will help polluters. Republicans are putting corporate greed ahead of public health, and the American people will be the ones who will suffer. Americans deserve better. We should be fighting on behalf of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell my Republican friends what I tell first graders that I talk to back in my district in Massachusetts, something our schools. I usually begin by telling them that science is important. It is a big deal, and it is such a big deal that all our schools teach it. And if you do your homework and if you study hard and if you pay attention, you might grow up someday to become a scientist, and scientists are people who dedicate their lives to protecting the health and well-being of people all over the world, and they dedicate their lives to protecting our planet.

Scientists tell us things that are really important. They tell us things like climate change is caused by greenhouse gases, something my Republican friends continually deny. They tell us that polluted air can give children asthma. They tell us that lead in children’s drinking water causes learning problems. They tell us pesticide exposure can cause cancer. These are important things.

My students learn in school, thanks to science, that the Earth orbits around the Sun, that gravity causes this pen to fall when I drop it, that plants turn sunshine into energy, that dinosaurs roamed the Earth millions of years ago.

Mr. Speaker, the first graders I talk to, they get it. They understand the importance of science. Unfortunately, many of my colleagues in this Chamber do not. And I would bet that those first graders understand the importance of making sure that it is scientists who sit on scientific advisory boards and not corporate cronies.

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

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

I appreciate the gentleman’s comments. In fact, some of those comments he was making I thought he was quoting me, or at least quoting parts of my own speech.

Certainly, I agree that the decisions made by the Environmental Protection Agency should be based on fact, not by industry insiders, and that is exactly
what this legislation would do. I can’t think of any instance where asking for more full public participation as well as transparency is not a positive step, and that is exactly what we are trying to do here.

In reference to the number of closed rules that we have had this year, let me just remind the good gentleman that 15 out of the 23 closed rules were actually the Congressional Review Act, the CRAs that we have been working on. They are prescribed to be a closed rule. That is the nature of a CRA.

So I would think that, in the good gentleman’s estimation of this bill and all the negative things that could potentially come of it, that we should be able to come to some bipartisan agreement on this, especially considering the political climate that we are in today, the occupant of the White House today, certainly in Republican hands, and I would think our friends on the Democratic side of the aisle would be very concerned about ensuring an unbiased source of information that comes from the SAB to give to the EPA in making their important decisions. This, I would think, would be a good idea for both sides of the aisle, no matter who is in the White House, and I would agree that it is.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WEBER), my good friend.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I do rise today in support of H.R. 1430, and I want to say to the gentleman that we were just given from the other side on what an emergency is.

I would remind my good friend on the other side that, on November 8, 2016, the Americans stood up and said: We have an emergency. We need to change directions. And they elected Donald Trump to be President to do just that. So that is a good reminder.

Mr. Speaker, our constituents have a right to know whether or not EPA regulations are based on sound science and if they benefit the American people.

Keeping in the vein with what I just said, we have a better way. Speaker PAUL RYAN has put out his plan for A Better Way. Donald Trump has been elected for that better way. The American people deserve a better way.

This is called the HONEST Act, which I am proud to be a co-sponsor of. It is a better way. It is simple and straightforward. It is a message to govern- ment bureaucrats they cannot pro- pose costly new regulations without providing sufficient transparency. As my good friend from Washington said: Why would anybody be opposed to transparency and a right for the American public to know?

Opponents of this bill apparently think Americans do not deserve to know the truth, not to mention the “science” behind EPA burdensome reg- ulations.

Trust me when I say Americans de- serve the truth from the very start.

Mr. Speaker, EPA’s regulatory agenda should not require secret science, much less 30-year-old data, in order to sell it to the American people. The other side likes to claim that there are a lot of scientists behind this climate change theory, but they won’t release that data.

So what are they hiding behind?

By the way, I remember Mark Twain said that sometimes the majority sim- ply means that all the fools are on one side.

Mr. Speaker, it is long past time for Congress to increase the transparency of the EPA. This HONEST Act will do exactly that by prohibiting the EPA from proposing or finalizing regulations based upon data that is either outdated, it is not transparent, nor is it publicly available for review.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman SMITH for bringing this important leg- islation to the floor today, and I thank the fine gentleman from Washington State (Mr. NEWHOUSE).

