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No. 73

Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 30, 2024, at 3 p.m.

House of Representatives

MONDAY, APRIL 29, 2024

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. EZELL).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 29, 2024.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE EZELL to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 9, 2024, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

EPA DELIVERED A DEVASTATING BLOW TO AMERICAN ENERGY GENERATORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last week, the EPA delivered a devastating blow to American energy generators with the decision to impose severe regulations that are designed to close the power plants that Pennsylvania communities rely on each and every day.

This heavy-handed approach to regulation is the clearest sign yet that President Biden is more interested in catering to the far left than supporting American families.

Instead of investing in the resources that are underneath the feet of my constituents in Pennsylvania, President Biden has chosen to placate his far-left base by attempting to close the coal-powered plants that generate nearly 20 percent of our electricity.

It is time to send a clear message that this administration cannot gamble away our energy stability by relying on inconsistent Green New Deal technologies like windmills and solar panels.

Risking blackouts during the heat of summer, when the loss of power can ultimately be deadly, is too high a price to pay in order to score political points. The EPA must immediately reverse its course of action and allow American energy producers to continue to lead the way on reliable production of energy.

SECURE OUR BORDER AND PUT AN END TO THE OPIOID CRISIS

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, California announced that it had seized 1.1 million fentanyl pills as well as 523 pounds of methamphetamine in just 7 days.

The active components of fentanyl are shipped from China with the consent of the Chinese Communist Party, manufactured by cartels in Mexico, and then shipped into the United States. This process has fueled the opioid crisis that continues to make each and every State a border State.

We have seen the devastating consequences that these drugs have on our area. Right now, more than 40 percent of Americans know someone who has been killed by an overdose. Furthermore, I feel that each and every Member of Congress knows multiple individuals who have died from fentanyl poisoning.

Sadly, these deaths are preventable, and it is time for President Biden to take the necessary steps to secure our southern border. A border crisis that allows millions of fentanyl pills to enter our Nation endangers the lives of each and every American.

By ending the remain in Mexico policy and by reinstating catch and release, President Biden has sent a clear message to the Mexican cartels that they can continue to break American laws. It is time to secure our border. It is time to put an end to this crisis.

CONDEMNING ANTI-JEWISH DEMONSTRATORS ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) for 5 minutes.

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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H2637

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn the anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish, pro-Hamas demonstrators who, amidst Passover, are wreaking havoc on campuses around the country and threatening violence against local Jewish communities and students.

Such violence is unacceptable anywhere, but to witness this at our universities is truly painful. Places of education are supposed to be of discourse and of learning and rising above, and all those who choose to attend deserve peace and respect.

My heart goes out to all of the Jewish students who no longer feel safe at American universities. They deserve better than this.

Mr. Speaker, the purveyors of anti-Semitism must be stopped. I ask my colleagues to join me in condemning these anti-Semitic protesters and continue the push to combat anti-Semitism and stand with our Jewish friends and neighbors.

RECOGNIZING ELIVIA PAPCUN'S EQUESTRIAN ABILITIES

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend Elivia Papcun, an Iowa native, who overcame a severe injury to become a top-ranked NCAA equestrian recruit.

Just a short while ago, Elivia had an accident that shook her to her core. As she rode her beloved horse, a moment of misfortune turned into a nightmare as her horse stumbled, leaving Elivia critically injured. The severity of her injuries left her unable to move, her very future hanging in the balance.

However, Elivia refused to give up. With each passing day, she fought tirelessly to reclaim her strength and through grueling rehabilitation and unwavering determination, she defied the odds and emerged stronger than ever before.

Elivia has recently reentered and committed to Texas Christian University. This commitment is akin to being recruited to play football at Alabama or Georgia in the equestrian world. It underscores not only Elivia's remarkable talent and dedication, but also the recognition of her potential by one of the top programs in the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, let us commend Elivia Papcun for her remarkable journey and wish her continued success as she embarks on this exciting new chapter.

RECOGNIZING 911 OPERATORS AMY KEMNER AND KRIS DECKER

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Warren County 911 dispatchers Amy Kemner and Kris Decker for their 30 years of service to their community.

Despite the long shifts, difficult calls, and extended time away from family, Amy and Kris have remained dedicated to their work of ensuring the safety of Warren County residents.

While the average tenure of a dispatcher is only 7 years, Amy and Kris have taken pride in serving Warren County. Their long tenures, while an anomaly in their field, are a reminder

of the worthwhile pursuit of community service.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating Amy and Kris for their ever-present service to their community and thank them for being the front line of defense when emergency calls.

HONORING FIRE CHIEF GREG CHIA ON HIS RETIREMENT

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished career of Indianola Fire Chief Greg Chia, who recently announced his retirement, which is set to take effect on December 31, 2024.

Chief Chia originally began his career in 1985 as a firefighter in Des Moines, and throughout his tenure worked up the ranks to reach chief officer.

In May 2015, Chief Chia was appointed to become the first fire chief for Indianola and has since led the response to multiple crises with poise and gravitas.

Under his leadership, the Indianola Fire Department has served as an illustrative example of top-notch community safety, and his absence will be felt by many.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues today to join me in celebrating Chief Chia's incredible career and his commitment to safety and in wishing him the best on a well-deserved retirement.

IOWA CITY FARMERS MARKET

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the return of the Iowa City Farmers Market for its 52nd year on May 4, and to congratulate Bill Lane on being appointed director of the Iowa City Farmers Market.

In recent years, the Iowa City Farmers Market has become a cultural staple in town with the market welcoming tens of thousands of residents yearly. The market puts Iowa's rich agricultural history on display for everyone with countless local vendors, serving a wide variety of Iowa's best agricultural products.

With live music and activities for everyone to enjoy as well, the Iowa City Farmers Market is sure to enjoy another amazing year as a preeminent venue for residents to shop, dine, and enjoy time with friends and family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating this phenomenal Iowa City staple and, once again, congratulate director Bill Lane on what is sure to be another great year for the Iowa City Farmers Market.

AMERICA'S SOUTHERN BORDER IS NOT A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Speaker, America's southern border is not a social construct.

On a trip to the U.S.-Mexico border this past weekend, an academic from a

prestigious institution shocked our bipartisan group by stating that he teaches students the border is a social construct to facilitate the free flow of people and ideas.

What the heck, Mr. Speaker?

It is appalling, but it sheds light on the ideology guiding President Biden's border policy decisions. These decisions include: halting border wall construction, implementing a mass parole system, and failing to promptly expel noncitizens who illegally cross in between ports of entry.

This mindset ignores the fundamental importance of border security and the rule of law. By dismissing the border as a mere social construct, it undermines the legitimate efforts to protect our Nation's sovereignty and ensure the safety of our citizens.

We must reject such dangerous rhetoric and work toward policies that prioritize border security.

ACCESSIBLE FEDERAL CONTRACTING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Speaker, the hurdles facing America's small businesses in obtaining Federal contracts are unjustifiably high.

These businesses, the lifeblood of our economy, shouldn't require a legal team or extensive compliance infrastructure just to compete for Federal contracts. That is why I have introduced H.R. 7987, the Plain Language in Contracting Act, aimed at simplifying the process for small businesses to secure government contracts.

I extend my gratitude to my colleague, Representative THANEDAR of Michigan, for co-leading this crucial legislation across party lines.

With over 33 million small businesses in America, only a small fraction secure Federal prime contracts. Many entrepreneurs cite the complexity of government procurement processes as a major deterrent. The language used in contract solicitations is often ambiguous and unnecessarily complex, deterring small businesses from even attempting to bid.

A study by the Naval Postgraduate School revealed that less than 3 percent of DOD contract solicitations are written in plain English. This complexity drives small businesses away from Federal contracting, eroding competition, and harming our economy.

My bill mandates Federal agencies to use clear language in contract solicitations, fostering greater accessibility to contracts for small businesses.

I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation, recognizing the pivotal role small businesses play in our Nation's economy.

Let's pave the way for a more accessible Federal contracting process for all businesses. Doing so benefits small businesses, the Federal Government, and its taxpayers.

□ 1215

FIGHTING FOR FAIR ELECTORAL MAPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. NICKEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, in a time when public trust in government is declining, the American people deserve a fair and transparent redistricting process that ensures that every voice and every vote is heard and accounted for.

The number of truly competitive districts is also declining in the U.S. Congress. We are seeing more polarization and less willingness to work across the aisle to do what is right for our country.

Unfortunately, in North Carolina and across the country, partisan gerrymandering has been used as a tool by politicians of both parties to manipulate electoral outcomes with almost surgical precision.

Some people in North Carolina have seen their district lines and their Representative in Congress change four times in the last 10 years because of gerrymandering by the North Carolina General Assembly. Courts threw out electoral maps drawn by Republican legislators three times in the past decade due to gerrymandering: in 2016, 2019, and 2021.

We recently, though, had a brief moment of relief. In the last election, North Carolina voters sent seven Democrats and seven Republicans to the U.S. Congress under fair court-drawn maps for our 50/50 State. North Carolina's 13th District, which I am proud to represent, is a true swing district.

In 2023, our constituents had to suffer through yet another unprecedented redraw, resulting in yet another partisan gerrymander for North Carolina. The maps are again being litigated in the courts.

This story isn't unique to North Carolina, and the problem isn't just with the current politicians in our State legislature. History has made one thing clear: Politicians can't be trusted to fairly draw their own maps. That is why I introduced the FAIR MAPS Act. The FAIR MAPS Act would combat partisan gerrymandering by establishing independent, nonpartisan redistricting commissions in every State.

The Duke University Quantifying Gerrymandering team recently found that if we end gerrymandering, there could be 37 to 42 additional competitive House seats around the country, which would double the number of competitive seats in Congress compared to the under 40 that are available today.

That is a big deal. Competitive districts are where we can have a real debate about the best ideas and elect Representatives willing to work across the aisle to get things done. My bill, the FAIR MAPS Act, would help make that a reality, and it would strengthen our democracy.

By ending partisan gerrymandering, we can restore fairness and ensure that voters are the ones choosing their politicians; not the other way around.

This is something that has been tried and has worked in a handful of States already. In Arizona, Colorado, and others, independent and nonpartisan redistricting commissions have drawn electoral maps that are more responsive to the will of the people than maps drawn by politicians in other States.

Voters should choose their politicians; politicians shouldn't choose their voters. While my name will not be on the ballot in 2024, I am not giving up or going out quietly in the fight for fair maps and an end to partisan gerrymandering. I will continue to fight with every ounce of my energy for an end to partisan gerrymandering and to protect the right to vote for every single North Carolinian.

CONGRATULATING THE UAW ON HISTORIC CONTRACT AGREEMENT

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the hardworking men and women of the UAW in my home State of North Carolina. UAW workers reached a historic new agreement with Daimler Trucks, which included a record wage increase, profit sharing for the first time ever, a cost-of-living increase, and much more.

Right now, support for unions is near an all-time high, and we are seeing this momentum pick up in North Carolina and across the South. I am proud to stand with the new generation of workers as they exercise their collective strength and make their voices heard.

Unions built our middle class, and I will always stand with the men and women of labor at the local, State, and Federal levels.

Once again, I congratulate the UAW on this historic contract agreement.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 17 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CARL) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

God, our guide, we look to You and ask for the strength only You can provide. On this day and the week ahead, may we seek Your face always.

We pray that we, individually and corporately, would try hard to live rightly. Together, with pure hearts,

may we trust You and walk in faith, love, and peace.

Dissuade us from fruitless and foolish arguments, lest they descend into destructive disputes. As Your servants, may we avoid quarreling and show kindness and patience with each other.

When we know we are right, may we be gentle with those who disagree. When we realize we are wrong, may we, with humility, seek to advance the truth.

It seems so simple to ask, but even our best intentions can get ensnared in our pride and prejudices. Guide us, then, in Your truth through the complex influence of these contentious times.

It is in Your mercy that we dare to pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

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 2 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1529

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WEBER of Texas) at 3 o'clock and 29 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

INVESTING IN ALL OF AMERICA ACT OF 2023

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and

pass the bill (H.R. 5333) to amend the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 to exclude from the limit on leverage certain amounts invested in smaller enterprises located in rural or low-income areas and small businesses in critical technology areas, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5333

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 “Investing in All of America Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. SBIC MAXIMUM LEVERAGE EXCLUSION.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 103(9) of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 662(9)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)(ii), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (B)(iii)—

(A) in subclause (I), by striking “established prior to October 1, 1987”;

(B) in subclause (II)—

(i) by striking “or” and inserting “;” and (ii) by inserting “, or a foundation, endowment, or trust of a college or university” after “pension plan”; and

(C) in subclause (III), by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(C) does not include any funds obtained directly or indirectly from any Federal, State or local government or any government agency or instrumentality, except for funds described in subclauses (I) through (III) of subparagraph (B)(iii), for the purpose of approval by the Administrator of any request for leverage.”

(b) IN GENERAL.—Section 303(b)(2) of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 683(b)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)(i), by striking “300” and inserting “200”;

(2) in subparagraph (C)—

(A) in the heading—

(i) by inserting “OR RURAL” after “LOW-INCOME”; and

(ii) by inserting “OR CRITICAL TECHNOLOGY AREAS” after “GEOGRAPHIC AREAS”;

(B) in clause (i)—

(i) by striking “(i) In calculating” and inserting the following:

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clause (iii), in calculating”;

(ii) by inserting “or companies” after “of a company”;

(iii) by striking “subparagraph (A)” and inserting “subparagraphs (A) and (B)”;

(iv) by striking “equity”;

(v) by striking “the company in a smaller enterprise” and all that follows and inserting the following: “the company or companies in—

“(I) a smaller enterprise located in a low-income geographic area (as defined in section 689 of this title) or in a rural area; or”; and

(vi) by adding at the end the following new subclause:

“(II) a small business concern in an area of critical technology (as defined in section 4801 of title 10, United States Code) vital to maintaining the national security of the United States.”;

(C) by amending clause (ii) to read as follows:

“(ii) LIMITATION.—While maintaining the limitation of subparagraph (A)(i) and consistent with a leverage determination ratio issued pursuant to section 301(c), the agree-

gate amount excluded for a company or companies under clause (i) from the calculation of the outstanding leverage of such company or companies for the purposes of subparagraphs (A) and (B) may not exceed the lesser of 50 percent of the private capital of such company or companies or \$125,000,000.”; and

(D) by amending clause (iii) to read as follows:

“(iii) PROSPECTIVE APPLICABILITY.—An investment by a licensee is eligible for exclusion from the calculation of outstanding leverage under clause (i) only if such investment is made by such licensee after the date of enactment of the Investing in All of America Act of 2023.”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(E) ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT.—The Administrator shall adjust the dollar amounts described in subparagraphs (A) and (B)—

“(i) on the date of the enactment of this subparagraph, by a percentage equal to the percentage (if any) by which the Consumer Price Index (all items; United States city average), as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, increased during the period—

“(I) beginning on December 18, 2015, and ending on the date of the enactment of this subparagraph, for subparagraph (B); and

“(II) beginning on June 21, 2018, and ending on the date of the enactment of this subparagraph, for subparagraph (A); and

“(ii) on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this subparagraph, and annually thereafter, by a percentage equal to the percentage (if any) by which the Consumer Price Index (all items; United States city average), as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, increased during the one-year period preceding the date of the adjustment under this clause.”.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than June 30 of the first year beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall submit to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives a report on the results of the exclusion under subparagraph (C) of section 303(b)(2) of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 683(b)(2)), as amended by subsection (a), including the economic activity generated and jobs directly and indirectly created by the exclusion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. 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.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, we all know small businesses are the backbone of the American economy. Main Street employs nearly half of all Americans and the vast majority of businesses in the United States are small businesses.

As we kick off this year’s National Small Business Week, I can think of no better way to pass H.R. 5333, the Investing in All of America Act, introduced by Representatives MEUSER and SCHOLTEN.

Small businesses are faced with constant challenges when it comes to accessing capital. With burdensome regulations and high-interest rates, banks are being forced to tighten their lending standards, forcing small business owners to pay higher prices for much-needed funds.

Unlike large corporations, small businesses don’t share the luxury of utilizing debt and equity markets for financing. Main Street America is instead forced to bridge the funding gap and return to resources like the SBIC program, where Federal funding is matched with experienced private investors to invest in small businesses.

The program has been successful in the early-stage funding of several companies that have gone on to become household names, such as Apple and Tesla, among others. However, often overlooked are investments in rural areas, including investment in American-made military technology. This is where H.R. 5333 comes in, making thoughtful improvements to ensure that the SBIC program continues to be an essential part of helping small businesses navigate the current economic challenges and increase avenues to access capital.

This program has never cost taxpayers any money and has always been seen as a positive return on investment. These commonsense changes will allow more businesses to access critical funding without increasing the risk of the government losing money.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5333, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here today as we celebrate National Small Business Week.

More than 60 years ago, President John F. Kennedy first enacted a proclamation to celebrate small businesses, and every year since then our country has honored the contributions of small business owners all throughout the country.

Small businesses employ roughly half of the private workforce, create the majority of new jobs, and generate almost half of our Nation’s economic activity. They are the heart and soul of communities. Whether it is our local plumber or contractor, a chef launching a restaurant, or a medical professional, they are creating neighborhood jobs and reinvesting in the local economies.

The state of our small business is growing stronger. We have seen more than 17 million new businesses start since President Biden took office, with the vast majority of those being filled by women, including women of color.

That is good news and gives us a reason to celebrate.

But more work needs to be done, and today we are considering four bipartisan bills that will create additional opportunities for entrepreneurs.

Turning to our first bill, H.R. 5333, as amended, makes statutory improvements to the Small Business Investment Company program to provide SBICs access to additional leverage when they invest in a small business critical to national security or located in a rural or underserved community.

Due to their often capital intensive nature, small businesses operating in America's critical technology sector need institutional investors with long-term time horizons to raise capital. Yet, due to statutory constraints, these investors are often limited in their ability to participate in the SBIC program, making it an unsuitable option for critical technology innovators to raise capital.

By providing SBICs with additional leverage flexibility, H.R. 5333 more appropriately matches the SBIC program with the capital needs of this industry. Doing so will enable the SBA and DOD to successfully carry out the joint SBIC Critical Technology Initiative.

At the same time, the evidence demonstrates there continues to be a significant lack of private investment in small businesses in rural and underserved communities.

By providing SBICs with additional bonus leverage, we are encouraging investment in our communities that need it the most. I thank Representatives SCHOLTEN and MEUSER for their leadership on this bill.

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

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEUSER).

Mr. MEUSER. Mr. Speaker, I thank our chairman, Mr. ROGER WILLIAMS from the great State of Texas, for yielding and for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today during National Small Business Week in support of H.R. 5333, the Investing in All of America Act of 2023, introduced by myself and Representative SCHOLTEN. This legislation aims to incentivize greater private capital investments in small businesses located in rural or low-income areas, and those operating in the national security sector by providing additional bonus leverage for funds participating in the SBA's SBIC program.

The Small Business Investment Companies are privately owned companies that are licensed and regulated by the SBA. SBICs raise private capital that is matched with leverage by the SBA, currently capped at \$175 million for individual licensees. SBICs then deploy these private funds, along with the SBA-guaranteed funding, to invest directly in small businesses.

It is important to note that the SBIC leverage operates at zero subsidy cost

to the American taxpayer. In other words, taxpayer funds are not utilized for the credit extended in SBIC investments.

Throughout the last two decades, SBIC-backed businesses have created 5 million new jobs and supported an additional 10.5 million jobs. Last year alone, SBICs invested over \$8 billion in small businesses across America, including \$412 million in small businesses located in my home State, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Though, the SBIC program has been very successful in responsibly deploying capital to small businesses, recent studies have shown that close to 20 percent of the SBIC investment reaches only 20 percent of low- to middle-income communities, but with this legislation this number will significantly increase.

The Investing in All of America Act would incentivize the deployment of additional capital to small businesses located in rural or low-income areas as well as small businesses, again, in the national security technology sector.

Dollars invested in these areas will not count against individual SBIC's \$175 million leverage cap. By creating this incentive, the Investing in All of America Act will increase investment for these underserved communities.

It is important to note that the bonus leverage included in this legislation does not change the cost or risks of the SBIC program. The existing successful private capital ratio to SBA leverage that has kept the program operating at no subsidy will remain the same.

This legislation would also adjust the SBIC leverage caps to account for inflation. SBIC leverage caps have not been adjusted since 2015 for single licensees and since 2018 for a family of funds. Since the last adjustment, as we know, inflation has risen rapidly. As we continue to deal with increasing inflation, reinstating the inflation adjuster for the leverage cap is necessary to ensure the investment power of the SBIC's remain consistent with the broader markets and ensure the program can continue to provide small businesses with the capital they need.

Recently, the Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Tax, and Capital Access, which I chair, held a hearing examining the SBIC program. In addition to discussing the positive effects of the program, we discussed the improvements that could be made. I am happy to say that a number of the reforms suggested by the witnesses are included in this legislation.

While there is more work to do, this legislation will make a very positive impact on those participating in the SBIC program and assist them in deploying even more capital to these worthy small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative SCHOLTEN for her partnership on this legislation and the bipartisan group of 14 Members who have cosponsored it. Again, I thank Chairman WILLIAMS and

the ranking member for their leadership and support of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage a "yes" vote.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. SCHOLTEN), the ranking member of the Contracting and Infrastructure Subcommittee.

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman WILLIAMS and Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ for holding this really important hearing during National Small Business Week.

Mr. Speaker, 99.6 percent, that is the number of businesses in Michigan that are considered small businesses. That is nearly 1 million small businesses that call our State home.

As diverse as these businesses are, there is one thing that binds them all together. These small business owners consistently tell me that access to capital is the number one thing that they need and rely on to keep their doors open.

This is especially true for our small businesses in low-income and rural communities.

That is why this bipartisan bill with my colleague, DAN MEUSER, the Investing in All of America Act, is so important.

It will build on the success of the Small Business Investment Companies program to ensure that more capital can reach the small businesses that need it most. Our legislation will incentivize deployment of additional capital by changing how investments are counted against the SBIC's leverage cap. In doing so, small businesses will be able to access more capital than before, especially those in underserved communities, and, as my colleague noted, without costing the taxpayers additional dollars.

Recent studies have shown that less than 20 percent of SBIC funds reach low-income and rural communities. That disparity is unacceptable, and if we pass this bill we can change this statistic. It is incumbent on this body to invest in the people who are investing in our communities.

I am known to say back home that we are bringing boring back to Congress. That is what I set out to do every time I come here. Oftentimes, this body is not known for that, but it is essential that we do this type of bipartisan, unglamorous work that corrects errors in our laws that so disproportionately impact the people who need it most.

This bipartisan solution will address an urgent need in every corner of our Nation, and I urge my colleagues to support this much-needed bill.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, today, under President Biden's leadership, the SBIC program

is making historic investments. In fiscal year 2023, the SBIC program provided a record-high \$8 billion in investment and collectively financed more than 1,200 small businesses and startups resulting in over 130,000 jobs.

H.R. 5333 will build on this monumental success and unleash even further investment in America's small firms.

Innovation is the cornerstone of economic growth and U.S. global competitiveness. Most often, the most innovative and disruptive R&D is happening in our small business community. H.R. 5333 will encourage more SBIC investment in small businesses operating in our innovative sector and in rural and underserved areas all over the country.

Mr. Speaker, I, again, thank Representatives SCHOLTEN and MEUSER for leading this effort. I encourage Members to vote "yes," and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1545

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation that will provide more opportunities for our Nation's job creators to access capital. I once again thank Representatives MEUSER and SCHOLTEN for bringing this solution to the table, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5333, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2024

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7103) to amend the Small Business Act to require Federal agencies to testify and report on scores received under the scorecard program for evaluating Federal agency compliance with small business contracting goals, to testify for failure to meet Governmentwide contracting goals, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7103

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 "Agency Accountability Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. FEDERAL AGENCY TESTIMONY ON SCORECARD SCORES AND FAILURE TO ACHIEVE CERTAIN GOALS.

Section 15(g)(2) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 644(g)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(G) TESTIMONY REQUIRED.—The head of the office established in a Federal agency

under subsection (k) shall testify before the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives under the following circumstances:

"(i) If such agency fails to receive a score equivalent to a letter grade of 'A' or above on the scorecard established under subsection (y) for a fiscal year, on the reasons for such failure.

"(ii) If such agency fails to meet two or more of the Governmentwide goals established under paragraph (1)(A), on the reasons for such failure."

SEC. 3. FEDERAL AGENCY REPORTING ON SCORECARD SCORES.

Section 15(h)(1)(D) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 644(h)(1)(D)) is amended by inserting "and to improve the score on the scorecard established under subsection (y)" after "better meet such goals".

SEC. 4. COMPLIANCE WITH CUTGO.

No additional amounts are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act or the amendments made by this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. 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.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7103, the Agency Accountability Act of 2024, introduced by Representatives STAUBER and MCGARVEY. H.R. 7103 holds Federal agencies accountable for failing America's small businesses.

The Federal Government is one of the largest customers in the world. In order to ensure small businesses are able to access this vital customer, President Ronald Reagan signed into law a goal for Federal agencies to award a certain percentage of government contracts to small businesses. Not only has this opened the Federal marketplace to small businesses, it also ensures a strong and resilient industrial base in America.

Unfortunately, not every Federal agency is meeting the commitment to contract with the little guys. Worse than that, when an agency misses its small business contracting goals, they face no consequences.

The Agency Accountability Act will help solve these issues. This bill will force agencies to testify to Congress and explain why they aren't meeting their small business goals and what they will do to rectify these issues.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote for H.R. 7103, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, Mr. STAUBER and Mr. MCGARVEY, for their work to bring this bipartisan bill to the floor today.

In an effort to ensure that small firms can participate in the Federal marketplace on a level playing field, Congress sets a goal for Federal agencies of annually awarding at least 23 percent of prime contracting dollars to small businesses. These goals have helped millions of small businesses compete and have helped the government leverage their creativity and innovation.

Many Federal agencies regularly meet or even exceed their individual goals, but some do not, and they are not formally penalized for this failure. This legislation would apply additional pressure to Federal agencies to meet their small business goals by requiring them to testify before us when they fail. It is a productive step that will add additional congressional oversight to maximize contracting opportunities for small government contractors.

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

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER).

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in favor of the Agency Accountability Act. I will start by thanking the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MCGARVEY) for his support with this legislation.

I can think of no better way to start off National Small Business Week than by passing legislation to ensure the Federal contracting system has a fair playing field for even the smallest of our businesses.

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. They are the innovators, the job creators, and the driving force behind economic growth. In Minnesota, small businesses account for over 99 percent of all businesses and employ over half of the workforce.

The very least that we can do is to ensure that small businesses have every opportunity to contract with the largest purchaser of goods and services in the world, the Federal Government.

Right now, Federal agencies set goals for awarding contracts to small businesses, but meeting those goals is often treated like a suggestion and not a requirement. The result? Too many agencies fall short, leaving billions of dollars out of reach of American small business owners.

My bill, the Agency Accountability Act, changes the game. It shines a spotlight on agency performance by requiring public testimony for failures. Agency heads will answer directly to Congress for missing goals, explaining why they haven't prioritized small businesses and what they will do to fix it.

This isn't just about finger-pointing. It is about finding solutions. Public

scrutiny, paired with mandated reporting on scoreboard performance, will expose systemic roadblocks and identify best practices.

Our small businesses are more than just economic engines. They are the embodiment of the American spirit, equipped with creativity, resilience, and a fierce determination to succeed. This bill gives them a fighting chance, a seat at the table, and the opportunity to prove themselves on the national stage.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on the Agency Accountability Act.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MCGARVEY), the ranking member of the Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development Subcommittee.

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Agency Accountability Act. I thank Chairman WILLIAMS, Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ, and my colleague from Minnesota, Representative STAUBER, for bringing this important bill forward and getting it to the floor.

As Representative STAUBER said, small businesses are the backbone of the American economy. They are what keep things moving. In Louisville, our small businesses are so special. We have a saying in our small business community that says “Keep Louisville Weird,” meaning make sure our small businesses are here and they are thriving.

One of the reasons I enjoy being on the Small Business Committee is we get together every week, and we talk about what small businesses need and how we can make sure we are helping foster the growth and entrepreneurship that keep America’s small businesses moving forward.

When you look at what small businesses need, however, they need a fair shot, among other things. The Federal Government is the largest purchaser of goods and services around the world, so we have recognized that the Federal Government must engage in purchasing things from our small businesses.

Representative STAUBER, a former hockey player, knows a rule isn’t any good unless it is enforced. With the Federal Government having a quota, what happens if it doesn’t meet it? This bill answers that question, and it says that we must hold failing agencies accountable, that if they aren’t meeting their quota of purchasing from small businesses, that they are going to have to come before the House and the Senate and testify as to why.

I am proud to support this bill because it makes sure that we are continuing to support our small businesses all over this country, and I am proud to be a cosponsor of the Agency Accountability Act.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am

prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I emphasize that this bill specifies that agencies that have not met two or more of their subcategory goals must also testify before our committee.

Each of the categories, including and especially the WOSB program, continue to need additional focus to ensure that the government’s acquisition professionals are maximizing contracting opportunities for those small businesses.

Again, I thank the sponsors of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation that will ensure small businesses have access to one of the largest customers in the world, the Federal Government. I thank Congressmen STAUBER and MCGARVEY for working on this legislation that will help our government meet its contracting objectives.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7103.

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.

ENTREPRENEURS WITH DISABILITIES REPORTING ACT OF 2024

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7985) to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to submit to Congress a report on the entrepreneurial challenges facing entrepreneurs with a disability, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7985

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 “Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Reporting Act of 2024”.

SEC. 2. REPORT ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP CHALLENGES OF ENTREPRENEURS WITH DISABILITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall submit to Congress a report on the challenges that entrepreneurs with a disability encounter with starting and operating a business, including—

(1) an assessment of the challenges and needs of entrepreneurs with a disability;

(2) a description of the resources and support that the Small Business Administration provides to entrepreneurs with a disability;

(3) a description of outreach to entrepreneurs with a disability by the Small Business Administration, including by district and regional offices of the Small Business Administration, small business development centers (as defined in section 3(t) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632(t))), and women’s business centers (as defined in section 29(a) of such Act (15 U.S.C. 656(a)));

(4) a description of any joint efforts between offices of the Small Business Administration or the Small Business Administration and other Federal agencies to advance the goal of supporting the economic success of entrepreneurs with a disability;

(5) any deficiencies in the resources and support described under paragraph (2);

(6) a description of the use of, and access to, resources of the Administration by entrepreneurs with a disability; and

(7) any recommendations for legislative actions that are necessary to address the challenges or needs of entrepreneurs with a disability that are identified in the report.

(b) COMPLIANCE WITH CUTGO.—No additional amounts are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentleman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. 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.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in full support of H.R. 7985, the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Reporting Act of 2024, introduced by Representatives MCGARVEY and MOLINARO.

This legislation will require the SBA to issue a report to Congress on the challenges individuals with disabilities face when starting a business. Further, it will require the SBA to look at resources across the Federal Government that assist individuals with disabilities.

The Government Accountability Office estimates that there are nearly 50 programs across nine Federal agencies that support employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. However, Federal agencies often fail to coordinate or collaborate on such programs to ensure that their efforts are not duplicated and are working as efficiently as possible. The Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Reporting Act of 2024 will require the SBA to look at this fragmented system and do its part to consolidate and streamline those efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representatives MCGARVEY and MOLINARO for their

leadership on this important issue and for introducing this bill. I urge a “yes” vote on the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, today we are considering H.R. 7985, which would require the SBA to submit a report to Congress on the challenges facing entrepreneurs with disabilities.

Despite progress to increase employment rates, only 26 percent of people with disabilities participate in the labor force. That is why we need a comprehensive study to assess the resources that are available to people with disabilities, examine their effectiveness, and determine what actions need to be taken to support entrepreneurs with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the efforts of Mr. MCGARVEY and Mr. MOLINARO to increase opportunities for people with disabilities. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 7985. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from the State of New York (Mr. MOLINARO).

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 7985, the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Reporting Act, which I am very proud to co-lead alongside my colleague, Representative MCGARVEY. I am grateful for his leadership and commitment to move the legislation forward and also to address an important need in our communities across this country.

This bipartisan bill will provide much-needed clarity for our entrepreneurs with disabilities as they navigate the SBA’s complex maze of over 50 different programs geared to support individuals with intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities as they start a business.

As of April 2022, 74 percent of adults with disabilities work outside the traditional workforce. Approximately 1.8 million of these adults with disabilities were businessowners themselves.

From limited access to affordable capital to a scarcity of supports and services tailored to their unique needs, the SBA needs to step up and, frankly, provide much greater support in working to consolidate this fractured and complex system.

Entrepreneurs of every ability should have a fair shot at pursuing their passion. As chair of the Small Business Subcommittee on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development, I remain committed, as I know my colleague, Mr. MCGARVEY, does, to empowering our entrepreneurs with disabilities to contribute more to Main Street and lead more independent lives.

The absence of adequate reporting data on entrepreneurs with disabilities renders this eager and highly competent community to the sidelines. The Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Re-

porting Act would provide a comprehensive assessment of the needs of our entrepreneurs with intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities and help inform lawmakers of legislative solutions to address the challenges these individuals face in order to break down barriers so they can pursue their own employment options and create opportunities to owning their own businesses.

Mr. Speaker, again, I thank Representative MORGAN MCGARVEY for his partnership on this bill. I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense, bipartisan legislation, and I look forward to continuing to show America what it means to think differently, breaking down barriers and creating opportunities for every individual of every ability.

□ 1600

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MCGARVEY).

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Reporting Act.

I think too often the outside focus on this body is on what isn’t working. There isn’t enough attention paid to when things come together and when it works the way it should.

I thank Chairman WILLIAMS and Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ for their support. I especially thank Chairman MOLINARO, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce, for his courage and compassion in personally navigating the maze of people who face intellectual and developmental disabilities.

We had a subcommittee hearing, and Chairman MOLINARO brought up Maeve, a young woman from New York, talking about her coffee shop. I brought up Cody Clark from Louisville, a truly inspiring young man who not only is an entrepreneur who told us about his experience, but I think he performed the first-ever magic trick in front of the Small Business Committee this year to highlight his point of what we can accomplish.

This bill helps ensure that every American—every American—has the opportunity to become that type of successful entrepreneur. After all, isn’t that the fundamental promise of the American Dream, that any person in this country can work hard, take risks, and hopefully find success?

What we highlighted in this hearing and through the stories of Maeve and Cody and others is that Americans with disabilities, like other underprivileged groups, see fewer opportunities to make this dream a reality.

In fact, 74 percent of people with disabilities do not participate in our Nation’s labor force. Too many barriers—both physical and intangible—block their way to joining the workforce or starting a business. The Federal Gov-

ernment must do more to help break those down.

To do that, we have to better understand what these challenges are, and this bill takes a really important first step in that process. It will require the Small Business Administration to submit a report to Congress on the challenges faced by entrepreneurs with disabilities. This report will assess the entrepreneurs’ challenges and needs, detail the resources the SBA currently provides, and recommend what actions we can take to improve how the Small Business Administration serves entrepreneurs with disabilities.

The better Congress understands these challenges, the easier it will be to knock them down to take these barriers away and make sure every American has the chance to succeed.

I again thank Chairman WILLIAMS, Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ, Chairman MOLINARO, and everyone else involved for their leadership and support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 7985.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Entrepreneurship provides people with disabilities a viable option to participate in the labor force and improve their quality of life.

SBA’s entrepreneurial ecosystem, comprised of nearly 1,000 resource partners across the country, can provide individuals with free counseling and training to launch and grow their small businesses.

We do not know how well SBA and its resource partners are meeting their needs and what more could be done to better serve these individuals. This bill will go a long way in assessing the outreach and engagement provided by SBA and make legislative recommendations to address any deficiencies in the services provided to people with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Mr. MCGARVEY and Mr. MOLINARO for their bipartisan efforts, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we have held hearings this year that have highlighted the great work of disabled entrepreneurs across the country. I thank Representatives MCGARVEY and MOLINARO again for offering this solution to ensure the government is working efficiently to offer these individuals the resources that are already available.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7985.

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.

PLAIN LANGUAGE IN CONTRACTING ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7987) to require plain language and the inclusion of key words in covered notices that are clear, concise, and accessible to small business concerns, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7987

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 "Plain Language in Contracting Act".

SEC. 2. ACCESSIBILITY AND CLARITY IN COVERED NOTICES FOR SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Each covered notice shall be written—

(1) in a manner that is clear, concise, and accessible to a small business concern; and

(2) in a manner consistent, to the extent practicable, with the Federal plain language guidelines established pursuant to the Plain Writing Act of 2010 (5 U.S.C. 301 note).

(b) INCLUSION OF KEY WORDS IN COVERED NOTICES.—Each covered notice shall, to the maximum extent practicable, include key words in the description of the covered notice such that a small business concern seeking contract opportunities using the single governmentwide point of entry described under section 1708 of title 41, United States Code, can easily identify and understand such covered notice.

(c) RULEMAKING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall issue rules to carry out this section.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED NOTICE.—The term "covered notice" means a notice pertaining to small business concerns published by a Federal agency on the single Government-wide point of entry described under section 1708 of title 41, United States Code.

(2) SMALL BUSINESS ACT DEFINITIONS.—The terms "Federal agency" and "small business concern" have the meanings given those terms, respectively, in section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632).

SEC. 3. COMPLIANCE WITH CUTGO.

No additional amounts are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act or the amendments made by this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentleman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7987, the Plain Language in Contracting Act, introduced by Representatives LALOTA and THANEDAR.

Far too often, the government uses language that is difficult to understand when it solicits contract opportunities. No one feels the burden of this government-speak more than small business owners looking to break into the Federal marketplace.

We have heard from small business owners about how their limited resources often prevent them from employing a team of attorneys to sift through government solicitations to interpret what the government is actually trying to purchase. One entrepreneur even told our committee that they examined thousands of government contracts, and only 3 percent were written in a way that someone without a college degree could understand.

The number of small businesses contracting with the government has been shrinking for years. We consistently hear that the barriers to entry are simply too high.

H.R. 7987 will finally remove this barrier facing small businesses by forcing the government to take commonsense action and write contract solicitations using simple and plain language.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 7987, the Plain Language in Contracting Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their work on this bill, which states that certain contracting documents should be written in a way that is "clear, concise, and accessible" for small businesses.

This bill is an attempt to reduce confusion and add clarity for some small firms that contract with or are looking to contract with the Federal Government.

While we have concerns about how elements of this legislation could be implemented, simplifying the contracting process and recruiting new entrants into the Federal marketplace are priorities that we share. There are certainly ways for the government to improve in both of those areas.

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

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA).

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Speaker, America's small businesses from Long Island and throughout our great country should not need an attorney on staff or a compliance department to apply for and win a Federal contract.

That is why I have introduced the Plain Language in Contracting Act,

which is aimed at simplifying the process for small businesses to secure government contracts.

I extend my gratitude to my colleague, Representative THANEDAR of Michigan, for co-leading this crucial legislation across party lines, and to the skipper, Chairman WILLIAMS, and his diligent staff for seeing to it that this bill got to the floor today.

With over 33 million small businesses in America, only a very small fraction win Federal contracts. Many entrepreneurs cite the complexity of government procurement processes as a major deterrent.

The language used in contract solicitations is often ambiguous and unnecessarily complex, deterring small businesses from even attempting to bid on a contract.

A study by the Naval Postgraduate School revealed that less than 3 percent of Department of Defense contract solicitations are written in plain English. This complexity drives small businesses away from Federal contracting, eroding competition and harming our economy.

My bill mandates Federal agencies to use clear language in contract solicitations, fostering greater accessibility to contract bids for small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation recognizing the pivotal role small businesses play in our Nation's economy. Together, let's pave the way for a more accessible Federal contracting process for all small businesses. Doing so benefits small businesses, the Federal Government, and all of our taxpayers.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. THANEDAR).

Mr. THANEDAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7987, the Plain Language in Contracting Act, which I am co-leading with Representative NICK LALOTA of New York. I applaud Representative LALOTA's leadership, and it is a pleasure to work with him on this bipartisan bill.

I am also, as an entrepreneur, delighted and excited to be working on the Small Business Committee led so well by Chairman WILLIAMS and Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ.

Having experienced the challenges of running a small business, I recognize the urgent need to cut through the jargon of bureaucracy and provide clear, concise, and accessible information to our Nation's small business owners.

This bill would require all notices related to small business concerns to comply with the Federal plain language guidelines established by the Plain Writing Act of 2010, reflecting our core values of transparency, efficiency, and unwavering dedication to fostering a level playing field for all businesses, regardless of size.

By including key words and sticking to the Federal plain language guidelines, we are not just drafting legislation. We are empowering small businesses to navigate the complexity of

government contracting with confidence and ease.

This is about more than just policy. It is about supporting our economy and ensuring that every entrepreneur has the opportunity to succeed.

Walking down the streets of my district, I meet a lot of small business owners every day. Often, I hear from these small businesses, the mom-and-pop shops, the entrepreneurs who are working so hard, that the complexity of the language contributes to the difficulty in obtaining Federal contracts.

This bill goes a long way in simplifying the matter, helping our small businesses that create most of the jobs to be able to acquire Federal contracts and work with the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELAZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Again, I thank the sponsors for their work on this bill, and I believe that the goals are laudable.

It is a mandate of our committee to regularly review the processes that SBA and Federal agencies put in place to recruit, retain, and contract with small businesses—and do so with the goal of making it easier for them to compete for and win Federal awards.

Given that small businesses are leaving the Federal market at a record pace, and fewer small businesses are choosing to work with the government to begin with, we must use the tools available to us to provide remedies where we can.

□ 1615

In closing, I thank the chairman and the sponsors of the legislation for their commitment and dedication to our Nation's small business owners.

National Small Business Week is a good reminder that we need to work together in a bipartisan way to create more opportunities for our Nation's 33 million entrepreneurs.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't mention there are a sizeable number of Democratic bills that have been reported favorably from the committee but have not been scheduled for the floor.

In a spirit of bipartisanship, which is what National Small Business Week showcases to our constituents, I look forward to the chairman bringing more of these bills to the floor soon.

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

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressmen LALOTA and THANEDAR for this bill. Interpreting the Federal contracting language should not be a barrier that small businesses need to overcome in order to compete for a government contract.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I hear what the rank-

ing member is saying. It is a great week for small business and the National Small Business Week we have ahead of us.

This is another example of what this committee is doing, Mr. Speaker, on bipartisan legislation that we are getting out to help America. We can get it done in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7987.

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.

FIRE WEATHER DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2024

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4866) to direct the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish a program to improve fire weather and fire environment forecasting, detection, and local collaboration, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4866

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 "Fire Weather Development Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. FIRE WEATHER FORECASTING AND DETECTION.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, shall establish a program (in this Act referred to as the "Program") to improve fire weather and fire environment forecasting, detection, and delivery of products or services through collaboration with Federal and State agencies or departments, local emergency managers, and relevant entities.

(b) GOALS.—The goals of the Program shall be to develop and improve accurate fire weather and fire environment forecasts and warnings in order to reduce loss of life, reduce injuries, protect property, and reduce damage to the economy from wildfires. The Program shall seek to improve the assessment of fire weather and fire environments, the understanding and prediction of wildfires, and the communications regarding such assessments with State and local emergency officials in a timely and streamlined fashion, with a focus on improving the following:

(1) The prediction of ignition, intensification and spread of wildfires.

(2) The observation and monitoring of fire weather and fire environments.

(3) The forecast and communication of smoke dispersion from wildfires.

(4) Information dissemination and risk communication to develop more effective watch and warning products relating to wildfires.

(5) The early detection of wildfires, including pre-ignition analysis and ground condition characterizations.

(6) The development, testing, and deployment of novel tools and techniques related to understanding, monitoring, and predicting fire weather and fire environments.

(7) The understanding and association of climate change and its impacts on fire weather and fire environments.

(8) The unique characteristics, including observation or modeling requirements, related to fires at the wildland-urban interface.

(9) The forecasting and understanding of the impacts of prescribed burns (as such term is defined in section 2 of the Prescribed Burn Approval Act of 2016 (16 U.S.C. 551c-1 note)).

(c) COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS.—In developing the Program required under this section, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall solicit and take into consideration input from the weather industry, such academic entities as the Administrator considers appropriate, and other relevant stakeholders.

(d) ACTIVITIES.—To achieve the goals specified in subsection (b), the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration may conduct research, development, testing, demonstration, and operational transition activities related to fire weather and fire environments, including regarding the following:

(1) Tools and services to inform, support, and complement active land management, local emergency personnel, the United States Forest Service, and State, local, and Tribal entities during their response and mitigation efforts.

(2) Sensing technologies, such as infrared, microwave, and active sensors suitable for potential deployment on spacecraft, aircraft, and unmanned aircraft systems, to improve the monitoring and forecasting of fire fuel and active wildfires, wildfire behavior models and forecasts, mapping efforts, and the prediction of wildfires and the impacts of such.

(3) Grid-based assessments and outlooks of fuel moisture and danger levels.

(4) Social and behavior sciences related to fire weather and fire environment warning products.

(5) Advanced satellite detection products coupled with atmosphere and fire weather modeling systems.

(6) Education and training to expand the number of students and researchers in areas of study and research related to wildfires, fire weather, and fire environments.

(7) Modeling systems to link long-term climate predictions to localized or general land management decisions.

(8) Communication and outreach to communities, energy utilities, owners and operators of critical infrastructure, and other relevant stakeholders regarding fire weather and fire environment risk.

(9) Stewardship and dissemination, to the extent practicable, of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration scientific data and related products and services in formats meeting shared standards to enhance the interoperability, usability, and accessibility of such data in order to better meet the needs of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, other Federal agencies, and relevant stakeholders.

(10) Improvement of spatial and temporal resolution observations.

(11) Any other topic or activity the Administrator determines relevant.

(e) NOVEL TOOLS FOR MONITORING AND PREDICTION.—The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in consultation with the heads of the agencies specified in section 3, or other appropriate

stakeholders, including commercial partners, shall develop novel tools and technologies to support the activities of the Program and which may be applied to broader wildland fire research, monitoring, and mitigation activities, as practicable and appropriate.

(f) **EXTRAMURAL RESEARCH.**—The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall collaborate with and support the non-Federal wildland fire research community, which includes institutions of higher education, private sector entities, nongovernmental organizations, and other relevant stakeholders, by making funds available through competitive grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements.

(g) **COMMERCIAL DATA.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in consultation with the heads of other Federal agencies and relevant stakeholders, may enter into contracts with one or more private sector entities to obtain additional airborne and space-based data and observations that may enhance or supplement the understanding, monitoring, and prediction, of fire weather and fire environments, and the relevant Program activities under this section.

(2) **CONSULTATION.**—In carrying out activities under paragraph (1), the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall consult with private sector entities through the National Advisory Committee on Wildfires under section 4 to identify needed tools and data that can be best provided by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration satellites and are most beneficial to wildfire and smoke detection and monitoring.

(h) **NONDUPLICATION.**—To the maximum extent practicable, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall consult with the National Interagency Fire Center, including the Joint Fire Science Program, to avoid duplication of activities under this section and ensure the Administration's focus on unique research activities best suited for transition to operations.

