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No. 186

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 16, 2024.

I hereby appoint the Honorable SCOTT FITZGERALD 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 on 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.

BIDDING FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

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

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, today, I bid farewell to my amazing staff, some of whom are in the gallery, my wonderful colleagues on both sides of the aisle, constituents, and the myriad of unsung heroes to whom our entire Nation owes a debt of gratitude.

I thank them all from the top of my heart.

To my amazing family all around the country who has stood by me in times

of both great joy and pain: my mother, DeeDee, and my late father, Eddie; my brothers, Tyler, Jay, and Bobby; my sisters, Hutton and Lily; and my treasured daughters, Daniela and Pia, who compelled me to run for Congress in 2018: I love you all with all my heart.

I depart this august institution with a combination of deep gratitude, a little bit of attitude, and a healthy dose of American optimism.

To those who are pleased to see this affable but outspoken gadfly ride off into the sunset, I am sorry to say that my mission to restore common sense and a home for the exhausted majority of center left and center right Americans is just beginning. It is a mission whose roots were not planted here in Washington or back home in Minnesota but rather 8,000 miles away on Dragon Mountain in Pleiku, Vietnam, where my father, Captain Artie Pfefer, was killed fighting a war in which he did not believe, but for a country in which he believed very deeply.

Last year, I traveled to the very ground on which he took his last breath and where I took my first.

He died just 4 days after the Apollo 11 Moon landing, and I have often pictured him along with a half million other young soldiers looking up in awe that morning, many probably in tears, as two fellow Americans achieved the unthinkable. They got a glimpse of America at her very best up there while we were at our very worst down here.

I picture our predecessors in this very room voting to fund both that giant leap for mankind and that giant tragedy for mankind all in the same year.

On my flight home from Vietnam last year, I reflected on my father and the 1 million—yes, 1 million—Americans who have been killed in service to our country since 1776. I thought to myself they did not sacrifice their lives for Members of Congress to act like kindergartners.

They did not sacrifice their lives for Members of Congress to spend 10,000 hours per week begging for campaign cash used to eviscerate fellow Americans running for office.

They did not sacrifice their lives for Members of Congress to do nothing as 60 percent of Americans live paycheck to paycheck.

They did not sacrifice their lives for Congress to do nothing as 500,000 Americans go bankrupt every year from medical debt and 26 million go without any health insurance at all.

They did not sacrifice their lives for Congress to do nothing as 50,000 Americans die from gun violence and another 100,000 from overdoses every single year.

They did not sacrifice their lives for Congress to do nothing as wealthy industries shower millions upon millions of campaign cash on the very committee members who set the rules for their industries, and then Congress allows each party to collect dues from those committee members to fund their campaigns. It is legalized corruption, and it is unacceptable.

My father and 1 million other Americans did not sacrifice their lives for Congress to enable two private corporations, the two major parties, to maintain a virtual monopoly on our democracy, and having paid the ultimate price themselves, they surely did not sacrifice their lives for Members of Congress to prioritize their own self-protection over their principles.

However, they did sacrifice their lives because of decisions made in this very room by people just like us.

So, as I bid farewell, I humbly ask all the Members of the next Congress on both sides of the aisle to call on their better angels and act with courage, not cowardice: the courage to compete with our ideas rather than defeat one another with our ideologies, the courage to fix our problems rather than fixate on our politics, the courage to replace condemnation with invitation,

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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and the courage to replace confrontation with common sense.

In closing, I believe that we all have a choice to make—all of us. Do we wish to be a nation that metaphorically goes to the Moon together or one that goes to war against one another?

As a free people, that choice remains ours, all of ours. As Albert Einstein, a notable immigrant to the United States of America, famously said that the world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing.

I believe in us. I love you all, and I will see you down the road. Godspeed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds Members that the rules do not allow references to persons in the gallery.

AMERICA MUST LEAD 5G INNOVATION

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it has never been more critical that the United States lead the way on 5G innovation.

Not only would an expanded 5G network provide critical services and opportunities for Americans living in rural areas, but it would also provide the United States with the ability to continue leading the way on the development of wireless technology.

Allowing our adversaries to advance in future generations of wireless without us would erode our privacy, compromise the security of our networks, and lead to increased foreign influence in our communications.

The Promoting United States Wireless Leadership Act would help the U.S. take the necessary steps to safeguard our technological advantages. By bringing key leaders and stakeholders to the table, this bill would encourage a unified approach to set standards for all 5G networks.

By standardizing our approach, we can help ensure a greater certainty for both the provider and consumer.

As we look ahead, reliable high-speed connectivity will be vital for students who are doing their homework, for businesses connecting with their customers, for farmers in the fields, and for patients using telemedicine to heal from home.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation and help ensure that our wireless technologies continue to expand and serve the needs of the American people.

CONGRATULATING JUNIATA COLLEGE EAGLES
WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL TEAM

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate the Juniata College women's volleyball team on once again winning the NCAA Division III national championship and on their incredible achievement of winning 97 matches in a row.

This record number of consecutive wins is the result of determination.

Under the leadership of Coach Heather Pavlik, the Juniata Eagles once again completed their season with a perfect 35-0 record.

Equally as important as the team's success in volleyball is their success in the classroom.

Juniata's commitment to academic excellence is an example of how student athletes can make incredible achievements both on and off the court.

On behalf of everyone in Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I am proud to once again congratulate the women's volleyball team at Juniata on another outstanding season, and I look forward to their continued success.

EXECUTIVE OVERREACH DURING PRESIDENTIAL
TRANSITION

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, as the Biden administration comes to an end, we have seen continued attempts by the far left to enact major regulatory policies just as this administration is on its way out the door.

The American people have spoken and elected President Donald J. Trump to return to the White House. This is not the time for President Biden to take executive actions that provide student loan bailouts or implement Green New Deal policies.

If President Biden takes these executive actions at a time when the voters have made it clear that they are ready for change, we need to ensure that these rules are not permanent.

The Midnight Rules Relief Act would ensure that the American people are heard during a Presidential transition by allowing the Congressional Review Act to be used to overturn multiple Federal Rules in a single resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support the Midnight Rules Relief Act to put a stop to President Biden's executive overreach.

SENATE MUST REJECT RJK JR. FOR HHS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ROBERT GARCIA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on our colleagues in the Senate to reject Donald Trump's nomination of RFK Jr. as Secretary of Health and Human Services.

RFK Jr. has proven himself for decades to be a conspiracy theorist, and we cannot allow the critical work done by HHS and the doctors and medical professionals there to be undermined by someone with his record.

For those not familiar, RJK Jr. first has no scientific or medical credentials. Instead, he has spent his career fueling anti-vaccine movements around the world, including one in Samoa that contributed to a measles outbreak that killed dozens of people and made almost 6,000 sick, most of them children and infants.

RFK Jr. has falsely claimed vaccines cause autism and suggested that COVID health measures were worse than the Holocaust. He has also peddled conspiracy theories that chemicals in water are making children transgender and gay.

This is someone who has threatened to gut the National Institutes of Health, the Federal agency responsible for medical and public health research. They, along with the rest of HHS, do vital, nonpartisan work that impacts every American and every community, from pandemic preparedness to cancer research to resources for mental health and substance abuse.

There are real lives at stake. We just went through a pandemic that cost the lives of 1.3 million Americans, the single largest loss of life event in the modern era in our country and around the world.

We cannot allow at this moment to hand over the keys of public health to an extreme, unqualified, and dangerous nominee. The Senate must reject RJK Jr. for HHS.

□ 1215

SOCIETY IS LOSING ITS MORAL COMPASS

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

Mr. LOPEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the decay of the moral compass that our Nation is facing. The moral compass of faith, family, and self-resilience that this Nation was founded on is being treated as if it is a cheap suit or an old pair of shoes that needs to be discarded and replaced.

There is a national movement today that is focused on distorting the foundational values on which our great Nation was founded, values such as faith, family, and self-reliance. This movement is found in our schools; our military; our Federal, State, and local government; our churches; and in the public square.

Our Nation's values have been distorted to merely hollow words and are no longer seen as a foundational bedrock of our Nation.

When our educational system focuses on teaching our children that gender identity is more important than learning to read, write, or to do math, that is a sign that society is losing its moral compass.

When society and medical professionals promote the concept that God can make a mistake when it comes to gender and that only science can correctly assign the two genders of our adult brothers and sisters and to our children, that is a sign that society is losing its moral compass.

When society openly allows the labeling of the killing of babies as women's health or body autonomy, that is a sign of society losing its moral compass.

When man believes he has the ultimate authority to redefine marriage

and turn his back on traditional marriage between a man and a woman, that is a sign that society is losing its moral compass.

When lawmakers vote in favor of allowing biological men who are experiencing gender confusion to equally use women's facilities and compete in girls' sports, that is a sign of society losing its moral compass.

When the church decides to ignore its role in educating the people on the Biblical values that America was founded on, that is a sign that society is losing its moral compass.

Just last week, NANCY MACE, a Member of Congress, was physically assaulted in the Halls of Congress because she stands on a basic commonsense principle. The commonsense principle that caused her to be physically assaulted was her firm belief, as it is mine, that individuals experiencing gender confusion should not be allowed to utilize opposite facilities or participate in women's or girls' sports.

The majority of the American people share that commonsense belief and are thirsty for bold leaders who will openly defend our Nation's fundamental values. America needs and deserves strong leaders who are not afraid of fighting and speaking in the public square about regaining our country's moral compass.

Some of our brothers and sisters, instead of focusing on promoting our Republic's foundational moral compass, are fighting to ensure that government plays an overreaching role by dictating what America should think, eat, be educated on, and why they should be happy to pay more in taxes to fund the runaway spending of government.

Mr. Speaker, America is at a crossroads, and we, the people, through our Federal, State, and local elections, will determine the moral compass that will lead us into the future.

Our job here in the sacred Halls of Congress is to limit government and revitalize civil society. The \$36 trillion national debt is a sign that our country has lost its moral compass.

Self-reliance has given way to dependence, and a loss of respect for persons and property continues to spread like cancer.

In 1837, John O'Sullivan wrote: "The best government is that which governs least. . . . [Government] should be confined to the administration of justice, for the protection of the natural equal rights of the citizen and the preservation of the social order. In all other respects, the voluntary principle, the principle of freedom . . . affords the true golden rule."

Our Nation's founding documents were written with the unwavering understanding that the nature of government is force, not freedom. The language used in the founding principle was to limit the role of government to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Imagine an America where the elected officials understood the true role of

government and allowed us to live freely.

Imagine if every American believed in and followed the golden rule, as written in Luke 6:31: Do to others as you would have them do unto you.

Imagine an America where every individual not only believes in the American Dream, but that they can actually experience it.

Imagine an America that openly embraces the fundamental values that founded this great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, may God bless America.

CONGRESS MUST ENHANCE CAPITALISM'S SAFETY NET

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, as all Americans know, Social Security is the number one antipoverty program for the elderly of this country. Most people don't realize that it is also the number one antipoverty program for children in this country.

What is further annoying to most Americans is that it has been 54 years since Congress, who has the responsibility for doing so, has enhanced Social Security benefits. This has a direct impact on every district in the country.

In the Speaker's district, there are over 174,000 Social Security recipients, and 142,000 of them are retirees; 13,000-plus are disabled workers; 7,000-plus are widows; 3,000 are spouses; and over 7,000 are children.

Mr. Speaker, what most Members don't realize is the direct economic impact and economic development impact that this has on their district. For example, the Speaker's district receives \$353 million monthly for those 174,000 recipients.

Where do they spend that money, Mr. Speaker? They spend it right back in the districts where they live.

Nobody gets wealthy on Social Security, but it has been the mainstay to keep people out of poverty, both the elderly and children alike.

Congress has not taken any action to enhance those benefits since 1971. Richard Nixon was the President of the United States the last time this body, which is in charge of making sure that Americans receive this benefit, has taken any action to ensure that people in the Speaker's district and in mine and in all 435 districts receive Social Security benefits.

Here are the statistics: Over 70 million Americans rely on Social Security. For more than 35 million Americans, it is the only retirement benefit that they have. Americans are getting concerned by the day because 10,000 baby boomers a day become eligible for Social Security.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor to plead for Congress to take action. Have a vote. If Members have a better idea, they should put it forward.

President Trump has at least called for tax cuts. Most people don't realize

that, when they retire, all of a sudden, they are being double taxed because their Social Security is taxed. That is a good idea, but President Trump's plan doesn't pay for that.

When it is not paid for, the money comes directly out of the trust fund, therefore hurting everybody in the program because it will reduce Social Security benefits by 36 percent as soon as 2031. That is not a long way off, and this body of Congress has been woefully negligent in making sure it is speaking out on behalf of the American people and the citizens that we are sworn to serve.

This is capitalism's safety net. The reason that we are able to thrive as a Nation and be entrepreneurial in the system is because we have a safety net for our workforce. In the event that a business collapses or people get laid off or they don't have work, there is Social Security. That is the brilliance of Franklin Delano Roosevelt that is still with us, and it is embraced overwhelmingly by Democrats, Republicans, and unaffiliated persons.

It is time to act, Mr. Speaker.

REMEMBERING BATTLE OF THE BULGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oklahoma (Mrs. BICE) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BICE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today regarding correspondence from a young constituent of mine, Lauren Tappert, who expressed her desire to make a Federal holiday in recognition of World War II.

I was impressed by Lauren's patriotism and her initiative, especially given the fact that she is just in middle school.

This week, we remember one of World War II's most significant battles, the Battle of the Bulge. As Winston Churchill famously said: It is "undoubtedly the greatest American battle of the war."

The Battle of the Bulge, which occurred in the Ardennes Forest of Europe, lasted over a month. It is significant because it was the last major German offensive on the western front, ultimately ending in an Allied victory. In this defensive stand, the courage and fortitude of the American forces were challenged, but liberty ultimately prevailed.

I thank Lauren for taking the time to write to me and for placing special emphasis on a conflict that affected every American family and spanned the globe.

RECOGNIZING 233RD ANNIVERSARY OF RATIFICATION OF BILL OF RIGHTS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize

the 233rd anniversary of the ratification of the Bill of Rights.

Yesterday, we celebrated Bill of Rights Day, a day that highlights a cornerstone for our democracy.

Bill of Rights Day was established in 1941, when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued a proclamation referring to the document as: "The great American charter of personal liberty and human dignity."

Each year, on December 15, this day is used as an opportunity to reflect on the rights enshrined in our Constitution's first 10 amendments. Classrooms across the Nation use this day as an educational opportunity to further stress the importance of these rights to our Nation's young people.

The Bill of Rights was born out of a fierce debate between the Federalists and the anti-Federalists during the founding of our Republic. The Constitution itself laid the foundation for governance, but it was the Bill of Rights that ensured that government would always serve the people.

The Bill of Rights includes some of our Nation's most precious rights, including: freedom of speech, press, religion, assembly, petition, equal protection under the law, and limitations on the role of the Federal Government, just to name a few.

This Bill of Rights also reminds us of something deeper. Our unity as a Nation stems from our diversity of thought, belief, and expression. We may not always agree, but these rights ensure that every voice can be heard, every faith can be practiced, and every dream can be pursued.

This year marked the 233rd anniversary since the ratification of the Bill of Rights. Now, many years later, these rights are just as important as they were when our Founding Fathers penned them.

Let us honor the wisdom of our Founders and the sacrifices of countless Americans who have fought to uphold these freedoms.

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 28 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. BENTZ) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

Rear Admiral Gregory Todd, Chief of Chaplains, United States Navy, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

Eternal Father, ruler of wind and wave, You establish the heavens and

order all of creation. Behold Your humble people, seeking only to serve and not to be served. Grant all who labor in this House a heart of humble service.

While the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps celebrates 249 years of a sacred mission of caring for the souls of sailors, marines, coastguardsmen, and their families, we are recently reminded of the relevance of our mission as U.S. sailors in the Red Sea have faced the enemy in combat, wielding the sword for our Nation and facing their own mortality. Grant Your divine protection to all of our ships at sea and all who labor to defend our Nation. Keep their families in Your care while they are deployed, and grant them a joyful, joyful reunion.

Lord, as Navy chaplains seek to care for our flock, by Your mercy, send us more chaplains to fill our ranks. The need is great, but the laborers are few. Grant us more Navy chaplains to care for our Nation's greatest treasure: our sons and daughters.

Into Your divine hands we commit our prayer, trusting in Your divine mercy.

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. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. MORELLE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MORELLE 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.

RESIGNATION FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 14, 2024.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I hereby submit my resignation, effective at 11:59 p.m. December 14, 2024, as United States Representative for the At-Large District of North Dakota.

Sincerely,

KELLY ARMSTRONG,
Member of Congress.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 14, 2024.

Hon. DOUG BURGUM,
Governor, State of North Dakota,
Bismarck, ND.

DEAR GOVERNOR BURGUM: I hereby submit my resignation, effective at 11:59 p.m. De-

ember 14, 2024, as United States Representative for the At-Large District of North Dakota. Attached is the letter that I submitted to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives. It has been the honor of my lifetime to represent the great people of North Dakota for the last six years.

Sincerely,

KELLY ARMSTRONG,
Member of Congress.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the resignation of the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. ARMSTRONG), the whole number of the House is 430.

IN RECOGNITION OF NITTANY LEATHERNECKS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Nittany Leathernecks' contribution to Christmas throughout the Commonwealth.

The Nittany Leathernecks Detachment of the Marine Corps League is a community service organization composed of active, retired, and former marines.

Since 1947, the mission of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program has been to collect new, unwrapped toys during October, November, and December each year and to distribute them as Christmas gifts to less-fortunate children in the community.

The Nittany Leathernecks Detachment coordinates Toys for Tots for Centre County. The detachment works with the Centre County Adult Services office, which coordinates with seven Centre County food pantries to identify needy children and distribute toys.

The Nittany Leathernecks campaign annually provides a Christmas gift experience to over 9,000 children.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the selfless marines for their service to our country and their dedication to uplifting our communities. I wish them a merry Christmas.

CALLING FOR CONSERVATION OF BERING RIVER COALFIELD

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a piece of property in Alaska. Southeast Alaska is called the Copper River Delta. There is a coalfield there called the Bering River coalfield.

Mr. Speaker, this goes back to Teddy Roosevelt's days as a conservation effort. The United States Government

has an opportunity to purchase the coal rights of this field. I thank the gentleman, Joo Shin, and the KADCO board of directors for staying at the table. The appraisal came in at \$6 million. The Korean owner, Joo Shin, wants \$8 million for the property.

We have an opportunity, and I believe that Members on both sides of the aisle could agree by acclamation with this conservation effort. The United States Government cannot pay more than the appraised value unless we, in Congress, authorize them to do that. The difference is between \$6 million and \$8 million.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues, either now or in the future, to help the United States of America set aside the Copper River Delta area, the Bering River coalfield, in perpetuity for this conservation effort.

GEORGIANS PROTEST FARCE

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the world appreciates the courage of Georgian President, Salome Zourabichvili, standing strong for the people of Georgia, opposing the illegitimate Presidential election Saturday in Tbilisi.

For the first time, the President was not chosen in a national election, but by a vote of the fraudulently elected parliament. Lithuanian Parliamentarian Rasa Juknevičienė observed for the European Parliament that selecting puppet, Mikheil Kavelashvili, was a farce.

Former Georgian Ambassador Natalie Sabanadze condemned Kavelashvili as a puppet of war criminal Putin, who has cosponsored the Russian-devised foreign agent registration law, destroying democracy.

The people of Georgia will prevail over Putin as Putin has lost in Moldova, been rejected in Romania, and is being expelled from Syria.

In conclusion, God bless our troops as the global war on terrorism continues. Open borders for dictators puts all Americans at risk of more 9/11 attacks imminent, as warned by the FBI. Trump will reinstate existing laws to protect American families with peace through strength.

Best wishes for the continued success of Ric Grenell, selected by President Trump to be the presidential envoy for special missions.

HONORING ROBERT E. MILSTEAD

(Mr. BABIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a great American and a Texan, Robert E. Milstead, who passed away on December 6, just 1 week shy of his 97th birthday.

Mr. Milstead served his country as a career Air Force officer, with over 5,500

flying hours. He later joined First State Bank in Abilene, Texas, and became active in his community.

Mr. Milstead was a proud graduate of the University of Texas, having served as a Silver Spur and a Pi Kappa Alpha president.

He is survived by his loving wife of 74 years, Jane, who he met in college. They raised two incredible sons, retired U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant General Robert “Boomer” Milstead, Jr., and retired Austin Police Department Officer Randy Milstead.

He is survived by 7 grandchildren, including former communications director, Jimmy Milstead, of my staff; and 20 great grandchildren.

Mr. Milstead lived a full life and was greatly beloved. He will be missed, but his legacy will long endure.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 12, 2024.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 12, 2024, at 3:55 p.m.

That the Senate passed S. 920.
That the Senate passed S. 3857.
That the Senate passed S. 4000.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KEVIN F. McCUMBER,
Acting Clerk.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 13, 2024.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 13, 2024, at 12:00 p.m.

That the Senate passed S. 59.
That the Senate passed S. 141.
That the Senate passed S. 2513.
That the Senate passed S. 2783.
That the Senate passed S. 2908.
That the Senate passed S. 4365.
That the Senate passed S. 4370.
That the Senate passed S. 5046.

That the Senate passed with amendments H.R. 8663.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KEVIN F. McCUMBER,
Acting Clerk.

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.

SECURE HANDLING OF INTERNET ELECTRONIC DONATIONS ACT

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 9488) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to require the disclosure of the card verification value as a condition of the acceptance of online contributions made through the use of credit or debit cards in elections for Federal office and to prohibit the acceptance of contributions made through the use of gift cards and prepaid credit cards in such elections, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 9488

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 “Secure Handling of Internet Electronic Donations Act” or the “SHIELD Act”.

SEC. 2. REQUIRING DISCLOSURE OF CARD VERIFICATION VALUE AS CONDITION OF ACCEPTANCE OF ONLINE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE USING CREDIT OR DEBIT CARDS IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS.

Section 302 of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (52 U.S.C. 30102) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(j)(1) No political committee shall accept any Internet credit or debit card contribution unless—

“(A) the individual or entity making such contribution is required, at the time such individual makes such contribution, to disclose the card verification value of such credit or debit card; and

“(B)(i) the mailing address of the individual or entity is located in the United States; or

“(ii) in the case of a contribution made by an individual whose mailing address is located outside of the United States, the individual provides the committee with the applicable information described in paragraph (2).

“(2) The applicable information described in this paragraph is as follows:

“(A) In the case of an individual who is a citizen or national of the United States—

“(i) the United States mailing address the individual uses for voter registration purposes;

“(ii) a copy of the individual’s United States passport; or

“(iii) a copy of a comparable acceptable identification document, or the unique identifying number from such a document, for the individual.

“(B) In the case of a contribution made by an individual who is lawfully admitted for permanent residence, as defined by section 101(a)(20) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(20)—

“(i) a copy of the individual’s permanent resident card; or

“(ii) or a copy of a comparable acceptable identification document issued by the Department of Homeland Security.

“(3) A political committee that accepts any Internet credit or debit card contribution as a recurring contribution shall require the individual or entity making such contribution to comply with the requirements of this subsection for the first such contribution, but shall not require the individual or entity to provide the information identified in paragraphs (1) and (2) for subsequent recurring contributions made using the same credit or debit card as the initial contribution.

“(4) A political committee that stores or saves, or arranges to store or save, any credit or debit card information shall require the individual or entity making such contribution to comply with the requirements of this subsection for the first such contribution or at the time of storing or saving such information, but shall not require the individual or entity to provide the information identified in paragraphs (1) and (2) for subsequent contributions made using the same credit or debit card as the initial contribution.

“(5) An Internet credit or debit card contribution received by a political committee made through the use of a digital wallet shall be treated as complying with the requirements of this subsection.

“(6) Notwithstanding subsection (b) or (c), in the case of an Internet credit or debit card contribution—

“(A) no later than 10 days after receiving the contribution, the person who receives the contribution shall forward to the treasurer such contribution, the name and address of the person making the contribution, and the date of receipt; and

“(B) the treasurer of a political committee shall keep an account of the name and address of any person making any such contribution, together with the date and amount of such contribution by any person consistent with applicable regulations of the Commission, including regulations relating to the period for which contribution records must be preserved and the anonymity of certain contributors.

“(7)(A) A treasurer of a political committee shall determine whether a contribution is in compliance with this subsection. If the treasurer is unable to verify that the acceptance of the contribution was not in violation of this subsection, the treasurer shall, not later than 30 days after the receipt of the contribution, refund the contribution to the individual or entity making the contribution.

“(B) If the treasurer of a political committee shows that best efforts have been used to comply with the requirements of this paragraph, the committee shall be considered in compliance with this subsection.

“(8) In this subsection—

“(A) the term ‘Internet credit or debit card contribution’ means a contribution that—

“(i) is made using a credit or debit card; and

“(ii) is received through an Internet website or application; and

“(B) the term ‘digital wallet’ means a software application that stores payment or account information to facilitate traditional payments that use bank and credit card information.”.

SEC. 3. PROHIBITING ACCEPTANCE OF CONTRIBUTIONS MADE USING GIFT CARDS IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS.

Section 302 of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (52 U.S.C. 30102), as amended by section 2(a), is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(k)(1) No political committee shall knowingly accept a contribution made through the use of a gift certificate or store gift card,

as such terms are defined, respectively, under section 915(a) of the Electronic Fund Transfer Act.

“(2)(A) A treasurer of a political committee shall determine whether a contribution is in compliance with this subsection. If the treasurer is unable to verify that the acceptance of the contribution was not in violation of this subsection, the treasurer shall, not later than 30 days after the receipt of the contribution, refund the contribution to the individual or entity making the contribution.

“(B) If the treasurer of a political committee shows that best efforts have been used to comply with the requirements of this subsection, the committee shall be considered in compliance with this subsection.”.

SEC. 4. PROHIBITING AIDING OR ABETTING MAKING OF CONTRIBUTION IN THE NAME OF ANOTHER.

Section 320 of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (52 U.S.C. 30122) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: “No person shall knowingly direct, help, or assist any person in making a contribution in the name of another person.”.

SEC. 5. REGULATIONS.

(a) DEADLINE.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Federal Election Commission shall promulgate regulations to carry out the amendments made by this Act.

(b) CONSULTATION WITH CREDIT CARD PAYMENT NETWORKS.—In promulgating regulations under subsection (a) to carry out the amendments made by this Act, the Commission shall consult with representatives of payment card networks, as defined under section 921(c) of the Electronic Fund Transfer Act (15 U.S.C. 1693o-2(c)), and other relevant stakeholders.

SEC. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments made by this Act shall apply with respect to contributions made after the expiration of the 90-day period which begins on the date the Commission promulgates regulations under section 5.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MORELLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STEIL. 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, H.R. 9488.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I share my heartfelt condolences to the victims of the tragic events that took place at Abundant Life Christian School in Madison, Wisconsin, this morning.

We continue to monitor the situation, but we are all thankful to the first responders, the men and women of law enforcement, and medical professionals who responded and answered the call. We keep all of them, the first responders, as well as the victims, in our prayers today.

Mr. Speaker, coming back to the matter at hand, across the political

spectrum we are seeing an increase in online political fundraising. Serious questions have been raised related to how criminals and, in particular, international criminals can abuse our financial and campaign finance system. We must ensure online fundraising platforms cannot be abused.

Today, I am proud to support my bill, H.R. 9488, the Secure Handling of Internet Electronic Donations Act, or the SHIELD Act.

The SHIELD Act will strengthen donor verification standards for political committees. The legislation will prohibit political committees from accepting online contributions from credit or debit cards without disclosure of the card verification value, or CVV, and the billing address associated with the card.

Additionally, the SHIELD Act would prohibit political committees from accepting contributions from gift cards, like those bought over the counter.

Finally, the SHIELD Act will strengthen existing law that prohibits individuals from making a contribution in the name of someone else.

With the SHIELD Act as law, the FEC will have the authority to pursue individuals who knowingly break the law. This suggestion has been a top bipartisan legislative recommendation from the Federal Election Commission for years, and I am proud this legislation adopts that recommendation.

As chairman of the Committee on House Administration, my focus has been on increasing participation and restoring confidence in our elections.

Nearly a year ago, my committee launched an investigation into ActBlue, a major online fundraising platform.

□ 1415

At the time, ActBlue did not require a card verification value, or CVV. That is that three- or four-digit code on the back of the credit card that you have to use almost anytime you transact online. It wasn't used in that case in order to make political contributions.

Requiring the CVV is standard practice across the e-commerce industry to reduce fraud and prevent unlawful foreign transactions. It is a necessary security measure that ensures the person making the donation is actually in physical possession of the card.

After ActBlue confirmed that it did not require a CVV in order to make an online contribution, I sent a letter to the FEC urging them to initiate emergency rulemaking to require that political committees, like ActBlue, require the CVV for donors to make online contributions.

I also urged the FEC to initiate a rulemaking process to prohibit political committees from accepting online contributions from gift cards.

For too long now, Americans have grown weary of our election system. We are constantly hearing reports of how foreign actors are attempting to influence our elections. The SHIELD

Act makes it more difficult for foreign entities to improperly influence our elections through online fundraising platforms.

Keeping foreign funding out of our elections helps restore confidence in our election system. Greater confidence in our elections leads to greater participation, which is a good thing for the whole country.

I thank Representatives STEPHANIE BICE, LAUREL LEE, ANTHONY D'ESPOSITO, GREG MURPHY, and KEN CALVERT for their work and support on this important legislation. I believe that keeping foreign influence out of our elections is an idea we can all get behind.

I also thank Ranking Member MORELLE, my Democratic colleagues on the Committee on House Administration, and the committee staff for working together on this important piece of legislation.

Americans deserve free, fair, and secure elections. The SHIELD Act will bring us one step closer to making sure that happens. We should pass the SHIELD Act to keep foreign funding out of our elections.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I also share my thoughts with the folks at Abundant Life Christian School, and certainly to the students, the faculty, the staff, and the parents, and keep them very close in our hearts and very much in our prayers.

Mr. Speaker, I speak this afternoon in support of H.R. 9488, as amended, the Secure Handling of Internet Electronic Donations Act, and I extend my thanks to Chairman STEIL and his entire staff for their collaborative, bipartisan work to reach consensus on this bill before us.

House Democrats care deeply about the integrity of our elections. That will always be our North Star. Preventing fraudulent fundraising practices is a critical endeavor.

This bill would provide additional privacy and security protections for Americans who choose to engage in our democratic process by donating to political campaigns online. We are grateful, again, to the chair and his staff for agreeing to a number of changes we suggested that we believe were important revisions to the bill.

I will just review those briefly for the record here. For example, it includes changes to continue allowing recipients of Social Security and veterans' benefits to participate in the political process through small money donations; changes that would allow donors to continue to simplify the political donation process by scheduling recurring contributions and using saved credit card information; changes that further security without hampering innovation in how we finance our campaigns by creating special rules for contributions through digital wallets;

and changes incorporating an FEC bipartisan legislative recommendation to prohibit aiding or abetting the making of a contribution in the name of another individual. This provision codifies a regulation first issued in 1989. It includes changes to give the FEC time to make appropriate regulations to ensure that payment processors and online platforms can continue to securely enable political donations.

At the same time, I will make sure Americans understand that our political contribution system is currently safe and secure. ActBlue, for example, which enables Americans to easily engage in our political process, is a platform that is already extremely secure and numerous safeguards are provided for donors.

ActBlue monitors activity on its platform to ensure that impermissible contributions are promptly identified and rejected. These existing measures prevent potential foreign contributions, protect donors from financial fraud, and identify fraudulent online behavior.

This bill supports the already safe online donation system. Americans can continue to trust that our elections, our political systems, generally speaking, are free, fair, and unaffected by fraud.

Providing credit and debit card CVVs in online contributions will help Americans feel secure in their contributions, but Americans should understand that the provision of CVVs this bill facilitates is in addition to numerous other antifraud security measures that already protect credit and debit card donors.

Regrettably, we have seen recent disinformation campaigns against the platform. Allegations of fraudulent donor schemes involving ActBlue, however, have been discredited and criticized by campaign finance experts.

These campaigns distort and often misunderstand campaign finance data.

I want all Americans to know our system is safe and that you should feel free to participate in it. That is what my support for this measure is all about today. We can further strengthen the security of our online donation systems and inspire donors who feel moved to participate.

I appreciate the work that has gone into this bill, the opportunity to ensure the record correctly reflects the secure reality of online donation systems, and I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

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

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

Mr. MORELLE. Mr. Speaker, as I said, we support this bill strongly here. This is a critical priority for us to make sure Americans continue to have safety and feel confident in their system.

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

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this bill. This is one step forward in making sure that online contribution platforms are secure from foreign interference, and I encourage passage of the bill.

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 Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 9488, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to require the disclosure of the card verification value as a condition of the acceptance of online contributions made through the use of credit or debit cards in elections for Federal office and to prohibit the acceptance of contributions made through the use of gift cards in such elections, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NO CONGRESSIONALLY OBLIGATED RECURRING REVENUE USED AS PENSIONS TO INCARCERATED OFFICIALS NOW ACT

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 932) to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for the halt in pension payments for Members of Congress sentenced for certain offenses, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 932

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 "No Congressionally Obligated Recurring Revenue Used as Pensions To Incarcerated Officials Now Act" or the "No CORRUPTION Act".

SEC. 2. FORFEITURE OF PENSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 8332(o) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (4), (5), and (6) as paragraphs (5), (6), and (7), respectively;

(2) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following:

"(4)(A) Subject to subparagraph (B), an individual convicted of an offense described in paragraph (2) shall not be eligible to receive any payment of an annuity pursuant to the retirement system under this subchapter or chapter 84, except that this sentence applies only to such payments based on service rendered as a Member (irrespective of when rendered).

"(B) If the conviction of an individual described in subparagraph (A) is overturned on appeal by a court of competent jurisdiction, the individual shall receive payments that the individual would have received but for the application of subparagraph (A).

"(C) This paragraph applies only to a conviction that occurs after the date of enactment of the No Congressionally Obligated

Recurring Revenue Used as Pensions To Incarcerated Officials Now Act.”;

(3) in paragraph (5)(B)(i), as so redesignated, by striking “paragraph (5)” and inserting “paragraph (6)”;

(4) in paragraph (6), as so redesignated, by striking “paragraph (4)(B)” and inserting “paragraph (5)(B)”.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 719(e)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “section 8332(o)(5)” and inserting “section 8332(o)(6)”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MORELLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and submit extraneous material on the bill, S. 932, the No CORRUPTION Act.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this measure will halt annuity payments for Members of Congress sentenced for public corruption charges. This includes charges of bribery of public officials and witnesses, acting as an agent of a foreign principal, or engaging in conspiracy to commit an offense to defraud the United States.

Under current law, a Member of Congress who is convicted on public corruption charges is prohibited from receiving their congressional pension. That said, Members may continue receiving pension payments while appealing their conviction.

The No CORRUPTION Act addresses this gap and will withhold pension payments immediately upon conviction. If the conviction is overturned on appeal, the pension will be restored. The Member will be able to receive any benefits withheld.

This is a commonsense measure for the House to consider and pass.

Let’s be clear: A Member of Congress convicted of public corruption charges should not be paid at taxpayer expense. The bipartisan measure was introduced by Senators RICK SCOTT and JACKY ROSEN and passed the Senate this summer. I am pleased to bring the measure forward to ensure accountability for Members of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of S. 932, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 932.

Passed with unanimous consent by the Senate, S. 932 will close loopholes and tighten an already existing prohibition on Members collecting retirement benefits that were accrued during their time in Congress if they are con-

victed of a crime of public corruption committed during congressional service.

Currently, convicted former Members can continue to collect their government pension while going through the judicial appeals process.

This bill ends that practice.

Public service is often referred to as a “higher calling,” and there is no greater professional privilege than to be elected to this body. By sending us here, our constituents place an enormous amount of trust in us, and it is our obligation to reward that trust by carrying out our constitutional responsibilities to them with honor and integrity.

That is the contract we agree to when we ask for someone’s vote and they give it to us. That compact is the keystone of a legitimate government. It is what separates a democracy from a kleptocracy.

The overwhelming majority of our colleagues who serve do so with integrity. They are here for the right reasons. They honor the oath we all swear. They use the powers of the office to further the interests of their constituents, not to unjustly enrich themselves.

For those who don’t, we must send a clear and unequivocal message that corruption will not be tolerated. For the sake of the country, it cannot be tolerated, and this bill sends that message.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN), my friend, for his leadership on this as well as all my colleagues. I certainly thank the chair for his bipartisan work on this.

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

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN) to speak on the bill.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman STEIL and Congressman MORELLE for leading the charge on this.

Like many things, the public does not know the dollars that are going to politicians who corrupt the system, game the system, and then get paid for it, as Congressman STEIL and Congressman MORELLE mentioned.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Senate companion to my legislation, the No CORRUPTION Act. This legislation gives us an opportunity to rectify the abuse of taxpayer dollars.

Under current law, Members of Congress who have been convicted of various crimes related to public corruption remain eligible to receive a taxpayer-funded pension until all avenues have been exhausted. This can take years, and it has taken years. Even if the appeal is unsuccessful, there is no clawback on the funds that have been wrongly paid. It is in the hands of the politician who violated their oath when they came to Congress.

The No CORRUPTION Act fixes that loophole by immediately stripping a

Member’s pension upon initial conviction rather than final conviction. If an appeal was successful, the money halted by this legislation would be paid back fully so the Member is not out the money.

With this simple reform, taxpayer money is not given to criminals, and the interest of taxpayers is balanced with the rights of the accused.

Americans would be outraged if they knew about the various perks that former Members of Congress, many who have been in the news recently, receive. Pension payments to those who have been convicted of a crime is yet another example of wasteful spending that needs to be terminated, and it needs to be terminated now.

It is time for Members of Congress to start acting like everyday Americans, not elite politicians sheltered by their own rules.

Those who serve in Congress—and it is such an honor to serve in this body—should be held to the highest of standards in order to instill trust and confidence in our government. Anyone who does not measure up should not receive a taxpayer-funded pension, which for some Members can surpass \$70,000 per year.

The Speaker pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Senators JACKY ROSEN and RICK SCOTT for their bipartisan work in getting this legislation passed by unanimous consent in the Senate, and I urge my colleagues to do the same and pass it.

□ 1430

Mr. MORELLE. Mr. Speaker, I again thank my friend, Mr. NORMAN, for doing this. I think most people watching this would find it hard to believe this wasn’t already the law of the United States, but we are going to do that. I thank him for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I will simply say that this is important in building and rebuilding the trust that Americans, in some cases, have lost in this institution. I am grateful for this.

I thank my colleague and dear friend, the chairman of this committee, for bringing the bill forward. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague, Mr. NORMAN, for his work on this commonsense legislation. It is good to see, in the home stretch of the year, that we are still able to get some commonsense legislation across the floor of the House and, hopefully, signed into law in the near future, as this bill already passed the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage 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 Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 932.

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.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE RECORDS OF CONGRESS SUNSET ACT OF 2024

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 9489) to sunset the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 9489

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress Sunset Act of 2024”.

SEC. 2. MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION OF THE RECORDS OF CONGRESS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term “Archivist” means the Archivist of the United States;

(2) the term “Clerk” means the Clerk of the House of Representatives;

(3) the term “Director” means the Director of the Center for Legislative Archives of the National Archives, or any successor thereto;

(4) the term “Member of Congress” means a Member of the Senate or the House of Representatives, a Delegate to the House of Representatives, and the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico; and

(5) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Senate.

(b) REPORTING.—Not later than February 1 of the second calendar year beginning after the date of enactment of this Act, and every calendar year thereafter, the Director shall submit to the Archivist, the Secretary, and the Clerk a report on the management and preservation of the records of Congress during the previous year.

(c) REVIEW.—The Archivist, the Secretary, and the Clerk shall meet to review the management and preservation of the records of Congress and Members of Congress—

(1) not later than 60 days after the date on which the Director submits a report under subsection (b); and

(2) not later than 180 days after the date on which an individual is appointed to the position of Archivist, Secretary, or Clerk.

(d) SUNSET OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—Effective on the date that is 60 days after enactment, title 44 of the United States Code is amended—

(1) by striking chapter 27;

(2) by striking the table of sections relating to chapter 27; and

(3) in the table of chapters, by striking the item relating to chapter 27.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MORELLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and in-

clude extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 9489.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 9489, the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress Sunset Act. This measure will sunset an outdated advisory committee and replace it with meaningful reporting requirements.

The Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress was created in 1990 to assist with management and preservation. Since then, the advisory committee has released six detailed reports and continues to meet semiannually. This advisory committee has successfully met its purpose of advising Congress on records management and preservation.

Today, the House Clerk, Secretary of the Senate, and National Archives representatives regularly connect on records management. This close working relationship renders the regular convening of the advisory committee as a check-the-box exercise.

Based on feedback we received from House officers and advisory committee members, this legislation sunsets the advisory committee and replaces it with reporting requirements of the House, Senate, and Center of the Legislative Archives. This will ensure records management and preservation while saving taxpayer dollars on repetitive convenings.

I would like to take a moment to thank the House Clerk and their team for their work on this advisory committee.

I also would like to recognize the service of Danna Bell, the House Clerk’s appointee to the advisory committee, who passed away earlier this year. Ms. Bell was a librarian, archivist, former president of the Society of American Archivists, and a helpful resource for our team as we learned more about this advisory committee. She was a dedicated public servant committed to service. I offer my condolences to her family, friends, and colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 9489, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 9489. I also echo the words by my colleague and friend, Mr. STEIL, regarding the life of Danna Bell, who worked here in the House. She had a long record of many contributions to not only this institution but our country.

I rise in support of H.R. 9489, the bipartisan legislation that would sunset the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress, allowing us to allocate our limited resources more efficiently. The advisory committee, as my friend has indicated, was estab-

lished in 1990 and was tasked with reviewing and advising Congress and the National Archives on the management and preservation of congressional records.

The House Clerk, one of the committee’s leaders, has suggested it sunset, as it has fulfilled its primary objectives and is no longer necessary for addressing the evolving challenges of preserving congressional records.

Over the past 34 years, advancements in technology and the increasing volume of materials to be preserved have dramatically changed, and the landscape of record preservation has changed with it.

By disbanding this advisory committee, we can redirect valuable resources toward enhancing modern archiving practices while saving taxpayer dollars. As we all know, congressional resources are finite—I think we know that all too well—and need to be used efficiently to ensure the continued success of this institution and its service on behalf of the American people.

I extend my thanks to the House Clerk, the Honorable Kevin McCumber, and his entire team for their leadership on this initiative.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank my colleagues and the staff for doing this and for the leadership of the Clerk’s Office to find a way for us to end practices that are no longer useful and allow us to be able to focus more on the challenges we face moving forward.

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

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr. MORELLE, for his work on this. As we all know, in the United States House of Representatives, actually sunset almost anything is one of the most challenging projects you can do, and I am proud to say that we have accomplished that with this piece of legislation.

The process involved a lot of work from the Clerk and others to make sure this was done. A little bit of efficiency in the House can go a long way. Take the wins where you get them.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of sunseting this advisory committee, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 9489.

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.

HOUSE OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL MODERNIZATION ACT

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 9487) to amend the Legislative

Reorganization Act of 1970 to authorize the Legislative Counsel of the House of Representatives to designate more than one of the attorneys of the Office of the Legislative Counsel as a Deputy Legislative Counsel, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 9487

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 "House Office of Legislative Counsel Modernization Act".

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION OF MULTIPLE DEPUTY LEGISLATIVE COUNSELS.

(a) DESIGNATION.—Section 522(b)(1) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 (2 U.S.C. 282a(b)(1)) is amended—

(1) by amending the first sentence to read as follows: "The Legislative Counsel shall designate one or more of the attorneys appointed under subsection (a) as a Deputy Legislative Counsel."; and

(2) in the second sentence, by striking "the Deputy Legislative Counsel shall perform the functions of the Legislative Counsel." and inserting "the functions of the Legislative Counsel shall be performed by a Deputy Legislative Counsel. If there is more than one Deputy Legislative Counsel, the Deputy Legislative Counsel who shall perform such functions shall be determined in accordance with the order specified in a notice filed with the Speaker and the Minority Leader of the House by the Legislative Counsel.".

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 522(b)(2) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 282a(b)(2)) is amended by striking "Deputy Legislative Counsel" and inserting "Deputy Legislative Counsels".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MORELLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STEIL. 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. 9487, the House Office of Legislative Counsel Modernization Act.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support H.R. 9487, the House Office of Legislative Counsel Modernization Act.

Originally called the Legislative Drafting Service, the Office of the Legislative Counsel has been providing legislative drafting services to the House for over 100 years. Since its inception, the office has helped countless Members of Congress turn their legislative ideas into thoughtful, meaningful bills and amendment text.

This legislation addresses a need raised by the Legislative Counsel team to help manage their team of experts. It would allow the designation of more

than one Deputy Legislative Counsel to help manage their office. Passage would give the Legislative Counsel flexibility to meet staffing needs and handle vacancies as they arise.

This small change would allow the Legislative Counsel to name one deputy to fulfill leadership responsibilities for the office upon a vacancy or any other issue. A well-equipped Legislative Counsel Office helps us as Members deliver for our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have worked with Ranking Member MORELLE on this effort to assist our Legislative Counsel. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 9487, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 9487. This bipartisan bill amends the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 to clarify the responsibilities of the Deputy Legislative Counsel and grant the Legislative Counsel the authority to designate a deputy to carry out their duties in the event of an absence or vacancy in the position.

We may be repeating ourselves quite a bit here, but I think that just indicates our support and cooperation that we were able to generate to pass this package of bills, which I am grateful for.

The Office of the Legislative Counsel, as my learned colleague has indicated, plays an essential role in supporting the work of Congress by providing impartial and confidential drafting services to Members and committees. The office is critical in our ability to function as an institution, and it enables us to work more efficiently on behalf of the American people.

The expert attorneys within the Office of the Legislative Counsel draft tens of thousands of bills and resolutions each Congress. That number grows exponentially when accounting for the many drafts of measures as they are refined, as well as the increasing number of amendments submitted by Members to the various committees.

I would like to take a moment to briefly recognize two of those attorneys right now. First, I thank Wade Ballou for his more than 40 years of service with the office. That service culminated with his appointment to Legislative Counsel in 2016. Wade recently announced his retirement. I wish him well as he moves into the next phase of his professional and personal life.

I also recognize the Deputy Legislative Counsel, Noah Wofsy, for his outstanding leadership. He and his team do a masterful job of supporting the House's legislative agenda, including the Committee on House Administration in particular. We would not have been able to bring this measure to the floor or any others without their dedication, patience, and commitment to task.

As the demands on the Office of the Legislative Counsel will undoubtedly

continue to grow, it is vital we provide its attorneys with the support necessary for them to perform their jobs effectively. This includes ensuring the office has succession plans in place to maintain the continuity of congressional operations.

While this legislation may seem modest in scope, it is a critical step in strengthening the resilience of our institution, so I strongly urge my colleagues to support the measure.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank my friend and colleague, Mr. STEIL, chairman of our committee, and the staff for their work on this.

Mr. Speaker, for all the reasons previously articulated, I think this is a fine piece of legislation that helps move the institution forward. I encourage all of my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this piece of legislation. As my colleague said, it may be modest in scope, but sometimes you take a small step forward when you can get it.

I am appreciative of all those who work in the Legislative Counsel's Office. My colleague recognized a few by name, and I second that comment. I think it is important to recognize the hard work that goes on inside the Office of the Legislative Counsel. This opportunity to modernize it to allow it to operate a little more efficiently is well worth our support.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 9487.

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.

SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL CONGRESSIONAL TIME CAPSULE ACT

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6394) to provide for the creation of a Congressional time capsule in commemoration of the semiquincentennial of the United States, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6394

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 "Semiquincentennial Congressional Time Capsule Act".

SEC. 2. SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL CONGRESSIONAL TIME CAPSULE.

(a) CREATION BY ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL.—The Architect of the Capitol shall create a Congressional time capsule, to be

known as the “Semiquincentennial Congressional Time Capsule” (in this Act referred to as the “Time Capsule”).