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for his speech, but it was on a different bill than the one we are talking about right now. That was the rule we debated yesterday. The rule passed, but we are going to be talking about it today. So I was a little con- fused trying to follow the gentleman.

I also want to remind the gentleman that he mentioned Donald Trump’s election. I will remind him that less than half of the people of the United States actually voted for him. Hillary won the popular vote by close to 3 million. The gentleman keeps on talking about a better way, a better way, a better way.

Was that what was on display last week when we spent 15 hours in the Rules Committee debating a repeal- and-replace bill on health care that virtually 100 American people thought was worth it and that had to be pulled because it was such a lousy process?

If that is the better way, I don’t think people want anything to do with it.

I would say to the gentleman, my colleague, Mr. NEWHOUSE, who is talk- ing about trying to justify the closed process and saying that some of these bills were CRAs, just repealing regula- tions, well, my friends close to bring up these repeal regulation bills under a very closed process. Interestingly enough, these rules were made under a very open process where agencies solic- ited input from stakeholders and from the public, and it was all out in the open. But the Republicans chose to bring measures to the floor to repeal regulations in such a way that that agency can’t even go back and revisit the same subject of that particular reg- ulation.

I think people need to understand this. I don’t think I can ever recall a more closed, authoritarian process than the one that we have experienced under this leadership. This is not only something that I know Democrats have a problem with; I know a lot of Repub- licans do, too, because what this closed process means is that anybody with a good idea can’t bring it to the floor and can’t have an opportunity to debate the issue.

It was funny last night in the Rules Committee, my colleague from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) was kind of crowing about the fact that no amendments were brought before the Rules Committee. I reminded him the reason why no amendments were brought before the Rules Committee is because this bill was noticed as an emergency and there was no call for amendments.

Members weren’t asked to bring their ideas or their amendments to the Rules Committee. This would be laughable if it weren’t so tragic. I would say to my colleagues that it is this same closed process that brought us this disastrous health repeal bill that my friends had to pull last week that is on display today. When you have a lousy process, you end up with lousy legislation.

This is the people’s House. We are supposed to deliberate, and here is a radical idea: let us deliberate a little bit. Open it up. Open it up a little bit. Let there be some amendments on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to vote “no” on the previous question. If we defeat the previous question, I will bring to the floor an amendment, which I am going to talk about right now because, Mr. Speaker, we are deep- ly concerned by reports from our intel- ligence community regarding Russian interference in last year’s election and even more troubled by FBI Director Comey’s sworn testimony that the FBI is now investigating the possibility of collaboration between members of Presi- dent Trump’s campaign team and Rus- sia.

Mr. Speaker, the legitimacy of our electoral system is at stake, and it is time that this Republican-controlled Congress does its job and gets to the bottom of this. Unfortunately, recent actions by the House Intelligence Com- mittee chairman have left many Mem- bers from both sides of the aisle con- vinced that the committee will not be able to conduct an impartial investiga- tion of this crucial matter of national security.

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amend- ment to the rule to bring up Represent- ative SWALWELL’s and Representative CUMMINGS’ bill, which would create a bipartisan commission to investigate Russian interference in our 2016 elec- tion. For the life of me I don’t know why this is controversial. My col- leagues on the Republican side should be just as interested in getting to the truth and getting to the truth in a way that has credibility with the American people as we on the Democratic side do.
Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Fahrenthold). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts? There was no objection.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) to discuss our proposal.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my distinguished friend from Massachusetts, and I also thank his able staff for the incredible work they are doing.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the bill before us, the EPA Science Advisory Board, but also I want to talk about Mr. McGOVERN’s amendment on Russia.

They actually are linked because the last time a great power decided to deny science-based policy and to actually dictate politically what was science and what wasn’t was Stalin’s Soviet Russia. A famous scientist named Lysek turned out to be a fraud artist. But for 30 years, his thinking dominated Soviet science to the detriment of the Soviet people. It actually led to a famine in Ukraine, killing millions of people because he insisted on his political brand of agricultural science which wasn’t science at all.