(i) **UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall—

(A) assess the role and potential benefits of unmanned aircraft systems to improve data collection in support of fire weather and fire environment modeling, meteorological observations, predictions, and forecasts;

(B) identify objectives for testing such systems' use for obtaining fire weather and fire environment observations, and other relevant activities; and

(C) transition unmanned aircraft systems technologies from research to operations as the Administrator considers appropriate.

(2) **BRIEFING.**—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of the Act, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall brief the appropriate committees of Congress on the activities under paragraph (1).

(3) **PILOT PROGRAMS.**—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration may conduct pilot programs of unmanned aircraft systems for fire weather and fire environment observations, including relating to the following:

(A) Testing of unmanned aircraft systems in approximations of real-world scenarios.

(B) Assessment of the utility of meteorological data collected from fire response and assessment aircraft.

(C) Input into appropriate models of collected data to predict fire behavior, including coupled atmosphere and fire models.

(D) Collection of best management practices for deployment of unmanned aircraft systems for fire weather and fire environment observations.

(4) **PROHIBITION.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided under subparagraphs (B) and (C), the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration may not procure any unmanned aircraft system that is manufactured or assembled by an entity in a foreign country of concern.

(B) **EXEMPTION.**—The prohibition under subparagraph (A) shall not apply to the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration if the Administrator determines, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, that the procurement of an unmanned aircraft system is necessary for the sole purpose of marine or atmospheric science or management.

(C) **WAIVER.**—The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration may waive the prohibition under subparagraph (A) on a case-by-case basis—

(i) with the approval of the Secretary of Homeland Security; and

(ii) upon written or electronic notification to appropriate committees of Congress not later than 30 days after any such waiver.

(5) **AIRSPACE OPERATIONS SYSTEM.**—The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in cooperation with the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, shall utilize the capabilities of unmanned aircraft systems as appropriate for fire weather and fire environment observations, and may use a wildfire airspace operations system that accounts for piloted aircraft, unmanned aircraft systems, and other new and emerging capabilities after such airspace operations system is developed and determined ready for operational use by the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

(6) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 2025 to carry out this subsection.

(j) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.**—The term “appropriate committees of Congress” means the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate.

(2) **CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE.**—The term “critical infrastructure” has the meaning given such term in section 1016(e) of Public Law 107–56 (42 U.S.C. 5195c(e)).

(3) **FOREIGN COUNTRY OF CONCERN.**—The term “foreign country of concern” has the meaning given such term in section 9901 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (15 U.S.C. 4651).

(4) **INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.**—The term “institution of higher education” has the meaning given such term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

(5) **UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM.**—The term “unmanned aircraft system” has the meaning given such term in section 44801 of title 49, United States Code.

(6) **WEATHER INDUSTRY.**—The term “weather industry” has the meaning given such term in section 2 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8501).

SEC. 3. INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON WILDFIRES.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall establish an interagency coordinating committee to be known as the “Interagency Coordinating Committee on Wildfires” (in this section referred to as the “Committee”). The chair of the Committee shall be the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

(b) **PURPOSE.**—The Committee shall coordinate the development of accurate and timely wildfire forecasting, detection, monitoring, and delivery of related products or services that best assist State and local emergency officials while avoiding duplication of activities.

(c) **MEMBERSHIP.**—In addition to the chair, the Committee shall be composed of the heads or appropriate designees of the following program agencies:

(1) The Federal Emergency Management Agency.

(2) The United States Fire Administration.

(3) The United States Forest Service.

(4) The National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

(5) The Department of the Interior.

(6) The Department of Agriculture.

(7) The United States Geological Survey.

(8) The Office of Science and Technology Policy.

(9) Any other Federal department or agency the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy considers appropriate.

(d) **STRATEGIC PLAN.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Committee shall submit to Congress a strategic plan for the Program that includes the following:

(1) A description of short-term, mid-term, and long-term objectives to achieve the purpose specified in subsection (b).

(2) A description of how agencies specified in subsection (c) will collaborate with stakeholders and take into account stakeholder needs and recommendations in developing such objectives.

(3) A description of existing and new observational and data infrastructure needed to accomplish such objectives.

(4) A description of the role of each such agency in achieving such objectives.

(5) Guidance regarding how the Committee's recommendations are best used in climate adaptation planning for Federal, State, local, Tribal, and territorial entities.

(e) **INTERAGENCY AGREEMENTS.**—The heads of agencies specified in subsection (c) may enter into one or more interagency agreements providing for cooperation and collaboration in the development of wildfire forecasting, detection, and monitoring tools, instruments, technologies, and research to accomplish the purpose described in subsection (b).

(f) **COLLABORATION.**—The head of each agency specified in subsection (c) shall, to the extent practicable, increase engagement and cooperation with international, academic, State, and local communities regarding the infrastructure, data, and scientific research necessary to best advance the forecasting, detection, and monitoring of and preparation for wildfires.

SEC. 4. NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WILDFIRES.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 90 days after the submission of the strategic plan required by section 3(d), the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall establish a national advisory committee to be known as the “National Advisory Committee on Wildfires” (in this section referred

to as the “Advisory Committee”). The Advisory Committee shall consist of not fewer than seven and not more than 15 members who are qualified to provide advice regarding wildfire forecasting, detection, monitoring, and delivery of related products or services, including from the following entities:

- (A) Research and academic institutions.
- (B) Public communication or broadcast entities.
- (C) Emergency management agencies.
- (D) State, local, or Tribal governments.
- (E) The National Association of State Foresters.
- (F) Business communities.
- (G) Other entities as designated by the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

(2) **PROHIBITION.**—Members of the Advisory Committee may not be employees of the Federal Government.

(b) **ASSESSMENT.**—The Advisory Committee shall offer assessments and recommendations relating to the following:

(1) Tailored forecasting, detection, and monitoring products and tools.

(2) Communication and delivery methods of wildfire forecasting, detection, and monitoring information.

(3) Opportunities to streamline Federal forecasting, monitoring, and detection information to local emergency personnel and communities.

(4) The management, coordination, implementation, and activities of the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Wildfires under section 3.

(5) The effectiveness of the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Wildfires in meeting its purposes.

(c) **COMPENSATION.**—Members of the Advisory Committee shall serve without compensation.

(d) **REPORTS.**—Not less frequently than biennially, the Advisory Committee shall report to the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy on the assessments carried out under subsection (b) and its recommendations for ways to improve the coordination and dissemination of wildfire forecasts, warnings, and detection and monitoring information.

(e) **CHARTER.**—Notwithstanding section 1013(b)(2) of title 5, United States Code, the Advisory Committee shall not be required to file a charter subsequent to its initial charter, filed under section 1008(c) of such title, before the termination date specified in subsection (f) of this section.

(f) **TERMINATION.**—The Advisory Committee shall terminate on September 30, 2028.

(g) **CONFLICT OF INTEREST.**—An Advisory Committee member shall recuse himself or herself from any Advisory Committee activity in which he or she has an actual pecuniary interest.

SEC. 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF FIRE WEATHER TESTBED.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall establish a fire weather testbed to enable engagement across the Federal Government, State and local governments, academia, private and federally funded research laboratories, the private sector, and end-users in order to evaluate the accuracy and usability of technology, models, fire weather products and services, and other research to accelerate the implementation, transition to operations, and use of new capabilities by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Federal and land management agencies, and other relevant stakeholders.

(b) **RESOURCES.**—In carrying out this section, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration may not transfer or reprogram any funds, detail

any personnel, or make use of any infrastructure from cooperative institutes of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in existence as of the date of the enactment of this Act for the fire weather testbed established under subsection (a).

(c) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated \$4,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2028 to carry out this section.

SEC. 6. INCIDENT METEOROLOGIST WORKFORCE.

(a) **WORKFORCE AND TRAINING ASSESSMENT.**—Not later than six months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate the results of an assessment of National Weather Service workforce and training challenges for Incident Meteorologists, and a roadmap for overcoming such challenges. Such assessment shall take into consideration information technology support, logistical and administrative operations, anticipated weather and climate conditions, and feedback from relevant stakeholders, and shall include, to the maximum extent practicable, an identification by the National Weather Service of the following:

(1) The expected number of Incident Meteorologists needed over the next five years.

(2) Potential hiring authorities necessary to overcome any identified workforce and training challenges.

(3) Alternative services or assistance options the National Weather Service could provide to meet operational needs.

(b) **OVERTIME PAY.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Any premium pay for services performed by Incident Meteorologists of the National Weather Service that are determined by the Secretary of Commerce to be primarily related to emergency wildland fire suppression activities shall be disregarded in calculating the aggregate of such employee’s basic pay and premium pay for purposes of a limitation under section 5547 of title 5, United States Code, or under any other provision of law.

(2) **RATES.**—Section 5542(a)(5) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting “, the National Weather Service,” after “Interior”.

SEC. 7. RESEARCH ON WILDLAND FIRE COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—

(1) **PUBLIC SAFETY RESEARCH.**—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director, acting through the head of the Public Safety and Communications Research Division and in consultation with the Fire Research Division and technology manufacturers, shall carry out research on the following:

(A) Public safety communication coordination standards among Federal, State, Tribal, and local wildland firefighters, fire management response officials, and member agencies.

(B) Improving and integrating existing communications systems to transmit secure real-time data, alerts, and advisories to and from fire management response officials and wildland firefighters.

(2) **FIELD TESTING AND MEASUREMENT OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AND TECHNOLOGY.**—The Public Safety and Communications Research Division, in consultation with the Fire Research Division and member agencies, shall conduct both live and virtual field testing of equipment, software, and other technologies to determine current times of information dissemination and develop

standards for the delivery of useful and secure real-time data among member agencies, fire management response officials, and wildland firefighters, based on findings from research under paragraph (1).

(b) **RECOMMENDATIONS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Director shall develop and publish recommendations to improve public safety communication coordination standards among wildland first responders and fire management response officials.

(2) **TRANSMITTAL.**—The Director shall transmit the recommendations under paragraph (1) to the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Science and Technology Policy for member agencies to implement.

(3) **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Director shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report containing the recommendations published under paragraph (1).

(B) **IMPLEMENTATION.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of the publication of the Director’s recommendations under paragraph (1), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the extent to which member agencies have implemented such recommendations.

(c) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **DIRECTOR.**—The term “Director” means the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

(2) **MEMBER AGENCY.**—The term “member agency” means a member agency of the National Interagency Fire Center, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, United States Fire Administration, and the Department of Defense.

(3) **WILDLAND FIREFIGHTER.**—The term “wildland firefighter” means any person who participates in wildland firefighting activities.

(4) **FIRE MANAGEMENT RESPONSE OFFICIALS.**—The term “fire management response officials” means regional fire directors, deputy regional fire directors, agency officials who directly oversee fire operations, fire management officers, and individuals serving on incident management teams.

(5) **TECHNOLOGY MANUFACTURERS.**—The term “technology manufacturers” means private sector entities that manufacture communications technologies used by Federal, State, Tribal, or local wildland fire authorities.

SEC. 8. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **FIRE ENVIRONMENT.**—The term “fire environment” means—

(A) the environmental conditions, such as soil moisture, vegetation, topography, snowpack, atmospheric temperature, moisture, and wind, that influence—

(i) fuel and fire behavior; and
(ii) smoke dispersion and transport; and
(B) the associated environmental impacts occurring during and after fire events.

(2) **FIRE WEATHER.**—The term “fire weather” means the weather conditions that influence the start, spread, character, or behavior of wildfires or fires at the wildland-urban interface and relevant meteorological and chemical phenomena, including air quality, smoke, and meteorological parameters such as relative humidity, air temperature, wind

speed and direction, and atmospheric composition and chemistry, including emissions and mixing heights.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIMENEZ). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) and the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STEVENS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LUCAS. 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 H.R. 4866, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4866, the Fire Weather Development Act of 2024, offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. MIKE GARCIA), my friend and colleague on the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

This bill directs the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to improve the forecasting and detection of fire weather as well as increase collaboration with State and local partners to predict and fight fires.

Just over a month ago, the largest wildfire in U.S. history burned over a million acres in the Texas Panhandle and parts of my district in western Oklahoma.

The Smokehouse Creek fire, as it is now known, was the result of extremely dry and windy conditions that saw a half million acres burn within 24 hours of the fire's start.

With two fatalities, along with hundreds of homes and thousands of cattle lost, the effects of this fire will be felt in this region of our country for many years.

If it wasn't for a shift in wind direction at just the right time, my property would have been a part of that destruction.

At home, I had to take the precaution of moving cattle into fields that were less likely to burn, if the fire kept coming our way.

Looking back on this event today, there is one good thing we can take from it: We know with certainty that the National Weather Service has the tools and capability for fire weather forecasting and prediction that can protect lives and property.

The National Weather Service Storm Prediction Center began mentioning the potential for fire weather conditions in their extended forecast 6 days before the Smokehouse Creek fire started.

In my case, I closely monitored this weather outlook and made critical decisions based on the weather data, models, and forecasts that were available.

While two lives were lost, and that is two too many, it is likely there would have been more, if not for the work of the National Weather Service.

With an increased innovative focus provided by direction from Congress and the necessary resources, NOAA and the NWS can expand these capabilities and ensure every region of our country is prepared for the extreme weather events of the future.

Every citizen can and should have the most accurate tools readily available, just like I did. The bill we are considering today, the Fire Weather Development Act, is a critical step in that direction.

H.R. 4866 directs NOAA to develop and improve accurate fire weather and fire environment forecasts and warnings.

It places an emphasis on developing and using novel technologies such as advanced weather, advanced satellite detection paired with AI modeling systems, or active sensors for potential deployment on unmanned aircraft systems.

These technologies will improve wildfire behavior models, mapping efforts, and the monitoring of fire fuel and active fires, while also eliminating the risk of sending firefighters and operators into potential danger.

The Fire Weather Development Act also recognizes the critical need for Federal collaboration by establishing an Interagency Coordinating Committee on Wildfires.

With all the relevant bodies working together, this committee will coordinate the development of accurate and timely wildfire forecasting, detection, monitoring, and delivery of products or services that best assist State and local emergency officials.

Lastly, this bill establishes an independent National Advisory Council on Wildfires to ensure that local officials, communities, and people who are directly affected by wildfires have a seat at the table and can provide input on what tools or services are most needed.

I thank Representative MIKE GARCIA for introducing this bill along with his cosponsors, Representatives CARAVEO and KIM.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join us in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, in Hawaii, California, Colorado, and Michigan, wildfires are posing an increasing threat to the lives and livelihoods of so many Americans.

Over the last 30 years, the wildfire season in the West alone has lengthened by several months, and the total number of acres burned per year has nearly doubled.

Climate change has contributed to warmer temperatures and drier conditions, causing more frequent and intense wildland fires.

Understanding the fundamental science behind wildfires, including the impacts of climate change, is abso-

lutely essential to our ability to improve the prediction and forecasting of increasingly severe wildfires.

Another essential element to our response to wildfires is the effective communication of information and risks to land managers and to those living in wildfire-vulnerable areas.

To accomplish that, we have H.R. 4866, a phenomenal bipartisan piece of legislation to direct NOAA to establish a program that will increase the accuracy of, and effectively communicate, fire forecasts and warnings.

The brave and tireless work of incident management teams is absolutely the cornerstone of successful wildfire responses. This includes incident meteorologists, or IMETs, who work around the clock at active fire sites for days or weeks at a time, providing lifesaving information about wildfire and environmental conditions to firefighters and managers.

This bill also allows NOAA's National Weather Service to fully compensate IMETs for overtime work during active fire events, which will expand the capacity of IMETs to conduct their essential work.

The bill also requires NOAA to leverage collaborations with State, local, and Tribal governments, Federal agencies, academia, and the private sector to decrease the loss of lives and property from wildfires and support fire response personnel.

I truly commend Congressman MIKE GARCIA and my colleague from Colorado (Ms. CARAVEO) for working on this important legislation that will truly put the United States in a better position to respond to increasing threats of wildfires.

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

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. MIKE GARCIA) to speak on this bill.

Mr. MIKE GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his leadership on this bill.

In my district, it is all about security. It is about economic security. It is about national security. It is about school security, neighborhood security, and yes, border security, and yes, protecting Social Security.

If you live in my district, you will recognize that this bill, H.R. 4866, is truly about security. My district in north L.A. County has the most dense and largest interface of wildlands with human beings and housing developments.

They are all too familiar, my constituents, with the dangers that wildfires pose to our homes and to our livelihoods.

For my constituents, wildfire mitigation isn't a red or blue issue. It is not a Republican or Democratic issue. It is a life-or-death issue. That is why I have made it a top priority since coming to Washington to improve our ability to predict and to fight these disasters in order to keep our firefighters,

our homes, and our families safe from harm.

My bill, H.R. 4866, the Fire Weather Development Act, is a strong bipartisan step forward in a constant fight against these catastrophic wildfires.

This bill will dramatically improve NOAA's ability to predict, prevent, and respond to wildfires and to get information down to the local emergency responders.

It would be easy, the last 2 years have been relatively calm fire seasons, to get lulled into a false sense of security in southern California, but the next big fire season is right around the corner.

We have had 2 years of record rain that has spurred an explosion of grass and dense shrubbery across the hills in my district.

As the weather starts to dry out again, so will the forest, transforming greenery into an abundance of fuel and but that a stray spark or lightning strike can set ablaze in a moment's notice.

Southern California will be a tinderbox this fall, and the time to prevent wildfires is now. We can't allow ourselves to wait for another wildfire season like we had in 2020 where California lost over 4 million acres and 10,000 buildings due to mismanagement in years prior, like the fires that we saw in Texas just recently and in Hawaii just last year, so horrifically taking the lives of so many Americans.

Half the wildland in my district falls in Federal forests, so this is very important that we, at the Federal level, take care of this issue.

We need to be investing now, not just for our prediction efforts, but to ensure that our firefighters have every possible tool at their disposal to respond.

Firefighters are like frontline combat operators against wildfires, and there is no reason they shouldn't be as well-equipped as they fight fires as our soldiers are when they fight our enemies overseas.

They need the tools this bill provides; advanced imaging to see the fires before they grow out of control, drones to reach the small and remote fires, and improved communications to adjust the forward line of combat operations quickly and safely.

Just like our soldiers, we also need to send the firefighters into dangerous situations only when it is absolutely necessary.

My bill invests in fuel mapping, unmanned vehicles, unmanned aerial vehicles, wildfire behavior models and more, and all the steps to make 1 firefighter fight like 10 and to minimize the need to put them in danger. More importantly, to make sure that when they fight, they come home each night.

The side benefit of all of this is there is an ongoing fight against insurance companies in California, and this is going to improve lives outside of just the wildfire events as well.

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This is a constant threat, and we haven't done a good job in California managing our wildlands.

As a result of that, we have seen a disastrous effect on livelihoods and the economy, especially in southern California. The threat has gotten so bad that insurance companies are jacking up rates on current customers and have stopped offering policies to any new homeowners in my district.

I have heard countless stories from constituents about their house fire policies going up anywhere from 5 to 10 times what they were just in one year. I had a church pastor reach out this last weekend, Mr. Speaker, who said his premiums went from \$3,000 a year for his fire insurance to \$30,000 a year for a very small church.

To be clear, this bill is not a silver bullet that is going to solve the insurance problem. That is a problem made in Sacramento that this will hopefully mitigate, but there is still a whole lot of bad policies coming out of Sacramento that need to be addressed.

If we can drastically improve our ability to protect people's homes, it will hopefully be a massive step in the right direction and allow the insurance companies to come back to California.

I thank Chairman LUCAS for his leadership on this bill and allowing this to come to the floor. I thank Ms. CARAVEO for her cosponsorship of this bill. I urge my colleagues to support the Fire Weather Development Act to ensure the security of our constituents in all districts, not just mine, but throughout the Nation that face the daily threat of catastrophic wildfires.

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. CARAVEO).

Ms. CARAVEO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 4866, the Fire Weather Development Act. I thank my colleagues, Congressman MIKE GARCIA and Congresswoman KIM, for working with me to run this bipartisan piece of legislation. Thank you also to Ranking Member LOFGREN and Chairman LUCAS for their steadfast leadership.

Sadly, Coloradans are no strangers to wildfires, and we know that wildfires are no longer seasonal but can happen year-round. The impacts of these fires are felt long after the flames are extinguished and have lasting effects on our environment, economy, infrastructure, and more. With that, we are also seeing wildfires begin to encroach on communities that are not used to experiencing fires.

The Marshall fire in Colorado was the most expensive wildfire in our State's history and was primarily driven by an extreme windstorm that blew the fire into suburban parts of Colorado right next door to my district. With the total monetary cost of the Marshall fire estimated at \$2 billion, it is critical that we continue to invest in new ways to understand fire weather.

This is where our bill, the Fire Weather Development Act, comes in.

This bill will give NOAA the tools it needs to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to fire weather technology by allowing the agency to do things like access airborne and space-based data to enhance fire weather and fire environment monitoring. The bill also gives NOAA the ability to determine drone usage to improve data collection and even conduct drone pilot programs. Finally, the bill helps our local and State responders even more through several provisions focused on improving communications, especially around forecasting.

The Front Range and northern Colorado know how important it is that we do what we can to better predict fire weather, especially when it means protecting our homes and economic well-being.

In Colorado's Eighth District, we have a burgeoning energy sector and the largest agriculture economy in the State, but as we saw in Texas earlier this year, one wildfire can pose serious damage to that. By passing the Fire Weather Development Act, we are ensuring that we keep bolstering the tools we have to respond to fire weather. I look forward to continuing to work with Representatives MIKE GARCIA and KIM to get this commonsense solution in this bill across the finish line as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for closing.

Mr. Speaker, we find ourselves at a prominent moment here on the House floor, hopefully seeing the passage of H.R. 4866 to address some of these extraordinary fire considerations that have taken place. I continue to encourage my colleagues to join those of us who do this hard and great work on the Science Committee to pass this bill.

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

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

Over the last 5 years, the average annual cost of Federal firefighting suppression has been \$2.8 billion. While forest and land management can help prevent wildfires, long- and short-term weather observations, or modeling, play a critical role in limiting their spread and damage.

The Fire Weather Development Act takes immediate action to address this by increasing NOAA and the National Weather Service's activities to best protect lives and property at risk of wildfires.

I again thank the gentleman from California (Mr. MIKE GARCIA) for working tirelessly to get this bill across the finish line and increasing the lifesaving services available to his constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

LUCAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4866, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

**CLEAN ENERGY DEMONSTRATION
TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2023**

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1069) to amend the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to require reporting regarding clean energy demonstration projects, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1069

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 “Clean Energy Demonstration Transparency Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

Subsection (h) of section 41201 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (42 U.S.C. 18861) is amended by adding at the end following new paragraph:

“(3) FURTHER REPORTS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than six months after the date of the enactment of this paragraph and at least semiannually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate a report, and make publicly available in digital online format, that contains, for the period covered by each such report, for each covered project or other demonstration project administered or supported by the program, the following:

“(i) A copy of any initial contracts or financial assistance agreements executed between the Department and an award recipient, including any related documentation, as the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(ii) A list of any material, technical, or financial milestones that have or have not been met.

“(iii) Any material modifications to the scope, schedule, funding profile (including cost-share requirements), project partners or participating entities, or budget of the project.

“(B) STREAMLINING.—To the extent practicable, the Secretary may synchronize the reports required under subparagraph (A) with other required reports, such as those required under—

“(i) paragraph (1); and

“(ii) section 9005(e) of the Energy Act of 2020 (42 U.S.C. 7256c(e); enacted as division Z of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021).”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) and the gentle-

woman from Michigan (Ms. STEVENS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extemporaneous material on H.R. 1069, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1069, the Clean Energy Demonstration Transparency Act of 2023 offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CAREY). This commonsense legislation will provide Congress with the necessary tools to conduct thorough oversight on the Department of Energy’s growing number of demonstration projects.

Specifically, H.R. 1069 requires the Secretary of Energy to report to Congress on all demonstration projects administered by the Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations. As part of this report, the Secretary must include all contracts, milestones, schedules, and funding profiles, including cost-share agreements.

DOE established OCED to carry out the technology demonstration projects that were authorized in the Energy Act of 2020 and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. This includes projects with bipartisan support such as the Advanced Reactor Demonstration Program and Long-Duration Energy Storage Demonstrations.

Historically, DOE’s applied energy offices have administered these programs, creating a natural pipeline from the lab to the field. With the creation of OCED, DOE put these activities in a new and untested office, separating expertise and adding a new layer of bureaucracy. At the same time, the infrastructure bill and the Inflation Reduction Act appropriated \$27 billion to OCED to fund these projects.

This organizational change and influx of money should concern every lawmaker given previous instances of DOE’s mismanagement of demonstration projects. Already, OCED has been slow to award recipients and struggled to identify unique capabilities not covered by the applied energy offices.

Currently, Congress lacks the necessary safeguards and the ability to conduct rigorous oversight over OCED and its demonstration projects. For example, when the Science Committee tried to get more information on DOE waiving the cost-share requirement for a multimillion-dollar project, DOE had no requirement to document or justify their decision.

H.R. 1069 requires DOE to submit semiannual reports which include all contracts, agreements, and funding breakdowns, and enables Congress to have the tools to protect taxpayers’

dollars, hold OCED accountable, and ensure a truly competitive selection process based on merits.

I am proud to cosponsor this bill, along with Ranking Member LOFGREN, and I extend my appreciation to Representative CAREY for continuing his leadership on this issue despite no longer sitting on the Science Committee.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this is one of the moments where we find ourselves so grateful for the House RECORD, as we yet again are moving to pass a bipartisan piece of legislation, H.R. 1069, the Clean Energy Demonstration Transparency Act in a bipartisan fashion here, forever commemorated on the House floor.

We are recognizing that here in the United States of America, our phenomenal Department of Energy, now being run by Michigan’s former Governor, Secretary Jennifer Granholm, is doing clean energy. These are clean energy projects that are coming to fruition because of the Invest in America agenda promulgated by the President of the United States, the great Joe Biden.

We have already in place, 3 years on, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law which established a first of its kind clean energy demonstration office centrally coordinating the Department of Energy’s larger-scale clean energy technology development. I really appreciate when we can say, as Democrats and Republicans, yes to transparency because we do want the world to see that we are doing clean energy, and we will lead the sustainability vision for the future.

We also know that \$25 billion coming out of this Bipartisan Infrastructure Law legislation is funding and scaling emerging technologies such as clean hydrogen and advanced nuclear energy, which is needed to tackle some of our most pressing climate challenges and certainly to achieve our net zero goals that we have established for ourselves.

One of the initiatives that has been supported by the Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations, one that I am very excited about and has great meaning for us in Michigan, the automotive supply chain innovation capital of the world, is hydrogen hubs. We have these hydrogen hubs that have come to fruition or are being invested in out of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Certainly, as I mentioned, these hubs are helping my State of Michigan. We have got the Midwest Alliance for Clean Hydrogen, and it is going to leverage my State’s famous industrial power to lead the Nation in this clean energy hydrogen production.

The hubs are going to benefit from this transparency legislation, this network of hydrogen hubs which are seeking to lower our emissions as a Nation

in certainly a very trying moment for decarbonization. We see hydrogen really coming into play with heavy-duty transportation and maritime port equipment.

I invite everyone to take a peek at what is happening in Michigan because it is really quite phenomenal with these supply chain corridors and manufacturers and how they are adopting hydrogen. I will keep my finger on the pulse of their work for many years to come.

Here we stand now with this demonstration activity. We are going to push for transparency. We have this great group, the chairman of the Science Committee and the ranking member of the Science Committee, that have come together to support this legislation. We want Congress to have a hand in it because we know when we pass these big bills, a lot of times we just go forward and then we are hungry to implement and hungry to keep a finger on the pulse and maybe we can have a couple of hearings, but H.R. 1069 gives us a runway. It is really quite essential, and it also helps the Department of Energy, particularly President Biden's Department of Energy, continue to do what it is doing really well.

Let us all see this phenomenal bill get passed. I join the chairman of the Science Committee calling on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to continue to push forward in a bipartisan fashion the passage of H.R. 1069.

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

□ 1645

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CAREY).

Mr. CAREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a bill that will lead America toward an all-of-the-above energy future, H.R. 1069, the Clean Energy Demonstration Transparency Act.

First, I thank Chairman LUCAS, Ranking Member LOFGREN, and Energy Subcommittee Chairman WILLIAMS for their work on bringing this bill to the floor. I also thank the Science, Space, and Technology Committee staff for their bipartisan efforts in moving this legislation forward.

Strengthening the energy category of domestic energy production, including renewables, oil, gas, coal, and nuclear, will safeguard our supply chains, defend our national security, and, in fact, boost our economy.

H.R. 1069 is a commonsense bill that will increase transparency and oversight of the investments in home-grown, clean energy, including the billions of taxpayer dollars entrusted to the newly established Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations.

Specifically, the bill requires the Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations to submit semiannual reports to Congress regarding the budget, schedule, and participating entities of their demonstration projects.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bill, which will give Americans confidence that their taxpayer dollars are being used wisely in our pursuit of energy independence.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I am prepared to close once the gentlewoman from Michigan does.

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, in closing, again, I feel passionate about this legislation. I thank Mr. CAREY for his remarks and for joining us on the House floor. I look forward to seeing this bill become law.

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

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, one of our most important responsibilities in Congress is to serve as the steward of taxpayers' dollars. I take that job very seriously.

I want to see DOE and all of our Federal research agencies succeed in developing next-generation technologies. At the same time, we need to be conscious of the body and keep a watchful eye on the progress of these projects well before their costs balloon into multibillions of dollars.

H.R. 1069 allows us to do exactly that. It increases transparency between DOE and Congress, enabling both sides to have beneficial information and insight into the successes of Federal demonstration projects.

Once again, I thank Mr. CAREY for leading this bill along with his co-sponsors, Representatives WILLIAMS, DAVIDS, and DONALDS.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this 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 Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1069, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PRIVACY ENHANCING TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH ACT

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4755) to support research on privacy enhancing technologies and promote responsible data use, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4755

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 "Privacy Enhancing Technology Research Act".

SEC. 2. PRIVACY ENHANCING TECHNOLOGY.

(a) NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION SUPPORT OF RESEARCH ON PRIVACY ENHANCING TECH-

NOLOGY.—The Director of the National Science Foundation, in consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal agencies (as determined by the Director), shall support merit-reviewed and competitively awarded research on privacy enhancing technologies, which may include the following:

(1) Fundamental research on technologies for de-identification, pseudonymization, anonymization, or obfuscation to mitigate individuals' privacy risks in data sets while maintaining fairness, accuracy, and efficiency.

(2) Fundamental research on algorithms and other similar mathematical tools used to protect individual privacy when collecting, storing, sharing, analyzing, or aggregating data.

(3) Fundamental research on technologies that promote data minimization in data collection, sharing, and analytics that takes into account the trade-offs between the data minimization goals and the informational goals of data collection.

(4) Research awards on privacy enhancing technologies coordinated with other relevant Federal agencies and programs.

(5) Supporting education and workforce training research and development activities, including re-training and upskilling of the existing workforce, to increase the number of privacy enhancing technology researchers and practitioners.

(6) Multidisciplinary socio-technical research that fosters broader understanding of privacy preferences, requirements, and human behavior to inform the design and adoption of effective privacy solutions.

(7) Development of freely available privacy enhancing technology software libraries, platforms, and applications.

(8) Fundamental research on techniques that may undermine the protections provided by privacy enhancing technologies, the limitations of such protections, and the trade-offs between privacy and utility required for the deployment of such technologies.

(9) Fundamental research on technologies and techniques to preserve the privacy and confidentiality of individuals from unconsented, unwanted, or unauthorized location tracking, including through GPS.

(b) INTEGRATION INTO THE COMPUTER AND NETWORK SECURITY PROGRAM.—Subparagraph (D) of section 4(a)(1) of the Cyber Security Research and Development Act (15 U.S.C. 7403(a)(1)(D)) is amended by inserting "including privacy enhancing technologies" before the semicolon.

(c) COORDINATION WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, acting through the Networking and Information Technology Research and Development Program, shall coordinate with the Director of the National Science Foundation, the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Federal Trade Commission, and the heads of other Federal agencies, as appropriate, to accelerate the development, deployment, and adoption of privacy enhancing technologies.

(2) OUTREACH.—The Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology shall conduct outreach to—

(A) receive input from private, public, and academic stakeholders on the development of privacy enhancing technologies; and

(B) facilitate and support ongoing public and private sector engagement to inform the development and dissemination of voluntary, consensus-based technical standards, guidelines, methodologies, procedures, and processes to cost-effectively increase the integration of privacy enhancing technologies in

data collection, sharing, and analytics performed by the public and private sectors.

(d) REPORT ON PRIVACY ENHANCING TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH.—Not later than three years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, acting through the Networking and Information Technology Research and Development Program, shall, in coordination with the Director of the National Science Foundation, the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the heads of other Federal agencies, as appropriate, submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives, and the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, a report containing information relating to the following:

(1) The progress of research on privacy enhancing technologies.

(2) The progress of the development of voluntary resources described under subsection (c)(2)(B).

(3) Any policy recommendations that could facilitate and improve communication and coordination between the private sector and relevant Federal agencies for the implementation and adoption of privacy enhancing technologies.

(e) PROTECTING PERSONAL IDENTIFYING INFORMATION.—Any personal identifying information collected or stored through the activities authorized under this section shall be done in accordance with part 690 of title 45, Code of Federal Regulations (relating to the protection of human subjects), or any successor regulation.

(f) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “privacy enhancing technology”—

(1) means any software or hardware solution, technical process, or other technological means of mitigating individuals’ privacy risks arising from data processing by enhancing predictability, manageability, disassociability, and confidentiality; and

(2) may include—

(A) cryptographic techniques for facilitating computation or analysis on data while mitigating privacy risks;

(B) techniques for—

(i) publicly sharing data without enabling inferences to be made about specific individuals;

(ii) giving individuals’ control over the dissemination, sharing, and use of their data; and

(iii) generating synthetic data; and

(C) any other technology or approach that reduces the risk of re-identification, including when combined with other information.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) and the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STEVENS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4755, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4755, the Privacy Enhancing Technology Research Act, offered by the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STEVENS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. KEAN). The bill supports research activities to advance innovative technologies to safeguard individuals’ privacy.

As Americans have moved more and more of their lives online, it has resulted in a greater amount of digital consumer data and personal information being generated than ever before. This personal information has long been a target of cybercriminals, and the threat has only worsened over time. In 2023, the Federal Trade Commission received more than 1 million reports of identity theft. This problem is exacerbated by the failure of some companies to properly safeguard consumer data.

This data is a valuable asset. When safely utilized, it can do a great deal to spur our economy and support innovations like artificial intelligence and quantum computing. Our task is to ensure this resource doesn’t fall into the hands of bad actors, putting Americans’ private information at risk.

Privacy enhancing technologies, PETs, may be part of the solution. PETs utilize cryptography and statistics to minimize the amount of personally identifiable information while ensuring the datasets are still usable. However, more research is needed to understand PETs’ applicability and to encourage further development and adoption.

This bill requires the National Science Foundation to support fundamental research into PETs, the mathematics that underlie them, and the additional technologies that promote data minimization standards.

The legislation also directs NIST to work with stakeholders to develop voluntary consensus standards for incorporating these technologies into Federal and commercial applications. Similar legislation passed the House last Congress, which is a testament to the value of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, again, I thank Representatives STEVENS and KEAN for their leadership on this issue. I encourage my colleagues to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4755, the Privacy Enhancing Technology Research Act, is another very important bipartisan piece of legislation that we bring to the House floor this evening on the heels of the pronouncement of the Speaker and minority leader to form an AI task force that is led by Mr. OBERNOLTE of California on the Republican side and Mr. LIEU, also of California, on the Democratic side.

What the Privacy Enhancing Technology Research Act gets us is an op-

portunity to further strengthen and utilize Federal agencies to regulate our artificial intelligence.

This legislation has been met with the endorsement of the Federation of American Scientists, the Carnegie Mellon University, the University of California system, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Future of Privacy Forum.

I thank my colleague, Congressman KEAN, for joining me in this legislation. I also recognize Senator CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO of Nevada and Senator DEB FISCHER of Nebraska for working in the other Chamber and for their contributions to the legislation.

We have a path not only to see this pass here in the House but to see it pass in the Senate and become Federal law.

We are living, as we all know, in the time of the modern digital economy, probably a hyper-digital economy, that is fueled by an astronomical amount of personal data compounded over decades at this point in time. In this AI-powered world, personal data protection is absolutely imperative. There is certainly a struggle with the processes that can protect and enable the protection of the productive use of personal data and secure the confidentiality of information it includes.

In 2023, a survey by the Pew Research Center found that 81 percent of American adults are concerned about how companies use their personal data.

We are liking, clicking, purchasing, and browsing. What is going on with all of that?

It is certainly in conversations regarding AI in Congress, with friends of mine, and with my constituents back home in Oakland County, Michigan.

There remain lots of opportunities to capture the benefits of data, including for safer roads, improved public health, better educational outcomes, and tackling inequities and other disparities. However, in any use of personal data, we must ensure privacy and confidentiality. A critical way to achieve that is through the development of privacy enhancing technologies, or PETs.

PETs are a broad range of technologies that allow organizations to collect, share, and use data while mitigating the privacy risks that arise from those activities.

The goal is to make systems that use personal information private by default, opening up those data to a wide range of researchers who would otherwise not have access. These technologies even have the potential to enable broader use of Federal datasets, as privacy risks are often the greatest barrier to open government data efforts. Unfortunately, the technology itself is still really immature, and it is not ready for widespread use.

What we are looking to do with H.R. 4755 is to support the research, workforce development, standard setting, and government coordination for PETs. We are going to direct the National Science Foundation to conduct fundamental privacy research that can improve these technologies, assess their

limitations, and broaden their applicability.

The National Science Foundation will also support workforce development activities in order to help address some of the exacerbating shortage of privacy professionals across the United States and also springboard from cybersecurity workforce developments that have taken place from years prior.

H.R. 4755 also supports activities at the National Institute of Standards and Technology to facilitate the development of those standards and best practices for integration of PETs in public and private sectors.

Mr. Speaker, these two groups, the public sector and private sector, are encouraging of this legislation. They are asking for us to act in this way.

Finally, H.R. 4755 directs the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy to coordinate Federal activities to accelerate the development of PETs across government.

Congress, we all know, has been debating proposals on privacy legislation for a long time. Sometimes we are even wondering if we have legislation, but we have H.R. 4755, which takes an amazing and necessary step for ownership of this new technology that we want to own and manage here in this country.

So, yes, let us be encouraged by bipartisan activity. Let us continue to come together and ensure that we have the necessary tools to fully implement privacy legislation without stifling innovation.

Mr. Speaker, I thank, again, my colleague, Congressman KEAN of New Jersey, for his bipartisan efforts.

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

□ 1700

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. KEAN).

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be the co-lead on H.R. 4755, the Privacy Enhancing Technology Research Act of 2023, with my colleague, Congresswoman STEVENS.

Mr. Speaker, I have had many conversations about data privacy concerns with parents and constituents in the Seventh District in New Jersey. Ensuring their specific needs and concerns are met for safeguarding their privacy rights online is a top priority. I am pleased that the House is considering this critical piece of legislation to improve personal data protections for all Americans and to commit to enhancing individuals' privacy and security online.

In an increasingly interconnected world where digital technologies touch every aspect of our lives, safeguarding personal privacy has become a critical concern for all Americans, especially during a time when vast amounts of personal data is collected online.

As we navigate through a landscape of evolving cyber threats, data

breaches, and the development of artificial intelligence, the need for cutting-edge, privacy enhancing technologies has never been more pressing.

Recognizing the significance of these challenges and the threats we face online, this legislation directs the National Science Foundation to support competitive, fundamental research on privacy enhancing technologies. Our goal is to enhance user safety and provide safety measures for how our data is collected and used.

This legislation also directs the National Institute of Standards and Technology to facilitate the development of voluntary consensus standards to better integrate privacy enhancing technologies into public and private sectors. This is a key step toward mitigating risks and promoting trustworthiness.

The Privacy Enhancing Technology Research Act represents a promising opportunity to prioritize protecting an individual's data privacy in our ever-growing interconnected world.

Additionally, the bill will not only facilitate crucial research efforts but also contribute to the development of a skilled workforce and foster effective government coordination to ensure an impactful implementation of these technologies.

Advancing our legislation will support the development of robust safeguards for how people interact online and how their data is collected. This legislation seeks to empower individuals with greater control over their personal information, mitigating the risks of unauthorized access and misuse and maintaining trust in our digital ecosystem.

Through cutting-edge research and technologies, we will develop innovative solutions to not only shield sensitive data from malicious actors but also establish robust standards for data collection and sharing practices, fostering a more transparent and secure online environment.

Mr. Speaker, again, I thank Congresswoman STEVENS for her extraordinary leadership in this regard and the chairman and the ranking member for helping advance this legislation. I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to call on my colleagues to join me, Congressman KEAN, the chairman of the Science Committee, and the ranking member of the Science Committee in passing H.R. 4755. This certainly will mark a very important moment in time when the United States chooses to lead on privacy enhancing technologies for the betterment of all.

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

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleagues from Michigan and New Jersey

on an outstanding piece of legislation, and I urge the body to adopt it.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4755, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

CARBON SEQUESTRATION COLLABORATION ACT

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4824) to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to require the Secretary of Energy to carry out terrestrial carbon sequestration research and development activities, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4824

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 "Carbon Sequestration Collaboration Act".

SEC. 2. CARBON SEQUESTRATION RESEARCH INITIATIVE.

Section 963 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16293) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (2) as paragraphs (2) and (3), respectively;

(B) by inserting before paragraph (2), as so redesignated, the following new paragraph:

"(1) CARBON SEQUESTRATION IN GEOLOGIC FORMATIONS.—The term 'carbon sequestration in geologic formations' means carbon sequestration methods or technologies utilizing existing permeable or porous formations in geologic settings, such as basins or aquifers."; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(4) TERRESTRIAL CARBON SEQUESTRATION.—The term 'terrestrial carbon sequestration' means carbon sequestration methods or technologies engineered by humans and targeted at rangelands, agricultural lands, fallow lands, or forest stands to increase soil organic carbon levels or sequester carbon through transport processes via plant and root biomass, including through soil additives, geochemical approaches, and other engineered solutions that can increase the storage of produced carbon in inorganic or mineral forms, such as biochar and carbon mineralization utilizing mine tailings."; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking "shall establish" and inserting "in coordination with the heads of relevant Federal agencies, carry out"; and

(ii) by inserting "including through terrestrial carbon sequestration and carbon sequestration in geologic formations" before the period;

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) by striking “in coordination with relevant Federal agencies,”; and

(II) by striking “assess the capacity of geologic storage formation” and inserting “evaluate terrestrial carbon sequestration and carbon sequestration in geologic formations”;

(ii) in subparagraph (B)—

(I) in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting “and terrestrial carbon storage sites” after “geologic formations”; and

(II) in clause (ii), by striking “geologic storage” and inserting “across a variety of ecosystems”;

(iii) in subparagraph (D)—

(I) by striking “formation”; and

(II) by inserting “, and determining the fate of carbon dioxide concurrent with and after injection into geologic formations” before the semicolon;

(iv) in subparagraph (E), by striking “geologic sequestration of carbon dioxide” and inserting “terrestrial carbon sequestration and carbon sequestration in geologic formations”;

(v) by striking subparagraphs (F) and (G);

(vi) by redesignating subparagraphs (H) and (I) as subparagraphs (F) and (G), respectively;

(vii) in subparagraph (F), as so redesignated, by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(viii) in subparagraph (G), as so redesignated, by striking the period and inserting a semicolon; and

(ix) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(H) enhancing the scientific understanding of, and reducing uncertainties associated with, the cycling of carbon in agriculture lands, forests, and geologic formations, including long- and short-term behavior and potential environmental effects of sequestered carbon;

“(I) identifying scientific barriers and pursuing research solutions to challenges preventing terrestrial carbon sequestration and carbon sequestration in geologic formations, including supporting cost and business model assessments to examine the economic viability of technologies and systems developed under the program;

“(J) collecting, identifying, standardizing, and utilizing data and data sharing practices needed to—

“(i) increase the understanding of terrestrial carbon sequestration, in particular carbon sequestered through agricultural practices and conservation agriculture, such as rangeland and grazing management, soil cover, and crop rotations; and

“(ii) support the development and demonstration of new carbon sequestration tools and technologies; and

“(K) coordinating across Federal agencies research efforts regarding terrestrial carbon sequestration and carbon sequestration in geologic formations.”;

(C) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (5);

(D) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following new paragraphs:

“(3) LEVERAGING.—In carrying out activities under the program, the Secretary shall leverage for the advancement of monitoring, reporting, and verification, including tools, modeling, and analysis, the collective body of knowledge and data, including experience and resources from existing carbon utilization and sequestration research, entities, and demonstrations, from the following:

“(A) The United States Geological Survey, the Agricultural Research Service, and the national Carbon Utilization Research Center.

“(B) The Department of Energy, including the Office of Science, the Office of Fossil En-

ergy and Carbon Management, and the Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations.

“(C) Interagency research and development initiatives and data collection activities.

“(D) Other Federal agencies, research communities, and users of the data referred to in subparagraph (J) of paragraph (2), including the Farm Service Agency, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, the Forest Service, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

“(4) COORDINATION.—The Secretary of Energy shall carry out the program in coordination with, and avoid unnecessary duplication of, the following:

“(A) Other research entities of the Department of Energy, including the National Laboratories and the Advanced Research Projects Agency–Energy.

“(B) Research entities, services, and partnerships of the Department of Agriculture, including the Agricultural Research Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Farm Service Agency, and the Forest Service.

“(C) Research entities of the Department of the Interior.

“(D) Other entities within Federal agencies that conduct research, development, or demonstration on terrestrial carbon sequestration and carbon sequestration in geologic formations.”; and

(E) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(6) RESEARCH PLAN.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this paragraph and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, the Committee on Natural Resources, and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate the long-term strategic and prioritized research agenda to identify and address scientific challenges for widespread adoption of terrestrial carbon sequestration and carbon sequestration in geological formations, including in shallow formations and sites not used for enhanced oil recovery.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) and the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4824, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4824, the Carbon Sequestration Collaboration Act.

Mr. Speaker, this commonsense legislation increases the coordination among Federal research entities that are focused on the topic of carbon sequestration.

Specifically, this bill improves the capacity to sequester carbon through land use activities by authorizing a co-

ordinated research effort across the Department of Energy, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of Agriculture.

To date, most Federal research has been focused on large-scale carbon sequestration in geologic formations. That entails finding a specific spot deep in the Earth to trap carbon generated by large sources, like multiple power plants that supply an entire region.

This leaves a significant knowledge gap related to carbon storage potential at small-scale and everyday sites, like soils, rangelands, biochar, mine tailings, and forests. The USDA has already started to explore programs for farmers, ranchers, and landowners to generate carbon credits by adopting practices to reduce emissions or sequester carbon on their land.

Yet, I will be the first to admit that USDA is by no means an expert on quantifying amounts of carbon sequestered or tracking how it behaves over time. Therefore, we need to ensure that we have scientific support to develop tools that are needed to quantify, track, and verify carbon sequestration changes over time, especially in the short term.

By combining DOE expertise in fundamental research and carbon storage, DOI capacities in geologic mapping, and USDA knowledge in plant and crop interactions, we can rapidly develop the research to mature technologies and ensure scientific transparency.

Mr. Speaker, I introduced a similar bill in the last Congress to address these activities. I am very pleased with my colleague from Indiana (Mr. BAIRD), who has worked so hard on championing this issue.