(b) CONTENTS.—

(1) DETERMINATION BY CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP.—The Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Office of the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, Office of the Majority Leader of the Senate, and Office of the Minority Leader of the Senate shall jointly determine the contents of the Time Capsule, taking into account the requirements of paragraph (2).

(2) SPECIFICATIONS.—The contents of the Time Capsule shall include—

(A) a representative portion of all books, manuscripts, miscellaneous printed matter, memorabilia, relics, and other materials relating to the United States Semiquincentennial;

(B) copies or representations of important legislative and institutional milestones of Congress during the time before the Time Capsule is buried;

(C) a message from Congress to the future Congress when the Time Capsule will be opened; and

(D) such other content as the offices described in paragraph (1) consider appropriate.

(3) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out this subsection, the offices described in paragraph (1) may consult with the Architect of the Capitol, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, and such other entities of the Federal Government as the offices consider appropriate.

(c) DUTIES OF ARCHITECT.—The Architect of the Capitol shall—

(1) prepare the Time Capsule to be sealed and buried on the West Lawn of the Capitol, at a location specified by the Architect, on or before July 4th, 2026, at a time which would permit individuals attending this event to also attend the burial of a time capsule in Independence Mall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, under section 7(f)(1) of the United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016 (36 U.S.C. 101 note prec.); and

(2) install a plaque to provide such information about the Time Capsule as the Architect considers appropriate.

(d) UNSEALING.—The Time Capsule shall be sealed until July 4th, 2276, on which date the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall present the Time Capsule to the 244th Congress, and such Congress shall determine how the contents within should be preserved or used.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MORELLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STEIL. 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, H.R. 6394.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1445

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6394. This bipartisan legislation would authorize a time capsule to be buried on the Cap-

itol grounds to mark the Nation’s semiquincentennial.

America is turning 250 on July 4, 2026. This time capsule represents one way that Congress will participate in the Nation’s yearlong celebration of democracy and freedom.

The contents of the capsule will be sealed by the Office of the Speaker of the House, Office of the Minority Leader of the House, and Offices of the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate.

The contents of the capsule will remain sealed until July 2, 2276, the Nation’s 500th anniversary.

Representative WATSON COLEMAN introduced H.R. 6394 as a member of the commission, together with an additional 54 cosponsors.

The Architect of the Capitol has provided technical input to the commission and would work with the congressional leadership to implement the capsule.

I am pleased to have Ranking Member MORELLE’s efforts and support on this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support this and vote in favor of H.R. 6394.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6394. This bipartisan legislation, as my colleague has indicated, would authorize the Architect of the Capitol to bury a time capsule commemorating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 2026, to be opened on our Nation’s 500th anniversary in the year 2276.

I will note parenthetically, one of my favorite lines in the musical *Hamilton* says: “Legacy. What is a legacy? It’s planting seeds in a garden you never get to see.” I think this qualifies for that. I suspect I won’t be here at the opening of the time capsule.

Nonetheless, the items in the capsule will be determined by bipartisan, bicameral congressional leaders and include written materials relating to the anniversary, representations of notable legislative and institutional milestones, and a message from this Congress to our future colleagues in the 244th Congress.

The upcoming anniversary marks a powerful testament to the resilience of the American experiment. Our Nation has faced countless tests to our strength and unity, including a civil war, two world wars, natural disasters, and more.

Yet, through each challenge, this country has stood strong and remains committed to fulfilling the ideals set forth in the Declaration of Independence nearly 250 years ago.

As we face new challenges in a time of deep division, partisanship, and extremism, this anniversary serves as a reminder of our shared responsibility to uphold the values of liberty and equality championed by our Founding Fathers.

I extend my thanks to the United States Semiquincentennial Commission for its leadership in planning for this momentous occasion. I particularly commend my colleague and friend, Congresswoman WATSON COLEMAN, for her introduction of this measure.

I also acknowledge the service of my fellow New Yorker, former Representative Joe Crowley, who has lent his time and efforts to the work of the commission.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to seeing the items chosen for the time capsule and recommend my colleagues’ support for this measure.

I thank my friend and colleague for putting the bill before to the House and for his leadership in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN).

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, was an essential milestone in the progress of all humanity toward a more fair, just, and democratic society, work that continues to this day.

As we reflect on the last 250 years of progress toward those ideals, we must impart the lessons that we have learned to future generations. As co-founder and co-chair of the Congressional America250 Caucus along with my co-chairs, Mr. EVANS, Mr. ADERHOLT, and Ms. SALAZAR, it is an honor to see this legislation come forward today as just one small part of our Nation’s 250th anniversary celebration.

This bill, as you know, authorizes the Architect of the Capitol to create the time capsule and have it buried on the west lawn to remain sealed until July 2276, the Nation’s 500th anniversary.

The contents will include items that represent important legislation and institutional milestones of Congress, a message from the 119th Congress to the 244th Congress, and other items that reflect our history.

No one here today will see it, as has been said, but to be redundant, an old Greek proverb goes: “A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.”

This body does its best work when we don’t seek fame or followers, renown or retweets, but rather when we work so that distant generations of Americans for whom our names will be mere footnotes will enjoy the fruits of our work here today.

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

Mr. Speaker, again, I encourage support from my colleagues for this bill.

I will use this moment, if I can, as these are likely the final bills of our committee for the 118th Congress, to certainly thank my friend, Mr. STEIL, for his cooperation, his leadership, and his friendship during the last 2 years.

I thank all the members of the committee and certainly all the members of the staff on both sides of the aisle

who worked diligently each and every day. I know there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes.

While we at times disagree, I think we work very well together in our interests collectively as to advance the work of this great institution and the support and service of the American people, and I thank the gentleman for that.

To all of my colleagues and those listening, I wish them the very happiest whatever their holiday tradition or faith tradition is. Merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah, and to everyone, I wish them a very, very healthy and happy New Year.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I echo my colleague's remarks. It is true, we don't always agree on every policy issue of the day, but it is an honor to work with him. As is shown by these five pieces of legislation, this is a real opportunity for us to work together to move this institution and this country ahead.

As noted by my colleague, this would not be possible without the hard-working staff of both the majority and minority side, navigating through thorny issues at times. I thank my colleague and all the members of the committee as well as the staff for their hard work over the course of this Congress to make sure that the important work of this institution, but more importantly of the American people, is getting done.

I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation before us, as we have done with the previous four.

As my colleague jokingly said he does not suspect he will be here in 250 years when this capsule is opened in 2276. May the RECORD reflect I know I won't be here in 250 years, but I do think those that are here and open this capsule will be able to reflect back at the time we have spent working on behalf of our country here.

Mr. Speaker, I support and urge its passage, and I yield back balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6394, 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.

FEDERAL BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT TRACKING ACT

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3343) to require the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to submit to Congress a plan for the Assistant Sec-

retary to track the acceptance, processing, and disposal of certain Form 299s, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3343

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 "Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act".

SEC. 2. PLAN FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TO TRACK THE ACCEPTANCE, PROCESSING, AND DISPOSAL OF CERTAIN FORM 299S.

(a) PLAN.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a plan containing a description of—

(1) the process by which the Assistant Secretary proposes to—

(A) track the acceptance, processing, and disposal of each Form 299 for communications use authorization;

(B) provide applicants additional transparency with respect to the status of the applicable Form 299 for communications use authorization; and

(C) most expeditiously implement the plan; and

(2) any potential barriers to implementing the plan that are identified by the Assistant Secretary.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(A) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(2) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term "Assistant Secretary" means the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

(3) COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY.—The term "communications facility" has the meaning given the term communications facility installation in section 6409(d) of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1455(d)).

(4) COMMUNICATIONS USE.—The term "communications use" means the placement and operation of a communications facility.

(5) COMMUNICATIONS USE AUTHORIZATION.—The term "communications use authorization" means an easement, right-of-way, lease, license, or other authorization—

(A) provided by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture;

(B) to locate or modify a communications facility on covered land; and

(C) for the primary purpose of authorizing the occupancy and use of such covered land for communications use.

(6) COVERED LAND.—The term "covered land" means—

(A) public lands; and

(B) National Forest System land.

(7) FORM 299.—The term "Form 299" means the form established under section 6409(b)(2)(A) of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1455(b)(2)(A)), or any successor form.

(8) NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.—The term "National Forest System" has the meaning given the term in section 11(a) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1609(a)).

(9) PUBLIC LANDS.—The term "public lands" means land under the management of—

(A) the Bureau of Land Management;

(B) the National Park Service;

(C) the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; or

(D) the Bureau of Reclamation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LATTA. 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 in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3343, the Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act. This bill requires the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to develop a plan for tracking the broadband permitting applications on Federal lands.

Broadband is essential to participate in everyday activities. Americans rely on their internet for their work, healthcare, education, and more. Congress has provided billions of dollars to close the digital divide. The NTIA is in the process of administering the \$42.45 billion BEAD program and must ensure that these dollars are spent wisely.

Too often, broadband deployment is delayed or prevented due to unnecessary red tape in the form of burdensome permitting requirements. Federal agencies are some of the biggest culprits behind the red tape, delaying the deployment of broadband to the communities that are in need.

The process of application approval for some of these permits has unfortunately become duplicative, ineffective, and time consuming. Worse, there is no transparency in the process.

Opaque Federal permitting review processes leave applicants in the dark on whether their application is complete, where it is in the review process, and when they can finally expect a decision.

The Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act addresses these concerns by providing clarity into the Federal permitting process, giving applicants transparency into the status of their reviews and improving the processing speed and disposition of applications.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important moment in time, and we must do all we can to ensure that every American can access reliable broadband.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3343, the Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act.

Over the past 4 years, the Biden administration has worked hard to implement historic investments made by Congress in the bipartisan infrastructure law to expand broadband access to all Americans.

This includes the \$42 billion BEAD program, which will empower States and territories to close the digital divide and bring high-speed, affordable internet to unserved and underserved communities.

It should come as no surprise that many of the communities lacking internet access are rural, remote, and sparsely populated areas. Like in my own district, areas like Kenansville, Deer Park, Bull Creek, and Yeehaw Junction. Bringing this infrastructure to them will, in many cases, require crossing large geographic areas.

This is especially true in many of our Western States where significant amounts of territory are owned and managed by the Federal Government. H.R. 3343 is going to help bring more transparency to the status and progress of applications to deploy communications infrastructure on publicly owned and managed lands.

The bill requires the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to develop and implement a plan to assist communications providers in navigating the burdens of deploying communications infrastructure on public lands.

Ultimately, this bill should lead to more robust collaboration between those responsible for reviewing permit applications for Federal lands and communications providers who are trying to bring high-speed internet to all of our constituents.

□ 1500

I thank Representative PFLUGER for his leadership on this bill that I was happy to co-introduce with him. This bipartisan legislation is the product of regular order, and I am pleased to see it taken up by the full House today.

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

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PFLUGER), the bill's sponsor.

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio for yielding me time.

I rise in support of my legislation, the Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act. This bill is essential to improving transparency and efficiency in the broadband deployment process, which will help close the digital divide for rural Americans.

According to a 2024 GAO study on broadband deployment, the BLM and Forest Service, which handle most of the permitting reviews on Federal lands, often exceed the 270-day statutory deadline for processing applications. Lengthy application reviews, excessive fees, and complex environmental and historic preservation reviews mean delays in providing service

and higher prices leaving ordinary Americans without basic broadband services.

My legislation is simple. It requires the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to submit a comprehensive plan to Congress within 180 days detailing how the agency will track the acceptance, processing, and disposal of broadband permitting applications on Federal lands. These applications are essential for accessing easements and rights-of-way to build or maintain telecommunications infrastructure. The NTIA will also be responsible for detailing how quickly they will implement their plan and any potential barriers that they could face.

The Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act is a critical step toward a more connected America. By enhancing government accountability and accelerating broadband deployment, we are not just improving a process, we are investing in the future of our Nation. This act will help ensure that investments in broadband expansion reach Americans more quickly and effectively.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation. Together, we can close the digital divide and create a more connected future for all Americans.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers, if the gentleman is ready to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, it is time to get this done for the American people. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, this bill is very essential because, again, as we have seen, broadband is absolutely essential for everyday Americans.

As we think about what happened during COVID, Americans were shut in, and they relied on broadband for everything from education to telehealth to business. It went across the board.

It is absolutely essential we get this bill passed today, and I urge passage of this legislation.

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 Ohio (Mr. LATTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3343.

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.

PROMOTING UNITED STATES WIRELESS LEADERSHIP ACT OF 2023

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1377) to direct the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to take certain actions to enhance the representation of the United States and promote

United States leadership in communications standards-setting bodies, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1377

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 “Promoting United States Wireless Leadership Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. REPRESENTATION AND LEADERSHIP OF UNITED STATES IN COMMUNICATIONS STANDARDS-SETTING BODIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In order to enhance the representation of the United States and promote United States leadership in standards-setting bodies that set standards for 5G networks and for future generations of wireless communications networks, the Assistant Secretary shall, in consultation with the National Institute of Standards and Technology—

(1) equitably encourage participation by companies and a wide variety of relevant stakeholders, but not including any company or relevant stakeholder that the Assistant Secretary has determined to be not trusted, (to the extent such standards-setting bodies allow such stakeholders to participate) in such standards-setting bodies; and

(2) equitably offer technical expertise to companies and a wide variety of relevant stakeholders, but not including any company or relevant stakeholder that the Assistant Secretary has determined to be not trusted, (to the extent such standards-setting bodies allow such stakeholders to participate) to facilitate such participation.

(b) STANDARDS-SETTING BODIES.—The standards-setting bodies referred to in subsection (a) include—

(1) the International Organization for Standardization;

(2) the voluntary standards-setting bodies that develop protocols for wireless devices and other equipment, such as the 3GPP and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers; and

(3) any standards-setting body accredited by the American National Standards Institute or Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions.

(c) BRIEFING.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary shall brief the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and Foreign Relations of the Senate on a strategy to carry out subsection (a).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) 3GPP.—The term “3GPP” means the 3rd Generation Partnership Project.

(2) 5G NETWORK.—The term “5G network” means a fifth-generation mobile network as described by 3GPP Release 15 or higher.

(3) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term “Assistant Secretary” means the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

(4) CLOUD COMPUTING.—The term “cloud computing” has the meaning given the term in Special Publication 800-145 of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, entitled “The NIST Definition of Cloud Computing”, published in September 2011, or any successor publication.

(5) COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK.—The term “communications network” means any of the following:

(A) A system enabling the transmission, between or among points specified by the user, of information of the user's choosing.

(B) Cloud computing resources.

(C) A network or system used to access cloud computing resources.

(6) NOT TRUSTED.—The term “not trusted” means, with respect to a company or stakeholder, that the company or stakeholder is determined by the Assistant Secretary to pose a threat to the national security of the United States. In making such a determination, the Assistant Secretary shall rely solely on one or more of the following determinations:

(A) A specific determination made by any executive branch interagency body with appropriate national security expertise, including the Federal Acquisition Security Council established under section 1322(a) of title 41, United States Code.

(B) A specific determination made by the Department of Commerce pursuant to Executive Order No. 13873 (84 Fed. Reg. 22689; relating to securing the information and communications technology and services supply chain).

(C) Whether a company or stakeholder produces or provides covered telecommunications equipment or services, as defined in section 889(f)(3) of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (Public Law 115-232; 132 Stat. 1918).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LATTA. 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 in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1377, the Promoting United States Wireless Leadership Act.

For decades, the United States has led the development of next-generation wireless technology. To maintain leadership and defend against our foreign adversaries, we must continue to focus on bolstering the foundational elements, like standards development, to make sure the United States continues to lead on future technological advancements.

As these standards are set in global, industry-led standards bodies, we must enhance participation by U.S. companies and remain vigilant so that bad actors don't game the system for their own economic and national security interests. To keep accountability and ensure proper transparency, we must encourage participation by trusted, like-minded partners.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration plays a central role in these efforts as the executive branch agency with technical expertise on wireless innovation. They have decades of experience working with the industry and other stakeholders to develop these technical standards globally.

I thank the dedicated career staff who worked tirelessly to advance U.S. global wireless leadership. As we move into the next decade, it is critical that we continue to enhance participation in critical standards-setting bodies and preserve U.S. wireless leadership.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1377, the Promoting United States Wireless Leadership Act. This legislation is an important step toward ensuring that the national and global bodies crafting standards for next-generation wireless technologies, such as 6G and Wi-Fi 8, include significant representation from trusted American companies and those from allied countries.

H.R. 1377 accomplishes this objective by requiring the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to encourage and facilitate the participation of trusted companies and stakeholders in the domestic and international standards-setting bodies for wireless technologies. The Assistant Secretary must also brief Congress within 60 days of the bill becoming law on the strategy to accomplish these objectives.

It is crucial that American and allied interests are well-represented at these standards-setting bodies. If the United States is not a leader in shaping the wireless future, our adversaries will step up in the leadership void. This includes dominating the future 6G marketplace in a way that may undermine our values, national security, and economic prosperity.

We cannot allow that to happen.

History has shown us that early developers and adopters of technology define the marketplace, drive innovation, and reap the economic benefits, and so we must lead.

Moreover, as we have seen with the recent news on the Salt Typhoon cyberattack, foreign adversaries often see our communications networks and devices as the entry points to disrupt our daily lives and conduct espionage campaigns. Therefore, it is imperative that American interests are at the table as new wireless standards are crafted, including those that have cybersecurity and national security implications.

I thank Representatives DINGELL, KUSTER, and WALBERG for their bipartisan work on this legislation.

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

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG), the bill's sponsor.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favor of my legislation, H.R. 1377, the Promoting United States Wireless Leadership Act.

This important legislation strengthens American leadership in 5G and fu-

ture wireless communications by bringing together key stakeholders to create a unified approach to international standards-setting.

It directs the NTIA to assist and encourage trusted U.S. companies to actively participate in global standards-setting organizations, such as 3GPP and IEEE.

These independent, business-led entities establish the technical standards that 5G operators, equipment manufacturers, software providers, and others rely on to build wireless networks.

China and other adversaries are investing heavily in 5G deployment and are actively working to shape these standards-setting processes to serve their interests. If they succeed in skewing future standards toward their own priorities, the United States risks being placed at a significant economic and strategic disadvantage.

As we did with 3G and 4G, the United States must continue leading the way on 5G. H.R. 1377 ensures a coordinated approach to counter foreign influence by protecting our national security, our economic competitiveness, and global technology leadership.

Finally, this will be my last act for now as a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee. It has been a wonderful, productive 8 years. I have worked on such a wide set of policies such as increasing energy independence, protecting kids online, fighting electric vehicle mandates, championing American innovators, improving nationwide connectivity, and much, much more.

My colleagues and the many staff I have worked with have made my time on the Energy and Commerce Committee great.

I see why this committee is often called the best committee on the Hill, though I am going to challenge you for that title over at the Education and the Workforce Committee.

I thank the incredible leadership of Chair RODGERS and former Chair WALDEN, and I wish Chair-elect GUTHRIE all the best.

As my last ask, I encourage all my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, first I congratulate Representative WALBERG on his new leadership position, and I thank him for his collaboration on the committee over the years in leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the legendary gentleman from Michigan (Mrs. DINGELL).

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding. I hope I am not too legendary.

I rise today, and I also want to compliment my colleague from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG), who I am proud to have worked with on this bill. I will miss him on the Energy and Commerce Committee, but education and labor matter in Michigan, too, so we will make sure his voice is well represented. Maybe he will even trust me on EVs.

I rise today in support of a bill that I worked with my colleague on, H.R.

1377, the Promoting United States Wireless Leadership Act. I am very proud to have introduced this bill along with my bipartisan co-chairs of the 5G and Beyond Caucus.

This legislation will ensure that the United States remains at the forefront of innovation in this evolving frontier by playing a central role in setting international wireless standards in emerging technologies. This approach has dramatic ramifications for our global competitiveness, 5G deployment, and our national security.

The policy choices of today will have lasting effects on the global wireless technology development of tomorrow, especially as we compete against China.

We must take concrete, proactive steps to lower barriers to entry for U.S. companies and promote American competitiveness in this space for each subsequent generation of these innovative technologies.

I know there are times when we don't all agree in this House, but we have a very bipartisan agreement that the United States must be a leader in the development and deployment of cutting-edge technologies. This bill does exactly that, and I am glad that today we are getting this one over the finish line in a very bipartisan manner—or at least I think we are.

I thank my colleague, Representative TIM WALBERG, who I have loved working with on 5G and hope we will continue to; Representative KUSTER; and former Representative BILL JOHNSON for their work on this legislation and as co-chairs and being the leads on this.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 1377.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, in support H.R. 1377, the Promoting United States Wireless Leadership Act of 2023.

□ 1515

Mr. Speaker, I thank the bipartisan sponsors of this bill for working to protect our national security and global competitiveness.

Our adversaries such as China are working diligently to gain an edge over the U.S. when it comes to wireless technology and deployment.

Let me be clear. Economic security is national security. Again, economic security is national security.

It is imperative that we maintain our lead in the wireless space specifically with 5G advancement. We must continue to be at the front line of innovation which means participating in international standard-setting organizations.

I was proud to support this legislation when it passed committee unanimously, and I urge my colleagues to support this act as well.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to pay my respects to Chairman WALBERG and

congratulate him on his new chairmanship. I will miss sitting beside him in Energy and Commerce. It has been a pleasure to work with him for the last 8 years.

Mr. Speaker, I would also be remiss if I did not mention that in the first year of this session, I had the opportunity to serve as vice chair of the Communications and Technology Subcommittee. I thank Chairman LATTA for the wonderful job that he did and for his inclusion of me in all of our meetings and his leadership on this great subcommittee and on this great committee in Energy and Commerce.

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

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, let's pass H.R. 1377, the Promoting United States Wireless Leadership Act of 2023 and boldly lead the charge toward 6G and beyond.

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

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, the Communications and Technology Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee has been very busy this past Congress making sure that we get broadband deployed across this country. This piece of legislation will help make sure that that happens.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LOPEZ). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1377.

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.

EXPEDITING FEDERAL BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT REVIEWS ACT

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3293) to require the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to establish an interagency strike force to ensure that certain Federal land management agencies, including the organizational units of such agencies, prioritize the review of requests for communications use authorizations, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3293

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 "Expediting Federal Broadband Deployment Reviews Act".

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERAGENCY STRIKE FORCE.

(a) INTERAGENCY STRIKE FORCE.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this

Act, the Assistant Secretary shall establish an interagency strike force to ensure that each Federal land management agency, including each organizational unit of the agency, prioritizes the review of requests for communications use authorizations.

(2) MEMBERS.—The strike force shall be composed of—

(A) the Assistant Secretary;

(B) the head of each Federal land management agency;

(C) a designee of the Secretary of Agriculture, other than the Chief of the Forest Service; and

(D) a designee of the Secretary of the Interior, other than the Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

(3) DUTIES.—The duties of the strike force shall include—

(A) conducting periodic calls between the members of the strike force to ensure that each Federal land management agency, including each organizational unit of the agency, prioritizes the review of requests for communications use authorizations;

(B) establishing objective and reasonable goals for the review of requests for communications use authorizations; and

(C) monitoring, and facilitating the accountability of, each Federal land management agency, including each organizational unit of the agency, with respect to meeting such goals.

(4) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the effectiveness of the strike force in ensuring that each Federal land management agency, including each organizational unit of the agency, prioritizes the review of requests for communications use authorizations.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(A) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives;

(B) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives;

(C) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate;

(D) the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate;

(E) the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives; and

(F) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate.

(2) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term "Assistant Secretary" means the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

(3) COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY.—The term "communications facility" has the meaning given the term "communications facility installation" in section 6409(d) of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1455(d)).

(4) COMMUNICATIONS USE.—The term "communications use" means the placement and operation of a communications facility.

(5) COMMUNICATIONS USE AUTHORIZATION.—The term "communications use authorization" means an easement, right-of-way, lease, license, or other authorization—

(A) provided by a Federal land management agency;

(B) to locate or modify a communications facility on covered land; and

(C) for the primary purpose of authorizing the occupancy and use of such land for communications use.

(6) COVERED LAND.—The term "covered land" means—

(A) public lands; and

(B) National Forest System land.

(7) FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY.—The term “Federal land management agency” means each of the following:

- (A) The Bureau of Land Management.
- (B) The Forest Service.

(8) NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.—The term “National Forest System” has the meaning given that term in section 11(a) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1609(a)).

(9) ORGANIZATIONAL UNIT.—The term “organizational unit” means—

(A) with respect to the Bureau of Land Management—

- (i) a State office;
- (ii) a regional office;
- (iii) a district office; or
- (iv) a field office; and

(B) with respect to the Forest Service—

- (i) a regional office;
- (ii) a management unit; or
- (iii) a ranger district office.

(10) PUBLIC LANDS.—The term “public lands” has the meaning given that term in section 103 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702).

(11) STRIKE FORCE.—The term “strike force” means the interagency strike force established under subsection (a)(1).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LATTA. 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 Ohio?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3293, Expediting Federal Broadband Deployment Reviews Act. This legislation establishes an interagency strike force to help prioritize permitting reviews for deploying broadband on Federal lands.

Broadband has become an essential part of everyday life. As we have seen, we need broadband for work, to stay connected with loved ones, and even for healthcare and education. Too many Americans still lack access to broadband. Thus, Congress has provided billions of dollars to ensure that every American gets connected.

Deploying on Federal lands is a critical part of closing the digital divide. Many unserved communities are near Federal lands and thus broadband providers must traverse these lands to reach these unserved homes and businesses.

Unfortunately, deploying broadband on Federal lands can be burdensome, particularly when it comes to the permitting process. Providers have testified that this complicated process moves slowly, and they are left in the dark on the status of their applications.

As a result, unserved communities are left without the broadband they

need as providers wait for agencies to approve their permits.

We need to reform the broadband permitting process. Not only do we need to streamline how we review permits, we also need to ensure that agencies that manage Federal lands prioritize these reviews. H.R. 3293, the Expediting Federal Broadband Deployment Reviews Act, will help ensure this happens.

H.R. 3293 directs the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to create an interagency strike force that includes the head of each Federal land management agency to ensure that they are prioritizing the review of broadband permitting applications.

In addition to holding periodic calls, the strike force will establish goals for the review of the requests and monitor and hold each agency accountable for meeting those goals. This strike force is necessary to expedite the permitting process so that every American has access to broadband.

I thank the gentleman from South Carolina’s Third District (Mr. DUNCAN) and the gentlewoman from Minnesota’s Second District (Ms. CRAIG) for their leadership on this important piece of legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3293, the Expediting Federal Broadband Deployment Reviews Act which was introduced by Representatives DUNCAN and CRAIG.

As this year comes to a close and with an eye towards 2025, I am excited to see real progress in the year ahead on many of the broadband deployment efforts, including in the bipartisan infrastructure law.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration and the Federal Communications Commission laid so much important groundwork over the past 2 years, notably creating accurate and reliable broadband availability maps, so that infrastructure dollars will go to communities where they truly are needed.

In the coming year, many projects funded under the \$42 billion BEAD program will begin to break ground and connect for the first time unserved and underserved communities to high-speed internet.

Communication providers are zeroing in on project areas and preparing plans at the most granular level. In the course of this work, providers will find that in many cases the most direct route to lay broadband infrastructure requires traversing lands owned and managed by the Federal Government.

In central Florida, we have a lot of Federal lands around Cape Canaveral and Avon Park Air Force Range. We have a lot of national parks in and around our area as well, so we know this well.

Earlier this Congress, the Energy and Commerce Committee heard about delays and inefficiencies in the handling of permit applications that are pending at various agencies overseeing Federal lands.

While environmental and historic preservation protections will always be of the utmost importance to me, we should strive to ensure our agencies operate as efficiently as possible to dispense with applications to deploy communications infrastructure where no additional environmental or historic preservation due diligence is required.

This bill calls on the administrator of the NTIA to establish an interagency strike force that will improve collaboration between NTIA and the agencies and departments responsible for reviewing and improving communications use authorization applications.

This will help NTIA help bring relevant parties together to identify the obstacles and inefficiencies that have slowed progress in the past and collaborate on solutions to address these barriers, ultimately expediting the deployment of broadband infrastructure to the rural and remote areas most in need.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the leadership of Representatives DUNCAN and CRAIG on this important legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina’s Third District (Mr. DUNCAN), the bill’s sponsor.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3293, the Expediting Federal Broadband Deployment Reviews Act.

I thank House leadership for allowing this legislation to come to the floor. I thank my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee on both sides of the aisle for supporting this legislation in committee and supporting it here today.

Mr. Speaker, in the 21st century, broadband internet access is no longer a luxury. It is a necessity. It connects our communities. It drives economic growth and allows our constituents to fully engage with the digital age. Yet, millions of Americans still lack access to reliable high-speed internet.

This digital divide is a barrier to opportunity, holding back businesses, hindering education, and limiting access to essential services. H.R. 3293 takes a crucial step towards bridging this divide and streamlining the process for deploying broadband infrastructure.

Currently, the review process for obtaining permits and authorizations can be lengthy and bureaucratic, causing significant delays in deployment. This bill establishes an interagency strike force to coordinate and expedite these reviews, ensuring that Federal agencies prioritize broadband expansion. Streamlining these Federal processes

will help get broadband deployed in the rural parts of America just like the Third District of South Carolina.

The benefits of H.R. 3293 are clear. Faster broadband deployment will create jobs, stimulate economic development, and improve the quality of life for countless Americans. Students will have access to online learning resources. Telehealth services will become more accessible, and rural communities will be better connected to the global economy.

H.R. 3293 is a commonsense solution that will help us achieve universal broadband access. It is a critical investment in our future, and I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 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 support of H.R. 3293, the Expediting Federal Broadband Deployment Reviews Act.

I thank the bipartisan sponsors for this bill in working to close the digital divide. There are over 7 million American homes and businesses that lack access to high-speed broadband, and it is often lengthy permitting processes that contribute to this digital divide.

In every industry ranging from energy to telecommunications, the permitting process gets in the way of investment and deployment and ends up hurting consumers the most.

There are so many benefits to communities having reliable internet access such as educational and job opportunities, expansion of small business operations, and simply allowing people and services to reach new populations and areas.

Mr. Speaker, this important legislation ensures that broadband deployment on Federal lands gets reviewed and prioritized in a timely manner, while also holding the relevant agencies accountable, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

□ 1530

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, that was my last speaker on the bill. I am prepared to close if my friend, the gentleman from Florida, is.

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

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close.

First, I thank Representative DUNCAN for his leadership on the committee, especially in areas of energy. We worked on a lot of issues relating to nuclear energy, which is going to be a key part of the clean energy future that we all care deeply about, so I wish him well in his future endeavors.

Mr. Speaker, it is simple. Once the environmental and historic preservation reviews are done, or where they are not required, we have to get these broadband dollars out the door.

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

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier on the previous bills, the Communications and Technology Subcommittee of the Committee on Energy and Commerce has been moving legislation to make sure we get broadband deployed across this country. As the speakers have already mentioned, broadband is not something that is a luxury, but it is a necessity.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the legislation today, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3293, 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.

AUTISM COLLABORATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND SUPPORT ACT OF 2024

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 7213) to amend the Public Health Service Act to enhance and reauthorize activities and programs relating to autism spectrum disorder, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendment is as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Autism Collaboration, Accountability, Research, Education, and Support Act of 2024” or the “Autism CARES Act of 2024”.

SEC. 2. NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH ACTIVITIES.

(a) EXPANSION OF ACTIVITIES.—Section 409C(a)(1) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 284g(a)(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking “) shall, subject to the availability” and inserting the following: “), in consultation with relevant Federal departments and agencies, as appropriate, shall—

“(A) subject to the availability”;

(2) by striking “basic and clinical research in fields including pathology” and inserting the following: “basic and clinical research—

“(i) in fields, such as pathology”;

(3) by striking “toxicology, and interventions” and inserting the following: “toxicology, psychiatry, psychology, developmental behavioral pediatrics, audiology, and gerontology; and

“(ii) on interventions”;

(4) by striking “disorder. Such research shall investigate” and inserting the following: “disorder; and

“(B) ensure that research referred to in subparagraph (A)—

“(i) investigates”;

(5) by striking “prevention, services across the lifespan, supports, intervention, and treatment of autism spectrum disorder” and inserting “prevention, services and supports across the lifespan, intervention, and treatment of autism spectrum disorder and co-occurring conditions”; and

(6) by striking “treatments.” and inserting the following: “treatments;

“(ii) examines supports for caregivers; and

“(iii) reflects the entire population of individuals with autism spectrum disorder, including those individuals with co-occurring conditions and the full range of needs for supports and services, including such supports and services to ensure the safety, and promote the well-being, of such individuals.”.

(b) CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE.—Section 409C(b) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 284g(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking “including the fields of” and inserting “in fields such as”; and

(B) by striking “behavioral psychology, and clinical psychology” and inserting “behavioral psychology, clinical psychology, and gerontology”;

(2) in paragraph (5)(A), by striking “five” and inserting “seven”; and

(3) in paragraph (5)(B), by striking “period of not to exceed” and inserting “period not to exceed”.

(c) PUBLIC INPUT.—Section 409C(d) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 284g(d)) is amended to read as follows:

“(d) PUBLIC INPUT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall under subsection (a)(1) provide for means through which the public can obtain information on the existing and planned programs and activities of the National Institutes of Health with respect to autism spectrum disorder and through which the Director can receive comments from the public regarding such programs and activities.

“(2) GUIDANCE.—The Director may provide guidance to centers under subsection (b)(1) on strategies, activities, and opportunities to promote engagement with, and solicit input from, individuals with autism spectrum disorder and their family members, guardians, advocates or authorized representatives, providers, or other appropriate individuals to inform the activities of the center. Such strategies, activities, and opportunities should consider including, as appropriate, individuals, family members, and caregivers of individuals with autism spectrum disorder who represent the entire population of individuals with autism spectrum disorder, including those individuals with co-occurring conditions and the full range of needs for supports and services, including such supports and services to ensure the safety, and promote the well-being, of such individuals, to inform the activities of the center.”.

(d) BUDGET ESTIMATE.—Section 409C of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 284g) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(e) BUDGET ESTIMATE.—For each of fiscal years 2026 through 2029, the Director shall prepare and submit, directly to the President for review and transmittal to Congress, an annual budget estimate for the initiatives of the National Institutes of Health pursuant to the strategic plan developed under section 399CC(b)(5) and updated under section 399CC(b)(6)(B), after reasonable opportunity for comment (but without change) by the Secretary and the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee established under section 399CC.”.

SEC. 3. PROGRAMS RELATING TO AUTISM.

(a) DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SURVEILLANCE AND RESEARCH PROGRAM.—Section 399AA of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280i) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(3), by striking “an Indian tribe, or a tribal organization” and inserting “an Indian Tribe, or a Tribal organization”;

(2) in subsection (b)(1), by inserting “across the lifespan” before the period at the end;

(3) in subsection (d)(1)—

(A) in the paragraph heading, by striking “TRIBE; TRIBAL” and inserting “TRIBE; TRIBAL”;

(B) by striking “tribe” and inserting “Tribe”; and

(C) by striking “tribal” and inserting “Tribal”; and

(4) in subsection (e), by striking “December 20, 2024” and inserting “September 30, 2029”.

(b) AUTISM EDUCATION, EARLY DETECTION, AND INTERVENTION.—Section 399BB of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280i-1) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(1), by striking “culturally competent information” and inserting “culturally and linguistically appropriate information”;

(2) in subsection (b)(2)—

(A) by striking “promote research” and inserting “promote research, which may include research that takes a community-based approach,”; and

(B) by striking “screening tools” each place it appears and inserting “screening and diagnostic tools”;

(3) in subsection (b)(3), by striking “at higher risk” and inserting “at increased likelihood”;

(4) in subsection (b)(4), by inserting “, which may give consideration to the perspectives of parents and guardians” before the semicolon at the end;

(5) in subsection (b)(7), by striking “at higher risk” and inserting “at increased likelihood”;

(6) in subsection (c)(1), by striking “culturally competent information” and inserting “culturally and linguistically appropriate information”;

(7) in subsection (c)(2)(A)(ii), by striking “culturally competent information” and inserting “culturally and linguistically appropriate information”;

(8) by amending paragraph (1) of subsection (e) to read as follows:

(9) in subsection (e)(1)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting “, and strengthen the capacity of,” after “expand”;

(B) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking “expand existing or develop new” and inserting “expand and strengthen the capacity of existing, or, in States that do not have such a program, develop new,”; and

(ii) by striking “Act in States that do not have such a program” and inserting “Act”;

(C) in subparagraph (B)(v), by inserting “or other providers, as applicable” before the semicolon at the end; and

(D) by amending subparagraph (C) to read as follows:

“(C) program sites—

“(i) provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services;

“(ii) take a multidisciplinary approach and have experience working with underserved populations; and

“(iii) identify opportunities to partner with community-based organizations to expand the capacity of communities to serve individuals with autism spectrum disorder or other developmental disabilities.”;

(10) in subsection (e)(2), by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(C) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of the Autism CARES Act of 2024, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate a report that examines the need for, and feasibility of, expanding the developmental-behavioral pediatrician training programs described in subparagraph (A).”;

(11) by amending subsection (f) to read as follows:

“(f) INTERVENTION.—The Secretary shall promote research through grants or contracts, which may include grants or contracts to research centers or networks, to—

“(1) develop and evaluate evidence-based practices and interventions to improve outcomes for individuals with autism spectrum disorder or other developmental disabilities by addressing physical and behavioral health and communication needs of such individuals across the lifespan;

“(2) develop guidelines for such evidence-based practices and interventions; and

“(3) disseminate information related to such evidence-based practices and interventions and guidelines.”; and

(12) in subsection (g), by striking “December 20, 2024” and inserting “September 30, 2029”.

(c) INTERAGENCY AUTISM COORDINATING COMMITTEE.—Section 399CC of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280i-2) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting “, on a regular basis” after “shall”;

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking “develop a summary” and inserting “summarize”;

(C) by striking paragraphs (5) and (6) and inserting the following:

“(5) develop a strategic plan for the conduct of, and support for, autism spectrum disorder research, as described in section 409C(a)(1), which shall include—

“(A) proposed budgetary requirements; and

“(B) recommendations to ensure that autism spectrum disorder research, and services and support activities to the extent practicable, of the Department of Health and Human Services and of other Federal departments and agencies are not unnecessarily duplicative; and

“(6) submit to the Congress and the President—

“(A) an annual update on the summary of advances described in paragraph (2); and

“(B) a biennial update on the strategic plan described in paragraph (5), including progress made in achieving the goals outlined in such strategic plan and any specific measures taken pursuant to such strategic plan.”; and

(2) in subsection (f), by striking “December 20, 2024” and inserting “September 30, 2029”.

(d) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Section 399DD of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280i-3) is amended—

(1) by striking “2019” each place it appears and inserting “2024”; and

(2) in subsection (a), by amending paragraph (1) to read as follows:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 4 years after September 30, 2024, the Secretary, in consultation with other relevant Federal departments and agencies, shall prepare and submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives, and make publicly available, including through posting on the website of the Department of Health and Human Services, a progress report on activities related to autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities. Such report shall include activities and research related to the entire population of individuals with autism spectrum disorder, including those individuals with co-occurring conditions and the full range of needs for supports and services, including such supports and services to ensure the safety, and promote the well-being, of such individuals.”;

(3) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the heading of subsection (b), by striking “HEALTH AND WELL-BEING” and inserting “MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS”;

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking “health and well-being” and inserting “mental health needs”; and

(C) by amending paragraph (2) to read as follows:

“(2) CONTENTS.—The report submitted under paragraph (1) shall contain—

“(A) an overview of policies and programs relevant to the mental health of individuals with autism spectrum disorder across their lifespan, including an identification of existing Federal laws, regulations, policies, research, and programs; and

“(B) recommendations to improve mental health outcomes and address related disparities in mental health care for individuals with autism spectrum disorder, including prevention, care coordination, and community-based services.”;

(4) by adding at the end the following:

“(c) UPDATE ON YOUNG ADULTS AND YOUTH TRANSITIONING TO ADULTHOOD.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the Autism CARES Act of 2024, the Secretary, in coordination with other relevant Federal departments and agencies, as appropriate, shall prepare and submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate an update to the report required pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, as added by section 6 of the Autism CARES Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-157), and in effect before the date of enactment of the Autism CARES Act of 2019 (Public Law 116-60), concerning young adults with autism spectrum disorder and the challenges related to the transition from existing school-based services to those services available during adulthood.”.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 399EE of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280i-4) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking “\$23,100,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2024” and inserting “\$28,100,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029”;

(2) in subsection (b), by striking “\$50,599,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2024” and inserting “\$56,344,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029”; and

(3) in subsection (c), by striking “there are authorized to be appropriated \$296,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2024” and inserting “there is authorized to be appropriated \$306,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029”.

SEC. 4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO COMMUNICATION TOOLS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”) may, at the request of a State, Indian Tribe, Tribal organization, locality, or territory, provide training and technical assistance to such jurisdiction on the manner in which Federal funding administered by the Secretary may be used to provide individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities with access to evidence-based services, tools, and technologies that support communication needs.

(b) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Secretary shall annually prepare and submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report summarizing any technical assistance provided by the Secretary in the preceding fiscal year under subsection (a) and any advancements in the development or evaluation of such evidence-based services, tools, and technologies.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUCSHON. 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 in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Senate amendment to H.R. 7213, the Autism Collaboration, Accountability,

Research, Education, and Support Act, or the Autism CARES Act of 2024, led by Representative CHRIS SMITH.

Autism affects an estimated 1 in 36 children in the United States, with recent studies showing an increasing prevalence nationwide. The Autism CARES Act of 2024 will reauthorize critical programs and activities that support autism research, services, training, and monitoring across the Federal Government.

Importantly, it also takes steps to ensure the public and all individuals within the autism community have an opportunity to engage in and are included in the research process and other activities related to autism spectrum disorder.

I thank Congressman SMITH for his leadership on this and for his decades-long advocacy on behalf of those with autism.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the underlying bill, which makes minor updates to the previous version we passed in September with over 400 votes. I encourage my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the Senate amendment to H.R. 7213, the Autism CARES Act. This bipartisan legislation, sponsored by Representatives SMITH and CUELLAR, will reauthorize funding for a variety of programs that support autism education, research, and resources.

Mr. Speaker, in the United States, about 1 in 36 children have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. The prevalence of autism in children has been increasing every 2 years.

With these worrisome statistics in mind, it is important that we reauthorize the critical research and funding for the Autism CARES Act in order to continue this collaborative nationwide program.

In 2006, the original Autism CARES Act, which was then known as the Combating Autism Act, was signed into law. This law built a public health infrastructure that addresses autism on the Federal level directed by the Department of Health and Human Services.

From that point forward, over \$5 billion has been invested in addressing autism through various programs related to autism research, autism support services, early detection training for medical providers, and autism education.

With this legislation, we renew and expand support for Federal autism programs, underscoring our commitment to addressing the growing needs of individuals with autism and their families. The legislation authorizes funding over the next 5 years for key programs under the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Institutes of Health.

The legislation addresses challenges related to autism and aging, inclusivity in autism research, strengthening the developmental-behavioral pediatrician workforce, and mental health and communication supports, particularly for autistic individuals who may be unable or limited in their speech capabilities.

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

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend for yielding and for his leadership and that of my colleague on the other side of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, it all started in September 1997, 27 years ago, with Brick Township, New Jersey, parents Bobbie and Billy Gallagher and their indomitable commitment to help their two children, Austin and Alanna, and everyone else with autism.

We met several times and continue to plan and strategize to this day. We invited the CDC to Brick, New Jersey, only to realize that Federal autism programs were woefully inadequate. Frankly, they were nonexistent.

They spend \$287,000 per year on autism. That is it, a straight line for 5 years. It was a nothing burger, and they did nothing really of substance. So I introduced the Autism Statistics, Surveillance, Research, and Epidemiology Act, the ASSURE Act, in 1998 and again in 1999. In the second one, we had 199, almost one-half of the House of Representatives, as cosponsors. That would have established three to five autism centers of excellence, authorized serious prevalence studies, and established an autism advisory committee, which we now call IACC.

I am deeply grateful that the ASSURE Act was incorporated in large part by Chairman MIKE BILIRAKIS as title I of the Children's Health Act of 2000.

Mr. Speaker, in 2016, Bobbie Gallagher, now a board-certified behavior analyst, wrote an amazing book called "A Brick Wall: How a Boy with No Words Spoke to the World."

In it she points out, and it is just an amazing book, that all parents of children with autism face many, many hardships: frequent tears, agony, as well as physical, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion.

Doctors had told the Gallaghers not to worry about telltale early warning signs of autism. One doctor was so uninformed that he said that their daughter, Alanna, just needed a good swift kick in the ass.

She recounts, however, the big moments that she treasures deep within her heart, like when 11-year-old Austin called her "Mommy" for the first time. It was slow and deliberate, "Mommy," and she said it was beautiful. When he asked for a cookie, they celebrated in the Gallagher household.

It is a primer for everyone, and I would hope that others would read it.

She said in the book that she realized why she is on this Earth: "I am here to fight for children with autism," and fight she and her husband, Billy, have, like so many other brave and remarkable parents who deeply love their children.

They are parents like Scott Badesch, who is on my staff. Scott was the president of Autism Society for 10 years. Deeply, he and his wife love their son, Evan. They love their whole family. He is 37, and they have benefited from his leadership. We have benefited here in the Congress from Scott's leadership.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the Autism Collaboration, Accountability, Research, Education, and Support Act, or simply the Autism CARES Act of 2024, is a comprehensive reauthorization and strengthening of America's whole-of-government autism spectrum disorder initiative.

As the prime author of the Autism CARES Act of 2024 and previous iterations of the law in 2011, 2014, and again in 2019, let me send special thanks to cosponsor HENRY CUELLAR for his leadership and partnership, and to BRETT GUTHRIE, who is the chairman of the Health Subcommittee and incoming full committee chairman, for faithfully shepherding this legislation through the committee.

I thank my fellow New Jerseyan, FRANK PALLONE. Above all, I thank and show the deepest respect and gratitude to CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS, who is a tenacious, effective, and brilliant advocate for the autism community. I thank STEVE SCALISE for making sure we are here today with the bill. I also thank SUSAN COLLINS and BEN RAY LUJÁN for their important work over on the Senate side.

I thank committee staff, including Molly Brimmer, Kristin Fritsch, and Caitlin Wilson, among others, for their help, which was totally invaluable; and John McDonough, Mary Noonan, and, of course, Scott Badesch on my staff for their work on this bill.

The bill, as we know, provides, as has already been mentioned by my colleagues, critical research goals focused on responsive and effective interventions for the estimated 6.8 million individuals with autism, 27 percent of whom—that is 1.8 million—are profoundly autistic.

According to the CDC, 1 in 36 children in the U.S., including 1 in 35 in my home State of New Jersey, are on the autism spectrum.

The bill authorizes more than \$1.59 billion over 5 years for programs at the NIH, CDC, and HRSA, Health Resources and Services Administration. It directs the NIH to include the scope of research issues encountered by individuals and caregivers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISSA). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief and close and put the rest of it in the RECORD.

Autism Speaks says that the Autism CARES Act is the single most important driver of autism research, training, and data collection programs at NIH, HRSA, and CDC.

Mr. Speaker, we are joined here by Chris Banks, the CEO of Autism Society. They say it is a pivotable law for individuals with autism and their families to live fully, and it is crucial to understand the immense impact this law has on the daily lives of the autism community.

The Association of University Centers on Disabilities is also very, very supportive, and Profound Autism Alliance has pushed hard for this bill and its enhanced focus on individuals with profound autism, which they define as people who require lifetime, 24/7 care.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and the President, we hope, will sign it.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 7213: Directs the NIH to include in the scope of research issues encountered by individuals and caregivers as they age, mental health concerns, issues related to aging, as well as co-occurring conditions and needs for supports and services, such as care necessary for physical safety and the prevention of self-injurious behavior.