My friend from Massachusetts I think is wrong when he asks: What is the emergency? I don’t think he understands that, from the Republican point of view, science mixed with public policy is an emergency. We have to do something about it.

The world was created 4,273 years ago and carbon dating is a fraud. As your coastal areas are under water, think about the comfort of Republican philosophy: It is just a theory, and disputable at that. By the way, let’s defund any research on it. Let’s back out of our commitments. Let’s be the only major nation in the world that denies that climate change is real and is going to affect us in almost every aspect of our lives moving forward, including our children and their children.

We owe them better. That is the emergency. God forbid the Environmental Protection Agency have policies and regulations that are science-based. God forbid we look at empirical research to guide us in making thoughtful policies to protect the public. God forbid we look at the science of lead and other toxins in water supplies, let’s say $7 million in Flint, Michigan. Just today they announced a $100 million settlement. That anti-scientific decision, that political decision, put the people of Flint, Michigan, at risk, and it is now going to cost $100 million to fix.

That is the consequence of an anti-empirical philosophy, and that will be the consequence of polluting this board with corporations and corporate representatives who are guilty of polluting in the first place. Of course, they won’t welcome regulation of their own respective industries, and the Republicans are their enablers. That is what is going to happen if this bill passes.

With respect to Russia, each day there are more troubling revelations that make clear that senior-level Trump officials had undisclosed contact with Russian officials about the transition, and about sanctions. National Security Adviser Michael Flynn was fired after only 3 weeks on the job for lying about this very thing to the Vice President of the United States. Attorney General Jeff Sessions had to recuse himself from any Russian probe because of compromised testimony at his nomination hearing. FBI Director James Comey confirmed an investigation into the Trump campaign’s possible collusion with Russian officials.

What has been the most visible reaction from my friends on the other side of the aisle in this Congress? The frenetic behavior of the Intelligence Committee that has seemingly compromised the committee’s ability to investigate. That ought not to be about partisan politics. It ought to be about restoring congressional independence and integrity, one of our most cherished democratic institutions; in fact, the most cherished, a free election without foreign interference.

So I support Mr. McGOVERN’s potential amendment that will also oppose the previous question.

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

As we get back to the bill at hand, I think it is important that there are a lot of important topics out there that people want to touch on, and that is still well and good. Just like my friend from Texas, a fine member of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, brought up politics is important and that relate to what we are talking about here today, and I think that is important as well.

But I think I see an underlying theme here. We all agree on one thing: we want the EPA to use science. We want public participation. We want and we need transparency.

This is certainly a positive step in a bill, Mr. Speaker, that went through regular order, that was introduced with bipartisan support, that went through the markup process, and that was reported out without amendments, something that this body in the last Congress passed, I believe, in a bipartisan fashion.

Just to underscore the importance of taking this important step—and let me underscore again—no matter which side of the aisle you are on, it is important that we do this because of who you think is the right person or the wrong person sitting in the White House, it is important that the EPA has an unbiased source of information in order for it to make its decisions.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a news release from the American Chemistry Council.

[From the American Chemistry Council, March 9, 2017]

ACC SUPPORTS LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE EPA SCIENCE

WASHINGTON.—The American Chemistry Council (ACC) issued the following statement in support of the H.R. 1431, the “Honest and Open New EPA Science Treatment Act of 2017” introduced by Congressman Lamar Smith (R-TX) and H.R. 1431 “EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017,” introduced by Congressman Frank Lucas (R-OK).

“Consistency and transparency are key to the regulatory certainty our industry needs to thrive and create jobs. In some instances, EPA has fallen short of employing the highest-quality, best-available science in their regulatory decision making.

“It is critical that the regulated community and the public have confidence that decisions reached by EPA are grounded in transparent and reproducible science. By ensuring that the EPA utilizes high-quality science and shares underlying data used to reach decisions, the HONEST Act can help foster a regulatory environment that will allow the U.S. business chemistry to continue to develop safe, innovative products that Americans depend on in their everyday lives.”