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

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Carbon Sequestration Collaboration Act. The bill amends the carbon storage provisions of the bipartisan Energy Act of 2020 to support research and development on ways to sequester carbon in terrestrial ecosystems, agriculture, and forestry.

Recent academic research has found that agricultural approaches that enhance the carbon uptake of soils have many potential benefits, including increased productivity and improvements in the stability of yields.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will help us better understand the potential short-term or long-term behavior of sequestered carbon and help identify any scientific barriers to the widespread deployment of these technologies.

This is not to mention the added benefit of removing carbon from the atmosphere, making this one of many solutions we need to advance if we are to slow down or even reverse the effects of climate change.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 4824, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BAIRD) to speak on his bill.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) for yielding and for all the work done in committee to get this important piece of legislation to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I also thank the gentleman from California (Ms. LOFGREN), the ranking member of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, for her leadership and support on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of misconceptions about what this bill does, and, unfortunately, there are some who are intentionally spreading misinformation about this bill for political gain. Before I continue any further, let's put these rumors to rest by telling the American people what this bill does not do.

This bill does not give Federal agencies any authority to seize private property. I am a farmer and a private landowner, and I would never sponsor or support a bill that would give the Federal Government more power to seize private land.

This bill does not specify any land for carbon capture projects or undermine the property rights of American citizens.

This bill does not directly benefit or impact private companies with an interest in carbon sequestration.

The United States has been using carbon sequestration methods to store excess carbon emissions underground for over 50 years, and President Biden's Department of Energy is currently studying large-scale carbon sequestration at the Federal level. The problem is that our Federal agencies are not communicating properly about this technology, leaving a knowledge gap that wastes taxpayer dollars and could result in important findings falling through the cracks.

H.R. 4824 will force the executive branch to submit a plan to Congress and require Federal agencies to share research, data, and current sequestration technologies. Simply put, this bill puts guardrails on the administration's national energy plan by adding a reporting requirement to Congress and requires Federal agencies to talk to one another and share research in the most efficient way.

Mr. Speaker, I am sponsoring this legislation because I believe every Hoosier and every American, for that matter, should have the best information that is available when making informed decisions about their land and their community.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 4824, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4824 is a practical bill that lets Federal agencies collaborate on this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I would note that before my father's family lived in Oklahoma, we lived in Indiana. I would also note to my colleague on the other side of the aisle that before they lived in Indiana, they lived in Pennsylvania.

Nonetheless, this is an important piece of legislation, and we need to pass this.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to adopt it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4824, as amended.

The question was taken. The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered. The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ABANDONED WELL REMEDIATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACT

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4877) to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to direct the Secretary of Energy to carry out a research, development, and demonstration program with respect to abandoned wells, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4877

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 "Abandoned Well Remediation Research and Development Act".

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT TO THE ENERGY POLICY ACT OF 2005.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Energy Policy Act of 2005 is amended—

(1) by adding at the end of subtitle F of title IX (42 U.S.C. 16291 et seq.) the following new section:

"SEC. 969E. ABANDONED WELLS RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.

"(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary of Energy shall, in coordination with relevant Federal and state agencies and entities, establish a research, development, and demonstration program to improve—

"(1) data collection on the location of abandoned wells;

"(2) the plugging, remediation, reclamation, and repurposing of abandoned wells; and

"(3) strategies to mitigate potential environmental impacts of documented and undocumented abandoned wells.

"(b) ACTIVITIES.—The research, development, and demonstration under subsection (a) shall include activities to improve—

"(1) remote sensor capabilities, LiDAR capabilities, optical gas imaging, magnetic

survey technology, and any other technologies relevant to the efficient identification of abandoned wells;

"(2) understanding of how certain parameters of abandoned wells affect methane emission rates of such wells, including parameters such as well age, well depth, geology, construction, case material, and geographic region;

"(3) the efficiency and cost-efficacy of processes for plugging, remediating, reclaiming, and repurposing abandoned wells, including—

"(A) improvement of processes and technologies for the unique challenges associated with plugging remote abandoned wells;

"(B) use of low carbon, lightweight cement or use of alternative materials and additives for plugging purposes; and

"(C) repurposing of abandoned wells for alternative uses, including geothermal power production or carbon capture, utilization, and storage; and

"(4) understanding of the impacts of abandoned wells on groundwater quality and contamination.

"(c) COORDINATION.—In carrying out the program established under subsection (a), the Secretary shall ensure coordination of these activities with State and local governments, institutions of higher education, the Department of Energy National Laboratories, the private sector, and impacted communities, including landowners within such communities.

"(d) ABANDONED WELL DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'abandoned well' means a well originally drilled in connection with oil and gas operations that is not being used, has not been plugged, and has no anticipated use in oil and gas operations.

"(e) FUNDING.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this section amounts authorized pursuant to section 10771 of subtitle O of title VI of the Research and Development, Competition, and Innovation Act (enacted as division B of Public Law 117-167), as follows:

"(1) For fiscal year 2024, \$30,000,000.

"(2) For fiscal year 2025, \$31,250,000.

"(3) For fiscal year 2026, \$32,500,000.

"(4) For fiscal year 2027, \$33,750,000.

"(5) For fiscal year 2028, \$35,000,000.

"(f) SUNSET.—This section shall terminate five years after the date of the enactment of this section.";

(2) in the table of contents in section 1(b) (42 U.S.C. 15801 note), by inserting after the matter relating to section 969D the following new item:

"Sec. 969E. Abandoned wells research, development, and demonstration program."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Paragraph (6) of section 10771 of subtitle O of title VI of the Research and Development, Competition, and Innovation Act (enacted as division B of Public Law 117-167) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking "2026" and inserting "2028";

(2) in subparagraph (A), by striking "\$600,000,000" and inserting "\$507,500,000";

(3) in subparagraph (B), by striking "and" after the semicolon;

(4) in subparagraph (C)—

(A) by striking "\$1,000,000,000" and inserting "\$930,000,000"; and

(B) by striking the period and inserting "and"; and

(5) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(D) \$162,500,000 to carry out abandoned wells research, development, and demonstration activities under section 969E of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, in accordance with such section."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) and the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4877.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4877, the Abandoned Well Remediation Research and Development Act.

This bill was introduced by two of my Science Committee colleagues, the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. LEE) and the gentlewoman from Oklahoma (Mrs. BICE).

The bill directs the Department of Energy to support research, development, and demonstration activities that accelerate the remediation of abandoned or orphaned oil and gas wells across the country.

Currently, there are an estimated 700,000 to maybe 3 million abandoned wells in the United States. These wells cost between \$30,000 to potentially as much as \$1 million per well to plug, meaning a remarkable amount of money will be needed just to cover past developments.

Wells in remote locations, like Tribal land in Oklahoma, are more difficult and costly to locate and plug, thus increasing the likelihood they will remain unmitigated.

Improving the technologies and methods associated with plugging and remediation processes for abandoned wells would lower the overall cost, improve efficiency, reduce the environmental harm, and potentially result in new and improved purposes.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I support H.R. 4877. This bill will capitalize on the Department of Energy's existing research and infrastructure within the Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management to improve the processes and lower the costs associated with abandoned wells.

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The research, development, and demonstration activities conducted by DOE have the potential to validate innovative processes, such as the use of low-carbon cement for plugging or repurposing abandoned wells for geothermal power production and carbon capture utilization and storage.

Additionally, this bill directs DOE to improve technology to pinpoint and map the location of abandoned wells. Before we can plug or repurpose a well, we need to know exactly where they are located.

Efforts for States to plug abandoned wells are already underway and funded by Federal investment. This bill en-

ures that those efforts efficiently use taxpayer dollars and remain effective in the long term.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative LEE and Representative BICE for leading this bill. I urge all of my colleagues to support its passage, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of legislation that I am proud to see passed on behalf of the people of Pennsylvania and Oklahoma, the bipartisan Abandoned Well Remediation Research and Development Act. Across the country, there are around 3 million abandoned oil and gas wells in urgent need of remediation or plugging.

In Pennsylvania, there are well over 350,000 abandoned wells, but only 27,000 of these have been identified and documented in order to be plugged.

These abandoned wells not only contribute to the climate crisis by leaking methane, but they also expose our families to cancer-causing toxins like benzene, leave our homes vulnerable to explosive gases, and lower property values making it tougher for families to maintain and sell their homes.

Our region's health and economy suffer while we allow these wells to pollute our communities without accountability or plans to plug them.

Last month, I visited the home of Pamela and Ivan Schrank, a couple in Murrysville, who recently discovered a leaky, abandoned well on their property in Westmoreland County.

During my visit, Pamela described how she got dizzy and almost fainted while gardening in her backyard after being exposed to the pungent odor she recognized as gas. Fortunately, she and her husband, Ivan, caught the leakage in time to reach out to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to begin the process of plugging the well and preventing permanent harm to their family's health and the value of their property. However, until Congress takes action to invest in the identification and remediation of abandoned wells starting with the passage of this bill, tens of thousands of people in my district and across Pennsylvania will continue to suffer the consequences.

Pennsylvania has more abandoned wells than any other State except Texas. Many of these wells that pollute our communities were drilled in the mid-1800s, decades before regulations existed to properly track and document them.

My district already suffers from some of the worst air quality in the Nation and serious rates of exposure to toxins in our water. These communities also suffer from high rates of asthma or COPD and exposure to lead in our water.

We can't leave leaky oil and gas wells from the 1800s to continue poisoning and endangering our communities. We also can't afford inaction. We must in-

vest significant resources to research and develop solutions to this crisis by passing our bipartisan bill because, until we do, it will remain nearly impossible to track every orphaned and abandoned well and too expensive to plug or remediate them.

This bipartisan bill we have introduced builds on the \$23 million worth of Federal investments to plug abandoned wells we have already delivered to western Pennsylvania from the infrastructure act by authorizing a new research, development, and demonstration program at the Department of Energy to locate, identify, and address the problems associated with abandoned oil and gas wells.

This program will enhance our ability to locate these wells and direct research toward improving remediation, plugging, and understanding what causes some of these wells to become super emitters, posing the most harm to our health and our climate. It will also fuel the development of new uses for these wells, such as evaluating whether they are suitable for conversion to geothermal power production.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman LUCAS and Ranking Member LOFGREN for supporting this legislation, as well as Representative BICE for joining me in championing this issue for bringing this important bipartisan bill to the floor.

Today, the Science Committee has now twice unanimously approved this bill, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Oklahoma (Mrs. BICE).

Mrs. BICE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman LUCAS for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4877, the Abandoned Well Remediation Research and Development Act. In Oklahoma, there are over half a million oil and gas wells, which allow our State to rank eight in oil and gas production in the country. While active wells support hundreds of thousands of jobs, legacy sites and abandoned wells can present environmental and economic problems.

Across the country, some abandoned or orphaned wells are slowly leaking harmful gases and chemicals into the ecosystem. This is partly due to some wells being left unaddressed after their use. However, most leaks are the result of plugging procedures or materials that have not withstood the test of time.

To remedy this issue, different States have implemented plugging and clean-up programs with varying levels of success. For example, the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board has invested \$132 million to successfully clean up over 18,000 sites across our State.

Additionally, the Federal plugging and remediation program established last Congress provided \$25 million in

initial grants to Oklahoma. This was a great first step, but unless we want to continue to spend on temporary solutions, we must have innovation.

H.R. 4877 will address this innovation gap and potentially save billions of dollars in future efforts. Through the research, development, and demonstration activities authorized by this bill, the Department of Energy will improve the data on the location of abandoned wells, the process for plugging, reclaiming, and repurposing wells, and the ability to mitigate potential environmental impacts of leaking wells.

In the future, we won't need another \$4 billion in Federal plugging programs. The innovation spurred by this bill could cut those costs in half and save billions in taxpayer funds.

H.R. 4877 directs the type of forward-looking research and development that will solve our legacy challenges, while allowing responsible environmental stewardship to continue into the next generation.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to lead this bill with my colleague from Pennsylvania (Ms. LEE). I thank her for working alongside me in a bipartisan fashion to get this bill to the floor, which is a great example of innovating to solve a real-world issue.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote from my colleagues.

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 4877, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, we all share concern about the tens of thousands of known abandoned oil and gas wells across the country that have the potential to leak methane, pose health and safety risks, and pollute local ground water. This is a major step in addressing that.

I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 4877. I thank Congresswoman LEE and Congresswoman BICE for their effort, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STRONG). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4877, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

WEATHER RESEARCH AND FORECASTING INNOVATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2023

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6093) to improve the National

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's weather research, support improvements in weather forecasting and prediction, expand commercial opportunities for the provision of weather data, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6093

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Reauthorization Act of 2023" or the "Weather Act Reauthorization Act of 2023".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Definitions.

TITLE I—REAUTHORIZATION OF THE WEATHER RESEARCH AND FORECASTING INNOVATION ACT OF 2017

Sec. 101. Public safety priority.

Sec. 102. United States weather research and forecasting.

Sec. 103. Verification of the Origins of Rotation in Tornadoes Experiment (VORTEX).

Sec. 104. Hurricane forecast improvement program.

Sec. 105. Tsunami Warning and Education Act reauthorization.

Sec. 106. Observing system planning.

Sec. 107. Observing system simulation experiments.

Sec. 108. Computing resources prioritization.

Sec. 109. Earth prediction innovation center.

Sec. 110. Satellite architecture planning.

Sec. 111. Improving uncrewed activities.

Sec. 112. Interagency Council for Advancing Meteorological Services.

Sec. 113. Ocean observations.

Sec. 114. Consolidation of reports.

Sec. 115. National Landslide Preparedness Act reauthorization.

Sec. 116. Amendments to Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998.

TITLE II—ENHANCING FEDERAL WEATHER FORECASTING AND INNOVATION

Sec. 201. Weather innovation for the next generation.

Sec. 202. Next generation radar.

Sec. 203. Data voids in highly vulnerable areas of the United States.

Sec. 204. Atmospheric rivers forecast improvement program.

Sec. 205. Coastal flooding and storm surge forecast improvement program.

Sec. 206. Aviation weather and data innovation.

Sec. 207. NESDIS joint venture partnership transition program.

Sec. 208. Advanced weather interactive processing system.

Sec. 209. Reanalysis and reforecasting.

Sec. 210. National Weather Service workforce.

TITLE III—COMMERCIAL WEATHER AND ENVIRONMENTAL OBSERVATIONS

Sec. 301. Commercial Data Program.

Sec. 302. Commercial Data Pilot Program.

Sec. 303. Contracting authority and avoidance of duplication.

Sec. 304. Data assimilation, management, and sharing practices.

Sec. 305. Clerical amendment.

TITLE IV—COMMUNICATING WEATHER TO THE PUBLIC

Sec. 401. Definitions.

Sec. 402. Hazardous weather or water event risk communication.

Sec. 403. Hazard communication research and engagement.

Sec. 404. National Weather Service communications improvement.

Sec. 405. NOAA Weather Radio modernization.

Sec. 406. Post-storm surveys and assessments.

Sec. 407. Government Accountability Office report on alert dissemination for hazardous weather or water events.

Sec. 408. Data collection management and protection.

TITLE V—IMPROVING WEATHER INFORMATION FOR AGRICULTURE AND WATER MANAGEMENT

Sec. 501. Weather and climate information in agriculture and water management.

Sec. 502. National Integrated Drought Information System.

Sec. 503. National Mesonet Program.

Sec. 504. National Coordinated Soil Moisture Monitoring Network.

Sec. 505. National water center.

Sec. 506. Satellite transfers report.

Sec. 507. Precipitation forecast improvement program.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In this Act, the terms "seasonal", "State", "subseasonal", "Under Secretary", "weather enterprise", "weather data", and "weather industry" have the meanings given such terms in section 2 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8501).

(b) WEATHER DATA DEFINED.—Section 2 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8501) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (6); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following new paragraph:

"(5) WEATHER DATA.—The term 'weather data' means information used to track and predict weather conditions and patterns, including forecasts, observations, and derivative products from such information."

TITLE I—REAUTHORIZATION OF THE WEATHER RESEARCH AND FORECASTING INNOVATION ACT OF 2017

SEC. 101. PUBLIC SAFETY PRIORITY.

Section 101 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8511) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: "The Under Secretary shall ensure the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration remains focused on providing accurate and timely weather forecasts that protect lives and property and enhance the national economy by disseminating to the public and core partners through nimble, flexible, and mobile methods critical weather information and impact-based decision support services."

SEC. 102. UNITED STATES WEATHER RESEARCH AND FORECASTING.

Section 110 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8519) is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 110. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

"(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research to carry out this title the following:

"(1) \$155,000,000 for fiscal year 2024, of which—

"(A) \$90,000,000 is authorized for weather laboratories and cooperative institutes;

"(B) \$30,000,000 is authorized for the United States Weather Research Program;

"(C) \$20,000,000 is authorized for tornado, severe storm, and next generation radar research; and

“(D) \$15,000,000 is authorized for the joint technology transfer initiative described in section 102(b)(4) of this title.

“(2) \$156,550,000 for fiscal year 2025, of which—

“(A) \$90,900,000 is authorized for weather laboratories and cooperative institutes;

“(B) \$30,300,000 is authorized for the United States Weather Research Program;

“(C) \$20,200,000 is authorized for tornado, severe storm, and next generation radar research; and

“(D) \$15,150,000 is authorized for the joint technology transfer initiative described in section 102(b)(4) of this title.

“(3) \$158,116,000 for fiscal year 2026, of which—

“(A) \$91,809,000 is authorized for weather laboratories and cooperative institutes;

“(B) \$30,603,000 is authorized for the United States Weather Research Program;

“(C) \$20,402,000 is authorized for tornado, severe storm, and next generation radar research; and

“(D) \$15,302,000 is authorized for the joint technology transfer initiative described in section 102(b)(4) of this title.

“(4) \$159,697,000 for fiscal year 2027, of which—

“(A) \$92,727,000 is authorized for weather laboratories and cooperative institutes;

“(B) \$30,909,000 is authorized for the United States Weather Research Program;

“(C) \$20,606,000 is authorized for tornado, severe storm, and next generation radar research; and

“(D) \$15,455,000 is authorized for the joint technology transfer initiative described in section 102(b)(4) of this title.

“(5) \$161,294,000 for fiscal year 2028, of which—

“(A) \$93,654,000 is authorized for weather laboratories and cooperative institutes;

“(B) \$31,218,000 is authorized for the United States Weather Research Program;

“(C) \$20,812,000 is authorized for tornado, severe storm, and next generation radar research; and

“(D) \$15,609,000 is authorized for the joint technology transfer initiative described in section 8512(b)(4) of this title.

“(b) LIMITATION.—No additional funds are authorized to carry out this title or the amendments made by this title.”

SEC. 103. VERIFICATION OF THE ORIGINS OF ROTATION IN TORNADES EXPERIMENT (VORTEX).

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 103 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8513) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 103. VERIFICATION OF THE ORIGINS OF ROTATION IN TORNADES EXPERIMENT (VORTEX).

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary, in collaboration with the United States weather industry and academic partners, shall maintain a program for rapidly improving tornado forecasts, predictions, and warnings, including forecaster training in radar interpretation and information integration from new sources.

“(b) GOAL.—The goal of the program under subsection (a) shall be to develop and extend accurate tornado forecasts, predictions, and warnings in order to reduce the loss of life or property related to tornadoes, with a focus on the following:

“(1) Improving the effectiveness and timeliness of tornado forecasts, predictions, and warnings.

“(2) Optimizing lead time and providing actionable information beyond one hour in advance.

“(3) Transitioning from warn-on-detection to warn-on-forecast.

“(c) INNOVATIVE OBSERVATIONS.—The Under Secretary shall ensure the program under

subsection (a) periodically examines, tests, and evaluates the value of incorporating innovative observations, such as novel sensor technologies, observation tools or networks, crewed or uncrewed systems, and hosted instruments on commercial aircrafts, vessels, and satellites, with respect to the improvement of tornado forecasts, predictions, and warnings.

“(d) ACTIVITIES.—The Under Secretary shall award grants for research, including relating to the following:

“(1) Implementing key goals and achieving program milestones to the maximum extent practicable as outlined by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s 2019 report, ‘Tornado Warning Improvement and Extension Program Plan’.

“(2) In coordination with the National Science and Technology Council’s Social and Behavioral Sciences Subcommittee, improving the social, behavioral, risk, communication, and economic sciences regarding vulnerabilities, risk communication, and delivery of information critical for reducing the loss of life or property related to tornadoes.

“(3) Improving the physical sciences, computer modeling, and tools related to tornado formation, the impacts of tornadoes on the built and natural environment, and the interaction of tornadoes and hurricanes.

“(e) WARNINGS.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Under Secretary, in coordination with the program established under section 406, shall—

“(1) conduct and transition to operations the research necessary to develop and deploy probabilistic weather forecast guidance technology for tornadoes and related weather phenomena;

“(2) incorporate into tornado modeling and forecasting, as appropriate, social, behavioral, risk, communication, and economic sciences;

“(3) enhance workforce training on radar interpretation and use of tornado warning systems; and

“(4) expand computational resources to support higher-resolution modeling to advance the capability for warn-on-forecast.

“(f) TORNADO RATING SYSTEM.—The Under Secretary, in collaboration with local communities and emergency managers, shall—

“(1) evaluate the system used as of the date of the enactment of this section to rate the severity of tornadoes;

“(2) determine whether updates to such system are required to ensure such ratings accurately reflect the severity of tornadoes; and

“(3) if determined necessary, update such system.

“(g) ANNUAL BUDGET.—The Under Secretary shall, not less frequently than annually, submit to Congress a proposed budget corresponding with carrying out this section.”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 is amended by amending the item relating to section 103 to read as follows:

“Sec. 103. Verification of the Origins of Rotation in Tornadoes Experiment (VORTEX).”

SEC. 104. HURRICANE FORECAST IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.

Section 104 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8514) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 104. HURRICANE FORECAST IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary, in collaboration with the United States weather industry and academic partners, shall maintain a program to improve hurricane forecasting, predictions, and warnings.

“(b) GOAL.—The goal of the program under subsection (a) shall be to develop and extend accurate hurricane forecasts, predictions, and warnings in order to reduce the loss of life or property related to hurricanes, with a focus on the following:

“(1) Improving the understanding and prediction of rapid intensity change and projected path of hurricanes, including probabilistic methods for hurricane hazard mapping.

“(2) Improving the forecast and impact-based communication of inland flooding, compound flooding, and storm surges from hurricanes, in coordination with the program established under section 205 of the Weather Act Reauthorization Act of 2023.

“(3) Incorporating social, behavioral, risk, communication, and economic sciences to clearly inform response to prevent the loss of life or property, such as evacuation or shelter in place.

“(4) Evaluating and incorporating, as appropriate, innovative observations, such as novel sensor technologies, observation tools or networks, crewed or uncrewed systems, and hosted instruments on commercial aircrafts, vessels, and satellites.

“(c) ACTIVITIES.—The Under Secretary shall award grants for research, including relating to the following:

“(1) Implementing key strategies and following priorities and objectives outlined by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s 2019 report ‘Hurricane Forecast Improvement Program’.

“(2) In coordination with the National Science and Technology Council’s Social and Behavioral Sciences Subcommittee and other relevant interagency committees, improving the social, behavioral, risk, communications, and economic sciences related to vulnerabilities, risk communication, and delivery of information critical for reducing the loss of life or property related to hurricanes.

“(3) Improving the physical sciences, operational modeling, and tools related to hurricane formation, the impacts of wind and water-based hurricane hazards on the built and natural environment, and the interaction of hurricanes and tornadoes.

“(d) WARNINGS.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Under Secretary, in coordination with the program established under section 406, shall—

“(1) conduct and transition to operations the research necessary to develop and deploy probabilistic weather forecast guidance technology relating to hurricanes and related weather phenomena;

“(2) incorporate into hurricane modeling and forecasting, as appropriate, social, behavioral, risk, communication, and economic sciences research; and

“(3) expand computational resources to support and improve higher-resolution operational modeling of hurricanes and related weather phenomena.

“(e) ANNUAL BUDGET.—The Under Secretary shall, not less frequently than annually, submit to Congress a proposed budget corresponding with carrying out this section.”

SEC. 105. TSUNAMI WARNING AND EDUCATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION.

(a) TITLE HEADING.—The Tsunami Warning and Education Act (enacted as title VIII of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-479)) is amended in the title heading, by inserting “RESEARCH,” after “WARNING.”

(b) PURPOSES.—Section 803 of the Tsunami Warning and Education Act (33 U.S.C. 3202) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by inserting “timeliness and” before “accuracy”;

(2) in paragraph (7), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(3) in paragraph (8), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(9) to ensure data and metadata are managed, archived, and made available for operations, research, education, and mitigation activities in accordance with section 305 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017.”

(c) TSUNAMI FORECASTING AND WARNING PROGRAM.—Section 804 of the Tsunami Warning and Education Act (33 U.S.C. 3203) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (4), by inserting “, using industry and scientific best practices,” after “operational condition”;

(B) in paragraph (5)—

(i) in subparagraph (C), by striking “global seismic network” and inserting “Global Seismic Network”;

(ii) by redesignating subparagraphs (D), (E), (F), and (G), as subparagraphs (E), (F), (G), and (H), respectively; and

(iii) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following new subparagraph:

“(D) the global navigation satellite system (GNSS) network;”;

(C) by amending paragraph (6) to read as follows:

“(6) ensure data quality and management systems, support data and metadata access and archiving, and support the requirements of the program pursuant to the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-435) and chapter 31 of title 44, United States Code;”;

(D) in paragraph (7)—

(i) by amending the matter preceding subparagraph (A) to read as follows: “include a cooperative effort among the Administration, the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the National Science Foundation (NSF) under which the Director of USGS, the Director of the NSF, and the Administrator of NASA shall—”;

(ii) in subparagraph (A), by striking “and” at the end; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(C) provide reliable and real-time support for the GNSS network data streams from NSF, NASA, and USGS maintained networks, and supplement instrumentation coverage for rapid earthquake assessment;

“(D) assess the data and information relating to warning systems of collaborating agencies for potential utilization in NOAA’s warning system, taking into consideration advancement in research and technology;

“(E) incorporate, as practicable, tsunami notifications and warnings in the USGS Earthquake Early Warning System; and

“(F) incorporate, as practicable, preliminary analysis or data from the National Earthquake Information Center regarding the source and magnitude of an offshore earthquake within five minutes of detection;”;

(E) in paragraph (8)—

(i) by inserting “ and decision support aides” after “graphical warning products;”;

(ii) by inserting “-prone” after “tsunami;”;

(F) in paragraph (9), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(G) in paragraph (10), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(H) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(11) update tsunami inundation maps, models, or other geographic products, in order to best support, as appropriate, rel-

evant agencies with tsunami mitigation and recovery activities.”;

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) by striking paragraph (1) and redesignating paragraphs (2) and (3) as paragraphs (1) and (2), respectively; and

(B) in paragraph (1), as so redesignated—

(i) by striking “the Atlantic Ocean, including the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico, that are determined—” and inserting “the Pacific, Arctic, and Atlantic Oceans, including the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico, that are determined to pose significant risks of tsunami for States and United States territories along the coastal areas of such regions; and”; and

(ii) by striking subparagraphs (A) and (B);

(3) by redesignating subsections (d), (e), (f), and (g) as subsections (e), (f), (g), and (h), respectively;

(4) by inserting after subsection (c) the following new subsection:

“(d) TSUNAMI WARNING ALERT LEVEL EVALUATION.—The Administrator, in collaboration with social scientists, emergency personnel, and high-risk communities, shall—

“(1) evaluate tsunami alert levels terminology, timing, and effectiveness;

“(2) determine if such alerts produce the desired response and understanding from possible tsunami-prone communities; and

“(3) if necessary, update the alert level system for increased effectiveness.”;

(5) in subsection (e), as so redesignated—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting “responsible for Alaska, the continental United States, Hawaii, United States territories, and international entities the Administrator determines appropriate” before the period;

(ii) in subparagraph (A), by striking “which is primarily responsible for Alaska and the continental United States”; and

(iii) in subparagraph (B), by striking “, which is primarily responsible for Hawaii, the Caribbean, and other areas of the Pacific not covered by the National Center”;

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by inserting “current,” after “sea level;”;

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking “and volcanic eruptions” and inserting “volcanic eruptions, or other sources”;

(iii) in subparagraph (C), by striking “buoy data and tidal” and inserting “and coastal”;

(iv) in subparagraph (E), by striking “Integrated Ocean Observing System of the Administration” and inserting “United States and global ocean and coastal observing system”;

(v) in subparagraph (H), by inserting “monitoring needs,” after “response;”;

(vi) by amending subparagraph (I) to read as follows:

“(I) Providing a Tsunami Warning Coordinator to coordinate with partners and stakeholders products and services of the centers supported or maintained under paragraph (1).”;

(C) by amending paragraph (3) to read as follows:

“(3) FAIL-SAFE WARNING CAPABILITY.—The Administrator shall support and maintain fail-safe warning capability for the tsunami warning centers supported or maintained under paragraph (1), and such centers shall conduct at least one service back up drill bi-annually.”;

(D) in paragraph (4)—

(i) by amending the matter preceding subparagraph (A) to read as follows: “The Administrator shall coordinate with the weather forecast offices of the National Weather Service, the centers supported or maintained under paragraph (1), and such national and regional program offices of the Administration as the Administrator or the coordi-

nating committee, as established in section 805(b), consider appropriate to ensure that regional and local weather forecast offices—”;

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(iii) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(iv) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(D) conduct education and outreach efforts to help prepare coastal communities for tsunami hazards.”;

(E) in paragraph (5)—

(i) in the section heading, by striking “UNIFORM” and inserting “STANDARDIZED”;

(ii) in subparagraph (A), by striking “uniform” and inserting “standardized”;

(iii) in subparagraph (C)(ii), by striking “uniform” and inserting “standardized”;

(iv) in subparagraph (D), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(v) in subparagraph (E), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(vi) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(F) align the analytic techniques and methodologies of the existing tsunami warning centers supported or maintained under paragraph (1) to ensure seamless continuity of operations and mitigate risk of operational failure by prioritizing investments that include—

“(i) replacing end of life equipment;

“(ii) ensuring product consistency;

“(iii) enabling consistent operational processes for backup capabilities;

“(iv) mitigating existing operational security risks; and

“(v) meeting information security requirements specified in chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code.”;

(F) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(7) REPORTING.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this paragraph and annually thereafter until such time as all relevant requirements have been satisfied, the Administrator shall provide to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate an update briefing on the progress of the following:

“(A) Standardizing products and procedures under paragraph (5), including tsunami assessments, forecast guidance, and related products.

“(B) Migrating the message generation systems of the centers supported or maintained under paragraph (1) to the Advanced Weather Information Processing Systems, or successor systems.

“(C) The structural reorganization effort, if necessary, to align such centers’ organizational charts.

“(D) The expected timeline for the full completion of standardizing such centers’ products and procedures.”;

(6) in subsection (f), as so redesignated—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting “detect, measure, and” after “used to”;

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(iii) in subparagraph (C), by striking “and the Advanced National Seismic System” and inserting “the Advanced National Seismic System, and the global navigation satellite system (GNSS); and”;

(iv) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(D) ensure research is coordinated with tsunami warning operations;”;

(B) in paragraph (3), by inserting “according to industry best practices” before the period; and

(7) in subsection (h)(2)(A), as so redesignated, by striking “accuracy of the tsunami model used” and inserting “timeliness and accuracy of the forecast used to issue the warning”.

(d) NATIONAL TSUNAMI HAZARD MITIGATION PROGRAM.—Section 805(c) of the Tsunami Warning and Education Act (33 U.S.C. 3204(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (5)—

(A) by redesignating subparagraphs (B), (C), (D), (E), (F), and (G) as subparagraphs (C), (D), (E), (F), (G), and (H), respectively;

(B) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following new subparagraph:

“(B) Coastal digital elevation models (DEMs) to support the development of inundation maps.”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(I) Evaluation of the variation of inundation impact resulting from tsunami-driven sediment transport.

“(J) Evaluation of tsunami debris impact on critical infrastructure (as such term is defined in section 1016(e) of Public Law 107-56 (42 U.S.C. 5195c(e))) and lifelines.

“(K) High-resolution and high-quality digital elevation models needed for at-risk coastlines, ports, and harbors, particularly for regions not covered by existing inundation maps.”; and

(2) in paragraph (7)(C), by inserting “and behavioral” after “social”;

(e) TSUNAMI RESEARCH PROGRAM.—Section 806 of the Tsunami Warning and Education Act (33 U.S.C. 3205) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking “section 805(d)” and inserting “section 805(b)”;

(B) by inserting “and management” after “data collection”;

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by inserting “deployment and” after “may include”;

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking “social science research” and inserting “social and behavioral science research, including data collection”;

(C) in paragraph (4), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(D) by redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (7); and

(E) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following new paragraphs:

“(5) develop decision support tools;

“(6) leverage and prioritize research opportunities; and”;

(3) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN.—Not later than 12 months after the date of the enactment of this subsection and not less frequently than every 36 months thereafter, the Administrator, in consultation with the Interagency Council for Advancing Meteorological Services, shall develop a research and development and research to operations plan to improve tsunami detection and forecasting capabilities that—

“(1) identifies and prioritizes research and development priorities to satisfy section 804;

“(2) identifies key research needs for better detecting tsunamis that may occur in open ocean and along the coastlines of the United States and its territories, improve forecasting of tsunamis that are not seismically driven, and other opportunities determined appropriate;

“(3) develops plans for transitioning research to operations; and

“(4) identifies collaboration opportunities that may further and align tsunami research, development, warnings, and operations between the centers supported or maintained under section 804, the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Adminis-

tration Center for Tsunami Research, the National Science Foundation, the United States Geological Survey, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, institutions of higher education, private entities, stakeholders, and others determined appropriate.”;

(f) GLOBAL TSUNAMI WARNING AND MITIGATION NETWORK.—Section 807(d) of the Tsunami Warning and Education Act (33 U.S.C. 3206(d)) is amended by inserting “and management” after “data sharing”;

(g) TSUNAMI SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY PANEL.—Section 808(b)(1) of the Tsunami Warning and Education Act (33 U.S.C. 3206a(b)(1)) is amended by inserting “and behavioral” after “social”;

(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 809 of the Tsunami Warning and Education Act (33 U.S.C. 3207) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 809. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

“There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administrator to carry out this title \$30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028, of which—

“(1) not less than 27 percent of the amount appropriated for each fiscal year shall be for activities conducted at the State level under the national tsunami hazard mitigation program under section 805; and

“(2) not less than 8 percent of the amount appropriated shall be for the tsunami research program under section 806.”.

SEC. 106. OBSERVING SYSTEM PLANNING.

Section 106 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8516) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by inserting “Federal” before “observing capabilities”;

(B) by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (4)—

(A) by inserting “, including private sector partnerships or commercial acquisition,” after “options”;

(B) by striking the period and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(5) compare costs and schedule, including cost-benefit analysis, of Federal and private sector supplemental options to fill the observation data requirements under paragraph (1) and gaps identified pursuant to paragraph (3); and

“(6) not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this paragraph, submit to Congress a report that provides an analysis of the technical, schedule, cost, and cost benefit analyses to place an operational polar-orbiting environmental satellite capability in the early morning orbit to support the weather enterprise and the Administration’s mission.”.

SEC. 107. OBSERVING SYSTEM SIMULATION EXPERIMENTS.

Section 107 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8517) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(3), by striking “providing data” and inserting “comparison to current or experimental commercial system capabilities that provide data”;

(2) in subsection (c)(1), by striking “, including polar-orbiting and geostationary satellite systems,”;

(3) by striking subsection (d); and

(4) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (d).

SEC. 108. COMPUTING RESOURCES PRIORITIZATION.

Section 108 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8518) is amended by striking subsection (a)(3)(C) and all that follows through subsection (b)(7) and inserting the following new subsections:

“(b) COMPUTING RESEARCH INITIATIVE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary, in collaboration with the Secretary of Energy, shall carry out an initiative, which may leverage Department of Energy high performance computers, cloud computing, or expertise, to run advanced coupled models in order to conduct proof of concept scenarios in comparison with current issued forecasts and models. The Under Secretary and Secretary of Energy shall carry out the initiative through a competitive, merit-reviewed process, and consider applications from Federal agencies, National Laboratories, institutions of higher education (as such term is defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)), nonprofit institutions, and other appropriate entities (or a consortia thereof).

“(2) COMPONENTS.—In carrying out the initiative under paragraph (1), the Under Secretary shall prevent duplication and coordinate research efforts in artificial intelligence, high performance computing, cloud computing, quantum computing, modeling and simulation, machine learning, data assimilation, large scale data analytics, and predictive analysis across the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and may—

“(A) conduct research to compare National Weather Service forecast and model outputs to predictions and model outputs developed through such initiative;

“(B) share relevant modeling system and applications innovations developed through such initiative, including Unified Forecast System-based applications, through community-based activities, in accordance with section 10601 of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (15 U.S.C. 8512a);

“(C) leverage coordinating activities managed by the National Science and Technology Council, the Interagency Council for Advancing Meteorological Services, and other relevant interagency entities;

“(D) provide sufficient capacity for long-term archive and access of model output to support research and long-term study;

“(E) determine computing decisions based on an agile requirements framework; and

“(F) support the training, recruitment, and retention of the next generation weather, water, and climate computing workforce through incentives and pathways for career development and employment opportunities.

“(3) RESEARCH SECURITY.—The activities authorized under this section shall be applied in a manner consistent with subtitle D of title VI of the Research and Development, Competition, and Innovation Act (enacted as division B of Public Law 117-167; 42 U.S.C. 19231 et seq.).

“(4) TERMINATION.—The authority under this subsection shall terminate five years after the date of the enactment of this subsection.

“(c) ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE INVESTMENTS.—The Under Secretary shall leverage artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies to facilitate, optimize, and further leverage advanced computing to accomplish critical missions of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration by enhancing existing and forthcoming high-performance and cloud computing infrastructure or systems.

“(d) CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE.—The Under Secretary may expand, and where applicable establish, centers of excellence to aid the adoption of next-generation artificial intelligence and machine learning enabled advanced computing capabilities. Each such center may carry out activities that include the following:

“(1) Leveraging robust public-private partnership models to provide access to training,

experience, and long-term development of workforce and infrastructure.

“(2) Developing and optimizing tools, libraries, algorithms, data structures, and other supporting software necessary for specific applications on high performance computing systems.

“(3) Applying modern artificial intelligence, deep machine-learning, and advanced data analysis technologies to address current and future mission challenges.

“(4) To the maximum extent practicable, explore quantum computing and related application partnerships with public, private, and academic entities to improve the accuracy and resolution of weather predictions.

“(e) MULTI-YEAR CONTRACTS.—The Under Secretary may enter into multi-year contracts in accordance with section 3903 of title 41, United States Code, and shall ensure compliance with all clauses provided in such section to support operations, research, and development related to high performance and cloud computing infrastructure or systems with an unfunded contingent liability in the event of cancellation.

“(f) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Under Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report evaluating the following:

“(1) The effectiveness of the initiative required under subsection (b), including applied research discoveries and advanced modeling improvements achieved.

“(2) A best estimate of the overall value of high-resolution probabilistic forecast guidance for hazardous weather or water events (as such term is defined in section 406) using a next-generation weather forecast and warning framework.

“(3) The needs for cloud computing, quantum computing, or high-performance computing, visualization, and dissemination collaboration between the Department of Energy and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

“(4) A timeline and guidance for implementation of the following:

“(A) High-resolution numerical weather prediction models.

“(B) Methods for meeting the cloud computing, quantum computing, or high-performance computing, visualization, and dissemination needs identified under paragraph (3).”

SEC. 109. EARTH PREDICTION INNOVATION CENTER.

Paragraph (5) of section 102(b) of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8512(b)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (D), by striking “and” after the semicolon; and

(2) by striking subparagraph (E) and inserting the following new subparagraphs:

“(E) developing community weather research modeling systems that—

“(i) are accessible by the public in accordance with section 10601 of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (15 U.S.C. 8512a) and available for archive and long-term study;

“(ii) meet basic end-user requirements for running on public computers and networks located outside of secure National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration information and technology systems;

“(iii) utilize, whenever appropriate and cost-effective, innovative strategies and methods, including cloud-based computing capabilities, for hosting and management of part or all of the system described in this subparagraph;

“(iv) utilize modeling systems that allow for interoperability with new model components, modules, and next-generation software and coding languages;

“(v) allow for open testing and integration of promising operational model improvements from the broader community;

“(vi) access as close to a real-time basis as possible operational data and metadata, including commercially purchased data for use in Earth Prediction Innovation Center research and development testing grounds pursuant to redistribution restrictions, licensing agreements, and applicable existing laws and regulations; and

“(vii) provide supported and portable versions of the unified forecast system, including applications for hurricane, space weather, ocean, cryosphere, air quality, and coastal models, that can reproduce current operational global and regional model prediction; and

“(F) establishing a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Data Lake, to be maintained by the Administration, a commercial partner, or non-profit entity, that consolidates and maintains a publicly available and continuously updated collection of data and metadata used in numerical weather prediction for use in the Earth Prediction Innovation Center’s model testing, pursuant to redistribution restrictions, licensing agreements, and applicable existing laws and regulations.”

SEC. 110. SATELLITE ARCHITECTURE PLANNING.

Section 301 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8531) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking paragraph (1) and redesignating paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) as paragraphs (1), (2), and (3), respectively;

(2) by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

“(b) NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION SATELLITE SYSTEMS AND DATA.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall maintain a fleet of Administration space-based observation platforms that provide critical operations-focused data and information to support the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s mission to monitor the global environment in order to protect lives and property from extreme weather and other natural phenomena.

“(2) COLLABORATION.—The Under Secretary shall implement recommendations from the NOAA Observing Systems Council to ensure an appropriate mix of government, academic, commercial sector, and international partnerships in the provision of data and information, including a broadened effort on data acquisition through the Commercial Data Program under section 302 when cost effective and beneficial to the Administration.

“(3) PRIORITY.—The Under Secretary shall ensure that Administration platforms maintained under paragraph (1) prioritize the development of products and services that are tailored to meet the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s mission.

“(4) NATIONAL CENTERS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION.—The Under Secretary shall maintain the National Centers for Environmental Information to provide a long-term archive and access to the Administration’s national and global data and metadata.”; and

(3) in subsection (f)(1), by striking “2023” and inserting “2030”.

SEC. 111. IMPROVING UNCREWED ACTIVITIES.

Subparagraph (G) of section 102(b)(3) of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8512(b)(3)) is amended by striking “, including commer-

cial observing systems” and inserting “, including stationary and mobile commercial observing systems, such as uncrewed aircraft and marine systems, to provide observations of the atmosphere and ocean, and other observations, in cooperation with the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations”.

SEC. 112. INTERAGENCY COUNCIL FOR ADVANCING METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 402 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8542) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking “Advancing Weather Services” and inserting “Advancing Meteorological Services (in this section referred to as the ‘Interagency Council’)”; and

(B) by striking “Committee” each place it appears and inserting “Council”;

(2) by amending subsections (b) and (c) to read as follows:

“(b) CO-CHAIRS.—The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Under Secretary shall serve as co-chairs of the Interagency Council. The Under Secretary shall serve as the Federal Coordinator for Meteorology.

“(c) FURTHER COORDINATION.—The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall take such steps as are necessary to coordinate the activities of the Federal Government with stakeholders in the United States weather industry, academic partners, State governments, and emergency managers, including by implementing mechanisms to encourage and enable the participation of non-Federal employees in the functions of the Interagency Council.”;

(3) by adding at the end the following new subsections:

“(d) FUNCTIONS.—The Interagency Council shall be the formal mechanism by which all relevant Federal departments and agencies coordinate implementation of policy and practices to ensure United States global leadership in meteorological services. In doing so, the Interagency Council shall review programs and support relevant weather research and forecast innovation activities, as well as other related implementation activities, related to Federal meteorological services, including by carrying out the following:

“(1) Identifying and helping prioritize meteorological research and service delivery needs, including relating to observations, operational systems, communications, and infrastructure.

“(2) Providing recommendations to streamline or consolidate activities and develop greater efficiencies in cross-agency activities.

“(3) Leveraging Earth system science research outcomes of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and other relevant Federal departments and agencies, including research outcomes related to the relevant recommended key science and applications questions and priorities in the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s 2018 report ‘Thriving on Our Changing Planet: A Decadal Strategy for Earth Observation from Space’, to understand and predict high-impact weather phenomena.

“(4) Facilitating the expansion and strengthening of partnerships with private sector entities to advance meteorological research, communications, and computing in collaboration with the Earth system science, service, and stakeholder communities.

“(5) Sharing information regarding meteorological research improvement needs and science opportunities across relevant Federal departments and agencies.

“(6) Providing advice to all relevant Federal departments and agencies regarding potential collaborations and expected level of

resources needed to maintain and operate the Interagency Council.

“(7) Enhancing communication and coordination and promoting sharing within relevant Federal departments and agencies and across the Interagency Council.

“(8) Developing, recruiting, and sustaining a professional and diverse workforce for meteorological research and services.

“(e) DATA INVENTORY.—The Interagency Council, in coordination and avoidance of duplication with the United States Group on Earth Observations, shall promote data and metadata access and archive activities to increase accessibility, interoperability, and reusability by maintaining a data inventory of meteorological observations. Not less frequently than annually for a period of five years beginning on the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Interagency Council shall solicit updated information from private sector entities identifying current and near future sources of such data. Such data shall be made available to member departments and agencies under subsection (a).

“(f) COORDINATION OFFICE.—The Interagency Meteorological Coordination Office shall provide to the Interagency Council such administrative and logistical support as the Interagency Council may require, as determined by the co-chairs.

“(g) COST SHARE.—Member departments and agencies of the Interagency Council under subsection (a) may provide reimbursable financial support to the Interagency Meteorological Coordinating Office to enhance cost-sharing and collaboration related to weather research and forecast innovation activities.

“(h) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this subsection and annually thereafter, the Interagency Council shall publish a report which identifies among member agencies the following:

“(1) Federal programs that use meteorological observations, data sources, and capabilities.

“(2) Federal programs that acquire such data from private sector entities.

“(3) Advancements in meteorological data collection, assimilation, and forecasting that could improve Federal programmatic operational capabilities.

“(4) Barriers to acquiring meteorological observations, data sources, and capabilities that could be used to better meet Federal programmatic needs.”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference to the Interagency Committee for Advancing Weather Services in any law, rule, regulation, paper, record, map, or other such document of the United States shall be deemed to be a reference to the Interagency Council for Advancing Meteorological Services.

SEC. 113. OCEAN OBSERVATIONS.

Subsection (b) of section 12304 of the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 (33 U.S.C. 3603) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(5) SHIPS OF OPPORTUNITY PILOT PROGRAM.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, in coordination with the heads of relevant Federal departments and agencies, shall, subject to relevant regulations and certifications, maintain pilot programs or projects to contract with research or commercial ship operators for data collection and assess the potential costs, benefits, and viability of a global network of ocean and atmospheric observing instruments operating on research or commercial ocean vessels, including in the Arctic, in order to supplement the Integrated Coastal, Great Lakes, and Ocean Ob-

serva-tion System in improving understanding of coastal and ocean systems and their relationships to human activities.