Increases the number of NIH Centers of Excellence to seven and ensures research reflects the entire population of individuals with autism spectrum disorder and is designed to address the full range of needs faced by individuals, including to ensure the physical safety and to promote the well being of all Americans with autism.

Includes, for the first time, a professional bypass budget to provide the autism community with a comprehensive budget highlighting priority research areas and resources needed to advance quality of life improvements for all individuals with autism.

Promotes the adoption of assistive communication technologies to improve communication outcomes for those with communication assistance needs.

My bill also helps adults with autism who were and are today often misdiagnosed, underdiagnosed and overlooked.

Language throughout the bill continues to emphasize that causes, diagnosis, detection, prevention and treatment of autism spectrum disorder must be throughout the lifespan of a person. To this end, Congress has included the study of gerontology—the study of aging, including the physical, mental, and social changes that occur as people age, as an NIH research priority.

H.R. 7213 continues to emphasize the need for early detection and intervention—including the use of advanced technologies in early detection—to provide the highest quality of life possible for those with autism.

The earlier a child can be identified as having ASD, the earlier they can access interventions and services.

Researchers have developed technologies to identify signs of autism in children as young as eighteen months—this is an incredible development and there is more research being done now to determine if autism can be identified even earlier. However, the median age of

diagnosis in the United States is not until after 4 years of age, and diagnosis often occurs even later among those without intellectual disabilities or delays in social communication.

The delivery of services and interventions must keep up with a younger patient population, and services and interventions for autistic individuals must continue to improve across their lifespans.

Examples of services and interventions research include approaches to address conditions that affect the quality of life for individuals on the autism spectrum, such as behavior that puts individuals with significant support needs or their caregivers at risk (e.g., self-injurious, elopement, aggression, etc.), or mental health concerns (anxiety, depression, suicidality). The Autism CARES Act emphasizes the need to improve the quality of life for individuals with the full range of needs across the lifespan. Continued research by NIH to study how to improve interventions and the delivery of services is crucial.

H.R. 7213 calls for a report on youth aging out of school-aged services since the pandemic, and recommendations to improve mental health outcomes and address related disparities in mental health care for individuals with autism spectrum disorder, including prevention, care coordination, and community-based services.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 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 the Senate amendment to H.R. 7213, the Autism CARES Act of 2024, which reauthorizes and strengthens the autism spectrum disorder research, education, and support initiative through 2029.

The Autism CARES Act is the single most important driver of Federal investment in autism research and training programs over the past few decades. It has led to improvements in early intervention services, a better understanding of the prevalence of autism, and a better understanding of the co-occurring health conditions that individuals with autism experience.

Importantly, it has also been responsible for thousands of future health professionals being trained on how to screen, diagnose, and provide interventions to individuals with autism and other neurodevelopmental disabilities to improve their health and well-being.

Thanks to the Autism CARES Act, many health professionals are better equipped to meet the ever-changing and diverse needs of individuals with autism and other people with neurodevelopmental disabilities.

Located in my home State of Georgia within Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, the Marcus Autism Center is one of the largest autism centers in the U.S. and is actively involved in research to pinpoint the earliest signs of autism and determine better ways to treat the disorder. Marcus integrates research into clinical practice to maxi-

mize the potential of children with autism.

NIH had historically supported research grants focused on intervention and services, and I am hopeful that with engagement from Congress and stakeholders, NIH can once again support this important research through the centers of excellence program.

I thank Representative CHRIS SMITH for working on this important issue, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 7213, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I encourage a "yes" vote on 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 Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 7213.

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. BUCSHON. 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.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE SOAR TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRAINING PROGRAM

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7224) to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Training Program.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7224

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE SOAR TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRAINING PROGRAM.

Section 1254(h) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300d-54(h)) is amended by striking "fiscal years 2020 through 2024" and inserting "fiscal years 2025 through 2029".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUCSHON. 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 in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7224, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Training Program led by Representatives WAGNER and COHEN.

Individuals who have experienced human trafficking will often encounter a healthcare or social service provider during or after their exploitation. The Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond, or SOAR, to Health and Wellness Training Program was signed into law in 2018 to help local healthcare professionals receive essential training to identify and care for victims of human trafficking.

Reauthorizing this program will maintain a vital source of support for victims of human trafficking by ensuring communities have the resources available to provide appropriate services.

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

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of H.R. 7224, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Training Program.

This bipartisan legislation, introduced by Representative COHEN, would reauthorize the program administered by the Administration of Children and Families that trains healthcare and social service providers on human trafficking.

The SOAR program is designed to educate healthcare providers, social workers, public health professionals, and behavioral health professionals on how to identify and respond appropriately to individuals who either have experienced trafficking or are at risk of it.

This training is targeted at physicians, pharmacists, nurses, dentists, psychologists, social workers and case managers, school counselors, public health professionals, and allied health professionals, as well.

Human trafficking impacts thousands of people in the United States. According to the Harvard Medical School Center for Primary Care, over 88 percent of human-trafficking victims seek medical care in various health settings. Ensuring that our health professionals who serve on the front lines of providing medical care for human-trafficking victims are appropriately trained and supported is essential.

In 2019, the original SOAR to Health and Wellness Act was signed into law, which established the SOAR to Health and Wellness Training Program. This program helps healthcare settings cre-

ate a plan for treating human-trafficking victims and support victim recovery.

Since the establishment, over 90 percent of providers who received SOAR training reported high or very high confidence in identifying and responding to human trafficking.

With the passage of the reauthorization bill, we can continue to fund this important training initiative, as well as encourage collaboration between healthcare providers and law enforcement and social service providers in the fight against human trafficking.

I thank Representative COHEN for his leadership on this legislation, as well as Dr. BUCSHON and my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee for working with us to bring this to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to vote "yes" to continue a well-rounded national effort to combat human trafficking, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 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 support of H.R. 7224, which reauthorizes the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Act. I am proud to co-lead this important bill with the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN), and I thank him for his work.

Mr. Speaker, this bill provides healthcare professionals with training on how to identify and appropriately treat victims of human trafficking. Every 2 minutes, a child in the United States falls into the human-trafficking ring.

In 2023, nearly 10,000 cases were reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, with over 600 of those occurring in Georgia. At some point during their captivity, many of these victims will come into contact with healthcare professionals. A doctor's visit or an emergency department trip can offer a critical point of intervention for victims and a brief chance when a victim may be able to detach from traffickers.

This legislation will teach healthcare professionals how to properly identify and respond to victims of human trafficking. That is why I applaud Representative COHEN for introducing this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the recognition and the cosponsorship and support.

Mr. Speaker, this bill came from a meeting I had in Memphis with nurses at the University of Tennessee. They were discussing human trafficking and ways that victims could be identified, and the idea came to fruition through the work of the University of Tennessee Nursing School.

Human traffickers exploit tens of thousands of people in the United States. When we talk about human trafficking here, we are basically talking about sexual trafficking. I mean, the trafficking of workers, the trafficking in a variety of occupations, but these are women who are trafficked for sex.

The actual number is difficult to determine, but it is one of the reasons we introduced the SOAR Act several years ago. I am pleased it passed, and it has done much good.

It has shown that, when nurses are trained, they can identify victims of sexual trafficking. Oftentimes they end up in health facilities because they get beaten by the people who put them into this position. They have wounds, and they have to come to emergency rooms. The nurses are there to observe. If they are trained, they are the initial source. They can then get these women out of the human trafficking and prevent this scourge on human society.

This bill expanded the training program under the Department of Health and Human Services to train these workers, health and social service providers, to identify potential human-trafficking victims, work with law enforcement to report and facilitate the communication with such victims, refer victims to social or victim service agencies and organizations, and provide victims with coordinated care tailored to their circumstances.

The program has been successful. In September 2017 and September 2023, the Office of Trafficking in Persons hosted 222 events through which they trained over 263,000 healthcare professionals. After receiving the training, 91.4 percent of the participants indicated they had high or very high confidence in their ability to identify and respond to human trafficking.

The SOAR to Health and Wellness Program has made tremendous strides to train healthcare professionals on the signs of human trafficking and the appropriate steps to be taken once they identify the victim.

As Members of Congress, we should continue to support this program so that more people could be trained to properly identify and assist victims of human trafficking. Pass the reauthorization bill here, and let our constituents know that, if they are being trafficked or are suspicious that someone they know is being trafficked, help is available.

The Homeland Security Investigations Tip Line is 866-347-2423, and the National Human Trafficking Hotline is 888-373-7888.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill to reauthorize the SOAR Act, and I thank the committee ranking member and the committee chair for bringing the bill to the floor.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 7224, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I encourage a "yes" vote on 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 Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7224.

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.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 223) to amend the Controlled Substances Act to fix a technical error in the definitions.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 223

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT.

Section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (58) as paragraph (59);

(2) by redesignating the second paragraph designated as paragraph (57) (relating to the definition of “serious drug felony”) as paragraph (58); and

(3) by moving paragraphs (57), (58) (as so redesignated), and (59) (as so redesignated) 2 ems to the left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON) and the gentleman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUCSHON. 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 in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 223, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to fix a technical error in the definitions, led by Senators CHUCK GRASSLEY and Representative BURCHETT.

In 2018, the First Step Act, or the FSA, included a redundantly numbered subparagraph 57, causing “serious drug felony” and “serious violent felony” to be misnumbered in statute.

The misnumbering of the affected subparagraphs causes confusion in Federal district courts during litigation and can result in costly mistakes when the wrong subparagraph 57 charge is used.

Correcting this error is important to the efficiency and accuracy of Federal

criminal court cases. This bill rectifies this technical error by correctly renumbering the affected subparagraphs in the statute.

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

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of S. 223, a bill that amends the Controlled Substances Act to fix a technical error in the definitions. This legislation, sponsored by Representatives BURCHETT and COHEN here in the House, would clarify the definitions of the different types of recidivist enhancements in the statute.

When the First Step Act was first signed into law in 2018, it created two new types of recidivist enhancements: serious drug felony and serious violent felony.

In the statute, however, both are numbered as paragraph 57, and this technical error has caused confusion between the two definitions. To prevent any further confusion with the interpretation of the statute, this bill corrects this technical error and properly numbers these definitions as different paragraphs.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to vote “yes” on this legislation to prevent potential costly mistakes in Federal criminal court cases, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I encourage a “yes” vote on 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 Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 223.

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.

WOMEN AND LUNG CANCER RESEARCH AND PREVENTIVE SERVICES ACT OF 2024

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4534) to require a review of women and lung cancer, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4534

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 “Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act of 2024”.

SEC. 2. INTERAGENCY REVIEW TO EVALUATE AND IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ACCELERATION OF RESEARCH ON LUNG CANCER IN WOMEN AND UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS, GREATER ACCESS TO PREVENTIVE SERVICES, AND STRATEGIC PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of Veterans Affairs, shall conduct an interagency review to evaluate the status of, and identify opportunities related to—

- (1) research on lung cancer in women;
- (2) research on lung cancer in underserved populations that meet the eligibility criteria for lung cancer screening as recommended by the United States Preventive Services Task Force;
- (3) access to lung cancer preventive services; and
- (4) strategic public awareness and education campaigns on lung cancer.

(b) CONTENT.—The review and recommendations under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) a review and comprehensive report on the outcomes of previous research, the status of existing research activities, and knowledge gaps related to lung cancer in women and underserved populations in all agencies of the Federal Government;

(2) opportunities for collaborative, interagency, multidisciplinary, and innovative research, that would—

(A) encourage innovative approaches to eliminate knowledge gaps in research on lung cancer in women;

(B) evaluate environmental and genomic factors that may be related to the etiology of lung cancer in women; and

(C) foster advances in imaging technology and techniques to improve risk assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and the simultaneous utilization of other preventive services and activities;

(3) opportunities regarding the development of a national lung cancer screening strategy to expand access to such screenings, particularly among women and underserved populations; and

(4) opportunities regarding the development of a national public education and awareness campaign on—

(A) lung cancer in women and underserved populations; and

(B) the importance of early detection of lung cancer.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit to Congress a report on the review conducted under subsection (a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON) and the gentleman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUCSHON. 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 in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4534, the Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act of

2024, led by Representative BRENDAN BOYLE.

Mr. Speaker, lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death for both men and women in the United States. Just this year, an estimated 230,000 Americans developed new cases of lung cancer, and about 125,000 died from the disease.

Currently, 20 percent of women diagnosed with lung cancer are non-smokers, and women who have never smoked are more than two times more likely to get lung cancer than men who have never smoked.

□ 1600

To improve our ability to screen, diagnose, and treat lung cancer, we need a better understanding of the related risk factors.

This bill would review current lung cancer research in women and underserved populations, as well as identify current relevant opportunities related to education and access to prevention, detection, and treatment services.

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

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4534, the Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act. This legislation led by Representative BOYLE of Pennsylvania would require an interagency review to evaluate research on women and lung cancer.

In the United States, we are seeing a concerning trend among young and middle-aged women who are being diagnosed with lung cancer. Women are disproportionately being diagnosed with lung cancer at a higher rate than men, even though many of them have never smoked.

Approximately, two-thirds of never smokers who have been diagnosed with lung cancer are women. A clear understanding of the existing research and innovative opportunities to reduce lung cancer mortality, particularly among women and underserved populations, is needed.

The Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act will directly address these alarming statistics by supporting an interagency review on women and lung cancer.

This important bill will allow scientists and policymakers to identify opportunities to accelerate research in this area and develop a public awareness campaign on lung cancer screening to better reach underserved populations.

Led by the Department of Health and Human Services, with partnership from the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, the review would include a report on the status of existing research and knowledge gaps and identify opportunities for collaborative research to determine the causes of lung cancer.

By passing H.R. 4534, we will move our country toward progress in reduc-

ing lung cancer mortality among women. I thank Representative BOYLE for his commitment and determined advocacy to ensure this legislation's success.

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

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

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BOYLE).

Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my bill, the Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act of 2024.

This bipartisan legislation would require the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretaries of Defense and Veterans Affairs, to conduct an interagency review of research on women and lung cancer, as well as access to preventive services. It also calls for interagency collaboration on public awareness campaigns to increase education and promote early detection.

While smoking rates continue to decline and overall lung cancer rates fall, there is one deeply concerning exception: young women who have never smoked. Studies show that women non-smokers are now twice as likely as nonsmoking men to develop lung cancer.

The statistics are indeed staggering. According to the American Cancer Society, 162 women in the United States die of lung cancer every single day. That is about one woman every 8 to 9 minutes. In 2024 alone, an estimated 59,280 women will lose their lives to this disease. Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer deaths among women, and we must do far more to address it.

This bill is about solutions. By increasing access to preventive services and public awareness, we can lower the prevalence of lung cancer among women.

Mr. Speaker, despite progress in preventing and treating lung cancer, disparities persist. Women continue to see slower declines in lung cancer rates as compared to men. It is past time for the Federal Government to step up, confront this disparity head-on, and take real action to address it.

Today is also a bittersweet day for me because much of the inspiration for this bill comes from my late colleague and friend, Congressman Rick Nolan. Rick was committed to this fight in honor of his late daughter, Katherine Benson, who courageously battled stage 4 non-small cell lung cancer until her untimely death in 2020 at just 46 years old. Katherine is survived by her husband and four children, and her legacy continues through this effort.

I am also proud to have worked on this proposal with the late Senator Dianne Feinstein, who was a steadfast

advocate for addressing disparities in lung cancer outcomes. Senator Feinstein and I first introduced this legislation together in 2016, and her dedication to improving the lives of women impacted by lung cancer will never be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, I also thank my friend and fellow Pennsylvanian, Congressman BRIAN FITZPATRICK, for co-leading this effort from across the aisle.

Finally, I am grateful to the members of the Energy and Commerce Committee for helping advance this bill on both sides of the aisle, especially my good friend, BRETT GUTHRIE.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, this is a commonsense, bipartisan proposal to save lives and close a glaring disparity in healthcare. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4534 and stand with the countless women and families impacted by lung cancer.

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

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative BOYLE again for his leadership and advocacy. I urge a "yes" vote on H.R. 4534, the Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act of 2024, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I encourage a "yes" vote on this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. VALADAO). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4534, 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.

SHANDRA EISENGA HUMAN CELL AND TISSUE PRODUCT SAFETY ACT

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7188) to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct a national, evidence-based education campaign to increase public and health care provider awareness regarding the potential risks and benefits of human cell and tissue products transplants, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7188

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 "Shandra Eisenga Human Cell and Tissue Product Safety Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) HUMAN CELL AND TISSUE PRODUCT.—The terms "human cell and tissue product" and "human cell and tissue products" have the

meaning given the term “human cells, tissues, or cellular or tissue-based products” in section 1271.3(d) of title 21, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations).

(2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(3) TISSUE REFERENCE GROUP.—The term “Tissue Reference Group” means the Tissue Reference Group of the Food and Drug Administration.

SEC. 3. HUMAN CELL AND TISSUE PRODUCTS TRANSPLANT PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN.

The Secretary shall support the development and dissemination of educational materials to inform health care professionals and other appropriate professionals about issues surrounding—

(1) organ, tissue, and eye donation, including evidence-based methods to approach patients and their families;

(2) the availability of any donor screening tests; and

(3) other relevant aspects of donation.

SEC. 4. REVIEW AND UPDATE OF EXISTING GUIDANCE.

The Secretary, acting through the Commissioner of Food and Drugs, shall—

(1) not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, initiate an internal review of existing guidance for determining eligibility of donors of human cell and tissue products;

(2) not later than 3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, if appropriate—

(A) update the guidance titled “Eligibility Determination for Donors of Human Cells, Tissues, and Cellular and Tissue-Based Products; Guidance for Industry” issued August 2007; and

(B) issue or update, as applicable, any guidance for industry of the Food and Drug Administration that includes—

(i) recommendations to reduce the risk of transmission of mycobacterium tuberculosis by human cells, tissues, and cellular and tissue-based products (HCT/Ps); or

(ii) recommendations to reduce the risk of transmission of disease agents associated with sepsis for donors of human cells, tissues, and cellular and tissue-based products (HCT/Ps); and

(3) if the Secretary determines that issuing or updating guidance as specified in paragraph (2) is not appropriate, provide a written statement of explanation of that determination to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate.

SEC. 5. CIVIL PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION OF REQUIREMENTS FOR HUMAN CELL AND TISSUE PRODUCTS.

Section 368 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 271) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d)(1) Any person who, on or after the date of the enactment of the Shandra Eisenga Human Cell and Tissue Product Safety Act, violates a requirement of subparts C or D of section 1271 of title 21, Code of Federal Regulations, (or successor regulations) with respect to human cell or tissue products regulated under section 361 shall be liable to the United States for a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed the sum of—

“(A)(i) \$20,000 for each violation; and

“(ii) in the case of a violation that continues after the Secretary provides written notice to such person, \$20,000 for each subsequent day on which the violation continues; and

“(B) an amount equal to the retail value of the human cell and tissue products that are the subject of the violation.

“(2) The total civil penalty under paragraph (1) may not exceed \$10,000,000 for all such violations adjudicated in a single proceeding.

“(3) In this subsection, the term ‘human cell and tissue products’ has the meaning given the term ‘human cells, tissues, or cellular or tissue-

based products’ in section 1271.3(d) of title 21, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations).”.

SEC. 6. STREAMLINING REGULATORY OVERSIGHT OF HUMAN CELL AND TISSUE PRODUCTS.

(a) INFORMATION ON HUMAN CELL AND TISSUE PRODUCTS.—

(1) WEBSITE.—The Secretary, acting through the Commissioner of Food and Drugs, shall publish on the public website of the Food and Drug Administration—

(A) educational materials about the Tissue Reference Group; and

(B) best practices for obtaining a timely, accurate recommendation regarding human cell and tissue products from the Tissue Reference Group.

(2) PUBLIC INFORMATION.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually for the subsequent 3 years, the Secretary, acting through the Commissioner of Food and Drugs, shall publish on the public website of the Food and Drug Administration—

(A) the number of human cell and tissue establishments that registered with the Food and Drug Administration on or after January 1, 2019;

(B) the number of inspections conducted by the Food and Drug Administration of human cell and tissue establishments on or after January 1, 2019, including a comparison of the number of inspections for blood establishments with the number of inspections for such human cell and tissue establishments;

(C) the number and type of inquiries to the Tissue Reference Group in the preceding year; and

(D) the average response time for submissions to the Tissue Reference Group in the preceding year, including average initial and final response time.

(3) EDUCATION.—The Secretary, acting through the Commissioner of Food and Drugs, shall, with respect to the regulation of human cell and tissue products—

(A) provide information to relevant stakeholders, including industry, tissue establishments, academic health centers, biomedical consortia, research organizations, and patients; and

(B) conduct workshops and other interactive and educational sessions for such stakeholders to help support regulatory predictability and scientific advancement, as appropriate.

(b) HUMAN CELL AND TISSUE PRODUCT SCIENTIFIC AND REGULATORY UPDATES.—Section 3205 of the Food and Drug Omnibus Reform Act of 2022 (title III of division FF of Public Law 117–328) is amended by striking “best practices” and all that follows through “other cellular therapies” and inserting “best practices on generating scientific data necessary to further facilitate the development of certain human cell-, tissue-, and cellular-based medical products (and the latest scientific information about such products), namely, stem cell and other cellular therapies”.

(c) PUBLIC DOCKET.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall establish a public docket to receive written comments related to—

(1) the approaches recommended for discussion during the public workshop described in section 3205 of the Food and Drug Omnibus Reform Act of 2022 (title III of division FF of Public Law 117–328); and

(2) modernizing the regulation of human cell and tissue products, including considerations associated with assessing minimal manipulation and homologous use (as such terms are defined in section 1271.3 of title 21, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations)) of human cell and tissue products.

(d) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than September 30, 2026, the Secretary shall summarize the approaches discussed in the public workshop described in section 3205 of the Food

and Drug Omnibus Reform Act of 2022 (title III of division FF of Public Law 117–328) and the public docket described in subsection (c), and develop recommendations regarding the regulation of human cell and tissue products, including provisions under sections 1271.10(a) and 1271.3 of title 21, Code of Federal Regulations, taking into account—

(1) regulatory burden;

(2) scientific developments;

(3) access to human cell and tissue products regulated under section 361 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 264); and

(4) protecting public health.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUCSHON. 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 in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7188, the Shandra Eisenga Human Cell and Tissue Product Safety Act led by Representative MOOLENAAR.

This bill was drafted in response to the passing of Shandra Eisenga of Marion, Michigan, on August 10, 2023, due to complications from a tuberculosis infection.

Ms. Eisenga contracted TB after receiving a bone graft in April 2023 using a tissue donation from an infected donor.

She was 1 of 36 patients in seven States to contract TB from a tissue donation originating from this donor resulting in 2 deaths.

The bill would help raise awareness about the risks and life-transformative benefits of human cell and tissue product transplants through a public awareness campaign. It would also require the FDA to take additional steps to promote public health by issuing and updating relevant guidance for industry on determining eligibility of donors of human cell and tissue products.

This path forward will increase patient safety and public trust in these lifesaving medical products.

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

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7188, the Shandra Eisenga Human Cell and Tissue Product Safety Act, sponsored by my colleagues, Representatives DINGELL and MOOLENAAR.

Stem cell therapies and related products have shown tremendous promise for delivering treatments to patients, such as bone marrow transplants for

certain cancer patients and therapies for patients with blood and immune system disorders.

However, there are still rogue clinics that take advantage of patients desperate for cures.

For example, there have been reports of some clinics peddling unapproved treatments with exaggerated and deceptive claims. Exposure to these unproven treatments have put the health of vulnerable patients at risk, leading to serious adverse events, including blindness, blood stream infections, paralysis, and tumor growth.

There are currently few meaningful repercussions in the human cell and tissue products industry, so this legislation would change that by providing the Food and Drug Administration with additional enforcement tools to move more quickly and effectively to protect the public.

It provides a balanced approach to improving safety of human cell tissue in cellular and tissue-based products. First, the legislation provides clarity regarding FDA scientific and regulatory efforts to oversee these products. Second, it also enables more effective enforcement against an establishment that does not meet its donor eligibility obligations or current good tissue practice obligations.

This would also encourage responsible manufacturers to continue to develop and license products where the scientific evidence supports the products' safety, purity, and potency. This is an important bill.

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

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MOOLENAAR).

Mr. MOOLENAAR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I also thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, especially Congresswoman DINGELL, my fellow Michigander, who has worked very closely with me on this.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this bipartisan legislation. This is the Shandra Eisenga Human Cell and Tissue Product Safety Act.

In 2023, 36 patients across seven States contracted tuberculosis from infected bone grafts. One of these patients was my constituent, Shandra Eisenga, of Marion, Michigan, who tragically passed away on August 10, 2023, from TB.

We are joined today in the gallery by Shandra's daughter, Amber; her husband, Brandon, and their children; Shandra's fiancé, Leo; as well as her sister, Tarin Brunink, who also serves in my office as the director of casework.

This family has been forever hurt by the loss of Shandra, and today we are taking concrete action to help stop more families from having this same terrible experience.

Shandra's passing, as well as nine other patients over the past 3 years, was completely preventable if it was

not for the inadequate oversight of tissue material suppliers.

When it comes to tissue donations, the FDA requires screening for diseases like hepatitis, syphilis, and HIV. This bipartisan bill will require screening for tuberculosis as well and put an end to preventable TB deaths like Shandra's.

This bill will also require HHS to conduct research and public education campaigns on the risks of surgery requiring a tissue donation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this vital, bipartisan legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds Members that the rules do not allow references to persons in the gallery.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. DINGELL).

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. CASTOR for yielding to me. I also thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and, in particular, my dear friend, JOHN MOOLENAAR. We have been a team on this from the moment that we heard about this.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my strong support for H.R. 7188, the Shandra Eisenga Human Cell and Tissue Product Safety Act.

I am proud to lead this bipartisan bill alongside my friend and colleague from Michigan, Mr. MOOLENAAR.

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Last summer, I was contacted by the medical director of the Washtenaw County Tuberculosis Clinic, who was treating a patient, Shandra Eisenga, for a severe post-surgical tuberculosis infection. Shandra was Representative MOOLENAAR's constituent, but she was being treated at the University of Michigan, a medical facility in my district. After a month of battling a severe TB infection in the intensive care unit, she unfortunately died.

Since Shandra's passing, it has been discovered that her death was, indeed, linked to contaminated bone graft material produced by Aziyo Biologics. She was 1 of 36 patients who received material from the contaminated lot. As of today, this latest outbreak is linked to the deaths of two patients, including Shandra.

This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct public awareness campaigns to assist in preventing TB outbreaks caused by contaminated human cell and tissue product donations. We have also included an important provision to allow the Food and Drug Administration to pursue civil penalties from establishments that manufacture human cells, tissues, and cellular- and tissue-based products where they put the patient at risk.

Patients and their healthcare providers deserve to know the risks associated with tissue donations, and companies that make and distribute contami-

nated products must be held accountable for their actions that put patients in harm's way.

Mr. Speaker, when this happened, I had had multiple bone grafts because of osteomyelitis. I never once was warned of any danger, and my doctor was unaware of these dangers. We cannot let that ever happen again. We must protect patients and educate patients.

I thank Energy and Commerce Chair CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS and Ranking Member FRANK PALLONE for fighting for this important piece of legislation. Again, I would not be here without my colleague, Representative MOOLENAAR.

We owe it to Shandra and her family, who is here and to whom we made a commitment last August that we would not let this happen to anybody else again. I am happy that they see us here fighting for them on this floor. We are also here for any other patient who has been affected by contaminated bone grafts. We are going to prevent these unnecessary tragedies from happening again.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes," and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I am glad we are here today. I was a healthcare provider before I was in the Congress for 15 years, and I find when you have legislation like this that comes up, it is surprising that we have to, literally, as they say, have an act of Congress to protect patients, but today is one of those days.

In the healthcare space, it always disappoints me when you see, whether it is providers or whether it is organizations that provide tissue, like this, where it seems like their moral character is compromised by the quest for profit. To me, it couldn't be worse.

One of the goals that I have had since I have been here—and this will probably be my last time on the House floor managing a bill since I am retiring—is to put patients first. Any legislation that we propose, bipartisan legislation that we do, that is the number one goal.

The number one goal should not be talking about the finances or other things related to legislation. We do have to talk about some of those things, but at the end of the day, the goal here is to make sure that the American people get quality, affordable healthcare that is safe and that they don't get transplants like this that have contaminated tissue that, in this case, has resulted in her death and the death of one other person, plus who knows how many other people of the 36 have struggled with their medical care based on this.

The other thing is, I wish this was an isolated incident in the healthcare space. Let me say that the vast majority of people across the healthcare space, from providers on down to companies, do things right. They do things the right way, but every once in a

while, you will find organizations or people who do not.

Mr. Speaker, it is surprising to me that we have to address this with the FDA because you would think that already—this is part of the problem when you put specific diseases in for what the FDA has to look at. They have to look at HIV and syphilis and other things, but these tissues can have almost anything there. We need to make sure that they have the power and, honestly, the legislative authority to accomplish the goal that we all have, and that is to protect patients.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a very important piece of legislation, and it is bigger than just this legislation. This is something that will, in perpetuity, protect patients so we don't end up having situations like this.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have any other speakers on the legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

It has been a pleasure to work with Dr. BUCSHON. He has brought great intellect and passion to his service on health issues, especially at the Energy and Commerce Committee. I also thank Representative MOOLENAAR and Representative DINGELL for their leadership on this effort.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that Shandra Eisenga's tragedy will be turned into progress and prevention for other families across the United States.

I urge a "yes" vote on H.R. 7188 and yield back the balance of my time.

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

I thank the gentlewoman for her kind words. The Energy and Commerce Committee is a committee that works in a broad, bipartisan way to accomplish all kinds of things. I think if you look back at this Congress or previous Congresses, the number of pieces of legislation that come to this floor that have gone through our committee in a bipartisan way, you would find that is a substantial percentage of bills that come across this floor. It has been an honor and privilege to work with all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage a "yes" vote on this really important 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 Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7188, 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.

HONOR OUR LIVING DONORS ACT

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill

(H.R. 6020) to amend the Public Health Service Act to eliminate consideration of the income of organ recipients in providing reimbursement of expenses to donating individuals, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6020

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 "Honor Our Living Donors Act".

SEC. 2. NO CONSIDERATION OF INCOME OF ORGAN RECIPIENT.

Section 377 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 274f) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (c) through (f) as subsections (d) through (g), respectively;

(2) by inserting after subsection (b) the following:

"(c) NO CONSIDERATION OF INCOME OF ORGAN RECIPIENT.—The recipient of a grant under this section, in providing reimbursement to a donating individual through such grant, shall not give any consideration to the income of the organ recipient."; and

(3) in subsection (f), as so redesignated—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking "subsection (c)(1)" and inserting "subsection (d)(1)"; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking "subsection (c)(2)" and inserting "subsection (d)(2)".

SEC. 3. REMOVAL OF EXPECTATION OF PAYMENTS BY ORGAN RECIPIENTS.

Section 377(e) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 274f(e)), as redesignated by section 2, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by adding "or" at the end;

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking "; or" and inserting a period; and

(3) by striking paragraph (3).

SEC. 4. ANNUAL REPORT.

Section 377 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 274f), as amended by sections 2 and 3, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

"(h) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than December 31 of each year, the Secretary shall—

(1) prepare, submit to the Congress, and make public a report on whether grants under this section provided adequate funding during the preceding fiscal year to reimburse all donating individuals participating in the grant program under this section for all qualifying expenses; and

(2) include in each such report—

(A) the estimated number of all donating individuals participating in the grant program under this section who did not receive reimbursement for all qualifying expenses during the preceding fiscal year; and

(B) the total amount of funding that is estimated to be necessary to fully reimburse all donating individuals participating in the grant program under this section for all qualifying expenses."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUCSHON. 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 in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 6020, the Honor Our Living Donors Act, or the HOLD Act, led by Representative JAY OBERNOLTE.

This legislation will support living organ donors who give the miraculous gift of life to patients in need and their families. Donating an organ is a selfless act. The financial burdens of donation should not stand in the way of people who are motivated to give the gift of life.

Organ donors often take time off work and undergo invasive medical procedures to help patients in need. Under current law, a living donor's ability to be reimbursed for qualified expenses is based on the income of both the donor and recipient. This has proven to be an unnecessary barrier to living organ donation and has resulted in most living organ donors financing their own donations.

The HOLD Act would ensure that more heroic living donors are able to access qualified reimbursements associated with organ donation.

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

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6020, the Honor Our Living Donors Act, sponsored by Representatives OBERNOLTE and DELBENE.

Living donor donation is an important option for the more than 100,000 Americans on the national transplant waiting list. However, many people who would like to donate an organ have trouble paying for their related expenses. The National Living Donor Assistance Center reduces these barriers by providing reimbursement for travel, lost wages, and dependent care expenses to people pursuing living organ donation.

Currently, there are strict income restrictions on who can be reimbursed for being a living donor, including restrictions based on the income of the recipient. This bill would no longer limit donor eligibility based on the income of the recipient, allowing more donors to qualify for necessary assistance when donating organs.

This bipartisan legislation is an important step toward making living donation easier for those who choose to pursue it. It would also benefit the thousands of individuals anxiously awaiting an organ transplant.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in this effort to strengthen and expand the National Living Donor Assistance Center program. I encourage all of my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 6020, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the

gentleman from California (Mr. OBERNOLTE).

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to testify in support of my bill, the Honor Our Living Donors Act.

Mr. Speaker, I think everyone can agree that there are few acts more selfless than a living donor donating an organ to somebody else in need.

There is a desperate need for those organs. We have over 100,000 Americans currently actively awaiting a donated organ to save their lives, yet we don't have enough donations to go around.

It will also come as no surprise that the act of donating an organ comes with substantial financial liability and risk for the donors. There is time off work to be considered. It is an invasive medical procedure with, in some cases, an extensive recovery. There are expenses like childcare and travel. All of these things make it very expensive to donate an organ.

That is why the National Living Donor Assistance Center was established by Congress, to help fund these badly needed donations. However, it is not enough. Over 90 percent of the active living donors who donate an organ currently do so at their own expense.

One of the reasons for that is because it is so difficult to qualify under the current guidelines. In fact, it is means tested so that it is dependent on the sum of the income of the organ donor and the organ recipient. I think we should all be able to agree that that is nonsensical. Only the income of the donor should matter.

That is why this bill is so important. This bill makes that simple change that will hopefully incentivize more people to undertake the selfless act of donating an organ.

I thank you for your consideration, Mr. Speaker, and I respectfully urge adoption of the HOLD Act.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative OBERNOLTE for his very thoughtful legislation, along with Representative DELBENE. I urge a "yes" vote on H.R. 6020, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I urge a "yes" vote on 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 Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6020, 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.

□ 1630

DESIGNATION OF BALD EAGLE AS NATIONAL BIRD

Mr. FRY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R.

4610) to amend title 36, United States Code, to designate the bald eagle as the national bird.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 4610

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION OF BALD EAGLE AS NATIONAL BIRD.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) bald eagles are a historical symbol of the United States representing independence, strength, and freedom;

(2) the bald eagle is unique to North America;

(3) on June 20, 1782, the bald eagle was adopted as the Coat of Arms for the United States Great Seal;

(4) the bald eagle image remains the leading insignia for all branches of the United States military;

(5) the bald eagle is the leading image on thousands of Federal Government branches, departments, and agencies, including the President, Vice-President, Congress, and Senate;

(6) the bald eagle serves as the logo, trademark, and brand icon for businesses, non-profit organizations, and sports teams across the United States;

(7) bald eagles are integral to the spiritual lives and sacred belief systems of most Indigenous peoples and Tribal communities;

(8) bald eagles are prevalent in belief, practice, stories, ceremonies, dance, traditions, songs, regalia, flags, insignias, arts, craft, and other forms of spiritual reverence;

(9) bald eagle festivals are—

(A) held in over 100 locations across the United States; and

(B) key components of community engagement;

(10) the bald eagle is prevalent on—

(A) hundreds of United States stamps; and

(B) many United States coins and currencies;

(11) the bald eagle is a primary component and symbol on Federal and State flags throughout the United States; and

(12) joint efforts of the Federal Government and State and local governments, non-profit organizations, and individuals have contributed to the successful recovery of the bald eagle.

(b) DESIGNATION.—Chapter 3 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 306. National bird

"The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) is the national bird."

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—The table of sections for chapter 3 of title 36, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the chapter heading, by striking "**AND TREE**" and inserting "**TREE, AND BIRD**"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"306. National bird."

(d) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section, the amendments made by this section, or the adoption of the bald eagle as the national bird of the United States may be construed or used as a reason to alter, change, modify, or otherwise affect any plan, policy, management decision, regulation, or other action of the Federal Government.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. FRY) and the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCANLON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRY. 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 S. 4610.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, the bald eagle has long been associated with and a symbol of the United States. It was first adopted in the Great Seal of the United States in 1782.

Versions of the Great Seal are used in the Seal of the President of the United States, the House of Representatives, the Senate, and by countless Federal agencies and departments.

The bald eagle appears on the flags and insignia of our military, on our passports, and on our currency. It appears on the flags and the seals of several States as well.

The bald eagle is also important to Native American Tribes across the United States. It plays a key role in sacred belief systems and traditions, stories, ceremonies, and insignias.

Despite this long and intertwined history of the United States, the bald eagle has not been officially designated as our national bird. S. 4610 would change that. This bill would amend title 36 to enshrine the bald eagle as the national bird along with our national anthem, national motto, and other symbols of our country.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 4610, a bill that would amend chapter III of title 36 of the United States Code, which codifies various national symbols to designate the bald eagle as our national bird.

The bald eagle, native to North America, is a longstanding and cherished symbol, as well as one for whom football fans in my district share a special affection. However, it may surprise people to know that the law does not already designate the bald eagle as our national bird.

In 1782, the bald eagle was adopted as part of the Coat of Arms for the Great Seal of the United States. It has been incorporated into the Seals of the United States House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, the President and Vice President of the United States, and various government departments and agencies.

It is also deeply embedded into our culture as a symbol of patriotism, reflecting the strength, majesty, and grace of our great Nation.

However, by the 1960s, this powerful symbol of American freedom was on its way to extinction due to the combined impact of environmental hazards and habitat laws.

In the late 1970s, the bald eagle was designated as endangered in many of the lower 48 States. Today, its population has recovered significantly, thanks to targeted conservation measures spearheaded by the Federal Government and private individuals. These included habitat protection, the banning of certain poisons and pesticides, and captive breeding programs, all of which led to the bald eagle being removed from the endangered species list and to its becoming a symbol of how the Endangered Species Act can save wildlife from extinction.

The bald eagle population in the lower 48 States has increased from 417 nesting pairs in 1963 to more than 71,400 nesting pairs and 316,700 individual birds today. In bringing this bill to the floor, we applaud the efforts of Senators AMY KLOBUCHAR, CYNTHIA LUMMIS, MARKWAYNE MULLIN, and TINA SMITH, as well as BRAD FINSTAD and ANGIE CRAIG.

I urge the House to pass this legislation to designate the bald eagle as the national bird, or as we say in Philadelphia, Go Birds.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation, I urge all Members to pass it, and send it to the President's desk.

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

Mr. FRY. Mr. Speaker, I echo the sentiments of my colleague from across the aisle and I urge my colleagues to support S. 4610.

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

Mr. FINSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 4610, the counterpart to my bipartisan legislation to recognize the bald eagle as the National Bird of the United States of America.

Throughout this process, I have had the pleasure of working with the National Eagle Center in Wabasha, Minnesota, and we are proud that they call southern Minnesota home.

As an undisputed symbol of our Nation, the bald eagle represents the strength and independence that we hold in our hearts as American citizens, and it is past time it is rightfully recognized as the national bird.

Since 1782, the bald eagle has been a symbol of America featured on the Great Seal; however it has never been officially designated as the national bird.

It remains a symbol of freedom across the country, as it is an emblem for all branches of the military and serves as a logo, trademark, and brand icon for businesses, nonprofits, and sports teams across the country.

It is also represented on our stamps, coins, and currency, holds spiritual value for our tribal communities, and so much more.

This bi-partisan, bi-cameral legislation gives the bald eagle the long-overdue recognition it deserves.

I would like to thank Senators KLOBUCHAR and LUMMIS, as well as Representative CRAIG for partnering with me on this legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote in support.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. FRY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 4610.

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.

FEDERAL JUDICIARY STABILIZATION ACT OF 2024

Mr. FRY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3998) to provide for the permanent appointment of certain temporary district judgeships.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3998

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 "Federal Judiciary Stabilization Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. TEMPORARY JUDGESHIPS IN THE DISTRICT COURTS.

(a) EXISTING JUDGESHIPS.—The existing judgeships for the district of Hawaii, the district of Kansas, and the eastern district of Missouri authorized by section 203(c) of the Judicial Improvements Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-650; 28 U.S.C. 133 note) and the existing judgeships for the northern district of Alabama, the district of Arizona, the central district of California, the southern district of Florida, the district of New Mexico, the western district of North Carolina, and the eastern district of Texas authorized by section 312(c) of the 21st Century Department of Justice Appropriations Authorization Act (Public Law 107-273; 28 U.S.C. 133 note) shall, as of the effective date of this Act, be authorized under section 133 of title 28, United States Code, and the incumbents in those offices shall hold the office under section 133 of title 28, United States Code, as amended by this Act.

(b) TABLES.—In order that the table contained in section 133 of title 28, United States Code, will, with respect to each judicial district, reflect the changes in the total number of permanent district judgeships authorized as a result of subsection (a) of this section, such table is amended—

(1) by striking the items relating to Alabama and inserting the following:

Table with 2 columns: Alabama (Northern, Middle, Southern) and corresponding counts (8, 3, 3).

(2) by striking the item relating to Arizona and inserting the following:

Table with 2 columns: Arizona and count (13).

(3) by striking the items relating to California and inserting the following:

Table with 2 columns: California (Northern, Eastern, Central, Southern) and corresponding counts (14, 6, 28, 13).

(4) by striking the items relating to Florida and inserting the following:

Table with 2 columns: Florida (Northern, Middle, Southern) and corresponding counts (4, 15, 18).

(5) by striking the item relating to Hawaii and inserting the following:

Table with 2 columns: Hawaii and count (4).

(6) by striking the item relating to Kansas and inserting the following:

Table with 2 columns: Kansas and count (6).

(7) by striking the items relating to Missouri and inserting the following:

Table with 2 columns: Missouri (Eastern, Western, Eastern and Western) and corresponding counts (7, 5, 2).

(8) by striking the item relating to New Mexico and inserting the following:

Table with 2 columns: New Mexico and count (7).

(9) by striking the items relating to North Carolina and inserting the following:

Table with 2 columns: North Carolina (Eastern, Middle, Western) and corresponding counts (4, 4, 5).

(10) by striking the items relating to Texas and inserting the following:

Table with 2 columns: Texas (Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western) and corresponding counts (12, 19, 8, 13).

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. FRY) and the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCANLON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRY. 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 S. 3998.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this Congress has already taken the most important step to stabilizing our overworked Federal courts.

Last week, the House joined the Senate in decisively passing the JUDGES Act of 2024. Dozens of Democrats joined Republicans to finally add much-needed judgeships for the first time in 20 years. We urge the President to set aside partisan politics and sign the bill into law.

The bill before us today, S. 3998, is another piece of critical legislation aimed at relieving the backlog of our Federal courts. The Federal Judiciary Stabilization Act of 2024 further aids the Federal judiciary by converting 10 temporary judgeships into permanent ones.

Importantly, this bill does not create any new vacancies. Instead, this bill ensures that districts don't lose a judgeship if a judge retires or takes senior status after a temporary judgeship expires in the future.

This bill makes permanent judgeships in Alabama, Arizona, California, Florida, Hawaii, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Texas. Passing this bill will provide stability

to the regions of those States that have come to rely on these temporary judgeships since their creation, in some cases more than 30 years ago.

This bill takes into account the recommendations of the Judicial Conference of the United States, and it is sorely needed.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 3998, the Federal Judiciary Stabilization Act of 2024, a bill to convert 10 temporary Federal judgeships to permanent seats.

Our country is facing a serious judicial shortage and has for some time. The last bill creating Federal district court judgeships was passed into law over 30 years ago.

Since that time, the Federal caseload has ballooned, and it has become increasingly difficult to ensure that Americans are able to have their day in court. This need spurred Republicans and Democrats to seek passage of the JUDGES Act earlier this year before the November election.

That bill was predicated on an agreement to give 25 judicial appointments to the unknown at that time next President. I was disappointed that Republican leadership held the bill until after the election in order to ensure that their candidate controlled the appointments.

It was very disappointing to have politics introduced on what should have been a bipartisan bill. We can't go back in time and pass the JUDGES Act before the election, but we can pass this legislation on a bipartisan basis to prevent the loss of 10 Federal judgeships when the current temporary judgeships expire.

Temporary judgeships are designed to help district courts reduce unusually large backlogs. Short-term judgeships look very similar to permanent ones. They are created by Congress, and the judges are appointed by the President to a lifetime judgeship.

However, after a temporary judgeship expires, the next person to retire or otherwise leave the bench in that judicial district is simply not replaced. That is exactly what will happen if these 10 temporary judgeships are allowed to lapse.

When a judge retires, no new nominees will be sent to Congress. Those judicial districts will lose judgeships on which they have relied for at least two decades, and Americans living in those districts will have trouble accessing justice.

We may call these judgeships temporary, but it is clear they are needed on a permanent basis. The 10 at issue today on S. 3998 have been reauthorized again and again. Since they were first authorized over 20 years ago, our Nation has grown, and with it, the demands on our Federal judicial system have grown too.

Making these 10 temporary judgeships permanent will ensure that people living and working in those communities have a Federal court system that is more responsive to their needs.

The Federal Judiciary Stabilization Act is a product of bipartisan, bicameral work. I thank my colleagues in both Chambers, Senators MAZIE HIRONO and TED CRUZ along with Representatives TED LIEU and LANCE GOODEN for their hard work on this bill.

The Senate passed this bill in April, so if the House passes it today, it will go directly to the President's desk. I am proud to support this bill. I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will strengthen the rule of law and access to justice, and provide stability to our judiciary by ensuring the number of Federal judges doesn't decrease when these temporary judgeships expire.

Each of these judicial districts has relied on these temporary judgeships for decades, and it is long past time that we make them permanent. This bill is a small, but meaningful step toward making our courthouse doors accessible to all Americans, regardless of where they live. I hope we can replicate this bipartisan work in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this bill, and send it to the President's desk, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FRY. Mr. Speaker, I echo the comments of my colleague from across the aisle, and I urge my colleagues in the House to support this bipartisan, bicameral piece of legislation, S. 3998, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. FRY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3998.

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. FRY. 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.

JAMES MOUNTAIN INHOFE VA MEDICAL CENTER

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 5314) to designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as the James Mountain Inhofe VA Medical Center.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 5314

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION OF JAMES MOUNTAIN INHOFE VA MEDICAL CENTER.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs under

construction as of the date of the enactment of this Act at 440 South Houston Avenue, Tulsa, Oklahoma, shall after such date of enactment be known and designated as the “James Mountain Inhofe Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center” or the “James Mountain Inhofe VA Medical Center”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the medical center referred to in subsection (a) shall be considered to be a reference to the James Mountain Inhofe VA Medical Center.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SELF). 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 S. 5314.

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 S. 5314, a bill to designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as the James Mountain Inhofe VA Medical Center.

Senator James Inhofe was born in 1934 in Des Moines, Iowa. He was drafted into the Army in 1956 and served until 1958. After serving in Oklahoma State politics and serving as the mayor of Tulsa, Senator Inhofe was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives representing Oklahoma's First District.

Senator Inhofe then represented the State of Oklahoma in the United States Senate from 1994 until 2023. Senator Inhofe chaired the Senate Armed Services Committee, and was instrumental in passing legislation which ensures our Nation's defense and the well-being of our servicemembers.

□ 1645

Senator Inhofe will be remembered for his long legacy of public service, from the U.S. Army to the U.S. Senate, and I am proud to name this VA medical center after him.