“The Science Advisory Board Reform Act would improve the peer review process—a critical component of the scientific process used by EPA in their regulatory decisions about potential risks to human health or the environment. The Act would make peer reviewers accountable for responding to public comment, strengthen policies to address conflicts of interest, ensure engagement of a wide range of perspectives of qualified scientific experts in EPA’s scientific peer review panels and increase transparency in peer review reports.”

“We commend Chairman Smith and Congressman Lucas for their leadership and commitment to advance these important issues.”

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to read an excerpt from the American Chemistry Council letter:

“The Science Advisory Board Reform Act would improve the peer review process—a critical component of the scientific process used by EPA in their regulatory decisions about potential risks to human health or the environment. The Act would make peer reviewers accountable for responding to public comment, strengthen policies to address conflicts of interest, ensure engagement of a wide range of perspectives of qualified scientific experts in EPA’s scientific peer review panels and increase transparency in peer review reports.”

That is a strong statement.

I also include in the RECORD a letter from the American Farm Bureau Federation.


Hon. Lamar Smith, Chairman, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Washington, DC.

Hon. Eddie Bernice Johnson, Ranking Member, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Washington, DC.

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Johnson: Later this week, the House
Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I think we have run to the end of our speakers.

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

Mr. Speaker, let me first remind Members that we are asking for a “no” vote on the previous question. If the previous question is defeated, we will bring up an amendment that will allow the bill that Representative SWALWELL and Representative CUMMINGS have introduced to create a bipartisan commission to investigate Russian interference in our 2016 election.

This is the appropriate place to do it because we are blocked in every other way in terms of trying to bring this to the floor, and the Rules Committee is a committee that prioritizes legislation that helps set the agenda, so this ought to be part of it. This anti-science bill can still be debated and voted on. It won’t derail that, but it will allow the House to deliberate on a bill that would create a bipartisan commission to investigate Russian interference in the 2016 election.

This is a big deal. The American people deserve the truth. My Republican colleagues ought to get out of the way and allow this commission to be created so that the American people can actually have some trust in a process that determines an election to which the Russians interfered in our election.

Again, I would urge a “no” vote on the previous question.

With regard to the rule that we are debating today, I would again remind everybody that if the previous question is defeated, there are some Members of this House who have never seen an open rule, ever. I hope that changes because I do think that, again, there ought to be more deliberation here, there ought to be more back and forth. Even ideas that I strongly disagree with on the Republican side, they ought to have the opportunity to come here and be able to present them and we can vote up or down on them.

I think we need to break this pattern of shutting the process down. It is what resulted in the debacle last week with your horrible healthcare bill, the one that only 16 percent of the American people supported. Nobody got to get that low, but my friends managed to be able to set a new record on unpopular legislation—so bad that it had to be withdrawn from the floor for consideration.

I would argue it is the closed, authoritarian-like process that produced a lousy bill. If my friends continue to adhere to this closed process, they are going to get more lousy pieces of legislation that are going to do great harm to the American people brought to this floor.

This bill that is before us today, again, has been brought to the floor under this expedited procedure called an emergency, and this is just being rushed to the floor as an emergency.

This is not an emergency. The opioid crisis is an emergency; the crisis in Flint, Michigan, is an emergency; our crumbling infrastructure is an emergency. There are deficient bridges and roads in every one of our congressional districts. That is an emergency. We need to address that.

Keeping the government open is an emergency. But to say this is an emergency is kind of ridiculous. It is not an emergency. It is kind of like our house is on fire and you are saying: I will get out the hose later, but I need to wash the dishes first.

That is how this kind of fits into what we are doing here today. This doesn’t qualify for that.

On the substance of the bill, we have this radical idea that scientists ought to sit on scientific advisory committees, not corporate cronies, not people who are interested in covering up for polluters or doing their bidding. We think experts and scientists ought to sit on scientific advisory boards. That is the radical idea that we have. This bill, unfortunately, undermines that.