“(B) STANDARDS AND SPECIFICATIONS.—The Administrator shall ensure that data acquired through the pilot program established pursuant to subparagraph (A) meets the most recent standards and specifications required for observation services and data as published pursuant to subsection (c) of section 302 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017.

“(C) REPORT.—Not later than five years after the date of the enactment of this paragraph, the Administrator, in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation, shall submit to Congress a report on the requirements for a global network of ocean and atmospheric instruments operating on research or commercial ocean vessels for measurement and data transmission.

“(D) SUNSET.—This paragraph shall terminate on the earlier of—

“(i) September 30, 2029; or

“(ii) one year after the date on which the report required under subparagraph (B) is submitted by the Administrator.”.

SEC. 114. CONSOLIDATION OF REPORTS.

(a) WEATHER RESEARCH AND FORECASTING INNOVATION ACT OF 2017.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 is amended—

(A) in section 102 (15 U.S.C. 8512), by striking subsection (d);

(B) by amending section 105 (15 U.S.C. 8515) to read as follows:

“**SEC. 105. WEATHER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING.**

“Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this section and not less frequently than semiannually thereafter, the Under Secretary, acting through the Assistant Administrator for Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, and in coordination with the Director of the National Weather Service and the Assistant Administrator for Satellite and Information Services, shall issue a research and development and research to operations plan to maintain United States leadership in numerical weather prediction and forecasting that—

“(1) describes the forecasting skill and technology goals, objectives, expected budget, and progress of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in carrying out the program conducted under section 102;

“(2) identifies and prioritizes specific research and development activities, data collection and analysis, predictive modeling, demonstration of potential operational forecast application, education, training, and performance metrics, weighted to meet the operational weather and flood-event mission of the National Weather Service to achieve a weather-ready Nation;

“(3) describes how the program conducted under section 102 will collaborate with Federal agencies and departments, international partners, and stakeholders, including the United States weather industry and academic partners, and the role of each in advancing weather forecasting and communication;

“(4) identifies, through consultation with the National Science Foundation, the United States weather industry, and academic partners, research necessary to advance the scientific understanding of weather processes and provide information to improve weather warning and forecast systems in the United States most effectively; and

“(5) describes how the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is advancing community weather modeling.”;

(C) in section 403 (15 U.S.C. 8543)—

(i) in subsection (a), by inserting “the” after “Director of”; and

(ii) by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

“(d) ANNUAL BRIEFING.—Not less frequently than once each year, the Under Secretary shall brief the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives on participation in the program under subsection (a) and shall highlight any innovations that come from the interaction described in subsection (b).”; and

(D) by striking sections 408 through 411 and section 414 and redesignating sections 412 and 413 as sections 408 and 409, respectively.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 is amended by striking the items relating to sections 408 through 414 and inserting the following new items:

“Sec. 408. Weather enterprise outreach.

“Sec. 409. Hurricane hunter aircraft.”.

(b) NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1992.—The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Authorization Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-567) is amended—

(1) in section 106, by striking subsection (c) (15 U.S.C. 1537); and

(2) in section 108 (15 U.S.C. 8520)—

(A) by striking subsection (b); and

(B) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (b).

SEC. 115. NATIONAL LANDSLIDE PREPAREDNESS ACT REAUTHORIZATION.

The National Landslide Preparedness Act (43 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 3 (43 U.S.C. 3102)—

(A) in subsection (a)(3), by striking “protect” and inserting “contribute to protecting”;

(B) in subsection (b)(1)(C)(ii), by striking “implement” and inserting “disseminate”;

(C) in subsection (c)(2), by adding at the end the following:

“(J) The Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.”; and

(D) in subsection (h), by striking “2024” and inserting “2029”; and

(2) in section 5 (43 U.S.C. 3104)—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) in paragraph (1)(A), by inserting “and derivative” after “3D elevation”; and

(ii) in paragraph (2)(B)(i), by inserting “, process, and integrate” after “acquire”;

(B) in subsection (b)(3)—

(i) by redesignating subparagraphs (D) and (E) as subparagraphs (E) and (F), respectively; and

(ii) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

“(D) the 3D Hydrography Program Working Group.”;

(C) in subsection (d)(3), by striking “publicly” and inserting “publicly”; and

(D) in subsection (e), by striking “2024” and inserting “2029”.

SEC. 116. AMENDMENTS TO HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM AND HYPOXIA RESEARCH AND CONTROL ACT OF 1998.

(a) ASSESSMENTS.—Section 603 of the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 (33 U.S.C. 4001) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (13) and (14) as paragraphs (14) and (15); and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (12) the following new paragraph:

“(13) the Department of Energy.”;

(2) by striking subsections (b), (c), (d), (e), (h), and (i) and redesignating subsections (f) and (g) as subsections (b) and (c), respectively;

(3) in subsection (b), as so redesignated—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “coastal waters including the Great Lakes” and inserting “marine, estuarine, and freshwater systems”; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by amending subparagraph (A) to read as follows:

“(A) examine the causes and ecological consequences of hypoxia on marine and aquatic species in their natural environments, and socio-cultural or economic costs of hypoxia, including impacts on food safety and security;”;

(ii) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) through (D) as subparagraphs (D) through (F), respectively;

(iii) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following new subparagraphs:

“(B) examine the effect of other environmental stressors on hypoxia;

“(C) evaluate alternatives for reducing, mitigating, and controlling hypoxia and its environmental impacts;”;

(iv) in subparagraph (D), as so redesignated, by inserting “, social,” after “ecological”; and

(v) in subparagraph (E), as so redesignated, by striking “hypoxia modeling and monitoring data” and inserting “hypoxia modeling, forecasting, and monitoring and observation data”; and

(4) in subsection (c), as so redesignated, to read as follows:

“(c) ACTION STRATEGY AND SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT FOR MARINE AND FRESHWATER HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS.—

“(1) Not less often than once every 5 years, the Task Force shall complete and submit to Congress an action strategy, including a scientific assessment, of harmful algal blooms in the United States (in this Act referred to as the ‘Action Strategy’). Each such Action Strategy, including scientific assessment, shall examine both marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms, including those in the Great Lakes and upper reaches of estuaries, those in freshwater lakes and rivers, and those that originate in freshwater lakes or rivers and migrate to coastal waters.

“(2) Each Action Strategy under this subsection shall—

“(A) examine the causes and ecological consequences, and the socio-cultural or economic costs, including impacts food safety and security, of harmful algal blooms;

“(B) examine the effect of other environmental stressors on harmful algal blooms;

“(C) examine potential methods to prevent, control, and mitigate harmful algal blooms and the potential ecological, social, cultural, and economic costs and benefits of such methods;

“(D) identify priorities for research needed to advance techniques and technologies to detect, predict, monitor, respond to, and minimize the occurrence, duration, and severity of harmful algal blooms, including recommendations to eliminate significant gaps in harmful algal bloom forecasting, monitoring, and observation data;

“(E) evaluate progress made by, and the needs of, Task Force activities and actions to prevent, control, and mitigate harmful algal blooms;

“(F) identify ways to improve coordination and prevent unnecessary duplication of effort among Federal departments and agencies with respect to research on harmful algal blooms;

“(G) include regional chapters relating to the requirements described in this paragraph in order to highlight geographically and ecologically diverse locations with significant ecological, social, cultural, and economic impacts from harmful algal blooms; and

“(H) define methodology used to determine ecological, social, cultural and economic im-

pacts from harmful algal blooms and hypoxia.”.

(b) CONSULTATIONS.—Section 102 of the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Amendments Act of 2004 (33 U.S.C. 4001a) is amended—

(1) by striking “the coastal”;;

(2) by inserting “and” after “Indian tribes.”;

(3) by inserting “and” after “local governments.”; and

(4) by striking “with expertise in coastal zone science and management” and inserting “with relevant expertise”.

(c) NATIONAL HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM AND HYPOXIA PROGRAM.—Section 603A of the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 (33 U.S.C. 4002) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “predicting,” and inserting “monitoring, observing, forecasting.”; and

(ii) by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking “comprehensive research plan and action strategy under section 603B” and inserting “Action Strategy, including scientific assessment, under section 603(c).”; and

(ii) by striking the period and inserting “; and”;

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) the scientific assessment under section 603(b).”;;

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (3), by striking “ocean and Great Lakes” and inserting “marine, estuarine, and freshwater systems”; and

(B) in paragraph (5), by inserting “while recognizing each agency is acting under its own independent mission and authority” before the semicolon;

(3) in subsection (d), by striking “Except as provided in subsection (h), the” and inserting “The”;

(4) in subsection (e)—

(A) by amending paragraph (2) to read as follows:

“(2) examine, in collaboration with State and local entities and Indian Tribes, including island communities, low-population rural communities, Indigenous communities, subsistence communities, fisheries, and recreation industries that are most dependent on coastal and water resources that may be impacted by marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia, the causes, ecological consequences, cultural impacts, and social and economic costs of harmful algal blooms and hypoxia.”;

(B) by striking paragraph (3);

(C) by redesignating paragraphs (4), (5), and (6) as paragraphs (3), (4), and (5), respectively;

(D) in paragraph (3), as so redesignated—

(i) by striking “to, regional” and inserting “to regional”; and

(ii) by striking “agencies” and inserting “entities, and regional coastal observing systems (as such term is defined in section 12330(6) of the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 (33 U.S.C. 3602(6)))”;

(E) in paragraph (5), as so redesignated, by inserting “and communities” after “ecosystems”;

(F) by inserting after paragraph (5) the following new paragraph:

“(6) support sustained observations, including through peer-reviewed, merit-based, competitive grant funding, to provide State and local entities, Indian Tribes, and others access to real-time or near real-time observation data for decision-making to protect human and ecological health and local economies.”;

(G) in paragraph (8), by striking “State and local” and inserting “State, local, and Tribal”; and

(H) in paragraph (9)(A), by striking “tribal” and inserting “Tribal”;

(5) by amending subsections (f) and (g) to read as follows:

“(f) COOPERATIVE EFFORTS.—The Under Secretary shall work cooperatively with and avoid duplication of effort of other agencies on the Task Force, and with and of States, Indian tribes, and nongovernmental organizations concerned with marine and freshwater issues, and shall coordinate harmful algal bloom and hypoxia and related activities and research.

“(g) FRESHWATER AND ESTUARINE PROGRAM DUTIES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall—

“(A) with respect to freshwater aspects of the Program, in coordination with the Task Force, carry out the duties under subsection (e) through the activities required under section 603C; and

“(B) with respect to estuarine aspects of the Program, coordinate with the Under Secretary to carry out activities required under this section.

“(2) NONDUPLICATION.—The Administrator shall ensure that activities carried out under this subsection focus on new approaches to addressing freshwater harmful algal blooms and are not duplicative of existing research and development programs authorized under this Act or any other law.”; and

(6) by amending subsection (h) to read as follows:

“(h) ANTI-DEFICIENCY ACT APPLIED TO HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM SERVICES.—Any services by an officer or employee under this title relating to the immediate development and dissemination of the Harmful Algal Bloom Operational Forecast System of the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall be considered, for purposes of section 1342 of title 31, United States Code, services for emergencies involving the safety of human life or the protection of property. Such consideration shall only apply to areas with active harmful algal blooms during any lapse in appropriations beginning on or after the date of the enactment of this subsection.”.

(d) NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION ACTIVITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 603B of the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 (33 U.S.C. 4003) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 603B. NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION ACTIVITIES.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall—

“(1) carry out marine, coastal, and Great Lakes harmful algal bloom and hypoxia events response activities;

“(2) develop and enhance operational harmful algal bloom observing and forecasting programs, including operational observations and forecasting, monitoring, modeling, data management, and information dissemination;

“(3) maintain and enhance peer-reviewed, merit-based, competitive grant funding relating to harmful algal blooms and hypoxia to—

“(A) maintain and enhance baseline monitoring programs established by the Program;

“(B) support the projects maintained and established by the Program;

“(C) address the research and management needs and priorities identified in the Action Strategy under section 603(c);

“(D) accelerate the utilization of effective methods of intervention and mitigation to

reduce the frequency, severity, and impacts of harmful algal bloom and hypoxia events;

“(E) identify opportunities to improve monitoring of harmful algal bloom and hypoxia, with a particular focus on coastal waters that may affect fisheries, public health, or subsistence harvest;

“(F) examine the effects of other environmental stressors on harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;

“(G) assess the effects of multiple environmental stressors on living marine resources and coastal ecosystems; and

“(H) evaluate adaptation and mitigation strategies to address the impacts of harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;

“(4) enhance communication and coordination among Federal agencies carrying out marine and freshwater harmful algal bloom and hypoxia activities and research;

“(5) to the greatest extent practicable, leverage existing resources and expertise available from local research universities and institutions; and

“(6) use cost effective methods in carrying out this section.

“(b) INTEGRATED COASTAL AND OCEAN OBSERVATION SYSTEM.—The collection of monitoring and observing data under this section shall comply with all data standards and protocols developed pursuant to the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 (33 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.). Such data shall be made available through the system established under that Act.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 2 of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-383) is amended by amending the item relating to section 603B to read as follows:

“Sec. 603B. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration activities.”.

(e) ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY ACTIVITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 (33 U.S.C. 4001 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 603B of that Act (33 U.S.C. 4003), as amended by subsection (d), the following new section:

“SEC. 603C. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY ACTIVITIES.

“The Administrator shall—

“(1) carry out research on the ecology and human health impacts of freshwater harmful algal blooms;

“(2) develop and maintain forecasting and monitoring of, and event response to, freshwater harmful algal blooms in lakes, reservoirs, rivers, and estuaries (including tributaries thereof);

“(3) enhance communication and coordination among Federal agencies carrying out freshwater harmful algal bloom and hypoxia activities and research;

“(4) to the greatest extent practicable, leverage existing resources and expertise available from local research universities and institutions; and

“(5) use cost effective methods in carrying out this section.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 2 of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-383) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 603B, as amended by subsection (e), the following new item:

“Sec. 603C. Environmental Protection Agency activities.”.

(f) NATIONAL HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM AND HYPOXIA OBSERVING NETWORK.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 606 of the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 (33 U.S.C. 4005) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 606. NATIONAL HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM OBSERVING NETWORK.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary, acting through the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (referred to in this section as ‘NCCOS’) and the Integrated Ocean Observing System (referred to in this section as ‘IOOS’) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, shall integrate Federal, State, regional, and local observing capabilities to establish a national network of harmful algal bloom observing systems for the monitoring, detection, and forecasting of harmful algal blooms by leveraging the capacity of IOOS regional associations, including through the incorporation of emerging technologies and new data integration methods, such as artificial intelligence.

“(b) COORDINATION.— In carrying out subsection (a), the IOOS Program Office shall—

“(1) coordinate with NCCOS regarding observations, data integration, and information dissemination; and

“(2) establish a Harmful Algal Bloom Data Assembly Center to integrate, disseminate, and provide a central architecture to support ecological forecasting.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 2 of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-383) is amended by amending the item relating to section 606 to read as follows:

“Sec. 606. National harmful algal bloom observing network.”.

(g) DEFINITIONS.—Section 609 of the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 (33 U.S.C. 4008) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “means the comprehensive research plan and action strategy established under section 603B” and inserting “means the action strategy, including scientific assessment, for marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms established under section 603(c)”;

(2) in paragraph (3), to read as follows:

“(3) APPROPRIATE FEDERAL OFFICIAL.—The term ‘appropriate Federal official’ means—

“(A) in the case of marine systems or Great Lakes hypoxia or harmful algal bloom event, including those in estuarine areas, the Under Secretary; and

“(B) in the case of a freshwater hypoxia or harmful algal bloom event, the Administrator, in consultation with the Under Secretary.”;

(3) by striking paragraph (9);

(4) by redesignating paragraphs (4), (5), (6), (7), and (8) as paragraphs (6), (7), (8), (10), and (11);

(5) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following new paragraphs:

“(4) HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM; HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM AND HYPOXIA EVENT.—

“(A) HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM.—The term ‘harmful algal bloom’ means marine or freshwater algae or macroalgae, including Sargassum, that proliferate to high concentrations, resulting in nuisance conditions or harmful impacts on marine and freshwater ecosystems, communities, or human health through the production of toxic compounds or other biological, chemical, or physical impacts of the algae outbreak.

“(B) HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM AND HYPOXIA EVENT.—The term ‘harmful algal bloom and hypoxia event’ means the occurrence of a harmful algal bloom or hypoxia as a result of a natural, anthropogenic, or undetermined cause.

“(5) HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM OR HYPOXIA EVENT OF SIGNIFICANCE.—The term ‘harmful algal bloom or hypoxia event of significance’ means a harmful algal bloom or hypoxia event that has had or will likely have significant detrimental environmental, economic,

social, subsistence use, or public health impacts.”;

(6) in paragraph (6), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking “aquatic” and inserting “marine or freshwater”; and

(B) by striking “resident” and inserting “marine or freshwater”; and

(7) by inserting after paragraph (8), as so redesignated, the following new paragraph:

“(9) SUBSISTENCE USE.—The term ‘subsistence use’ means the customary and traditional use of fish, wildlife, or other freshwater, coastal, or marine resources by any individual or community to meet personal or family needs, including essential economic, nutritional, or cultural applications.”.

(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 610 of the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 (33 U.S.C. 4009) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), to read as follows:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Under Secretary to carry out this title \$27,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028.”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) TRANSFER AUTHORITY.—The Under Secretary is authorized to make a direct non-expenditure transfer of funds authorized to be appropriated pursuant to subsection (a) to the head of any Federal department or agency, with the concurrence of such head, to carry out, as appropriate, relevant provisions of this title.”.

(i) NATIONAL LEVEL INCUBATOR PROGRAM; HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM OR HYPOXIA EVENT OF SIGNIFICANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 (33 U.S.C. 4001 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“SEC. 611. NATIONAL LEVEL INCUBATOR PROGRAM.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary, in collaboration with research universities and institutions, shall establish a national level incubator program to increase the number of available control strategies and technologies relating to harmful algal blooms. Such incubator shall establish a framework for preliminary assessments of novel harmful algal bloom prevention, mitigation, and control technologies in order to determine the potential for effectiveness and scalability.

“(b) OPERATION.—The incubator established under subsection (a) shall provide merit-based funding for harmful algal bloom control strategies and technologies that eliminate or reduce through biological, chemical, or physical means the levels of harmful algae and associated toxins.

“(c) DATABASE.—The incubator established under subsection (a) shall include a database to catalog the licensing and permitting requirements, economic costs, feasibility, effectiveness, and scalability of both novel and established prevention, control, and mitigation measures.

“(d) PRIORITIZATION.—In carrying out the incubator established under subsection (a), the Under Secretary shall prioritize proposed activities that would, to the maximum extent practicable—

“(1) protect key habitats for fish and wildlife;

“(2) maintain biodiversity;

“(3) protect public health;

“(4) protect coastal resources of national, historical, and cultural significance; or

“(5) seek to partially or fully benefit communities of color, low-income communities, Indian Tribes or Indigenous communities, and rural communities.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 2 of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-383) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 610 the following new item:

“Sec. 611. National level incubator program.”

(j) HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM OR HYPOXIA EVENT OF SIGNIFICANCE.—Section 9(g) of the National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act of 2018 (33 U.S.C. 4010(g)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (B), by adding at the end the following new sentence: “The appropriate Federal official may waive the non-Federal share requirements of this subsection if such official determines no reasonable means are available through which the recipient of the Federal share can meet the non-Federal share requirement.”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(D) CONTRACT, GRANT, AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT AUTHORITY.—The Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere may enter into agreements and grants with States, Indian Tribes, local governments, or other entities to pay for or reimburse costs incurred for the purposes of supporting the determination of and assessing the environmental, economic, social, subsistence use, and public health effects of a harmful algal bloom or hypoxia event of significance.”;

(2) in paragraph (2)(A), by inserting “, leadership official of an affected Indian Tribe, the executive official of the District of Columbia, or a territory or possession of the United States, including Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, and American Samoa, if affected” after “State”;

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) FUNDING AUTHORITY.—To carry out this subsection, notwithstanding any other provision of law, there is authorized to be appropriated from the amounts made available to the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere \$2,000,000, to remain available until expended.”

(k) PROTECT FAMILIES FROM TOXIC ALGAL BLOOMS.—Section 128 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 (33 U.S.C. 610 note) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (f); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (d) the following new subsection:

“(e) HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM TECHNOLOGIES.—In carrying out the demonstration program under subsection (a), the Secretary may enter into agreements with water and irrigation districts located in the focus areas described in subsections (c) and (d) for the use or sale of any new technologies developed under the program to expedite the removal of harmful algal blooms in such areas.”

TITLE II—ENHANCING FEDERAL WEATHER FORECASTING AND INNOVATION

SEC. 201. WEATHER INNOVATION FOR THE NEXT GENERATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under Secretary shall establish a Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation Program (in this section referred to as the “Program”) to ensure the continued performance of weather radar capabilities, including systems currently being developed, with interferences in the line of sight of such radar.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out the Program, the Under Secretary, in consultation with the Interagency Council for Advancing Meteorological Services, shall—

(1) partner with the private sector, academia, Federal, State, and local government entities, and any other entity the Under Secretary considers appropriate;

(2) identify, evaluate, and test existing or near-commercial technologies and solutions that improve radar coverage and performance, including by mitigating the potential impact of interferences on weather radar;

(3) to the maximum extent practicable, research additional solutions that could mitigate the effects of interferences on weather radar, such as—

(A) signal processing algorithms;

(B) short-term forecasting algorithms to replace contaminated data;

(C) the use of dual polarization characteristics in mitigating the effects of wind turbines on weather radar; and

(D) gap filling radars to provide supplemental or replacement observations in impacted areas; and

(4) develop, support, or partner with developers to provide commercially viable technical mitigation solutions for interferences to weather radar capabilities that are compatible with the operational requirements of the weather radar systems.

(c) PRIORITY.—In carrying out subsection (b), the Under Secretary shall prioritize consideration of the following technology-based mitigation solutions:

(1) Phased array weather radar systems.

(2) Supplementing or replacing contaminated data with commercial radar data.

(3) The utilization of data from private sector associated meteorological towers or similar capabilities.

(4) The display on local forecasting equipment of wind farm boundaries and consolidated wind farm areas.

(5) The installation and provision of access to rain gauges.

(6) Any other technology-based mitigation solution the Under Secretary determines could improve radar coverage by overcoming interferences, beam blockage, or ghost echoes.

(d) REPORT; RECOMMENDATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this section and annually thereafter until the Program terminates pursuant to subsection (e), the Under Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation of the Program, including an evaluation of each technology-based mitigation solution identified for priority consideration pursuant to subsection (c), and a recommendation regarding additional identification and testing of new technologies based on such consideration.

(2) FINAL RECOMMENDATION.—Not later than five years after the date of the enactment of this section, the Under Secretary shall provide to Congress a recommendation on whether additional research, testing, and development through the Program established under subsection (a) is needed, and a determination of whether a cessation of field research, testing, development and evaluation is appropriate.

(e) TERMINATION.—The authority of the Under Secretary to carry out the Program shall terminate on the earlier of—

(1) September 30, 2029; or

(2) one year after the date on which the final recommendation required under subsection (d)(2) is submitted by the Under Secretary.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) BEAM BLOCKAGE.—The term “beam blockage” means a signal that is partially or fully blocked due to an interference.

(2) GHOST ECHO.—The term “ghost echo” means radar signal reflectivity or velocity return errors in radar data due to the proximity of an interference.

(3) INTERFERENCE.—The term “interference” includes the following:

(A) a wind turbine that could limit the effectiveness of a weather radar system;

(B) any building that disrupts or limits the effectiveness of a weather radar system; or

(C) any other natural or human built structure that affects a weather radar system.

SEC. 202. NEXT GENERATION RADAR.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall develop a plan to replace the Next Generation Weather Radar of the National Weather Service (“NEXRAD”) system in existence as of the date of the enactment of this section.

(b) PROCUREMENT DEADLINE.—The Under Secretary shall take such actions as may be necessary to ensure the replacement described in subsection (a) is completed by not later than September 30, 2040.

(c) ELEMENTS.—The plan developed pursuant to subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) Estimates of quantifiable improvements in radar performance and service delivery, including coverage and accuracy, to be made from replacement of the NEXRAD system referred to in such subsection.

(2) Development of a digital phased array radar test article designed to test and determine the specifications and requirements for such replacement.

(3) Establishment of a weather surveillance radar tested for the following:

(A) Evaluation of commercial radars with the potential to replace or supplement the NEXRAD system.

(B) Providing technical assistance for commercial replacement or supplemental radars, including data void filling radars in regions where geographical topography prevents full utilization of conventional systems.

(4) Consultation and input solicited from meteorologists, emergency managers, and public safety officials regarding the specifications and requirements for the replacement of the NEXRAD system referred in such subsection.

(5) Prioritized locations for initial deployment of the replacement system described in subsection (a) that will replace the NEXRAD system.

(6) Expected locations of such replacement system described in subsection (a), including sites located more than 75 miles away from an existing NEXRAD station and additional appropriate locations.

(d) RADAR-AS-A-SERVICE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to supplement data voids in radar coverage in existence as of the date of the enactment of this section and ensure the continued performance of weather radar capabilities, the Under Secretary may utilize and contract with third party entities to fill such low-level and wide-area radar data voids using diverse weather radars and data assimilation technologies to better detect significant precipitation and severe weather over a greater area across the population.

(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In carrying out the activities under paragraph (1), the Under Secretary may consider—

(A) utilizing and contracting with third party entities that have participated in the testbed established in accordance with subsection (c)(3), the National Mesonet Program, or Cooperative Research and Development Agreements; and

(B) weather camera systems and services, including systems and services in consultation with the Federal Aviation Administration, as viable technologies to supplement weather forecasting and prediction needs.

(e) UPDATES TO CONGRESS.—The Under Secretary shall provide to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate periodic updates on the implementation of this section.

SEC. 203. DATA VOIDS IN HIGHLY VULNERABLE AREAS OF THE UNITED STATES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary, in coordination with the Director of the National Weather Service and the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, in consultation with the United States weather industry, academic partners, and in accordance with activities implemented through existing regional atmospheric, coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes observing systems, shall carry out activities to ensure equitable and comprehensive weather observation coverage and emergency information sharing in the United States, including relating to the following:

(1) Reviewing areas in the continental United States and the territories that are considered under-observed, underserved, or highly vulnerable for weather phenomenon, including urban and offshore regions, and identifying associated challenges to providing such coverage.

(2) Increasing weather observations and developing new weather observational capabilities, such as urban heat island mapping campaigns, with respect to under-observed, underserved, or highly vulnerable regions.

(3) Establishing or supporting testbeds to develop and integrate new weather, water, and climate observation or emergency information sharing tools, such as next generational or supplemental radars for weather observations, in under-observed, underserved, or highly vulnerable regions.

(4) To the maximum extent practicable, advancing weather and water forecasting and climate modeling capabilities for under-observed, underserved, or highly vulnerable regions.

(5) Undertaking workforce development efforts for emergency management officials and meteorologists in under-observed, underserved, or highly vulnerable areas, including urban regions, of the United States.

(6) Using data void filling observations to better resolve extreme rainfall in complex topography.

(7) Contributing to a national integrated heat health information systems.

(b) PILOT PROGRAM.—In carrying out this section, the Under Secretary, acting through the Director of the National Weather Service and the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, shall establish an interagency partnership to support pilot projects that accelerate coordination and use of localized weather, water, and climate data and impact-based communications in infrastructure and emergency management decisions by Federal, State, and local officials.

(c) PRIORITY.—At least one pilot project under subsection (b) shall address key science challenges to using mesonet data in local decision making and development of new tools and training for owners and operators of critical infrastructure (as such term is defined in section 1016(e) of Public Law 107-56 (42 U.S.C. 5195c(e))), such as dams, energy generation and distribution facilities, nuclear power plants, and transportation networks.

SEC. 204. ATMOSPHERIC RIVERS FORECAST IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary, in collaboration with the United States weather industry and academic partners, shall establish an atmospheric river forecast improvement program (in this section referred to as the “program”).

(b) GOAL.—The goal of the program shall be to reduce through the development and extension of accurate, effective, and actionable forecasts and warnings the loss of life or property from atmospheric rivers, including by—

(1) establishing quantitative atmospheric river forecast skill metrics that include

quantifying the benefits of dynamical modeling, data assimilation, and machine learning improvements in the probabilistic forecasts of landfall location, extreme wind and precipitation, and cascading impacts;

(2) developing an atmospheric river forecast system within the unified forecast system, and advancing next-generation coupled modeling systems, with the capability of providing seasonal to short-range atmospheric river forecasts that include forecast of snow accumulation and other hydrologic components;

(3) advancing scientific understanding of the roles of atmospheric rivers in subseasonal to seasonal precipitation and probabilistic predictions at subseasonal and seasonal scales;

(4) developing tools and improved forecast products to predict periods of active or inactive atmospheric river landfalls and inland penetration over the western United States with a focus on addressing stakeholder and public needs related to perceiving, comprehending, and responding to atmospheric river forecast improvements; and

(5) enhancing research transition to operations through the Administration’s testbeds, including the evaluation of physical and social science, technology, and other research to develop products and services for implementation and use by relevant stakeholders.

(c) INNOVATIVE OBSERVATIONS AND MODELING.—The Under Secretary shall ensure the program periodically examines, tests, and evaluates the value of incorporating innovative observations, such as novel sensor technologies, observation networks, soil moisture monitoring systems, reservoir storage data, observations from crewed or uncrewed systems, and hosted instruments on commercial aircrafts, vessels, and satellites, and data assimilation tools, with respect to the improvement of atmospheric river forecasts, predictions, and warnings.

(d) PROGRAM PLAN.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under Secretary shall develop a plan that details the specific research, development, data acquisition, and technology transfer activities, as well as corresponding resources, limitations, and timelines, necessary to achieve the goal of the program under subsection (b).

(e) ANNUAL BUDGET FOR PLAN SUBMITTAL.—After the development of the plan pursuant to subsection (d), the Under Secretary shall, not less frequently than annually, submit to Congress a proposed budget corresponding with the activities identified in such plan.

SEC. 205. COASTAL FLOODING AND STORM SURGE FORECAST IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary, in collaboration with the Integrated Ocean Observing System, the United States weather industry, and academic partners, shall establish a coastal flooding and storm surge forecast improvement program (in this section referred to as the “program”).

(b) GOAL.—The goal of the program shall be to reduce through the development and extension of accurate, effective, actionable, and probable forecasts and warnings the loss of life or property from coastal flooding, including high tide flooding, and storm surge events.

(c) PRIORITY.—In implementing the program, the Under Secretary shall prioritize activities that carry out the following:

(1) Improving understanding and capacity for real-time operational prediction of the ocean’s role in coastal flooding, including high tide flooding, and storm surge events.

(2) Improving the capacity to mitigate or prevent the impacts of coastal flooding, including high tide flooding, and storm surge

events, including by improving the understanding and capacity of coastal communities to perceive, comprehend, and respond to forecast information.

(3) Incorporating data from in situ distributed sensors into models.

(4) Developing probabilistic coastal flooding, including high tide flooding, and storm surge estimates to complement worst-case scenario estimates, including for use in long-term planning and risk management by States, Tribal governments, localities, and emergency managers in coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, as appropriate.

(5) Establishing skill metrics for coastal inundation forecasting that quantify the benefits of dynamical modeling, data assimilation, and machine learning improvements in the probabilistic forecast of coastal flooding, including high tide flooding, and storm surge risk and impacts.

(6) Improving operational regional storm surge and wave prediction models to enhance probabilistic guidance and messaging.

(d) INNOVATIVE OBSERVATIONS AND MODELING.—The Under Secretary shall ensure the program periodically examines, tests, and evaluates the value of incorporating enhanced model physics, hybrid dynamical or machine learning based prediction systems, and innovative observations, such as novel sensor technologies, observation networks, crewed or uncrewed systems, and hosted instruments on commercial aircrafts, vessels, and satellites, with respect to the improvement of coastal flooding, including high tide flooding, and storm surge forecasts, predictions, and warnings.

(e) PROGRAM PLAN.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under Secretary shall develop a plan that details the specific research, development, data acquisition, and technology transfer activities, as well as corresponding resources and timelines, necessary to achieve the goal of the program under subsection (b).

(f) ANNUAL BUDGET FOR PLAN SUBMITTAL.—After the development of the plan pursuant to subsection (e), the Under Secretary shall, not less frequently than annually, submit to Congress a proposed budget corresponding with the activities identified in such plan.

SEC. 206. AVIATION WEATHER AND DATA INNOVATION.

(a) PROGRAM.—The Under Secretary shall maintain an airborne observation program (in this section referred to as the “program”) for the acquisition of atmospheric sensor data and the deployment of critical atmospheric sensors, including in partnership with the weather enterprise.

(b) ACTIVITIES.—The program shall include activities that carry out the following:

(1) Procurement of weather data available from commercial aircraft, as determined by the Under Secretary.

(2) Acquisition of additional vertical profile observations that provide spatial and temporal density, as determined by the Under Secretary.

(3) Analysis of procured data when incorporated into the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s unified forecast system in order to provide improved forecast information for aircraft.

(c) BUDGET.—The Under Secretary shall, not less frequently than annually, submit to Congress a proposed budget corresponding with the activities described in subsection (b), including and analysis of activities that can be complemented by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration aircraft.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—From amounts made available to the Commercial Data Program under section 302 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017, there is authorized to be

appropriated up to \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028 to carry out the program.

(e) AVIATION WEATHER AND TURBULENCE FORECASTING.—The Director of the National Weather Service shall include turbulence events, icing conditions, or other phenomena in the forecasting capabilities of the National Weather Service's Aviation Weather Center, and deliver operational forecasts with consistent, timely, and accurate weather and turbulence information for the airspace system and the protection of lives and property.

(f) COORDINATION.—In carrying out subsection (e), the Director of the National Weather Service shall give consideration to recommendations from the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration in furtherance of section 44720 of title 49, United States Code, and improve weather and turbulence forecasting capabilities by—

(1) designating or establishing within the Federal Government an interagency working group to determine weather and environmental data or observation requirements, needs, and potential solutions related to aviation weather and turbulence modeling or forecasting;

(2) identifying current and future potential data gaps related to turbulence events or phenomena that can—

(A) identify or inform route specific flight planning; and

(B) be supplemented or filled by commercial aviation tools;

(3) transitioning research initiatives and pilot programs, including a pilot program of instrumentation for observing greenhouse gases and other atmospheric factors deployed on commercial aircraft and supporting the evaluation of a sustained observing network using such platforms, into operations that improve the forecasting missions of the Aviation Weather Center;

(4) developing and deploying improved probabilistic aviation weather forecast guidance technology; and

(5) updating interagency agreements as appropriate, including to address reimbursable agreements.

(g) NEXT GENERATION AVIATION RESEARCH.—Paragraph (3) of section 102(b) of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8512(b)), is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (F) and (G) as subparagraphs (G) and (H), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subparagraph (E) the following new subparagraph:

“(F) aviation weather phenomena, including atmospheric composition and turbulence, to improve scientific understanding and forecast capabilities for the airspace system;”.

(h) AVIATION INFORMATION DISSEMINATION.—The Under Secretary shall ensure the Aviation Weather Center is able, to the maximum extent possible, to disseminate in a timely manner full resolution aviation weather data, forecasts, and information to meet the needs of aviation users.

SEC. 207. NESDIS JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP TRANSITION PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Assistant Administrator of the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service, in consultation with the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, shall administer broad agency announcements and other transactional authority or contracting mechanisms, on an annual or more frequent basis, to support a joint venture partnership program that allows the Service to prioritize engagement with the private sector, academia, and other Federal departments and agencies.

(b) TRANSITION PROGRAM.—To support the development of next-generation tech-

nologies, missions, data systems, spacecraft, and instrument design, the Assistant Administrator of the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service, in consultation with the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, shall maintain a program to transition selected awards from research and study phases into demonstration. In selecting awardees for demonstrations, the Assistant Administrator shall consider technologies, missions, data systems, spacecraft, and instrument design that—

(1) improve upon the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's satellite architecture;

(2) have a direct impact on implementing the recommendations of the Administration's 2018 Satellite Observing System Architecture Study, “Building a Plan for NOAA's 21st Century Satellite Observing System”; and

(3) meet current or future mission requirements.

(c) OPERATIONAL PLANNING.—In carrying out the transition program under subsection (b), the Assistant Administrator of the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service shall monitor demonstration phase progress and plan for promising results that meet mission requirements to be transitioned into National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's operational satellite architecture.

(d) ANNUAL PLAN.—The Assistant Administrator of the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation an annual plan that outlines the progress made in the joint venture partnership program under subsection (a), the transition program for demonstrations under section (b), and transition to operational architecture planning under subsection (c).

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—From amounts authorized to be appropriated to the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service, there is authorized to be appropriated \$20,000,000 for fiscal years 2024 through 2028 to carry out to this section.

SEC. 208. ADVANCED WEATHER INTERACTIVE PROCESSING SYSTEM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary, acting through the Director of the National Weather Service, shall develop a strategy to transition operations of the Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System to an operational cloud-based environment in order to enable a more nimble, flexible, and mobile workforce.

(b) SERVICES.—The Under Secretary shall ensure that the Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System in an operational cloud-based environment referred to in subsection (a) provides impact-based decision support services to emergency managers at the Federal, State, local, and Tribal levels, and continues to provide the following services:

(1) Integrating and displaying forecast data, including meteorological, hydrological, climate, ocean, satellite, and radar data, for National Weather Service field offices and national centers.

(2) Acquiring and processing observational data from sensors and local sources.

(3) Providing an interactive communications system, including the satellite broadcast network, to connect relevant National Weather Service employees and sites.

(4) Initiating the dissemination of weather, water, marine, ecological, climate, aviation, and space warnings and forecasts in a rapid and highly reliable manner.

(c) ELEMENTS.—The transition strategy developed pursuant to subsection (a) may include the following:

(1) Establishment or support of testbeds, pilot projects, and functional testing activities to facilitate remote evaluation and automated testing.

(2) Coordinated training efforts needed for Federal and non-Federal users and operators of the Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System in an operational cloud-based environment referred to in subsection (a).

(3) Evaluation of bandwidth requirements to achieve a quality user experience.

(4) Installation of circuits to reduce lapses in network operations and support backup functions.

(5) Establishment of a cloud-based, remotely accessible repository for data referred to in subsection (b)(2).

(6) Development and deployment of virtualized systems to replace physical hardware at operational sites.

(7) Evaluation of commercial cloud providers, including hybrid approaches, to meet mission needs.

(8) Development, testing, demonstration, evaluation, and operationalization of forecast and warning products, consistent with the mission and scientific expertise of the Administration.

(d) TRANSITION DEADLINE.—The Under Secretary shall take such actions as may be necessary to ensure the transition strategy described in subsection (a) is completed by not later than September 30, 2030.

(e) UPDATES TO CONGRESS.—The Under Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate periodic updates on the implementation of this section.

(f) CONTINUED INNOVATION.—Nothing in this section may be construed as prohibiting the development of new forecast capabilities, sub-systems, or implementing modeling advancements on the operational computing systems of the Administration.

SEC. 209. REANALYSIS AND REFORECASTING.

The Under Secretary may support reanalysis and reforecasting activities within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, including through the hazardous weather testbed of the Administration, for improving weather forecasts, extreme weather predictions, and weather and climate datasets.

SEC. 210. NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE WORKFORCE.

(a) HIRING.—The Director of the National Weather Service shall annually submit to the Under Secretary and Congress an assessment of the milestones, timelines, and service level expectations required for the expeditious hiring and timely on-boarding of employees of the National Weather Service. Each such assessment may include the following:

(1) Recommendations to outsource hiring to any entity other than the National Weather Service in order to meet such milestones, timelines, and service level expectations.

(2) Determinations of the number of staff and designated positions required at each forecasting office to provide services to protect lives and property in the geographic region of responsibility.

(b) HEALTH AND MORALE ASSESSMENT.—The Director of the National Weather Service shall contract or continue to partner with an entity other than the National Weather Service to conduct an assessment of medical impacts, including stress and long-term health impacts, on National Weather Service employees related to required rotating shift

work. Such assessment may include options for mitigating such impacts on employees and recommendations for improving benefits related to required rotating shift work.

(c) DESIGNATION OF SERVICE HYDROLOGIST.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the National Weather Service may designate at least one service hydrologist at each Weather Forecast Office of the National Weather Service.

(2) LIMITATION.—Nothing in this section may be construed to authorize or require a change in the authorized number of full time equivalent employees of the National Weather Service or otherwise result in the employment of any additional employees.

(3) PERFORMANCE BY OTHER EMPLOYEES.—Notwithstanding paragraphs (4) and (5), the Director of the National Weather Service may assign the performance of the responsibilities described in this subsection to such other staff of the National Weather Service as the Director considers appropriate

(4) RESPONSIBILITIES.—In order to increase impact-based decision support services, each service coordination hydrologist designated under paragraph (1) shall, with respect to hydrology, carry out the following:

(A) Be responsible for providing service to the geographic area of responsibility covered by the Weather Forecast Office at which the service coordination hydrologist is employed to help ensure that users of products and services of the National Weather Service can respond effectively to improve outcomes from flood events.

(B) Liaise with users of products and services of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, such as emergency managers, the public, academia, media outlets, users in the hydropower, transportation, recreation, and agricultural communities, and forestry, land, fisheries, and water management interests, to evaluate the adequacy and usefulness of the products and services referred to in subparagraph (A), including extended range streamflow forecasts, water supply forecasts, drought outlooks, flood inundation mapping, coastal inundation, and flood warnings.

(C) Collaborate with the National Water Center, River Forecast Centers, other Weather Forecast Offices, the National Integrate Drought Information System, Administration offices, and Federal, State, local, and Tribal government agencies, as the Director considers appropriate, in developing, proposing, and implementing plans to develop, modify, or tailor such products and services to improve the usefulness of such products and services.

(D) Engage in interagency partnerships with Federal, State, local, and Tribal government agencies to explore the use of forecast-informed reservoir operations to reduce flood risk and inform decisions related to water resources management.

(E) Ensure the maintenance and accuracy of flooding and water resource management partner call lists, appropriate office hydrologic service policy or procedures, and other hydrologic information or dissemination methodologies or strategies.

(F) Work closely with Federal, State, local, and Tribal emergency and floodplain management agencies, and other agencies relating to disaster management, to ensure a planned, coordinated, and effective preparedness and response effort.

(5) ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES.—A service coordination hydrologist designated under this subsection may, with respect to hydrology—

(A) work with a State agency to develop plans for promoting more effective use of products and services of the National Weather Service throughout the State concerned;

(B) identify priority community preparedness objectives;

(C) develop plans to carry out the responsibilities described in paragraph (4); and

(D) conduct flooding event preparedness planning and citizen education efforts with and through various State, local, and Tribal government agencies and other disaster management-related organizations.

TITLE III—COMMERCIAL WEATHER AND ENVIRONMENTAL OBSERVATIONS

SEC. 301. COMMERCIAL DATA PROGRAM.

The Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 is amended by striking section 302 (15 U.S.C. 8532) and inserting the following new section:

“SEC. 302. COMMERCIAL DATA PROGRAM.

“(a) PROGRAM ESTABLISHMENT.—The Under Secretary, in coordination with the heads of appropriate offices of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, shall maintain a Commercial Data Program to coordinate and execute acquisition of weather and environmental data and services from private sector entities for operational use.

“(b) PROGRAM ELEMENTS.—The Under Secretary shall acquire satellite, ground-based, airborne, or marine-based in situ, remote sensing, or crowd-sourced data and services for operational use relating to weather and environmental forecasting and modeling. The Under Secretary shall ensure the Commercial Data Program coordinates, collaborates, and ensures access to data across the Administration, including among the following:

- “(1) The National Mesonet Program.
- “(2) The Aircraft Based Observation Program.
- “(3) The U.S. Integrated Ocean Observation Program, including existing regional associations.
- “(4) The National Integrated Drought Information System, including the National Coordinated Soil Moisture Monitoring Network.
- “(5) The Global Ocean Monitoring and Observing Program.
- “(6) The National Data Buoy Center.
- “(7) The Uncrewed Systems Operation Center.
- “(8) The Ocean Exploration Program.
- “(9) Any other program or office the Under Secretary determines appropriate.

“(c) STANDARDS AND SPECIFICATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section and on a continuous basis thereafter, the Under Secretary shall publish data, metadata, and service standards and specifications required for acquired observation services and data for use, licensing, and attribution to ensure quality, impact, and compatibility of such services and data with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration modeling capabilities, meteorological situational awareness, and forecasting.

“(d) PRIORITIZATION.—In acquiring commercial data and services, the Under Secretary shall prioritize obtaining surface-based, airborne-based, space-based, and coastal- and ocean-based data, metadata, and services for operational use that participate in the Commercial Data Pilot Program or other programs of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that acquire commercial data or observations.

“(e) NOAA OBSERVING SYSTEMS AND FLEET COUNCILS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall maintain the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Observing Systems Council and the NOAA Fleet Council (in this subsection referred to as the ‘Councils’) to provide strategic recommendations and guidance regarding the prioritization, design, development, acquisition, upgrading,

lifecycle, performance monitoring, and retiring of major observing systems portfolio components, including related to the acquisition of commercial weather and environmental data and services.

“(2) LINE OFFICE COORDINATION.—The Councils shall ensure coordination and adherence to uniform policies by providing guidance to all line offices of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration engaged in observing systems portfolio design, technology, development, execution, and operation.

“(3) COMMITTEE.—The Under Secretary shall maintain a Committee within the Councils to develop and approve procedural directives, guides, or handbooks relevant to management of data and information, including commercial data, and coordinate data governance and management practices across the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to promote consistent processes.

“(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated \$100,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028 to carry out this section.

“(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Under Secretary should seek to enter into contracts or other appropriate agreements that enable the expenditure, to the maximum extent practicable, of amounts authorized to be appropriated or otherwise made available in a fiscal year to carry out this section.

“(g) DATA AND HOSTED PAYLOADS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Commerce may enter into agreements relating to the following:

- “(1) The purchase of weather and environmental data and services through contracts with commercial data and service providers.
- “(2) The placement of weather instruments on co-hosted Federal, international, or private space, airborne, maritime, or ground platforms.

“(h) OMBUDSMAN.—The Under Secretary shall establish or designate at least one Ombudsman position within the Commercial Data Program to implement the recommendations of the Observing System Council under subsection (e) related to commercial weather and environmental data and services acquisitions. Such an Ombudsman shall act as the liaison between commercial data and service providers and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration with respect to receiving recommendations and resolving issues related to engagement, testing, contracting, or other areas related to the Administration’s efforts to acquire commercial weather and environmental data and services.

“(i) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this section, the Under Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report evaluating the activities and needed authorities related to data governance and management practices, including acquisition, collection, documentation, quality control, validation, reprocessing, storage, retrieval, dissemination, and long-term preservation activities across all National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration line, staff, and corporate offices.”

SEC. 302. COMMERCIAL DATA PILOT PROGRAM.

The Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 is amended by striking section 303 (15 U.S.C. 8533) and inserting the following new section:

“SEC. 303. COMMERCIAL DATA PILOT PROGRAM.

“(a) PROGRAM ESTABLISHMENT.—Within the Commercial Data Program under section 302,

there shall be a Commercial Data Pilot Program to engage with external partners and providers to test and develop shared standards and methodologies for quality, use, licensing, and attribution of observation services and data, and to ensure quality, impact, and compatibility of such services and data with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration modeling capabilities, meteorological situational awareness, and forecasting. The Program is authorized to test and evaluate all sources and types of observation services, imagery, products, and data from private sector entities, including new and innovative surface-based, airborne-based, space-based, and coastal- and ocean-based data, metadata, and model components.