Anyone who knew Senator Inhofe knew how much he cared for our Nation's men and women in uniform. I thank the sponsor of this bill, Senator LANKFORD, as well as the entire Oklahoma delegation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support S. 5314, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise to express my support for S. 5314, a bill to designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as the James Mountain Inhofe VA Medical Center, introduced by Senator LANKFORD of Oklahoma.

This legislation is a fitting tribute to the long and dedicated service of former U.S. Senator James Inhofe, whose legacy is defined by his unwavering commitment to serving Oklahoma's veterans and ensuring that they receive the care and services they have earned.

Born and raised in Tulsa, Senator Inhofe served in the Army before becoming a Senator. He demonstrated a lifelong commitment to service to his community until his death earlier this year.

As we continue to make investments and support construction projects to improve veterans' access to care at VA facilities, we will remember Senator Inhofe's tireless support of the new VA facility that is currently under construction and that will soon bear his name.

Mr. Speaker, I support S. 5314 and ask that my colleagues do the same.

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. HERN), my good friend.

Mr. HERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great honor and pride to the legacy of the remarkable Oklahoma Senator James Mountain Inhofe and to support S. 5314, a bill sponsored by my colleague Senator LANKFORD to name the new VA medical center in Tulsa after this towering figure in our State's history, and I would argue, in our Nation's history.

This new 275,000-square-foot, 58-bed medical-surgical VA hospital will bear the name of James Mountain Inhofe VA Medical Center, a fitting tribute to a man who dedicated his career to championing our military, our veterans, and their families.

Senator Inhofe's legacy of service is unmatched. From his early days as mayor of Tulsa to his decades in the Senate, he fought tirelessly for the men and women who wear the uniform of this Nation.

I thank Senator LANKFORD for leading this effort in the Senate and for ensuring the unanimous passage of this important bill.

It was an honor to introduce companion legislation in the House alongside the Oklahoma delegation, knowing how much this hospital's name will mean to our veterans and their families.

For those of us privileged to call Senator Inhofe a friend, this is deeply personal. His unwavering dedication to our State and our Nation, his tireless advocacy for those who served, and his steadfast leadership left an indelible mark on every corner of Oklahoma.

Naming this hospital in his honor ensures his legacy will endure, reminding us all of the standard he set as a public servant.

Oklahomans knew Senator Inhofe as their Senator, their mayor, their advocate, and most importantly, their friend. This designation is more than a tribute. It is a promise to carry for-

ward his commitment to the men and women who sacrificed so much for the freedom of our Nation.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, I am ready to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

I ask all my colleagues to join me in passing S. 5314 to designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as the James Mountain Inhofe VA Medical Center.

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all 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, S. 5314.

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.

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS DESMOND T. DOSS VA CLINIC

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3938) to designate the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Lynchburg, Virginia, as the "Private First Class Desmond T. Doss VA Clinic".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3938

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION OF PRIVATE FIRST CLASS DESMOND T. DOSS VA CLINIC IN LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Lynchburg, Virginia, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Private First Class Desmond T. Doss VA Clinic".

(b) REFERENCE.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the clinic referred to in subsection (a) shall be considered to be a reference to the Private First Class Desmond T. Doss VA Clinic.

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 S. 3938.

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.

I rise today in support of S. 3938, a bill that designates the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Lynchburg, Virginia, as the Private First Class Desmond T. Doss VA Clinic.

Desmond T. Doss was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, in 1919 and enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1942 after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

In 1944, he took part in both the Battle of Guam and the Battle of the Philippines, serving as a medic in the 77th Infantry Division. While serving in those battles, he earned two Bronze Stars for exceptional valor in assisting wounded soldiers while under fire.

In 1945, during the Battle of Okinawa, PFC Doss saved an estimated 75 wounded men atop the infamous Hacksaw Ridge. For his heroism, he was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Truman.

After the war, he raised a son with his wife, Dorothy, on a small farm in Georgia.

PFC Doss remains a testament to the American spirit and an example of going above and beyond to answer the call of duty.

By naming the VA clinic after him, his story of service will be told for generations of Americans.

I thank the sponsor of the bill, Senator WARNER, as well as the entire Virginia delegation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support S. 3938, 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 S. 3938, a bill to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Lynchburg, Virginia, as the Private First Class Desmond T. Doss VA Clinic. I thank my colleague Senator WARNER for introducing it.

Private First Class Doss served with extraordinary courage during many of World War II's fiercest battles. His actions saved the lives of hundreds of his fellow soldiers, despite never being an active combatant, and his story is nothing short of heroic. I am proud to support this bill to honor his service.

The son of a decorated World War I veteran, Mr. Doss was raised in Lynchburg, Virginia, as a devout Seventh-day Adventist. A cornerstone of his faith was pacifism, but despite this, he enlisted into the Army in April of 1942 following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

During our Nation's darkest hour, he made the patriotic decision to balance his religious belief in nonviolence with a calling to protect his Nation by pursuing a nonarmed role as an Army medic. Assigned to 2nd Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 307th Infantry Division, Private First Class Doss soon found himself in some of the Pacific theater's most intense combat. Notably, he was awarded two Bronze Star

Medals for exceptional valor in Guam and the Philippines, aiding wounded soldiers under fire.

Private First Class Doss and the members of the 77th Infantry Division were assigned a major role during the Battle of Okinawa in 1945, the bloodiest conflict in the Pacific. The nearly 3-month-long battle resulted in roughly 49,000 American casualties, including 13,000 servicemembers who were killed in action.

Private First Class Doss demonstrated extraordinary heroism during the Battle of Okinawa, saving upwards of over 100 soldiers over the course of the conflict while routinely placing himself in the line of fire. Many of the casualties he saved were during operations during the notorious Maeda Escarpment, commonly called Hacksaw Ridge.

Time and again in the conflict, Private First Class Doss exposed himself to heavy rifle and mortar fire to provide aid to wounded soldiers and evacuate them to safety.

Even when Private First Class Doss sustained his own injuries, he never gave up on providing aid to his fellow soldiers. While tending to wounded soldiers during a night raid, Private First Class Doss was seriously wounded in the legs from a grenade blast. To avoid having another medic risk his life to save him, he valiantly cared for his own wounds and waited 5 hours before a medical evacuation team could reach him.

Noticing a critically wounded soldier nearby, Private First Class Doss crawled off the litter he was laying on and ensured his evacuation team cared for that man first. In all, Private First Class Doss saved the lives of 75 wounded infantrymen.

For his tremendous bravery and heroism, Private First Class Doss was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Harry S. Truman on October 12, 1945.

The immense courage, sacrifice, and patriotism that Private First Class Doss displayed while serving in the Pacific theater are in many ways unfathomable.

As a nation, we owe him a debt of gratitude that can never be fully repaid, but we should commit to honoring his legacy. I can think of no better way to ensure that his service is remembered for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I support this important piece of legislation, and I ask that my colleagues do the same.

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOOD).

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I proudly support the legislation to name the Lynchburg, Virginia, VA Clinic after Private First Class Desmond T. Doss, a World War II hero and Medal of Honor recipient.

This bill, S. 3938, is the Senate companion following and complementing

my original legislation, and I thank Senator WARNER for joining me in championing this cause.

Desmond Doss is greatly admired in my district, and in May of 2023 at the request of some of my constituents, I introduced a bill to rename the Lynchburg VA Clinic after him in honor of his outstanding legacy.

It is fitting for the building that provides healthcare services to our Nation's heroes to be named after one who dedicated his military career to saving as many lives as possible.

A devout Seventh-day Adventist, Doss believed that killing in all circumstances was wrong, nevertheless, he still chose to serve his country as a medic in the United States Army when called upon during World War II.

Doss proved his heroism in battle and under fire and became the first conscientious objector to be awarded the Medal of Honor after fearlessly saving 75 wounded men in the Battle of Okinawa.

As the Medal of Honor citation describes: "Doss refused to seek cover and remained in the fire-swept area with the many stricken, carrying them one by one to the edge of the escarpment and there lowering them on a rope-supported litter down the face of a cliff to friendly hands."

The citation describes many more instances where Doss disregarded his own personal safety to protect others.

Many Americans saw his story depicted in the popular 2016 movie "Hacksaw Ridge."

His extraordinary bravery was true faith in action. Although he didn't have to pay the ultimate price in battle, he lived the words of Jesus in the Gospel of John: Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Doss' humble beginnings were in my district, in Lynchburg, Virginia, and Lynchburg has always loved him. In 1945, the city threw a parade in his honor, but it has been nearly 80 years since then, and Lynchburg wants another opportunity to celebrate one of our most heroic citizens.

Today, if the House passes this bill, it will be sent to the President's desk, and this Congress will have done a small thing to honor a great man. I trust my colleagues will join me in voting "yes."

In conclusion, I thank the entire Virginia delegation for uniting behind this bill. I would especially like to thank Steve Bozeman, my veteran constituent, who came to me with this idea. Steve Bozeman leads a weekly gathering to support the troops in Lynchburg, Virginia, and this group of mostly veterans has met without fail every Friday for more than 20 years, so well over 1,000 consecutive Fridays to honor our veterans and our military servicemembers.

Finally, I express my gratitude for the sacrifices made by all veterans and servicemembers who fought to keep our Nation safe. Mr. Speaker, it has

been a privilege to represent them in Congress.

□ 1700

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in passing S. 3938 to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Lynchburg, Virginia, as the Private First Class Desmond T. Doss VA Clinic, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all 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, S. 3938.

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.

HENRY PARHAM VA CLINIC

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4955) to name the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, as the "Henry Parham VA Clinic".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4955

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Henry Parham was born in Emporia, Virginia, in November 1921.

(2) At age 21, Henry Parham was drafted into the Army and shipped out to England in 1943 with the 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion in preparation for the D-Day invasions.

(3) The 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion, a segregated Army unit, consisted of approximately 700 African-American soldiers with the mission of hoisting barrage balloons designed to entangle incoming German planes and prevent them from conducting strafing runs on ground troops.

(4) On June 6, 1944, Private First Class Henry Parham and his section of the 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion landed at Omaha Beach. With the threat of enemy sniper and rifle fire ever present, PFC Parham's unit performed their duties, hoisting their barrage balloons 2,000 feet into the air over the beachhead in Normandy.

(5) For two months, Private First Class Henry Parham and the 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion stood watch at Omaha Beach, keeping the pipeline of incoming supplies and Allied troops secure before returning to the United States in September 1944.

(6) After his service, Henry Parham moved to Wilkensburg, Pennsylvania, where he lived and worked as a heavy equipment operator until 1986. There, he met and married his wife, Ethel Parham, to whom he was married for more than 45 years.

(7) Henry Parham died on July 4, 2021, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at the age of 99. He was survived by his wife, Ethel, both of

whom served for decades as volunteers at the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and local chapters of veterans service organizations.

(8) Henry Parham was the last surviving African-American combat veteran who took part in the D-Day landings on June 6, 1944.

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION OF HENRY PARHAM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLINIC.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the “Henry Parham Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic” or the “Henry Parham VA Clinic”.

(b) REFERENCE.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the community-based outpatient clinic referred to in subsection (a) shall be considered to be a reference to the Henry Parham VA Clinic.

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. 4955.

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. 4955, a bill to designate the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, as the Henry Parham VA Clinic.

Henry Parham was born in 1921 in Greenville, Virginia, and was drafted into World War II in 1942.

In June of 1944, he took part in the D-day landing in France, serving in the 320th Very Low Altitude Anti-Aircraft Barrage Balloon Battalion. His unit was responsible for downing dozens of enemy aircraft.

After the war, he returned home. In his spare time, he kept serving his community by volunteering with his wife in their local VA. He was also the last surviving African American who took part in the D-day landings when he passed away in 2021.

Henry Parham is a great example of what it means to live a life of service, and I am proud to name this VA clinic after him to continue to tell the story of service and inspire future generations.

I thank the sponsor of the bill, Representative LEE, as well as the entire Pennsylvania delegation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, H.R. 4955, 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. 4955. This bill will des-

ignate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, as the Henry Parham VA Clinic. I thank my colleague, Representative LEE, for introducing this bill.

A member of a segregated Army unit, Private First Class Parham was likely the last surviving African-American D-day combat veteran. His heroic actions during perhaps the most famous military operation in American history are worthy of our continued gratitude. It is my pleasure to support this bill to do just that.

Mr. Parham was born in Emporia, Virginia, in November 1921 and was the son of a sharecropper. With limited educational opportunities in Emporia for African Americans, Mr. Parham moved to Richmond as a teenager to begin work as a porter for Trailways buses.

Following American entry into World War II, Mr. Parham was drafted into the Army at age 21. His unit, the 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion, had the mission of protecting ground forces by raising the hydrogen-filled balloons to disrupt and down enemy aircraft.

The 320th, an all-Black unit, initially trained in Tennessee before being sent to England in 1943 to prepare for the D-day invasion.

Landing on Omaha Beach hours after the first wave of American troops, Private First Class Parham and his unit encountered heavy German fire and casualties spread across the battlefield. Private First Class Parham survived the assault at Omaha Beach, and his service continued in the months to come.

Private First Class Parham and the 320th remained at Omaha Beach for 2 months following the June 6 invasion. This unit played a critical role in protecting supply lines and troop movements for follow-on operations in the region. The actions of Private First Class Parham and the 320th were crucial to the ultimate defeat of Nazi forces and Allied victory in Europe.

Private First Class Parham and the 320th returned to the United States in November of 1944. They were stationed in Hawaii. The unit began preparing for deployment to the Pacific as part of the planned invasion of Japan. They were still in Hawaii when atomic bombs were dropped on Japan in August 1945, ending the war.

After World War II ended, Mr. Parham and his wife, Ethel, settled in Wilkesburg, Pennsylvania, just outside of Pittsburgh. He worked as a heavy equipment operator for years in the region.

Following his retirement, both Mr. and Mrs. Parham became active volunteers at local VA hospitals and with The American Legion.

Mr. Parham, like so many members of the Greatest Generation, answered his Nation's call to serve to protect democracy at home and abroad.

During a time of racial division, Mr. Parham remained committed to a

country that often treated him as a second-class citizen. His actions with the 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion on D-day and the months that followed are deserving of our continued gratitude and respect.

What is more, his work with fellow veterans as a volunteer in his post-military life demonstrated a lifelong commitment to our Nation's heroes. There is perhaps no better way to honor Mr. Parham than to ensure that this community facility bears his name and helps to educate the public about his service.

Mr. Speaker, I support this important piece of legislation. I ask my colleagues do the same, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. LEE), the author of H.R. 4955 and my very good friend who serves on the Oversight and Accountability Committee and the Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill to designate the new Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, as the Henry Parham VA Clinic.

Private First Class Henry Parham, who at the time of his passing on July 4, 2021, was believed to be the last surviving Black combat veteran of D-day. He passed away at the Pittsburgh VA Medical Center at the age of 99, leaving behind an extraordinary legacy of courage, resilience, and service.

Drafted into the Army at just 21 years old, Mr. Parham joined the 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion, the only Black combat unit to land on D-day. Unable to swim on that day, Mr. Parham waded through neck-high water onto Omaha Beach, carrying his equipment under the chaos of enemy fire, praying for survival.

For 2 months, he and his battalion stood watch, aiding the flow of supplies and reinforcements to sustain Allied forces in turning the tide of the war. When asked about his service, Mr. Parham said simply: I did my duty. I did what I was supposed to do as an American.

That sense of responsibility defined him. After the war, Mr. Parham, like so many Black veterans, returned to a country that denied him the very freedoms he had fought to protect. He endured, devoting his life to service, spending decades volunteering at the Pittsburgh VA medical center and his local American Legion alongside his wife of 54 years, Ethel.

His dedication earned his recognition in his later year, including the French Legion of Honor.

In September 2023, the VA opened the Monroeville community-based outpatient clinic to improve veterans' access to primary and specialty outpatient services in our region.

Naming this facility after Henry Parham will serve as both a tribute to

his legacy and acknowledgment of the immense sacrifices made by veterans like him, those who fought for freedom abroad while enduring injustice at home. It is a testament to their courage and their unyielding belief in this Nation's promise, even when that promise was denied them.

In honoring Mr. Parham, let us continue to honor all veterans by ensuring they receive the highest quality of care and support they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman RESCHENTHALER for co-leading this effort with me, Senators FETTERMAN and CASEY for their leadership in the Senate, and the entire Pennsylvania delegation for their support, and I urge my colleagues to pass this bill.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 4955, a bill to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, as the Henry Parham VA Clinic, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. 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. 4955.

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.

DUANE E. DEWEY VA CLINIC

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8667) to rename the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Cadillac, Michigan, as the "Duane E. Dewey VA Clinic".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8667

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION OF DUANE E. DEWEY VA CLINIC.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs located at 1905 North Mitchell Street in Cadillac, Michigan, shall, after the date of the enactment of this Act, be known and designated as the "Duane E. Dewey Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic" or the "Duane E. Dewey VA Clinic".

(b) REFERENCE.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the community-based outpatient clinic referred to in subsection (a) shall be considered to be a reference to the Duane E. Dewey VA Clinic.

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. 8667.

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.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 8667, a bill to rename the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Cadillac, Michigan, as the Duane E. Dewey VA Clinic.

Duane Dewey was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1931 and established in the U.S. Marine Corps during the height of the Korean war. Serving as a machine gunner, he was wounded by a grenade that landed by his feet.

While being treated for his wounds, another enemy grenade landed near him. Without regard for his life, Corporal Dewey jumped on the grenade as it exploded. For his actions, he earned the Medal of Honor which was awarded to him by President Eisenhower.

After being medically discharged from active duty in 1952, he went on to start his own business and serve as chaplain at the AMVETS post named in his honor in Baldwin, Michigan.

I thank the sponsor of this bill, Representative MOOLENAAR, as well as the entire Michigan delegation for honoring their fellow Michigander with this tribute.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 8667, 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. 8667, a bill to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Cadillac, Michigan, as the Duane E. Dewey VA Clinic introduced by Representative MOOLENAAR.

□ 1715

Risking his own life to protect his fellow marines, Corporal Dewey demonstrated incredible bravery while serving in the Korean war. His heroic service deserves to be memorialized in his home State of Michigan, and I am proud to support this bill to do just that.

Born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Mr. Dewey was a foundry worker at National Motor Casting at the beginning of the Korean war. Determined to support his Nation, he enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserves in 1951 for an indefinite enlistment.

Corporal Dewey completed basic training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina. He then underwent intensive combat training in Camp Pendleton, California.

At the completion of his training, Corporal Dewey deployed to Korea as a

member of weapons platoon Company E, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines in September 1951.

Corporal Dewey and the members of Company E participated in the United Nations summer-fall offensive of 1951 and in the second winter during the Korean war.

On April 16, 1952, Corporal Dewey and the roughly 80-member Company E found themselves under attack near Panmunjom, a village at the border between what is now North Korea and South Korea. Outnumbered by nearly 700 enemy forces, Corporal Dewey directed his machine gun squad to provide continuous suppressive fire.

As Corporal Dewey was being treated for wounds sustained by a grenade explosion, another grenade landed in their vicinity.

Despite his injuries, Corporal Dewey immediately alerted his machine gun squad and the hospital corpsmen treating his wounds that a grenade had just landed.

Corporal Dewey launched himself on top of the grenade to minimize impact to his fellow marines, sacrificing his own safety and saving the lives of many of his fellow soldiers. The grenade exploded, lifting him off the ground and leaving serious wounds throughout his body.

Corporal Dewey was evacuated to hospitals in Japan and then back to the United States for treatment and rehabilitation for his serious shrapnel and gunshot wounds. He was released from Active Duty on August 19, 1952.

For his heroic actions, Corporal Dewey was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1953. He was the first person to be awarded the Medal of Honor by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who famously told Dewey that he "must have a body of steel."

The uncommon valor Corporal Dewey displayed while serving in Korea is worth our continued recognition and appreciation. His service is a reminder of the sacrifices that Americans from all walks of life have made in defense of our freedoms. It is fitting to honor his legacy by naming the VA clinic in Cadillac, Michigan, for Corporal Dewey.

Mr. Speaker, I support this important piece of legislation, and I ask my colleagues to do the same. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MOOLENAAR), who is the sponsor of the legislation.

Mr. MOOLENAAR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chair for yielding time and for his kind words, and for the gentleman's kind words.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bipartisan legislation to rename the Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Cadillac, Michigan, in honor of the late Corporal Duane Dewey, a Michigan native and a U.S. marine.

Corporal Dewey was extraordinarily brave in his service to our Nation. In April 1952, Corporal Dewey was serving

as the leader of a machine gun squad in Korea when he came under fire. After hours of fighting, an enemy grenade fell at his feet. It exploded, and Dewey was injured.

Then, as he was being treated for his wounds, a second grenade was launched and landed near his position. Dewey alerted his fellow marines of the danger and rushed to smother the explosive. In this moment of bravery, he used his body to cover the explosive and saved the members of his squad.

Miraculously, Duane survived the blast, and he returned home to Michigan to recover from his injuries. Dewey was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor by President Dwight Eisenhower, who did joke that Duane has a body of steel.

Duane's Medal of Honor citation read, in part: "His indomitable courage, outstanding initiative, and valiant efforts on behalf of others in the face of almost certain death reflect the highest credit upon Corporal Dewey and enhance the finest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service."

Duane Dewey lived a humble life. He served his community as a school bus driver and ran an office machine repair shop. He remained involved in the veterans community and spoke to his fellow veterans frequently, offering them encouragement and sharing his story.

My legislation to rename this VA clinic in his home State is a fitting honor for Duane's service to our Nation and his lifelong support of our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 8667 to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Cadillac, Michigan, as the Duane E. Dewey VA clinic, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all 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. 8667.

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.

LOUIS A. CONTER VA CLINIC

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 9124) to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Auburn, California, as the "Louis A. Conter VA Clinic".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 9124

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Louis "Lou" Anthony Conter was born on September 13, 1921, in Ojibwa, Wisconsin.

(2) Lt. Commander Lou Conter, the last remaining survivor of the attack on the USS Arizona at Pearl Harbor, was an American hero.

(3) On that fearful day, Petty Officer Conter helped evacuate shipmates who were blinded, wounded, or burned, even restraining some of his fellow shipmates from jumping overboard into the burning sea.

(4) In the days after the attack, he helped with recovering bodies and putting out fires. Lou Conter's heroic actions saved the lives of many of his shipmates on December 7, 1941.

(5) Following Pearl Harbor, Conter continued serving during WWII in New Guinea and in Europe as an enlisted naval aviation pilot assigned to VP-11, a "Black Cat" Squadron.

(6) Lou Conter would be awarded with the Distinguished Flying Cross for actively taking part in the rescue of 219 Australians trapped by Japanese troops in New Guinea.

(7) Later, in the Korean War, he served on the USS Bon Homme Richard as both an intelligence officer and a navy aviation pilot. Following his service in the Korean War, he served as a military intelligence advisor to three Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson.

(8) During the 1950s, Lou Conter played a prominent role in the establishment and development of the Navy Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) training program.

(9) In addition to the Distinguished Flying Cross, he was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal and became the first recipient of the USS Arizona Medal of Freedom.

(10) Louis Conter retired from the Navy in 1967 after serving 28 years as a Lieutenant Commander.

(11) Following his retirement, he generously gave his time to share his personal experiences at veterans' ceremonies and by giving lectures to students.

(12) Lieutenant Commander Conter's lectures were popular with generations of local students who were equally fascinated and enthralled by his first-person accounts.

(13) He is eminently deserving of recognition for his decades of service to a grateful nation.

(14) Lieutenant Commander Conter passed away in Grass Valley, California on April 1, 2024.

SEC. 2. NAME OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC, AUBURN, CALIFORNIA.

The Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Auburn, California, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Louis A. Conter VA Clinic". Any reference to such clinic in any law, regulation, map, document, record, or other paper of the United States shall be considered to be a reference to the Louis A. Conter VA Clinic.

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. 9124.

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. 9124, a bill to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Auburn, California, the Louis A. Conter VA Clinic.

Louis Conter was born in Wisconsin in 1921. He enlisted in the Navy in 1939 and was assigned to the infamous USS Arizona.

On the morning of December 7, 1941, Louis was standing watch on the deck of the Arizona when it came under attack by Japanese bombers.

As the infamous explosion that ignited the ship's magazine happened, Louis was thrown to the ground. As the ship began to sink, he aided the wounded. In the following days, Louis helped put the fires out and recover the bodies from the wreckage.

Following the attack, as the war kicked into high gear, Louis was selected for pilot training. He deployed to the Pacific theater and was shot down twice. Again, defying all odds, he survived and reached the rank of lieutenant, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Louis was reactivated during the Korean war in the 1950s, eventually retiring from the Navy in 1967 at the rank of lieutenant commander. After his service, he lived out the rest of his life as a real estate developer and author.

Louis Conter was the last known survivor of the USS Arizona before passing away on April 1, 2024.

I am proud to name the VA clinic after him to memorialize his historic story of service. I thank the sponsor of this bill, Representative KILEY, as well as the entire California delegation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 9124, 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. 9124, a bill to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Auburn, California, as the Louis A. Conter VA Clinic, which was introduced by Representative KILEY of California.

Lieutenant Commander Louis A. Conter, the last remaining survivor of the attack on the USS Arizona at Pearl Harbor, embodied the highest ideals of military service and American valor. I am proud to support this bill to honor his service.

During the fateful attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, he helped evacuate shipmates who were blinded, wounded, and burned. In the days following the attack, he helped recover bodies and put out smoldering fires. Lou Conter's heroic actions saved the lives of many of his shipmates.

Mr. Conter continued to serve with distinction throughout World War II as a naval aviation pilot, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross for rescuing 219 Australians trapped by Japanese troops in New Guinea.

Later, during the Korean war, he served as both an intelligence officer and naval aviation pilot aboard the USS *Bon Homme Richard*. In addition to the Distinguished Flying Cross, he was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal and became the first recipient of the USS Arizona Medal of Freedom.

After retiring from Active Duty, he continued to serve the Nation as a military intelligence adviser to three Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson. In the 1950s, he helped establish the Navy's survival, evasion, resistance, and escape, or SERE, training program.

Following his retirement from the Navy in 1967 after 28 years of service, Lieutenant Commander Conter remained active in his community. He generously shared his experiences at veteran ceremonies and delivered lectures to students. His passing on April 1 of this year marked the end of a life dedicated to service and preservation of American military history. He is very deserving of this recognition for his decades of service to a grateful nation.

Mr. Speaker, I support this important piece of legislation, and I ask 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 California (Mr. KILEY), who is the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I am truly grateful that today the House is taking up my legislation to honor a truly extraordinary constituent of mine whom we lost earlier this year.

My bill would rename the Auburn VA facility after Grass Valley resident and World War II veteran Lieutenant Commander Lou Conter.

It is notable that in order to advance this legislation, we actually had to get the signatures of each and every member of the California congressional House delegation. That is 52 people who came together and all signed on to this bill. I think it speaks to what a true American hero Lou Conter was.

He was, in fact, the last survivor of the attack on the USS *Arizona* during Pearl Harbor. On that fateful day in 1941, Commander Conter heroically evacuated shipmates who were blinded, wounded, or burned, even restraining some of his fellow shipmates from jumping overboard into the burning sea. Then, on the day after the attack, he helped in recovering bodies and putting out fires.

Lou Conter's heroic actions saved the lives of many of his shipmates. Not only that, but he also continued to serve our country for decades following Pearl Harbor. He flew over 200 combat missions.

On one of those missions, Commander Conter would be awarded with the Distinguished Flying Cross for actively taking part in the rescue of 219 Australians trapped by Japanese troops in New Guinea.

He later served in the Korean war and retired from the Navy in 1967 after 23 years as a lieutenant commander. He resided in Grass Valley, California, until his death earlier this year at the age of 102.

Lieutenant Commander Conter dedicated his life to the service of others and sacrifice for our country. His courage, along with that of so many from the Greatest Generation, has left an indelible mark on our country and defined our national character in so many ways.

Following his passing this last April, there really could be no better way to honor Lieutenant Commander Conter and his enduring legacy than naming a veterans healthcare facility in his honor.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman BOST for his work on this legislation as well, and I look forward to seeing it pass with unanimous bipartisan support.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, I support this important piece of legislation, and I ask that my colleagues do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 9124 to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Auburn, California, as the Louis A. Conter VA clinic, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1730

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I encourage all 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. 9124.

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.

SENATOR ELIZABETH DOLE 21ST CENTURY VETERANS HEALTH-CARE AND BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 141) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve certain programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs for home and community based services for veterans, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 141

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 “Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—HEALTH CARE MATTERS

Subtitle A—Veterans Community Care Program Matters

Sec. 101. Implementation of provision of care under Veterans Community Care Program upon determination of eligibility by veteran and veteran’s referring clinician.

Sec. 102. Outreach regarding care and services under Veterans Community Care Program.

Sec. 103. Annual review and report on waivers of certain payment rates under Veterans Community Care Program.

Sec. 104. Modification of requirements for standards for quality of care from Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 105. Pilot program to improve administration of care under Veterans Community Care Program.

Sec. 106. Pilot program on consolidating approval process of Department of Veterans Affairs for covered dental care.

Sec. 107. Strategic plan on value-based health care system for Veterans Health Administration; pilot program.

Sec. 108. Plan on adoption of certain health information standards for Department of Veterans Affairs and certain health care providers.

Sec. 109. Report on use of value-based reimbursement models under Veterans Community Care Program.

Sec. 110. Inspector General assessment of implementation of Veterans Community Care Program.

Sec. 111. Comptroller General report on density under Veterans Community Care Program.

Subtitle B—Matters Relating to Nursing Home and Other Long Term Care and Family Caregivers

Sec. 120. Increase of expenditure cap for non-institutional care alternatives to nursing home care.

Sec. 121. Coordination with Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly.

Sec. 122. Authority for Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants or contracts to entities to improve provision of mental health support to family caregivers of veterans.

Sec. 123. Home- and community-based services: programs.

Sec. 124. Coordination with assistance and support services for caregivers.

Sec. 125. Improvements to program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers.

Sec. 126. Improvements relating to Home-maker and Home Health Aide program.

Sec. 127. Pilot program to furnish assisted living services to certain veterans.

Sec. 128. Provision of medicine, equipment, and supplies available to Department of Veterans Affairs to State homes.

- Sec. 129. Recognition of organizations and individuals to assist veterans, family members, and caregivers navigating programs and services of Veterans Health Administration.
- Sec. 130. Reviews and other improvements relating to home- and community-based services.
- Sec. 131. GAO report on mental health support for caregivers.
- Sec. 132. Development of centralized website for program information.
- Sec. 133. Definitions.
- Subtitle C—Medical Treatment and Other Matters
- Sec. 140. Quarterly report on referrals for non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care.
- Sec. 141. Elimination of certain requirements for certain Department of Veterans Affairs Assistant Under Secretaries.
- Sec. 142. Modification of pay limitation for physicians, podiatrists, optometrists, and dentists of Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 143. Reimbursement of ambulance cost for care for certain rural veterans.
- Sec. 144. Pilot program to furnish dental care from the Department of Veterans Affairs to certain veterans diagnosed with ischemic heart disease.
- Sec. 145. Documentation of preferences of veterans for scheduling of appointments for health care under laws administered by Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 146. Staffing model and performance metrics for certain employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 147. Online health education portal for veterans enrolled in patient enrollment system of Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 148. Limitation on detail of directors of medical centers of Department of Veterans Affairs to different positions.
- Sec. 149. National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report.
- Sec. 150. Report on physical infrastructure required by medical facilities of Department of Veterans Affairs to provide dental care services.
- Sec. 151. Comptroller General report on certain oral health care programs under laws administered by Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 152. Review of workflows associated with processing referrals between facilities of the Veterans Health Administration.
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- TITLE II—ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY MATTERS**
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- Sec. 201. Temporary expansion of eligibility for Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship.
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- Sec. 206. Expansion of Department of Veterans Affairs oversight of certain educational institutions.
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- Sec. 208. Payment of full monthly housing stipend for veterans enrolled in final semester using educational assistance under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program.
- Sec. 209. Modification of rules for approval of commercial driver education programs for purposes of educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 210. Provision of certificates of eligibility and award letters using electronic means.
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- Sec. 212. Department of Veterans Affairs high technology program.
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- Subtitle B—Employment and Training
- Sec. 221. Improvements to reemployment rights of members of the Armed Forces.
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- Subtitle C—Home Loans
- Sec. 231. Improvements to program for direct housing loans made to Native American veterans by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 232. Native community development financial institution relending program.
- TITLE III—DISABILITY AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS MATTERS**
- Sec. 301. Burial allowance for certain veterans who die at home while in receipt of hospice care furnished by Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 302. Authority for Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants to States and Indian Tribes to improve outreach to veterans.
- Sec. 303. Definition of surviving spouse.
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- Sec. 305. Provision of information regarding an agent or attorney to a licensed health care professional who performs a medical disability examination under certain Department of Veterans Affairs pilot program.
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- TITLE IV—HOMELESSNESS MATTERS**
- Sec. 401. Short title.
- Sec. 402. Per diem payments provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for services furnished to homeless veterans.
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- TITLE V—OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS MATTERS**
- Sec. 501. Department of Veterans Affairs employee training regarding Office of Inspector General.
- Sec. 502. Annual review of security at covered facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 503. Modification of certain housing loan fees.
- TITLE I—HEALTH CARE MATTERS**
- Subtitle A—Veterans Community Care Program Matters**
- SEC. 101. IMPLEMENTATION OF PROVISION OF CARE UNDER VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM UPON DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY BY VETERAN AND VETERAN'S REFERRING CLINICIAN.**
- (a) **IN GENERAL.**—During the period specified in subsection (c), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall implement section 1703(d)(1)(E) of title 38, United States Code, in compliance with the implementing regulations for such section under section 17.4010(a)(5) of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, such that the determination of eligibility for care is final and shall be made by the veteran and the veteran's referring clinician.
- (b) **CORRECTION OF ERRORS.**—A covered veteran and the referring clinician of such veteran may correct any errors made with respect to a determination described in subsection (a).
- (c) **PERIOD SPECIFIED.**—The period specified in this subsection is the two-year period beginning on the date that is 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.
- (d) **REPORT.**—Not later than one year and not later than two years after the commencement of the period specified by subsection (c), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the care provided under section 1703(d)(1)(E) of title 38, United States Code, during the one-year period preceding the date of the report, including—
- (1) the number of instances of care provided;
 - (2) the type of care provided; and
 - (3) the cost of such care.
- (e) **RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the

Secretary's authority to prescribe, amend, or rescind regulations under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code.

(f) COVERED VETERAN DEFINED.—In this section, the term "covered veteran" has the meaning given that term in section 1703(b) of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 102. OUTREACH REGARDING CARE AND SERVICES UNDER VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM.

(a) REQUIREMENT.—Section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (o) as subsection (p); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (n) the following new subsection (o):

“(O) OUTREACH REGARDING AVAILABILITY OF CARE AND SERVICES.—(1) The Secretary shall conduct outreach to inform veterans of the following:

“(A) The conditions for care or services under subsections (d) and (e).

“(B) How to request such care or services.

“(C) How to appeal a denial of a request for such care or services using the clinical appeals process of the Veterans Health Administration.

“(2) Upon enrollment of a veteran in the system of annual patient enrollment established and operated under section 1705 of this title, and not less frequently than every two years thereafter, the Secretary shall inform the veteran of information described in paragraph (1).

“(3) The Secretary shall ensure that information described in paragraph (1) is—

“(A) publicly displayed in each medical facility of the Department;

“(B) prominently displayed on a website of the Department; and

“(C) included in other outreach campaigns and activities conducted by the Secretary.”.

(b) SOLID START PROGRAM.—Section 6320(a)(2)(A) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting “, including how to enroll in the system of annual patient enrollment established and operated under section 1705 of this title and the ability to seek care and services under sections 1703 and 1710 of this title” before the semicolon.

(c) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT ON OUTREACH.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the efforts of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that veterans are informed of the conditions for eligibility for care and services under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, including such efforts to conduct outreach pursuant to subsection (o) of such section (as added by subsection (a)).

SEC. 103. ANNUAL REVIEW AND REPORT ON WAIVERS OF CERTAIN PAYMENT RATES UNDER VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, is further amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (p) as subsection (q); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (o) the following new subsection (p):

“(p) ANNUAL REVIEW AND REPORT ON WAIVERS OF PAYMENT RATES.—(1) On an annual basis, the Secretary shall—

“(A) conduct a review of waivers of payment rates under subsection (i) for Third Party Administrators to identify whether such waivers help to alleviate community-specific challenges, including scarcity of medical services associated with access to health care; and

“(B) submit to Congress a report on the results of such review.

“(2) Each report under paragraph (1)(B) shall include, with respect to the period covered by the report—

“(A) a statement, disaggregated by region, of the total number of waivers described in

subparagraph (A) of such paragraph requested by Third Party Administrators;

“(B) a statement of the total number of such waivers that were—

“(i) granted by the Secretary;

“(ii) denied by the Secretary; or

“(iii) withdrawn by a Third Party Administrator;

“(C) a description of the process for the review required under paragraph (1);

“(D) a statement, disaggregated by region, of the average time to process such waivers;

“(E) an assessment, disaggregated by region, of the extent to which such waivers that were granted by the Secretary improved access to health care for covered veterans; and

“(F) a description of trends, if any, identified by the Secretary with respect to such waivers.

“(3) In this subsection, the term ‘Third Party Administrator’ has the meaning given such term in section 1703B of this title.”.

(b) DEADLINE.—The Secretary shall submit the first report required under subsection (p) of section 1703 of such title (as added by subsection (a)) not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 104. MODIFICATION OF REQUIREMENTS FOR STANDARDS FOR QUALITY OF CARE FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1703C of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking “In establishing” and inserting “(A) In establishing”; and

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

“(B) The Secretary shall ensure that the standards for quality established under paragraph (1) are comparable to industry standards to ensure there is adequate data transfer between care furnished by the Department and care furnished by a non-Department provider.”;

(B) in paragraph (3)(B), by adding at the end the following new clause:

“(v) Outcomes relating to patient quality of life.”;

(C) in paragraph (4)—

(i) by striking “and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services” and inserting “the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and the Indian Health Service”; and

(ii) by striking “and other nongovernmental entities” and inserting “and other non-governmental entities including Third Party Administrators”; and

(D) by striking paragraph (5) and inserting the following new paragraphs:

“(5) When collecting, considering, and applying data related to patient care for purposes of establishing standards for quality under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure no metric is being over or under analyzed.

“(6) In establishing standards for quality under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

“(A) utilize the most up-to-date practices for extracting and analyzing relevant data;

“(B) utilize all relevant data available to the Secretary;

“(C) ensure the most efficient use of time and resources related to the use of data scientists employed by the Department; and

“(D) collaborate, as appropriate, with entities specified in paragraph (4).

“(7)(A) Not less frequently than once every five years, the Secretary shall update the standards for quality established under paragraph (1) pursuant to the requirements for the establishment of such standards under this subsection.

“(B) Not later than 30 days after any date on which the Secretary updates, pursuant to subparagraph (A), the standards for quality

under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on such updated standards for quality.”; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “Not later than 1 year after the date on which the Secretary establishes standards for quality under subsection (a)” and inserting “Not less frequently than once every three years”; and

(ii) by inserting “pursuant to standards for quality under subsection (a)” after “medical facilities of the Department”; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by inserting “or updates” after “establishes”.

(b) DEADLINE FOR UPDATE.—The Secretary, pursuant to paragraph (7) of section 1703C(a) of title 38, United States Code (as added by subsection (a)), shall make the first update to the standards for quality established under paragraph (1) of such section not later than the date that is five years after the date on which the Secretary submits the report under paragraph (2) of subsection (d).

(c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on how the Secretary—

(1) has consulted with entities specified in paragraph (4) of section 1703C(a) of title 38, United States Code, before the date of the enactment of this Act in establishing standards for quality under such section;

(2) has continued to consult with those entities on and after such date of enactment; and

(3) intends to leverage data sciences to improve standards for quality care furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(d) UPDATES TO QUALITY CARE METRICS.—

(1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on how the Secretary plans to implement the amendments made by subsections (a).

(2) DEADLINE; SUMMARY REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

(A) implement the amendments made by subsection (a), including by updating the standards for quality established under section 1703C of title 38, United States Code; and

(B) submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report detailing the standards for quality updated pursuant to such amendments.

(e) AUDIT OF QUALITY CARE METRICS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into one or more contracts with a non-Department entity described in paragraph (2) to conduct an audit on the quality of care from the Department of Veterans Affairs, including through non-Department health care providers pursuant to section 1703 of title 38 United States Code.

(2) NON-DEPARTMENT ENTITY DESCRIBED.—A non-Department entity described in this paragraph is an entity that—

(A) specializes in analyzing large-scale organizational data collection and analysis efforts, especially with respect to the health care sector; and

(B) has experience and proven outcomes in optimizing the accuracy and comprehensiveness of data collection and analysis related to the quality of health care services.

(3) ELEMENTS.—The audit required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) An assessment of the methodology used by the Department to collect and assess data

on the quality of care furnished by the Department, including any vulnerabilities in such methodology.

(B) An assessment of the accuracy and reliability of the data sources used by the Department to compile data on the quality of care furnished by the Department.

(C) The extent to which the standards the Department uses to assess the quality of care furnished by the Department are—

(i) comparable with industry standards;

(ii) easily accessible to, and understood by—

(I) veterans;

(II) employees of the Department; and

(III) other individuals, as the private sector entity considers appropriate.

(D) Any recommendations of such private sector entity with respect to improvements that the Secretary could administer to more accurately capture the quality of care furnished by the Department.

(4) REPORTS ON AUDIT.—

(A) REPORT ON FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 60 days after any date on which a private sector entity described in paragraph (2) completes an audit under paragraph (1), such private sector entity shall submit to the Secretary, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate, and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

(i) the findings of such audit; and

(ii) recommendations of such private sector entity with respect to such audit.

(B) REPORT ON PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS.—Not later than 60 days after any date on which the Secretary receives a report under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on how the Secretary plans to improve the standards for quality of care of the Department.

(f) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term "appropriate committees of Congress" has the meaning given such term in section 1703C of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 105. PILOT PROGRAM TO IMPROVE ADMINISTRATION OF CARE UNDER VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Pursuant to section 1703E of title 38, United States Code, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, acting through the Center for Innovation for Care and Payment established under such section, shall carry out a pilot program to seek to develop and implement a plan—

(1) to provide monetary and non-monetary incentives to a covered health care provider—

(A) to allow the Secretary to see the scheduling system of the provider, to assess the availability of, and to assist in scheduling appointments for, veterans under the Veterans Community Care Program under section 1703 of such title, including through synchronous, asynchronous, and asynchronous assisted digital scheduling;

(B) to complete continuing professional educational training available through the VHA TRAIN program (or any successor program or initiative) regarding veteran cultural competency, the opioid safety initiative (or any successor program or initiative), and other subjects determined appropriate by the Secretary;

(C) to improve methods of accounting for non-Department training that is equivalent or substantially similar to the continuing professional educational training described in subparagraph (B);

(D) to improve the rate of the timely return to the Secretary of medical record documentation for care or services provided

under the Veterans Community Care Program;

(E) to improve the timeliness and quality of the delivery of care and services to veterans under such program; and

(F) to achieve other objectives determined appropriate by the Secretary; and

(2) to decrease the rate of no-show appointments under such program.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the establishment of the pilot program under this section, and annually thereafter during the term of the pilot program, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the pilot program that includes, with respect to the period covered by the report—

(1) an assessment of the extent to which—

(A) the system of the Department of Veterans Affairs for scheduling appointments for veterans under the Veterans Community Care Program has improved;

(B) the rate of timely return to the Secretary of medical record documentation described in subparagraph (D) of subsection (a)(1) has improved;

(C) the timeliness and quality of the delivery of care and services described in subparagraph (E) of such subsection has improved; and

(D) the frequency of no-show appointments described in paragraph (2) of such subsection decreased;

(2) a list of the continuing professional educational training courses under subparagraph (B) of such subsection available to covered health care providers;

(3) the rate of participation in such continuing professional education training courses; and

(4) any other matter the Secretary determines appropriate.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term "covered health care provider" means a health care provider—

(A) described in subsection (c) of section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, that furnishes care or services under the Veterans Community Care Program pursuant to a contract or agreement with a Third Party Administrator; or

(B) that otherwise furnishes care or services outside of Department facilities pursuant to a contract or agreement with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(2) The term "opioid safety initiative" means the programs, processes, and guidelines of the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs relating to the management of opioid therapy and chronic pain.

(3) The term "Third Party Administrator" means an entity that manages a network of health care providers and performs administrative services related to such network under section 1703 of such title.

(4) The term "VHA TRAIN program" means the free program of the Veterans Health Administration that offers veteran-specific continuing medical education courses.

SEC. 106. PILOT PROGRAM ON CONSOLIDATING APPROVAL PROCESS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR COVERED DENTAL CARE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, acting through the Center for Innovation for Care and Payment established under section 1703E of title 38, United States Code, shall carry out a pilot program under which the Secretary shall hire—

(1) general dentists at medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs to manage approval by the Department of treat-

ment plans requested by dental providers in providing covered dental care; and

(2) dental specialists at Veterans Integrated Service Networks of the Department to manage approval by the Department of treatment plans for specialty dental care requested by dental providers in providing covered dental care.

(b) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program in not fewer than two Veterans Integrated Service Networks of the Department.

(c) REPORTS.—

(1) **INITIAL REPORT.—**Not later than one year after the date of the commencement of such pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on the pilot program, that includes—

(A) an identification of the Veterans Integrated Service Networks participating in such pilot program;

(B) a description of the implementation of such pilot program;

(C) an identification of any barriers or challenges to implementing such pilot program;

(D) an assessment of the efficacy of hiring general dentists and dental specialists pursuant to such pilot program;

(E) aggregated feedback with respect to such pilot program from dentists of the Department in Veterans Integrated Service Networks participating in such pilot program; and

(F) aggregated feedback from dental providers providing covered dental care within such Veterans Integrated Service Networks regarding any changes in the timeliness of treatment plan approvals by the Department.

(2) **FINAL REPORT.—**Not later than 90 days before the date of the completion of such pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on the pilot program that—

(A) includes, with respect to the period covered by the report, each element of the report required under paragraph (1) described in subparagraphs (A) through (F) of such paragraph;

(B) includes recommendations of the Secretary on whether the pilot program should be—

(i) extended;

(ii) expanded; or

(iii) adopted throughout the Department; and

(C) indicates whether the Secretary requests action by Congress to make the pilot program permanent.

(d) SUNSET.—The authority to carry out the pilot program under this section shall terminate on the date that is two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(e) COVERED DENTAL CARE DEFINED.—In this section, the term "covered dental care" means dental care provided—

(1) under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code; or

(2) pursuant to a Veterans Care Agreement under section 1703A of such title.

SEC. 107. STRATEGIC PLAN ON VALUE-BASED HEALTH CARE SYSTEM FOR VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION; PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUP.—

(1) **IN GENERAL.—**Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(A) establish a working group on value-based care; and

(B) submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate the strategic plan developed by the working group pursuant to subsection (b).

(2) MEMBERSHIP.—

(A) REQUIRED MEMBERS.—The working group shall include, at a minimum, the following members:

(i) The Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(ii) The Director of the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention of the Department of Veterans Affairs (or any successor office).

(iii) The Director of the Office of Integrated Veteran Care of the Department (or any successor office).

(iv) The Director of the Office of Rural Health of the Department (or any successor office).

(v) The Director of the Office of Connected Care of the Department (or any successor office).

(vi) The Assistant Secretary for the Office of Information Technology (or any successor office).

(vii) The Chief Officer of the Office of Healthcare Innovation and Learning of the Office of Discovery, Education, and Affiliate Networks of the Veterans Health Administration (or any successor office).

(viii) An individual designated by the Secretary from the Center for Innovation for Care and Payment of the Department under section 1703E of title 38, United States Code.

(ix) An individual designated by the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation.

(x) An individual designated by the Secretary of Health and Human Services from the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy of the Health Resources and Services Administration.

(xi) The Chief of Human Capital Management for the Veterans Health Administration.