What this bill does is threaten public health by stacking advisory boards with industry representatives, and it weakens scientific review. It is that simple. I don’t care what your political ideology is, I don’t think you want that.

Let me just mention some of the groups that are opposing this bill.


I would go on and mention a national organization that is an advocate for the health and well-being of the American people oppose this bill. We are bringing it up for an up-or-down vote, no amendments, a closed rule, and here we are.

I would just say, again, this is a bad idea. I guess if you are an ally of big corporations or of corporations that engage in pollution, this is a good idea. But if you are interested in protecting the health and well-being of the American people on our globe, for that matter, this is a bad idea.

As I began, I mentioned that when I speak to first-graders, they understand the importance of science. They get it.

They want us to be good stewards of the environment. They want us to protect the planet. They understand the importance of science.

But I am always amazed how many people in this Chamber just don’t get it. I find that really sad. I want to give my kids, and someday my grandkids and great grandkids, a future where we respect the environment. When we pass bills like this, it makes that less certain.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues again to vote “no” on the previous question and, please, in a bipartisan way, reject this lousy piece of legislation.

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

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

This bill is a good idea, and I think the debate that we have had here today underscores the importance of this as we consider this under the rule.

H.R. 1391 addresses problems that have arisen over the years with the Science Advisory Board, and actually would return the Board to its intended purpose—something maybe the gentleman does not agree with—to provide independent expert advice on scientific and technical information.

By modernizing the policies and the procedures of the governing of the SAB, Congress, with this bill, can take

with industry representatives, and it weakens scientific review. It is that simple. I don’t care what your political ideology is, I don’t think you want that.

Let me just mention some of the groups that are opposing this bill.


I would go on and mention a national organization that is an advocate for the health and well-being of the American people oppose this bill. We are bringing it up for an up-or-down vote, no amendments, a closed rule, and here we are.

I would just say, again, this is a bad idea. I guess if you are an ally of big corporations or of corporations that engage in pollution, this is a good idea. But if you are interested in protecting the health and well-being of the American people on our globe, for that matter, this is a bad idea.

As I began, I mentioned that when I speak to first-graders, they understand the importance of science. They get it.

They want us to be good stewards of the environment. They want us to protect the planet. They understand the importance of science.

But I am always amazed how many people in this Chamber just don’t get it. I find that really sad. I want to give my kids, and someday my grandkids and great grandkids, a future where we respect the environment. When we pass bills like this, it makes that less certain.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues again to vote “no” on the previous question and, please, in a bipartisan way, reject this lousy piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.
critical steps to make sure that the SAB is best equipped to provide that independent, transparent, balanced review and the analyses of the science used that guides the EPA’s regulatory decisions. The ray issue that this measure would address is the importance of having regulations that are supported by science and that are reproducible and accessible for peer review, not antiscience, like some people have said. It is time to restore independence to undertake a balanced and open re-

The scientific method demands that the result of scientific studies be capable of replication. This is all the more critical when the information is used to develop sound science is the belief, which is why the methods and the data used by the EPA and the SAB must be public-

The material previously referred to by Mr. McGOVERN is as follows: An Amendment to H. Res. 233 Offered by Mr. McGOVERN

At the end of the resolution, add the follow-

SEC. 2. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole on the state of the House for consideration of the bill (H.R. 356) to establish the National Commission on Foreign Inter-

Mr. Speaker, opponents of the legis-

I believe that these arguments fail to recognize that this bill actually does accomplish. They seem to ignore the importance of reforming the Federal rulemaking process in a way that en-

Unfortunately, the EPA has diluted the Board’s credibility by systemati-

H.R. 1431 simply encourages greater transparency, debate, and public par-

By strengthening public participa-

Mr. Speaker, it is time to update the law. It is time to restore independence to the Science Advisory Board. It is time to strengthen scientific integrity. Science is an invaluable tool that helps policymakers navigate complex issues, yet this resource has been severely di-

As President Reagan said in guidance to the EPA: “The purpose of the Science Advisory Board is to apply the universally accepted principles of sci-

One key issue that this measure des-

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursu-

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays. The yeas and nays were ordered. The SPEAKER pro tempore, pursuant to the request of the Majority Leader, asked the Clerk to announce the result.
The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 232, nays 191, not voting 6, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yeas</th>
<th>Noes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>232</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Vot.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr. HALLERAN changed his vote from “yea” to “nay.”