“(b) **CRITERIA.**—The Under Secretary shall ensure that data acquired through the Commercial Data Pilot Program described in subsection (a) meets the most recent standards and specifications required for observation services and data as published pursuant to section 302(c).

“(c) **PILOT CONTRACTS.**—The Under Secretary shall, through an open competition, regularly enter into pilot contracts with private sector entities capable of providing observation services and data referred to in subsection (a) that meet the standards and specifications published pursuant to section 302(c) for so providing such services and data in a manner that allows the Under Secretary to calibrate and evaluate such services and data for use in National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration activities.

“(d) **ASSESSMENT OF VIABILITY.**—The Under Secretary shall annually assess and submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives a summary of the pilot contracts entered into pursuant to subsection (c), the extent to which such contracts meet the standards and specifications published pursuant to section 302(c), and any additional information determined necessary related to the following:

“(1) The viability of assimilating observation services and data from private sector entities into National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration forecasts and models.

“(2) The expected value added or improvements from such services and data so assimilated into National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration forecasts and models.

“(3) The accuracy, quality, timeliness, validity, reliability, usability, information technology security, and cost-effectiveness of obtaining observation services and data from private sector entities.

“(4) Steps to integrate within one year such services and data into operational use by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or any associated challenges in doing so.

“(e) **OBTAINING FUTURE DATA.**—If an assessment under subsection (d) demonstrates the ability of commercial services and data to meet the standards and specifications published pursuant to section 302(c), the Under Secretary shall—

“(1) when cost-effective and feasible, obtain observation services and data from private sector entities through the Commercial Data Program under section 302;

“(2) as early as possible in the acquisition process for any future National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration satellite system, determine whether there is a suitable, cost-effective, commercial capability available or that will be available to meet applicable instrument, spacecraft, or system requirements before completion of the critical design phase of such planned satellite system;

“(3) if a suitable, cost-effective, commercial capability is or will be available as de-

scribed in paragraph (2), determine whether and how such capability is in the national interest if developed as a solely governmental system; and

“(4) submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives a report detailing any determinations made under paragraphs (2) and (3).

“(f) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—From amounts authorized to be appropriated pursuant to section 302 to carry out such section, not less than 15 percent of such amounts each fiscal year are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section.”.

SEC. 303. CONTRACTING AUTHORITY AND AVOIDANCE OF DUPLICATION.

Title III of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“SEC. 304. CONTRACTING AUTHORITY AND AVOIDANCE OF DUPLICATION.

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Consistent with other Federal agencies that contract and partner with private sector entities, the Under Secretary is authorized to use contracting mechanisms and enter into agreements that utilize multiyear contract options. In carrying out sections 302 and 303, the Under Secretary shall, to the greatest extent possible—

“(1) enter into year-long or multiyear contract options using contracting mechanisms that foster resiliency of datatypes purchased;

“(2) partner and contract with multiple observation service and data providers simultaneously to reduce risks of data gaps and improve mission robustness; and

“(3) utilize authorities, such as additional forms of transaction agreements under section 301, that allow for innovative partnerships with private sector entities.

“(b) **SAVINGS CLAUSE.**—Nothing in this title may be construed as infringing on the acquisition authority or strategy of Federal entities authorized under title 10, United States Code.

“(c) **UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION.**—In meeting the requirements under this title, the Under Secretary shall avoid unnecessary duplication between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, other Federal departments and agencies, and private sector entities, including relating to corresponding expenditures of funds and employment of personnel by—

“(1) coordinating existing activities with other civilian Federal departments and agencies which provide, contract, or partner with private sector entities to acquire, weather and environmental observations and data; and

“(2) coordinating and soliciting weather and environmental observations and data requirements and needs from other civilian Federal departments and agencies to be acquired by the Commercial Data Program under section 302.

“(d) **FAIR COMPENSATION FOR INTERAGENCY NEEDS.**—The Under Secretary, to the maximum extent practicable, shall ensure that Federal departments and agencies utilizing services and data under sections 302 and 303 fairly compensate the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or the non-Federal entities providing such services or data, as appropriate, for use.”.

SEC. 304. DATA ASSIMILATION, MANAGEMENT, AND SHARING PRACTICES.

Title III of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017, as amended by section 303 of this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“SEC. 305. DATA ASSIMILATION, MANAGEMENT, AND SHARING PRACTICES.

“(a) **DATA STANDARDS.**—The Under Secretary, in collaboration with the weather enterprise, shall seek to establish consistent and open data and metadata standards to support open science, including simple cloud-optimized data formats and application programming interfaces that support findability, accessibility, usability, and preservability.

“(b) **DATA INFRASTRUCTURE.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Under Secretary, in consultation with the Chief Information Officer and appropriate program heads, shall consolidate and arrange data infrastructure needs to ensure efficient and effective data transfer between National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration offices by considering the use of commercial cloud technologies, or similar hybrid structures, to host and transmit data and metadata.

“(2) **FEDERAL PARTNERSHIPS.**—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Under Secretary may partner with the heads of other Federal departments and agencies, including the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Department of Energy, the United States Space Force, the United States Coast Guard, the United States Navy, the Federal Aviation Administration, the United States Forest Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Science Foundation, and the United States Geological Survey, to collocate data with joint utility and support a transition to cloud architectures, including commercial cloud networks.

“(3) **LONG TERM DATA ARCHIVE.**—The Under Secretary shall ensure the long-term management, maintenance, and stewardship of archival data and metadata acquired through the Commercial Data Program under section 302 is conducted within the National Centers for Environmental Information.

“(c) **DATA SHARING WITH THE WEATHER ENTERPRISE.**—To the greatest extent practicable, the Under Secretary shall make accessible to members of the weather enterprise that are United States persons data not subject to redistribution contract permissions and purchased through the Commercial Data Program under section 302 or shared through international government partners. If purchased data must be assimilated into numerical weather prediction models or automated forecast guidance to satisfy redistribution contract permissions, the Under Secretary shall make accessible without delay to members of the weather enterprise that are United States persons the numerical weather prediction model or automated forecast guidance output, as the case may be.

“(d) **DATA ASSIMILATION.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Under Secretary, in coordination with the Commercial Data Program under section 302, the National Centers for Environmental Information, and any other offices within the Administration, shall establish a program to test, advance, and implement data assimilation methods, which may include artificial intelligence, machine learning, data pre- and post-processing, efficient input and output, and next-generation algorithms.

“(2) **DATA ASSIMILATION UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM.**—Through the program established pursuant to paragraph (1), the Under Secretary shall establish a consortium consisting of institutions of higher education (as such term is defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)) to address critical research challenges for data assimilation and foster a growing data assimilation workforce. The consortium shall seek to—

“(A) solve critical research issues for data assimilation through innovative research;

“(B) increase significantly the number of students, including graduate level and Ph.D. candidates, in data assimilation;

“(C) utilize modern software and frameworks, such as the Joint Effort for Data Assimilation Integration, to conduct data assimilation research and development and facilitate research to operations efforts;

“(D) identify and prioritize critical research areas in data assimilation and facilitate operations to research efforts;

“(E) establish and enable an effective collaboration infrastructure between National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration facilities, such as labs, centers, or joint agency institutes, and the research community, including a mechanism for external partners to host Administration employees; and

“(F) establish mechanisms to enable all members of the consortium to archive and access data required to support the work under this subsection.

“(3) COORDINATION.—In carrying out this subsection, the Under Secretary shall ensure the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and its associated activities focus on research to operations and operations to research, including by coordinating and collaborating with the Joint Center for Satellite Data Assimilation.

“(4) DATA ASSIMILATION, MANAGEMENT, AND SHARING PRACTICES SECURITY.—The activities authorized under this subsection shall be applied in a manner consistent with subtitle D of title VI of the Research and Development, Competition, and Innovation Act (enacted as division B of Public Law 117-167; 42 U.S.C. 19231 et seq.).

“(e) STUDY ON DATA MANAGEMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the data of the enactment of this section, the Under Secretary shall seek to enter into an agreement with a non-Federal entity to conduct a study on matters concerning data practices and management needs at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In conducting the study, the outside entity shall—

“(A) assess the costs and benefits of current data management needs for observational and operational mission requirements;

“(B) develop recommendations regarding how to make more robust and cost-effective the data portfolio of the Administration;

“(C) identify data infrastructure technologies and needs that are essential to the performance of modeling systems of the Administration;

“(D) assess the sharing needs and practices of the Administration for both internal and external sharing dissemination; and

“(E) develop recommendations for methods of data infrastructure sharing, including data purchased from the commercial sector.

“(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—From amounts authorized to be appropriated to the Commercial Data Program under section 302, there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the study under paragraph (1) \$1,000,000, to remain available until expended.”

SEC. 305. CLERICAL AMENDMENT.

The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 is amended by striking the items relating to sections 302 and 303 and inserting the following new items:

“Sec. 302. Commercial Data Program.

“Sec. 303. Commercial Data Pilot Program.

“Sec. 304. Contracting authority and avoidance of duplication.

“Sec. 305. Data assimilation, management, and sharing practices.”

TITLE IV—COMMUNICATING WEATHER TO THE PUBLIC

SEC. 401. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) HAZARDOUS WEATHER OR WATER EVENTS.—The term “hazardous weather or water events” has the meaning given such term in section 406 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-25; 131 Stat. 109), as amended by section 402 of this Act.

(2) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term “institution of higher education” has the meaning given such term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

(3) NOAA WEATHER RADIO.—The term “NOAA Weather Radio” means the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards network.

(4) PUBLIC CLOUD.—The term “public cloud” means an information technology model in which service providers make computing services, including compute and storage and develop-and-deploy environments and applications, available on-demand to organizations and individuals over the public internet or other means that allows for the widest dissemination of information.

(5) WATCH; WARNING.—The terms “watch” and “warning” have the meanings given such terms in section 406 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-25; 131 Stat. 109), as amended by section 402 of this Act.

SEC. 402. HAZARDOUS WEATHER OR WATER EVENT RISK COMMUNICATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 406 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-25; 131 Stat. 109) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 406. HAZARDOUS WEATHER OR WATER EVENT RISK COMMUNICATION.

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) HAZARDOUS WEATHER OR WATER EVENTS.—The term ‘hazardous weather or water events’ means weather or water events that have a high risk of loss of life or property, including the following:

“(A) Severe storms, such as hurricanes and short-fused, small-scale hazardous weather or hydrologic events produced by thunderstorms, including large hail, damaging winds, tornadoes, and flash floods.

“(B) Winter storms, such as freezing or frozen precipitation (including freezing rain, sleet, and snow), or combined effects of freezing or frozen precipitation and strong winds.

“(C) Other weather hazards, such as extreme heat or cold, wildfire, drought, dense fog, high winds, and river, coastal, or lake-shore flooding.

“(2) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the meaning given such term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

“(3) WATCH; WARNING.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The terms ‘watch’ and ‘warning’, with respect to a hazardous weather or water event, mean products issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, intended for consumption by the general public, to alert the general public to the potential for or presence of such event and to inform action to prevent loss of life or property.

“(B) EXCEPTION.—The terms ‘watch’ and ‘warning’ do not include technical or specialized meteorological or hydrological forecasts, outlooks, or model guidance products.

“(b) SYSTEM COMMUNICATIONS.—The Under Secretary shall maintain and improve the system of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration by which the risks of hazardous weather or water events are communicated to the general public, with the goal of informing response to prevent loss of life or property.

“(c) HAZARD RISK COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENT AND SIMPLIFICATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—To carry out subsection (b), the Under Secretary shall maintain a social, behavioral, risk, communication, and economic sciences program (in this section referred to as the ‘Program’), for the purpose of simplifying and improving the communication of hazardous weather or water events.

“(2) TERMINOLOGY.—The Program, in coordination with social, behavioral, risk, communication, and economic science community and user feedback, shall identify, eliminate, or modify unnecessary, redundant, or confusing terms for communications regarding hazardous weather or water events and add new terminology, as appropriate.

“(3) COMMUNICATIONS IMPROVEMENT.—The Program shall improve the form, content, and methods of communications regarding hazardous weather or water events and associated risks to more clearly inform response to prevent the loss of life or property.

“(4) EVALUATIONS.—The Program, in coordination with the performance and evaluation branches of the National Weather Service and Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, shall develop metrics for such branches to track and evaluate the degree to which communications regarding hazardous weather or water events inform response.

“(5) SUPPORT PLAN.—The Program shall develop a plan for the purpose of carrying out paragraph (3). Such plan shall be periodically updated and informed by internal and extramural research and the results of the evaluation of communications regarding hazardous weather or water events and associated risks under paragraph (4).

“(6) METHODS.—In carrying out this section, the Program shall develop and implement recommendations that—

“(A) are based on the best and most recent understanding from social, behavioral, economic, risk, and communications science research;

“(B) are validated by social, behavioral, risk, and communications science, taking into account the importance of methods that support reproduction and replication of scientific studies, use of rigorous statistical analyses, and, as applicable, data analysis supported by artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies;

“(C) account for the needs of various demographics, vulnerable populations, and geographic regions;

“(D) account for the differences between various types of hazardous weather or water events;

“(E) respond to the needs of Federal, State, and local government partners and media partners; and

“(F) account for necessary changes in the infrastructure, technology, and protocols for developing and disseminating watches and warnings.

“(7) COORDINATION.—In carrying out this section, the Program shall coordinate with the following:

“(A) Federal partners, including National Laboratories, cooperative institutes, and regional integrated sciences and assessments programs.

“(B) State and local government partners.

“(C) Tribal governments.

“(D) Institutions of higher education or a consortia thereof.

“(E) Media partners.

“(8) TIMELINESS AND CONSISTENCY.—The Program shall develop best practices and guidance for ensuring timely and consistent communications across public facing platforms that disseminate information related to hazardous weather or water events.”

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—Section 1(b) of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 is amended by amending

the item relating to section 406 to read as follows:

“Sec. 406. Hazardous Weather or Water Event Risk Communication.”.

SEC. 403. HAZARD COMMUNICATION RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT.

Section 406 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–25; 131 Stat. 109), as amended by section 402 of this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsections:

“(d) HAZARD COMMUNICATION RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall maintain, as appropriate, a program to—

“(A) modernize the development and communication of risk-based, statistically reliable, probabilistic hazard information, with the goal of informing appropriate responses to hazardous weather or water events; and

“(B) improve the fundamental social, behavioral, economic, risk, and communication science relating to communications, including by means of collecting voluntary data, regarding hazardous weather or water events.

“(2) COORDINATION.—In carrying out the program under paragraph (1), the Under Secretary shall coordinate and communicate with States, Tribal governments, localities, and emergency managers regarding research priorities and results.

“(3) PILOT PROGRAM FOR TORNADO HAZARD COMMUNICATION REQUIRED.—To further research into communications regarding hazardous weather or water events, the Under Secretary, in coordination with the VORTEX program under section 103 and in collaboration with one or more eligible institutions (or a consortia thereof), shall establish a pilot program for tornado hazard communication to test the effectiveness of implementing research into operations with respect to tornadoes.

“(4) PILOT STUDY FOR HURRICANE HAZARD COMMUNICATION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—To further research into communications regarding hazardous weather or water events, the Under Secretary, in coordination with the hurricane forecast improvement program under section 104, shall seek to enter into an agreement with an appropriate entity, as determined by the Under Secretary, to conduct a pilot study using a mixed methods approach, such as surveys, focus groups, and interviews, to gather information from hurricane prone population areas regarding the levels of preparedness of such areas for hurricanes or in response to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s early forecasts and warnings. Such study shall evaluate the following:

“(i) Possession of disaster supplies.

“(ii) Evacuation decisions.

“(iii) Levels of trust of tropical cyclone information and hurricane path prediction from various sources.

“(iv) Access to tropical cyclone and hurricane warnings in such study participant’s first language.

“(v) Determination regarding such study participant’s reasoning that may hinder the ability of such a participant to evacuate or willingness to evacuate.

“(B) ADDITIONAL CRITERIA.—The pilot study described in subparagraph (A) shall define its methodology and be made publicly available on a website of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

“(5) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ‘eligible institution’ means any of the following:

“(A) An institution of higher education, nonprofit organization, or other institution located in a jurisdiction eligible to partici-

pate in the program under section 113 of the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 1988 (42 U.S.C. 1862g).

“(B) An institution of higher education, nonprofit organization, or other institution located in proximity to a Weather Forecast Office of the National Weather Service.

“(e) HURRICANE SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL, AND ECONOMIC SCIENCES.—As part of the program carried out under subsection (d), the Under Secretary shall carry out research and development activities to improve how the public receives, interprets, responds to, and values hurricane forecasts and warnings. In conducting such activities, the Under Secretary shall—

“(1) conduct a comprehensive review of what is known about how the public receives, interprets, responds to, and makes decisions regarding hurricane forecasts and warnings, including—

“(A) how the connections between weather observations, downstream models, and processes affect the decision tools or products derived from such hurricane forecasts and warnings;

“(B) how such hurricane forecasts and warnings generated by decision tools and products are used by emergency managers, governments, and other users to benefit the public and stakeholder groups;

“(C) how past experiences with hurricanes impacts decision making;

“(D) how the source of such hurricane forecasts and warnings affects interpretation;

“(E) how tropical cyclone warnings and watches are received and interpreted;

“(F) how understanding of and response to such hurricane forecasts and warnings vary across demographic groups, including the elderly, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations;

“(G) language barriers; and

“(H) how understanding and response to such hurricane forecasts and warnings varies across geographic areas, including rural, urban, and suburban areas;

“(2) identify communication data gaps based on the review conducted pursuant to paragraph (1);

“(3) carry out research, including data collection and baseline assessments, in coordination with the hurricane forecast improvement program under section 104 to evaluate and quantify the economic value of extending lead times of tropical cyclone and hurricane warnings and watches, including identifying the most effected or vulnerable populations and potential impacts to those populations;

“(4) as part of post-storm surveys and assessments conducted under section 406 of the Weather Act Reauthorization Act of 2023, conduct retrospective or ex ante assessments of previous hurricane forecasts and warnings with improvements to better understand the key components, including expected actions or behavior changes, of the value of the forecasts and warnings provided;

“(5) conduct cost benefit analysis of forecasts and warnings improvement alternatives developed through the hurricane forecast improvement program under section 104; and

“(6) conduct risk assessments for pre-, during, and post-storm periods in regions and communities with significant elderly populations, including retirement communities.”.

SEC. 404. NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE COMMUNICATIONS IMPROVEMENT.

(a) IMPROVEMENT OF NWS INSTANT MESSAGING SERVICE.—The Director of the National Weather Service shall improve the instant messaging service used by personnel of the National Weather Service by implementing, not later than October 1, 2027, a commercial off-the-shelf communications solution that replaces the instant messaging

service commonly referred to as “NWSSChat”.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—The communications solution implemented under this section shall—

(1) be hosted on the public cloud; and

(2) satisfy requirements set forth by the Director to ensure such solution—

(A) best accommodates future growth;

(B) performs successfully with increased numbers of users;

(C) is easy to use for the majority of users; and

(D) is similar to systems already in commercial use.

(c) FUNDING.—From amounts made available for Operations, Research, and Facilities, the Director of the National Weather Service shall allocate up to \$3,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2027 to carry out this section.

SEC. 405. NOAA WEATHER RADIO MODERNIZATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, expand coverage of the NOAA Weather Radio and ensure its reliability. In carrying out this subsection, the Under Secretary shall—

(1) maintain support for existing systems serving areas not covered by or having poor quality cellular service;

(2) ensure consistent maintenance and operations monitoring, with timely repairs to broadcast transmitter site equipment and antennas;

(3) enhance the ability to amplify Non-Weather Emergency Messages via NOAA Weather Radio as necessary; and

(4) acquire additional transmitters as required to expand coverage to rural and underserved communities, units of the National Park System, and National Recreation Areas.

(b) MODERNIZATION INITIATIVE.—To the maximum extent practicable, the Under Secretary shall enhance NOAA Weather Radio to ensure its capabilities and coverage remain valuable to the public. In carrying out this section, the Under Secretary shall—

(1) upgrade telecommunications infrastructure of NOAA Weather Radio to accelerate the transition of broadcasts to internet protocol-based communications over non-copper media;

(2) accelerate software upgrades to the Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System, or the relevant system successors, to implement partial county notifications and alerts;

(3) consult with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, to enhance accessibility and usability of NOAA Weather Radio data and feeds;

(4) develop options, including satellite backup capability and commercial provider partnerships, for NOAA Weather Radio continuity in the event of Weather Forecast Office outages;

(5) research and develop alternative options, including microwave capabilities, to transmit NOAA Weather Radio signals to transmitters that are remote or do not have internet protocol capability; and

(6) transition critical applications to the Integrated Dissemination Program, or the relevant program successors.

(c) PRIORITY.—In carrying out subsection (b), the Under Secretary shall prioritize practices, capabilities, and technologies recommended in accordance with the assessment under subsection (d) to maximize accessibility, particularly in remote and underserved areas of the United States.

(d) ASSESSMENT FOR MANAGEMENT AND DISTRIBUTION.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under Secretary shall complete an assessment of

access to NOAA Weather Radio. In conducting such assessment, the Under Secretary shall take into consideration and provide recommendations regarding the following:

(1) The need for continuous, adequate, and operational real-time broadcasts of the NOAA Weather Radio in both urban and rural areas.

(2) Solicited inputs from relevant stakeholders on the compatibility of NOAA Weather Radio data for third party platforms that provide online services, such as websites and mobile device applications, or deliver NOAA Weather Radio access.

(3) Existing or new management systems that promote consistent, efficient, and compatible access to NOAA Weather Radio.

(4) The ability of NOAA to aggregate real time broadcast feeds at one or more central locations.

(5) Effective interagency coordination.

(6) The potential effects of an electromagnetic pulse or geomagnetic disturbance on NOAA Weather Radio.

(7) Any other function the Under Secretary determines necessary.

SEC. 406. POST-STORM SURVEYS AND ASSESSMENTS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Under Secretary shall continue to perform one or more post-storm surveys and assessments following every hazardous weather or water event determined by the Under Secretary to be of sufficient societal importance to warrant a post-event survey and assessment.

(b) **COORDINATION.**—The Under Secretary shall coordinate with Federal, State, local and Tribal governments, private entities, and relevant institutions of higher education (or a consortia thereof) when conducting post-storm surveys and assessments under this section to optimize data collection, sharing, integration, archiving, and access, as appropriate for research needs.

(c) **DATA AVAILABILITY.**—The Under Secretary shall make the appropriate data obtained from each post-storm survey and assessment conducted under this section available to the public as soon as practicable after conducting each such survey and assessment.

(d) **IMPROVEMENT.**—In carrying out this section, the Under Secretary shall—

(1) examine the role of uncrewed aerial and marine systems in data collection during post-storm surveys and assessments conducted under this section;

(2) identify gaps in and update tactics and procedures to enhance the efficiency and reliability of data obtained from post-storm surveys and assessments;

(3) to the maximum extent practicable, increase the number of post-storm community impact studies, particularly among under-observed, underserved, or highly vulnerable populations, including—

(A) surveying-individual responses;

(B) conducting review of the accuracy of prior risk evaluations;

(C) evaluating the efficacy of prior mitigation activity; and

(D) gathering survivability statistics; and

(4) as appropriate, integrate community-based, social, behavioral, risk, communication, and economic sciences elements into existing post-storm surveys and assessments, including relating to efficacy of forecast and warning information, barriers to action, and messaging challenges.

(e) **SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES.**—The Under Secretary shall provide training, resources, and access to professional counseling to support the emotional and mental health and well-being of employees conducting post-storm surveys and assessments under this section.

(f) **EXEMPTION.**—Subchapter I of chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, shall not

apply to the collection of information during the conduct of a survey or assessment authorized under subsection (a).

SEC. 407. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE REPORT ON ALERT DISSEMINATION FOR HAZARDOUS WEATHER OR WATER EVENTS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 540 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives a report that examines the information technology infrastructure of the National Weather Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, specifically regarding the system for timely public notification via alerts and updates regarding hazardous weather or water events.

(b) **ELEMENTS.**—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An analysis of the information technology infrastructure of the National Weather Service, including software and hardware capabilities and limitations, including an examination of server and data storage methods, broadband, data management, and data sharing.

(2) An identification of secondary and tertiary fail-safes for the timely distribution to the public of notifications via alerts and updates regarding hazardous weather or water events.

(3) A process analysis to determine the source and extent to which public notifications via alerts and updates regarding hazardous weather or water events have been delayed and an identification of possible improvements or corrective measures to address latency in the notification process.

(4) An assessment of whether collaboration with other Federal offices, States, or private entities could reduce delays in notifications to the public.

(5) A description of actions being undertaken to better identify critical steps in public notification via alerts and updates for hazardous weather or water events that may be vulnerable to disruption or failure in the event of communication, technologic, or computational failure.

(6) The geographical differences in availability and effectiveness of rural systems, including an estimated number of rural areas affected by unreliable or unavailable accurate systems and barriers to obtain or upgrade such systems.

SEC. 408. DATA COLLECTION MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION.

(a) **DATA COLLECTION.**—The Under Secretary may collect social, behavioral, and economic data, including Federal communication and related public response to hazardous weather or water events. Where appropriate, the Under Secretary shall encourage use of secondary data, purchase data, or partner with the private sector.

(b) **DATA MANAGEMENT.**—The Under Secretary shall establish a central repository system for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for social, behavioral, and economic data related to the communication of and related public response to hazardous weather or water events, including data developed or received pursuant to this title.

(c) **PROTECTION OF DATA.**—The Under Secretary shall ensure that all data collected and managed by the Administration is done within with all legal, regulatory, and contractual obligations and in accordance with chapter 31 of title 44, United States Code, and the Federal Evidence-Based Policy-making Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-435).

(d) **DIGITAL WATERMARKING.**—The Under Secretary shall develop methods to reduce

the likelihood of unauthorized tampering with online public notifications of hazardous weather or water events, such as developing digital watermarks.

(e) **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.**—The Under Secretary shall establish policies and procedures for the collection, archiving, and stewardship of data on community response, including the response of effected or vulnerable populations, to hazardous weather or water events.

TITLE V—IMPROVING WEATHER INFORMATION FOR AGRICULTURE AND WATER MANAGEMENT

SEC. 501. WEATHER AND CLIMATE INFORMATION IN AGRICULTURE AND WATER MANAGEMENT.

Section 1762 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (15 U.S.C. 8521) is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (h) to read as follows:

“(h) **SUBSEASONAL TO SEASONAL FORECASTING PILOT PROJECTS.**—

“(1) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Under Secretary shall establish not fewer than two pilot projects, in accordance with paragraph (2), within the U.S. Weather Research Program of the Oceanic and Atmospheric Research office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to support improved subseasonal to seasonal precipitation forecasts for the following:

“(A) Water management in the western United States.

“(B) Agriculture in the central United States.

“(2) **OBJECTIVES.**—In carrying out this subsection, the Under Secretary shall ensure the following:

“(A) A pilot project under subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) addresses key science challenges to improving forecasts and developing related products for water management in the western United States, including the following:

“(i) Improving operational model resolution, both horizontal and vertical, to resolve issues associated with mountainous terrain, such as intensity of precipitation and relative fraction of rain versus snow precipitation.

“(ii) Improving fidelity in the operational modeling of the atmospheric boundary layer in mountainous regions.

“(iii) Resolving challenges in predicting winter atmospheric circulation and storm tracks, including periods of blocked versus unblocked flow over the eastern North Pacific Ocean and western United States.

“(iv) Utilizing outcomes from the Atmospheric Rivers Forecast Improvement Program as authorized in section 204 of the Weather Act Reauthorization Act of 2023 to produce operational tools and services.

“(v) Improving the quality and temporal and spatial resolution of observations and accurate operational modeling of air-sea interactions, and the influence of oceans on subseasonal and seasonal forecasting.

“(B) A pilot project under subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1) addresses key science challenges to improving forecasts and developing related products for agriculture in the central United States, including the following:

“(i) Improving the quality and temporal and spatial resolution of observations and accurate operational modeling of the land surface and hydrologic cycle, including soil moisture and flash drought processes.

“(ii) Improving fidelity in the operational modeling of warm season precipitation processes.

“(iii) Understanding and predicting large-scale upper-level dynamical flow anomalies that occur in spring and summer.

“(3) ACTIVITIES.—A pilot project under this subsection shall include activities that carry out the following:

“(A) Best implement recommendations of the National Weather Service’s 2020 Report, entitled ‘Subseasonal and Seasonal Forecasting Innovation: Plans for the Twenty-First Century’.

“(B) Achieve measurable objectives for operational forecast improvement.

“(C) Engage with, and leverage the resources of, institutions of higher education (as such term is defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)), or a consortia thereof, and entities within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in existence as of the date of the enactment of this subsection, including Regional Climate Centers and the National Centers for Environmental Information.

“(D) Are carried out in coordination with the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research and the Director of the National Weather Service.

“(4) SUNSET.—The authority under this subsection shall terminate on the date that is five years after the date of the enactment of this subsection.”; and

(2) by amending subsection (j) to read as follows:

“(j) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated \$45,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028 to carry out the activities under this section.”.

SEC. 502. NATIONAL INTEGRATED DROUGHT INFORMATION SYSTEM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3 of the National Integrated Drought Information System Act of 2006 (15 U.S.C. 313d) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by inserting “and” after the semicolon; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(C) incorporates flash drought research and tools to enhance timely response;”;

(B) in paragraph (5), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(C) in paragraph (6)—

(i) by inserting “(including ecological drought)” after “drought” each place it appears; and

(ii) by striking the period and inserting a semicolon; and

(D) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(7) advance and deploy next generation technologies related to drought and related publicly available data, such as monitoring, preparedness, and forecasting capabilities utilizing artificial intelligence, machine learning, and cloud technologies; and

“(8) utilize observational networks, including the National Weather Service cooperative observer program and State or regional hydrological monitoring projects, and refine drought indicators across a variety of spatial and temporal scales for decision-support products by optimizing data and resources from across the Federal Government, including snowpack, soil moisture, groundwater, and rapid intensification data.”;

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) in partnership with the National Mesonet Program, establish memoranda of understanding to provide coordinated, high-quality, nationwide drought information for the public good, including integrated soil

moisture information in accordance with the 2021 report, ‘A Strategy for the National Coordinated Soil Moisture Monitoring Network’;”;

(3) by amending subsection (f) to read as follows:

“(f) MODELING UPDATE.—The Under Secretary, in partnership with National Integrated Drought Information System and the Climate Prediction Center of the National Weather Service, shall undertake an effort to transition existing drought products to probabilistic forecasts and incorporate new and improved dynamical and statistical forecast modeling tools.”.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 4 of the National Integrated Drought Information System Act of 2006 (15 U.S.C. 313d note) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

“From amounts made available to Operations, Research, and Facilities of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section the following:

“(1) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2024.

“(2) \$15,500,000 for fiscal year 2025.

“(3) \$16,000,000 for fiscal year 2026.

“(4) \$16,500,000 for fiscal year 2027.

“(5) \$17,000,000 for fiscal year 2028.”.

SEC. 503. NATIONAL MESONET PROGRAM.

(a) PROGRAM.—The Under Secretary shall maintain the National Mesonet Program (in this section referred to as the “Program”). The Program shall—

(1) obtain observations in all geographic environments to improve understanding of and forecast capabilities for atmospheric and water events, with a prioritization on leveraging available commercial, academic, and other non-Federal environmental data to enhance coordination across the private, public, and academic sectors of the United States weather enterprise; and

(2) establish memoranda of understanding with networks outside of the scope of the Program.

(b) PROGRAM ELEMENTS.—The Program shall carry out the following activities:

(1) Improve environmental observations used by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Weather Service to support baseline forecasts, including nowcasts, and warnings that protect the Nation’s citizens, businesses, military, and government agencies, and enable such individuals and entities to operate in safe, efficient, and orderly manners.

(2) When demonstrably cost effective and meeting or exceeding agency data quality standards, leverage existing networks of environmental monitoring stations, including supplemental radar systems, to increase the quantity and density of environmental observations and data available to the Administration.

(3) Establish means to integrate greater density and type of environmental observations into the Program on an annual basis, including by encouraging local and regional networks of environmental monitoring stations, in situ sensor networks and satellite constellations to participate in the Program.

(4) Yield increased quantities of boundary-layer data to improve numerical weather prediction performance, including regarding subseasonal to seasonal timescales.

(5) Provide the critical technical and administrative infrastructure needed to facilitate rapid integration and sustained use of new and emerging networks of environmental monitoring stations anticipated in coming years from non-Federal sources.

(6) Expand and enhance environmental observational networks in the roadway environment to provide real-time road weather and surface conditions for surface transportation and related economic sectors.

(7) Identify available terrestrial or marine environmental data, or quantifiable gaps in such data, to improve the understanding of air-sea interactions.

(8) Support the National Weather Service in reaching its target of a 30-minute warning time for severe weather through better predictive model algorithms driven by increasingly effective observations.

(9) Coordinate with existing Administration data used for forecasts, including data from the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service, the Integrated Ocean Observing System, the Global Ocean Monitoring and Observing Program, the National Data Buoy Center, and the National Ocean Service.

(10) Identify and communicate to the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research and other partners priorities of research and development needed to advance observations in the Program.

(11) Support the National Coordinated Soil Moisture Monitoring Network in acquiring soil moisture and related data to support the development of decision-support products and other information services.

(C) FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In furtherance of the Program, the Under Secretary may, to the extent amounts are made available, award up to 15 percent of the Program’s annual appropriations for financial assistance to State, Tribal, private, and academic entities seeking to build, expand, or upgrade equipment and capacity of mesonet systems. Financial assistance under this subsection may be made in coordination with and in addition to awards from other Federal agencies.

(2) AGREEMENTS.—Before receiving financial assistance under paragraph (1), the State, Tribal, private, or academic entity seeking financial assistance under this subsection shall enter into an agreement with the Under Secretary to provide data to the Program, subject to verification by the Program of the relative operational value and evaluation of the cost of such data, for use in weather prediction, severe weather warnings, and emergency response.

(3) ASSISTANCE AND OTHER SUPPORT.—The Under Secretary may provide technical assistance, project implementation support, and guidance to State, Tribal, private, and academic entities seeking financial assistance under this subsection. The Under Secretary may provide technical and financial assistance for maintenance of monitoring stations in underrepresented or remote areas of the country where it is financially unfeasible for one entity to operate such stations without such assistance.

(4) TERMS.—In providing financial assistance under this subsection, the Under Secretary shall establish terms to ensure that each State, Tribal, private, or academic entity that receives financial assistance under this subsection receives a level of Federal support commensurate with the quality and other characteristics of the data to be provided.

(5) DETERMINATION.—A State, Tribal, private, or academic entity may receive financial assistance under this subsection only if the Under Secretary determines such entity shall provide sufficient non-Federal financial support and full maintenance to maintain the quality of the mesonet system and associated data standards required by the Program for a period of not less than five years.

(6) PRIORITY.—The Under Secretary shall prioritize providing assistance under paragraph (1) to at least one entity in an underrepresented or remote area.

(d) ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall ensure the Program has an active advisory

committee of subject matter experts to make recommendations to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on the identification, implementation, procurement, and tracking of data needed to supplement the Program, and recommend improvements, expansions, and acquisitions of available data. The Under Secretary may designate an existing Federal advisory committee, subcommittee, or working group, including, if appropriate, the Science Advisory Board of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to carry out this subsection.

(2) **ACADEMIC EXPERTISE.**—The advisory committee under paragraph (1), in consultation with the Program, shall include expertise from one or more institutions of higher education (as such term is defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)) to assist the advisory committee to identify, evaluate, and recommend potential partnerships, regional or sub-regional consortia, and collaborative methods that would expand the number of participants and volume of data in the Program.

(e) **REGULAR REPORTING.**—The Under Secretary shall provide regular briefings, not less than twice annually, to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate on all Program activities. Such briefings shall include information relating to the following:

(1) Efforts to implement the activities described in subsection (b).

(2) Any financial or technical assistance provided pursuant to subsection (c).

(3) Efforts to address recommendations received from the advisory committee under subsection (d).

(4) The potential need and associated benefits of a coastal and ocean mesonet, or other emerging areas of weather data needs.

(5) Progress toward eliminating gaps in weather observation data by States and regions of the United States.

(6) Any other topic the Under Secretary determines relevant.

(f) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—From amounts made available to the National Weather Service, the Under Secretary, to carry out this section, shall allocate up to the following amounts for each specified fiscal year:

- (1) \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2024.
- (2) \$55,000,000 for fiscal year 2025.
- (3) \$61,000,000 for fiscal year 2026.
- (4) \$68,000,000 for fiscal year 2027.
- (5) \$70,000,000 for fiscal year 2028.

SEC. 504. NATIONAL COORDINATED SOIL MOISTURE MONITORING NETWORK.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Under Secretary, in collaboration with the Secretary of Agriculture, the Director of the United States Geological Survey, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the heads of other relevant Federal agencies and departments, shall support the development, deployment, and maintenance of soil moisture monitoring networks by managing the National Coordinated Soil Moisture Monitoring Network (in this section referred to as the “Network”) within the National Integrated Drought Information System.

(b) **ACTIVITIES.**—The Under Secretary shall ensure the Network includes activities that carry out the following:

(1) Establishing a visible, user-friendly website.

(2) Developing a set of criteria for high-quality data sources.

(3) Supporting research necessary to develop or improve soil moisture monitoring products at a national scale.

(4) Increasing the number of long-term, high-quality, in situ and remote sensing soil

moisture monitoring stations across the United States.

(5) Sharing methodologies and validation protocols with the private sector.

(6) Engaging with the citizen science community.

(7) Developing, releasing, and promoting new, nationwide point-based and gridded soil moisture data products that meet the needs of diverse end-user groups.

(8) Supporting community building and outreach to the network of individuals engaged with soil moisture information delivery, from data provision to end-user decision making.

SEC. 505. NATIONAL WATER CENTER.

Section 301 of the Coordinated Ocean Observations and Research Act of 2020 (42 U.S.C. 10371) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)(A)—

(i) in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting “as a component of the National Centers for Environmental Prediction” after “center”;

(ii) in clause (i), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(iii) in clause (ii), by striking the period and inserting “; and”;

(iv) by adding at the end the following new clause:

“(iii) to provide service backup capabilities and additional mission support services for River Forecast Centers.”;

(B) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(F) Serving as the primary Center for collaboration and coordination of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s water research and operational activities with existing Federal centers and networks, including the Department of Agriculture, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation, the United States Geological Survey, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.”;

(2) by striking subsection (b) and redesignating subsections (c) through (e) as subsections (b) through (d) respectively; and

(3) by amending subsection (c), as so redesignated, to read as follows:

“(c) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated \$46,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028 to carry out this section.”.

SEC. 506. SATELLITE TRANSFERS REPORT.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Commerce shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives a report describing the Department of Commerce’s authorities, policies, and Federal Government-wide policies related to transferring any portion of the weather satellite systems operated by the Department of Commerce to any other Federal department or agency. The report shall also include the following:

(1) A description of the process for decommissioning a Department of Commerce operational weather satellite, any existing agreements related to transfers of weather satellites, whether decommissioned or not, and any reimbursable agreements related to the transfer of physical property or the operation of Department of Commerce weather satellites on behalf of any other Federal department or agency.

(2) A summary of any Department of Commerce plans for potential transfer of existing or future weather satellite systems to any other Federal department or agency.

SEC. 507. PRECIPITATION FORECAST IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Title VI of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8501 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by redesignating section 603 as section 604; and

(2) by inserting after section 602 the following new section:

“SEC. 603. PRECIPITATION FORECAST IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Under Secretary, in collaboration with the United States weather industry, other Federal agencies, and academic partners, shall maintain a program to improve precipitation forecasting across timescales.

“(b) **GOAL.**—The goal of the program under subsection (a) shall be to provide more accurate, reliable, and timely precipitation forecasts across timescales through the development and application of a fully coupled Earth system prediction model in order to reduce the loss of life or property related to precipitation extremes, with a focus on the following:

“(1) Improving the understanding and prediction of precipitation extremes from a variety of weather systems, including atmospheric rivers.

“(2) Evaluating and incorporating, as appropriate, innovative observations into operational monitoring and forecast systems to improve precipitation forecasts.

“(3) Improving earth system model predictions of precipitation extremes from atmospheric rivers, tropical cyclones, summertime thunderstorms, winter storms, and other phenomena, in coordination with relevant programs.

“(4) Enhancing research transition to operations through testbeds, including the evaluation of physical and social science, technology, and other research to develop products and services for implementation and use by relevant stakeholders.

“(5) Incorporating social, behavioral, and economic sciences best practices into operations for more effective and actionable watch and warning products that help drive public safety and damage mitigation decisions in coordination with the programs established in accordance with this Act.

“(6) Ensuring data and metadata management processes are in place to support data access and archive for long term research and operations among multiple partners.

“(c) **ACTIVITIES.**—In carrying out the program under subsection (a), the Under Secretary shall support research-to-operations work, including relating to the following:

“(1) Implementing key strategies and following priorities and objectives outlined by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s ‘Precipitation Prediction Grand Challenge Strategy’.

“(2) Improving the physical science, operational modeling and tools, and technology related to better forecasting precipitation extremes across timescales.

“(3) Improving the social, behavioral, risk, communications, and economic sciences related to vulnerabilities, risk communication, and delivery of information critical for reducing the loss of life or property related to extreme precipitation.

“(4) Conducting the research necessary to develop and deploy probabilistic weather forecast guidance technology relating to precipitation extremes in operational practice.

“(5) Enhancing the operational capacity of the National Weather Service to deliver decision support for increasing precipitation extremes.

“(6) Expanding computational resources to improve precipitation modeling.

“(d) **ANNUAL BUDGET.**—The Under Secretary shall, not less frequently than annually, submit to Congress a proposed budget

corresponding with carrying out this section.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 is amended by striking the item relating to section 603 and inserting the following new items:

“Sec. 603. Precipitation forecast improvement program.

“Sec. 604. Definitions.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) and the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LUCAS. 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 H.R. 6093, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6093, the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Reauthorization Act of 2023, simply known as the Weather Act Reauthorization Act.

In 2017, I was proud to lead the first comprehensive weather authorization in 25 years that resulted in the original Weather Act being signed into law. The bill we are considering today, the Weather Act Reauthorization Act, builds on previous accomplishments and makes further advancements in weather forecasting and prediction of high-impact weather events. It will undoubtedly save the lives of citizens across our country.

In the simplest of terms: the Weather Act Reauthorization Act gives Americans better forecasts.

What that means and how it is accomplished through this bill is so much more than what meets the eye.

This bill improves the hurricane forecast accuracy and the tornado warning lead time that started under the Weather Act through the continuation of successful research programs. It also supports cutting-edge forecasting by establishing new research and development programs related to the next generation of radar, atmospheric rivers, coastal flooding, storm surges, aviation weather, and more.

The Weather Act Reauthorization Act increases NOAA’s access to critical forecasting data by expanding its authority to contract with the private sector to acquire commercial weather data and codifying the Commercial Data Program to lead this work. Again, building on what we started in 2017, NOAA will have more flexibility to purchase high-quality data from trusted and verified industry partners instead of building out expensive observation systems and satellite networks.

The Weather Act Reauthorization Act also ensures all this research and

progress doesn’t result in overly complex products the public can’t understand. This bill strengthens the emergency preparedness of every community by improving the communication of weather and water events to the public. This ensures all Americans understand watches, warnings, emergency information, and exactly how to respond.

This bill also provides farmers and ranchers with better tools and services for agriculture and water management, including improvements in subseasonal and seasonal research and forecasting. As perhaps the most weather-dependent sector in our country, the agriculture industry needs accurate forecasts for efficient crop planting and timely harvest cycles because at the end of the day, this is what feeds and clothes our country.

Finally, the Weather Act Reauthorization Act authorizes the continuation of key public tools, including the National Integrated Drought Information System, the National Mesonet Program, and the National Coordinated Soil Moisture Monitoring Network. NOAA is, after all, a taxpayer-funded agency; therefore, it should continue to invest in tools that benefit the taxpayers.

It is clear this bill is not a one-trick pony and will accomplish many things, so it should come as no surprise to hear the widespread support we have received. Mr. Speaker, 63 Republican and Democrat Members have cosponsored bills that appear in this package. It has letters of support from 50 stakeholders, representing groups as diverse as recreational fishers to two-way radio suppliers. It is a bipartisan bill with 29 cosponsors on both sides of the aisle.

The Weather Act Reauthorization Act ensures NOAA is modern and reliable, which will secure the United States’ global leadership in weather forecasting, modeling, and prediction.

More importantly, the Weather Act Reauthorization Act ensures NOAA’s services equip Americans with timely warnings and support, providing additional lifesaving resources to communities across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my partner in this effort, Ranking Member ZOE LOFGREN, who has been essential in continuing the bipartisan successes of the Science Committee in this Congress.

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

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6093.

Sadly, this year is expected to set yet another record for global temperatures according to the World Meteorological Organization.

Last year, the U.S. experienced 28 separate extreme weather and climate disasters costing more than \$1 billion each, surpassing the previous record set in 2020.

Climate change is causing an increase in the frequency and intensity of severe storms. Just 2 weeks ago, Pittsburgh was inundated by a severe storm that flooded many parts of the area. Daily rainfall records for the Pittsburgh area were shattered, and there were numerous road closures and water rescues across Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, which I represent.

The science is clear. The need to act cannot be ignored. As we adapt to this unfortunate new norm of severe weather events, our forecasting capabilities and preparedness must substantially improve.

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H.R. 6093 will build upon the bipartisan 2017 Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act that led to critical research and advancements in weather and climate forecasting. This bill before us today will support the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in continuing to improve research, development, dissemination, and communication of environmental forecasts, warnings, and information. We must ensure that NOAA has access to every tool to improve the accuracy and timeliness of weather and climate information to effectively meet its mission in protecting people, property, and the economy.

Specifically, this bill modifies and extends key weather and climate research programs for hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis, drought, and harmful algal blooms. It also establishes and codifies new forecasting improvement programs for precipitation, atmospheric rivers, and coastal flooding, including storm surges. Additionally, the bill authorizes NOAA to expand its partnership with private industry in gathering more data while solidifying its own role as the driver of the enterprise and leverages the use of artificial intelligence to meet its mission.

Necessary improvements in data assimilation will be made so that our weather models continue to be the gold standard. While the improvement of all severe weather-related research programs is necessary, the communication of the information is also a key element to an effective forecast.

Under-observed, underserved, and highly vulnerable communities are disproportionately affected by severe weather and climate events. To better serve these communities, we must determine how to best communicate important weather and climate information. Understanding how the public receives, interprets, responds to, and values severe weather information is necessary to produce better forecasts and warnings. This bill aims to accomplish this by expanding NOAA’s social, behavioral, and economic science research program to simplify and improve the communication of hazardous weather.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman LUCAS and Ranking Member LOFGREN for their diligent work and cooperation

on this important legislation, and also many of my colleagues who made significant contributions to this excellent piece of legislation. I strongly support this sensible, bipartisan bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Oklahoma (Mrs. BICE) to speak on the bill.

Mrs. BICE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Weather Act Reauthorization Act.