(xii) An individual designated by the Secretary of Defense that is a representative of the Defense Health Agency.

(xiii) An individual selected by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from the special medical advisory group established under section 7312 of title 38, United States Code.

(B) OPTIONAL MEMBERS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may appoint any of the following individuals as members of the working group:

(i) An individual representing the Health and Medicine Division of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

(ii) Three individuals representing a private health care system that has made the transition to value-based care.

(iii) Three individuals representing an organization recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

(3) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—All meetings, deliberations, and products of the working group shall be made publicly available throughout the duration of the working group, including to individuals representing organizations recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

(4) EXEMPTION FROM FACAs.—Chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code, shall not apply to the working group established under paragraph (1).

(b) DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC PLAN.—The working group shall develop a strategic plan to implement value-based care into the Veterans Health Administration that includes the following:

(1) An identification of the state of the Veterans Health Administration as of the date of the enactment of this Act, including an assessment of the current model of health care delivery used by the Veterans Health

Administration in medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) An assessment of the capacity needs of the Veterans Health Administration during the five-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) An analysis of the leadership of the Veterans Health Administration, including an assessment of leadership acumen and ability to implement a clear, shared vision and effective change management and care coordination.

(4) An identification of goals for the future of the Veterans Health Administration.

(5) An identification and classification of the current capabilities, capacity, and gaps in access and quality of the health care system of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(6) An analysis of value-based care models, including—

(A) a selection of potential models that would best work for the Veterans Health Administration;

(B) the capacity and capabilities of each such model; and

(C) a thorough justification of the selection of each selected model, including a summary of the ability of such model to improve the metrics described under paragraph (9).

(7) A definition of what quality means with respect to—

(A) access to health care under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and

(B) delivery of such health care.

(8) A definition of what value means with respect to care furnished by the Veterans Health Administration.

(9) A system for measuring value within the Veterans Health Administration that includes metrics for—

(A) outcomes;

(B) safety;

(C) service;

(D) access;

(E) productivity;

(F) capacity; and

(G) total cost of patient care.

(10) With respect to the system described in subparagraph (H), an analysis of variable value with respect to patient outcomes across different health care types and specialties.

(11) An assessment of—

(A) previous or ongoing assessments of the current information technology infrastructure of the Veterans Health Administration, including—

(i) such assessments conducted pursuant to the Electronic Health Record Modernization program of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(ii) any other ongoing information technology modernization programs of such Department and any unimplemented relevant recommendations from such assessments;

(B) the information technology infrastructure of the Veterans Health Administration in effect as of the date of the enactment of this Act;

(C) the value-driven framework of the Department, in effect as of the date of the enactment of this Act, for evaluating health care innovations, and how improvements in such framework could be used to encourage innovation; and

(D) workforce challenges and needs of the Veterans Health Administration based on—

(i) reviews of workforce assessment data available as of the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(ii) the findings of—

(I) the report required by section 301(d) of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146);

(II) the reports required by section 505 of the John S. McCain III, Daniel K. Akaka and Samuel R. Johnson VA Maintaining Internal

Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-182);

(III) the report required by section 301 of the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-46); and

(IV) any comprehensive health care inspection conducted by the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

(12) Any recommendations of the working group with respect to improving the information technology infrastructure described in clause (i) of subparagraph (J).

(13) An analysis of how the value-driven framework described in clause (iii) of such subparagraph could be used to improve the model of care delivery by the Department.

(14) A description of how a value-based care system would apply to primary care, inpatient and outpatient mental health care, and inpatient and outpatient substance use treatment, spinal cord injury disorder care, and polytrauma care furnished by the Veterans Health Administration.

(15) With respect to legislative or administrative action necessary to incorporate value-based care models into the Veterans Health Administration, a description of the estimated timelines, effect on workforce, and costs.

(c) PILOT PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the submission of the strategic plan pursuant to subsection (b), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, acting through the Center for Innovation for Care and Payment established under section 1703E of title 38, United States Code, shall commence a three-year pilot program under which the Secretary shall implement the elements of such strategic plan relating to the delivery, by the Veterans Health Administration, of primary care, inpatient and outpatient mental health treatment, inpatient and outpatient substance abuse treatment, spinal cord injury disorder care, and polytrauma care.

(2) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall carry out such pilot program in four Veterans Integrated Service Networks that are geographically dispersed and shall include the following:

(A) A Veterans Integrated Service Network that predominately serves veterans in rural and highly rural areas.

(B) A Veterans Integrated Service Network that predominately serves veterans in urban areas.

(C) A Veterans Integrated Service Network that has a high rate of suicide among veterans.

(D) A Veterans Integrated Service Network that has a high rate of substance use disorder among veterans.

(E) A Veterans Integrated Service Network that has access or productivity challenges.

(3) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—

(A) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the commencement of the pilot program, and annually thereafter during the duration of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot program.

(B) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days before the conclusion of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a final report on the pilot program that includes—

(i) lessons learned during the administration of such pilot program; and

(ii) specific health outcomes in veteran patient care compared to the Veterans Health Administration system of care in effect as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 108. PLAN ON ADOPTION OF CERTAIN HEALTH INFORMATION STANDARDS FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND CERTAIN HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.

(a) PLAN FOR CERTAIN HEALTH INFORMATION STANDARDS.—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology of the Department of Health and Human Services, shall create and implement a plan to adopt, as rapidly and to the most comprehensive extent feasible, national health information interoperability standards for the Department of Veterans Affairs and community care providers with respect to—

(A) coordination of—

- (i) care; and
- (ii) benefits;
- (B) patient identity matching;
- (C) measurement and reporting of quality;
- (D) population health; and
- (E) public health.

(2) **CONSIDERATION.**—In developing the plan under paragraph (1), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consider challenges faced by—

- (A) small community care providers; and
- (B) community care providers located in rural areas.

(b) PLAN ON ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD EXCHANGE.—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a plan to provide, at no cost, to community care providers of the Department, through Third Party Administrators, a capability to facilitate the electronic direct exchange, between such providers and the Department, of—

- (A) the health records of veterans; and
- (B) documents relating to health care of veterans, clinical notes, and any other information the Secretary determines necessary.

(2) **PRIORITIZATION.**—In developing the plan required under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall prioritize providing the capability described in such paragraph to community care providers that—

- (A) provide care under the laws administered by the Secretary to—
 - (i) a lower volume of veterans; and
 - (ii) veterans who are located in rural areas; and
- (B) are unable or unwilling to exchange the records and documents described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of such paragraph with the Department through standards-based or direct exchange mechanisms in effect as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) REPORTS ON PLAN FOR INTEROPERABILITY STANDARDS.—

(1) **INITIAL REPORT.**—Not later than one year 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 the House of Representatives—

- (A) the plan required by subsection (a); and
- (B) a report that includes—

(i) an analysis of gaps, if any, between the use, by the Department and other agencies, health information exchanges, and technology companies, of national health information interoperability standards and the potential, or optimal, use of such national health information interoperability standards;

(ii) an analysis and description of the participation by the Department, community care providers, and other relevant entities in the Trusted Exchange Framework and Com-

mon Agreement program of the Department of Health and Human Services as of the date of the enactment of this Act;

(iii) recommendations of the Secretary with respect to development of health information interoperability standards;

(iv) timelines or schedules to implement the plan required by subsection (a); and

(v) an identification of any legislative authorities or resources the Secretary requires to implement such plan.

(2) RECURRING REPORT REQUIREMENT.—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter for four years, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on the status of implementation of the plan required under subsection (a).

(B) **ELEMENTS OF SUBSEQUENT REPORTS.**—Each report under subparagraph (A) submitted after the date on which the first report required by such subparagraph is submitted shall include a description of any revisions to—

- (i) the plan required by subsection (a) made during the period covered by the report; and
- (ii) the analysis, recommendations, timelines, and legislative authorities reported pursuant to paragraph (1).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “community care provider” means a non-Department health care provider providing care (including dental care)—

(A) under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code;

(B) pursuant to a Veterans Care Agreement under section 1703A of such title; or

(C) under any other law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(2) The term “Third Party Administrator” means an entity that manages a provider network and performs administrative services related to such network under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 109. REPORT ON USE OF VALUE-BASED REIMBURSEMENT MODELS UNDER VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM.

(a) **REPORT ON VALUE-BASED REIMBURSEMENT MODELS.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Center for Innovation for Care and Payment of the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 1703E of title 38 United States Code, the Office of Integrated Veteran Care of the Department, or successor office, and Third Party Administrators, shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report containing—

(1) an assessment of the efforts of the Department pursuant to section 1703(i)(5) of such title, to incorporate value-based reimbursement models under the Veterans Community Care Program to promote the provision of high-quality care to veterans; and

(2) such recommendations for legislative or administrative action as the Secretary considers appropriate regarding the use of value-based reimbursement models throughout the Veterans Community Care Program under section 1703 of such title.

(b) **RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**—This section shall not be construed to be a pilot program subject to the requirements of section 1703E of title 38, United States Code.

(c) **THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATOR DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “Third Party Administrator” means an entity that manages a provider network and performs administrative services related to such network under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 110. INSPECTOR GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, and periodically thereafter, the Inspector General shall assess the performance of the Department of Veterans Affairs in—

(1) appropriately identifying veterans eligible for care and services under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code;

(2) informing veterans of their eligibility for such care and services; and

(3) delivering such care and services in a timely manner.

(b) **BRIEFING ON ASSESSMENTS.**—Upon the submission of the assessment required by subsection (a), the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall provide to the Committees on Veterans Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a briefing on the results of such assessment.

SEC. 111. COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT ON DENTISTRY UNDER VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on dental care furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under the Veterans Community Care Program under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, that includes a review of—

(1) the impact current reimbursement rates provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to dental providers under such program have on—

(A) the availability of dental care for veterans; and

(B) the ability of Third Party Administrators to meet their contractual obligations for network adequacy;

(2) the satisfaction of dental providers providing dental care under such program with the processes of the Department for approving dental care under such program; and

(3) the current processes of the Department for approving emergent dental care under such program.

(b) **THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATOR DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “Third Party Administrator” means an entity that manages a provider network and performs administrative services related to such network under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code.

Subtitle B—Matters Relating to Nursing Home and Other Long Term Care and Family Caregivers

SEC. 120. INCREASE OF EXPENDITURE CAP FOR NONINSTITUTIONAL CARE ALTERNATIVES TO NURSING HOME CARE.

(a) **INCREASE OF EXPENDITURE CAP.**—Section 1720C(d) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “The total cost” and inserting “(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the total cost”;

(2) by striking “65 percent” and inserting “100 percent”;

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

“(2)(A) The total cost of providing services or in-kind assistance in the case of any veteran described in subparagraph (B) for any fiscal year under the program may exceed 100 percent of the cost that would otherwise have been incurred as specified in paragraph (1) if the Secretary determines, based on a consideration of clinical need, geographic market factors, and such other matters as the Secretary may prescribe through regulation, that such higher total cost is in the best interest of the veteran.

“(B) A veteran described in this subparagraph is a veteran with amyotrophic lateral

sclerosis, a spinal cord injury, or a condition the Secretary determines to be similar to such conditions.”.

(b) **APPLICABILITY.**—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to fiscal years beginning on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 121. COORDINATION WITH PROGRAM OF ALL-INCLUSIVE CARE FOR THE ELDERLY.

Section 1720C of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 120, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(f) In furnishing services to a veteran under the program conducted pursuant to subsection (a), if a medical center of the Department through which such program is administered is located in a geographic area in which services are available to the veteran under a PACE program (as such term is defined in sections 1894(a)(2) and 1934(a)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395eee(a)(2); 1396u-4(a)(2))), the Secretary shall seek to enter into an agreement with the PACE program operating in that area for the furnishing of such services.”.

SEC. 122. AUTHORITY FOR SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO AWARD GRANTS OR CONTRACTS TO ENTITIES TO IMPROVE PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TO FAMILY CAREGIVERS OF VETERANS.

Subchapter II of chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section (and conforming the table of sections at the beginning of such chapter accordingly):

“§ 1720K. Grants or contracts to provide mental health support to family caregivers of veterans

“(a) **AUTHORITY.**—The Secretary may award grants or contracts to carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance mental health counseling, treatment, or support to the family caregivers of veterans participating in the family caregiver program.

“(b) **APPLICATION.**—(1) To be eligible for a grant or contract under this section, an entity shall submit to the Secretary an application therefor at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

“(2) Each application submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

“(A) A detailed plan for the use of the grant or contract.

“(B) A description of the programs or efforts through which the entity will meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (f).

“(C) A description of how the entity will distribute grant or contract amounts equitably among areas with varying levels of urbanization.

“(D) A plan for how the grant or contract will be used to meet the unique needs of veterans residing in rural areas, Native American, Native Hawaiian, or Alaska Native veterans, elderly veterans, women veterans, and veterans from other underserved communities.

“(c) **DISTRIBUTION.**—The Secretary shall seek to ensure that grants and contracts awarded under this section are equitably distributed among entities located in States with varying levels of urbanization.

“(d) **PRIORITY.**—The Secretary shall prioritize awarding grants or contracts under this section that will serve the following areas:

“(1) Areas with high rates of veterans enrolled in the family caregiver program.

“(2) Areas with high rates of—

“(A) suicide among veterans; or

“(B) referrals to the Veterans Crisis Line.

“(e) **REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.**—Any grant or contract awarded under this section shall be used—

“(1) to expand existing programs, activities, and services;

“(2) to establish new or additional programs, activities, and services; or

“(3) for travel and transportation to facilitate carrying out paragraph (1) or (2).

“(f) **OUTCOME MEASURES.**—(1) The Secretary shall develop and provide to each entity that receives a grant or contract under this section written guidance on the following:

“(A) Outcome measures.

“(B) Policies of the Department.

“(2) In developing outcome measures under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider the following goals:

“(A) Increasing the utilization of mental health services among family caregivers of veterans participating in the family caregiver program.

“(B) Reducing barriers to mental health services among family caregivers of veterans participating in such program.

“(g) **TRACKING REQUIREMENTS.**—(1) The Secretary shall establish appropriate tracking requirements with respect to the entities receiving a grant or contract under this section.

“(2) Not less frequently than annually, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on such tracking requirements.

“(h) **PERFORMANCE REVIEW.**—The Secretary shall—

“(1) review the performance of each entity that receives a grant or contract under this section; and

“(2) make information regarding such performance publicly available.

“(i) **REMEDIATION PLAN.**—(1) In the case of an entity that receives a grant or contract under this section and does not meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (f), the Secretary shall require the entity to submit to the Secretary a remediation plan under which the entity shall describe how and when it plans to meet such outcome measures.

“(2) The Secretary may not award a subsequent grant or contract under this section to an entity described in paragraph (1) unless the Secretary approves the remediation plan submitted by the entity under such paragraph.

“(j) **MAXIMUM AMOUNT.**—The amount of a grant or contract awarded under this section may not exceed 10 percent of amounts made available for grants or contracts under this section for the fiscal year in which the grant or contract is awarded.

“(k) **SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.**—Any grant or contract awarded under this section shall be used to supplement and not supplant funding that is otherwise available through the Department to provide mental health support among family caregivers of veterans participating in the family caregiver program.

“(1) **OUTREACH TO FAMILY CAREGIVERS.**—The Secretary shall include, in the outreach materials regularly provided to a family caregiver who participates in the family caregiver program, notice of mental health support provided by recipients of grants or contracts under this section that are located in the relevant Veterans Integrated Service Network.

“(m) **FUNDING.**—(1) Amounts for the activities of the Department under this section shall be budgeted and appropriated through a separate appropriation account.

“(2) In the budget justification materials submitted to Congress in support of the budget of the Department for any fiscal year (as submitted with the budget of the President under section 1105(a) of title 31), the Secretary shall include a separate statement of the amount requested to be appropriated for that fiscal year for the account specified in paragraph (1).

“(n) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary, for each of fiscal years 2025 and 2026, \$10,000,000 to carry out this section.

“(o) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

“(1) The terms ‘caregiver’ and ‘family caregiver’ have the meanings given those terms in section 1720G of this title.

“(2) The term ‘family caregiver program’ means the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers under section 1720G of this title.

“(3) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means the toll-free hotline for veterans established under section 1720F of this title.”.

SEC. 123. HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES: PROGRAMS.

(a) **PROGRAMS.**—Such subchapter is further amended by inserting after section 1720K (as added by section 122) the following new section (and conforming the table of sections at the beginning of such chapter accordingly):

“§ 1720L. Home- and community-based services: programs

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—In furnishing non-institutional alternatives to nursing home care pursuant to the authority of section 1720C of this title (or any other authority under this chapter or other provision of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs), the Secretary shall carry out each of the programs specified in this section in accordance with such relevant authorities except as otherwise provided in this section.

“(b) **VETERAN-DIRECTED CARE PROGRAM.**—

(1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in collaboration with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall carry out a program to be known as the ‘Veteran-Directed Care program’. Under such program, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may enter into agreements with the providers described in paragraph (2) to provide to eligible veterans funds, to the extent practicable, to obtain such in-home care services and related items that support clinical need and improve quality of life, as may be determined appropriate by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and selected by the veteran, including through the veteran hiring individuals to provide such services and items or directly purchasing such services and items.

“(2) The providers described in this paragraph are the following:

“(A) An Aging and Disability Resource Center, an area agency on aging, or a State agency.

“(B) A center for independent living.

“(C) An Indian tribe or tribal organization receiving assistance under title VI of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3057 et seq.).

“(D) Any other entity that the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, determines appropriate.

“(3) In carrying out the Veteran-Directed Care program, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

“(A) administer such program through each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

“(B) seek to ensure the availability of such program in American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, and any other territory or possession of the United States, to the extent practicable; and

“(C) seek to ensure the availability of such program for eligible veterans who are Native American veterans receiving care and services furnished by the Indian Health Service, a tribal health program, an Urban Indian organization, or (in the case of a Native Hawaiian veteran) a Native Hawaiian health care system, to the extent practicable.

“(4) If a veteran participating in the Veteran-Directed Care program is hospitalized, the veteran may continue to use funds under the program during a period of hospitalization in the same manner that the veteran would be authorized to use such funds under the program if the veteran were not hospitalized.

“(c) **HOMEMAKER AND HOME HEALTH AIDE PROGRAM.**—(1) The Secretary shall carry out a program to be known as the ‘Homemaker and Home Health Aide program’ under which the Secretary may enter into agreements with home health agencies to provide to eligible veterans such home health aide services as may be determined appropriate by the Secretary.

“(2) In carrying out the Homemaker and Home Health Aide program, the Secretary shall—

“(A) administer such program in the locations specified in subparagraph (A) of subsection (b)(3);

“(B) seek to ensure the availability of such program in the locations specified in subparagraph (B) of subsection (b)(3); and

“(C) seek to ensure the availability of such program for the veteran populations specified in subparagraph (C) of subsection (b)(3).

“(d) **HOME-BASED PRIMARY CARE PROGRAM.**—The Secretary shall carry out a program to be known as the ‘Home-Based Primary Care program’ under which the Secretary may furnish to eligible veterans in-home health care, the provision of which is overseen by a provider of the Department.

“(e) **PURCHASED SKILLED HOME CARE PROGRAM.**—The Secretary shall carry out a program to be known as the ‘Purchased Skilled Home Care program’ under which the Secretary may furnish to eligible veterans such in-home care services as may be determined appropriate and selected by the Secretary for the veteran.

“(f) **CAREGIVER SUPPORT.**—(1) With respect to a resident eligible caregiver of a veteran participating in a program under this section, the Secretary shall—

“(A) if the veteran meets the requirements of a covered veteran under section 1720G(b) of this title, provide to such caregiver the option of enrolling in the program of general caregiver support services under such section;

“(B) provide to such caregiver covered respite care of not less than 30 days annually; and

“(C) conduct on an annual basis (and, to the extent practicable, in connection with in-person services provided under the program in which the veteran is participating), a wellness contact of such caregiver.

“(2) Covered respite care provided to a resident eligible caregiver of a veteran under paragraph (1) may exceed 30 days annually if such extension is requested by the resident eligible caregiver or veteran and determined medically appropriate by the Secretary.

“(g) **RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the authority of the Secretary to carry out programs providing home- and community-based services under any other provision of law.

“(h) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

“(1) The terms ‘Aging and Disability Resource Center’, ‘area agency on aging’, and ‘State agency’ have the meanings given those terms in section 102 of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3002).

“(2) The terms ‘caregiver’ and ‘family caregiver’, with respect to a veteran, have the meanings given those terms, respectively, under subsection (e) of section 1720G of this title with respect to an eligible veteran under subsection (a) of such section or a covered veteran under subsection (b) of such section, as the case may be.

“(3) The term ‘center for independent living’ has the meaning given that term in section 702 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 796a).

“(4) The term ‘covered respite care’ has the meaning given such term in section 1720G(d) of this title.

“(5) The term ‘eligible veteran’ means any veteran—

“(A) for whom the Secretary determines participation in a specific program under this section is medically necessary to promote, preserve, or restore the health of the veteran; and

“(B) who absent such participation would be at increased risk for hospitalization, placement in a nursing home, or emergency room care.

“(6) The term ‘home health aide’ means an individual employed by a home health agency to provide in-home care services.

“(7) The term ‘in-home care service’ means any service, including a personal care service, provided to enable the recipient of such service to live at home.

“(8) The terms ‘Indian tribe’ and ‘tribal organization’ have the meanings given those terms in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

“(9) The terms ‘Native American’ and ‘Native American veteran’ have the meanings given those terms in section 3765 of this title.

“(10) The terms ‘Native Hawaiian’ and ‘Native Hawaiian health care system’ have the meanings given those terms in section 12 of the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act (42 U.S.C. 11711).

“(11) The terms ‘tribal health programs’ and ‘Urban Indian organizations’ have the meanings given those terms in section 4 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1603).

“(12) The term ‘resident eligible caregiver’ means an individual who—

“(A) is a caregiver, or a family caregiver, of a veteran and resides with that veteran; and

“(B) has not entered into a contract, agreement, or other arrangement for such individual to act as a caregiver for that veteran unless such individual is a family member of the veteran or is furnishing caregiver services through a medical foster home.”

(b) **DEADLINE FOR IMPROVED ADMINISTRATION.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the Veteran-Directed Care program and the Homemaker and Home Health Aide program are administered through each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in accordance with section 1720L of title 38, United States Code (as added by subsection (a)), by not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) **ADMINISTRATION OF VETERAN-DIRECTED CARE PROGRAM.**—

(1) **PROCEDURES.**—

(A) The Secretary shall establish procedures to—

(i) identify the staffing needs for the Veteran-Directed Care program of the Department of Veterans Affairs under such section (as added by subsection (a)); and

(ii) define the roles and responsibilities for personnel of the Department responsible for the administration of such program, including such personnel employed at the national, Veterans Integrated Service Network, or medical facility level.

(B) The responsibilities described in clause (ii) of subparagraph (A) shall include responsibilities for engagement with—

(i) veterans participating in such program;

(ii) veterans interested in participating in such program; and

(iii) providers described in section 1720L(b)(2) (as added by subsection (a)).

(2) **STAFFING MODEL; REPORT.**—Not later than two years after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(A) establish a staffing model for the administration of such program at each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(B) submit to the Committees on Veterans Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report containing the following:

(i) A description of—

(I) the staffing model described in subparagraph (A); and

(II) the rationale for such staffing model.

(ii) An identification of the ratio of staff required to administer such program to the number of veterans served by such program, disaggregated by each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(iii) A description of budgetary resources or other support, if any, required to accommodate an increase in staffing at medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to the requirements of the staffing model described in subparagraph (A).

(iv) Such other matters as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines appropriate.

SEC. 124. COORDINATION WITH ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CAREGIVERS.

(a) **COORDINATION WITH PROGRAM OF COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS.**—

(1) **COORDINATION.**—Section 1720G(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(14)(A) In the case of a veteran or caregiver who seeks services under this subsection and is denied such services, or a veteran or the family caregiver of a veteran who is discharged from the program under this subsection, the Secretary shall—

“(i) if the veteran meets the requirements of a covered veteran under subsection (b), provide to such caregiver the option of enrolling in the program of general caregiver support services under such subsection;

“(ii) assess the veteran or caregiver for participation in any other available program of the Department for home- and community-based services (including the programs specified in section 1720L of this title) for which the veteran or caregiver may be eligible and, with respect to the veteran, store (and make accessible to the veteran) the results of such assessment in the electronic medical record of the veteran; and

“(iii) provide to the veteran or caregiver written information on any such program identified pursuant to the assessment under clause (ii), including information about facilities, eligibility requirements, and relevant contact information for each such program.

“(B) The Secretary shall, to the extent practicable, provide to a veteran or family caregiver the option of obtaining clinically appropriate services under any other available program of the Department for home- and community-based services (including the programs specified in section 1720L of this title) for which the veteran or family caregiver may be eligible prior to discharging the veteran or family caregiver from the program under this subsection.

“(C) For each veteran or family caregiver who is discharged from the program under this subsection, a caregiver support coordinator shall provide for a smooth and personalized transition from such program to an appropriate program of the Department for home- and community-based services (including the programs specified in section 1720L of this title), including by integrating caregiver support across programs.”

(2) **APPLICABILITY.**—The amendments made by paragraph (1) shall apply with respect to denials and discharges occurring on or after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) **TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—Section 1720G(d) of such title is amended—

(A) by striking “or a covered veteran” each place it appears and inserting “, a veteran denied or discharged as specified in paragraph (14) of such subsection, or a covered veteran”; and

(B) by striking “under subsection (a), means” each place it appears and inserting “under subsection (a) or a veteran denied or discharged as specified in paragraph (14) of such subsection, means”.

(b) **CONFORMITY OF RESPITE CARE ACROSS PROGRAMS.**—Section 1720G of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a)(3), is further amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(3)—

(A) by amending subparagraph (A)(ii)(III) to read as follows:

“(III) covered respite care of not less than 30 days annually;”;

(B) by striking subparagraph (B) and redesignating subparagraphs (C) and (D) as subparagraphs (B) through (C), respectively; and

(2) by amending subsection (b)(3)(A)(iii) to read as follows:

“(iii) Covered respite care of not less than 30 days annually;”;

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (2) through (4) as paragraphs (3) through (5), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph:

“(2) The term ‘covered respite care’ means, with respect to a caregiver of a veteran, respite care under section 1720B of this title that—

“(A) is medically and age appropriate for the veteran (including 24-hour per day care of the veteran commensurate with the care provided by the caregiver); and

“(B) includes in-home care.”.

(c) **REVIEW RELATING TO CAREGIVER CONTACT.**—The Secretary shall conduct a review of the capacity of the Department to establish a streamlined system for contacting all caregivers enrolled in the program of general caregiver support services under section 1720G(b) of title 38, United States Code, to provide to such caregivers program updates and alerts relating to emerging services for which such caregivers or the veterans for which they provide care may be eligible.

SEC. 125. IMPROVEMENTS TO PROGRAM OF COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS.

Section 1720G(a) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 124, is further amended—

(1) in paragraph (12)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by inserting “, which shall include all criteria used to determine eligibility for such assistance and, in the case of a completed evaluation, how such criteria were used to evaluate information provided in assessments to determine such eligibility” before the period at the end; and

(B) in subparagraph (C)(i), by striking “who submits” and all that follows through the end of the clause and inserting the following: “who—

“(I) submits an application for the program established under paragraph (1); or

“(II) is being reassessed for eligibility to continue in such program.”;

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

“(15)(A) Not less frequently than annually, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a comprehen-

sive report on the program required by paragraph (1) that includes, with respect to the one-year period preceding the date of the submission of such report, the following:

“(i) The number of applications received for such program.

“(ii) The number, disaggregated by race, sex, and era and branch of service in the Armed Forces of the applicant, of—

“(I) approvals of such applications; and

“(II) denials of such applications.

“(iii) The number of reassessments conducted for such program.

“(iv) An identification of each decision made with respect to a reassessment conducted for such program, disaggregated by decisions resulting in—

“(I) disenrollment, including removal, discharge, or voluntary withdrawal;

“(II) tier reduction; and

“(III) tier continuation.

“(v) The number of appeals of decisions made with respect to such program, disaggregated by type of appeal.

“(vi) With respect to each appeal described in clause (v), the decision rendered, if any.

“(vii) A description of all tools used in assessments conducted for such program, including an explanation of how and by whom such tools are administered.

“(viii) A description of procedures used under such program for reviewing and integrating clinical records from health care providers that includes an explanation of how such records are used in determinations of eligibility for such program.

“(ix) A description of procedures available under such program for health care providers to communicate medical opinions to the teams conducting assessments to determine eligibility for such program, including health care providers in the private sector and health care providers specified in subsection (c) of section 1703 of this title.

“(x) A description of information technology systems and processes used under such program to upload and integrate all clinical records from all non-Department providers, including providers in the private sector and providers under the Veterans Community Care Program established under such section.

“(B) The Secretary shall ensure that all data included in a report under subparagraph (A)—

“(i) relating to a decision made under the program required by paragraph (1), are disaggregated by the specific reason for the decision;

“(ii) relating to a veteran, include comprehensive demographic information of the veteran, including the time period of the injuries, if any, of the veteran and the Veterans Integrated Service Network in which the veteran is located; and

“(iii) with respect to eligibility determinations relating to a serious injury of a veteran, specify—

“(I) how many such determinations relate to the ability of the veteran to perform activities of daily living; and

“(II) how many such determinations relate to the need of a veteran for supervision and protection.

“(C) The Secretary shall provide the data under paragraph (B) pursuant to Federal laws and in a manner that is wholly consistent with applicable Federal privacy and confidentiality laws, including the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (Public Law 104–191; 42 U.S.C. 201 note) and regulations (title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, parts 160 and 164, or successor regulations), and sections 5701, 5705, and 7332 of this title to ensure that the provided data, or some portion of the data, will not undermine the anonymity of a veteran.”.

SEC. 126. IMPROVEMENTS RELATING TO HOME-MAKER AND HOME HEALTH AIDE PROGRAM.

(a) **PILOT PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITIES WITH SHORTAGE OF HOME HEALTH AIDES.**—

(1) **PROGRAM.**—Beginning not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall carry out a three-year pilot program under which the Secretary shall provide homemaker and home health aide services to veterans who reside in communities with a shortage of home health aides.

(2) **LOCATIONS.**—The Secretary shall select not fewer than five geographic locations in which the Secretary determines there is a shortage of home health aides at which to carry out the pilot program under paragraph (1).

(3) **NURSING ASSISTANTS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—In carrying out the pilot program under paragraph (1), the Secretary may hire nursing assistants as new employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or reassign nursing assistants who are existing employees of the Department, to provide to veterans in-home care services (including basic tasks authorized by the State certification of the nursing assistant) under the pilot program, in lieu of or in addition to the provision of such services through non-Department home health aides.

(B) **RELATIONSHIP TO HOME-BASED PRIMARY CARE PROGRAM.**—Nursing assistants hired or reassigned under subparagraph (A) may provide services to a veteran under the pilot program under paragraph (1) while serving as part of a health care team for the veteran under the Home-Based Primary Care program.

(4) **REPORT TO CONGRESS.**—Not later than one year before the date of the termination of the pilot program under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report that includes—

(A) a statement of the results of such pilot program; and

(B) an assessment of the feasibility and advisability of—

(i) extending such pilot program; or

(ii) making such pilot program a permanent program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) **REPORT ON USE OF FUNDS.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report containing, with respect to the period beginning in fiscal year 2012 and ending in fiscal year 2024, the following:

(1) An identification of the amount of funds that were included in a budget of the Department of Veterans Affairs during such period for the provision of in-home care to veterans under the Homemaker and Home Health Aide program but were not expended for such provision, disaggregated by medical center of the Department for which such unexpended funds were budgeted (if such disaggregation is possible).

(2) To the extent practicable, an identification of the number of veterans for whom, during such period, the hours during which a home health aide was authorized to provide services to the veteran under the Homemaker and Home Health Aide program were reduced for a reason other than a change in the health care needs of the veteran, and a detailed description of the reasons why any such reductions may have occurred.

(c) **UPDATED GUIDANCE ON PROGRAM.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall issue updated guidance for the Homemaker and Home Health Aide program. Such updated guidance shall include the following:

(1) A process for the transition of veterans from the Homemaker and Home Health Aide program to other covered programs.

(2) A requirement for the directors of the medical facilities of the Department to complete such process whenever a veteran with care needs has been denied services from home health agencies under the Homemaker and Home Health Aide program as a result of the clinical needs or behavioral issues of the veteran.

SEC. 127. PILOT PROGRAM TO FURNISH ASSISTED LIVING SERVICES TO CERTAIN VETERANS.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—Beginning not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program to assess—

(1) the effectiveness of providing assisted living services to eligible veterans, at the election of such veterans; and

(2) the satisfaction with the pilot program of veterans participating in such pilot program.

(b) **PROGRAM LOCATIONS.**—

(1) **VETERANS INTEGRATED SERVICE NETWORKS.**—The Secretary shall select two Veterans Integrated Service Networks of the Department of Veterans Affairs at which to carry out the pilot program under subsection (a).

(2) **FACILITIES.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Within the Veterans Integrated Service Networks selected under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall select facilities at which to carry out the pilot program under subsection (a)(1).

(B) **SELECTION CRITERIA.**—In selecting facilities under subparagraph (A) at which to carry out the pilot program under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall ensure that—

(i) the locations of such facilities are in geographically diverse areas;

(ii) not fewer than one such facility serves veterans in rural or highly rural areas (as determined through the use of the Rural-Urban Commuting Areas coding system of the Department of Agriculture);

(iii) not fewer than one such facility is located in each Veterans Integrated Service Network selected under paragraph (1); and

(iv) not fewer than one such facility is a State home.

(c) **PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS.**—Not more than 60 eligible veterans may participate in the pilot program under subsection (a)(1) in each Veterans Integrated Service Network selected under subsection (b)(1).

(d) **PROVISION OF ASSISTED LIVING SERVICES.**—

(1) **AGREEMENTS.**—In carrying out the pilot program under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary may enter into agreements for the provision of assisted living services on behalf of eligible veterans with—

(A) a provider participating under a State plan or waiver under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.); or

(B) a State home recognized and certified under subpart B of part 51 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, or successor regulations.

(2) **STANDARDS.**—The Secretary may not place, transfer, or admit a veteran to any facility for assisted living services under the pilot program under subsection (a)(1) unless the Secretary determines that—

(A) the facility meets the standards for community residential care established under sections 17.61 through 17.72 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, or successor regulations, and any additional standards of care as the Secretary may specify; or

(B) in the case of a facility that is a State home, the State home meets such standards of care as the Secretary may specify.

(3) **INSPECTION.**—The Secretary shall inspect facilities at which veterans are placed under the pilot program under subsection (a)(1)—

(A) with respect to a facility that is a State home, not less frequently than annually and in the same manner as the Secretary conducts inspection of State homes under section 1742 of title 38, United States Code; and

(B) with respect to any other facility, not less frequently than annually and in the same manner as the Secretary conducts inspection of facilities under section 1730 of such title.

(4) **PAYMENT TO CERTAIN FACILITIES.**—

(A) **STATE HOMES.**—In the case of a facility participating in the pilot program under subsection (a)(1) that is a State home, the Secretary shall pay to the State home a per diem for each veteran participating in the pilot program at a rate agreed to by the Secretary and the State home.

(B) **COMMUNITY ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES.**—In the case of a facility participating in the pilot program under subsection (a)(1) that is a community assisted living facility, the Secretary shall—

(i) pay to the facility an amount that is less than the average rate paid by the Department for placement in a community nursing home in the same Veterans Integrated Service Network; and

(ii) re-evaluate payment rates annually to account for current economic conditions and current costs of assisted living services.

(e) **CONTINUITY OF CARE.**—Upon the termination of the pilot program under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall—

(1) provide to all veterans participating in the pilot program at the time of such termination the option to continue to receive assisted living services at the site they were assigned to under the pilot program, at the expense of the Department; and

(2) for such veterans who do not opt to continue to receive such services—

(A) ensure such veterans do not experience lapses in care; and

(B) provide such veterans with information on, and furnish such veterans with, other extended care services based on their preferences and best medical interest.

(f) **DETERMINATION OF QUALITY.**—The Secretary shall determine a method for assessment of quality of care provided to veterans participating in the pilot program under subsection (a)(1) and shall communicate that method to providers of services under the pilot program.

(g) **ANNUAL REPORT.**—Not later than one year after the initiation of the pilot program under subsection (a)(1), and annually thereafter for the duration of such pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the pilot program that includes—

(1) an identification of Veterans Integrated Services Networks and facilities of the Department participating in the pilot program and assisted living facilities and State homes at which veterans are placed under the pilot program;

(2) the number of participants in the pilot program, disaggregated by facility;

(3) general demographic information of participants in the pilot program, including average age, sex, and race or ethnicity;

(4) disability status of participants in the pilot program;

(5) an identification of any barriers or challenges to furnishing care to veterans under the pilot program, conducting oversight of the pilot program, or any other barriers or challenges;

(6) the cost of care at each assisted living facility and State home participating in the

pilot program, including an analysis of any cost savings by the Department when comparing that cost to the cost of nursing home care;

(7) aggregated feedback from participants in the pilot program, including from veteran resident surveys and interviews; and

(8) such other matters the Secretary considers appropriate.

(h) **FINAL REPORT.**—Not later than one year after the pilot program terminates under subsection (j), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the pilot program that—

(1) includes the matters required under paragraphs (1) through (8) of subsection (g);

(2) includes recommendations on whether the model studied in the pilot program should be continued or adopted throughout the Department; and

(3) indicates whether the Secretary requests action by Congress to make the pilot program permanent.

(i) **INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than three years after the initiation of the pilot program under subsection (a)(1), the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the pilot program.

(2) **ELEMENTS.**—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include an assessment of—

(A) the quality of care provided to veterans at facilities participating in the pilot program, measured pursuant to the method determined under subsection (f);

(B) the oversight of such facilities, as conducted by the Department, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, State agencies, and other relevant entities; and

(C) such other matters as the Inspector General considers appropriate.

(3) **PLAN REQUIRED.**—Not later than 90 days after the submission of the report under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a plan to address the deficiencies identified in the report, if any.

(j) **TERMINATION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to paragraph (2), the pilot program under subsection (a)(1) shall terminate on September 30, 2028.

(2) **EXTENSION.**—The Secretary may extend the duration of the pilot program for an additional two-year period if the Secretary, based on the results of the reports submitted under subsection (g), determines such an extension is appropriate.

(k) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) The term “assisted living services” means services of a facility in providing room, board, and personal care for and supervision of residents for their health, safety, and welfare.

(2) The term “eligible veteran” means a veteran who is—

(A) receiving nursing home care paid for by the Department of Veterans Affairs, eligible to receive such care pursuant to section 1710A of title 38, United States Code, or requires a higher level of care than the domiciliary care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, but does not meet the requirements for nursing home level care provided by the Department pursuant to such section; and

(B) eligible for assisted living services, as determined by the Secretary or meets such additional criteria for eligibility for the pilot program under subsection (a)(1) as the Secretary may establish.

(3) The term “State home” has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 128. PROVISION OF MEDICINE, EQUIPMENT, AND SUPPLIES AVAILABLE TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO STATE HOMES.

(a) **PROVISION AUTHORIZED.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may provide to State homes medicine, personal protective equipment, medical supplies, and any other equipment, supplies, and assistance available to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) **DEFINITION.**—In this section:

(1) The term “personal protective equipment” means any protective equipment required to prevent the wearer from contracting an infectious disease, including gloves, N-95 respirator masks, gowns, goggles, face shields, or other equipment required for safety.

(2) The term “State home” has the meaning given such term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 129. RECOGNITION OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS TO ASSIST VETERANS, FAMILY MEMBERS, AND CAREGIVERS NAVIGATING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a process through which the Department of Veterans Affairs may recognize organizations and individuals to assist a veteran, a family member of a veteran, or a caregiver of a veteran (as defined in section 1720G(d) of title 38, United States Code) in navigating the programs and services of the Veterans Health Administration.

(b) **SOLICITATION OF FEEDBACK.**—The Secretary shall solicit feedback and recommendations in the creation of the process under subsection (a) from such organizations as the Secretary may consider relevant.

(c) **LIMITATION.**—The Secretary may not recognize an organization or individual pursuant to the process established under subsection (a) unless the organization or individual has certified to the Secretary that no fee or compensation of any nature will be charged to any individual for services rendered in providing assistance pursuant to such subsection.

SEC. 130. REVIEWS AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS RELATING TO HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES.

(a) **OFFICE OF GERIATRIC AND EXTENDED CARE.**—

(1) **REVIEW OF PROGRAMS.**—The Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a review of each program administered through the Office of Geriatric and Extended Care of the Department and the Caregiver Support Program Office of the Department, or any successor offices, to—

(A) eliminate service gaps at the medical center level; and

(B) ensure—

(i) the clinical needs of veterans are met;

(ii) consistency in program management;

(iii) the availability of, and the access by veterans to, home- and community-based services, including for veterans living in rural areas; and

(iv) proper coordination between covered programs.

(2) **ASSESSMENT OF STAFFING NEEDS.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct an assessment of the staffing needs of the Office of Geriatric and Extended Care of the Department and the Caregiver Support Program Office of the Department, or any successor offices.

(3) **GOALS FOR GEOGRAPHIC ALIGNMENT OF CARE.**—

(A) **ESTABLISHMENT OF GOALS.**—The Director of the Office of Geriatric and Extended Care, or successor office, shall establish quantitative goals to enable aging or disabled veterans who are not located near medical centers of the Department to access extended care services (including by improving access to home- and community-based services for such veterans).

(B) **IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE.**—Each goal established under subparagraph (A) shall include a timeline for the implementation of the goal at each medical center of the Department.

(4) **GOALS FOR IN-HOME SPECIALTY CARE.**—The Director of the Office of Geriatric and Extended Care, or successor office, shall establish quantitative goals to address the specialty care needs of veterans through in-home care, including by ensuring the education of home health aides and caregivers of veterans in the following areas:

(A) Dementia care.

(B) Care for spinal cord injuries and diseases.

(C) Ventilator care.

(D) Other specialty care areas as determined by the Secretary.

(5) **INPUT ON GOALS.**—To the extent practicable, the head of the Caregiver Support Program Office, or successor office, shall provide to the Director of the Office of Geriatric and Extended Care, or successor office, input with respect to the establishment of the goals under paragraphs (3) and (4).

(6) **REPORT TO CONGRESS.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report containing the findings of the review under paragraph (1), the results of the assessment under paragraph (2), and the goals established under paragraphs (3) and (4).

(b) **REVIEW OF INCENTIVES AND EFFORTS RELATING TO HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES.**—

(1) **REVIEW.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a review of the following:

(A) The financial and organizational incentives or disincentives for the directors of medical centers of the Department to establish or expand covered programs at such medical centers.

(B) Any incentives or disincentives for such directors to provide to veterans home- and community-based services in lieu of institutional care.

(C) The efforts taken by the Secretary to enhance spending of the Department for extended care by balancing spending between institutional care and home- and community-based services consistent with the demand for such services.

(D) The plan of the Under Secretary for Health of the Department to accelerate efforts to enhance spending as specified in subparagraph (C), to match the progress of similar efforts taken by the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services with respect to spending of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for extended care.

(2) **REPORT TO CONGRESS.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the findings of the review under paragraph (1).

(c) **REVIEW OF RESPITE CARE SERVICES.**—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a review of the use, availability, cost, and effectiveness, of the respite care services furnished by the Secretary under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, including—

(1) the frequency at which the Department of Veterans Affairs is unable to meet demand for such services;

(2) a detailed description of—

(A) the reasons the Department of Veterans Affairs is unable to meet the demand for such services; and

(B) any actions, or planned actions, of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure such demand is met.

(d) **COLLABORATION TO IMPROVE HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES.**—

(1) **RECOMMENDATIONS.**—

(A) **DEVELOPMENT.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop recommendations as follows:

(i) With respect to home- and community-based services for veterans, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop recommendations regarding new services (in addition to those furnished as of the date of enactment of this Act) in collaboration with the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(ii) With respect to the national shortage of home health aides, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop recommendations regarding methods to address such shortage in collaboration with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Labor.

(B) **SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report containing the recommendations developed under subparagraph (A) and an identification of any changes in existing law or new statutory authority necessary to implement the recommendations, as determined by the Secretary.

(C) **CONSULTATION WITH SECRETARY OF LABOR.**—In carrying out this paragraph, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consult with the Secretary of Labor.

(2) **FEEDBACK AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON CAREGIVER SUPPORT.**—

(A) **FEEDBACK AND RECOMMENDATIONS.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall solicit from the entities described in subparagraph (B) feedback and recommendations regarding opportunities for the Secretary to enhance home- and community-based services for veterans and the caregivers of veterans, including through the potential provision by the entity of care and respite services to veterans and caregivers who may not be eligible for any program under section 1720G of title 38, United States Code, or section 1720L of such title (as added by section 123), but have a need for assistance.

(B) **COVERED ENTITIES.**—The entities described in this subparagraph are veterans service organizations and nonprofit organizations with a focus on caregiver support or long term care (as determined by the Secretary).

(3) **COLLABORATION FOR CERTAIN VETERANS.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall collaborate with the Director of the Indian Health Service and representatives from tribal health programs and Urban Indian organizations to ensure the availability of home- and community-based services for—

(A) Native American veterans, including Native American veterans receiving health care and medical services under multiple health care systems; and

(B) Native Hawaiian veterans, including Native Hawaiian veterans receiving health care and medical services under the Native Hawaiian health care system.

SEC. 131. GAO REPORT ON MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS.

(a) **REPORT REQUIRED.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on

Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the provision of mental health support to caregivers of veterans.

(b) **CONTENTS.**—The report submitted under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An assessment of the need for mental health support among caregivers participating in the caregiver programs.

(2) An assessment of options for mental health support in facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs and in the community for caregivers participating in the caregiver programs.

(3) An assessment of the availability and accessibility of mental health support in facilities of the Department and in the community for caregivers participating in the caregiver programs.

(4) An assessment of the awareness among caregivers of the availability of mental health support in facilities of the Department and in the community for caregivers participating in the caregiver programs.

(5) An assessment of barriers to mental health support in facilities of the Department and in the community for caregivers participating in the caregiver programs.

(c) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) The term “caregiver” has the meaning given that term in section 1720G of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term “caregiver programs” means—

(A) the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers under subsection (a) of section 1720G of title 38, United States Code; and

(B) the program of support services for caregivers under subsection (b) of such section.

SEC. 132. DEVELOPMENT OF CENTRALIZED WEBSITE FOR PROGRAM INFORMATION.

(a) **CENTRALIZED WEBSITE.**—The Secretary shall develop and maintain a centralized and publicly accessible internet website of the Department as a clearinghouse for information and resources relating to covered programs.

(b) **CONTENTS.**—The website under subsection (a) shall contain the following:

(1) A description of each covered program.

(2) An informational assessment tool that—

(A) explains the administrative eligibility, if applicable, of a veteran, or a caregiver of a veteran, for any covered program; and

(B) provides information, as a result of such explanation, on any covered program for which the veteran or caregiver (as the case may be) may be eligible.

(3) A list of required procedures for the directors of the medical facilities of the Department to follow in determining the eligibility and suitability of veterans for participation in a covered program, including procedures applicable to instances in which the resource constraints of a facility (or of a community in which a facility is located) may result in the inability to address the health needs of a veteran under a covered program in a timely manner.

(c) **UPDATES.**—The Secretary shall ensure the website under subsection (a) is updated on a periodic basis.

SEC. 133. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle:

(1) The terms “caregiver” and “family caregiver” have the meanings given those terms under section 1720L(h) of title 38, United States Code (as added by section 123).

(2) The term “covered program”—

(A) means any program of the Department of Veterans Affairs for home- and community-based services; and

(B) includes the programs specified in section 1720L of title 38, United States Code (as added by section 123).

(3) The term “home- and community-based services”—

(A) means the services referred to in section 1701(6)(E) of title 38, United States Code; and

(B) includes services furnished under a program specified in section 1720L of such title (as added by section 123).

