Congressman Guthrie and Congresswoman Matsui's bill to include a spectrum auction deposit fix, this will actually allow future actions to go forward legally. They couldn’t do that under existing law because of an interpretation, and so we fixed that. That was very, very important.

Congressmen McHenry and Kinzinger’s legislation to require the FCC to report to Congress on promoting internet access for veterans, we all know how important that is, especially those low-income veterans in our rural communities.

Congressman Loeb's legislative initiative to improve mapping methodology for mobile broadband, we need to know where we have service in America and where we don’t and have numbers we can trust.

Representative Ruiz’s legislation is very, very important, dealing with broadband in Tribal areas and carrying out rulemaking to address unserved Tribal areas. We have lots of Tribal areas in our country that lack service.

Anna Eshoo’s legislation to provide further improvements on 911 caller information that builds on Kansas Law that we have already approved, that is really, really important.

And, again, Eliot Engel’s legislation requires the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the NTIA, to study and consider how the agency can best coordinate the interoperability process following cybersecurity incidents.

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(d) Definitions.—In this section—

(1) the term ‘agency’ has the meaning
given the term ‘Executive agency’ in section 105.

(2) the term ‘Associate Director’ means
the Associate Director of Merit Systems Account-
ability and Compliance at the Office of
Personnel Management.

(3) the term ‘career appointee’ means
an individual serving in an appointment
of any duration to a political position;

(4) the term ‘political position’ means—

(A) a position with respect to which an
appointment is made—

(i) by the President; or

(ii) by the President, by and with the ad-
dvice and consent of the Senate;

(B) a position which has been escaped
from the competitive service by reason of its
confidential, policy-determining, policy-
making, or policy-advocating character;

(C) a position described under sections
3312 through 3316 (relating to the Executive
Schedule); and

(D) a general position in the Senior Ex-
cutive Service during such time as it is filled
by—

(i) a noncareer appointee, as defined in
paragraph (8) of section 3132(a); or

(ii) a limited term appointee or limited
emergency appointee, as defined in para-
graphs (b) and (d) of section 3132(a), who is
serving under a political appointment.

(5) the term ‘career position’ means—

(A) a position in the competitive service
filled by career or career-conditional ap-
pointment;

(B) a position in the excepted service
filled by an appointment of equivalent ten-
ure as a position described in subparagraph
(A); and

(C) a career reserved position, as defined in
paragraph (8) of section 3132(a), in the
Senior Executive Service; or

(D) a general position in the Senior Ex-
cutive Service when filled by a career ap-
pointee, as defined in section 3132(a)(4);

(6) the term ‘participated’ means an
action
taken as an officer or employee through
decision, approval, disapproval, rec-
ommendation, the rendering of advice, inves-
tigation, or other such action; and

(7) the term ‘matters’ includes any
investigation, application, request for a
ruling or determination, rulemaking, con-
tract, controversy, claim, charge, accusa-
tion, arrest, or judicial or other pro-
ceeding.”.

(b) Clerical Amendment.—The table of
sections of chapter 31 of title 5, United
States Code, as added by title II of the
Burrowing Prevention Act, will enact a
political appointee into a career posi-
tion for 2 years after that individual
held a political position.

In contrast, the career civil service is
designed to carry over from administra-
tion to administration. These em-
ployees should be hired based on their
qualifications and promoted based on their
performance. Despite the signifi-
cant differences between the two types
of positions, however, political ap-
pointees are currently allowed to con-
vert to career positions. This practice
is known as “burrowing.”

As the Government Accountability
Office explained: “Circumstances sur-
rounding conversions can raise ques-
tions as to whether the individuals se-
lected experienced favoritism or en-
joyed an unfair advantage in the selec-
tion process.”

GAO went on to say: “Any appear-
ance of this could compromise the
merit system’s integrity.”

H.R. 1132, the Political Appointee
Burrowing Prevention Act, introduced by
the gentleman from Colorado, Rep-
resentative BUCK.

This important bill will protect the
integrity of the civil service and ensure
the American people are served by a
competent, nonpolitical career work-
force.

Under current law, each administra-
tion appoints a political staff to help
advance the administration’s political
goals. These political employees leave
at the end of the administration to
make way for the next administra-
tion’s appointees.

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H.R. 1132, the Political Appointee
Burrowing Prevention Act, will enact a
new law, the political appointee and report the results of its reviews to
Congress.

A February 2017 report found that
OPM reviewed just 16 requests by agen-
cies to hire former political appointees
from October 1, 2016, through January
20, 2017, and did not find any reason to
deny any of those requests.

We all want the best people in the
Federal service, and there should be no
undue favoritism in the hiring process.

In comments on this bill, OPM sug-
gested that certain provisions may
conflict with the merit system prin-
ciples that have formed the basis of the
Federal civil service for over a century.
The issue should be clarified before this
bill becomes enacted into

Nonetheless, we support the spirit
with which the bill is offered us today,
and we have no objections to the legis-
lation in front of us.

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

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5
minutes to the gentleman from Colo-
ado (Mr. BUCK), the sponsor of the bill
and my esteemed colleague.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the
gentleman from Iowa for the time
today to talk about this important leg-
sislation.
Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BLUM) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa.

General Leave

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in 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 Iowa?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3737, the Social Media Use in Clearance Investigations Act of 2017, introduced by the gentleman from Florida, Representative DeSANTIS, according to the record from Iowa Center, 7 in 10 Americans use social media today. A significant portion of those Americans’ personal and professional interactions occur online. It is just common sense that the government should check the social media of individuals who apply for security clearances, but it doesn’t.

H.R. 3737 will move the government toward implementing checks of social media for individuals we trust with our country’s most sensitive information.

The bill requires a study of the use of social media in security clearance investigations to inform government-wide implementation of social media checks. The study will provide comprehensive information on existing pilot programs, lessons learned, and costs.

We must begin the process of strengthening the system now, and that starts with determining best practices for moving forward.

H.R. 3737 will help ensure that government checks social media before issuing security clearances.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I think we want to make sure we prevent favoritism and political connections from slicing bread, who brings a level of expertise that we need, and we don’t want to make it harder to look at those credentials on their merits. I know that is not the intention of the bill, but it may be one of the unintended consequences, and that is what we want to just make sure we are not doing as we move forward, but with that, I support the bill.

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

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BLUM) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1132, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the bill was passed.

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

Mr. Speaker, I think this bill is long overdue and recognizes the internet world in which we live and operate.

This bill would require the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to issue a report to Congress on the use of social media checks in background investigations for security clearances.

In recent years, a number of agencies have begun pilot programs to help determine the best way to incorporate social media into those background checks. For example, the Army initiated a pilot program that found that while checking social media is a

Social Media Use in Clearance Investigations Act of 2017

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3737) to provide for a study on the use of social media in security clearance investigations.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3737

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 “Social Media Use in Clearance Investigations Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. STUDY ON USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SECURITY CLEARANCE INVESTIGATIONS.

Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall submit to Congress a report on the examination of social media activity during security clearance investigations, including—

(1) the current use of publicly available social media in security clearance background investigations;

(2) any legal impediments to examining publicly available social media activity, and whether those impediments are statutory or regulatory in nature;

(3) the results of any pilot programs to incorporate social media checks in such investigations, including the effectiveness and cost of such programs;

(4) options for widespread implementation of the examination of social media activity during such investigations; and

(5) estimates on the cost for such options as part of—

(A) all Top Secret investigations; or

(B) all Secret and Top Secret investigations.

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