Over the weekend, we saw the terrible effects that weather can have on our communities and States. Throughout the heartland, there were more than 50 confirmed tornadoes, which left many injured and, sadly, took the lives of four Oklahomans. This is why the Weather Act Reauthorization Act is so important.

We must ensure that Americans have the resources they need when critical weather events strike. This includes having access to accurate weather forecasting and other necessary resources to protect life and property.

I was pleased to see that my legislation, the NOAA Weather Radio Modernization Act, the National Mesonet Authorization Act, and the WING Act were included in this package.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio Modernization Act will help save lives by updating our emergency alert system. Specifically, it paves the way for future development and provides fail-safe options so that the national weather radio is never down for an extended period and that outages will be less frequent. Over the weekend, there were issues with receiving and transmitting alerts from the national weather radio. My bill will help address the aging infrastructure in these systems and prevent outages like these from occurring in the future.

The National Mesonet Authorization Act will work to increase the overall coverage and accuracy of the National Mesonet Program, which provides reliable, real-time data and observations for weather prediction, severe weather warnings, and emergency response.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman LUCAS for his leadership on this legislation and for his focus on protecting Oklahomans. I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FROST).

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the reauthorization of the Weather Act. Since its passage in 2017, the Weather Act has been the driving force behind faster and more precise hurricane and tornado forecasting.

This reauthorization will build upon that research by updating existing projects and adding new project programs focused on coastal flooding, storm surge, and improving weather radar. I am also proud that included in this package is my bipartisan bill, the Fixing Gaps in Hurricane Preparedness

Act, co-led by my colleague from Florida, Congressman DANIEL WEBSTER.

Congressman WEBSTER and I know that we need to do more to keep our people and most at-risk communities safe during extreme weather events that due to the climate crisis are continuing and happening more often in Florida and across the entire country.

Our bill works to better protect the lives of seniors, folks with disabilities, and non-English speakers during hurricanes. Our bill instructs NOAA to evaluate the level of people's preparedness for hurricane-prone areas; better understand how at-risk populations receive, interpret, and react to emergency notifications, including seniors, people with disabilities, communities with language barriers, and rural, suburban, and urban populations; and, finally, examine the unique risks for areas with large senior populations, like retirement communities, before, during, and after a hurricane.

This bill was inspired by devastating national data and conversations with my own constituents in central Florida who have experienced some of the worst storms that our State has ever seen. Floridians speak to me about living in neighborhoods that quickly flood, confusing messaging from the media on whether they should evacuate or not, and alerts that are usually just in English or Spanish.

While inspired by the needs of our constituents, this bill will help folks far beyond just the State of Florida. When these storms come, people with disabilities must undergo evacuations at far greater rates than others, yet folks have told me that they feel like an afterthought when it comes down to the accommodations.

Folks with disabilities and seniors oftentimes get stuck without electricity. As a result, seniors are most likely to die during a hurricane, making up two-thirds of the deaths from Hurricane Katrina, Florence, and Ian.

As part of the Weather Act, the Fixing Gaps in Hurricane Preparedness Act will save lives, reduce fear, and help Floridians and Americans. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this critical legislative package.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MIKE GARCIA) to speak on the bill.

Mr. MIKE GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman LUCAS for introducing the reauthorization of the Weather Act, which includes my bill, the Improving Atmospheric River Forecasting Act.

In my home State of California, we can experience devastating flooding, wildfires, and droughts all in the same year, if not in the same season. Needless to say, we have learned the value of being well prepared. These past two winters, we have experienced a new threat called atmospheric rivers. This past winter, 51 atmospheric rivers hit California, dumping trillions of gallons of water on us, causing flooding and damage to homes and businesses.

It is clear that we need to do more to improve our predictive capabilities to give emergency coordinators as much of a heads-up as possible. We also need to make sure that we are taking advantage of this free water as much as possible. The problem in California isn't that we don't have enough water, it is that we don't retain enough of it. We don't have enough storage, we don't have enough capacity, and we don't plan appropriately based on the predictions.

The L.A. Times recently reported that nearly 95 percent of the water from the atmospheric rivers this last year flowed back into the ocean. That is trillions of gallons of free water that could have been stored for dry seasons. It is clear that Sacramento isn't going to build more storage any time soon, so we need to be investing in infrastructure we already have and improve the efficiency of our reservoirs.

That is why my bill increases research into what is called Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations. If we can give water managers a heads-up that these storms are coming, they can prepare reservoirs to capture the water, helping us fight off droughts when the dry seasons come.

We got lucky this last time; we got so much water that even California's terrible water policies weren't enough to keep us in a prolonged drought. We can't keep relying on luck, and we can't wait around for Sacramento to get its act together. If there was a zombie apocalypse in Sacramento, Mr. Speaker, even the zombies would die because there are not enough brains in our State's capital right now when it comes to water policies, and this goes a long way in helping them. We need improved prediction of atmospheric rivers moving forward, and that is what this bill does.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill.

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DELBENE).

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Weather Act Reauthorization Act.

For the past 3 years, the National Landslide Preparedness Act has been providing communities with the tools and resources that they need to reduce the potential devastation of landslides.

Washington State knows this pain too well. A decade ago, the single deadliest landslide in U.S. history destroyed a community between Oso and Darrington and took 43 lives in mere minutes. I knew in the aftermath of that that we have to do more to prevent future natural disasters from becoming national tragedies.

The landslide law I championed is doing exactly that. The programs established by the law are increasing preparedness and improving mapping data so communities understand where vulnerabilities exist. We cannot let these programs expire when they are just getting up and running.

The landslide law passed this Chamber without opposition in 2020 because every State in this country has some form of landslide risk. Each year, landslides kill between 20 and 50 people and cause over \$3 billion in damage.

With a changing climate and more unpredictable weather, landslide risks are only going to grow more frequent, more dangerous, and more costly. I urge my colleagues to support the Weather Act Reauthorization Act, which includes my legislation that extends these programs.

I also thank Congresswomen SCHRIER and GLUESENKAMP PEREZ along with Senators CANTWELL and MURKOWSKI for their support in reauthorizing the landslide law.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BAIRD) to speak on the bill.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding and for all the work that we did in the committee to include my bill, the Precipitation Forecasting for Agriculture Act in the Weather Act's reauthorization.

The Precipitation Forecasting for Agriculture Act is a simple piece of legislation. This bill simply directs the United States Weather Research Program to study seasonal precipitation forecasts for agriculture.

Hoosier farmers rely on accurate forecasts to determine whether or not their farms will have rain needed for their crops. This bill supports that basic need through a collaboration between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and our universities to create measurable objectives in forecasting improvement.

This study will address the scientific challenges to improving precipitation forecasting by enacting the National Weather Service's recommendations for subseasonal and seasonal forecasting innovation in the 21st century.

These recommendations will enable the Indiana State Climate Office at Purdue University to produce operational models for land surfaces, soil moisture, and flash drought processes. Our farmers need the most accurate data available to guarantee a successful harvest. That is why I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JACKSON).

Mr. JACKSON of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the week after I was elected to Congress, a group of meteorologists from my district got in touch with me, and they taught me something I didn't know, which is that my district, which is the Charlotte area, is in the largest weather radar gap in the country.

Our nearest NEXRAD radar is roughly 100 miles away, which makes it very difficult to have accurate forecasts for especially low-altitude storms and fast-moving tornadoes, so at the request of these meteorologists, our office got to work on a piece of legislation to address this. I am very grateful

that it has been included in this bill. It would address this by asking NOAA to have a plan to implement the next generation of weather radar and specifically to prioritize districts, like mine, that currently exist in these blind spots, in these weather radar gaps.

This legislation isn't going to just help solve this problem, but it is going to identify a number of these spots across the country and prioritize those to make sure that we have accurate forecasts across the country.

I am very grateful for its inclusion, and I ask all of my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MCCORMICK) to speak on the bill.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6093, the Weather Act Reauthorization Act of 2023. The Weather Act Reauthorization Act is sensible legislation that will strengthen the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration forecasting capabilities and elevate the U.S. Weather Enterprise, greatly benefiting communities across the country.

□ 1745

As a former helicopter pilot in the Marine Corps, I know firsthand the consideration you must give to the weather before taking to the skies. Fog, high winds, turbulence, thunderstorms, ice, and snow are all routine weather occurrences that can impact commercial and recreational flights, as well as ground crew operations and maintenance tasks.

Additionally, I think every Member of Congress here and many of our constituents have experienced some type of flight delay or turbulence in the last 6 months, as weather volatility is a consistent threat to travel plans.

That is why I introduced H.R. 3915, the Aviation Weather Improvement Act, which has been included in this larger legislative package.

This bill will improve all aspects of aviation weather forecasting and prediction by authorizing the National Weather Service to acquire readily available commercial data and partner with the U.S. weather enterprise to deploy critical atmospheric sensors.

In addition to authorizing this public-private partnership on weather data, H.R. 3915 also has an explicit focus on improving turbulence forecasting and modeling.

The Aviation Weather Improvement Act codifies the inclusion of turbulence events or phenomena in the operation forecasting capabilities of the Aviation Weather Center. This will ensure that recreational and commercial pilots have a definitive and accurate source for turbulence information that can inform route-specific flight planning.

Put simply, my bill will lower the over 5,000 flights per year that encounter severe turbulence, as well as make a dent in the 30 percent of annual delays caused by weather.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman LUCAS, Ranking Member LOFGREN, and my colleagues on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee for supporting the efforts of all the Members who contributed to this important Weather Act Reauthorization Act.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. KEAN) to speak on the bill.

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6093, the Weather Act Reauthorization Act, introduced by Chairman LUCAS and Ranking Member LOFGREN. I thank the chairman and ranking member for including my bill, H.R. 4069, the Protecting Coasts and Cities from Severe Weather Act, in the overall package.

With the Weather Act Reauthorization Act and my legislation, we are modernizing critical research programs to address weather observation gaps in highly vulnerable areas, which will improve our ability to protect lives and property from disasters and allow NOAA to continue developing cutting-edge research and development.

As we have seen from the first comprehensive Weather Act, investing in advanced weather research and forecasting technologies is crucial for mitigating the risks posed by extreme weather events.

By expanding NOAA's authority to acquire commercial weather data, we are not only improving the efficiency of weather data acquisition but also fostering innovation in the private sector.

These measures underscore our commitment to protecting the safety and well-being of the people of New Jersey, ensuring that they have the information and resources needed to withstand and recover from weather-related disasters.

This bill establishes new programs to improve forecasting models for weather phenomena like atmospheric rivers and coastal flooding, directly benefiting the residents of New Jersey's coastal areas. This will lead to more reliable forecasts and better emergency preparedness measures for the people back home in New Jersey.

Mr. Speaker, the Weather Act Reauthorization Act is about empowering individuals and communities with the tools they need to mitigate the risks of severe weather events. I encourage my colleagues to support this impactful legislation.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. FEENSTRA) to speak on the bill.

Mr. FEENSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman LUCAS for yielding.

This past Friday, horrible tornadoes struck parts of my district in southwest Iowa. Minden, Iowa, a community of approximately 600, felt the worst of these storms. Roughly 180 homes and businesses were either devastated or destroyed, and a community member, sadly, passed away.

Even in our grief, Iowans are resilient. These tornadoes are a tragic reminder that we need to use every tool available to keep our communities safe.

I am glad that two of my bills are part of this package. My bills help ensure that our weather radar can better detect serious storms, especially low-hanging tornadoes, and the National Weather Service can disseminate information more quickly.

These reforms will save lives, keep Iowans informed, and deliver accurate and timely updates during storms.

When it comes to severe weather, seconds can make the difference between life and death. That is why I urge my colleagues to support this legislation so that we can protect our families and our communities.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oklahoma has 5½ minutes remaining.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. OBERNOLTE) to speak on the bill.

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the reauthorization of the Weather Act.

This bill includes, in section 115, my legislation to also reauthorize the National Landslide Hazards Reduction Program. This is a critically important program for reducing landslide hazards in the United States that will, absent reauthorization, expire at the end of this year.

It is a little-known fact that landslides cause over a billion dollars in property damage every year in the United States, as well as costing countless lives. This is particularly true in my district in southern California.

My district has experienced substantial wildfire damage in the last several years, and last August, we experienced the first tropical storm in 83 years in California. This resulted in the liquefaction of the soil beneath the burn scars in the San Bernardino Mountains. The resulting landslides erased an entire community. Houses were uprooted and displaced, and many residents were trapped and had to be lifted by helicopter to safety.

Mr. Speaker, the National Landslide Hazards Reduction Program is a critical program for identifying hazards that exist with landslides and improving coordination with local emergency responders and agencies to make sure that those hazards are addressed.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman LUCAS and my colleagues on the Science, Space, and Technology and the Natural Resources Committees for including my legislation in the Weather Act Reauthorization Act, and I urge its adoption.

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the Democratic staff who were the driving

force behind this bill: Kristi Parrott, Noah Hunt, and Dahlia Sokolov. I thank them for their work on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on H.R. 6093, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Again, I express my sincere thanks to Ranking Member LOFGREN for her willingness to work together on this critical issue. I also thank the 29 bipartisan cosponsors, along with the 63 Members who contributed language found in this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting the Weather Act Reauthorization Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6093, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE DATA SHARING ACT

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7032) to amend the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 to provide the Congressional Budget Office with necessary authorities to expedite the sharing of data from executive branch agencies, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7032

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 “Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act”.

SEC. 2. REQUESTS BY CBO OF INFORMATION FROM EXECUTIVE AGENCIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 201(d) of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 601(d)) is amended—

(1) by striking “The Director is authorized” and inserting “(1) The Director is authorized”;

(2) by striking “(other than material the disclosure of which would be a violation of law)” and inserting “(with or without written agreement) provided that the Director maintains the level of confidentiality required by law of the department, agency, establishment, or regulatory agency or commission from which it is obtained in accordance with section 203(e)”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) No provision of law enacted after the date of the enactment of the Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act shall be con-

strued to supersede, limit, or otherwise modify the authority of the Director to obtain any material under this subsection unless such provision specifically provides, by specific reference to this paragraph, that such authority is to be superseded, limited, or otherwise modified.”.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Congressional Budget Office shall submit, to the chairs of the Committees on the Budget of the House of Representatives and the Senate, a report listing any request for information pursuant to a written agreement under section 201(d) of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 601(d)), as amended by subsection (a) of this Act, made to any department, agency, or establishment of the executive branch of Government or any regulatory agency or commission of the Government and any challenges faced accessing information under such section.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YAKYM) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BOYLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. YAKYM. 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 H.R. 7032.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act.

First, I thank my colleague and friend, the ranking member of the Budget Committee, Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, for working with me on this commonsense, bipartisan reform. I also thank our Budget Committee chairman, JODEY ARRINGTON, for his leadership and work on this effort, as well.

As a Congress, there is one thing we can all agree on: The current budgetary process is not working for the American people.

Congress has adopted a budget resolution by its statutorily required April 15 deadline only four times in the last four decades.

We have to find ways to address this brokenness so we can serve and steward the American people’s hard-earned tax dollars. A key part of this is process reform.

To me, process is a set of incentives that drive behavior, and we must change the current behavior that is failing this country, especially our children and grandchildren.

Right now, the CBO encounters ongoing challenges in obtaining necessary data from executive branch agencies in a timely manner without restrictions. CBO’s recent interactions with the Social Security Administration reveal a systemic issue that extends beyond a single agency. The process of renewing

data agreements, which are vital for the CBO's analyses, has been met with significant delays.

For example, a particular Social Security agreement with the Social Security Administration, critical for ongoing access to essential data, required over a year of negotiations before it was finalized and renewed. This consumed significant resources and time and deprived Congress of valuable information.

It is clear that the current framework is broken. There are many interpretations of various legislative mandates that bring inefficiencies and obstacles to data access. These challenges impact how quickly CBO can provide vital information to Congress and hinder Members' ability to make fully informed decisions regarding the budgetary impact of proposed legislation.

Our bill will put an end to this troubling dynamic.

The Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act would ensure the CBO has the tools it needs to deliver for us, their customer, timely and accurate information. It assists CBO in providing Congress with cost estimates for legislation and other fiscal reports that are critical for bringing accountability and transparency.

We streamline the CBO's ability to obtain necessary data, enabling timely completion of its work. We also strengthen and clarify the CBO's ability to request and receive data from executive branch agencies.

This doesn't threaten the confidentiality of sensitive information. Rather, the CBO would be required to maintain confidentiality in a way similar to the executive branch agency that is providing it.

This bill also ensures that future laws will not limit or modify this enhanced authority unless explicitly stated.

Finally, the bill provides increased transparency by requiring the CBO to report to the House and Senate Budget Committees on the requests it makes to agencies and any challenges encountered in retrieving necessary information.

I am proud to support this measure that will give CBO some of the tools it needs to provide timely, accurate, and complete information to Congress.

This legislation is smart, bipartisan, and a step in the right direction to improving the way that we budget Americans' hard-earned tax dollars.

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

□ 1800

Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today as the author of H.R. 7032, the Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act.

Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago, almost to the day, Congress passed the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, which cre-

ated the modern Congressional budget process as well as the Senate and House Budget Committees, and finally, the Congressional Budget Office.

With 270 dedicated, nonpartisan staff led by Director Dr. Phillip Swagel, CBO is critical to our work on behalf of the American people.

CBO issues hundreds of cost estimates on proposed legislation annually, provides technical assistance in crafting legislation, and keeps the public informed about the costs and impacts of legislation, as well as the overall fiscal health of our Nation.

The Budget Committee has direct oversight of CBO, and as the ranking member, helping CBO to do a better job of serving our institution is one of my top priorities.

Just a few months ago, the CBO director testified before our committee on the issues that CBO faces when requesting data from executive branch agencies.

In many cases, even when agencies want to cooperate with the CBO, they sometimes have concerns about their legal authority to provide data that creates delays.

In just one example that Dr. Swagel gave, CBO faced delays receiving data from FEMA regarding important analysis on flood insurance because FEMA was unsure of their legal authority to provide the data that was requested.

In cases like this, CBO is often forced to rely on less detailed, publicly available information in order to complete their reports on time.

My bill remedies this by clarifying CBO's authority to request data from executive agencies and grant CBO better and timely information so CBO can provide this analysis to Congress.

It accomplishes that while maintaining that CBO protects data to the same standards as the Federal agency providing it.

The security of sensitive data is important to agencies, CBO, and Congress, and this legislation ensures that CBO will continue to follow the procedures of the providing agency when it comes to protecting that data.

Mr. Speaker, as you heard just a few moments ago, this bill is a common-sense solution to an issue that has plagued CBO both through Republican and Democratic administrations, and I am proud that it had unanimous bipartisan support in the Budget Committee.

I thank the lead cosponsor of this legislation, Chairman JODEY ARRINGTON, who has been a crucial partner in advancing this bill.

I thank my friend as well from the South Bend, Indiana, area who has spoken so positively about this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago after the enactment of the Budget Act, Congress clearly still has work to do when it comes to improving our budget and appropriations process and ensuring we deliver for the American people on time. This bill is the first step to improving our budget process.

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

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 7032, the Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act, led by Ranking Member BOYLE and Chairman ARRINGTON.

When we in Congress make decisions on legislation and programs, we often look to CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, for their estimates on how it will affect our economy and our Federal budget.

With Federal debt reaching new heights every hour, it is of the utmost importance that the fine people at CBO have access to all the data they need when doing their analysis.

All this bill does is to clarify and strengthen CBO's access to executive branch data, and that is extremely important.

The vital data we need when making decisions regarding the future of our country is the data that we need in order to make these types of decisions, and that is why the CBO needs access to that data, and in turn, we get access to that data.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan piece of legislation.

Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the Congressional Budget Office on how this bill would clarify and strengthen the agency's general authority for accessing data from executive branch agencies, as well as a letter from the Bipartisan Policy Center in support of this bill.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, April 12, 2024.

Hon. JODEY ARRINGTON,
Chairman, Committee on the Budget,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. BRENDAN F. BOYLE,
Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Re H.R. 7032, Congressional Budget Office
Data Sharing Act

DEAR CHAIRMAN ARRINGTON AND RANKING MEMBER BOYLE: You have asked how enacting H.R. 7032, the Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act, would improve CBO's access to data. The bill would amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to clarify and strengthen the agency's general authority for accessing data from executive branch agencies.

The Congressional Budget Act provides CBO general authority to access data from a variety of sources. CBO works collaboratively with the executive branch to obtain data through formal and informal means. CBO also accesses data by using specific authority and by collaborating with other agencies.

CBO currently has more than 20 active data-use agreements with federal agencies. However, the shifting legal and regulatory frameworks at federal agencies can delay,

weaken, or block access to information. The time necessary to negotiate and renew agreements can be unpredictable and is widely variable, taking from a couple of weeks to more than a year.

H.R. 7032 would amend section 201(d) of the Congressional Budget Act, which governs CBO's access to executive branch data, by striking a parenthetical statement in that section, "(other than material the disclosure of which would be a violation of law)." That condition is unnecessary when another statute more specifically governs CBO's access to certain data. It also can hamper access to data by requiring CBO to enter into additional discussions with agencies, thus impairing the timeliness of CBO's work.

Enacting the bill would remove the caveat and, instead, provide CBO access to executive branch data unless that access is specifically disallowed by a future law. H.R. 7032 also includes a reference to section 203(e) of the Congressional Budget Act to highlight CBO's obligation to protect the restricted information it receives.

Better and more timely access to data enhances the precision of CBO's work, and it gives the Congress better—and more timely—information to make informed decisions about policy. Such access also helps to ensure equal footing with the executive branch.

I hope this information is useful to you. Please contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,
Director.

BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER
April 15, 2024.

Hon. JODEY ARRINGTON,
Chairman, House Budget Committee,
Washington, DC.

Hon. BRENDAN BOYLE,
Ranking Member, House Budget Committee,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ARRINGTON AND RANKING MEMBER BOYLE: On behalf of the Bipartisan Policy Center, I write to commend you and your colleagues on the House Budget Committee for your work in advancing H.R. 7032, the Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act. This thoughtful, bipartisan legislation would enhance the working relationships between the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and federal departments and agencies, and would enable CBO to collect better data in the course of serving lawmakers and their staff.

As you know, CBO faces challenges in gaining access to agency-level data, even with willing executive branch partners. These challenges delay or even prevent CBO from working hand in hand with departments and agencies, which in turn hinders CBO's ability to respond to congressional requests in a timely manner.

Your legislation would address these challenges head on, enhancing CBO's ability to work with federal agencies while retaining confidentiality protections that are essential to any entity making use of potentially sensitive government data. We were glad to see widespread, bipartisan support for H.R. 7032 in the House Budget Committee in February of this year.

With the 50th anniversary of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act approaching, now is the perfect time for lawmakers to be considering reforms large and small that would improve upon this law and update it for the budgetary challenges lawmakers face in the 21st century. BPC looks forward to working with you and the members of the House Budget Committee on this and other proposals to reform and improve the congressional budget process.

We thank you for your work on H.R. 7032 and for your commitment to bipartisan, bicameral budget process reform.

Sincerely,

G. WILLIAM HOAGLAND,
Senior Vice President, BPC.

Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this is a commonsense bipartisan bill that gives CBO the tools it needs to do its job to serve this institution better.

This is really about strengthening the institution of Congress, in addition to ensuring CBO is better able to deliver a product.

Helping CBO provide more timely and accurate information to Congress will help us as a body make better and more informed decisions on behalf of the people who sent us here.

I urge all of my colleagues to support the CBO Data Sharing Act, and I once again thank Director Swagel and all the dedicated staff at CBO for their hard work.

I, again, thank Chairman ARRINGTON for his friendship and his support, as well as all of my colleagues on the Budget Committee, including the gentleman from Indiana, who unanimously supported this legislation.

As always, a heartfelt thank you to the staff in my office, as well as both the Democratic and Republican staffs of the Budget Committee for their hard work to make this legislation possible.

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

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, I am ready to close, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I ask to include in the RECORD letters in statement of support from various organizations and individuals as part of H.R. 7032.

These include from the Congressional Budget Office, several former directors of the Congressional Budget Office, including: Dan Crippen, Doug Elmendorf, and Doug Holtz-Eakin; Sandy Davis who served as the Congressional Budget Office's Associate Director for Legislative Affairs from 2003–2015, and the Economic Policy Innovation Center.

I will include in the RECORD the Bipartisan Policy Center, the Cato Institute, the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, and the National Taxpayers Union Foundation.

DAN CRIPPEN, FORMER CBO DIRECTOR

I applaud the House Budget Committee for its legislation allowing CBO more access to data from federal agencies. I urge the House to pass the bill in time for the Senate to act expeditiously as well.

Having once served as Director, I can report first-hand that agencies collect data valuable to CBO analysis of legislation and important issues to the Congress. Unfortunately, many of those agencies are reluctant to share the data for any number of reasons, including:

- privacy;
- enabling statutes; and,
- the inherent power of "owning" the data (often unspoken).

The bill the House plans to consider will help clarify the ability of agencies to overcome any legislative restrictions that might impose concern about the legality of trans-

fers. Other concerns can be mitigated using an MOU.

Privacy has often been the reason given for not sharing data. Various deidentification techniques can protect privacy. I was often told that I could identify Bill Gates tax return without any identifying information . . . of course, with more taxpayers at his level of income, it would be more difficult now. Nonetheless, it is possible to eliminate entirely a few cells that would be identifiable without severe masking of all data, destroying the statistical properties of the information.

With the help of Chairman Moynihhan, CBO gained access to IRS data, but under all the same laws and rules of the IRS itself . . . including go-to-jail provisions for leaking. Some analysts at CBO were initially chagrined at the new exposure, but subsequently understood the security measures we needed to take to successfully comply. This legislation would do the same for all agencies.

The Census Bureau often claimed that its charter made any census data available only to the Census Bureau . . . to help improve its data collection. I once encouraged the House Appropriations Committee to include CBO access to Census Bureau data, which they did, only to have the Bureau launch a large and successful campaign against it. The Bureau claimed leaks by CBO would discourage people from returning the census survey when, at least at that point, the only agency to leak data was the Bureau itself. This bill would make it clear that it is appropriate and legal for agencies to allow CBO to use data collected by the government.

No matter what the reason, nor how good the motives, withholding data from CBO deprives the Congress of better estimates and analysis. This legislation will make it more straightforward and less ambiguous, without jeopardizing existing privacy. The folks at CBO, along with other fine qualities, are not a leaky lot . . . as shown by their history.

HARVARD, KENNEDY SCHOOL,
Cambridge, MA, April 12, 2024.

Hon. JODEY ARRINGTON,
Chairman, Committee on the Budget,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. BRENDAN BOYLE,
Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ARRINGTON AND RANKING MEMBER BOYLE: As a former director of the Congressional Budget Office—serving from 2009 to 2015—I take considerable interest in CBO's ability to obtain the information it needs to effectively serve the Budget Committees and the Congress as a whole. From that perspective, I strongly support H.R. 7032, the Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act.

Many officials around the U.S. Government understand the value of CBO's analysis in the legislative process, the importance of that analysis being based on comprehensive and up-to-date data, and the care with which CBO handles the data that it receives. At the same time, those officials are understandably concerned about not violating confidentiality protections that apply to the data they collect. The result in some cases is that legal ambiguity about CBO's authority to access confidential data hinders CBO's ability to gather needed information in a timely and efficient manner, and thereby constrains CBO's ability to serve the Congress appropriately.

H.R. 7032 would resolve such ambiguity, allowing CBO to obtain data from executive branch agencies without obstacles as long as CBO maintains the required degree of confidentiality. This clarification of CBO's ability to access agency data would streamline CBO's work process and help CBO to deliver

the timely, rigorous, fact-based analysis on which the Congress depends.

Sincerely,

DOUGLAS W. ELMENDORF,
Professor of Public Policy.

AMERICAN ACTION FORUM,
April 15, 2024.

Hon. JODEY ARRINGTON,
*Chairman, Committee on the Budget,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*
Hon. BRENDAN F. BOYLE,
*Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR CHAIRMAN ARRINGTON AND RANKING MEMBER BOYLE: I am writing to support passage of H.R. 7032, the Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act. I served as director of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) from 2003 through 2005. In my opinion, H.R. 7032 would improve CBO's access, and especially the timeliness of access, to executive agencies' data essential to fulfilling its mission.

At present, CBO receives data under the authority provided by the Congressional Budget Act. These are largely cooperative arrangements, at times augmented by formal datasharing agreements. While this process has generally worked well, it would be useful to clarify and strengthen CBO's access to agencies' data.

As noted in CBO's letter to you:

H.R. 7032 would amend section 201(d) of the Congressional Budget Act, which governs CBO's access to executive branch data, by striking a parenthetical statement in that section, "(other than material the disclosure of which would be a violation of law)." That condition is unnecessary when another statute more specifically governs CBO's access to certain data. It also can hamper access to data by requiring CBO to enter into additional discussions with agencies, thus impairing the timeliness of CBO's work.

Enacting the bill would remove the caveat and, instead, provide CBO access to executive branch data unless that access is specifically disallowed by a future law. H.R. 7032 also includes a reference to section 203(e) of the Congressional Budget Act to highlight CBO's obligation to protect the restricted information it receives.

This relatively modest clarification of CBO's authority to request and receive data will strengthen CBO's ability to provide Congress with timely cost estimates, more detailed reports, and other information supporting Congress' deliberations.

I congratulate you on the successful vote in the Budget Committee and hope to see H.R. 7032 enacted into law.

Sincerely,

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN,
President.

[From Sandy Davis, Associate Director for Legislative Affairs, Congressional Budget Office (2003–2015), Apr. 12, 2024]

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR H.R. 7032—THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE DATA SHARING ACT

It is my pleasure to submit this statement supporting the adoption of H.R. 7032, the Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act. I worked at the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) for nearly 20 years, the last dozen or so serving as CBO's principal liaison to Congress. In that capacity, I witnessed the periodic struggles CBO analysts faced in their efforts to acquire timely data and information from Executive Branch agencies to prepare cost estimates and other critical budgetary analyses for Congress. H.R. 7032 would reaffirm Congress' original directive under the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 giving CBO access to Executive Branch data

and would clarify and enhance CBO's statutory authority to acquire such data to carry out its duties under the Budget Act in support of the Budget Committees and the broader Congressional budget process.

It is also important to note that the House Budget Committee reported H.R. 7032 by a unanimous vote of 30–0. In my view, that vote strongly suggests that the Committee views this measure as a buttress for Congress' institutional capacity to protect its power of the purse under Article I of the Constitution. That is reminiscent of the strong bipartisanship that led to the enactment of the Congressional Budget Act and other institutional reforms in the early 1970s to reassert Congress' constitutional prerogatives. As we approach the 50th anniversary of the enactment of that landmark measure, H.R. 7032 represents an important restatement of and enhancement to that critical law.

ECONOMIC POLICY
INNOVATION CENTER,
April 25, 2024.

Hon. JODEY ARRINGTON,
*Chairman, Committee on the Budget,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*
Hon. BRENDAN BOYLE,
*Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

CHAIRMAN ARRINGTON AND RANKING MEMBER BOYLE: Congress relies on the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to serve as its non-partisan official scorekeeper. Accurate cost estimates and budgetary and economic projections require high-quality and up-to-date data inputs.

The CBO was established to provide information to lawmakers without being solely reliant on the Executive Branch's analysis of legislation. However, the Executive Branch agencies that administer the laws will often have access to records and statistics which are vital to understanding the fiscal and economic impacts of programs and policy proposals. That is why the Congressional Budget Act authorized the Director of the CBO to "to secure information, data, estimates, and statistics directly from the various departments, agencies, and establishments of the executive branch of Government and the regulatory agencies and commissions of the Government." Indeed, the heart of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policy Making Act (2018) was to require government-wide data sharing (subject to privacy laws) with the goal of better policy evaluation and formation.

Unfortunately, the CBO has reported difficulty and delays in accessing data from agencies. H.R. 7032, the Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act, would improve CBO's ability to access data from the Executive Branch while requiring CBO to maintain "the level of confidentiality required by law" to protect any sensitive information. The bill also includes a new requirement for CBO to report to Congress on CBO's requests for data from the Executive Branch.

Access to accurate and timely information is important for lawmakers to do their work for the American people, and we applaud your bipartisan efforts in this regard.

Sincerely,

BRITTANY MADNI,
Executive Vice President, Economic Policy Innovation Center (EPIC).

WILLIAM W. BEACH, D.
PHIL.,
Senior Fellow in Economics, Economic Policy Innovation Center (EPIC).

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, I also include in the RECORD letters and statements of support

from various organizations and individuals as part of H.R. 7032. These include statements of support from the National Taxpayers Union, the CATO Institute, and the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

ROMINA BOCCIA, CATO

Strengthen budget data sharing. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) plays a critical role in informing Congress about the fiscal state of the nation as well as in providing forward-looking guidance for how policy changes will affect the budgetary picture. At times, CBO has encountered difficulties accessing necessary data from other government agencies which complicates the production of objective, impartial, and timely analyses of legislative proposals. The Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act (H.R. 7032) empowers CBO to get the data it needs to get the job done, ensuring legislators can make informed budgetary decisions. Improving fiscal reporting should be a non-partisan priority and it's encouraging to see that this is the case for H.R. 7032, which was reported out of the House Budget Committee with unanimous support.

COMMITTEE FOR A RESPONSIBLE FEDERAL BUDGET

Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, said, "The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) needs timely access to government data to provide information to lawmakers as they make decisions affecting our country's fiscal path. The Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act would streamline the process for CBO to obtain such data and thus contribute to improved and more timely information for lawmakers. Policymakers should pass this bill."

NATIONAL TAXPAYERS UNION FOUNDATION

The Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act introduced by the House Budget Committee's Chairman Jodey Arrington (R-TX) and Ranking Member Brendan Boyle (D-PA) will help CBO to respond to congressional requests for legislative analyses in a timelier manner.

Under current policies, CBO can encounter roadblocks in getting information it needs from federal agencies that lead to avoidable delays. The bill would add the CBO to the same exemption to the Privacy Act of 1974 that is provided to the Government Accountability Office and both chambers of Congress. It is also important to note that CBO is obligated to protect data in the same way as other federal agencies.

The bipartisan CBO Data Sharing Act would help improve CBO's important work by streamlining its access to needed information. In turn, CBO can provide lawmakers and taxpayers with more accurate and timely cost estimates of legislative proposals.

DEMIAN BRADY,

*Vice President of Research,
National Taxpayers Union Foundation.*

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, again, I express my sincere gratitude to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BOYLE), my friend and fellow Notre Dame graduate, and the ranking member of the Budget Committee for his bipartisan work and his partnership on the CBO Data Sharing Act.

It is a testament to the spirit of bipartisanship that we have on the House Budget Committee. I, again, thank our budget chair, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON) for his work and his commitment on this bill.

I also extend my deep appreciation to my fellow members of the Budget Committee for their work in support of this

legislation, as well as the Budget Committee staff, both on the Republican and Democratic side.

It is critical that the Congressional Budget Office has access to the data needed to support the budget process and ensure that we are the best stewards of Americans' hard earned tax dollars.

The CBO plays a meaningful role in the legislative process by determining the fiscal impact of important potential policy decisions that we undertake here in this House.

Too often, the CBO struggles to obtain the necessary data from executive branch agencies in a timely manner. As was mentioned earlier, this has ripple effects on its ability to deliver prompt budgetary analysis to Congress.

As we all know, this, in turn, delays the Congress in making fully informed decisions regarding the budgetary impact of legislation.

H.R. 7032 removes this hurdle and helps streamline the budget process. This bipartisan legislation will grant the CBO the authority to request and receive key data from executive branch agencies, ensuring it is able to fulfill its mission as laid out in the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

While expanding access, however, this bill also recognizes the importance of protecting data privacy and ensures that the CBO continues to be subject to congressional oversight.

Given the critical nature of the CBO's work, we can't allow them to continue to operate in a broken budgetary system.

This bipartisan legislation supports strengthening the CBO while allowing us as lawmakers to make the most informed and forward-thinking decisions possible.

I am grateful to everyone who played a part in moving this bill, and I commend the bipartisan members of the Budget Committee who voted unanimously for this bill during committee markup.

I am proud to express my strong support for the CBO Data Sharing Act. I look forward to voting in favor of this piece of legislation. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YAKYM) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7032.

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.

REVISING EXISTING PROCEDURES ON REPORTING VIA TECHNOLOGY ACT

Ms. LEE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 474) to amend title 18, United

States Code, to strengthen reporting to the CyberTipline related to online sexual exploitation of children, to modernize liabilities for such reports, to preserve the contents of such reports for 1 year, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 474

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 "Revising Existing Procedures On Reporting via Technology Act" or the "REPORT Act".

SEC. 2. LIMITED LIABILITY MODERNIZATION.

(a) AMENDMENTS.—Section 2258B of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking "providers or domain name registrars" and inserting "the reporting, storage, and handling of certain visual depictions of apparent child pornography to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children";

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting "or charge" after "a claim"; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(C), by striking "this section."; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(d) LIMITED LIABILITY FOR NCMEC-CONTRACTED VENDORS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), a civil claim or criminal charge may not be brought in any Federal or State court against a vendor contractually retained and designated by NCMEC to support the duties of NCMEC under section 404(b)(1)(K) of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11293(b)(1)(K)).

"(2) INTENTIONAL, RECKLESS, OR OTHER MISCONDUCT.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to a claim or charge if the vendor—

"(A) engaged in—

"(i) intentional misconduct; or

"(ii) negligent conduct; or

"(B) acted, or failed to act—

"(i) with actual malice;

"(ii) with reckless disregard to a substantial risk of causing injury without legal justification; or

"(iii) for a purpose unrelated to the performance of any responsibility or function—

"(I) set forth in paragraph (1); or

"(II) pursuant to sections 2258A, 2258C, 2702, or 2703.

"(3) VENDOR CYBERSECURITY REQUIREMENTS.—With respect to any visual depiction provided pursuant to the duties of NCMEC under section 404(b)(1)(K) of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11293(b)(1)(K)) that is stored or transferred by a vendor contractually retained and designated by NCMEC to support such duties of NCMEC, a vendor shall—

"(A) secure such visual depiction in a manner that is consistent with the most recent version of the Cybersecurity Framework developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, or any successor thereto;

"(B) minimize the number of employees that may be able to obtain access to such visual depiction;

"(C) employ end-to-end encryption for data storage and transfer functions, or an equivalent technological standard;

"(D) undergo an independent annual cybersecurity audit to determine whether such visual depiction is secured as required under subparagraph (A); and

"(E) promptly address all issues identified by an audit described in subparagraph (D).

"(e) LIMITED LIABILITY FOR REPORTING APPARENT CHILD PORNOGRAPHY BY AN INDIVIDUAL DEPICTED IN THE CHILD PORNOGRAPHY AS A MINOR, OR A REPRESENTATIVE OF SUCH INDIVIDUAL.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), a civil claim or criminal charge may not be brought in any Federal or State court against an individual depicted in child pornography as a minor, or a representative of such individual, arising from a report to the NCMEC CyberTipline by the individual, or the representative of such individual, of information that relates to the child pornography in which the individual is depicted as a minor, including a copy of the child pornography.

"(2) INTENTIONAL, RECKLESS, OR OTHER MISCONDUCT.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to a claim or charge if the individual, or the representative of such individual—

"(A) engaged in—

"(i) intentional misconduct;

"(ii) negligent conduct; or

"(iii) any activity which constitutes a violation of section 2251; or

"(B) acted, or failed to act—

"(i) with actual malice; or

"(ii) with reckless disregard to a substantial risk of causing injury without legal justification.

"(3) MINIMIZING ACCESS.—With respect to any child pornography reported to the NCMEC CyberTipline by an individual depicted in the child pornography as a minor, or a representative of such individual, NCMEC shall minimize access to the child pornography and ensure the appropriate deletion of the child pornography, as set forth in section 2258D.

"(4) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this subsection, the term "representative", with respect to an individual depicted in child pornography—

"(A) means—

"(i) the parent or legal guardian of the individual, if the individual is under 18 years of age;

"(ii) the legal guardian or other person appointed by a court to represent the individual;

"(iii) a legal representative retained by the individual;

"(iv) a representative of the estate of the individual; or

"(v) a person who is a mandated reporter under section 226(a)(1) of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20341(a)(1)); and

"(B) does not include a person who engaged in any activity which constitutes a violation of section 2251."

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to a civil claim or criminal charge that is filed on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) TABLE OF SECTIONS AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 110 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to section 2258B and inserting the following:

"2258B. Limited liability for the reporting, storage, and handling of certain visual depictions of apparent child pornography to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children."

SEC. 3. PRESERVATION OF REPORTS TO CYBERTIPLINE RELATED TO ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN.

Section 2258A(h) of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking "90 days" and inserting "1 year"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(5) EXTENSION OF PRESERVATION.—A provider of a report to the CyberTipline under

subsection (a)(1) may voluntarily preserve the contents provided in the report (including any comingled content described in paragraph (2)) for longer than 1 year after the submission to the CyberTipline for the purpose of reducing the proliferation of online child sexual exploitation or preventing the online sexual exploitation of children.

“(6) METHOD OF PRESERVATION.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this paragraph, a provider of a report to the CyberTipline under subsection (a)(1) shall preserve materials under this subsection in a manner that is consistent with the most recent version of the Cybersecurity Framework developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, or any successor thereto.”.

SEC. 4. STRENGTHENING OF DUTY TO REPORT APPARENT VIOLATIONS TO CYBERTIPLINE RELATED TO ONLINE EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN.

(a) AMENDMENTS.—Section 2258A of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)(A), by inserting “, of section 1591 (if the violation involves a minor), or of 2422(b)” after “child pornography”; and

(2) in subsection (e)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “\$150,000” and inserting “\$850,000 in the case of a provider with not less than 100,000,000 monthly active users or \$600,000 in the case of a provider with less than 100,000,000 monthly active users”; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking “\$300,000” and inserting “\$1,000,000 in the case of a provider with not less than 100,000,000 monthly active users or \$850,000 in the case of a provider with less than 100,000,000 monthly active users”.

(b) GUIDELINES.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children may issue guidelines, as appropriate, to providers required or permitted to take actions described in section 2258A(a)(1)(B) of title 18, United States Code, on the relevant identifiers for content that may indicate sex trafficking of children, as described in section 1591 of that title, or enticement, as described in section 2422(b) of that title.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. LEE) and the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. DEAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. LEE of Florida. 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 S. 474, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida.

There was no objection.

Ms. LEE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the bill we are here to discuss today is the Revising Existing Procedures on Reporting via Technology Act, or REPORT Act.

This is a strong bipartisan bill that provides additional tools to investigate and catch criminal purveyors of child sex abuse material, or CSAM.

The exploitation of children through CSAM remains a serious problem both

within the United States and abroad. We have heard extensive testimony about these issues in our two victims’ focused hearings in the Subcommittee on Crime and Federal Government Surveillance of the Judiciary Committee, one in September and one earlier this month.

Reports of CSAM continue to grow exponentially, with 3,000 reports in 1998 growing to more than 1 million in 2014 and 36.2 million in 2023.

We have gaps in Federal law that prevent the National Center For Missing and Exploited Children, or NCMEC, from preserving reports of CSAM, which hinders law enforcement from holding these predators accountable.

With the growing proliferation of CSAM on the internet, NCMEC, Homeland Security investigations, and other entities that protect children need additional support and investigative tools to bring these predators to justice.

The REPORT Act will extend the duration for which evidence submitted to the CyberTipline is preserved from 90 days to 1 year.

This will allow law enforcement agencies the much-needed time to conduct comprehensive investigations and strengthen the legal framework against online predators.

This bill will strengthen existing law that requires providers to report to law enforcement as soon as reasonably possible after obtaining information about CSAM.

Currently, many providers maintain an adequate reporting system. However, the REPORT Act will increase fines for companies that fail to meet these standards and will further penalize companies that repeatedly fail to report exploitative contact.

I thank all of the advocates who helped us get where we are today with this bill, including the American Conservative Union, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the National Center on Sexual Exploitation, International Justice Mission, Rights4Girls, PACT-USA, Raven, the Tim Tebow Foundation, and so many more.

I cannot thank them enough for all that each of them does to protect and advocate on behalf of child victims in both the United States and abroad.

□ 1815

I also thank my colleagues across the aisle for their support of this bill, including Representative MADELEINE DEAN, Representative LUCY MCBATH, and Representative GLENN IVEY.

Lastly, I thank law enforcement for their tireless efforts to protect children, including Homeland Security Investigations and the Internet Crimes Against Children task forces across the country.

This legislation will make a significant impact on our ability to investigate and prosecute child predators. I am thrilled this bill passed out of the Judiciary Committee 23-0, and I am thrilled to see it brought before this Chamber for a vote today.

Simply put, the legislation is crucial. It is supported by law enforcement, advocacy groups, and tech companies alike. It is bipartisan, it is common sense, and it will save lives.

I urge all my colleagues to pass the REPORT Act and take this important step to protect children.

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

Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 474, the REPORT Act. I am pleased to cosponsor the House version of this legislation with my colleague and friend from Florida. I thank Representative LEE for her leadership on this bill. The REPORT Act would strengthen the ongoing collaboration between law enforcement and technology providers to combat sexual exploitation of children.

The exploitation of children through the proliferation of child sex abuse material, frequently referred to as CSAM, can be stopped only with cooperation across many different sectors of American society, from law enforcement to victims’ groups to local leaders and technology providers.

The REPORT Act would enable this cooperation and encourage much greater reporting to the CyberTipline, operated by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, or NCMEC.

This legislation would also modify how photos and videos of child sex abuse are stored by providers, would change reporting requirements for platforms, and would give law enforcement more time to investigate these cases. By making updates to the law, the REPORT Act will help law enforcement evolve with the threat, as consumption of child sexual abuse content permeates new technology spaces.

Advancements in technology, from generative AI to social networking platforms, clearly benefit society. Technology has brought us cutting-edge medical and therapeutic breakthroughs, the ability to keep in touch with loved ones far away, and opportunities for budding entrepreneurs and artists who leverage technology to reach their audiences without costly barriers to entry.

However, there is also a dark side. Law enforcement experts and victims’ advocates agree: Advancements in technology have led to an explosion of images depicting child sexual abuse available and distributed online.

Demand for new and more egregious photos and videos drives the market for this material, resulting in the continued grotesque abuse and exploitation of children.

Through their comprehensive efforts, the Internet Crimes Against Children, or ICAC, task forces, which represent more than 5,400 local, State, and Federal law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies, are making progress in identifying and rescuing victims of child sex abuse material.

However, the growth of the problem continues to outpace the resources

available to identify and locate victims, especially since law enforcement, prosecutors, the tech industry, and other organization must continually contend with the emergence of new technologies, like AI, which further complicates their efforts.

Under the process for reporting child sexual abuse material today, electronic service providers, or companies that offer a platform through which users can communicate, are required to report instances of CSAM to the CyberTipline. After a tip is reported, the company works with NCMEC to share relevant information. NCMEC reviews the incoming reports and then refers them out to the appropriate law enforcement agency, typically a regional ICAC task force.

To date, NCMEC reports that the CyberTipline has received more than 92 million reports since it began in 1998, the majority of them from electronic communication service providers.

NCMEC's Child Victim Identification Program has reviewed more than 331 million images and videos. That is more than 25 million images each year. That is grotesque. While most children reflected in the images remain unknown, more than 19,300 victims have been identified.