(4) The terms “Home-Based Primary Care program”, “Homemaker and Home Health Aide program”, and “Veteran-Directed Care program” mean the programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs specified in subsection (d), (c), and (b) of such section 1720L, respectively.

(5) The terms “home health aide”, “Native American”, “Native American veteran”, “tribal health programs”, and “Urban Indian organizations” have the meanings given those terms in subsection (h) of such section 1720L.

(6) The term “veterans service organization” means any organization recognized by the Secretary under section 5902 of such title.

Subtitle C—Medical Treatment and Other Matters

SEC. 140. QUARTERLY REPORT ON REFERRALS FOR NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter I of chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 1703F the following new section (and amending the table of sections at the beginning of such chapter accordingly):

“§ 1703G. Quarterly report on referrals for non-Department health care

“The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a quarterly report containing, with respect to referrals for non-Department health care originating from a medical facility of the Department during the quarter preceding the date of the submission of the report, a measurement of, for each such medical facility—

“(1) the period of time between—

“(A) the date on which a clinician employed by the Department determines that a veteran requires care, or a veteran presents to the Department requesting care, and the date on which the referral for care is sent to a non-Department health care provider;

“(B) the date on which such referral is sent to a non-Department health care provider and the date on which such non-Department health care provider accepts such referral;

“(C) the date on which such non-Department health care provider accepts such referral and the date on which such referral is completed;

“(D) the date on which such referral is completed and the date on which an appointment with a non-Department health care provider is made; and

“(E) the date on which such an appointment is made and the date on which such appointment occurs; and

“(2) any other period of time that the Secretary determines necessary.”.

(b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The first report under section 1703G, as added by this section, shall be due not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section.

SEC. 141. ELIMINATION OF CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARIES.

Section 7306 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (b);

(2) by redesignating subsections (c) through (g) as subsections (b) through (f), respectively; and

(3) in subsection (c) (as so redesignated), by striking “subsection (e)” and inserting “subsection (d)”.

SEC. 142. MODIFICATION OF PAY LIMITATION FOR PHYSICIANS, PODIATRISTS, OPTOMETRISTS, AND DENTISTS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **PAY.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 7431 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by inserting “optometrists,” after “podiatrists,” each place it appears;

(B) by inserting “optometrist” after “podiatrist,” each place it appears;

(C) in subsection (c)—

(i) in paragraph (5), by adding at the end the following new sentence: “Such a notice shall include a statement of whether the market pay will increase, decrease, or remain unchanged following such evaluation.”; and

(ii) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(7) The Secretary shall ensure that each physician, podiatrist, optometrist, and dentist in the Veterans Health Administration is—

“(A) advised, on an annual basis, of the criteria described in subparagraph (F) of paragraph (4);

“(B) evaluated in accordance with such criteria; and

“(C) compensated in accordance with—

“(i) applicable assignment and pay levels, subject to relevant pay limitations; and

“(ii) the extent to which such criteria are met.

“(8) Not later than 120 days after the end of each fiscal year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report that includes the following:

“(A) A list of each facility and specialty that conducted an evaluation of pay during the period covered by the report.

“(B) For each evaluation described in subparagraph (A)—

“(i) a list of occupations for which pay was evaluated, disaggregated by medical specialty, number of authorized full-time employees, and onsite full-time employees as of the date of the evaluation;

“(ii) the date such evaluation was completed;

“(iii) whether a market pay adjustment was made following the evaluation per each occupation and specialty evaluated;

“(iv) whether applicable employees were notified of such evaluation;

“(v) whether local labor partners were notified of such evaluation; and

“(vi) in the case of an evaluation that resulted in an adjustment of pay—

“(I) the date such adjustment—

“(aa) was implemented; and

“(bb) became effective; and

“(II) the percentage of employees of each occupation and specialty for which pay was adjusted pursuant to such evaluation.

“(C) A list of facilities of the Department that have not conducted an evaluation of market pay, pursuant to paragraph (5), during the 18-month-period that precedes the date of the submission of such report.”; and

(D) in subsection (e), by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(5) Notwithstanding any compensation or pay limitations under this title or title 5, the Secretary may authorize the Under Secretary for Health to pay physicians, podiatrists, optometrists, and dentists—

“(A) awards authorized under this title;

“(B) advance payments, recruitment or relocation bonuses, and retention allowances authorized under section 7410(a) of this title or as otherwise provided by law;

“(C) incentives or bonuses under section 706 of this title or as otherwise provided by law; and

“(D) earnings from fee-basis appointments under section 7405(a)(2) of this title.

“(6)(A) The Secretary may waive any pay limitation described in this section (including tier limitations) that the Secretary determines necessary for the recruitment or retention of critical health care personnel whom the Secretary determines would provide direct patient care.

“(B) Priority for such waivers shall be given for positions, locations, and care provided through agreements that are costly to the Department.

“(C) The Chief Human Capital Officer of the Department, the Chief Financial Officer of the Department, and the Office of the General Counsel of the Department shall review any waiver issued under subparagraph (A).

“(D) During the period the authority under subparagraph (A) is effective, the Secretary may not issue more than 300 waivers under such subparagraph.

“(E) The Secretary may prescribe requirements, limitations, and other considerations for waivers under such subparagraph.

“(F) Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report that includes—

“(i) any updates to the requirements, limitations, and considerations prescribed under subparagraph (B) during the period covered by the report;

“(ii) a description of the findings of each review, if any, conducted pursuant to subparagraph (C);

“(iii) a description of each waiver under subparagraph (A) in effect as of the date of the submission of the report, including the—

“(I) duty location, position, specialty, market and performance considerations for the waiver; and

“(II) impact, if any, of the waiver on care furnished by the Department pursuant to an agreement regarding the geographic area; and

“(iv) a list of any separation actions during the period covered by the report with respect to a position for which a waiver under subparagraph (A) is in effect.

“(G) The authority of the Secretary under subparagraph (A) shall terminate on the last day of the third full fiscal year following the date of the enactment of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.”.

(2) **REPORT ON WAIVER AUTHORITY.**—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 the House of Representatives a report that includes a description of the requirements, limitations, and other considerations prescribed under section 7431(b)(6)(D) of title 38, United States Code, as added by paragraph (1).

(3) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—

(A) **PAY OF UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH.**—Section 7432(b)(1) of such title is amended by inserting “, podiatrist, optometrist,” after “physician”.

(B) **ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS.**—Section 7433 of such title is amended by inserting “optometrists,” after “physicians,” each place it appears.

(C) **COMPETITIVE PAY.**—Section 7451(a)(2)(C) of such title is amended by inserting “optometrist,” after “physician.”

(4) **CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.**—

(A) **SUBCHAPTER HEADING.**—Subchapter III of chapter 74 of such title is amended in the heading by inserting “**Optometrists,**” after “**PODIATRISTS,**”.

(B) **TABLE OF SECTIONS.**—The table of sections for such chapter is amended by striking the item relating to subchapter III and inserting the following:

“**SUBCHAPTER III—PAY FOR PHYSICIANS AND OTHER HEALTH-CARE PERSONNEL**”.

(5) **APPLICABILITY DATES.**—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to any pay period of the Department of Veterans Affairs beginning on or after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) **MODIFICATION AND CLARIFICATION OF PAY GRADE FOR OPTOMETRISTS.**—Section 7404 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)(A), by striking “podiatrists, and dentists” and inserting “podiatrists, optometrists, and dentists”; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking “podiatrist (dpm), and dentist” and inserting “podiatrist (dpm), optometrist (od), and dentist”; and

(B) by striking “clinical chiropractor and optometrist schedule,” and inserting “clinical chiropractor schedule”; and

(C) by inserting “optometrist grade” after “Podiatrist grade”.

(c) **RETROACTIVE AUTHORITY FOR COMPENSATION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may pay retroactive compensation to a covered employee in an amount that equals the amount of compensation that was authorized to be paid to such covered employee during the period specified in paragraph (2), but was deferred and paid to such employee in the calendar year following the calendar year in which such compensation was authorized because the payment such compensation would have exceeded an applicable cap on annual compensation.

(2) **PERIOD SPECIFIED.**—The period specified in this paragraph is the period beginning on January 8, 2006, and ending on December 31, 2017.

(3) **EXCLUSION.**—Compensation authorized under this subsection shall not be included in the calculation of any aggregate limit on compensation for a covered employee for the year in which it is paid.

(4) **CHARGING OF COMPENSATION.**—Compensation authorized under this subsection shall be charged to the appropriate medical care appropriation account of the Department of Veterans Affairs for the fiscal year in which the work was performed except as follows:

(A) In the case of an account that has closed pursuant to section 1552 of title 31, United States Code, the compensation shall be charged to a current appropriation account in accordance with section 1553 of such title.

(B) In the case of an expired account that has not closed, if charging the compensation to the expired account would cause such account to have a negative unliquidated or unexpended balance, the compensation may be charged to a current appropriation account available for the same purpose.

(5) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this subsection:

(A) The term “compensation” means any pay, including salary, awards, and incentives.

(B) The term “covered employee” means a physician, podiatrist, or dentist subject to market pay under section 7431 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 143. REIMBURSEMENT OF AMBULANCE COST FOR CARE FOR CERTAIN RURAL VETERANS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall pay, or reimburse a cov-

ered veteran for, the cost of transporting the veteran by ambulance, including air ambulance, from a covered location to a provider of the Department of Veterans Affairs, a non-Department provider, or the nearest hospital that can meet the needs of the veteran (including a hospital that compacts with the Indian Health Service) for covered care.

(b) **AMOUNT COVERED.**—The maximum cumulative amount covered under this section for a covered veteran is \$46,000.

(c) **SUNSET.**—This section shall cease to be effective on September 30, 2026.

(d) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) The term “covered care” means care for a veteran eligible for care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs under title 38, United States Code, or any other law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, even if the care associated with the transport described in subsection (a) is not authorized by the Department.

(2) The term “covered location” means a location that is—

(A) in a State that is 100 miles or more from the nearest medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(B) in an area rated as a 10 or higher under the rural-urban commuting areas coding system of the Department of Agriculture.

(3) The term “covered veteran” means a veteran who—

(A) has a service-connected disability rated by the Secretary as between 0 and 30 percent disabling;

(B) is not eligible for payments or reimbursements for beneficiary travel or other transportation under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, other than under this section; and

(C) is not entitled to care or services under a non-Department of Veterans Affairs health-plan contract.

(4) The term “health-plan contract” has the meaning given that term in section 1725 of title 38, United States Code.

(5) The term “service-connected” has the meaning given that term in section 101 of such title.

SEC. 144. PILOT PROGRAM TO FURNISH DENTAL CARE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO CERTAIN VETERANS DIAGNOSED WITH ISCHEMIC HEART DISEASE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Beginning not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a two-year pilot program (in this section referred to as the “pilot program”) under which the Secretary shall furnish covered care to covered veterans through means that include the use of community care.

(b) **LOCATIONS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall select not more than four States in which to carry out the pilot program.

(2) **SELECTION CRITERIA.**—In selecting States under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall prioritize States in which—

(A) the Department of Veterans Affairs serves a high proportion, as determined by the Secretary, of veterans residing in rural or highly rural areas (as determined through the use of the Rural-Urban Commuting Areas coding system of the Department of Agriculture);

(B) dental clinics operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs currently utilize teledentistry;

(C) the Department of Veterans Affairs does not currently operate a dental clinic; or

(D) the Secretary determines a large percentage of veterans enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment of the Department of Veterans Affairs established and operated under paragraphs (1) or (2) of section

1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, visit emergency rooms for dental emergencies at high rates.

(C) PARTICIPATION LIMITATION.—Participation in a pilot program established pursuant to this section shall be limited to a covered veteran who receives health care in a facility of the Department located in a State selected under subsection (b).

(D) USE OF CERTAIN METHODS TO PROVIDE CARE.—

(1) MOBILE DENTAL CLINICS.—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall test the efficacy of mobile dental clinics to service rural areas that do not have a population base to warrant a full-time clinic but where there are covered veterans in need of dental care.

(2) HOME-BASED DENTAL CARE.—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall test the efficacy of portable dental care units to service rural veterans in their homes, as the Secretary considers medically appropriate.

(E) ADMINISTRATION.—

(1) COMMUNITY CARE NETWORK REVIEW.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Before commencing the pilot program, the Secretary shall work with third party administrators to conduct a review of dental providers who are part of the community care network of the Department in each State selected under subsection (b)(1) to ensure—

(i) dental providers who are no longer accepting patients from the Department—

(I) are not still listed as providers accepting referrals from the Department; and

(II) are not sent referrals from the Department; and

(ii) dental providers participating in each such network are capable of receiving an influx of patients from the Department under the pilot program.

(B) EXPANSION OF NETWORK.—If, pursuant to a review under subparagraph (A), the Secretary determines the community care network in a State selected under subsection (b)(1) is not capable of receiving an influx of patients under the pilot program, the Secretary shall coordinate with the Third Party Administrator for such State to ensure the dental provider network of such community care network is sufficiently expanded before the initiation of the pilot program.

(2) NOTICE TO COVERED VETERANS.—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall inform all covered veterans in States selected under subsection (b)(1) of the covered care available under the pilot program.

(3) LOSS OF ELIGIBILITY.—Any veteran participating in the pilot program who ceases to be a covered veteran shall be removed from the pilot program on the date that is 90 days after the Secretary determines the participant is no longer a covered veteran.

(4) CONTINUITY OF CARE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Upon the termination of the pilot program, the Secretary shall provide to all veterans participating in the pilot program at the time of such termination—

(i) information on how to enroll in the dental insurance plan of the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 1712C of title 38, United States Code;

(ii) if appropriate, information on the VETSmile program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or any successor program; and

(iii) contact information for dental providers in the surrounding community who provide low- or no-cost dental care and whom the Secretary has confirmed are available to take on new patients.

(B) CONTINUATION OF TREATMENT PLAN.—Any veteran participating in the pilot program may continue to receive services under the pilot program after the termination of the pilot program to complete a treatment

plan commenced under the pilot program, as determined necessary by the Secretary.

(F) REPORTS.—

(1) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the commencement of the pilot program, and annually thereafter for the duration of the pilot program, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the pilot program that includes—

(A) an identification of the States participating in the pilot program;

(B) a description of the implementation and operation of the pilot program;

(C) the number of participants in the pilot program, disaggregated by—

(i) State; and

(ii) disability rating;

(D) an identification of any barriers or challenges to implementing the pilot program;

(E) aggregated feedback from participants in the pilot program, including from interviews and surveys;

(F) the average annual cost of providing covered care to a participant in the pilot program, disaggregated by—

(i) State;

(ii) disability rating; and

(iii) whether the care was provided through the community care network or through a provider of the Department;

(G) an analysis of the communication and collaboration of the Department with Third Party Administrators and community care dental providers, disaggregated by State;

(H) an analysis of any cost savings by the Department with respect to the treatment of ischemic heart disease;

(I) an assessment of the impact of the pilot program on appointments for care, prescriptions, hospitalizations, emergency room visits, wellness, employability, satisfaction, and perceived quality of life of covered veterans related to their diagnosis of ischemic heart disease;

(J) an analysis and assessment of the efficacy of mobile clinics and portable dental care units, to the extent such modalities are used, to service the needs of covered veterans under the pilot program;

(K) an analysis and assessment of the usage of teledentistry to service the needs of covered veterans under the pilot program, to include a cost benefit analysis of such services; and

(L) such other matters as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days before the completion of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the pilot program that—

(A) includes the matters required under paragraph (1);

(B) includes recommendations on whether the pilot program should be continued, expanded, or adopted throughout the Department; and

(C) indicates whether the Secretary requests action by Congress to make the pilot program permanent.

(g) IMPACT ON COMMUNITY CARE.—Participants in the pilot program shall be able to access covered care in the community under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code.

(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “covered care” means dental care that is consistent with the dental services and treatment furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to veterans pursuant to section 1712(a)(1)(G) of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term “covered veteran” means a veteran who—

(A) is enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment of the Department established and operated under paragraphs (1) or (2) of section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code;

(B) is not eligible for dental services and treatment and related dental appliances under the laws administered by the Secretary as of the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(C) has a diagnosis of ischemic heart disease.

(3) The term “Third Party Administrator” has the meaning given such term in section 1703F of such title.

SEC. 145. DOCUMENTATION OF PREFERENCES OF VETERANS FOR SCHEDULING OF APPOINTMENTS FOR HEALTH CARE UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop a mechanism to solicit information regarding the preference of veterans enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment of the Department of Veterans Affairs established and operated under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, for scheduling of appointments for health care and related services under the laws administered by the Secretary, including through non-Department providers.

(b) DOCUMENTATION OF PREFERENCE.—Preferences provided voluntarily by a veteran pursuant to subsection (a) shall be documented on My HealtheVet or another system designated by the Secretary that allows the veteran to view and change such preferences at any time.

(c) INCLUSION IN PREFERENCE.—Preferences solicited under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) How and when the veteran prefers to be contacted about an appointment for health care.

(2) Whether the veteran prefers to schedule appointments without the assistance of the Department, if able.

(3) Whether the veteran prefers to select a provider without the assistance of the Department, if able.

(4) Whether the veteran prefers appointments to be scheduled during certain days or times.

(d) USE OF PREFERENCE.—The Secretary shall make the preferences provided under subsection (a) easily accessible to medical support assistants and other staff of the Department, or non-Department staff, as the Secretary determines appropriate, who assist in the appointment scheduling process.

(e) DEPLOYMENT OF MECHANISM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning after the date on which the Secretary develops the mechanism required under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(A) test the mechanism in not fewer than three geographically diverse Veterans Integrated Service Networks; and

(B) gather feedback about the effectiveness of such mechanism from veterans, medical support assistants, staff and other stakeholders as the Secretary determines appropriate.

(2) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may not implement such mechanism across the Veterans Health Administration of the Department before the Secretary addresses the feedback described in paragraph (1)(B).

SEC. 146. STAFFING MODEL AND PERFORMANCE METRICS FOR CERTAIN EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) STAFFING MODEL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(A) develop, validate, and implement a staffing model for the Office of Integrated Veteran Care of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or successor office, Veterans Integrated Services Networks, and medical centers of the Department that includes appropriate target staffing levels nationally, regionally, and locally to ensure timely access to care and effectively oversee the provision of care by the Department, whether at a facility of the Department or through a non-Department provider; and

(B) provide to Congress a briefing on such staffing model, which shall include—

(i) the metrics and measures used by the Secretary in developing such staffing model;

(ii) an analysis of how such staffing model compares to the staffing models of other relevant Government-owned and private sector health care systems; and

(iii) an estimate of the portion of the roles in such staffing model that will be filled by contracted staff at any given time.

(2) **REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF STAFFING MODEL.**—Not later than one year after the date on which the Secretary implements the staffing model required under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to Congress and the Comptroller General of the United States a report containing—

(A) an update on such implementation; and

(B) information on the outcomes yielded by such staffing model in terms of improved access to care for veterans and improved compliance with relevant laws, regulations, policy directives, and guidance governing access to care.

(b) **PERFORMANCE METRICS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall develop and implement a plan, with an appropriate tracking system, to incorporate appropriate standardized performance metrics and oversight measures within the performance appraisal systems for employees of the Department specified in paragraph (2).

(2) **EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT SPECIFIED.**—Employees of the Department specified in this paragraph are employees who are responsible for ensuring timely access to care from the Department, compliance with relevant statutes and regulations relating to the provision of care, including section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, and overseeing the provision of care, whether at a facility of the Department or through a non-Department provider, including employees within the Office of Integrated Veteran Care of the Department, or successor office, employees of a Veterans Integrated Service Network, and employees of a medical center of the Department.

(3) **REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF PERFORMANCE METRICS.**—Not later than one year after implementing the performance metrics required under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to Congress and the Comptroller General of the United States a report containing—

(A) an update on such implementation; and

(B) information on the outcomes yielded by such performance metrics in terms of improved access to care for veterans and improved compliance with relevant laws, policy directives, and guidance governing access to care.

(c) **GAO REPORT.**—Not later than two years after the later of the date on which the Comptroller General receives the report under subsection (a)(2) or the report under subsection (b)(3), the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report that includes—

(1) an assessment of the performance of the Office of Integrated Veteran Care of the Department, or successor office, in improving access to care for veterans in facilities of the

Department and pursuant to section 1703 of title 38, United States Code; and

(2) such recommendations as the Comptroller General considers appropriate with respect to improving access to the care described in paragraph (1) for veterans.

SEC. 147. ONLINE HEALTH EDUCATION PORTAL FOR VETERANS ENROLLED IN PATIENT ENROLLMENT SYSTEM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish, on an Internet website of the Department, a health education portal that includes interactive educational modules to ensure veterans enrolled in the patient enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs established and operated under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, understand the basic health care eligibilities and entitlements of veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary, including under the Veterans Community Care Program under section 1703 of such title.

SEC. 148. LIMITATION ON DETAIL OF DIRECTORS OF MEDICAL CENTERS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO DIFFERENT POSITIONS.

(a) **NOTIFICATION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 90 days after detailing a director of a medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs to a different position within the Department, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall notify the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives of such detail.

(2) **MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.**—The notification required by paragraph (1) shall include, with respect to a director of a medical center who is detailed to a different position within the Department, the following information:

(A) The location at which the director is detailed.

(B) The position title of the detail.

(C) The estimated time the director is expected to be absent from their duties at the medical center.

(D) Such other information as the Secretary may determine appropriate.

(b) **APPOINTMENT OF ACTING DIRECTOR.**—Not later than 120 days after detailing a director of a medical center of the Department to a different position within the Department, the Secretary shall appoint an individual as acting director of such medical center with all of the authority and responsibilities of the detailed director.

(c) **UPDATE ON DETAIL.**—Not later than 120 days after detailing a director of a medical center of the Department to a different position within the Department, and not less frequently than every 30 days thereafter while the detail is in effect or while the director position at the medical center is vacant, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives an update regarding the status of the detail.

(d) **RETURN TO POSITION OR REASSIGNMENT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided in paragraph (2), not later than 180 days after detailing a director of a medical center of the Department to a different position within the Department, for a reason other than an ongoing investigation or administrative action with respect to the director, the Secretary shall—

(A) return the individual to the position as director of the medical center; or

(B) reassign the individual from the position as director of the medical center and begin the process of hiring a new director for such position.

(2) **WAIVER.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary may waive the requirement under paragraph (1) with respect to an individual for successive 90-day increments for a total period of not more than 540 days from the original date the individual was detailed away from their position as director of a medical center.

(B) **NOTIFICATION.**—Not later than 30 days after exercising a waiver under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall notify Congress of the waiver and provide to Congress information as to why the waiver is necessary.

SEC. 149. NATIONAL VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION ANNUAL REPORT.

(a) **NATIONAL VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION ANNUAL REPORT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than September 30 of each year thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees and publish on a publicly available website of the Department of Veterans Affairs a report to be known as the "National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report".

(2) **EXTENSION.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—If the Secretary requires an extension of the deadline for a report under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a written request for such an extension.

(B) **ELEMENTS.**—Each written request under paragraph (1) for an extension for a report shall include the following:

(i) The rationale for the delay in the submission of the report.

(ii) An explanation of the need for an extension.

(iii) A proposed amended date for the submission and publication of the report.

(3) **BRIEFING.**—With respect to each report required under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall, before the date on which the Secretary submits such report, provide to the appropriate congressional committees a briefing on such report.

(4) **ELEMENTS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Each report required under paragraph (1) shall include—

(i) the findings of the national analysis of veteran suicide rates for the latest year for which data is available;

(ii) an identification of trends, if any, demonstrated by such data; and

(iii) a comparison of such data to data on veteran suicide rates during preceding years.

(B) **ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS.**—Each report under paragraph (1) shall include, for the year covered by the report, the following:

(i) Suicide rates of veterans disaggregated by age, gender, and race or ethnicity.

(ii) Trends in suicide rates of veterans compared to engagement of those veterans with health care from the Veterans Health Administration, including an examination of trends in suicide rates or deaths among—

(I) veterans who have recently received health care from the Veterans Health Administration as compared to veterans who have never received health care from the Veterans Health Administration;

(II) veterans who are enrolled in the patient enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, as compared to veterans who have never enrolled in such system;

(III) veterans who have recently used services from a Vet Center as compared to veterans who have never used such services;

(IV) to the extent practicable, veterans who have a diagnosis of substance use disorder; and

(V) other groups of veterans relating to engagement with health care from the Veterans Health Administration, as the Secretary considers practicable.

(iii) To the extent practicable, trends in suicide rates of veterans compared to engagement of those veterans with benefits from the Veterans Benefits Administration, including an examination of trends in suicide rates or deaths among—

(I) veterans who are currently using, have previously used, or have never used educational assistance under the laws administered by the Secretary;

(II) veterans who are currently receiving, have previously received, or have never received services or assistance under chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code;

(III) with respect to compensation under chapter 11 of such title—

(aa) veterans who were recipients of such compensation as compared to veterans who never applied for such compensation prior to death;

(bb) veterans who had a claim denied for such compensation prior to death;

(cc) veterans who had a pending claim for such compensation at time of death; and

(dd) veterans who had an entitlement for such compensation reduced prior to death;

(IV) veterans who are currently receiving or have never received pension under chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code;

(V) veterans who are currently using, have recently used, or have never used programs or services provided by the Homeless Programs Office of the Department, including an examination of trends in suicide rates or deaths among veterans who made contact with such office but were denied or deemed ineligible for any such program or service;

(VI) with respect to housing loans guaranteed by the Secretary under chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code, veterans who are current recipients of, were recent recipients of, or have never received such a loan;

(VII) veterans owing debts to the Department;

(VIII) veterans who were involved in a veterans treatment court program, whether they graduated successfully or not; and

(IX) veterans who were successfully contacted, unsuccessfully contacted, or never contacted by the Department through the Solid Start program under section 6320 of title 38, United States Code.

(C) STRATEGY AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—

(i) INITIAL REPORT.—The initial report under paragraph (1) shall include a strategy and recommendations developed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in collaboration with the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for—

(I) improving data collection at the State and local levels to accurately capture suicide deaths of veterans;

(II) improving the timeliness, efficacy, and standardization of data reporting on suicide deaths of veterans at the Federal level, including by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(III) improving the timeliness of identification and analysis of suicide deaths of veterans by Federal agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(IV) any other necessary process improvements for improving the timeliness, efficacy, and standardization of reporting of data relating to suicide deaths of veterans, particularly with respect to the annual report under this section.

(ii) SUBSEQUENT REPORTS.—Each report after the initial report under paragraph (1) shall include updates on actions taken to meet the strategy and recommendations developed under subparagraph (A).

(5) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) The term “appropriate congressional committees” means the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

(B) The term “Vet Center” means a center for readjustment counseling and related mental health services for veterans under section 1712A of title 38, United States Code.

(b) INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION ANNUAL REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into one or more contracts with a private sector entity described in paragraph (5) to conduct an independent assessment of the National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report required under subsection (a).

(2) FREQUENCY.—The private sector entity or entities carrying out the assessment required under paragraph (1) shall complete such assessment not later than 240 days after entering into the contract described in such subsection and not less frequently than every five years thereafter.

(3) ELEMENTS.—Each assessment required under paragraph (1) shall analyze the following:

(A) The methodology used by the Department to track, analyze, categorize, and report suicide deaths and suicide rates among veterans.

(B) Whether data sources used by the Department to compile data on suicide deaths and suicide rates among veterans are accurately reflecting such data.

(C) Vulnerabilities in the methodology used by the Department that could lead to inaccurate counting of suicide deaths and suicide rates among veterans.

(D) The ability of the Department to cross reference suicide deaths and suicide rates among veterans with trends in usage of programs of the Veterans Health Administration or the Veterans Benefits Administration or other programs that could serve as widespread protective factors against suicide.

(E) Improvements that could be made to ensure the National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report required under subsection (a) is accurate and comprehensive and provides insights for making improvements to the suicide prevention efforts of the Department.

(4) REPORT ON ASSESSMENT.—

(A) REPORT ON FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 60 days after completing an assessment required by paragraph (1), the private sector entity or entities carrying out the assessment shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on the findings and recommendations of the private sector entity or entities with respect to such assessment.

(B) REPORT ON PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS.—Not later than 60 days after receiving a report under paragraph (1) with respect to an assessment required by paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on how the Department plans to improve the National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report required under subsection (a) based on such assessment.

(5) PRIVATE SECTOR ENTITY DESCRIBED.—A private sector entity described in this paragraph is a private entity that—

(A) specializes in analyzing large-scale organizational data collection and analysis efforts, especially with respect to the health care sector; and

(B) has experience and proven outcomes in optimizing the accuracy and comprehensive-

ness of data collection and analysis related to suicide.

(c) REPORT ON ADDITIONAL BENEFITS AND SERVICES FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PREVENT VETERAN SUICIDE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than three years 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 the House of Representatives and publish on a publicly available website of the Department of Veterans Affairs a report that analyzes which benefits and services under the laws administered by such Secretary, including such benefits and services furnished by the Veterans Benefits Administration, have the greatest impact on the prevention of suicide among veterans, including recommendations for potential expansion of services and benefits to reduce the number of veteran suicides.

(2) ASSESSMENT OF SOLID START PROGRAM.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include an analysis of the effectiveness of the Solid Start program under section 6320 of title 38, United States Code, on prevention of suicide among veterans.

(d) TOOLKIT FOR STATE AND LOCAL CORONERS AND MEDICAL EXAMINERS ON BEST PRACTICES FOR IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING ON SUICIDE DEATHS OF VETERANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in collaboration with the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shall develop a toolkit for State and local coroners and medical examiners that contains best practices for—

(A) accurately identifying and reporting suicide deaths of veterans, including how to identify veteran status; and

(B) reporting such deaths to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other applicable entities.

(2) AVAILABILITY.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall make the toolkit developed under paragraph (1) available on a publicly available website of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(3) OUTREACH.—The Secretary, in collaboration with the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shall conduct outreach to appropriate State and local agencies to promote the availability and use of the toolkit developed under paragraph (1).

SEC. 150. REPORT ON PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRED BY MEDICAL FACILITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE DENTAL CARE SERVICES.

Not later than one year 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 the House of Representatives a report, for each medical center or other relevant health care facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs, that includes—

(1) an identification of the physical infrastructure, including new facilities, renovations, remodels, leases, or other infrastructure, such medical center or health care facility requires to provide dental care services to veterans eligible for such services under the laws administered by the Secretary; and

(2) an analysis of the physical infrastructure such medical center or health care facility would require if a greater number of veterans became eligible for such dental care services pursuant to a modification of the laws administered by the Secretary.

SEC. 151. COMPROLLER GENERAL REPORT ON CERTAIN ORAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act,

the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on the status of the oral health care programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, that includes an assessment of—

(1) any issues with information technology programs, including Dental Record Manager Plus, that affect dental care staff of the Department;

(2) the implementation of the dental insurance plan of the Department under section 1712C of title 38, United States Code;

(3) the implementation and expansion of the VETSmile program of the Department;

(4) barriers preventing the Department from expanding dental care eligibility to all veterans with ischemic heart disease, including such barriers relating to physical infrastructure, workforce, and cost of such dental care;

(5) barriers preventing dental clinics of the Department, if any, from adopting teledentistry;

(6) the demographic makeup of veterans eligible for dental care paid for by the Department as of the commencement of the pilot program under section 144 of this Act, including information on—

(A) age;

(B) gender;

(C) race or ethnicity, disaggregated by—

(i) membership in an Indian Tribe; and

(ii) the major race groups used in the decennial census;

(D) employment status; and

(E) location of residence, disaggregated by rural, highly rural, and urban locations; and

(7) changes to such demographic makeup if any, that would result from an expansion of eligibility for dental care under the laws administered by the Secretary to all veterans with ischemic heart disease including changes to demographics specified in paragraph (6).

(b) **THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATOR DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “Third Party Administrator” means an entity that manages a provider network and performs administrative services related to such network under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 152. REVIEW OF WORKFLOWS ASSOCIATED WITH PROCESSING REFERRALS BETWEEN FACILITIES OF THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a review of the workflows directly associated with processing referrals of patients between facilities of the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs to identify specific delays or bottlenecks in such referrals.

(b) **ELEMENTS OF REVIEW.**—The review required under subsection (a) shall include a review of—

(1) the interfacility consult management guidance of the Veterans Health Administration that assists facilities described in subsection (a) in constructing a workflow for consults between such facilities; and

(2) the roles and responsibilities of the individuals involved in the consult management process in managing such consults, including the role of the referral coordination team.

(c) **REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the results of the review required under subsection (a).

SEC. 153. PLAN FOR TIMELY SCHEDULING OF APPOINTMENTS AT MEDICAL FACILITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **PLAN REQUIRED.**—To improve responsiveness in the provision of hospital care and

medical services at medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop a plan to—

(1) ensure that whenever a covered veteran contacts the Department by telephone to request the scheduling of an appointment for care or services for the covered veteran at such a facility, the scheduling for the appointment occurs during that telephone call (regardless of the prospective date of the appointment being scheduled); and

(2) provide timely and, where applicable, same-day scheduling for an appointment described in paragraph (1).

(b) **REPORT.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the plan under subsection (a).

(c) **COVERED VETERAN DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “covered veteran” means a veteran who is enrolled in the system of patient enrollment of the Department under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 154. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS TO SUPPORT INITIATIVES FOR MOBILE MAMMOGRAPHY SERVICES FOR VETERANS.

There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 2025 for the Office of Women's Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 7310 of title 38, United States Code, to be used by the Secretary to expand access of women veterans to—

(1) mobile mammography initiatives;

(2) advanced mammography equipment; and

(3) outreach activities to publicize those initiatives and equipment.

TITLE II—ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY MATTERS

Subtitle A—Educational Assistance

SEC. 201. TEMPORARY EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR MARINE GUNNERY SERGEANT JOHN DAVID FRY SCHOLARSHIP.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall treat an individual described in subsection (b) as a covered individual described in section 3311(b) of title 38, United States Code.

(b) **COVERED INDIVIDUAL DESCRIBED.**—An individual described in this subsection is an individual who is the child or spouse of a person—

(1) who dies from a service-connected disability during the 120-day period immediately following the day on which the person was discharged or released from duty as a member of the Armed Forces (without regard to whether such duty was active duty); and

(2)(A) who received an honorable discharge; or

(B) whose service in the Armed Forces is characterized by the Secretary concerned as honorable service.

(c) **APPLICABILITY.**—This section shall apply with respect to—

(1) deaths that occur before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(2) a quarter, semester, or term, as applicable, commencing—

(A) on or after August 1, 2025; and

(B) before October 1, 2027.

SEC. 202. REMOVAL OF EXPIRATION ON ENTITLEMENT TO MARINE GUNNERY SERGEANT JOHN DAVID FRY SCHOLARSHIP FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES.

Section 3311(f) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (2);

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (3) through (5) as paragraphs (2) through (4), respectively;

(3) in paragraph (2), as redesignated by paragraph (2) of this section, by striking “in paragraph (4)” and inserting “in paragraph (3)”; and

(4) in paragraph (3)(A), as redesignated by paragraph (2) of this section, by striking “under paragraph (3)” and inserting “under paragraph (2)”.

SEC. 203. SOLE LIABILITY FOR TRANSFERRED EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BY AN INDIVIDUAL WHO FAILS TO COMPLETE A SERVICE AGREEMENT.

Subsection (i) of section 3319 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking “In the event” and inserting “Subject to paragraph (2), in the event”; and

(B) by inserting “of this title” after “section 3685”;

(2) in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (2)—

(A) in the heading, by striking “IN GENERAL” and inserting “SOLE LIABILITY”; and

(B) by striking “under paragraph (1)” and inserting “for which the individual shall be solely liable to the United States for the amount of the overpayment for purposes of section 3685 of this title”; and

(3) in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (2)—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking “Subparagraph (A) shall not apply” and inserting “Neither the individual nor the dependent shall be liable to the United States for the amount of the overpayment for purposes of section 3685 of this title”; and

(B) in clause (ii), by inserting “of this title” after “section 3311(c)(4)”.

SEC. 204. NOTICE TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF RISK-BASED SURVEYS.

Section 3673A(d) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “one business day” and inserting “two business days”.

SEC. 205. RELATIONSHIP OF PARTICIPATION BY AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION IN CERTAIN FEDERAL STUDENT FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS TO APPROVAL OF SUCH INSTITUTION FOR PURPOSES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

Paragraph (4) of section 3675(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(4) The educational institution—

“(A) is approved and participates in a program under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.); or

“(B) does not participate in such a program and the Secretary has waived the requirement under this paragraph with respect to the educational institution, and submits to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives notice of such waiver, because the Secretary determines that the educational institution—

“(i) elects not to participate in such a program;

“(ii) cannot participate in such a program; or

“(iii) is in the process of making a good-faith effort to submit an initial application for approval to participate in such a program, except that a waiver under this clause may not be provided for a period of longer than 36 months.”.

SEC. 206. EXPANSION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OVERSIGHT OF CERTAIN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

(a) **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR APPROVAL.**—Section 3675(b) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 205, is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(5) The educational institution agrees to, not later than 30 days after any date on which such educational institution becomes subject to an action or event described in

section 3673(e)(3) of this title, submit to the State approving agency, or the Secretary when acting in the role of a State approving agency, a notification of such action or event in such form and containing such information as the Secretary determines appropriate.”.

(b) **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR APPROVAL OF NONACCREDITED COURSES.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 3676(c) of such title is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (14) through (16) as paragraphs (15) through (17), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (13) the following new paragraph:

“(14) The institution agrees to, not later than 30 days after any date on which such institution becomes subject to an action or event described in section 3673(e)(3) of this title, submit to the State approving agency, or the Secretary when acting in the role of a State approving agency, a notification of such action or event in such form and containing such information as the Secretary determines appropriate.”.

(2) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—Such title is further amended—

(A) in section 3672(b)(2)(C), by striking “paragraph (14) or (15)” and inserting “paragraph (15) or (16)”;

(B) in section 3675(b)(3), by striking “(14), (15), and (16)” and inserting “(15), (16), and (17)”;

(C) in section 3679(d), by striking “described in paragraph (14) or (15)” and inserting “described in paragraph (15) or (16)”;

(D) in section 3680A(a)(4)(C)(iii), by striking “section 3676(c)(14) and (15)” and inserting “section 3676(c)(15) and (16)”.

(c) **ADDITIONAL GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION OF APPROVAL.**—Section 3679(f)(1) of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(I) Comply with the notification requirements under sections 3675(b)(5) and 3676(c)(14) of this title, when applicable.”.

(d) **DEADLINE FOR RISK-BASED SURVEYS DATABASE.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish the database required under section 3673A(c) of title 38, United States Code, by not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 207. REQUIREMENT THAT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS APPROVED FOR PURPOSES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS PROVIDE DIGITAL OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS.

(a) **REQUIREMENT.**—Section 3675(b) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by sections 205 and 206, is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(6) The educational institution makes available to each eligible person or veteran a copy of the person or veteran’s official transcript in a digital format.”.

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—

(1) **APPROVAL OF COURSES.**—Section 3672(b)(2)(A) of such title is amended by striking “(b)(1) and (b)(2)” and inserting “paragraphs (1), (2), and (6) of section 3675(b)”.

(2) **APPROVAL OF NONACCREDITED COURSES.**—Section 3676(c) of such title is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (17) as paragraph (18); and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (16) the following new paragraph (17):

“(17) In the case of a course that leads to a standard college degree, the educational institution satisfies the requirements of section 3675(b)(6) of this title.”.

(3) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—Section 3675(b)(3) of such title is amended by striking “(15), (16), and (17)” and inserting “(15), (16), and (18)”.

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on Au-

gust 1, 2025, and apply with respect to a quarter, semester, or term, as applicable, commencing on or after such date.

SEC. 208. PAYMENT OF FULL MONTHLY HOUSING STIPEND FOR VETERANS ENROLLED IN FINAL SEMESTER USING EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE UNDER POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) **HOUSING ALLOWANCE.**—Section 3680(a)(3) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively and by redesignating each subordinate provision and the margins thereof accordingly;

(2) by striking “Notwithstanding paragraph (1)” and inserting “(A) Notwithstanding paragraph (1)”;

(3) by striking “, including a monthly housing stipend described in section 3313(c) of this title.”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph (B):

“(B) For purposes of providing a monthly housing stipend described in section 3313(c) to an eligible veteran or eligible person for whom the Secretary is providing educational assistance under chapter 33 of this title during a period that is the last semester, term, or academic period pursuant to subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall treat the veteran or person as pursuing a program of education on a full-time basis.”.

(b) **APPLICATION.**—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and apply with respect to a quarter, semester, or term, as applicable, commencing on or after January 1, 2025.

SEC. 209. 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.**—Subsection (a)(4) of section 2 of the Veteran Improvement Commercial Driver License Act of 2023 (Public Law 118-95) is amended, in the matter to be inserted as the new paragraph (2) of section 3680A(e) of title 38, United States Code—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking “the commercial driver education program offered at the branch by the educational institution—” and inserting and em dash; and

(B) by striking clauses (i) and (ii) and inserting the following:

“(i) the commercial driver education program offered at the branch by the educational institution 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); and

“(ii)(I) such branch is located in a State in which such educational institution offers such commercial driver education program at another branch of such educational institution; or

“(II) such branch—

“(aa) has been operating for at least one year; and

“(bb) offers such commercial driver education program, using the same curriculum as another branch of such educational institution.”; and

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

“(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 subparagraph (A). Such notification shall identify the educational institution, and the branch thereof, granted such exemption.”.

(b) **IMPLEMENTATION.**—Section 2(b) of such Act is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking “180 days” and inserting “365 days”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(3) **REGULATIONS.**—In prescribing any regulation to carry out the amendments made by subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consult with State approving agencies designated under section 3671 of such title.

“(4) **GAO STUDY.**—Not later than 365 days after the applicability date under paragraph (2), the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

“(A) conduct a study to—

“(i) determine the effects of the amendments made by subsection (a); and

“(ii) the feasibility and advisability of similarly amending the rules for approval of programs of education for other vocational programs of education; and

“(B) submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the findings of the Comptroller General with respect to such study.”.

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in such Act on the date of the enactment of such Act.

SEC. 210. PROVISION OF CERTIFICATES OF ELIGIBILITY AND AWARD LETTERS USING ELECTRONIC MEANS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 3698 the following new section (and conforming the table of sections at the beginning of such chapter accordingly):

“**§3698A. Provision of certificates of eligibility and award letters using electronic means**

“(a) **REQUIREMENT.**—Except as provided by subsection (b), the Secretary shall provide to an individual the following documents using electronic means:

“(1) A certificate of eligibility for the entitlement of the individual to covered educational assistance.

“(2) An award letter regarding the authorization of the individual to receive covered educational assistance.

“(b) **ELECTION TO OPT OUT.**—An individual may elect to receive the documents specified in subsection (a) by mail rather than through electronic means under subsection (a). An individual may revoke such an election at any time, by means prescribed by the Secretary.

“(c) **COVERED EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.**—In this section, the term ‘covered educational assistance’ means educational assistance under chapter 30, 33, or 35 of this title, or section 3699C of this title.”.

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3698 the following new item:

“3698A. Provision of certificates of eligibility and award letters using electronic means.”.

SEC. 211. RETROACTIVE EFFECTIVE DATE OF LAW REGARDING CHARGE TO ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO DO NOT TRANSFER CREDITS FROM CERTAIN CLOSED OR DISAPPROVED PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION.

Section 3699(c)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking subparagraph (C) and inserting the following new subparagraph (C):

“(C) This paragraph, including clauses (ii) and (iii) of subparagraph (A), shall apply with respect to the closure or discontinuation of a course or program of education, as described in subsection (b)(1), that occurs during the period beginning on August 1, 2021, and ending on September 30, 2025.”.

SEC. 212. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HIGH TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM.**(a) HIGH TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM.—**

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 210, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 3699C. High technology program

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—(1) The Secretary shall carry out a program under which the Secretary provides covered individuals with the opportunity to enroll in high technology programs of education that the Secretary determines provide training or skills sought by employers in a relevant field or industry.

“(2) Not more than 4,000 covered individuals may participate in the program under this section in any fiscal year.

“(b) AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE.—(1) The Secretary shall provide, to each covered individual who pursues a high technology program of education under this section, educational assistance in amounts equal to the amounts provided under section 3313(c)(1) of this title, including, except as provided in paragraph (3), with respect to the housing stipend described in that section and in accordance with the treatment of programs that are distance learning and programs that are less than half-time.

“(2) Under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall provide such amounts of educational assistance to a covered individual for each of the following:

“(A) A high technology program of education.

“(B) A second such program if—

“(i) the second such program begins at least 18 months after the covered individual graduates from the first such program; and

“(ii) the covered individual uses educational assistance under chapter 33 of this title to pursue the second such program.

“(3) No covered individual may receive a housing stipend under this subsection for any month if such individual is in receipt of a housing stipend under chapter 33 of this title for that month.

“(c) CONTRACTS.—(1) For purposes of carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall seek to enter into contracts with any number of qualified providers of high technology programs of education for the provision of such programs to covered individuals. Each such contract shall provide for the conditions under which the Secretary may terminate the contract with the provider and the procedures for providing for the graduation of students who were enrolled in a program provided by such provider in the case of such a termination.

“(2) A contract under this subsection shall provide that the Secretary shall pay to a provider—

“(A) upon the enrollment of a covered individual in the program, 25 percent of the cost of the tuition and other fees for the program of education for the individual;

“(B) upon graduation of the individual from the program, 25 percent of such cost; and

“(C) 50 percent of such cost upon—

“(i) the successful employment of the covered individual for a period—

“(I) of 180 days in the field of study of the program; and

“(II) that begins not later than 180 days following graduation of the covered individual from the program;

“(ii) the employment of the individual by the provider for a period of one year; or

“(iii) the enrollment of the individual in a program of education to continue education in such field of study.

“(3) For purposes of this section, a provider of a high technology program of education is qualified if—

“(A) the provider employs instructors whom the Secretary determines are experts in their respective fields in accordance with paragraph (5);

“(B) the provider has successfully provided the high technology program for at least one year;

“(C) the provider does not charge tuition and fees to a covered individual who receives assistance under this section to pursue such program that are higher than the tuition and fees charged by such provider to another individual; and

“(D) the provider meets the approval criteria developed by the Secretary under paragraph (4).

“(4)(A) The Secretary shall prescribe criteria for approving providers of a high technology program of education under this section.

“(B) In developing such criteria, the Secretary may consult with State approving agencies.

“(C) Such criteria are not required to meet the requirements of section 3672 of this title.

“(D) Such criteria shall include the job placement rate, in the field of study of a program of education, of covered individuals who complete such program of education.

“(5) The Secretary shall determine whether instructors are experts under paragraph (3)(A) based on evidence furnished to the Secretary by the provider regarding the ability of the instructors to—

“(A) identify professions in need of new employees to hire, tailor the programs to meet market needs, and identify the employers likely to hire graduates;

“(B) effectively teach the skills offered to covered individuals;

“(C) provide relevant industry experience in the fields of programs offered to incoming covered individuals; and

“(D) demonstrate relevant industry experience in such fields of programs.

“(6) In entering into contracts under this subsection, the Secretary shall give preference to a provider of a high technology program of education—

“(A) from which at least 70 percent of graduates find full-time employment in the field of study of the program during the 180-day period beginning on the date the student graduates from the program; or

“(B) that offers tuition reimbursement for any student who graduates from such a program and does not find employment described in subparagraph (A).

“(d) EFFECT ON OTHER ENTITLEMENT.—(1) If a covered individual enrolled in a high technology program of education under this section has remaining entitlement to educational assistance under chapter 30, 32, 33, 34, or 35 of this title, such entitlement shall be charged at the rate of one month of such entitlement for each month of educational assistance provided under this section.

“(2) If a covered individual enrolled in a high technology program of education under this section does not have remaining entitlement to educational assistance under chapter 30, 32, 33, 34, or 35 of this title, any educational assistance provided to such individual under this section shall be provided in addition to the entitlement that the individual has used.