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tem. said:

The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken, and the Speaker pro tem. announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. McGOVERN, Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tem. said:

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—aye 232, noes 188, not voting 9, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ayes (232)</th>
<th>Noes (188)</th>
<th>Not Vot. (9)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

**NOTE:**

- The vote was recorded as aye 232, noes 188, not voting 9.
- Mr. HALLERAN changed his vote from “yea” to “nay.”
- The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.
- The Speaker pro tem. said the question is on the resolution.
- The question was taken, and the Speaker pro tem. announced that the ayes appeared to have it.
- Mr. McGOVERN, Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.
- A recorded vote was ordered.
- The Speaker pro tem. said this is a 5-minute vote.
- The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—aye 232, noes 188, not voting 9.

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The text contains a table listing the names of representatives with their voting records, along with additional congressional details and procedural notes. There are references to procedural rules and recorded votes, indicating a formal legislative process. The text is structured in a formal, official tone typical of legislative proceedings.
HONEST AND OPEN NEW EPA SCIENCE TREATMENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 229, I call up the bill (H.R. 1430) to prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency from proposing, finalizing, or disseminating regulations or assessments based upon science that is not transparent or reproducible, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk reads the title of the bill.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 229, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. 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, H.R. 1430.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we all care about the environment, but if policies are not based on legitimate science, regulations will result in economic hardship with little or no environmental benefits. In other words, the regulations would be all pain and no gain. This bill strengthens the previous House-passed legislation of the last Congress, the Secret Science Reform Act. That bill also required the EPA to base its decisions on information fully available to scientists and the American people.

You may hear from opponents of this legislation that it costs too much money. That is based on a CBO estimate from 2 years ago that misinterprets the implementation requirements of the bill. CBO has not reissued that mate from 2 years ago that misinterprets the implementation requirements of the bill. CBO has not reissued that estimate to this issue, and for sponsoring the Secret Science Reform Act in the 113th Congress. In the last Congress, a similar bill passed the House with bipartisan support. Our goal is to help advance not just any science, but the best science.

The HONEST Act is a nonpartisan bill: a change in administration does not affect the public’s right to know and see the science behind the EPA’s regulations.

This legislation ensures that sound science is the basis of decisions and regulatory actions. The days of “trust-me science” are over. In our modern Information Age, Federal regulations should be based only upon data that is available for every American to see, and that can be subjected to independent review. That is called the scientific method.

We can all agree that the government should rely on the best available science. Unfortunately, the government does not always hold to this standard. Looking at the EPA’s past record, it is clear that the Agency has not followed an open and honest process. For example, many major air-quality regulations from the previous administration were justified by data that the EPA said they had not seen, even though they proposed the regulation.

This means that the EPA’s claims about the cost and benefits of its regulations and the real risk they are meant to address cannot be independently verified by unbiased experts. If the EPA’s mandates really are based on sound science, then the American people should be allowed to see the data. The EPA’s past refusal to cooperate, leads to the question: What have they been hiding? Americans have a right to be suspicious.

Mr. Speaker, all care about the environment, but if policies are not based on legitimate science, regulations will result in economic hardship with little or no environmental benefits. In other words, the regulations would be all pain and no gain. This bill strengthens the previous House-passed legislation of the last Congress, the Secret Science Reform Act. That bill also required the EPA to base its decisions on information fully available to scientists and the American people.

You may hear from opponents of this legislation that it costs too much money. That is based on a CBO estimate from 2 years ago that misinterprets the implementation requirements of the bill. CBO has not reissued that misinterpretation this year after consulting with the EPA. All the HONEST Act requires is that the EPA use science that is publicly available, not make all science public itself. So the cost is negligible.

Some critics may claim that it puts personal data at risk. This is false. The HONEST Act specifically requires...