I commend the successes of NCMEC and other law enforcement agencies in identifying and rescuing victims, but we cannot be satisfied while so many CSAM victims remain unidentified. That is why the REPORT Act is an important first step to increasing the effectiveness of CSAM reports and better protecting victims from child sexual abuse.

The Senate passed this bill by unanimous consent, with the support of law enforcement groups, the National Center For Missing and Exploited Children, or NCMEC, and technology providers. With passage of the bill today, the next stop will be President Biden's desk.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative LEE for her extraordinary leadership to protect all of our children.

In conclusion, the REPORT Act takes an important step toward combating the proliferation of child sexual abuse material online and protecting victims from future abuse. I thank Representative LEE for her leadership in introducing the House version of this bill. I am proud to cosponsor it with her. I thank our Senate partners for sponsoring this legislation. This is about our children.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. LEE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative DEAN. It was a privilege to cosponsor this important legislation with her.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms.

LEE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 474.

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.

VETERANS EDUCATION TRANS-PARENCY AND TRAINING ACT

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3738) to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3738

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 "Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration Act".

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND TRANSITION ADMINISTRATION.

(a) VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND TRANSITION ADMINISTRATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Part V of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new chapter:

"CHAPTER 80—VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND TRANSITION ADMINISTRATION

"Sec.

"8001. Organization of Administration.

"8002. Functions of Administration.

"8003. Annual report to Congress.

"§ 8001. Organization of Administration

"(a) VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND TRANSITION ADMINISTRATION.—There is in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration. The primary function of the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration is the administration of the programs of the Department that provide assistance related to economic opportunity to veterans and their dependents and survivors.

"(b) UNDER SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND TRANSITION.—The Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration is under the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition, who is directly responsible to the Secretary for the operations of the Administration.

"§ 8002. Functions of Administration

"The Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration is responsible for the administration of the following programs of the Department:

"(1) Vocational rehabilitation and employment programs.

"(2) Educational assistance programs.

"(3) Veterans' housing loan and related programs.

"(4) The Transition Assistance Program under section 1144 of title 10.

"(5) Any other program of the Department that the Secretary determines appropriate.

"§ 8003. Annual report to Congress

"The Secretary shall include in the annual report to the Congress required by section

529 of this title a report on the programs administered by the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition. Each such report shall include the following with respect to each such program during the fiscal year covered by that report:

"(1) The number of claims received.

"(2) The number of claims decided.

"(3) The average processing time for a claim.

"(4) The number of successful outcomes (as determined by the Secretary).

"(5) The number of full-time equivalent employees.

"(6) The amounts expended for information technology."

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—The tables of chapters at the beginning of title 38, United States Code, and of part V of title 38, United States Code, are each amended by inserting after the item relating to chapter 79 the following new item:

"80. Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration ... 8001".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Chapter 80 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall take effect on October 1, 2025.

(c) FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES.—For fiscal years 2025 and 2026, the total number of full-time equivalent employees authorized for the Veterans Benefits Administration and the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration, as established under chapter 80 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), may not exceed—

(1) 34,228 in fiscal year 2025; and

(2) 35,417 in fiscal year 2026.

(d) LABOR RIGHTS.—Any labor rights, inclusion in the bargaining unit, and collective bargaining agreement that affects an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs who is transferred to the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration, as established under chapter 80 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply in the same manner to such employee after such transfer.

SEC. 3. UNDER SECRETARY FOR VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND TRANSITION.

(a) UNDER SECRETARY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 3 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 306 the following new section:

"§ 306A. Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition

"(a) UNDER SECRETARY.—There is in the Department an Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition, who is appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition shall be appointed without regard to political affiliation or activity and solely on the basis of demonstrated ability in—

"(1) information technology; and

"(2) the administration of programs within the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration or programs of similar content and scope.

"(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition is the head of, and is directly responsible to the Secretary for the operations of, the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration.

"(c) VACANCIES.—(1) Whenever a vacancy in the position of Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition occurs or is anticipated, the Secretary shall establish a commission to recommend individuals to the President for appointment to the position.

"(2) A commission established under this subsection shall be composed of the following members appointed by the Secretary:

“(A) Three persons representing education and training, vocational rehabilitation, employment, real estate, mortgage finance and related industries, and survivor benefits activities affected by the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration.

“(B) Two persons representing veterans served by the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration.

“(C) Two persons who have experience in the management of private sector benefits programs of similar content and scope to the economic opportunity and transition programs of the Department.

“(D) The Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

“(E) The chairman of the Veterans’ Advisory Committee on Education formed under section 3692 of this title.

“(F) One person who has held the position of Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition, if the Secretary determines that it is desirable for such person to be a member of the commission.

“(3) A commission established under this subsection shall recommend at least three individuals for appointment to the position of Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition. The commission shall submit all recommendations to the Secretary. The Secretary shall forward the recommendations to the President and the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives with any comments the Secretary considers appropriate. Thereafter, the President may request the commission to recommend additional individuals for appointment.

“(4) The Assistant Secretary or Deputy Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs who performs personnel management and labor relations functions shall serve as the executive secretary of a commission established under this subsection.”

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 306 the following new item:

“306A. Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition.”

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Title 38, United States Code, is further amended—

(1) in section 306(c)(2), by striking subparagraphs (A) and (E) and redesignating subparagraphs (B), (C), (D), and (F), as subparagraphs (A) through (D), respectively;

(2) in section 317(d)(2), by inserting after “Under Secretary for Benefits,” the following: “the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition.”;

(3) in section 318(d)(2), by inserting after “Under Secretary for Benefits,” the following: “the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition.”;

(4) in section 516(e)(2)(C), by striking “Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits” and inserting “Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition”;

(5) in section 541(a)(2)(B), by striking “Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits” and inserting “Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition”;

(6) in section 542(a)(2)(B)(iii), by striking “Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits” and inserting “Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition”;

(7) in section 544(a)(2)(B)(vi), by striking “Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits” and inserting “Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the Under Secretary

for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition”;

(8) in section 709(c)(2)(A), by inserting after “Under Secretary for Benefits,” the following: “the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition.”;

(9) in section 7701(a), by inserting after “assistance” the following: “, other than assistance related to Economic Opportunity and Transition.”; and

(10) in section 7703, by striking paragraphs (2) and (3) and redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as paragraphs (2) and (3), respectively.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 306A of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), and the amendments made by this section, shall take effect on October 1, 2025.

SEC. 4. TRANSFER OF SERVICES.

(a) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the progress toward establishing the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration, as established under section 8001 of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 2, and the transition of the provision of services to veterans by such Administration.

(b) CERTIFICATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may not transfer the function of providing any services to veterans to the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration, as established under section 8001 of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 2, until the Secretary submits to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives certification that—

(1) the transition of the provision of services to such Administration will not negatively affect the provision of such services to veterans; and

(2) such services are ready to be transferred.

(c) DEADLINE FOR CERTIFICATION.—The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives the certification required by subsection (b)—

(1) no earlier than April 1, 2025; and

(2) no later than September 1, 2025.

(d) FAILURE TO CERTIFY.—If the Secretary fails to submit the certification required by subsection (b) by the date specified in subsection (c)(2), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report that includes—

(1) the reason why the certification was not made by such date; and

(2) the estimated date when the certification will be made.

SEC. 5. MODIFICATION OF CERTAIN HOUSING LOAN FEES.

The loan fee table in section 3729(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “November 15, 2031” each place it appears and inserting “December 27, 2031”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3738, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3738, as amended, offered by my friend and colleague from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP).

H.R. 3738, as amended, would establish a new administration called the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

For years, the Veterans Benefits Administration has been overburdened and overwhelmed with bureaucracy and red tape. Right now, VBA simply has too many important duties to fulfill on behalf of veterans and is pulled in too many directions.

Even with the PACT Act giving record funding to reduce backlogs and increase veteran benefits, this committee still sees poor performance from this part of the VA. Dr. Wenstrup’s bill, as amended, would increase accountability and provide additional needed manpower for veterans and certain programs.

For years, we have let the VA use their own judgment on how to handle these programs. VBA is making too many decisions without notifying veterans; putting new, burdensome requirements on schools; and creating new programs that will cost billions of taxpayer dollars.

Changes are frequently made to the program with little input from Congress or stakeholders and with little recourse for schools or veterans. While the Biden administration has been especially guilty of this, it must stop, regardless of who is in the White House.

This bill on the floor today is just the beginning of our efforts to improve the delivery of benefits to veterans and their families.

I thank the VFW, SVA, DAV, and The American Legion for their support of this bill. I also thank my friend, Dr. Wenstrup, for continuing to be an advocate for this bill before he retires from Congress. I also thank my colleagues across the aisle for cosponsoring and supporting the legislation through the committee process.

The legacy of this bill will make a difference for veterans and their families. This will match the important legacy of Dr. Wenstrup’s steadfast support of veterans and servicemembers as a U.S. Army veteran.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 3738, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for H.R. 3738, as amended, a bill that would establish a new administration at the Department of Veterans Affairs. We have passed similar versions of this bill in the last several Congresses, and I thank Dr. Wenstrup for his continued work on this, as well

as that of current Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Ranking Member LEVIN.

The VA administers major programs like the GI Bill, Veteran Readiness & Employment, or VR&E, and the VA Home Loan program. However, these programs must compete for attention and oversight within the Veterans Benefits Administration.

Often, there is a lack of attention from VBA on critical benefits, since a majority of the staff and resources are dedicated to the administration of disability compensation and pension claims.

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 3738, urge my colleagues to do the same, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP), my good friend and the Representative from Ohio's Second Congressional District.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my bill, H.R. 3738, the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration Act, or VEOTA Act.

As a retired member of the U.S. Army Reserve and Iraq war veteran, I know how important it is to help our warfighters succeed in their transition to civilian life.

Far too often, people think unjustly that veterans return from war defeated and with skills that aren't applicable to the civilian world. This could be no further from the truth and anything else I have ever heard. Our veterans are strong, dependable leaders and team players. Our commitment to programs that promote opportunity and success brings forth their abilities and potential.

I believe our servicemembers should have a plan from the day that they enter the military to the day they transition out and beyond.

□ 1830

We should care about their military and post-military careers. Our veterans are soldiers for life, as we say in the Army, and we need to put as much emphasis and attention on their success after service as we do during it.

Currently, the Veterans Benefits Administration is responsible for all Department of Veterans Affairs benefits provided to veterans outside of healthcare and cemetery services.

While there are many different benefits that the VBA provides, the bulk of staffing and resources have been, understandably, directed toward the administration of disability compensation and pension claims. This has resulted in a lack of attention on the administration of other VBA benefits, such as the Forever GI Bill, vocational rehabilitation, home loan benefits, and VA's portion of the Transition Assistance Program.

We can't let these benefits fall by the wayside, especially those that empower veterans and help set them on the path to success in civilian life.

By aligning transition, education, and employment programs in a fourth administration within the VA, this act will modernize the Department and ensure that these opportunity-focused programs get the high priority they deserve and the oversight they need to better serve our veterans.

I thank Representative LEVIN for leading this legislation with me now for the third time. We have many Senators supporting us, as well.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support this legislation to help improve the way veterans receive VA services, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLOOD). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3738, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed. Votes will be taken in the following order:

- H.R. 4866; and
- H.R. 4755.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

FIRE WEATHER DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2024

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4866) to direct the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish a program to improve fire weather and fire environment forecasting, detection, and local collaboration, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 341, nays 48, not voting 39, as follows:

[Roll No. 153]

YEAS—341

Adams	Fitzpatrick	Mace
Aguilar	Fleischmann	Malliotakis
Allen	Fletcher	Maloy
Allred	Flood	Mann
Amo	Foster	Manning
Amodei	Foushee	Mast
Armstrong	Frankel, Lois	Matsui
Auchincloss	Franklin, Scott	McBath
Babin	Frost	McCaul
Bacon	Fulcher	McClain
Baird	Gallego	McClellan
Balderson	Garamendi	McClintock
Balint	Garbarino	McCollum
Barr	García (IL)	McCormick
Barragán	García (TX)	McGarvey
Beatty	García, Mike	McGovern
Bentz	García, Robert	Meeks
Bera	Gimenez	Menendez
Bergman	Golden (ME)	Meng
Beyer	Goldman (NY)	Meuser
Bice	Gonzales, Tony	Miller (OH)
Bilirakis	Gonzalez,	Miller (WV)
Bishop (GA)	Vicente	Miller-Meeks
Blunt	Gooden (TX)	Molinaro
Bonamici	Gottheimer	Moolenaar
Bost	Graves (LA)	Moore (UT)
Bowman	Graves (MO)	Moore (WI)
Boyle (PA)	Green (TN)	Moran
Brown	Green, Al (TX)	Morelle
Brownley	Griffith	Moskowitz
Buchanan	Grothman	Moulton
Bucshon	Guest	Mrvan
Burgess	Guthrie	Mullin
Bush	Harder (CA)	Murphy
Calvert	Hayes	Nadler
Cammack	Hern	Napolitano
Caraveo	Hill	Neal
Carbajal	Himes	Neguse
Cárdenas	Hinson	Newhouse
Carey	Horsford	Nickel
Carl	Houchin	Norcross
Carson	Houlahan	Nunn (IA)
Carter (GA)	Hoyer	Oberholte
Carter (TX)	Hoyle (OR)	Ocasio-Cortez
Cartwright	Hudson	Omar
Case	Huffman	Owens
Casten	Huizenga	Pallone
Castor (FL)	Issa	Palmer
Castro (TX)	Ivey	Panetta
Chavez-DeRemer	Jackson (IL)	Pappas
Cherfilus-	Jackson (NC)	Pascrell
McCormick	Jacobs	Peltola
Chu	James	Pence
Ciscomani	Jayapal	Perez
Clark (MA)	Jeffries	Pettersen
Clarke (NY)	Johnson (GA)	Pfluger
Cleaver	Johnson (SD)	Phillips
Clyburn	Jordan	Pingree
Cohen	Joyce (OH)	Pocan
Connolly	Kaptur	Porter
Correa	Kean (NJ)	Pressley
Costa	Keating	Quigley
Courtney	Kelly (IL)	Ramirez
Craig	Kelly (MS)	Raskin
Crenshaw	Kelly (PA)	Reschenthaler
Crockett	Khanna	Rodgers (WA)
Crow	Kiggans (VA)	Rogers (AL)
Cuellar	Kildee	Rogers (KY)
D'Esposito	Kiley	Ross
Davids (KS)	Kilmer	Rouzer
Davis (IL)	Kim (CA)	Ruiz
Davis (NC)	Krishnamoorthi	Ruppersberger
De La Cruz	Kuster	Ryan
Dean (PA)	LaHood	Salazar
DeGette	LaLota	Salinas
DeLauro	Lamborn	Sánchez
DelBene	Landsman	Sarbanes
Deluzio	Larsen (WA)	Scalise
DeSaulnier	Larson (CT)	Scanlon
DesJarlais	Latta	Schakowsky
Dingell	LaTurner	Schiff
Doggett	Lawler	Schneider
Duarte	Lee (CA)	Scholten
Dunn (FL)	Lee (FL)	Schrier
Edwards	Lee (NV)	Schweikert
Ellzey	Lee (PA)	Scott (VA)
Emmer	Leger Fernandez	Scott, Austin
Escobar	Letlow	Scott, David
Eshoo	Levin	Sessions
Espallat	Lieu	Sherman
Estes	Lofgren	Simpson
Ezell	Loudermilk	Slotkin
Feenstra	Lucas	Smith (MO)
Ferguson	Luetkemeyer	Smith (NJ)
Finstad	Luttrell	Smith (WA)
Fischbach	Lynch	Smucker

Sorensen	Timmons	Walberg
Soto	Titus	Wasserman
Spanberger	Tlabb	Schultz
Stansbury	Tokuda	Waters
Stanton	Tonko	Watson Coleman
Stauber	Torres (CA)	Weber (TX)
Steel	Trahan	Webster (FL)
Stefanik	Trone	Wenstrup
Steil	Turner	Westerman
Stevens	Underwood	Williams (GA)
Strickland	Valadao	Williams (NY)
Suozi	Van Drew	Williams (TX)
Takano	Van Duyne	Wilson (FL)
Tenney	Van Orden	Wilson (SC)
Thanedar	Vargas	Wittman
Thompson (CA)	Vasquez	Womack
Thompson (MS)	Veasey	Yakym
Thompson (PA)	Velázquez	Zinke
Tiffany	Wagner	

NAYS—48

Aderholt	Davidson	Kustoff
Alford	Donalds	Lesko
Banks	Duncan	Luna
Bean (FL)	Fallon	Massie
Biggs	Fitzgerald	Miller (IL)
Bishop (NC)	Fox	Mills
Boebert	Fry	Moore (AL)
Brecheen	Gaetz	Perry
Burchett	Good (VA)	Posey
Burlison	Gosar	Rose
Cline	Hageman	Rosendale
Cloud	Harris	Roy
Clyde	Harshbarger	Rutherford
Collins	Higgins (LA)	Self
Comer	Jackson (TX)	Steube
Crane	Joyce (PA)	Strong

NOT VOTING—39

Arrington	Grijalva	Ogles
Blumenauer	Hunt	Pelosi
Budzinski	Jackson Lee	Peters
Carter (LA)	Kamlager-Dove	Sewell
Casar	Kim (NJ)	Sherrill
Cole	LaMalfa	Smith (NE)
Crawford	Langworthy	Spartz
Curtis	Magaziner	Swalwell
Diaz-Balart	McHenry	Sykes
Evans	Mfume	Torres (NY)
Gomez	Mooney	Waltz
Granger	Nehls	Wexton
Greene (GA)	Norman	Wilde

□ 1857

Messrs. COMER, ALFORD, HARRIS, CLINE, DUNCAN, and BANKS changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

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

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: “A bill to direct the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administrator to improve fire weather and fire environment forecasting, detection, and local collaboration, and for other purposes.”

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN REMEMBRANCE OF CONGRESSMAN DONALD PAYNE, JR.

(Mr. SMITH of New Jersey asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise, along with my colleagues, to convey our deepest sorrow on the passing of our good friend, six-term, New Jersey Congressman, DONALD PAYNE, Jr. of the 10th Congressional District.

We are grateful for his public service, and offer our prayers and condolences

to his wife, Beatrice, and their children, Donald III, Jack, and Yvonne.

Like his father before him—Congressman Donald Payne, Sr., who I served with and who was also a great man—Donald Jr. was a dedicated public servant who tirelessly and tenaciously worked to improve the lives of New Jersey families, especially the poor.

He was a kind and compassionate lawmaker who cared deeply for the people of his district, our State, the country, those in need, and especially the sick.

As a diabetic, he fought to lower the cost of insulin. He wrote the House-passed Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act and the Amputation Reduction and Compassion Act to provide full coverage for PAD to help reduce amputations.

His TEST for Lead Act was designed to protect children from lead-contaminated drinking water in schools, and he wrote the DHS Interoperable Communications Act that became law in July 2015.

As chairman and then ranking member of the House Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee, Donald helped lead the charge to improve America’s transportation infrastructure, played a key role in securing the Gateway project, and was a powerful ally of Amtrak.

DONALD PAYNE served two terms on the Newark City Council, including as president, and beginning in 2005, three terms as an Essex County freeholder, which we now call county commissioner. DONALD PAYNE, Jr. will be deeply missed.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) for any comments he may have.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, Mr. SMITH really laid out all the great accomplishments of DON PAYNE in terms of what he accomplished here, which was so much as a Member of Congress, but I just want to talk a little bit about the man.

I think that many of us know Don for his trademark bow tie, his big smile, and his friendly demeanor. More than a Member of New Jersey’s congressional delegation, he was part of our family, and he affectionately called me “Uncle Frank.”

He used his time here to improve the lives and health of New Jerseyans and Americans with so many things that CHRIS SMITH mentioned, but DON was always struggling with health issues from the day that he came here. I am not sure that many of you knew that, but it never stopped him from his work, from voting.

So many times in the past year we had very close votes and he would always show up if there was any way possible. I remember him doing Special Orders. He had the record for the most Special Orders for several years.

If you look over there in seat number one where Democrats would sit if they wanted to line up for Special Orders, you see the flowers and the mourning

cloak. He was always the first one to come down.

I think a lot of you maybe didn’t realize how uncomfortable he was when he was sick, but he always took the time to ask how you were doing. If I would go up to him and say, DONALD, how are you feeling today? He would say, fine and just move on. Then he would say, how are you doing, Frank? How do you feel? How is the family?

He just made you feel like he was your friend, and it didn’t matter whether you were Democrat or Republican or where you were from.

I will join Mr. SMITH in mentioning his wife, Beatrice, and his children. He had triplets. I think many of you know Donald III, Jack, and Yvonne. We want to honor his legacy and his service to our State and our country. I will say in closing to DON, Uncle Frank says goodbye, but he certainly will not be forgotten by any of us.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I ask everyone to join us in a moment of silent prayer for our deceased colleague.

PRIVACY ENHANCING TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH ACT

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4755) to support research on privacy enhancing technologies and promote responsible data use, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 354, nays 36, not voting 38, as follows:

[Roll No. 154]

YEAS—354

Aderholt	Brownley	Cloud
Aguilar	Buchanan	Clyburn
Allen	Bucshon	Clyde
Allred	Budzinski	Cohen
Amo	Burgess	Collins
Amodei	Bush	Comer
Armstrong	Calvert	Connolly
Auchincloss	Caraveo	Correa
Babin	Carbajal	Costa
Bacon	Cárdenas	Courtney
Baird	Carey	Craig
Balderson	Carl	Crenshaw
Balint	Carson	Crockett
Banks	Carter (GA)	Crow
Barr	Carter (TX)	Cuellar
Barragán	Cartwright	D’Esposito
Beatty	Casar	Davids (KS)
Bentz	Case	Davis (NC)
Bera	Casten	De La Cruz
Bergman	Castor (FL)	Dean (PA)
Beyer	Castro (TX)	DeGette
Bice	Chavez-DeRemer	DeLauro
Bilirakis	Cherfilus-	DelBene
Bishop (GA)	McCormick	Deluzio
Blunt Rochester	Chu	DeSaulnier
Bonamici	Ciscomani	DesJarlais
Bost	Clark (MA)	Doggett
Bowman	Clarke (NY)	Duarte
Boyle (PA)	Cleaver	Dunn (FL)
Brown	Cline	Edwards

Ellzey	LaLota	Rodgers (WA)
Emmer	Lamborn	Rogers (AL)
Escobar	Landsman	Rogers (KY)
Eshoo	Larsen (WA)	Rose
Espallat	Larson (CT)	Ross
Estes	Latta	Rouzer
Ezell	LaTurner	Ruiz
Fallon	Lawler	Ruppersberger
Feenstra	Lee (CA)	Rutherford
Ferguson	Lee (FL)	Ryan
Finstad	Lee (NV)	Salazar
Fischbach	Lee (PA)	Salinas
Fitzgerald	Leger Fernandez	Sánchez
Fitzpatrick	Lesko	Sarbanes
Fleischmann	Letlow	Scalise
Fletcher	Levin	Scanlon
Flood	Lieu	Schakowsky
Foster	Lofgren	Schiff
Foushee	Loudermilk	Schneider
Frankel, Lois	Lucas	Scholten
Franklin, Scott	Luetkemeyer	Schrier
Frost	Luttrell	Scott (VA)
Fry	Lynch	Scott, Austin
Galleo	Mace	Scott, David
Garamendi	Malliotakis	Sessions
Garbarino	Maloy	Sewell
Garcia (IL)	Mann	Sherman
Garcia (TX)	Manning	Simpson
Garcia, Mike	Mast	Slotkin
Garcia, Robert	Matsui	Smith (MO)
Gimenez	McBath	Smith (NJ)
Golden (ME)	McCaul	Smith (WA)
Goldman (NY)	McClain	Smucker
Gonzales, Tony	McClellan	Sorensen
Gonzalez,	McColum	Soto
Vicente	McCormick	Spanberger
Gooden (TX)	McGarvey	Stansbury
Gosar	McGovern	Stanton
Gottheimer	Meeks	Stauber
Graves (LA)	Menendez	Steel
Graves (MO)	Meng	Stefanik
Green (TN)	Meuser	Steil
Green, Al (TX)	Miller (OH)	Stevens
Griffith	Miller (WV)	Strickland
Guest	Miller-Meeks	Strong
Guthrie	Molinaro	Suozzi
Hageman	Moolenaar	Takano
Harder (CA)	Moore (UT)	Tenney
Hayes	Moore (WI)	Thanedar
Hern	Moran	Thompson (CA)
Hill	Morelle	Thompson (MS)
Himes	Moskowitz	Thompson (PA)
Hinson	Moulton	Timmons
Horsford	Mrvan	Titus
Houchin	Mullin	Tlaib
Houlahan	Murphy	Tokuda
Hoyer	Nadler	Tonko
Hoyle (OR)	Napolitano	Torres (CA)
Hudson	Neal	Trahan
Huffman	Neguse	Trone
Huizenga	Newhouse	Turner
Issa	Nickel	Underwood
Ivey	Norcross	Valadao
Jackson (IL)	Nunn (IA)	Van Drew
Jackson (NC)	Obernolte	Van Duyne
Jacobs	Ocasio-Cortez	Van Orden
James	Omar	Vargas
Jayapal	Owens	Vasquez
Jeffries	Pallone	Veasey
Johnson (GA)	Palmer	Velázquez
Johnson (SD)	Panetta	Wagner
Joyce (OH)	Pappas	Walberg
Joyce (PA)	Pascrell	Wasserman
Kaptur	Peltola	Schultz
Kean (NJ)	Pence	Waters
Keating	Perez	Watson Coleman
Kelly (IL)	Peters	Weber (TX)
Kelly (MS)	Pettersen	Webster (FL)
Kelly (PA)	Pfuger	Wenstrup
Khanna	Phillips	Westerman
Kiggans (VA)	Pingree	Williams (GA)
Kildee	Pocan	Williams (NY)
Kiley	Porter	Williams (TX)
Kilmer	Posey	Wilson (FL)
Kim (CA)	Pressley	Wilson (SC)
Krishnamoorthi	Quigley	Wittman
Kuster	Ramirez	Womack
Kustoff	Raskin	Yakym
LaHood	Reschenthaler	Zinke

NAYS—36

Alford	Cammack	Good (VA)
Bean (FL)	Crane	Grothman
Biggs	Davidson	Harris
Bishop (NC)	Donalds	Harshbarger
Boebert	Duncan	Higgins (LA)
Brecheen	Foxx	Jackson (TX)
Burchett	Fulcher	Jordan
Burlison	Gaetz	Luna

Massie	Moore (AL)	Schweikert
McClintock	Perry	Self
Miller (IL)	Rosendale	Steube
Mills	Roy	Tiffany

NOT VOTING—38

Adams	Greene (GA)	Norman
Arrington	Grijalva	Ogles
Blumenauer	Hunt	Pelosi
Carter (LA)	Jackson Lee	Sherrill
Cole	Kamllager-Dove	Smith (NE)
Crawford	Kim (NJ)	Spartz
Curtis	LaMalfa	Swalwell
Davis (IL)	Langworthy	Sykes
Diaz-Balart	Magaziner	Torres (NY)
Dingell	McHenry	Waltz
Evans	Mfume	Wexton
Gomez	Mooney	Wild
Granger	Nehls	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE
 The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLOOD) (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1912

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. WEXTON. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I was not able to be present to vote today. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 153 and YEA on Roll Call No. 154.

PERMISSION FOR MEMBER TO BE CONSIDERED AS FIRST SPONSOR OF H.R. 1803

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I may hereafter be considered to be the first sponsor of H.R. 1803, a bill originally introduced by Representative GALLAGHER of Wisconsin, for the purpose of adding cosponsors and requesting reprintings pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARTER of Georgia). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 10 a.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND SORROW OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1172

Resolved, That the House has heard with profound sorrow of the death of the Honor-

able Donald M. Payne, Jr., a Representative from the State of New Jersey.

Resolved, That the Clerk communicate these resolutions to the Senate and transmit a copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

Resolved, That when the House adjourns today, it adjourn as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXTENDING LIMITS OF U.S. CUSTOMS WATERS ACT

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1137, I call up the bill (H.R. 529) to extend the customs waters of the United States from 12 nautical miles to 24 nautical miles from the baselines of the United States, consistent with Presidential Proclamation 7219, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1137, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, printed in the bill, is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 529

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 "Extending Limits of U.S. Customs Waters Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITION OF CUSTOMS WATERS.

(a) TARIFF ACT OF 1930.—Section 401(j) of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1401(j)) is amended—

(1) by striking "means, in the case" and inserting the following: "means—
 "(1) in the case";

(2) by striking "of the coast of the United States" the first place it appears and inserting "from the baselines of the United States, determined in accordance with international law.;"

(3) by striking "and, in the case" and inserting the following: "; and
 "(2) in the case"; and

(4) by striking "the waters within four leagues of the coast of the United States." and inserting the following: "the waters within—
 "(A) the territorial sea of the United States, to the limits permitted by international law in accordance with Presidential Proclamation 5928 of December 27, 1988; and

"(B) the contiguous zone of the United States, to the limits permitted by international law in accordance with Presidential Proclamation 7219 of September 2, 1999.".

(b) ANTI-SMUGGLING ACT.—Section 401(c) of the Anti-Smuggling Act (19 U.S.C. 1709(c)) is amended—

(1) by striking "means, in the case" and inserting the following: "means—
 "(1) in the case";

(2) by striking "of the coast of the United States" the first place it appears and inserting "from the baselines of the United States, determined in accordance with international law.;"

(3) by striking "and, in the case" and inserting the following: "; and
 "(2) in the case"; and

(4) by striking "the waters within four leagues of the coast of the United States." and inserting the following: "the waters within—
 "(A) the territorial sea of the United States, to the limits permitted by international law in accordance with Presidential Proclamation 5928 of December 27, 1988; and

“(B) the contiguous zone of the United States, to the limits permitted by international law in accordance with Presidential Proclamation 7219 of September 2, 1999.”

(c) *EFFECTIVE DATE.*—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the day after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill, as amended, shall be debatable for 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days 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 Missouri?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Extending Limits of U.S. Customs Waters Act, introduced by my good friend, Representative MIKE WALTZ. This bill would double the current distance that Customs and Border Patrol can enforce U.S. laws from 12 to 24 nautical miles off the coast of the United States. Congress should pass this legislation to protect America's national security and economic interests.

CBP is responsible for enforcing America's trade laws. With this expanded area of operations, the agency can better protect intellectual property, fight illegal dumping of products, and ensure America is paid the customs revenues we are owed.

Other law enforcement agencies, like the Coast Guard, already operate at the 24-nautical-mile-limit. CBP must be empowered fully to carry out its responsibilities, protect our national security, and enforce our trade laws.

Currently, CBP must rely on Presidential proclamations for legal authority to pursue or board vessels more than 12 nautical miles off our coast. In some cases, courts have created uncertainty by questioning the validity of this authority. Congress can use its legislative power to give the agency more certainty and the ability to operate more effectively in the future.

Making this change will also help keep American families safer. International crime rings smuggle drugs through our sea and airports. In fiscal year 2022, the Air and Marine Operations division of CBP captured hundreds of thousands of pounds of illegal drugs, including over 200,000 pounds of cocaine and 146 pounds of the deadly fentanyl poisoning Americans. More than 80 percent of those drugs were seized on the water.

This bill makes it easier to stop illegal drugs from reaching our border and entering our communities. This bill also makes it easier for us to end the abuses of human trafficking.

It is not just drugs that are smuggled into the United States. Humans are also being trafficked, and oftentimes by sea. By expanding in law the area in which they can operate, CBP agents will have more flexibility to capture and arrest criminals smuggling drugs and people into our country.

This bill won bipartisan approval in the Ways and Means Committee last year because it is a commonsense approach to stopping international crime rings from breaking our laws and harming our communities. It is a change Customs and Border Patrol has asked us for and of which the Biden White House has previously supported.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman SMITH for that argument. I also rise in support of the Extending Limits of U.S. Customs Waters Act, H.R. 529, authored and introduced by my good friend MIKE WALTZ, would extend the customs waters of the United States from 12 to 24 nautical miles, a change that would expand the coastal area in which Customs and Border Patrol's Air and Marine Operations can exercise their law enforcement authority to combat smuggling of illegal narcotics; to stem the flow of human trafficking; and, yes, to secure our borders.

CBP's Air and Marine Operations, or as I will refer to them, AMO, plays an important role in preventing the unlawful entry by sea of goods and people into our Nation, as Chairman SMITH indicated. Our coastal domain is over 95,000 miles long. It is an area that is more open and maneuverable than air and land, and thus, it is more vulnerable to being penetrated by transnational criminal organizations.

The issue, though, is that the current law prevents AMO from stopping those smugglers or exercising its law enforcement authorities more than 12 nautical miles from shore, even though, as you heard, the contiguous waters of the United States extend out to 24 nautical miles.

What we have seen is that the transnational criminal organizations are taking advantage of that situation, taking advantage of this limitation, which is demonstrated by the numbers, including that in 2022, 82 percent of drug seizures by AMO, including 702 pounds of fentanyl, occurred in the maritime environment.

Now, beyond stopping illegal narcotics, AMO has the authority to intercept vessels that are smuggling people on the sea which, unfortunately, as we have seen, has become one of the most dangerous ways to enter into any country. AMO does its best and has a duty to prevent the loss of life and discour-

aging this deadly form of migration by rescuing those trapped aboard dangerous vessels.

Many of the vessels used to smuggle people these days are often not built for the waters they are on, nor are they equipped for the long journey or bouts of bad weather. The U.S. Coast Guard reports that just about every vessel they encounter is constructed haphazardly with improvised materials and with absolutely no concern for the people on board.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, smugglers often overload their vessels to maximize profits, which risks capsizing and the loss of life. When AMO encounters migrants on suspicious vehicles, these operations often turn into rescues, with many on board being sick, severely dehydrated, injured, or even overboard in the water.

Fortunately, AMO doesn't just stop vessels. AMO personnel are trained and equipped to care for the people on board and rescue those who are overboard. Many AMO personnel are trained as emergency medical technicians, EMTs, and all of the agents are trained first responders. Moreover, AMO vessels are equipped with specialized trauma and first aid kits and ladders to help rescue people from the water.

Mr. Speaker, by increasing the customs waters from 12 nautical miles to 24, we are giving AMO more opportunity to rescue people, to save lives, to respond to suspected vehicles, and, yes, even set up interdictions farther away from shore and safely away from law-abiding boaters.

The expansion of the area that AMO operates in will help them better do their job to stop vessels that are trafficking drugs and humans and protect the people that are on board those vessels. That is why I support this legislation that passed unanimously out of the Ways and Means Committee back in November.

I encourage all of my colleagues to do the same because by supporting this legislation, we would not only help support the mission of AMO to stop illegal narcotics and human trafficking, but we would be helping secure our Nation's borders. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, in closing, as you have heard, this legislation has full bipartisan support of the Ways and Means Committee and beyond, and support from CBP's Air and Marine Operations.

It is critical that we give AMO the authorities it needs to effectively combat transnational criminal organizations. Extending customs waters to 24 nautical miles would allow AMO to exercise its law enforcement authority and both protect human life and our communities by helping AMO secure our borders.

Mr. Speaker, I once again encourage my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, this bill helps give Customs and Border Protection the certainty to know that they can enforce U.S. trade laws without fear of their authority being challenged in court.

Allowing our Customs agents the authority to go out 24 miles off the coast is consistent with what both Republican and Democratic Presidents have supported. This bill helps CBP protect the livelihoods of American workers. When foreigners cheat our U.S. trade system and avoid paying the rightful duties they owe, it is American workers and small businesses that suffer.

□ 1930

Improved trade enforcement not only helps our economy, but it will also help save American lives. Too many families know the pain of losing a loved one from a drug like fentanyl that should have never come into our country.

Customs and Border Protection needs the certainty and operational flexibility to catch smugglers before their deadly drugs reach our shore. We need to end the current inconsistency by which Congress has fully authorized the Coast Guard to pursue and board suspicious vessels up to 24 miles off of our coast but has not done the same for CBP.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes" on this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 1137, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on passage of the bill.

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

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on additional motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

DANIEL J. HARVEY, JR. AND ADAM LAMBERT IMPROVING SERVICEMEMBER TRANSITION TO REDUCE VETERAN SUICIDE ACT

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3722) to require a pilot program on activities under the pre-separation transition process of members of the Armed Forces for a reduction in suicide among veterans, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3722

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 "Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act".

SEC. 2. ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN THE TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND THE SOLID START PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.—Section 1142(b) of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (5), by inserting "(11)," before "and (16)"; and

(2) by striking paragraph (11) and inserting the following:

"(11) Information concerning mental health, including—

"(A) the availability of mental health services furnished by the Secretary concerned, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or a non-profit entity;

"(B) the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, anxiety disorders, depression, chronic pain, sleep disorders, suicidal ideation, or other mental health conditions associated with service in the armed forces;

"(C) the risk of suicide, including signs, symptoms, and risk factors (including adverse childhood experiences, depression, bipolar disorder, homelessness, unemployment, and relationship strain);

"(D) the availability of treatment options and resources to address substance abuse, including alcohol, prescription drug, and opioid abuse;

"(E) the potential effects of the loss of community and support systems experienced by a member separating from the armed forces;

"(F) isolation from family, friends, or society; and

"(G) the potential stressors associated with separation from the armed forces."

(b) SOLID START PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—Section 6320(b)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (G) and (H) as subparagraphs (I) and (J), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subparagraph (F) the following new subparagraphs:

"(G) assisting eligible veterans who elect to enroll in the system of patient enrollment under section 1705(a) of this title;

"(H) educating veterans about mental health and counseling services available through the Veterans Health Administration;"

(c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the

Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the information and materials developed pursuant to the amendments made by this Act.

(d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(1) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3722, the Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act.

I commend the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUNN) for introducing this legislation and for his leadership on this important issue.

H.R. 3722 seeks to improve the Transition Assistance Program run by the Department of Defense and the Solid Start program run by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Both programs provide critical assistance to the over 200,000 warfighters who transition to civilian life each year.

Every departing servicemember is required to complete the TAP program before leaving the service. The program provides valuable information, education, and training on veteran benefits, financial planning, how to find a job and start a business, as well as mental health resources available to servicemembers and their families.

Departing military service can be a very stressful time for servicemembers and their families. Servicemembers often experience feelings of isolation and loss of community that can exacerbate other mental health conditions. H.R. 3722 seeks to ensure that all departing servicemembers receive information on how to recognize and cope with these stressors, as well as help them identify risk factors for suicide.

On behalf of the Armed Services Committee, we look forward to working with the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUNN) as this bill moves forward to address some issues that may hinder its proper execution by the DOD.

It is important that we regularly review transition programs like TAP and Solid Start and make sure they are meeting the needs of our departing servicemembers and their families.

The men and women of our Armed Forces sacrifice tremendously when they agree to serve our Nation. When that service is complete, the least we can do is ensure they have an opportunity for a healthy and successful civilian life. That is the goal of H.R. 3722.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I join my colleague, Representative KIGGANS of Virginia, and rise in support of H.R. 3722, the Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act.

As a proud United States Air Force veteran and voice for over 46,000 veterans in North Carolina's First Congressional District, I was proud to join my friend and colleague, Representative ZACH NUNN, in introducing this bipartisan bill last year ahead of Memorial Day weekend.

The suicide rate in our military ranks and among our veterans is unacceptable. We must not have servicemembers put themselves in harm's way fighting for our country only to return home to take their own lives.

By requiring the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to jointly pursue a 5-year pilot program, H.R. 3722 will help assess the feasibility of providing specified counseling and services as part of the Transition Assistance Program.

This bill will close the information gap and ensure veterans can access the services they need when and where they need them.

When our Active-Duty personnel take off their uniforms and begin to transition to civilian life, we must ensure they have the mental health resources and support they need not only to survive but thrive.

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

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUNN).

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the story of Adam Lambert, a proud marine from Adel, Iowa.

Adam brought joy and laughter to his mother, Jill, and his father, Dean. He was a protective brother to his sisters, McKenzie and Anna.

Adam put himself before his country, his friends, his family, and his service.

During boot camp, Adam met a fellow marine named Daniel Harvey from Rhode Island. Together, these two became friends and stayed connected through their deployments and return to civilian life.

At 22 years old, sadly, Daniel died by suicide just a year after he left the Ma-

rines, and tragically, as was noted, Adam followed him less than a month later.

Unfortunately, Adam and Daniel's story all too often is becoming more common among our veterans. Veteran suicide is a casualty of war, one that demands immediate attention and action by this Congress.

The truth is that when our men and women in uniform leave the service, that transition to civilian life can be extremely difficult and often leaves servicemembers feeling very much left alone.

This is something I have witnessed firsthand as a 20-year combat veteran—as others have highlighted here from their military service—and as a squadron commander in the Air Force. You saw airmen struggle with the realities of life when they transitioned from service in defense of this Nation.

The pressure of employment, lack of fellowship, substance abuse, and finding a purpose weigh on all of our veterans as they return to civilian life, and many of our brothers and sisters sadly do not make it.

We need to do more to ensure that veterans are aware of the resources available to them as they leave the Armed Forces.

In honor of Adam and Daniel, as well as countless other servicemembers, I introduced the Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act.

This bipartisan legislation led by veterans makes critical improvements to the Transition Assistance Program to provide servicemembers who are returning home with access to mental health resources, more frequent VA check-ins, and clear communication about available assistance programs as they navigate their return from the battlefield and before it is too late.

I thank all who have served our Nation for their service, and I strongly encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support and pass this critical legislation.

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative NUNN for bringing this bill forward, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS).

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chair KIGGANS for the opportunity to speak.

I stand before you today in support of H.R. 3722, the Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act, which is co-led by my colleague from Iowa, Representative ZACH NUNN.

Our brave men and women in uniform have sacrificed immeasurably to defend our Nation and uphold our freedoms, and as a 24-year veteran, I know only too well that when they return home, many face significant challenges

transitioning back to civilian life. Too often, these challenges lead to tragic outcomes, including the heartbreaking reality of veteran suicide.

This bipartisan bill presents an opportunity for us to take meaningful action to address this crisis. By implementing a pilot program to enhance the pre-separation transition process for our servicemembers, we can provide them with the necessary support and resources to navigate this challenging period successfully.

The proposed model outlined in this bill offers comprehensive education on the potential risks and challenges facing our transitioning servicemembers, including issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use disorders, and homelessness.

Additionally, it provides vital information on available resources and treatment options through the Department of Veterans Affairs and other organizations.

Furthermore, by offering individualized services such as assessments of eligibility for VA healthcare and counseling and coordination of healthcare based on individual needs, we can ensure that our veterans receive the support they deserve as they reintegrate back into civilian life.

This is not a partisan issue; it is a moral imperative. We must always stand for our military and honor our veterans. By supporting H.R. 3722, we reaffirm our commitment to fulfilling this sacred duty.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Iowa, Representative NUNN, for introducing this legislation, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in supporting this bill and taking decisive action to reduce veteran suicide rates and ensure that those who have served our country receive the support and care they need and deserve.

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield myself the balance of my time for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, as we conclude today on this vital legislation, I am compelled to emphasize the significance of the issue at hand.

According to the VA's "2023 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report," 6,392 veterans died by suicide in 2021—114 more than the previous year. This rate is more than double that of the civilian adult population, underscoring a crisis that requires immediate and decisive action.

The stories of Corporal Adam Lambert and Lance Corporal Daniel J. Harvey, Jr., who both tragically lost their lives to suicide shortly after serving our country in Afghanistan, remind us that we must do more.

The enhancement of DOD and VA transition assistance programs in H.R. 3722 will ensure that every servicemember leaving the military is not only aware of but also able to access resources to address mental health conditions, substance use disorders, and

other risk factors associated with suicide.

To honor the legacy of our fallen, we must recommit ourselves to our servicemembers and veterans, our real heroes.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support the legislation. Again, I thank the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUNN) for introducing this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1945

Mrs. KIGGANS. Mr. Speaker, in closing, just to reiterate some of the statements and points that have been made by my fellow veteran colleagues, it is hard to transition out of the military.

We wake up every day with a mission, and that is a great mission—to defend our great Nation. We are part of a team, and it gets us out of bed in the morning. There is no better, no higher calling than that.

The day that that stops and the day that you are not a part of that team, and you might not know what is next ahead in life, and there is a lot of transition with a lot unknown, it is hard. We have to do better for our servicemen and -women that are transitioning out.

We are so thankful for the service of the two young Marines that we spoke about today, but even one veteran suicide is too many.

I know that even in my district in Hampton Roads, Virginia, when we take ships out of commission, we put them in the yards, or we put people on medical hold, we have seen suicides there as well.

Again, taking those servicemembers out of their role, their mission of defending the country every day and putting them in a holding pen, is very hard on their mental health. When we transition them out of the service, there is no more challenging time than that.

This is the least we can do. It is a step in the right direction, but education is a powerful tool. It is one of the tools we have here in Congress.

Mandating that this education be given to our servicemen and -women who are often young people transitioning out who have great lives ahead, long lives ahead, and just helping them to know what resources are available to them, especially for mental health, can be such a challenging time.

I urge all of my colleagues here to support this bill. I look forward to supporting it myself, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3722, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS EDUCATION TRANSPARENCY AND TRAINING ACT

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5914) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the processes to approve programs of education for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5914

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 “Veterans Education Transparency and Training Act” or the “VETT Act”.

SEC. 2. PROCESSES TO APPROVE PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION FOR PURPOSES OF THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) LIMITATION OF DISAPPROVAL OF PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION FOR FAILURE TO PROVIDE CERTAIN FORMS.—Section 3679(f)(5) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking “this paragraph” and inserting “this subparagraph”;

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking “this paragraph” and inserting “subparagraph (A)”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(C) If an educational institution cannot provide to an individual a form under paragraph (1) that contains all of the information required under subparagraph (A) of such paragraph, the educational institution shall provide to such individual, with the form under such paragraph, a notice—

“(i) that specifies what such information may be inaccurate or incomplete; and

“(ii) that includes, in place of the information that may be inaccurate or incomplete, the best estimate available on the date of such notice.”.

(b) PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION ABOUT TRAINING FOR SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIALS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a website to serve as a central location for the publication of information about the training that the Department of Veterans Affairs provides for school certifying officials and shall update such information on a regular basis.

SEC. 3. MODIFICATION OF RULES FOR APPROVAL OF COMMERCIAL DRIVER EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR PURPOSES OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3680A(e) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (3) as subparagraphs (A) through (C), respectively;

(2) in the matter before subparagraph (A), as redesignated by paragraph (1), by inserting “(1)” before “The Secretary”;

(3) in paragraph (1)(B), as redesignated by paragraph (1), by inserting “except as provided in paragraph (2),” before “the course”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new paragraph (2):

“(2)(A) Subject to this paragraph, a commercial driver education program is exempt from paragraph (1)(B) for a branch of an educational institution if the commercial driver education program offered at the branch by the educational institution—

“(i) is appropriately licensed; and

“(ii)(I) the branch is located in a State in which the same commercial driver education program is offered by the same educational institution at another branch of that educational institution in the same State that is approved for purposes of this chapter by a State approving agency or the Secretary when acting in the role of a State approving agency; or

“(II)(aa) the branch is located in a State in which the same commercial driver education program is not offered at another branch of the same educational institution in the same State; and

“(bb) the branch has been operating for a period of at least one year using the same curriculum as a commercial driver education program offered by the educational institution at another location that is approved for purposes of this chapter by a State approving agency or the Secretary when acting in the role of a State approving agency.