“(3) The Secretary may not consider enrollment in a high technology program of education under this section to be assistance under a provision of law referred to in section 3695 of this title.

“(4)(A) An application for enrollment in a high technology program of education under this section shall include notice of the requirements relating to use of entitlement under paragraphs (1) and (2), including—

“(i) in the case of the enrollment of an individual referred to under paragraph (1), the

amount of entitlement that is typically charged for such enrollment;

“(ii) an identification of any methods that may be available for minimizing the amount of entitlement required for such enrollment; and

“(iii) an element requiring applicants to acknowledge receipt of the notice under this subparagraph.

“(B) If the Secretary approves the enrollment of a covered individual in a high technology program of education under this section, the Secretary shall deliver electronically to the individual an award letter that provides notice of such approval and includes specific information describing how paragraphs (1) and (2) will be applied to the individual if the individual chooses to enroll in the program.

“(e) REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.—(1) The Secretary shall not approve the enrollment of any covered individual, not already enrolled, in any high technology programs of education under this section for any period during which the Secretary finds that more than 85 percent of the students enrolled in the program are having all or part of their tuition, fees, or other charges paid to or for them by the educational institution or by the Department of Veterans Affairs under this title or under chapter 1606 or 1607 of title 10, except with respect to tuition, fees, or other charges that are paid under a payment plan at an educational institution that the Secretary determines has a history of offering payment plans that are completed not later than 180 days after the end of the applicable term, quarter, or semester.

“(2) The Secretary may waive a requirement of paragraph (1) if the Secretary determines, pursuant to regulations which the Secretary shall prescribe, such waiver to be in the interest of the covered individual and the Federal Government. Not later than 30 days after the Secretary waives such a requirement, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report regarding such waiver.

“(3)(A)(i) The Secretary shall establish and maintain a process by which an educational institution may request a review of a determination that the educational institution does not meet the requirements of paragraph (1).

“(ii) The Secretary may consult with a State approving agency regarding such process or such a review.

“(iii) Not later than 180 days after the Secretary establishes or revises a process under this subparagraph, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report regarding such process.

“(B) An educational institution that requests a review under subparagraph (A)—

“(i) shall request the review not later than 30 days after the start of the term, quarter, or semester for which the determination described in subparagraph (A) applies; and

“(ii) may include any information that the educational institution believes the Department should have taken into account when making the determination, including with respect to any mitigating circumstances.

“(f) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this section, and annually thereafter until the termination date specified in subsection (i), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the operation of program under this section during the year covered by the report. Each such report shall include each of the following:

“(1) The number of covered individuals enrolled in the program, disaggregated by type

of educational institution, during the year covered by the report.

“(2) The number of covered individuals who completed a high technology program of education under the program during the year covered by the report.

“(3) The average employment rate of covered individuals who completed such a program of education during such year, as of 180 days after the date of completion.

“(4) The average length of time between the completion of such a program of education and employment.

“(5) The total number of covered individuals who completed a program of education under the program and who, as of the date of the submission of the report, are employed in a position related to technology.

“(6) The average salary of a covered individual who completed a program of education under the program and who is employed in a position related to technology, in various geographic areas determined by the Secretary.

“(7) The average salary of all individuals employed in positions related to technology in the geographic areas determined under subparagraph (F), and the difference, if any, between such average salary and the average salary of a covered individual who completed a program of education under the program and who is employed in a position related to technology.

“(8) The number of covered individuals who completed a program of education under the program and who subsequently enrolled in a second program of education under the program.

“(g) COLLECTION OF INFORMATION; CONSULTATION.—(1) The Secretary shall develop practices to use to collect information about covered individuals and providers of high technology programs of education.

“(2) For the purpose of carrying out program under this section, the Secretary may consult with providers of high technology programs of education and may establish an advisory group made up of representatives of such providers, private employers in the technology field, and other relevant groups or entities, as the Secretary determines necessary.

“(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘covered individual’ means any of the following:

“(A) A veteran whom the Secretary determines—

“(i) served an aggregate of at least 36 months on active duty in the Armed Forces (including service on active duty in entry level and skill training) and was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable; and

“(ii) has not attained the age of 62.

“(B) A member of the Armed Forces that the Secretary determines will become a veteran described in subparagraph (A) fewer than 180 days after the date of such determination.

“(2) The term ‘high technology program of education’ means a program of education—

“(A) offered by a public or private educational institution;

“(B) if offered by an institution of higher learning, that is provided directly by such institution rather than by an entity other than such institution under a contract or other agreement;

“(C) that does not lead to a degree;

“(D) that has a term of not less than six and not more than 28 weeks; and

“(E) that provides instruction in computer programming, computer software, media application, data processing, or information sciences.

“(i) TERMINATION.—The Secretary may not provide educational assistance under this section for a high technology program of

education that begins after September 30, 2027.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3699B the following new item:

“3699C. High technology program.”.

(b) EFFECT ON HIGH TECHNOLOGY PILOT PROGRAM.—Section 116 of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–48; 38 U.S.C. 3001 note) is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

“(d) HOUSING STIPEND.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall pay to each eligible veteran (not including an individual described in the second sentence of subsection (b)) who is enrolled in a high technology program of education under the pilot program on a full-time or part-time basis a monthly housing stipend equal to the product—

“(A) of—

“(i) in the case of a veteran pursuing resident training, the monthly amount of the basic allowance for housing payable under section 403 of title 37, United States Code, for a member with dependents in pay grade E–5 residing in the military housing area that encompasses all or the majority portion of the ZIP code area in which is located the campus of the institution where the individual physically participates in a majority of classes; or

“(ii) in the case of a veteran pursuing a program of education through distance learning, a monthly amount equal to 50 percent of the national average of the monthly amount of the basic allowance for housing payable under section 403 of title 37, United States Code, for a member with dependents in pay grade E–5, multiplied by

“(B) the lesser of—

“(i) 1.0; or

“(ii) the number of course hours borne by the individual in pursuit of the program of education involved, divided by the minimum number of course hours required for full-time pursuit of such program of education, rounded to the nearest multiple of 10.

“(2) BAR TO DUAL ELIGIBILITY.—No covered individual may receive a housing stipend under this subsection for any month if such individual is in receipt of a housing stipend under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, for that month.”.

(2) in subsection (g), by striking paragraph (6); and

(3) by striking subsection (h) and inserting the following new subsection (h):

“(h) TERMINATION.—The Secretary may not, under this section, pay a provider for a high technology program of education that begins after September 30, 2024.”.

(c) APPROVAL OF CERTAIN HIGH TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS.—Section 3680A of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking paragraph (4) and inserting the following:

“(4) Any independent study program except—

“(A) an independent study program (including such a program taken over open circuit television) that—

“(i) is accredited by an accrediting agency or association recognized by the Secretary of Education under subpart 2 of part H of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b);

“(ii) leads to—

“(I) a standard college degree;

“(II) a certificate that reflects educational attainment offered by an institution of higher learning; or

“(III) a certificate that reflects graduation from a course of study offered by—

“(aa) an area career and technical education school (as defined in subparagraphs (C) and (D) of section 3(3) of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302(3))) that provides education at the postsecondary level; or

“(bb) a postsecondary vocational institution (as defined in section 102(c) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(c))) that provides education at the postsecondary level; and

“(iii) in the case of a program described in clause (ii)(III)—

“(I) provides training aligned with the requirements of employers in the State or local area where the program is located, which may include in-demand industry sectors or occupations;

“(II) provides a student, upon graduation from the program, with a recognized postsecondary credential that is recognized by employers in the relevant industry, which may include a credential recognized by industry or sector partnerships in the State or local area where the industry is located; and

“(III) meets such content and instructional standards as may be required to comply with the criteria under section 3676(c)(14) and (15) of this title; or

“(B) an online high technology program of education (as defined in subsection (h)(2) of section 3699C of this title)—

“(i) the provider of which has entered into a contract with the Secretary under subsection (c) of such section;

“(ii) that has been provided to covered individuals (as defined in subsection (h)(1) of such section) under such contract for a period of at least five years;

“(iii) regarding which the Secretary has determined that the average employment rate of covered individuals who graduated from such program of education is 65 percent or higher for the year preceding such determination; and

“(iv) that satisfies the requirements of subsection (e) of such section.”; and

(2) in subsection (d), by adding at the end the following:

“(8) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to the enrollment of a veteran in an online high technology program described in subsection (a)(4)(B).”.

SEC. 213. NOTICE OF CHANGES TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICIES AND GUIDANCE AFFECTING THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by sections 210 and 212, is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 3699D. Notice of changes to policies and guidance relating to educational assistance programs

“In the case of any change to any policy or guidance provided by the Secretary that relates to any educational assistance program of the Department, the Secretary may not implement the change before the date that is 90 days after the date on which the Secretary makes available to students, educational institutions, and the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives notice of, and justification for, the change.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3699B the following new item:

“3699D. Notice of changes to policies and guidance relating to educational assistance programs.”.

SEC. 214. PAYMENT OF VA EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE VIA ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSFER TO A FOREIGN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall update the payment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs to allow for electronic fund transfer of educational assistance, administered by the Secretary, to a foreign institution of higher education that—

(1) provides an approved course of education to an eligible recipient of such assistance; and

(2) does not have—

- (A) an employer identification number; or
- (B) an account with a domestic bank.

SEC. 215. IMPROVING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR PURPOSES OF VETERANS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) REQUIREMENT RELATING TO G.I. BILL COMPARISON TOOL.—

(1) REQUIREMENT TO MAINTAIN TOOL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall maintain the G.I. Bill Comparison Tool that was established pursuant to Executive Order 13607 (77 Fed. Reg. 25861; relating to establishing principles of excellence for educational institutions serving service members, veterans, spouses, and other family members) and in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act, or a successor tool, to provide relevant and timely information about programs of education approved under chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, and the educational institutions that offer such programs.

(2) DATA RETENTION.—The Secretary shall ensure that historical data that is reported via the tool maintained under paragraph (1) remains easily and prominently accessible on the benefits.va.gov website, or a successor website, for a period of not less than six years from the date of initial publication.

(b) PROVIDING TIMELY AND RELEVANT EDUCATION INFORMATION TO VETERANS, MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES, AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall make such changes to the tool maintained under subsection (a) as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines appropriate to ensure that such tool is an effective and efficient method for providing information pursuant to section 3698(b)(5) of title 38, United States Code.

(2) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING REQUIRED.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall seek to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Secretary of Education and the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines appropriate, to obtain information on outcomes with respect to individuals who are entitled to educational assistance under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and who are attending educational institutions. Such memorandum of understanding may include data sharing or computer matching agreements.

(3) MODIFICATION OF SCOPE OF COMPREHENSIVE POLICY ON PROVIDING EDUCATION INFORMATION.—Section 3698 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking “veterans and members of the Armed Forces” and inserting “individuals entitled to educational assistance under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs”; and

(B) in subsection (b)(5)—

(i) by striking “veterans and members of the Armed Forces” and inserting “individuals described in subsection (a)”; and

(ii) by striking “the veteran or member” and inserting “the individual”.

(4) G.I. BILL COMPARISON TOOL REQUIRED DISCLOSURES.—Paragraph (1) of subsection (c) of such section is amended—

(A) by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following:

“(B) for each individual described in subsection (a) seeking information provided under subsection (b)(5), the name of each Federal student aid program, and a description of each such program, from which the individual may receive educational assistance; and”;

(B) in subparagraph (C)—

(i) in clause (i), by inserting “and a definition of each type of institution” before the semicolon;

(ii) in clause (iv), by inserting “and if so, which programs” before the semicolon;

(iii) by striking clause (v) and inserting the following:

“(v) the average annual cost and the total cost to earn an associate’s degree and a bachelor’s degree, with available cost information on any other degree or credential the institution awards;”;

(iv) in clause (vi), by inserting before the semicolon the following: “disaggregated by—

“(I) the type of beneficiary of educational assistance;

“(II) individuals who received a credential and individuals who did not; and

“(III) individuals using educational assistance under laws administered by the Secretary and individuals who are not;”;

(v) in clause (xiv), by striking “and” at the end;

(vi) in clause (xv), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(vii) by adding at the end the following new clauses:

“(xvi) the number of veterans or members who completed covered education at the institution leading to—

“(I) a degree, disaggregated by type of program, including—

“(aa) an associate degree;

“(bb) a bachelor’s degree; and

“(cc) a postbaccalaureate degree; and

“(II) a certificate or professional license, disaggregated by type of certificate or professional license;

“(xvii) programs available and the average time for completion of each program;

“(xviii) employment rate and median income of graduates of the institution in general two and five years after graduation, disaggregated by—

“(I) specific program; and

“(II) individuals using educational assistance under laws administered by the Secretary and individuals who are not; and

“(xix) the number of individuals using educational assistance under laws administered by the Secretary who are enrolled in the both the institution and specific program per year.”.

(5) CLARITY AND ANONYMITY OF INFORMATION PROVIDED.—Paragraph (2) of such subsection is amended—

(A) by inserting “(A)” before “To the extent”; and

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

“(B) The Secretary shall ensure that information provided pursuant to subsection (b)(5) is provided in a manner that is easy for, and accessible to, individuals described in subsection (a).

“(C) In providing information pursuant to subsection (b)(5), the Secretary shall maintain the anonymity of individuals described in subsection (a) and, to the extent that a

portion of any data would undermine such anonymity, ensure that such data is not made available pursuant to such subsection.”.

(c) IMPROVEMENTS FOR STUDENT FEEDBACK.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (b)(2) of such section is amended—

(A) by amending subparagraph (A) to read as follows:

“(A) provides institutions of higher learning—

“(i) up to 30 days to review and respond to feedback from individuals described in subsection (a) and address issues regarding the feedback before the feedback is published; and

“(ii) if an institution of higher learning contests the accuracy of the feedback, the opportunity to challenge the inclusion of such data with an official appointed by the Secretary;”;

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking “and” at the end;

(C) in subparagraph (C), by striking “that conforms with criteria for relevancy that the Secretary shall determine.” and inserting “, and responses from institutions of higher learning to such feedback, that conform with criteria for relevancy that the Secretary shall determine;”;

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

“(D) for each institution of higher learning that is approved under this chapter, retains, maintains, and publishes all of such feedback for not less than six years; and

“(E) is easily accessible to individuals described in subsection (a) and to the general public.”.

(2) ACCESSIBILITY FROM G.I. BILL COMPARISON TOOL.—The Secretary shall ensure that—

(A) the feedback tracked and published under subsection (b)(2) of such section, as amended by paragraph (1), is prominently displayed in the tool maintained under subsection (a) of this section; and

(B) when such tool displays information for an institution of higher learning, the applicable feedback is also displayed for such institution of higher learning.

(d) TRAINING FOR PROVISION OF EDUCATION COUNSELING SERVICES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not less than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall ensure that personnel employed by the Department of Veteran Affairs, or a contractor of the Department, to provide education benefits counseling, vocational or transition assistance, or similar functions, including employees or contractors of the Department who provide such counseling or assistance as part of the Transition Assistance Program, are trained on how—

(A) to use properly the tool maintained under subsection (a); and

(B) to provide appropriate educational counseling services to individuals described in section 3698(a) of such title, as amended by subsection (b)(3)(A).

(2) TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “Transition Assistance Program” means the program of counseling, information, and services under section 1142 of title 10, United States Code.

Subtitle B—Employment and Training

SEC. 221. IMPROVEMENTS TO REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) USERRA PURPOSES.—Section 4301(a)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “encourage noncareer service in the uniformed services” and inserting “encourage service in the uniformed services”.

(b) PROHIBITION OF RETALIATION.—Subsection (b) of section 4311 of title 38, United

States Code, is amended by inserting “or other retaliatory action” after “employment action”.

(c) EXPANSION OF INJUNCTIVE RELIEF.—Subsection (e) of section 4323 of such title is amended—

(1) by striking “The court shall use” and inserting “(1) The court shall use”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(2) A person bringing an action to enforce a provision of this chapter pursuant to subsection (a) shall be entitled to an injunction under paragraph (1) if such person demonstrates—

“(A) a violation—

“(i) of the provisions of this chapter; or

“(ii) of the provisions of this chapter is threatened or is imminent;

“(B) the harm to the person outweighs the injury to the employer;

“(C) a likelihood of success on the merits of such action; and

“(D) awarding such relief is in the public interest.

“(3) The court may not deny a motion for injunctive relief on the basis that a party bringing an action to enforce a provision of this chapter may be awarded wages unearned due to an unlawful termination or denial of employment at the conclusion of such action.”.

(d) DAMAGES AGAINST A STATE OR PRIVATE EMPLOYER.—Section 4323 of such title is further amended, in paragraph (1) of subsection (d), by striking subparagraph (C) and inserting the following new subparagraphs:

“(C) The court may require the employer to pay the person the amount referred to in subparagraph (B) and interest on such amount, calculated at a rate of 3 percent per year.

“(D) The court may require the employer to pay the person the greater of \$50,000 or the amount equal to the amounts referred to in subparagraphs (B) and (C) as liquidated damages, if the court determines that the employer knowingly failed to comply with the provisions of this chapter.”.

(e) MANDATORY ATTORNEY FEES AWARD IN SUCCESSFUL ACTIONS FOR REEMPLOYMENT.—

(1) MSPB ACTIONS.—Paragraph (4) of subsection (c) of section 4324 of such title is amended—

(A) by striking “may, in its discretion,” and inserting “shall”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new sentence: “The Board may, in its discretion, award reasonable attorney fees in a case settled before the issuance of an order if the person can demonstrate that significant attorney fees were incurred and that justice requires such an award.”.

(2) FEDERAL CIRCUIT ACTIONS.—Subsection (d) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) In such Federal Circuit proceeding, the court shall award such person reasonable attorney fees, expert witness fees, and other litigation expenses if such person—

“(A) prevails in such Federal Circuit proceeding; and

“(B) is not represented by the Special Counsel in such Federal Circuit proceeding.”.

(3) ACTIONS AGAINST A STATE OR PRIVATE EMPLOYER.—Paragraph (2) of section 4323(h) of such title is amended—

(A) by striking “subsection (a)(2)” and inserting “subsection (a)(3)”; and

(B) by striking “the court may award any such person who prevails in such action or proceeding reasonable attorney fees” and inserting “the court shall award any such person who prevails in such action or proceeding reasonable attorney fees”.

(f) GAO REVIEW AND REPORT ON USERRA.—

(1) REVIEW.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall review the methods

through which the Secretary of Labor, acting through the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, processes actions for relief under chapter 43 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report that includes—

(A) the findings of the review required under paragraph (1);

(B) an identification of the number of actions for relief under chapter 43 of title 38, United States Code, initiated during the period covered by the report, disaggregated by size of employer and geographic region;

(C) an identification of the number of such actions for relief that were erroneously dismissed, as determined by the Comptroller General;

(D) an identification of the number of such actions for relief that were referred to the Department of Justice; and

(E) an assessment of trends, if any, in such actions for relief initiated during such period.

(g) GAO REVIEW OF PROTECTIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES BY FEDERAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the processes and procedures adopted and used by the intelligence community to provide the protections for members of the uniformed services otherwise established under chapter 43 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) The term “appropriate congressional committees” means the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and Senate, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate.

(B) The term “intelligence community” has the meaning given such term in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4)).

SEC. 222. REVIEW OF INVESTIGATIONS MANUAL OF VETERANS’ EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and once every two years thereafter for the period of five years beginning on such date, the Secretary of Labor, shall review the manual of the Department of Labor titled “Veterans’ Employment and Training Service Investigations Manual: USERRA, VEOA, and VP” (or a successor manual) and make such revisions to such manual as the Secretary determines appropriate.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after any date on which the Secretary completes a review required under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate—

(1) a report that includes a description of any revision to such manual made pursuant to such review; and

(2) a copy of the entire such manual which—

(A) shall be provided to the Chairman and Ranking Member of each such committee; and

(B) may contain a separate addendum for portions of the manual that contain law enforcement sensitive materials.

SEC. 223. WARRIOR TRAINING ADVANCEMENT COURSE.

(a) REPORTS REQUIRED.—

(1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than six months 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 WARTAC.

(2) ANNUAL REPORT.—One year after the submission of the report required under paragraph (1) and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to such Committees a report that contains the elements under paragraphs (1) and (3) of subsection (b) with regards to the preceding year.

(3) ELEMENTS.—Except as provided in subsection (a)(2), the reports under this subsection shall include the following elements:

(A) BEST PRACTICES.—With regards to best practices of WARTAC—

(i) how many covered members have applied to participate in WARTAC;

(ii) how many covered members have participated in WARTAC;

(iii) how the Secretary provides training to covered members during TAP;

(iv) how many covered members have completed WARTAC; and

(v) any other information the Secretary determines appropriate.

(B) COST SAVINGS.—With regards to cost savings of WARTAC—

(i) how much money the Secretary determines WARTAC saves the United States each fiscal year;

(ii) how much money the Secretary determines WARTAC has saved the United States since its establishment; and

(iii) the determination of the Secretary whether other Federal agencies may save money by establishing a program similar to WARTAC.

(C) HIRING.—With regards to hiring covered members who complete WARTAC—

(i) how the Secretary identifies positions in the Department of Veterans Affairs for which such covered members may qualify;

(ii) the grades of such positions on the General Schedule under section 5332 of title 5, United States Code; and

(iii) how many such covered members the Secretary has hired to such positions.

(4) DISTRIBUTION.—Not later than 30 days after submitting the report under paragraph (1), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall transmit a copy of such report to the head of each Federal agency.

(5) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) The term “covered member” means members of the Armed Forces participating in TAP.

(B) The term “TAP” means the Transition Assistance Program under sections 1142 and 1144 of title 10, United States Code.

(C) The term “WARTAC” means the Warrior Training Advancement Course of the Veterans Benefit Administration, in which the Secretary provides training to covered members so such covered members may qualify for certain employment in the Veterans Benefit Administration.

(b) BEST PRACTICES FOR OTHER DEPARTMENTS.—The Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans’ Employment and Training shall, in consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, establish guidelines containing best practices for departments and agencies of the Federal Government that carry out programs to employ veterans who are transitioning from service in the Armed Forces. Such guidelines shall include the findings of the initial report required under subsection (a)(1).

(c) PILOT PROGRAM.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of the Interior shall, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, establish a pilot program to

proactively inform veterans of available employment positions that relate to the conservation and resource management activities of the Department of the Interior.

(2) POSITIONS.—The Secretary of the Interior shall—

(A) identify vacant positions in the Department of the Interior that are appropriate to fill using the pilot program; and

(B) to the maximum extent practicable, provide assistance to veterans in selecting one or more vacant positions to apply to, for which that veteran may be best qualified.

(3) REPORTS.—

(A) IMPLEMENTATION REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date on which the pilot program under paragraph (1) commences, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the Secretary of Labor shall jointly provide to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the implementation of the pilot program.

(B) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the pilot program under paragraph (1) terminates under paragraph (4), the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the Secretary of Labor shall jointly submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the pilot program that includes the following:

(i) The number of veterans who applied to participate in the pilot program.

(ii) The number of such veterans employed under the pilot program.

(iii) The number of veterans identified in clause (ii) who transitioned to full-time positions with the Federal Government after participating in the pilot program.

(iv) Any other information the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the Secretary of Labor determine appropriate with respect to measuring the effectiveness of the pilot program.

(4) TERMINATION.—The authority to carry out the pilot program under this subsection shall terminate on the date that is two years after the date on which the pilot program commences.

(5) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.

(d) OUTDOOR RECREATION PROGRAM ATTENDANCE.—The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture are encouraged to work with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure members of the Armed Forces and veterans have access to outdoor recreation and outdoor-related volunteer and wellness programs as part of the basic services provided to such members and veterans.

Subtitle C—Home Loans

SEC. 231. IMPROVEMENTS TO PROGRAM FOR DIRECT HOUSING LOANS MADE TO NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITIES AND REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) DIRECT HOUSING LOANS TO NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS.—Section 3762(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(a) The Secretary may make a direct housing loan to a Native American veteran under this subchapter if the Secretary ensures the following:

“(1) That each Native American veteran to whom the Secretary makes a direct housing loan under this subchapter—

“(A) holds, possesses, or purchases using the proceeds of the loan a meaningful interest in a lot or dwelling (or both) that is located on trust land; and

“(B) will purchase, construct, or improve (as the case may be) a dwelling on the lot using the proceeds of the loan.

“(2) That each such Native American veteran will convey to the Secretary by an appropriate instrument the interest referred to in paragraph (1)(A) as security for a direct housing loan under this subchapter.

“(3) That the Secretary, including the Secretary’s employees or agents, may enter upon the trust land for the purposes of carrying out such actions as the Secretary determines are necessary, including—

“(A) to evaluate the advisability of the loan;

“(B) to monitor any purchase, construction, or improvements carried out using the proceeds of the loan; and

“(C) to manage any servicing or post-foreclosure activities, including acquisition, property inspections, and property management.

“(4) That there are established standards and procedures that apply to the foreclosure of the interest conveyed by a Native American veteran pursuant to paragraph (2), including—

“(A) procedures for foreclosing the interest; and

“(B) procedures for the resale of the lot or dwelling (or both) purchased, constructed, or improved using the proceeds of the loan.

“(5) That the loan is made in a responsible and prudent manner, subject to standards and procedures as are necessary for the reasonable protection of the financial interests of the United States.”.

(2) MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING, AGREEMENTS, AND DETERMINATIONS.—Section 3762(b) of such title is amended to read as follows:

“(b)(1) To carry out the purpose of subsection (a), the Secretary may—

“(A) enter into a memorandum of understanding with a tribal organization, other entity, or individual;

“(B) rely on agreements or determinations of other Federal agencies to guarantee, insure, or make loans on trust land; and

“(C) enter into other agreements or take such other actions as the Secretary determines necessary.

“(2) If the Secretary determines that the requirements under subsection (a) are not being enforced by a tribal organization, other entity, or individual that is a party to any memorandum of understanding, agreement, or determination described in paragraph (1), the Secretary may cease making new direct housing loans to Native American veterans under this subchapter within the area of the authority of the tribal organization, other entity, or individual (as the case may be).”.

(b) DIRECT LOANS TO NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS TO REFINANCE EXISTING MORTGAGE LOANS.—Section 3762(h) of such title is amended to read as follows:

“(h) The Secretary may make direct loans to Native American veterans in order to enable such veterans to refinance existing mortgage loans for any of the following purposes:

“(1) To refinance an existing loan made under this section, if the loan—

“(A) meets the requirements set forth in subparagraphs (B), (C), and (E) of paragraph (1) of section 3710(e) of this title;

“(B) will bear an interest rate at least one percentage point less than the interest rate borne by the loan being refinanced; and

“(C) complies with paragraphs (2) and (3) of section 3710(e) of this title, except that for the purposes of this subsection the reference

to subsection (a)(8) of section 3710 of this title in such paragraphs (2) and (3) shall be deemed to be a reference to this subsection.

“(2) To refinance an existing mortgage loan not made under this section on a dwelling owned and occupied by the veteran as the veteran’s home, if all of the following requirements are met:

“(A) The loan will be secured by the same dwelling as was the loan being refinanced.

“(B) The loan will provide the veteran with a net tangible benefit.

“(C) The nature and condition of the property is such as to be suitable for dwelling purposes.

“(D) The amount of the loan does not exceed either of the following:

“(i) 100 percent of the reasonable value of the dwelling, with such reasonable value determined under the procedures established by the Secretary under subsection (d)(2).

“(ii) An amount equal to the sum of the balance of the loan being refinanced and such closing costs (including any discount points) as may be authorized by the Secretary to be included in the loan.

“(E) Notwithstanding subparagraph (D), if a loan is made for both the purpose of this paragraph and to make energy efficiency improvements, the loan must not exceed either of the following:

“(i) 100 percent of the reasonable value of the dwelling as improved for energy efficiency, with such reasonable value determined under the procedures established by the Secretary under subsection (d)(2).

“(ii) The amount referred to under subparagraph (D)(ii), plus the applicable amount specified under section 3710(d)(2) of this title.

“(F) The loan meets all other requirements the Secretary may establish under this subchapter.

“(G) The existing mortgage being refinanced is a first lien on the property and secured of record.

“(3) To refinance an existing mortgage loan to repair, alter, or improve a dwelling owned by the veteran and occupied by the veteran as the veteran’s home, if all of the following requirements are met:

“(A) The loan will be secured by the same dwelling as was the loan being refinanced.

“(B) The nature and condition of the property is such as to be suitable for dwelling purposes, and the repair, alteration, or improvement substantially protects or improves the basic livability or utility of such property.

“(C) The amount of the loan, including the costs of repairs, alterations, and improvements, does not exceed either of the following:

“(i) 100 percent of the reasonable value of the dwelling as repaired, altered, or improved, with such reasonable value determined under the procedures established by the Secretary under subsection (d)(2).

“(ii) An amount equal to the sum of—

“(I) the balance of the loan being refinanced;

“(II) the actual cost of repairs, alterations, or improvements; and

“(III) such closing costs (including any discount points) as may be authorized by the Secretary to be included in the loan.

“(D) The loan meets all other requirements the Secretary may establish under this subchapter.

“(E) The existing mortgage loan being refinanced is a first lien on the property and secured of record.”.

(c) EXPANSION OF OUTREACH PROGRAM ON AVAILABILITY OF DIRECT HOUSING LOANS FOR NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS.—Section 3762(i)(2) of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(G) Pursuant to subsection (g)(4), assisting Native American veterans in qualifying for mortgage financing by—

“(i) partnering with local service providers, such as tribal organizations, tribally designated housing entities, Native community development financial institutions, and nonprofit organizations, for conducting outreach, homebuyer education, housing counseling, and post-purchase education; and

“(ii) providing other technical assistance as needed.

“(H) Attending conferences and conventions conducted by the network of Native community development financial institutions and other Native American homeownership organizations to provide information and training to Native community development financial institutions about the availability of the relending program under section 3762A of this title.”

(d) ADEQUATE PERSONNEL.—Section 3762 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(k) The Secretary shall assign a sufficient number of personnel of the Department dedicated to carrying out the authority of the Secretary under this subchapter, including construction and valuation specialists to assist with issues unique to new construction and renovations on trust land.”

(e) DEFINITIONS.—Section 3765 of such title is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by amending subparagraph (C) to read as follows:

“(C) is located in the State of Alaska within a region established under section 7(a) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1606(a));”;

(B) in subparagraph (D), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

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

“(E) is defined by the Secretary of the Interior and recognized by the United States as land over which an Indian Tribe has governmental dominion; or

“(F) is on any land that the Secretary determines is provided to Native American veterans because of their status as Native Americans.”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(6) The term ‘community development financial institution’ has the meaning given that term in section 103 of the Community Development Banking and Financial Institutions Act of 1994 (12 U.S.C. 4702).

“(7) The term ‘Indian Tribe’ means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.), which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.

“(8) The term ‘Native community development financial institution’ means any entity—

“(A) that has been certified as a community development financial institution by the Secretary of the Treasury;

“(B) that is not less than 51 percent owned or controlled by Native Americans; and

“(C) for which not less than 51 percent of the activities of the entity serve Native Americans.

“(9) The term ‘net tangible benefit’ shall have such meaning as the Secretary determines appropriate, but shall include the refinancing of an interim construction loan.

“(10) The term ‘other technical assistance’ means services to assist a Native American veteran to navigate the steps necessary for

securing a mortgage loan on trust land, including pre-development activities related to utilities, identifying appropriate residential construction services, and obtaining lease clearances and title status reports from the applicable tribal organization or the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

“(11) The term ‘tribally designated housing entity’ has the meaning given that term in section 4 of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4103).”

(f) INTEREST RATE REDUCTION FINANCING LOAN.—Section 3729(b)(4)(F) of such title is amended by striking ‘3762(h)’ and inserting ‘3762(h)(1)’.

(g) REGULATIONS.—Section 3761 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) The Secretary shall prescribe such regulations as may be necessary to carry out this subchapter.”

SEC. 232. NATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTION RELENDING PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter V of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 3762 the following new section:

“§ 3762A. Native community development financial institution relending program

“(a) PURPOSE.—The Secretary may make a loan to a Native community development financial institution for the purpose of allowing the institution to relend loan amounts to qualified Native American veterans, subject to the requirements of this section.

“(b) STANDARDS.—(1) The Secretary shall establish standards to be used in evaluating whether to make a loan to a Native community development financial institution under this section.

“(2) In establishing standards under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure that a Native community development financial institution—

“(A) is able to originate and service loans for single-family homes;

“(B) is able to operate the relending program in a manner consistent with the mission of the Department to serve veterans; and

“(C) uses loan amounts received under this section only for the purpose of relending, as described in subsection (c), to Native American veterans.

“(c) RELENDING REQUIREMENTS.—(1) A Native community development financial institution that receives a loan under this section shall use the loan amounts to make loans to Native American veterans residing on trust land.

“(2) A loan to a Native American veteran made by a Native community development financial institution under paragraph (1) shall—

“(A) be limited either to the purpose of purchase, construction, or improvement of a dwelling located on trust land or to the refinancing of an existing mortgage loan for a dwelling on trust land, consistent with the requirements of section 3762(h) of this title; and

“(B) comply with such terms and conditions as the Secretary determines are necessary to protect against predatory lending, including the interest rate charged on a loan to a Native American veteran.

“(d) REPAYMENT.—A loan made to a Native community development financial institution under this section shall—

“(1) be payable to the Secretary upon such terms and conditions as are prescribed in regulations pursuant to this subchapter; and

“(2) bear interest at a rate of one percent.

“(e) OVERSIGHT.—Subject to notice and opportunity for a hearing, whenever the Sec-

retary finds with respect to loans made under subsection (a) or (c) that any Native community development financial institution has failed to maintain adequate loan accounting records, to demonstrate proper ability to service loans adequately, or to exercise proper credit judgment, or that such Native community development financial institution has willfully or negligently engaged in practices otherwise detrimental to the interest of veterans or of the Government, the Secretary may take such actions as the Secretary determines necessary to protect veterans or the Government, such as requiring immediate repayment of any loans made under subsection (a) and the assignment to the Secretary of loans made under subsection (c).

“(f) SUNSET.—The Secretary may not make a loan under this section after September 30, 2027.”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 37 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3762 the following new item:

“3762A. Native community development financial institution relending program.”

(c) NATIVE AMERICAN VETERAN HOUSING LOAN PROGRAM ACCOUNT.—Section 3763 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) Of amounts available in the Account, the Secretary may use for loans made under section 3762A of this title—

“(1) in fiscal year 2025, not more than \$5,000,000; and

“(2) in any fiscal year after fiscal year 2025, an amount determined necessary by the Secretary to meet the demand for such loans.”

TITLE III—DISABILITY AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS MATTERS

SEC. 301. BURIAL ALLOWANCE FOR CERTAIN VETERANS WHO DIE AT HOME WHILE IN RECEIPT OF HOSPICE CARE FURNISHED BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall treat a veteran described in subsection (b) as a veteran described in subparagraph (A) of section 2303(a)(2) of title 38, United States Code.

(b) VETERAN DESCRIBED.—A veteran described in this subsection is a veteran who dies in a home or other setting at which the deceased veteran was, at the time of death, receiving hospice care pursuant to section 1717(a) of such title if such care was directly preceded by the Secretary furnishing to the veteran hospital care or nursing home care described in clause (ii) of such subparagraph.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICABILITY.—This section shall apply with respect to deaths that occur—

(1) on or after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(2) before October 1, 2026.

SEC. 302. AUTHORITY FOR SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO AWARD GRANTS TO STATES AND INDIAN TRIBES TO IMPROVE OUTREACH TO VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 63 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating sections 6307 and 6308 as sections 6308 and 6309, respectively; and

(2) by inserting after section 6306 the following new section 6307:

“§ 6307. Grants to States and Indian Tribes to improve outreach to veterans

“(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to provide for assistance by the Secretary to States and Indian Tribes to carry out programs that improve covered outreach and assistance to veterans and the spouses, children, and parents of veterans, to ensure

that such individuals are fully informed about, and assisted in applying for, any veterans and veterans-related benefits and programs (including veterans programs of a State or Indian Tribe) for which they may be eligible and facilitate opportunities for such individuals to receive competent, qualified services in the preparation, presentation and prosecution of veterans benefits claims.

“(b) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may award grants to States and Indian Tribes—

“(1) to carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance—

“(A) covered outreach activities; or

“(B) activities to assist in the development and submittal of claims for veterans and veterans-related benefits; or

“(2) to increase the number of county or Tribal veterans service officers serving in the State by hiring new, additional such officers.

“(c) APPLICATION.—(1) To be eligible for a grant under this section, a State or Indian Tribe shall submit to the Secretary an application therefor at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

“(2) Each application submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

“(A) A detailed plan for the use of the grant.

“(B) A description of the programs through which the State or Indian Tribe will meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (j).

“(C) A description of how the State or Indian Tribe will distribute grant amounts equitably among counties or Tribal lands with varying levels of urbanization.

“(D) A plan for how the grant will be used to meet the unique needs of American Indian veterans, Alaska Native veterans, or Native Hawaiian veterans, elderly veterans, and veterans from other underserved communities.

“(d) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall seek to ensure that grants awarded under this section are equitably distributed among States and Indian Tribes with varying levels of urbanization.

“(e) SET-ASIDE.—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated or otherwise made available for grants under this section for any fiscal year, the Secretary shall ensure that not less than five percent is used to make grants to Indian Tribes.

“(f) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall prioritize awarding grants under this section that will serve the following areas:

“(1) Areas with a critical shortage of county or Tribal veterans service officers.

“(2) Areas with high rates of—

“(A) suicide among veterans; or

“(B) referrals to the Veterans Crisis Line.

“(g) USE OF COUNTY OR TRIBAL VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS.—A State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this section to carry out an activity described in subsection (b)(1) shall carry out the activity through—

“(1) a county or Tribal veterans service officer of the State; or

“(2) if the State or Indian Tribe does not have a county or Tribal veterans service officer, or if the county or Tribal veterans service officers of the State or Indian Tribe cover only a portion of that State or Indian Tribe, an appropriate entity of a State, local, or Tribal government, as determined by the Secretary.

“(h) REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.—Any grant awarded under this section shall be used—

“(1) to expand existing programs, activities, and services;

“(2) to hire new, additional county or Tribal veterans service officers; or

“(3) for travel and transportation to facilitate carrying out paragraph (1) or (2).

“(i) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—A grant under this section may be used to provide

education and training, including on-the-job training, for State, county, local, and Tribal government employees who provide (or when trained will provide) covered outreach services in order for those employees to obtain accreditation in accordance with procedures approved by the Secretary.

“(j) OUTCOME MEASURES.—(1) The Secretary shall develop and provide to each State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this section written guidance on the following:

“(A) Outcome measures.

“(B) Policies of the Department.

“(2) In developing outcome measures under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider the following goals:

“(A) Increasing the use of veterans and veterans-related benefits, particularly among vulnerable populations.

“(B) Increasing the number of county and Tribal veterans service officers recognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans under chapter 59 of this title.

“(k) TRACKING REQUIREMENTS.—(1) With respect to each grant awarded under this section, the Secretary shall track the use of veterans and veterans-related benefits among the population served by the grant, including the average period of time between the date on which a veteran applies for such a benefit and the date on which the veteran receives the benefit, disaggregated by type of benefit.

“(2) Not less frequently than annually during the life of the grant program established under this section, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on—

“(A) the information tracked under paragraph (1);

“(B) how the grants awarded under this section serve the unique needs of American Indian veterans, Alaska Native veterans, or Native Hawaiian veterans, elderly veterans, and veterans from other underserved communities; and

“(C) other information provided by States and Indian Tribes pursuant to the grant reporting requirements.

“(l) PERFORMANCE REVIEW.—The Secretary shall—

“(1) review the performance of each State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this section; and

“(2) make information regarding such performance publicly available.

“(m) REMEDIATION PLAN.—(1) In the case of a State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this section and does not meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (j), the Secretary shall require the State or Indian Tribe to submit a remediation plan under which the State shall describe how and when it plans to meet such outcome measures.

“(2) The Secretary may not award a subsequent grant under this section to a State or Indian Tribe described in paragraph (1) unless the Secretary approves the remediation plan submitted by the State or Indian Tribe.

“(n) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘county or Tribal veterans service officer’ includes a local equivalent veterans service officer.

“(2) The term ‘covered outreach’ means outreach with respect to—

“(A) benefits administered by the Under Secretary for Benefits; or

“(B) similar benefits administered by a State or Indian Tribe.

“(3) The term ‘Indian Tribe’ has the meaning given such term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

“(4) The term ‘State’ includes the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any territory or possession of the United States.

“(5) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means the toll-free hotline for veterans established under section 1720F(h) of this title.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 63 of such title is amended by striking the items relating to sections 6307 and 6308 and inserting the following new items:

“6307. Grants to States and Indian Tribes to improve outreach to veterans.

“6308. Outreach for eligible dependents.

“6309. Biennial report to Congress.”.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for each of fiscal years 2026 and 2027, \$10,000,000 to carry out section 6307 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

SEC. 303. DEFINITION OF SURVIVING SPOUSE.

Paragraph (3) of section 101 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(3) The term ‘surviving spouse’ means (except for purposes of chapter 19 of this title) a person who was the spouse of a veteran at the time of the veteran’s death, and who lived with the veteran continuously from the date of marriage to the date of the veteran’s death (except where there was a separation which was due to the misconduct of, or procured by, the veteran without the fault of the spouse) and who has not remarried.”.

SEC. 304. ENSURING ONLY LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS PERFORM MEDICAL DISABILITY EXAMINATIONS UNDER CERTAIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) PROHIBITION ON USE OF CERTAIN HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.—Section 504(c)(1) of the Veterans’ Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note) is amended by inserting “only” before “a health care professional”.

(b) REMEDIES.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall take such actions as the Secretary considers appropriate to ensure compliance with section 504(c) of the Veterans’ Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note), as amended by subsection (a).

(c) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and not less frequently than once each year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on—

(1) the conduct of the pilot program established under section 504 of the Veterans’ Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note); and

(2) the actions of the Secretary under subsection (b).

(d) TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.—Section 504 of the Veterans’ Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note) is amended, in the section heading, by striking “PHYSICIANS” and inserting “HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS”.

SEC. 305. PROVISION OF INFORMATION REGARDING AN AGENT OR ATTORNEY TO A LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL WHO PERFORMS A MEDICAL DISABILITY EXAMINATION UNDER CERTAIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 504 of the Veterans’ Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note), as amended by section 304, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(f) CERTAIN INFORMATION PROVIDED TO HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL.—The Secretary shall provide to a health care professional

who performs an examination under subsection (a), or a contractor performing a contract under such subsection, the contact information of any agent or attorney recognized by the Secretary under chapter 59 of title 38, United States Code, with regards to a claim for benefits that gives rise to such examination.”

(b) **APPLICABILITY.**—The amendment made by this section shall apply to an examination described in subsection (a) of such section that is performed on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 306. MODERNIZATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DISABILITY BENEFIT QUESTIONNAIRES.

(a) **REQUIREMENT FOR TRANSMISSION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION IN MACHINE-READABLE FORMAT.**—

(1) **REQUIREMENT.**—Not later than 180 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall require all disability benefit questionnaire data collected in the course of medical disability examinations made by covered non-Department providers to be transmitted to the Department in a machine-readable format.

(2) **ISSUANCE OF STANDARDS.**—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall issue standards for the transmission of disability benefit questionnaire data in a machine-readable format as required under paragraph (1).

(3) **UPDATES.**—In making updates to disability benefit questionnaires after the date specified in paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

(A) ensure that the updates are made in a manner that allows for the data collected under the questionnaires to be in a machine-readable format as of the date on which the update goes into effect; and

(B) not later than 30 days before an update goes into effect, notify the covered non-Department providers (or the contractor performing a contract under section 504 of the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note)) described in such paragraph of such updates.

(b) **PLAN FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM MODIFICATION.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a plan to modify the information technology systems and processes of the Department to enable a non-Department health care professional, assigned to or selected by a claimant, to transmit to the Department, in a machine-readable format, disability benefit questionnaire data, including complete disability benefit questionnaires rather than partial questionnaires or elements of medical evidence.

(c) **PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION.**—The Secretary shall make publicly available on the internet website of the Department referred to in section 5101(d) of title 38, United States Code—

(1) a description of the standards issued under subsection (a)(2); and

(2) the plan required under subsection (b).

(d) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) The term “claimant” has the meaning given such term in section 5100 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term “covered non-Department provider” means a health care provider who—

(A) is not an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(B) pursuant to a contract under section 504 of the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note), as amended by sections 304 and 305, examines a claimant for a medical disability.

SEC. 307. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AUTOMATIC PROCESSING OF CERTAIN CLAIMS FOR TEMPORARY DISABILITY RATINGS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall modify the information technology systems of the Department of Veterans Affairs to use automation technology for claims for temporary disability ratings for veterans described in section 1156(a)(1)(C) of title 38, United States Code.

(b) **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.**—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall ensure that—

(1) medical evidence is obtained from the corporate data warehouse of the Department or other sources of data, the Secretary determines appropriate;

(2) employees of the Department continue to determine whether a veteran is entitled to a temporary disability rating under section 1156(a)(1)(C) of title 38, United States Code; and

(3) claims may be processed manually if the evidence of record is not sufficient to decide the claim or if the medical evidence is provided in a format that is not compatible with the system developed under subsection (a).

TITLE IV—HOMELESSNESS MATTERS

SEC. 401. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the “Housing our Military Veterans Effectively Act of 2024” or the “HOME Act of 2024”.

SEC. 402. PER DIEM PAYMENTS PROVIDED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR SERVICES FURNISHED TO HOMELESS VETERANS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 2012 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(B)—

(i) in clause (i)(II)(aa)(BB), by striking “15 percent” and inserting “15 percent (or, during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Housing our Military Veterans Effectively Act of 2024 and ending on September 30, 2027, 133 percent)”; and

(ii) by adding at the end the following:

“(iii) For each of fiscal years 2025 through 2027, the Secretary may waive the maximum rate for per diem payments under clause (i)(II)(aa)(BB) or (ii) and, subject to the availability of appropriations, provide such payments at a rate that does not exceed 200 percent of the rate authorized for State homes for domiciliary care under subsection (a)(1)(A) of section 1741 of this title, as the Secretary may increase from time to time under subsection (c) of that section, if the Secretary notifies Congress of such waiver.

“(iv) The Secretary may not, pursuant to clause (iii), waive the maximum rate described in such clause for more than 50 percent of all grant recipients and eligible entities for a fiscal year.”; and

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

“(4) The Secretary may not provide more than 12,000 per diem payments under this section for a fiscal year.”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(f) **REPORTS REQUIRED.**—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the HOME Act of 2024, and not less frequently than twice each year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the rate for per diem payments under this section that includes, for each Veterans Integrated Service Network of the Department, the following data:

“(1) The average rate for such a payment.

“(2) A list of locations where the rate for such a payment is within 10 percent of the maximum rate for such a payment authorized under this section.

“(3) The average length of stay by a veteran participating in a program described in section 2012(a) of this title.”

(b) **REGULATORY AUTHORITY.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the amendments made by subsection (a) through interim guidance in advance of the issuance of regulations for such purpose.

(c) **STRATEGIC PLAN.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than September 30, 2025, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans Affairs of the House of Representatives a strategic plan for the provision of grants and per diem payments for services furnished to homeless veterans under sections 2011 and 2012 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) **ELEMENTS.**—The plan required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A method for administering grant funding equitably without using the rate authorized for State homes for domiciliary care under subsection (a)(1)(A) of section 1741 of title 38, United States Code, as the Secretary may increase from time to time under subsection (c) of that section, that takes into account—

(i) the wide variety of services furnished by grant recipients and eligible entities under sections 2011 and 2012 of title 38, United States Code;

(ii) varying costs of living across different geographic locations;

(iii) varying availability of affordable housing in different geographic locations;

(iv) circumstances of housing insecurity in rural and Tribal communities;

(v) veterans with significant medical care needs; and

(vi) the changing dynamic of the veteran population nationwide.

(B) A plan and timeline for implementation of the method included under subparagraph (A).

(C) An estimate of increased costs or savings per year under the plan.