“(B)(i) In order for a commercial driver education program of an educational institution offered at a branch described in paragraph (1)(B) to be exempt under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, the educational institution shall submit to the Secretary each year that paragraph (1)(B) would otherwise apply a report that demonstrates that the curriculum at the new branch is the same as the curriculum at the primary location.

“(ii) Reporting under clause (i) shall be submitted in accordance with such requirements as the Secretary shall establish in consultation with the State approving agencies.

“(C)(i) The Secretary may withhold an exemption under subparagraph (A) for any educational institution or branch of an educational institution as the Secretary considers appropriate.

“(ii) In making any determination under clause (i), the Secretary may consult with the Secretary of Transportation on the performance of a provider of a commercial driver program, including the status of the provider within the Training Provider Registry of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration when appropriate.

“(D) The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a notification not later than 30 days after the Secretary grants an exemption under this paragraph. Such notification shall identify the educational institution and branch of such educational institution granted such exemption.”.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT OF REQUIREMENTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish requirements under section 3680A(e)(2)(B)(ii) of such title, as added by subsection (a).

(2) RULEMAKING.—In promulgating any rules to carry out paragraph (2) of section 3680A(e) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consult with State approving agencies.

(3) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply to commercial driver education programs on and after the day that is 180 days after the date on which the Secretary establishes the requirements under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may

have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 5914, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5914, as amended, offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. VAN ORDEN), my friend and colleague.

This bill, as amended, would improve the information schools are required to give individuals regarding their GI Bill benefits.

Right now, schools are required to give an estimated cost of education to anyone using the GI Bill. However, there are cases where the school cannot accurately estimate the tuition and expenses for that year.

This could cause veterans to pick a school based off incorrect information that might harm them financially in the future.

Now, I support getting veterans all the information they need to make the right decision about their education. I do not support schools being forced to give a favorable financial estimate before the student enrolls.

This bill would also ensure that schools have a central place to find information to train their staff in charge of helping student veterans use their benefits.

Finally, this bill, as amended, would improve opportunities for veterans wanting to get commercial driver's licenses.

I thank my colleague from North Carolina (Mr. EDWARDS), as well for his work on key provisions of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5914, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for H.R. 5914, as amended, the Veterans Education Transparency and Training Act, or VETT Act.

This bill makes changes to student veteran rules and regulations, intending to make it easier for veterans to participate in commercial driver certification programs.

The bill also makes improvements to the shopping sheet that is offered to student veterans when they are applying to institutions of higher learning.

While I support the legislation, I do wish to raise a concern, which is that this legislation chooses one industry, commercial truck driving, over others for approval streamlining.

I understand that this industry is in need of workers. However, truck driving is not the ideal career choice for all, and putting one industry ahead of others doesn't necessarily benefit veterans.

Should this bill become law, we should ensure we do strong oversight of enrollments, quality of education, and earnings.

As I mentioned, the legislation also improves student shopping sheets for enrollments at colleges and universities.

This is a welcome improvement that ensures we won't waste time on paperwork that doesn't benefit students, student veterans in particular.

I thank Representative VAN ORDEN for his work on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 5914, as amended, and urge my colleagues to do the same. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. VAN ORDEN), the sponsor of this legislation. I appreciate the fine job he has done coming forward with this.

Mr. VAN ORDEN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to speak on behalf of my legislation, H.R. 5914, the VETT Act.

This legislation addresses unnecessary barriers that veterans face while trying to access educational benefits that they earned during their time of service and ensures a more effective transition to civilian life.

One important provision in the VETT Act addresses a burdensome administrative requirement by revising the current mandate for individualized shopping sheets. With the Department of Education's disastrous FAFSA rollout this year, many institutions cannot provide up-to-date, accurate financial aid information to many of our student veterans. Letting this failure result in a delayed delivery of education benefits for our veterans is entirely unacceptable.

My legislation resolves this burden by ensuring that the State approving agencies can only disapprove programs when schools fail to provide necessary information to the maximum extent possible.

This change offers the needed flexibility for institutions like police academies and truck driving schools, ensuring they can operate effectively while safeguarding veterans and their families.

These are two beleaguered industries that should be supported wholeheartedly by Congress and the American people at large.

I am also very thankful to see the inclusion of the provision from my colleague from North Carolina (Mr. EDWARDS) that will aid our veterans seeking opportunities in the transportation and trucking industry.

By eliminating unnecessary 2-year waits for GI benefits for commercial driving licenses, this provision opens up great-paying jobs to our veterans and aids in fulfilling necessary roles in the private sector.

We need to get our servicemen transitioned from productive members of the military to productive members of civilian life.

This legislation dovetails perfectly with Mr. NUNN's H.R. 3722 because the 24-month window following separating from Active-Duty service is when our

men and women commit suicide, and we will do anything as a body to prevent that.

I thank Ranking Member TAKANO and the chairman for your support in this, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote for it.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. EDWARDS) who has a portion of this bill as well.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. VAN ORDEN of Wisconsin for his leadership on H.R. 5914, the Veterans Education Transparency and Training Act.

This bill makes much-needed improvements to veteran educational assistance programs, and it will expand job opportunities for the brave men and women who serve our great Nation.

I am similarly grateful to Mr. VAN ORDEN for his collaboration and including my bill, the Veteran Improvement Commercial Driver License Act of 2023, into the VETT Act.

The VICDL Act will increase veteran access to timely, quality commercial driver license training, increase the truck driver workforce pool, and reduce the strain on our Nation's supply chain that is currently worsened by the severe truck driver shortage.

Across the United States, the trucking industry is facing more than a 78,000-driver shortage, which some estimate could reach 160,000 by 2030.

The shortage is exacerbated, in part, by burdensome red tape restricting veteran access to commercial driver license training using their GI Bill benefits.

Currently, roughly 8,400 commercial driving programs are approved for use by eligible veterans under the GI Bill, but a statutory 2-year rule prevents these training facilities from accepting GI benefits at secondary locations for 2 years.

This burdensome red tape has excluded many veterans from attending closer secondary branch training facilities, and it has been forcing veterans to travel hundreds of miles further for training or to wait 2 years to pursue their CDL.

My bill fixes that issue by exempting new branches of preapproved training facilities located in the same State as each other from the statutory 2-year wait to accept veterans' benefits.

Before I close, I thank the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. PAPPAS) for being my bipartisan co-lead on the bill and Senators FISCHER and PADILLA for leading this effort in the Senate.

Ultimately, this is a commonsense reform with wide organizational support that will reduce unnecessary roadblocks to veteran training and workforce opportunities.

I am grateful for its inclusion in the VETT Act, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5914.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 5914, as amended, the VETT Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, once again, I encourage Members to support this legislation and to help our veterans get the most out of their GI Bill benefits.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. DE LA CRUZ). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5914, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERAN FRAUD REIMBURSEMENT ACT

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4016) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the repayment by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs of benefits misused by a fiduciary.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4016

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 "Veteran Fraud Reimbursement Act".

SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENT TO REPAYMENT BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OF CERTAIN MISUSED BENEFITS.

Section 6107 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"§ 6107. Reissuance of benefits

"(a) REISSUANCE OF MISUSED BENEFITS.—(1) In any case in which a fiduciary misuses all or part of an individual's benefit paid to such fiduciary, the Secretary shall pay to the beneficiary or the beneficiary's successor fiduciary an amount equal to the amount of such benefit so misused.

"(2) In any case in which the Secretary reissues a benefit payment (in whole or in part) under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall make a good faith effort to obtain recoupment from the fiduciary to whom the payment was originally made.

"(3) In any case in which the Secretary obtains recoupment from a fiduciary who has misused benefits, the Secretary shall promptly remit payment of the recouped amounts to the beneficiary or the beneficiary's successor fiduciary, as the case may be, to the extent that such amounts have not been paid under paragraph (1).

"(b) LIMITATION ON TOTAL AMOUNT PAID.—The total of the amounts paid to a beneficiary or the beneficiary's successor fiduciary under this section may not exceed the total benefit amount misused by the fiduciary with respect to that beneficiary.

"(c) OVERSIGHT OF NEGLIGENCE.—(1) The Secretary shall establish methods and timing with respect to determining whether an instance of misuse by a fiduciary, of all or part of an individual's benefit paid to such fiduciary, is the result of negligence by the Secretary.

"(2) The Secretary may not withhold the reissuance of a benefit payment under subsection (a)(1) by reason of a pending determination under paragraph (1).

"(3) The Secretary is not required to make a determination under paragraph (1) for each instance of misuse by a fiduciary, of all or part of an individual's benefit paid to such fiduciary."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 4016.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4016 as offered by Representative CONNOLLY. This bill would ensure that VA's fiduciary program is managed effectively so that our Nation's most vulnerable veterans receive the benefits they earned.

The VA appoints fiduciaries for veterans who are unable to manage their VA benefits. A fiduciary misuses a veteran's VA benefit when they spend a veteran's benefit on anything other than the veteran's care and welfare. However, before a veteran who is a victim of misuse can be made financially whole, the VA is required to determine whether the misuse was as a result of VA negligence, but VA does not monitor whether these negligence determinations are being made in a timely way. This bureaucratic red tape has resulted in long wait times for veterans to recoup their misused benefits. Some veterans have passed away before recouping their misused benefits. We must ensure the VA promptly makes whole any veteran who was a victim of misuse by a fiduciary.

H.R. 4016 would ensure just that. It would prohibit VA from withholding repayment of misused benefits because the VA is still working on a negligence determination.

It would also require the VA to establish methods to ensure that negligence determinations are made in a timely way. Veterans deserve to receive their benefits without bureaucratic hurdles and unnecessary delays.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 4016, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the bill from Representative CONNOLLY, H.R. 4016, the Veteran Fraud Reimbursement Act, and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Beneficiaries in the fiduciary program are among the most vulnerable in

VA's care. Because they are often elderly or mentally ill, they are at greater risk for financial abuse and theft of benefits. Unfortunately, in spite of VA's best efforts at vetting proposed fiduciaries, bad actors do arise from time to time.

When that happens, theft or misuse can have a devastating impact on the financial stability of the beneficiary. Not only that, the strain of being taken advantage of can further erode their physical and mental health, as well.

As such, I support this bill's goal of speeding restitution to those beneficiaries who may have suffered from theft or misuse of funds by a fiduciary. We must empower the VA to make these beneficiaries whole as soon as possible. It is the right thing to do.

Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS).

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman BOST for yielding me time to speak.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 4016, the Veteran Fraud Reimbursement Act. This bipartisan piece of legislation, introduced by Representative CISCOMANI and Representative CONNOLLY, aims to enhance the repayment process by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for misappropriated benefits.

Our veterans have selflessly served our Nation with honor and courage, and it is our duty to ensure they receive the benefits they rightly deserve and have earned. However, instances of misappropriation of veterans' benefits are a grave injustice that cannot be tolerated. This bill addresses this issue head-on by instituting crucial reforms to ensure that our veterans are promptly reimbursed for any benefits misappropriated by their fiduciaries.

Under this proposed legislation, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs is mandated to reissue benefits to veterans in cases where they are defrauded of their benefits. Additionally, the Secretary must make a good faith effort to recoup misused funds from the responsible fiduciaries, thereby holding them accountable for their actions.

As a 24-year military veteran, I would also like to state that this bill ensures that veterans are not unduly penalized due to delays in determining negligence and guarantees that they receive their benefits owed to them in a timely manner. We cannot turn a blind eye to the injustices faced by our veterans.

By supporting H.R. 4016, we demonstrate our unwavering commitment to protecting the rights and well-being of those who have bravely served our country.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this crucial legislation and standing up for our veterans.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from

Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY), the coauthor of this legislation who serves on the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Oversight and Accountability Committee.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and Mr. BOST for their leadership and support in trying to fix a wrong.

Mr. BOST, I think, perfectly described the intent of this bill and what the problem is, and I think Mr. TAKANO did a great job in helping us understand what pain is incurred when veterans in a fiduciary status experience fraud and cannot get reimbursed in a timely manner for their benefits.

As both gentlemen indicated, we have examples of veterans who have died before this issue is adjudicated. That is wrong. No veteran and no family of a veteran should have to go through that once the determination has been made that fraud has occurred.

More than 50 percent of the people in this fiduciary category are pensioners. As Mr. TAKANO said, this is among the most vulnerable population of veterans, so they are easy to defraud, easy to exploit and take advantage of, and the government must stand by those men and women who served in uniform, served bravely, and deserve the best treatment from their government, not negligent treatment.

Today, this bill, H.R. 4016, the Veterans Fraud Reimbursement Act, grew out of actually an encounter I had with veterans in my district who were describing this very problem. We can't solve every problem, but this one we can.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for making this a bipartisan effort. I hope that it will pass with no opposition and clear the Senate so that we can start making sure that our veterans are kept whole.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 4016, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, once again, I encourage Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4016.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

STUDENT VETERAN BENEFIT RESTORATION ACT

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill

(H.R. 1767) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide that educational assistance paid under Department of Veterans Affairs educational assistance programs to an individual who pursued a program or course of education that was suspended or terminated for certain reasons shall not be charged against the entitlement of the individual, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1767

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 "Student Veteran Benefit Restoration Act".

SEC. 2. TREATMENT BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS THAT VIOLATE CERTAIN PROHIBITIONS ON ADVERTISING, SALES, AND ENROLLMENT PRACTICES.

(a) RESTORATION OF ENTITLEMENT.—Section 3696 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (i) through (j) as subsections (j) through (m), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (h) the following new subsection (i):

"(i) RESTORATION OF ENTITLEMENT.—Upon a final determination by the Under Secretary for Benefits under subsection (g), including the results of any appeal under subsection (i), that an educational institution or the owner of an educational institution violated subsection (a), (c), or (d), the Secretary may determine that any payment of educational assistance to an individual who used, or was enticed to use, entitlement to educational assistance under chapter 30, 31, 32, 33, or 35 of this title, or chapter 1606 or 1607 of title 10, to pursue a course or program of education at such educational institution during the time period when the violation occurred, and who, by reason of such violation, was unable to continue such course or program at such educational institution or was deprived (in the determination of the Secretary) of the expected value of such used entitlement, is not—

"(1) charged against any entitlement to educational assistance of the individual; or

"(2) counted against the aggregate period for which section 3695 of this title limits the receipt of educational assistance by such individual."

(b) REPAYMENT OF FUNDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (h) of such section is amended—

(A) in paragraph (4), by striking "subsection (i)" and inserting "subsection (j)"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(5)(A) In addition to any other enforcement action taken under this subsection, upon a final determination by the Under Secretary for Benefits under subsection (g) that an educational institution or the owner of an educational institution violated subsection (a) or (c), the Secretary shall require the educational institution to repay to the Secretary all amounts of educational assistance under chapter 30, 31, 32, 33, or 35 of this title, or chapter 1606 or 1607 of title 10, paid to the educational institution by or on behalf of an individual who pursued a course or program of education at the educational institution during the time period when the violation occurred.

"(B) As a condition of the approval of a course or program of education under this

chapter, the educational institution offering the course or program shall agree that if Under Secretary of Benefits makes a final determination under subsection (g) that the educational institution or the owner of the educational institution violated subsection (a) or (c), the educational institution shall make the repayment required under subparagraph (A).

"(C) The Under Secretary shall establish a process for making a determination regarding the amount an educational institution or an owner of an educational institution is required to repay under subparagraph (A) in the case of a violation of subsection (a) or (c). Such process shall include—

"(i) clearly defined factors to be used to determine the amount attributable to the violation, including the degree to which individuals enrolled in a program of education offered by the educational institution using entitlement to educational assistance under chapter 30, 31, 32, 33, or 35 of this title or chapter 1606 or 1607 of title 10 suffered a loss due to the violation;

"(ii) a requirement that the Under Secretary provide notice to the educational institution or the owner of the educational institution that the Under Secretary is in the process of making such a determination with respect to the educational institution or owner; and

"(iii) a procedure under which the educational institution or owner may provide such information to the Under Secretary as the educational institution or owner determines appropriate within a specified period of time outlined by the Secretary for purposes of informing such determination.

"(D) A determination made pursuant to subparagraph (C) shall be—

"(i) made by the Under Secretary and may not be delegated; and

"(ii) subject to review under section 7104(a) of this title."

(2) DISAPPROVAL.—Section 3679 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(g) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, in the case of an educational institution that the Secretary determines is required to repay to the Secretary an amount under section 3696(h)(5) of this title and does not repay such amount, the Secretary shall disapprove a course or program of education offered by the educational institution until the educational institution repays to the Secretary such amount."

(3) REINSTATEMENT.—Paragraph (2) of subsection (k) of section 3696, as redesignated by subsection (a)(1), is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (E)—

(i) by striking "that"; and

(ii) by striking "and" at the end;

(B) by redesignating subparagraph (F) as subparagraph (G); and

(C) by inserting after subparagraph (E) the following new subparagraph (F):

"(F) the educational institution repays any amount required to be repaid under subsection (h)(5); and"

SEC. 3. MODIFICATION OF CERTAIN HOUSING LOAN FEES.

The loan fee table in section 3729(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "November 15, 2031" each place it appears and inserting "November 29, 2031".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1767, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1767, as amended, introduced by my friend and colleague Representative RAMIREZ from my home State of Illinois.

The bill on the floor today is the result of good, bipartisan work to improve the lives of veterans. I am pleased that Representative RAMIREZ was willing to work with me and make the changes that I believe were necessary to get this bill moving forward.

H.R. 1767, as amended, would restore the GI Bill benefits to student veterans who were harmed by misrepresentation or fraud of an educational institution.

The GI Bill is one of the very best benefits a veteran earns for their service. No veteran should be unable to use their benefits to receive an education because a fraudulent school stole their GI Bill. However, adequate due process to ensure a fair system for both veterans and schools is necessary.

This Congress, we have seen the Biden White House weaponize the Department of Education and use student loans for political gain. Their decision to act without listening to Congress or the courts will cost American taxpayers billions of dollars. We cannot let the VA become another Department of Education, despite there being some people who would like to see that happen.

For this reason, H.R. 1767, as amended, would provide schools with a route for due process and appeal. Let me be clear: A school found guilty of fraud would still have to repay the entitlement, even with the additional due process provisions we have included in the bill.

This proposed solution would rely on VA to make decisions about schools participating in the GI Bill program rather than leaving the decision-making process to an entirely different agency.

I thank the broader veteran community for their support of this bill, as amended. I also thank my colleague Representative RAMIREZ and the minority staff for helping us to get this bill into a good place.

Madam Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 1767, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise to express my support for H.R. 1767, as amended, a bill that will help some veterans have their earned GI Bill benefits restored in cases of fraud.

The language before us is a narrower fix than our committee considered last

summer, so while I will be supporting this bill, I want to send a message to some student veterans who, unfortunately, won't be helped by this legislation today. We hear them. We will not stop working on a comprehensive fix for all student veterans impacted by fraudulent actors in higher education.

I thank Representative RAMIREZ for her tireless efforts on behalf of student veterans. From her first days in Congress, she has put student veterans first, and it is only right that she can lead the House in restoring benefits for our student veterans.

I thank Chairman BOST for working with us on this language to get it to a place where he can support it. I look forward to working with him and his staff on improving this bill in the Senate to ensure that no student veterans are left out.

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It is, frankly, quite disappointing and shocking that student veterans lack the same access to relief that student loan borrowers have generally. At a minimum, our veterans deserve the same protections that traditional student loan borrowers can receive, especially when an educational institution closes, is suspended, or has terminated a program due to a determination of fraud.

This bill does not get us all the way there, but I refuse to let perfect be the enemy of the good. This bill will help student veterans.

Madam Speaker, for that reason, I urge support, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. RAMIREZ), who is my very good friend and a coauthor of this important piece of legislation. She also serves on the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee and the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge the passage of H.R. 1767, the Student Veteran Benefit Restoration Act.

When I came to Congress about 16 months ago, I made a commitment to deliver legislative victories and every possible resource that would positively impact Illinois-03. During my first term, through our work on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have made it a priority to advocate for equity for our veterans and to ensure they have access to every single benefit and resource they have rightfully earned. That work includes protecting them from bad actors seeking to exploit them for the benefits they deserve.

It is why I am so proud that this bill, H.R. 1767, the Student Veteran Benefit Restoration Act, passed through committee with bipartisan support and has come to the floor today.

I thank Congressman MIKE LEVIN for being an original cosponsor with me. Also, I thank Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman BOST, Ranking Member TAKANO, and the fantastic committee staff because we don't acknowledge the work that they do enough. I thank them for all of their support and leadership in moving this bill through committee.

I also thank Veterans Education Success and Student Veterans of America for leading the effort to protect our student veterans from bad actors seeking to exploit their benefits.

I thank the National Educational Association and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, HACU, for their support of my bill and the work they do on behalf of student veterans and all students.

I also want to take the time to express my gratitude to my staff and the rest of the committee staff for the countless hours that they have spent, majority and minority, working on this bill. I thank them for their efforts. I am grateful for Justin Vogt, who has been and continues to be instrumental to this work.

Access to quality education is one of the promises we have made to our veterans, and we have to deliver.

The educational benefits provided by the GI Bill have been instrumental in helping veterans gain economic security and access to postsecondary education. Moreover, these benefits have helped ensure that student veterans are fully supported to transition back into civilian life.

This bill starts the long-overdue process of restoring the GI Bill benefits of student veterans who were defrauded by for-profit colleges and universities. This bill will help veterans like Army veteran Christopher Brown from Des Plaines, Illinois, who was promised a quality education that would be covered by his benefits, but ITT Tech instead used all of his benefits and left him with \$95,000 of debt.

Because of this bill, thousands of veterans across the country will now have a pathway to be able to seek restoration.

I thank our ranking member, again, for his endless commitment, and I thank our chairman, as well.

I believe that today is the beginning of the journey of making sure that every single veteran in this country is able to go to school and is able to have an opportunity to seek the education that they deserve.

Madam Speaker, yes, my bill was negotiated and amended, and I look forward to working together to ensure full parity for veteran students as we continue to do this work in the coming months and in the coming Congress and certainly making sure that this bill passes the Senate.

We have come a long way in the fight to protect our student veterans and passing H.R. 1767.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support its swift passage

today, and I look forward to it becoming law.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, in closing, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 1767, as amended, the Student Veteran Benefit Restoration Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, once again, I encourage all of our Members to support this bill, as well as the other bills we have moved here tonight.

Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member and staff on both sides of the aisle for the work they have done, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1767, as amended. The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 21 minutes p.m.), under its previous order and pursuant to House Resolution 1172, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, April 30, 2024, at 10 a.m., as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honorable DONALD M. PAYNE, Jr.

Thereupon (at 8 o'clock and 21 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, April 30, 2024, at 10 a.m., as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honorable DONALD M. PAYNE, Jr.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-3944. A letter from the Program Analyst, Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans [FNS-2022-0043] (RIN: 0584-AE88) received April 25, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

EC-3945. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance (RIN: 0945-AA15) received April 25, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110

Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

EC-3946. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Retirement Security Rule: Definition of an Investment Advice Fiduciary (RIN: 1210-AC02) received April 25, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

EC-3947. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Amendment to Prohibited Transaction Exemption 2020-2 [Application No.: D-12057] (RIN: 1210-ZA32) received April 25, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

EC-3948. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Amendment to Prohibited Transaction Exemption 84-24 [Application D-12060] (RIN: 1210-ZA33) received April 25, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

EC-3949. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Amendment to Prohibited Transaction Exemptions 75-1, 77-4, 80-83, 83-1, and 86-128 [Application No.: D-12094] (RIN: 1210-ZA34) received April 25, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

EC-3950. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for General Service Lamps [EERE-2022-BT-STD-0022] (RIN: 1904-AF43) received April 25, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-3951. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's Major Direct final rule — Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Dishwashers [EERE-2019-BT-STD-0039] (RIN: 1904-AF60) received April 26, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-3952. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Distribution Transformers [EERE-2019-BT-STD-0018] (RIN: 1904-AE12) received April 25, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-3953. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Unaccompanied Children Program Foundational Rule (RIN: 0970-AC93) received April 19, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110

Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-3954. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Medicaid Program: Ensuring Access to Medicaid Services [CMS-2442-F] (RIN: 0938-AU68) received April 17, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-3955. A letter from the Senior Regulatory and Policy Coordinator, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Major final rule and interpretations — Nondiscrimination in Health Programs and Activities (RIN: 0945-AA17) received April 23, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-3956. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 23-093 Certification of Proposed Issuance of an Export License Pursuant to Sec 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-3957. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 23-088 Certification of Proposed Issuance of an Export License Pursuant to Sec 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-3958. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 23-092 Certification of Proposed Issuance of an Export License Pursuant to Sec 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-3959. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 23-087 Certification of Proposed Issuance of an Export License Pursuant to Sec 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-3960. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 24-004 Certification of Proposed Issuance of an Export License Pursuant to Sec 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-3961. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Department Notification Number: DDTC 23-058, pursuant to sections 36(c) and 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-3962. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Department Notification Number: DDTC 23-062, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-3963. A letter from the Director, Office of Standards, Regulations, and Variances, Mine Safety and Health Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Lowering Miners' Exposure to Respirable Crystalline Silica and Improving Respiratory Protection [Docket No.: MSHA-2023-0001] (RIN: 1219-AB36) received April 18, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-3964. A letter from the Division Chief, Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's Major final rule —

Fluid Mineral Leases and Leasing Process [BLM—HQ—FRN—MO4500176829] (RIN: 1004-AE80) received April 26, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-3965. A letter from the Chief Regulatory Officer, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's Major temporary final rule — Temporary Increase of the Automatic Extension Period of Employment Authorization and Documentation for Certain Employment Authorization Document Renewal Applicants [CIS No.: 2767-24; DHS Docket No.: USCIS-2024-0002] (RIN: 1615-AC78) received April 16, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. Supplemental report on H.R. 615. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture from prohibiting the use of lead ammunition or tackle on certain Federal land or water under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, and for other purposes (Rept. 118-203, Pt. 2). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ARRINGTON: Committee on the Budget. H.R. 7032. A bill to amend the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 to provide the Congressional Budget Office with necessary authorities to expedite the sharing of data from executive branch agencies, and for other purposes (Rept. 118-474). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. COMER: Committee on Oversight and Accountability. H.R. 7219. A bill to ensure that Federal agencies rely on the best reasonably available scientific, technical, demographic, economic, and statistical information and evidence to develop, issue or inform the public of the nature and bases of Federal agency rules and guidance, and for other purposes, with an amendment (Rept. 118-475, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. COMER: Committee on Oversight and Accountability. H.R. 7109. A bill to require a citizenship question on the decennial census, to require reporting on certain census statistics, and to modify apportionment of Representatives to be based on United States citizens instead of all persons, with amendments (Rept. 118-476). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mrs. FISCHBACH: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 1173. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 615) to prohibit the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture from prohibiting the use of lead ammunition or tackle on certain Federal land or water under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2925) to amend the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 to provide for security of tenure for use of mining claims for ancillary activities, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3195) to rescind Public Land Order 7917, to reinstate mineral leases and permits in the Su-

perior National Forest, to ensure timely review of Mine Plans of Operations, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 764) to require the Secretary of the Interior to reissue regulations removing the gray wolf from the list of endangered and threatened wildlife under the Endangered Species Act of 1973; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3397) to require the Director of the Bureau of Land Management to withdraw a rule of the Bureau of Land Management relating to conservation and landscape health; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 6285) to ratify and approve all authorizations, permits, verifications, extensions, biological opinions, incidental take statements, and any other approvals or orders issued pursuant to Federal law necessary for the establishment and administration of the Coastal Plain oil and gas leasing program, and for other purposes; and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 6090) to provide for the consideration of a definition of antisemitism set forth by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance for the enforcement of Federal anti-discrimination laws concerning education programs or activities, and for other purposes (Rept. 118-477). Referred to the House Calendar.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on the Judiciary discharged from further consideration. H.R. 7219 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mrs. BEATTY:

H.R. 8142. A bill to require the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to conduct an assessment of the use of certain educational data in determining the creditworthiness of an applicant, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mrs. BEATTY:

H.R. 8143. A bill to establish requirements relating to credit scores and educational credit scores, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. BERGMAN (for himself and Mrs. DINGELL):

H.R. 8144. A bill to amend title III of the Public Health Service Act to include rural emergency hospitals in the definition of a covered entity for purposes of the 340B drug discount program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BURLISON:

H.R. 8145. A bill to require the Secretary of the Army to convey or lease certain land acquired for the Table Rock Lake project to owners of property located adjacent to such project, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. D'ESPOSITO:

H.R. 8146. A bill to require a report by the Attorney General on the impact the border crisis is having on law enforcement at the Federal, State, local, and Tribal level; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DAVIDSON (for himself, Ms. HAGEMAN, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. OGLLES, Mr. POSEY, Mr. HERN, Mr. GOOD of Virginia, Mrs. FISCHBACH, Mr. FALLON, and Mr. ARMSTRONG):

H.R. 8147. A bill to repeal the Corporate Transparency Act; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. FEENSTRA (for himself and Mr. NUNN of Iowa):

H.R. 8148. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow for the furnishing of audio-only telehealth services; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FERGUSON (for himself and Mr. NICKEL):

H.R. 8149. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the tax treatment of digital asset rewards; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas (for himself, Mr. CORREA, Mr. CISCOMANI, Mr. CUELLAR, Ms. DE LA CRUZ, and Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas):

H.R. 8150. A bill to require the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to establish procedures for conducting maintenance projects at ports of entry at which the Office of Field Operations conducts certain enforcement and facilitation activities; to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of California, and Mr. SMITH of Nebraska):

H.R. 8151. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand eligible practitioners to furnish telehealth services; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LAWLER (for himself, Mr. JACKSON of North Carolina, Mr. MCCORMICK, and Ms. CROCKETT):

H.R. 8152. A bill to amend the Export Control Reform Act of 2018 to provide for control of remote access of items, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. MOONEY (for himself, Mr. DONALDS, and Mr. OGLLES):

H.R. 8153. A bill to amend the Wall Street Transparency and Accountability Act of 2010 to provide covered banking institutions with certain exemptions related to interest rate swaps, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. VAN ORDEN, and Mr. NEHLS):

H.R. 8154. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend telehealth services for federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE (for himself, Mr. FULCHER, Mr. ZINKE, and Mr. BENTZ):

H.R. 8155. A bill to direct the Secretary of Energy to develop fish and wildlife program funding alternatives to mitigate the cost to Bonneville Power Administration ratepayers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE (for himself, Mrs. RODGERS of Washington, Mr. FULCHER, Mr. BENTZ, and Mr. ZINKE):
H.R. 8156. A bill to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to submit to Congress an updated report on the roles, responsibilities, and practices of the Council on Environmental Quality; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE (for himself, Mrs. RODGERS of Washington, Mr. FULCHER, and Mr. BENTZ):
H.R. 8157. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of the Army from carrying out certain spillage operations on the Lower Snake Rivers dams, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE (for himself, Mrs. RODGERS of Washington, Mr. FULCHER, Mr. BENTZ, and Mr. ZINKE):
H.R. 8158. A bill to require the Secretary of the Army to acquire technology that uses acoustic sound to deter pinniped predators at such Dam, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE (for himself, Mr. FULCHER, Mr. ZINKE, Mr. ROSENDALE, and Mr. BENTZ):
H.R. 8159. A bill to prohibit the breaching of federally operated dams if such breach would result in the replacement energy resource occupying additional acreage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE (for himself, Mr. FULCHER, Mr. ZINKE, Mr. ROSENDALE, and Mr. BENTZ):
H.R. 8160. A bill to prohibit the breaching of federally operated dams in certain circumstances, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE (for himself, Mr. FULCHER, Mr. BENTZ, and Mr. ROSENDALE):
H.R. 8161. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of the Army from retiring an energy generation source if that retirement would raise customer electricity rates and decrease regional energy reliability by more than 10 percent, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. NORTON:
H.R. 8162. A bill to amend the National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act of 1997 to treat domestic partnerships as marriage for purposes of the program of benefits paid by the Federal government for survivors of a District of Columbia police officer, firefighter, or teacher in the same manner and to the same extent that domestic partnerships are treated as marriage for purposes of such benefits which are paid by the District of Columbia, to conform the age limit after which a surviving spouse of a police officer, firefighter, or teacher may remarry without losing survivor benefits under such program to the age limit established with respect to survivor benefits of Federal employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

By Ms. TENNEY (for herself and Mr. WILLIAMS of New York):
H.R. 8163. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permanently add stainless steel flatware to the list of covered items required to be procured from American sources, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana:
H.J. Res. 132. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Defense, the General Services Administration, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration relating to the "Federal Acquisition Regulation: Use of Project Labor Agreements for Federal Construction Projects"; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey:
H. Res. 1172. A resolution expressing the profound sorrow of the House of Representatives on the death of the Honorable Donald M. Payne, Jr.; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. KIM of California (for herself, Mr. KEAN of New Jersey, Mr. LAWLER, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. WESTERMAN, and Mr. TONKO):

H. Res. 1174. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Mathematics and Statistics Awareness Month; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE (for himself, Mrs. RODGERS of Washington, Mr. FULCHER, Mr. BENTZ, and Mr. ZINKE):

H. Res. 1175. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that hydropower is a vital component to an all-of-the-above approach to energy development which is critical to United States national security; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE (for himself, Mrs. RODGERS of Washington, Mr. FULCHER, Mr. BENTZ, Mr. ROSENDALE, and Mr. ZINKE):

H. Res. 1176. A resolution expressing disapproval of the Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative entered into by the Biden administration; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE (for himself, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. PORTER, Ms. NORTON, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. STANSBURY, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BROWNLEY, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. KILMER, Ms. SCHRIER, Mr. STANTON, Ms. HOYLE of Oregon, Mr. SOTO, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Ms. SALAZAR, Mr. ROSENDALE, Mr. ARMSTRONG, Mrs. RODGERS of Washington, Mr. GRIMALVA, Mr. GALLEGGO, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. COLE, Mrs. BICE, Mr. STAUBER, Mr. POCAN, Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. TOKUDA, Mr. CASE, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, and Mr. ESPAILLAT):

H. Res. 1177. A resolution expressing support for the designation of May 5, 2024, as the "National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls"; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. PRESSLEY:
H. Res. 1178. A resolution proclaiming a Declaration of Environmental Rights for Incarcerated People; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WALBERG (for himself, Mr. BALDERSON, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. NORCROSS, and Mr. VAN ORDEN):

H. Res. 1179. A resolution expressing support for the designation of May 2024 as Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY AND SINGLE SUBJECT STATEMENTS

Pursuant to clause 7(c)(1) of rule XII and Section 3(c) of H. Res. 5 the following statements are submitted regarding (1) the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution and (2) the single subject of the bill or joint resolution.

By Mrs. BEATTY:
H.R. 8142.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution
The single subject of this legislation is:
Financial Services

By Mrs. BEATTY:
H.R. 8143.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution
The single subject of this legislation is:
Financial Services

By Mr. BERGMAN:
H.R. 8144.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution
The single subject of this legislation is:
Allows facilities under Rural Emergency Hospital designation to be eligible for the 340B drug discount program.

By Mr. BURLISON:
H.R. 8145.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section VIII of the United States Constitution
The single subject of this legislation is:
To require the Secretary of the Army to convey or lease certain land acquired for the Table Rock Lake project to owners of property located adjacent to such project, and for other purposes.

By Mr. D'ESPOSITO:
H.R. 8146.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution
The single subject of this legislation is:
To require a report by the Attorney General on the impact the border crisis is having on law enforcement at the Federal, State, local, and Tribal level.

By Mr. DAVIDSON:
H.R. 8147.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution
The single subject of this legislation is:
To repeal the Corporate Transparency Act

By Mr. FEENSTRA:
H.R. 8148.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section VIII of the U.S. Constitution
The single subject of this legislation is:
Allows for the furnishing of audio-only telehealth services.

By Mr. FERGUSON:
H.R. 8149.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution, to "provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States."

The single subject of this legislation is:
Establishes clarity in the tax treatment of digital asset rewards.

By Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas:
H.R. 8150.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8
The single subject of this legislation is:
To require the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to establish procedures for conducting maintenance projects at ports of entry at which the Office of Field Operations conducts certain enforcement and facilitation activities.

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania:
H.R. 8151.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, U.S. Constitution
The single subject of this legislation is:
To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand eligible practitioners to furnish telehealth services.

By Mr. LAWLER:
H.R. 8152.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the U.S. Constitution
The single subject of this legislation is:
To amend the Export Control Reform Act of 2018 to provide for control of remote access of items, and for other purposes.

By Mr. MOONEY:
H.R. 8153.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8
The single subject of this legislation is:
Interest Rate Swaps

By Mr. MURPHY:
H.R. 8154.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8
The single subject of this legislation is:
To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend telehealth services for federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE:
H.R. 8155.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8
The single subject of this legislation is:
to direct the Secretary of Energy to develop fish and wildlife program funding alternatives to mitigate the cost to Bonneville Power Administration ratepayers, and for other purposes.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE:
H.R. 8156.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8
The single subject of this legislation is:
to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to submit to Congress an updated report on the roles, responsibilities, and practices of the Council on Environmental Quality

By Mr. NEWHOUSE:
H.R. 8157.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8
The single subject of this legislation is:
To prohibit the Secretary of the Army from carrying out certain spillage operations on the Lower Snake River dams, and for other purposes.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE:
H.R. 8158.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8
The single subject of this legislation is:

to require the Secretary of the Army to acquire technology that uses acoustic sound to deter pinniped predators at such Dam, and for other purposes

By Mr. NEWHOUSE:
H.R. 8159.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8
The single subject of this legislation is:
to prohibit the breaching of federally operated dams if such breach would result in the replacement energy resource occupying additional acreage, and for other purposes.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE:
H.R. 8160.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8
The single subject of this legislation is:
to prohibit the breaching of federally operated dams in certain circumstances, and for other purposes.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE:
H.R. 8161.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8
The single subject of this legislation is:
to prohibit the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of the Army from retiring an energy generation source if that retirement would raise customer electricity rates and decrease regional energy reliability by more than 10 percent, and for other purposes

By Ms. NORTON:
H.R. 8162.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 17 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution
The single subject of this legislation is:
This bill would address several retirement issues for current and former District of Columbia employees that resulted from the National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act of 1997.

By Ms. TENNEY:
H.R. 8163.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8
The single subject of this legislation is:
This bill would require DOD to procure domestically produced flatware

By Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana:
H.J. Res. 132.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

The single subject of this legislation is:
To express congressional disapproval of the rule: "Federal Acquisition Regulation: Use of Project Labor Agreements for Federal Construction Projects".

The single subject of this legislation is:
To express congressional disapproval of the rule: "Federal Acquisition Regulation: Use of Project Labor Agreements for Federal Construction Projects".

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

- H.R. 16: Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. MORELLE, Mr. SWALWELL, Ms. SHERRILL, Ms. HOULAHAN, Mrs. FOUSHEE, Ms. SPANBERGER, Mr. SCHNEIDER, and Mr. HUFFMAN.
- H.R. 175: Mr. CRENSHAW.
- H.R. 251: Ms. BROWNLEY.
- H.R. 431: Mr. STRONG.
- H.R. 619: Ms. MCCLELLAN, Ms. CLARKE of New York, and Ms. SCANLON.

- H.R. 669: Mr. GARAMENDI.
- H.R. 694: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.
- H.R. 807: Mr. COHEN.
- H.R. 945: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
- H.R. 1003: Mr. DELUZIO.
- H.R. 1097: Mr. SMITH of Nebraska.
- H.R. 1358: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
- H.R. 1413: Mr. SUOZZI.
- H.R. 1425: Mr. BABIN, Mr. CLOUD, and Mr. GIMENEZ.
- H.R. 1477: Mr. CARTWRIGHT and Mr. VEASEY.
- H.R. 1507: Mr. HUFFMAN.
- H.R. 1572: Ms. PINGREE and Mr. CARBAJAL.
- H.R. 1582: Mr. MOORE of Utah.
- H.R. 1584: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.
- H.R. 1787: Mr. ROSE and Mr. MEUSER.
- H.R. 1822: Mr. GOODEN of Texas and Mrs. LESKO.
- H.R. 2451: Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina.
- H.R. 2539: Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, and Mr. CROW.
- H.R. 2584: Mr. VAN ORDEN.
- H.R. 2630: Mrs. BEATTY.
- H.R. 2723: Ms. NORTON.
- H.R. 2748: Mr. SORENSEN.
- H.R. 2871: Mr. SCHNEIDER and Mr. LARSEN of Washington.
- H.R. 2894: Mr. GARAMENDI.
- H.R. 2930: Mr. MOORE of Alabama and Ms. JACKSON LEE.
- H.R. 3024: Mr. CARBAJAL.
- H.R. 3031: Mr. CROW.
- H.R. 3086: Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia, and Ms. BALINT.
- H.R. 3139: Mr. PALMER and Mr. VAN ORDEN.
- H.R. 3170: Ms. BROWNLEY.
- H.R. 3325: Mr. OGLES.
- H.R. 3375: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
- H.R. 3381: Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. TURNER, and Ms. SLOTKIN.
- H.R. 3537: Mr. KILDEE and Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
- H.R. 3647: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
- H.R. 3654: Mr. TIFFANY.
- H.R. 3773: Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas, Mr. WILLIAMS of New York, and Mr. MEUSER.
- H.R. 3910: Mr. POCAN.
- H.R. 4065: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
- H.R. 4121: Ms. STRICKLAND.
- H.R. 4126: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
- H.R. 4138: Mr. KIM of New Jersey.
- H.R. 4157: Mr. LANDSMAN, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, and Ms. SLOTKIN.
- H.R. 4178: Mr. D'ESPOSITO.
- H.R. 4189: Mr. AMO, Ms. LOFGREN, and Mr. CARSON.
- H.R. 4220: Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
- H.R. 4221: Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
- H.R. 4335: Ms. TLAI.
- H.R. 4569: Mr. STANTON.
- H.R. 4721: Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina.
- H.R. 4829: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.
- H.R. 5003: Mrs. NAPOLITANO and Ms. CROCKETT.
- H.R. 5037: Ms. SPANBERGER.
- H.R. 5061: Mr. CARBAJAL.
- H.R. 5062: Mr. CARBAJAL.
- H.R. 5104: Mr. RYAN.
- H.R. 5254: Mr. MCGARVEY.
- H.R. 5315: Ms. SALINAS.
- H.R. 5403: Mr. MCCORMICK, Mr. CAREY, and Mr. WITTMAN.
- H.R. 5500: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
- H.R. 5530: Mr. LAWLER and Mrs. PELTOLA.
- H.R. 5713: Mr. BIGGS.
- H.R. 5806: Mrs. LESKO.
- H.R. 5840: Mrs. RODGERS of Washington.
- H.R. 5871: Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ.
- H.R. 5879: Mr. SMUCKER.
- H.R. 5979: Ms. ROSS.
- H.R. 5995: Ms. CLARKE of New York.
- H.R. 6030: Mr. LANDSMAN.
- H.R. 6090: Mr. ESTES, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. LANDSMAN, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. WILLIAMS of New York, Mr. BEAN of Florida, Mrs. HOUCHIN, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mrs. CAMMACK, Mrs. GONZALEZ-COLON, Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas, Mr. BARR, and Mr. BALDERSON.

H.R. 6196: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
 H.R. 6257: Mr. DOGGETT.
 H.R. 6307: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.
 H.R. 6371: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.
 H.R. 6394: Ms. CHU.
 H.R. 6448: Mr. ESTES.
 H.R. 6468: Mr. NEGUSE.
 H.R. 6500: Ms. JACKSON LEE.
 H.R. 6592: Mr. COHEN.
 H.R. 6664: Mrs. TRAHAN.
 H.R. 6720: Mr. TRONE, Mr. VARGAS, and Ms. OMAR.
 H.R. 6727: Ms. JACKSON LEE.
 H.R. 6805: Ms. SCANLON.
 H.R. 6860: Ms. CRAIG.
 H.R. 6926: Ms. VAN DUYN, Mr. KUSTOFF, and Mr. GUEST.
 H.R. 6937: Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER.
 H.R. 7014: Mrs. HARSHBARGER.
 H.R. 7032: Ms. WEXTON, Ms. BALINT, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. ESPALLAT, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. ROY, Mr. ESTES, and Mr. GOOD of Virginia.
 H.R. 7108: Ms. BALINT.
 H.R. 7109: Mr. MURPHY.
 H.R. 7127: Mr. BOWMAN.
 H.R. 7185: Mr. D'ESPOSITO.
 H.R. 7198: Ms. SALAZAR.
 H.R. 7325: Mr. SCHIFF.
 H.R. 7360: Ms. STEFANIK.
 H.R. 7438: Ms. SEWELL, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Ms. SHERRILL, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE, Mr. SOTO, Mrs. TORRES of California, Mr. STANTON, Mrs. CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Ms. MENG, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Ms. MCCLELLAN, Mrs. STEEL, and Mr. CISCOMANI.

H.R. 7450: Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. NEHLS, Mr. HERN, and Mr. FLEISCHMANN.
 H.R. 7478: Mr. MOSKOWITZ.
 H.R. 7580: Ms. MACE and Mr. GOOD of Virginia.
 H.R. 7598: Ms. STANSBURY.
 H.R. 7714: Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
 H.R. 7764: Ms. MALLIOTAKIS, Mrs. RODGERS of Washington, and Mr. GOLDMAN of New York.
 H.R. 7770: Ms. SEWELL.
 H.R. 7771: Ms. SEWELL.
 H.R. 7775: Mr. CARSON.
 H.R. 7779: Mr. HORSFORD.
 H.R. 7802: Mr. BUCHANAN, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
 H.R. 7914: Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
 H.R. 7918: Mr. SCHIFF.
 H.R. 7921: Mr. TORRES of New York.
 H.R. 7925: Mr. GARBARINO.
 H.R. 7951: Mr. PALMER, Ms. MACE, and Ms. BOEBERT.
 H.R. 7959: Mr. FALLON.
 H.R. 7977: Mr. LALOTA and Mr. FITZPATRICK.
 H.R. 7994: Ms. NORTON and Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California.
 H.R. 8005: Mr. BARR and Ms. STANSBURY.
 H.R. 8007: Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
 H.R. 8013: Ms. OMAR.
 H.R. 8025: Mr. MORELLE and Mr. LAMBORN.
 H.R. 8041: Mr. SMITH of Missouri.
 H.R. 8043: Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
 H.R. 8051: Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina.
 H.R. 8061: Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia.
 H.R. 8104: Ms. STANSBURY.
 H.R. 8119: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
 H.R. 8141: Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Mrs. STEEL, and Mr. QUIGLEY.

H.J. Res. 107: Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina.
 H. Con. Res. 10: Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER.
 H. Con. Res. 101: Mr. SHERMAN and Mr. DESAULNIER.
 H. Res. 376: Mr. WILLIAMS of New York.
 H. Res. 839: Mr. MEUSER.
 H. Res. 978: Mr. MOSKOWITZ.
 H. Res. 1063: Ms. PINGREE.
 H. Res. 1153: Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas.
 H. Res. 1157: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

OFFERED BY MR. JORDAN

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on the Judiciary in H.R. 6090, the Antisemitism Awareness Act of 2023, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

OFFERED BY MR. STAUBER

The amendment to be offered by myself, or my designee, to H.R. 6285, the Alaska's Right to Produce Act of 2023, does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.