(D) An overview of the different grants that will be available once the plan is implemented.

SEC. 403. AUTHORIZATION FOR SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO USE CERTAIN FUNDS FOR IMPROVED FLEXIBILITY IN ASSISTANCE TO HOMELESS VETERANS.

(a) **USE OF FUNDS.**—During the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on the termination date specified in subsection (d), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may provide to a covered veteran, as the Secretary determines necessary—

(1) food, shelter, clothing, blankets, and hygiene items required for the safety and survival of the veteran;

(2) transportation required to support the stability and health of the veteran for appointments with service providers, the conduct of housing and employment searches, and the obtainment of food and supplies; and

(3) tablets, smartphones, disposable phones and other technology, and related service plans required to support the stability and health of the veteran through the maintenance of contact with service providers, prospective landlords, and family members.

(b) **HOMELESS VETERANS ON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS LAND.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary may collaborate, to the extent practicable, with one or more organizations to manage the use of land of the Department of Veterans Affairs for homeless veterans for living and sleeping.

(2) FORMS OF COLLABORATION.—Collaboration under paragraph (1) may include the provision by either the Secretary or the head of the organization concerned of food services and security for property, buildings, and other facilities owned or controlled by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(c) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than six months after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter until the date specified in subsection (d), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that includes, with respect to the period covered by such report—

(1) a statement, disaggregated by each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs, of the amount of funds under this section—

(A) each such medical center requested from the Secretary; and

(B) to which the Secretary provided each such medical center;

(2) data, disaggregated by each such medical center, relating to how each such medical center used amounts provided by the Secretary under this section;

(3) the number of covered veterans to which the Secretary provided assistance under this section;

(4) the total amount of assistance the Secretary provided to covered veterans pursuant to subsection (a)(3) for communications equipment, broken down by the type of equipment provided;

(5) the total amount of assistance the Secretary provided covered veterans pursuant to subsection (a)(2) for ridesharing;

(6) the number of covered veterans who received such assistance; and

(7) a description, for each rideshare used by a covered veteran with such assistance, of the reasons such covered veteran used such rideshare.

(8) the number of covered veterans who lived or slept on Department land;

(9) the amount of funds used to make available Department land for covered veterans to live and sleep;

(10) the number of Department employees whose primary responsibilities involved providing services for covered veterans living or sleeping on Department land;

(11) the average length of time a covered veteran lived or slept on Department land, and

(12) the period of time the Secretary expects Department land will be made available for covered veterans to live and sleep.

(d) TERMINATION DATE.—The termination date specified in this subsection is September 30, 2027.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the term “covered veteran” means—

(1) a homeless veteran, as such term is defined in section 2002 of title 38, United States Code; and

(2) a veteran participating in the program carried out under section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)).

SEC. 404. ACCESS TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TELEHEALTH SERVICES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle VII of chapter 20 of title 38, United States Code is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 2069. Access to telehealth services

“To the extent practicable, the Secretary shall ensure that veterans participating in or receiving services from a program under this chapter have access to telehealth services to which such veterans are eligible under the laws administered by the Secretary, including by ensuring that telehealth capabilities are available to—

“(1) such veterans;

“(2) case managers of the Department of programs for homeless veterans authorized under this chapter; and

“(3) community-based service providers for homeless veterans receiving funds from the Department through grants or contracts.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 20 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“2069. Access to telehealth services.”.

TITLE V—OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS MATTERS

SEC. 501. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EMPLOYEE TRAINING REGARDING OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL.

(a) TRAINING.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall require each employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs who begins employment with the Department on or after the date of the enactment of this Act to receive training that the Inspector General of the Department shall develop on the reporting of wrongdoing to, responding to requests from, and the duty of cooperating with the Office of Inspector General of the Department.

(b) TIMING OF TRAINING.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall require each employee of the Department covered under such subsection to undergo the training required by such subsection not later than one year after the date on which the employee begins employment with the Department.

(c) ELEMENTS.—Training developed and required under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) Definition of the role, responsibilities, and legal authority of the Inspector General of the Department and the duties of employees of the Department for engaging with the Office of Inspector General.

(2) Identification of Federal whistleblower protection rights, including the right to report fraud, waste, abuse, and other wrongdoing to Congress.

(3) Identification of the circumstances and mechanisms for reporting fraud, waste, abuse, and other wrongdoing to the Inspector General, including making confidential complaints to the Inspector General.

(4) Identification of the prohibitions and remedies that help to protect employees of the Department from retaliation when reporting wrongdoing to the Inspector General.

(5) Recognition of opportunities to engage with staff of the Office of Inspector General to improve programs, operations, and services of the Department.

(6) Notification of the authority of the Inspector General to subpoena the attendance and testimony of witnesses, including former employees of the Department, as necessary to carry out the duties of the Office of Inspector General under section 312 of title 38, United States Code.

(d) DESIGN AND UPDATE.—The Inspector General of the Department shall design, and update as the Inspector General considers appropriate, the training developed and required by subsection (a).

(e) SYSTEM.—The Secretary shall provide, via the talent management system of the Department, or successor system, the training developed and required under subsection (a).

(f) RELATION TO CERTAIN TRAINING.—The Secretary shall ensure that training developed and required under subsection (a) is separate and distinct from training provided under section 733 of title 38, United States Code.

(g) NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES.—The Secretary shall ensure that the Inspector General is afforded the opportunity, not less frequently than twice each year and more frequently if the Inspector General considers appropriate under extraordinary circumstances, to use the electronic mail system of the Department to notify all authorized users of such system of the following:

(1) The roles and responsibilities of the employees of the Department when engaging with the Office of Inspector General.

(2) The availability of training provided under subsection (a).

(3) How to access training provided under subsection (a).

(4) Information about how to contact the Office of Inspector General, including a link to any website-based reporting form of the Office.

SEC. 502. ANNUAL REVIEW OF SECURITY AT COVERED FACILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) ANNUAL SURVEY.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for each of the following five fiscal years, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in coordination with the Director of the Office of Security and Law Enforcement of the Department of Veterans Affairs, shall conduct a survey of the covered employees at each covered facility to collect information regarding security. Each annual survey shall include questions about—

(1) the type and frequency of criminal activity experienced at the covered facility during the fiscal year which most recently concluded including whether or not the criminal activity was related to residents at the facility or campus such as those in a residential rehabilitation treatment program or enhanced-use lease facility;

(2) the number of vacancies and number of days vacant for Department police officers at the covered facility at the time of the survey delineated by recruitment status and stage;

(3) the availability and adequacy of covered equipment;

(4) the availability and adequacy of resources, classes, or other time set aside for training Department police officers who work at each covered facility about any skill or tactic related to law enforcement, including the proper use of force, firearms qualifications and training, procedures for responding to an active threat, and any other training required for Department police officers;

(5) any security weakness at covered facilities;

(6) the relationship between the covered facility (including the Department police officers who work at the covered facility) and local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies including what agreements or memorandums of understanding exist between each covered facility and external law enforcement agencies;

(7) efforts by the personnel of the covered facility to address and reduce criminal activity at, or in close proximity to, the covered facility; and

(8) recommendations for the Secretary to better address and reduce criminal activity at, or in close proximity to, covered facilities so as to improve the safety of veterans, employees, visitors, other authorized personnel, and the surrounding community.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after the end of the next full Fiscal Year after the enactment of this Act and for each of the following five fiscal years, the Secretary shall submit to each of the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report regarding the results of the surveys conducted under subsection (a) during the previous fiscal year. The report shall include—

(1) the results of the annual survey described under subsection (a) for the year covered by the report;

(2) an analysis, made in coordination with the Director of the Office of Security and Law Enforcement of such Department, each director and police chief of a Veterans Integrated Service Network, and the directors

and police chiefs of the medical centers within the Veterans Integrated Service Network of the results of the triannual security inspections conducted in prior fiscal year, to include a plan of action that describes how the Secretary plans to address any security weakness identified in the results of the triannual security inspections and includes clearly-stated goals with measurable benchmarks for each goal and deadlines for each benchmark; and

(3) a list of all vacant positions for police chief or deputy police chief at each covered facility during the prior fiscal year, the number of individuals who filled those positions over the two years prior to the date of the survey, the number of days the positions were vacant without someone serving in an acting capacity, and the number of days the positions were filled by individuals serving in an acting capacity.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “covered equipment” means any item issued by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to a Department police officer (including firearms, weapons detecting technology, ballistic vests, body-worn cameras, and radios) for use in the provision of services under section 902 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term “covered employee” means an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs who is employed and responsible for security operations at a covered facility including a covered facility’s police chief, facility emergency management leader, facility director, or person carrying out the responsibilities of one of these positions in an acting capacity.

(3) The term “covered facility” means any facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs where Department police officers have jurisdiction.

(4) The term “Department police officer” is used as such term as used in section 902 of title 38, United States Code.

(5) The term “security weakness” means a deficiency in the facilities, staffing, or covered equipment at a covered facility that a covered employee of the covered facility determines presents a risk to the safety of visitors or staff, including an unsecured door, inoperable security camera, unsecured police operations room, a lack of security presence at an entrance to the covered facility, and a lack of security presence in an area of the covered facility or the grounds of the covered facility that the director of the covered facility determines requires an increased security presence.

SEC. 503. 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 29, 2031” each place it appears and inserting “June 9, 2034”.

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 for S. 141.

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 strong support of S. 141, authored by my friend and colleague, Senator MORAN, from Kansas. The House came together 1 month ago and passed H.R. 8371, the Dole act, with a bipartisan vote of 389–9.

This vote was a strong message from the House of Representatives, Republicans and Democrats, to improve the veterans program and deliver on promises we made to those who served.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to finish the commitment we made 1 month ago. The Dole act would improve veterans’ homeless programs, expand nontraditional education and employment programs, protect service-members while they are deployed, put veterans’ healthcare back in the hands of the veterans, and hold VA officials accountable.

This bill has many House Republican priorities that we have worked this Congress to pass. The Dole act is not only a commonsense bill, but one that would save lives and push the VA forward and not backward.

I thank the over 40 veterans service organizations, advocacy organizations, and stakeholders from every corner of this country for their support of the Dole act. Their advocacy was the push we all needed to get the bipartisan bill done.

I also thank the Senate for making technical changes to the language to make sure we sent the best version of this to the President’s desk.

Mr. Speaker, before I reserve the balance of my time, I thank Mr. CISCOMANI and dozens of other Members on both sides of the aisle who have provisions in this bill. This legislation will make a difference for veterans and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support veterans by supporting this good bill, 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 S. 141, the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.

If that title sounds familiar, it is because all of my Democratic colleagues already voted for this bill. We passed the House version in November, and then we had to work to overcome Senate Republican holds on the House bill. Despite those holds, no substantive changes were made to the bill as a result of these negotiations.

Many of my Democratic colleagues have important provisions in this bill, and what was agreed to during the time the bill was held up were some technical changes that were agreed to by the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees, though this resulted in the slightly updated bill being incorporated into a Senate amendment that was included in the shell of the companion to the original bill, Representative JULIA BROWNLEY’s bill, the Eliza-

beth Dole Home Care Act, which she worked on for many years.

Mr. Speaker, it has been quite a long and winding journey for this bill, which was unfortunate, but I am glad we can at least pass some significant legislation for veterans this Congress, even if it comes at the last possible moment.

When reasonable minds work together, we can find consensus and deliver something for veterans. Hopefully that lesson will be taken to heart as we head into the next Congress.

I support this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to reaffirm their support, and let’s get it to President Biden’s desk.

Mr. Speaker, I support S. 141, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CISCOMANI).

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman BOST for yielding me time and for his leadership on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I rise today in support for my legislation, the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, the flagship bipartisan and bicameral veterans package of the 118th Congress.

It is not very often that someone has the opportunity to speak on the floor in support of a bill that they have introduced, let alone twice in such a short period of time, as I had the opportunity to do so today, so this is a very exciting moment.

I support many of the technical changes made in the legislation and appreciate our Senate counterparts’ willingness to work with the House throughout this entire process.

I am excited to see the impact to our veterans that these policy improvements will have, including by modernizing our veteran workforce training program through VET TEC, expanding access to home- and community-based services throughout every VA center, allowing older and sick veterans to receive care where they want it and where they need it, creating pilot programs to cover dental care, as well as address veteran homelessness by increasing reimbursement rates to partner organizations.

Furthermore, while this comprehensive bill does so much, I also highlight that it authorizes appropriations for the VA’s Office of Women’s Health to be used to expand access for women to mobile mammography units and outreach as well. This is imperative to ensure that our female veterans who live in rural areas, like in my district, have access to potentially lifesaving screenings.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to taking this final step to send this bill to the President’s desk and give our veterans the VA reforms that they demand and that they deserve. I urge my colleagues to vote “yes.”

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing S. 141, the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans

Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LUTTRELL).

Mr. LUTTRELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman BOST for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be here today to speak on S. 141, the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act. S. 141 includes provisions of my bill, H.R. 4461, the Modernizing Department of Veterans Affairs Disability Benefit Questionnaires Act.

Current practice does not require VA contractors who perform disability exams to submit disability benefit questionnaires, or DBQs, in a format that can easily be processed by VA claims automation software.

This leads to backlogs and delays that could be avoided by submitting the DBQs based on a standard that computers can read. Computerizing the data is the key to helping VA process and adjudicate veterans' claims faster.

The Modernizing Department of Veterans Affairs Disability Benefit Questionnaires Act would improve the DBQs, which are a critical part of the disability compensation process. As the VA moves forward with automation, standardizing the DBQ data will be crucial to timely and accurate claims processing.

Our veterans who have sacrificed so much for our country deserve a system that works for them and processes their disability compensation claims in an efficient manner.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support S. 141.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I encourage all Members to support this legislation. It is life-changing legislation for our Nation's veterans.

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, S. 141.

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. 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.

VETERANS BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2024

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2513) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2513

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.

This Act may be cited as the "Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLICATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DISABILITY BENEFIT QUESTIONNAIRE FORMS.

Section 5101 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1)(A), by inserting “, including (except as provided in paragraph (4)(A)) all disability benefit questionnaire forms available to personnel of the Veterans Health Administration and covered non-Department providers for the completion of examinations with respect to medical disability of applicants for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary” before the semicolon; and

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

“(4)(A) The Secretary may exclude from publication under clauses (i) and (ii) of paragraph (1)(A) any form described in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph that the Secretary determines could not reasonably be completed to a clinically acceptable standard by someone not an employee or a contractor of the Department.

“(B) A form described in this subparagraph is a form that—

“(i) was available or in use at any time after the date of the enactment of the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2024; and

“(ii) has not been published under paragraph (1).

“(C) The Secretary shall include on the same internet website as the website on which forms are published under paragraph (1)(A) a list of forms that have been excluded from publication pursuant to subparagraph (A), and for each such form, a justification for the exclusion of the form from publication.”; and

(2) in subsection (e), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) The term ‘covered non-Department provider’ means a medical provider who is not an employee of the Department and who provides examinations with respect to medical disability of applicants for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary pursuant to a contract with the Department.”.

SEC. 3. IMPROVEMENT OF PROVISION OF MEDICAL DISABILITY EXAMINATIONS BY CONTRACTORS.

(a) REPORT ON IMPROVING REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL RELATING TO MEDICAL DISABILITY EXAMINATIONS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, after consulting with the Secretary of State and the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on the efforts of the Secretary to reimburse veterans for expenses incurred traveling to a facility of the Department or of a covered non-Department provider incident to an examination with respect to the medical disability of the veteran for purposes of benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary, regardless of whether the facility is located inside or outside the United States.

(b) COMMUNICATION BY NON-DEPARTMENT PROVIDERS PROVIDING MEDICAL DISABILITY EXAMINATIONS WITH INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS DESIGNATED FOR PREPARATION, PRESENTATION, AND PROSECUTION OF CLAIMS.—Any contract entered into by the Secretary of

Veterans Affairs after the date of the enactment of this Act under which a covered non-Department provider agrees to provide examinations with respect to medical disability for applicants for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary, shall include a requirement that every communication from the covered non-Department provider to such an applicant regarding the scheduling of a covered medical disability examination be contemporaneously transmitted to any person or organization—

(1) designated by the applicant by a power of attorney filed with the Secretary; and

(2) recognized under sections 5902, 5903, and 5904 of title 38, United States Code, for the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims.

(c) DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTREACH REGARDING CONTACT INFORMATION FOR CONTRACTORS PROVIDING COVERED MEDICAL DISABILITY EXAMINATIONS.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in partnership with veterans service organizations and such other stakeholders as the Secretary considers relevant and appropriate, shall implement an outreach program to provide veterans with the following information:

(1) Contact information for covered non-Department providers that provide examinations with respect to medical disability of applicants for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary, including the telephone numbers such providers may use to contact veterans.

(2) Notice of the requirement for a veteran to provide personally identifiable information to such a provider when contacted in order to verify the identity of the veteran.

(d) COVERED NON-DEPARTMENT PROVIDER.—In this section, the term “covered non-Department provider” means a medical provider who is not an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs and who provides examinations with respect to medical disability of applicants for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs pursuant to a contract with the Department.

SEC. 4. REPORT ON SUPPORTING GOVERNMENTAL VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS WHO PREPARE, PRESENT, AND PROSECUTE BENEFITS CLAIMS BEFORE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and after consulting veterans service organizations and such other stakeholders as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs considers relevant and appropriate, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on improving the support by the Department of Veterans Affairs of covered governmental veterans service officers.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report submitted under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An assessment of the feasibility, advisability, and current technical limitations of providing covered governmental veterans service officers enhanced access to certain Department systems to better serve veterans those governmental service officers may not have authorization to represent.

(2) An assessment as to whether the Department would benefit from the establishment or designation of an office or working group within the Department to serve as an intergovernmental liaison between the Department and governmental veterans service officers.

(3) Any other recommendations to improve how the Department monitors, coordinates with, or provides support to covered governmental veterans service officers.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “covered governmental veterans service officer” means an employee of a State, county, municipal, or Tribal government—

(A) who is recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs as a representative of a veterans service organization to serve as a veterans service officer; and

(B) whose primary responsibilities include preparing, presenting, and prosecuting before the Department of Veterans Affairs claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary.

(2) The term “veterans service organization” means an organization recognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 5. BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 71 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 7114. Internship program

“The Secretary shall establish a competitive internship program of the Board for individuals enrolled in the first or second year of law schools accredited by the American Bar Association.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 71 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“7114. Internship program.”.

(c) DEADLINE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish the internship program required by section 7114 of such title, as added by subsection (a), not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 6. BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPANTS IN CERTAIN PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a program to furnish certain benefits to covered participants.

(b) BENEFITS: STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT; REIMBURSEMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to an agreement under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall provide to each covered attorney—

(A) student loan repayment benefits under section 5379 of title 5, United States Code, in the case of a covered attorney who is eligible for such benefits; and

(B) reimbursement for the cost of—

(i) enrollment in a course designed to prepare an individual for licensure to practice law in a State;

(ii) sitting for a bar examination in a State; and

(iii) annual dues required to maintain membership in the bar of any State.

(2) AGREEMENT.—The Secretary shall enter into an agreement with a covered attorney who will receive benefits under paragraph (1). Each such agreement shall specify that—

(A) the covered attorney agrees to remain in the service of the Department for a period of not less than three years, unless involuntarily separated; and

(B) if separated involuntarily on account of misconduct, or voluntarily, before the end of the period specified in the agreement, the covered attorney shall repay to the United States the amount of any benefits received by the covered participant under paragraph (1).

(c) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.—

(1) MENTORSHIP.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which an individual becomes a covered participant, the Secretary shall assign the covered participant a men-

tor who is an employee of the Department who is—

(A) to the extent practicable, a managerial employee; and

(B) outside the participant’s chain of command.

(2) ASSIGNMENTS.—At the election of a covered participant who has completed at least two years of service to the Department, the Secretary shall assign such covered participant to:

(A) The Office of General Counsel, in a position—

(i) that includes full-time legal responsibilities in order to further the professional development of the covered participant; and

(ii) for a period of not less than 120 days and not more than 180 days, or longer at the discretion of the Secretary.

(B) In the case of a covered participant who has already held a position described in subparagraph (A), an assignment described in clauses (i) and (ii) of such subparagraph with the Board of Veterans’ Appeals.

(3) OTHER ROTATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS.—The Secretary may provide a covered participant one or more other short-term rotational assignments. Such an assignment shall be for a period of not less than 30 days and not more than 180 days, at the discretion of the Secretary.

(d) PERIODIC REPORTS.—

(1) REPORTS REQUIRED.—Not later than three years after the date on which the Secretary begins to carry out the program under this section, and not less frequently than once every three years thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives regarding such program.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following elements:

(A) Costs to the United States to provide benefits under subsection (b).

(B) The rates of retention of covered participants compared to other employees of the Department.

(C) Recommendations of the Secretary regarding legislative or administrative action to improve such program.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “covered attorney” means an individual who—

(A) is a covered participant;

(B) has graduated from a law school accredited by the American Bar Association; and

(C) is a member in good standing of the bar of a State.

(2) The term “covered participant” means an individual who participates in—

(A) the Honors Attorney Program (or successor program) of the Office of General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Affairs; or

(B) the Law Clerk Program (or successor program) of the Board of Veterans’ Appeals.

(3) The term “State” has the meaning given such term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 7. INCREASE IN ADDITIONAL TEMPORARY EXPANSION OF UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS.

Section 7253(i) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking “Subject to paragraph (2), effective as of December 31, 2009” and inserting “(A) Subject to paragraph (2), effective during the period beginning on December 31, 2009, and ending on the date of the enactment of the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2024”; and

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

“(B) Subject to paragraph (2), effective as of the date of the enactment of the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2024, the authorized number of judges of the Court specified in subsection (a) is increased by three.”; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking “January 1, 2026” and inserting “January 1, 2028”.

SEC. 8. REPORT ON IMPROVING ACCESS TO BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS TELEHEARINGS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on improving access to hearings before the Board of Veterans’ Appeals held by picture and voice transmission.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) Recommendations on the feasibility and advisability of reimbursing veterans for expenses incurred for travel from the home of a veteran to the location at which a hearing before the Board of Veterans’ Appeals is held by picture and voice transmission, if the Secretary determines that travel to such location is reasonably necessary for such a hearing.

(2) Recommendations on establishment of pilot programs to assess the feasibility and advisability of using other methods that could improve veteran access to hearings before the Board of Veterans’ Appeals held by picture and voice transmission from a veteran’s home.

(3) Such other recommendations to improve access to hearings before the Board of Veterans’ Appeals held by picture and voice transmission as the Secretary may receive from stakeholders.

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 S. 2513.

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 S. 2513.

I thank my friend, Representative LUTTRELL, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, for leading the House companion to this important bill.

This legislation would make vital improvements for veterans and survivors who are navigating a VA disability claims and appeals process. Both Representative LUTTRELL and I have gone through the disability claims process, and we have seen firsthand how challenging it is.

S. 2513, and Mr. LUTTRELL’s companion bill, would streamline the VA claims process and make it easier for veterans to access the benefits they have earned.

This bill would require VA to publish disability compensation exam questionnaires on VA's website so that healthcare professionals can properly complete exams for veterans seeking disability benefits.

It would also ensure that contracted examiners communicate with veterans' representatives when scheduling disability compensation exams.

S. 2513 also includes Representative CISCOMANI's companion proposal to create a new internship program at the VA Board of Veterans' Appeals. This program would encourage law school graduates to join the fight for veterans and improve hiring at VA.

Finally, this bill includes Representative SELF's companion proposal to ensure that the U.S. Court of Appeals for veterans claims has enough judges to provide veterans and survivors with timely decisions on their claims.

These commonsense solutions would help veterans and their families receive faster decisions on their claims for VA benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. LUTTRELL, Mr. CISCOMANI, and Mr. SELF for their important work on this bill. I urge my colleagues to support S. 2513, 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 S. 2513, the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act.

I thank Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee Chairman LUTTRELL and Ranking Member PAPPAS for working in a bipartisan manner on the House companion to this package, which passed this body in September of last year. I also commend Representative CISCOMANI and Representative MCGARVEY for their contributions to this bill.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes several important changes that will help to streamline the medical disability exam process for veterans. It will also help to strengthen recruitment, hiring, and retention at the Board of Veterans' Appeals by creating a new internship program for law students and will expand the reimbursement programs for current employees to include student loans, professional development activities, bar exam fees, and dues.

Mr. Speaker, this bill also increases by one the number of temporary judges appointed to the Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims, allowing the court to process cases faster and grant veterans and survivors the relief they deserve.

Unfortunately, this is a much-paraded-back provision from the version originally considered by the House last year. This bill languished because Senate Republicans refused to expand the court, albeit on a temporary basis, until this moment. How curious.

Nevertheless, I do support this expansion, and I hope that we can do more in the future. I support S. 2513, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LUTTRELL), the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. LUTTRELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman BOST for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be here today to speak on S. 2513, the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2024. I am proud to lead the House companion to this bill, H.R. 1530.

Right now, the VA disability compensation claims process has too many barriers that prevent veterans from quickly receiving accurate decisions on their claims for VA benefits.

□ 1745

This bill would cut down on all the red tape. The bill would improve the quality of disability compensation exams by requiring VA to publish those exam forms online and ensure that veterans' representatives are notified of scheduled contracted disability compensation exams so that the veterans do not miss their appointments.

These are commonsense solutions to make the process for applying for disability benefits easier on veterans and their families.

As a veteran myself and chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, I know the difference these changes will make.

I also thank Representative CISCOMANI and Representative SELF for working with me on including their legislative proposals in my bill. Their provisions would help ensure that VA and the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims can hire and retain personnel required to process disability compensation claims and provide veterans with timely decisions on their claims.

These provisions are vitally important in light of the growing inventory of disability compensation claims after the implementation of the PACT Act. I am proud of this bill because it addresses many problems that the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs have tried to fix during this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member PAPPAS, Ranking Member TAKANO, and Chairman BOST for their leadership, and I urge my colleagues to support S. 2513.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in passing S. 2513, the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of 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 Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2513.

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.

REDUCING EXCESSIVE VETTING AUTHORITIES TO MAINTAIN OUR PORTS ACT

Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8150) 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, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8150

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 "Reducing Excessive Vetting Authorities to Maintain our Ports Act" or the "REVAMP Act".

SEC. 2. PORT MAINTENANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 411(o) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 211(o)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (4); and

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

“(3) PORT MAINTENANCE.—

“(A) PROCEDURES.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 3305 of title 40, United States Code, subject to subparagraph (B), the Commissioner, in consultation with the Administrator of General Services—

“(I) shall establish guidance and procedures by which U.S. Customs and Border Protection may conduct maintenance and repair projects costing not more than \$300,000 in the physical space at any Federal Government-owned port of entry at which the Office of Field Operations performs any of the activities described in subparagraphs (A) through (G) of subsection (g)(3); and

“(II) is authorized to perform such maintenance and repair projects, subject to the procedures described in clause (ii).

“(ii) GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES DESCRIBED.—The guidance and procedures established pursuant to clause (i) shall include—

“(I) a description of the types of projects that may be carried out pursuant to clause (i); and

“(II) the procedures for identifying and addressing any impacts on other tenants of facilities where such projects will be carried out.

“(iii) PUBLICATION OF GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES.—The guidance and procedures established pursuant to clause (i) shall be published in the Federal Register.

“(iv) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—The publication of guidance and procedures under clause (iii) shall not impact the authority of the Commissioner to update such procedures, in consultation with the Administrator, as appropriate.

“(B) LIMITATION.—The authority under subparagraph (A) shall only be available for maintenance and repair projects involving existing infrastructure, property, and capital at any port of entry described in such subparagraph.

“(C) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this paragraph may be construed to affect the availability of funding from—

“(i) the Federal Buildings Fund established under section 592 of title 40, United States Code;

“(ii) the Donation Acceptance Program established under section 482; or

“(iii) any other statutory authority or appropriation for projects described in subparagraph (A).”.

(b) REPORTING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report that includes the elements described in paragraph (2).

(2) ELEMENTS.—The elements described in this paragraph are the following:

(A) A summary of all maintenance projects conducted pursuant to section 411(o)(3) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by subsection (a) during the prior fiscal year.

(B) Information relating to the cost of each project referred to in subparagraph (A) of such section.

(C) An identification of the account that funded each such project, if applicable.

(D) any budgetary transfers, if applicable, that funded each such project.

(c) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 422(a) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 232(a)) is amended by inserting “section 411(o)(3) of this Act and” after “Administrator under”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TONY GONZALES) and the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TONY GONZALES 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 to include extraneous material on H.R. 8150.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of my bipartisan bill, H.R. 8150, the Reducing Excessive Vetting Authorities to Maintain our Ports Act.

Land ports of entry are a critical line of defense against fentanyl, drugs, and other illicit contraband that have plagued our communities.

Our ports of entry also bring in billions of dollars' worth of trade into our economy and serve as a lifeline for many cities along the border.

To help Customs officers carry out their mission, our international bridges must be kept in the best shape possible. My bill does just that by reducing the bureaucracy that is required to repair and maintain our ports of entry.

While the GSA has the primary authority to maintain our Federal facilities, there is a significant backlog for these projects and our ports of entry are no exception.

Currently, the GSA grants CBP the ability to perform limited repair

projects if the cost is less than \$100,000. Delegating this authority saves every-one time, and we all know that time is money.

My commonsense legislation would simply increase that number from \$100,000 to a \$300,000 threshold so that more of these minor projects at our ports of entry can be done quickly and efficiently.

This helps trade, this helps our taxpayers, and this helps our Customs personnel that work so hard to secure our borders.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on H.R. 8150, the REVAMP Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 8150, which allows Customs and Border Protection to make low-cost maintenance repairs at our ports of entry without involving the General Service Administration.

It makes sense to allow CBP to carry out expedited low-cost repairs needed to facilitate their operations at our ports of entry. We should not let minor maintenance issues slow down or disrupt legal trade and travel through our ports of entry. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation, which eliminates red tape.

I thank Representative GONZALES for leading this important initiative. This is a commonsense bill, Mr. Speaker. It allows CBP to carry out low-cost repairs needed to facilitate the operations at our ports of entry.

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

Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 8150, 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. TONY GONZALES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 8150, 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.

WORKING DOG HEALTH AND WELFARE ACT OF 2023

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2414) to require agencies with working dog programs to implement the recommendations of the Government Accountability Office relating to the health and welfare of working dogs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2414

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 “Working Dog Health and Welfare Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF WORKING DOG RECOMMENDATIONS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AGENCY.—The term “agency” has the meaning given the term in section 551 of title 5, United States Code.

(2) WORKING DOG.—The term “working dog” means a dog that has received specialized training in order to perform a particular productive function.

(3) WORKING DOG PROGRAM.—The term “working dog program” means a program, the operations of which include the employment of working dogs.

(4) WORKING DOG RECOMMENDATIONS.—The term “working dog recommendations” means the recommendations included in the report of the Government Accountability Office entitled “Working Dogs: Federal Agencies Need to Better Address Health and Welfare”, as published in October 2022.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the head of each agency that manages a working dog program shall implement the working dog recommendations.

(2) CONTRACTORS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, a contractor that manages a working dog program on behalf of an agency shall implement the working dog recommendations.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after the date on which the head of an agency or a contractor that manages a working dog program on behalf of an agency implements the working dog recommendations under this subsection, the head of the agency shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Oversight and Accountability of the House of Representatives a report on the explicit steps the agency or contractor has taken to complete the implementation.

(c) FOREIGN PARTNERS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall take appropriate steps to ensure that donations of working dogs provided to foreign partners by the Department of State are executed and monitored according to the working dog recommendations.

(d) NEW WORKING DOG PROGRAMS.—With respect to an agency that establishes a working dog program, or enters into a contract for the establishment of a working dog program, after the date of enactment of this Act, the head of the agency shall ensure that the working dog program implements the working dog recommendations.

(e) NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS.—No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated for the purpose of carrying out this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BURLISON) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURLISON. 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 this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2414, the Working Dog Health and Welfare Act of 2023.

As of February 2022, there are nearly 5,500 working dogs that have served in the Federal Government. They are tasked with many jobs, including the detection of explosives, narcotics, and missing persons.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the Working Dog Health and Welfare Act, S. 2414, requires agencies that manage working dog programs to implement recommendations that were made by the GAO in 2022 to improve the health and welfare and safety of working dogs.

It would also require any new program to comply with these recommendations. Agencies and contractors across the government use working dogs to support critical mission areas, such as law enforcement and security.

As of February 2022, Federal Government entities employed over 5,600 dogs. They help to detect explosives and narcotics, they conduct patrols and search and rescue missions, they help detect and apprehend suspects, and they support wildlife management. However, there is currently no consensus health and welfare standard that applies to the management of Federal working dogs.

In its report, GAO identified 18 critical issues important to the health and welfare of working dogs, which the agencies should address. That includes recommendations on everything from detection of abuse, neglect, and emergency medical care, to rest, length of on-duty time, and then canine retirement.

GAO found that of the 40 Federal working dog programs that are directly managed by Federal agencies, only 9 addressed all of these issues as important to the health and welfare of the dogs.

The bill requires all departments, agencies, and contractors managing working dog programs on behalf of an agency to implement these recommendations within 6 months of the bill's enactment.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to support this commonsense bill for animal welfare and animal rights and for those dogs who work hard in the Federal Government, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YAKYM).

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 2414, the Working Dog Health and Welfare Act. I was happy to work with Senator BRAUN and be the sponsor of the bipartisan House companion bill, H.R. 6950.

Over 5,500 working dogs perform various tasks in the 40 programs across the Federal Government. These impressive animals are essential to the daily operations of law enforcement and to our national defense.

They keep us safe by chasing down criminals and by finding deadly narcotics. Famously, a Delta Force working dog named Conan heroically helped neutralize the leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, in a raid in Syria back in 2019.

They also help with disaster relief and search and rescue efforts. These hardworking and heroic canines deserve the best care, but a government accountability audit found that none of the 40 working dog programs were satisfactory across all 18 aspects of care.

This legislation is simple. It requires government agencies with working dog programs to implement the GAO's sensible recommendations for health and welfare of these remarkable working dogs that are in their care.

I am very proud to sponsor the House companion bill for this legislation, and I encourage its passage.

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

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill to protect working dogs within the Federal Government, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BURLISON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2414.

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.

□ 1800

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT RISK REDUCTION ACT

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 4716) to amend section 7504 of title 31, United States Code, to improve the single audit requirements.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 4716

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 "Financial Management Risk Reduction Act".

SEC. 2. SINGLE AUDIT IMPROVEMENTS.

Section 7504 of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “, and” and inserting a semicolon;

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(3) participate in and furnish information for the review under subsection (e); and

“(4) identify recipients that expend \$300,000 or more in Federal awards or such other amount specified by the Director under section 7502(a)(3) during the recipient's fiscal year but did not undergo an audit in accordance with this chapter.”;

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by adding “and” at the end;

(B) by striking paragraph (2); and

(C) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (2); and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(d) Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this subsection, and every 2 years thereafter, the Director shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Oversight and Accountability of the House of Representatives a report listing the recipients identified under subsection (a)(4).

“(e)(1) The Director shall designate 1 or more Federal agencies to conduct a Government-wide analysis of single audit quality, which may include a consideration of the results of reviews of single audit quality by—

“(A) Federal agencies;

“(B) inspectors general of Federal agencies;

“(C) State auditors; and

“(D) external peer reviews conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

“(2) Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this subsection, and every 6 years thereafter, the Federal agencies designated under paragraph (1) shall complete a Government-wide analysis of single audit quality.

“(3) The Director shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Oversight and Accountability of the House of Representatives and make publicly available a summary of the results of each review under paragraph (2).

“(f) Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this subsection—

“(1) the Administrator of General Services, in coordination with the Director, the Council on Federal Financial Assistance (or any successor thereto), and key management single audit liaisons of Federal agencies designated as described in section 200.513 of title 2, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor thereto), shall develop analytic tools to use audit data in the Federal clearinghouse to identify cross-Governmental risks to Federal award funds; and

“(2) the Director, in coordination with the Administrator of General Services, the Council on Federal Financial Assistance (or any successor thereto), and key management single audit liaisons of Federal agencies designated as described in section 200.513 of title 2, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor thereto), shall develop a strategy to use audit data in the Federal clearinghouse to identify cross-Governmental risks to Federal award funds.

“(g) Not later than 4 years after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Comptroller General of the United States shall complete an evaluation of—

“(1) the effectiveness of the strategy and analytic tools developed under subsection (f);

“(2) reporting burdens for auditors and audited entities and the capacity of auditors and audited entities to fulfill the requirements under this chapter; and

“(3) the responsiveness of Federal agencies to repeat single audit findings and corrective action plans.”.

SEC. 3. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS.

No additional funds 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 Missouri (Mr. BURLISON) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURLISON. 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 this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Financial Management Risk Reduction Act of 2024, which will improve the quality and completeness of financial audit data of large Federal grant recipients.

If an entity receives Federal financial assistance from the Federal Government, we should be able to closely review their financial statements and expenditures of Federal funds to ensure that every transaction is legitimate.

I thank my House Oversight Committee colleague, Representative MARGORIE TAYLOR GREENE, for leading the House companion of this bill.

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

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

I rise in support of S. 4716, the Financial Management Risk Reduction Act, led by my esteemed colleague, Chairman GARY PETERS of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with Senator RON JOHNSON as his co-lead. I also thank Representative GREENE for leading the House companion.

Mr. Speaker, it appears financial management risk reduction is, indeed, an issue that speaks to everybody on both sides of the aisle. The bill would improve the quality and usability of independent audit data and enhance oversight of Federal funds.

The Single Audit Act of 1984 requires Federal grant recipients that receive more than \$750,000 to report an independent audit of their internal financial controls annually to the government. It sought to increase accountability while reducing burden on grant recipients by mandating a single, consolidated audit rather than audits on a discrete grant-by-grant basis. In 2022, over 40,000 State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments and not-for-profits submitted single audits.

The Financial Management Risk Reduction Act addresses recommendations made by the GAO, which were aimed at increasing the usability of single audit information to reduce Federal financial management risk. The bill codifies certain portions of OMB's Uniform Grants Guidance requiring

agencies to conduct quality control reviews on its audits and directs OMB to coordinate a governmentwide audit quality review every 6 years.

Finally, the bill would direct OMB to create a governmentwide strategy on financial risk regarding single audits and instructs GSA to create analytic tools to use single audit data more effectively.

This is a good bill that will improve the quality and accessibility of audit data, increasing the transparency and accountability of Federal spending.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, which will improve the quality and completeness of financial audit data of large Federal grant recipients, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BURLISON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 4716.

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.

FEDERAL IMPROVEMENT IN TECHNOLOGY PROCUREMENT ACT

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 9595) to improve Federal technology procurement, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 9595

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 "Federal Improvement in Technology Procurement Act" or the "FIT Procurement Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ACQUISITION WORKFORCE.—The term "acquisition workforce" means employees of an executive agency who are responsible for procurement, contracting, program or project management that involves the performance of acquisition-related functions, or others as designated by the Chief Acquisition Officer, senior procurement executive, or head of the contracting activity.

(2) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term "Administrator" means the Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy.

(3) CHIEF ACQUISITION OFFICER.—The term "Chief Acquisition Officer" means a Chief Acquisition Officer appointed pursuant to section 1702 of title 41, United States Code.

(4) CROSS-FUNCTIONAL.—The term "cross-functional" means a structure in which individuals with different functional expertise or from different areas of an organization work together as a team.

(5) EXECUTIVE AGENCY.—The term "executive agency" has the meaning given the term in section 133 of title 41, United States Code.

(6) EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING.—The term "experiential learning" means on-the-job exper-

iences or simulations that serve to enhance workforce professional skills.

(7) INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY.—The term "information and communications technology"—

(A) has the meaning given the term in section 4713(k) of title 41, United States Code; and

(B) includes information and communications technologies covered by any definition contained in the Federal Acquisition Regulation, including a definition added after the date of the enactment of this Act by the Federal Acquisition Regulatory Council pursuant to notice and comment.

(8) RELEVANT COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—The term "relevant committees of Congress" means the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Oversight and Accountability of the House of Representatives.

(9) SENIOR PROCUREMENT EXECUTIVE.—The term "senior procurement executive" means a senior procurement executive designated pursuant to section 1702(c) of title 41, United States Code.

(10) SMALL BUSINESS.—The term "small business" has the meaning given the term "small business concern" in section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632).

SEC. 3. ACQUISITION WORKFORCE.

(a) EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Federal Acquisition Institute shall establish a pilot program to consider the incorporation of experiential learning into the Federal Credentials Program, the Federal Acquisition Certification-Contracting Officer's Representative Program, and the Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers Program, or any successor program.

(b) TRAINING ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY ACQUISITION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Federal Acquisition Institute, in coordination with the Administrator, the Administrator of General Services, and the Administrator of the Office of Electronic Government, and in consultation with the heads of other executive agencies as determined to be appropriate by the Director of the Federal Acquisition Institute, shall develop and implement or otherwise provide a cross-functional information and communications technology acquisition training program for acquisition workforce members involved in acquiring information and communications technology. The training shall do the following:

(A) Include learning objectives related to market research, communicating with industry and industry perspectives on the procurement process, including how investment decisions are impacted by Government communication and engagement, developing requirements, acquisition planning, best practices for developing and executing outcome-based contracts, and source selection strategy, evaluating proposals, and awarding and administering contracts for information and communications technology.

(B) Include learning objectives that provide a basic understanding of key technologies executive agencies need, such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence and artificial intelligence-enabled applications, and cybersecurity solutions.

(C) Include learning objectives that encourage the use of commercial or commercially available off-the-shelf technologies to the greatest extent practicable.

(D) Include case studies of lessons learned from Federal information and communications technology procurements and contracts, and related matters as determined to

be relevant by the Director of the Federal Acquisition Institute.

(E) Include experiential learning opportunities, and opportunities to practice acquisition teaming involving collaboration of team members with varied relevant domain expertise to complete acquisition-related tasks, including tasks with accelerated timelines.

(F) Include continuous learning recommendations and resources to keep the skills of acquisition workforce members current, including tools that help adopt or adapt the use of innovative acquisition practices or other flexible business practices commonly used in commercial buys.

(G) Be made available to acquisition workforce members designated by a Chief Acquisition Officer, senior procurement executive, or head of the contracting activity to participate in the training program.

(H) Inform executive agencies about streamlined and alternative procurement methods for procurement of information and communications technology, including—

(i) simplified procedures for certain commercial products and commercial services in accordance with subpart 13.5 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation, prize competitions under the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-358), competitive programs that encourage businesses to engage in Federal research or research and development with the potential for commercialization, and joint venture partnerships;

(ii) innovative procurement techniques designed to streamline the procurement process and lower barriers to entry, such as use of oral presentations and product demonstrations instead of lengthy written proposals, appropriately leveraging performance and outcomes-based contracting, and other techniques discussed on the Periodic Table of Acquisition Innovations or other similar successor knowledge management portals; and

(iii) information on appropriate use, examples and templates, and any other information determined relevant by the Administrator to assist contracting officers and other members of the acquisition workforce in using the procedures described in clauses (i) and (ii).

(I) Incorporate learning objectives to identify and mitigate waste, fraud, and abuse and ensure the protection of established privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties in the procurement process.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Federal Acquisition Institute shall provide to the relevant committees of Congress, the Chief Acquisition Officers Council, and the Chief Information Officers Council—

(A) a report on the progress of the Director in developing and implementing or otherwise providing the information and communications technology acquisition training described in paragraph (1); and

(B) a list of any acquisition training that the Director determines to be outdated or no longer necessary.

(3) DURATION.—The training program shall be updated as appropriate, but at least every 2 years after implementation, and offered for a minimum of 6 years following the date of implementation of the training program.

(C) ACQUISITION WORKFORCE TRAINING FUND.—Section 1703(i)(3) of title 41, United States Code, is amended by striking “Five percent” and inserting “Seven and a half percent”.

(d) HARMONIZATION OF ACQUISITION WORKFORCE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.—Section 2 of the Artificial Intelligence Training for the Acquisition Workforce Act (Public Law 117-207; 41 U.S.C. 1703 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(4), by striking “DIRECTOR.—The term ‘Director’ means the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.” and inserting “ADMINISTRATOR.—The term ‘Administrator’ means the Administrator of General Services.”.

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “Director, in coordination with the Administrator of General Services and any other person determined relevant by the Director” and inserting “Administrator, in coordination with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget”;

(B) in paragraph (4), by striking “Director” and inserting “Administrator”;

(C) in paragraph (5), by striking “Director” and inserting “Administrator”;

(D) in paragraph (6), by striking “Director” and inserting “Administrator”.

SEC. 4. INNOVATIVE PROCUREMENT METHODS.

(a) INCREASE IN SIMPLIFIED ACQUISITION THRESHOLD.—Section 134 of title 41, United States Code, is amended by striking “\$250,000” and inserting “\$500,000”.

(b) INCREASE IN MICRO PURCHASE THRESHOLD.—Section 1902(a)(1) of title 41, United States Code, is amended by striking “\$10,000” and inserting “\$25,000”.

(c) ADVANCES FOR COMMERCIAL TECHNOLOGY SUBSCRIPTIONS AND TENANCY.—Section 3324(d) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(C), by striking “; and” and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by inserting “or commercially available content” after “publication”; and

(B) by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

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

“(3) charges for information and communications technology subscriptions, reservations, or tenancy, which means the sharing of computing resources in a private or public environment, including cloud environments, for which the ordering agency defines appropriate access and security standards.”.

SEC. 5. INCREASING COMPETITION IN FEDERAL CONTRACTING.

(a) USE OF PAST PERFORMANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall issue guidance, including examples and templates where appropriate, on—

(A) when a wider range of projects, such as commercial or non-government, as well as Government projects, should be accepted as relevant past performance, in order to have increased competition among eligible firms with capability to perform a requirement, such as a requirement without much precedent;

(B) a means by which an agency may validate non-government past performance references, such as by requiring an official of an entity providing past performance references to attest to their authenticity and by providing verifiable contact information for the references; and

(C) use of alternative evaluation methods other than past performance that may be appropriate for a requirement without much precedent, such as demonstrations and testing of technologies as part of the proposal process.

(2) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—The guidance issued under paragraph (1) shall supplement existing Federal and agency policy and procedures for consideration of past performance and other evaluation factors and methods.

(b) ENHANCING COMPETITION IN FEDERAL PROCUREMENT.—

(1) COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment

of this Act, the Administrator shall convene the Chief Acquisition Officers Council (in this section referred to as the “Council”), to make recommendations to identify and eliminate specific, unnecessary procedural barriers that disproportionately affect the ability of small businesses to compete for Federal contracts, with a focus on streamlining documentation and qualification requirements unrelated to the protection of privacy and civil liberties.

(2) CONSULTATION.—The Council shall obtain input from the public, including from the APEX Accelerators program (formerly known as Procurement Technical Assistance Center network) and other contractor representatives, to identify Federal procurement policies and regulations that are obsolete, overly burdensome or restrictive, not adequately harmonized, or otherwise serve to create barriers to small business participation in Federal contracting or unnecessarily increase bid and proposal costs.

(3) EXAMINATION OF ACTIONS.—The Council shall consider the input obtained under paragraph (2) and any other information determined to be relevant by the Council to identify legislative, regulatory, and other actions to increase competition and remove barriers to small business participation in the procurement process.

(4) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator, in consultation with the Federal Acquisition Regulatory Council, the Chief Acquisition Officers Council, and other executive agencies as appropriate, shall implement the regulatory and other non-legislative actions identified under paragraph (3), as determined necessary by the Administrator, to remove barriers to entry for small businesses seeking to participate in Federal Government procurement.

(5) BRIEFING.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall brief the relevant committees of Congress on the legislative actions identified under paragraph (3), and the actions implemented under paragraph (4).

(c) CONSIDERATION OF COST-EFFICIENCY AND QUALITY.—The Administrator shall advocate for and prioritize contracting policies that ensure that cost-efficiency and quality of goods and services are key determining factors in awarding Federal contracts.

SEC. 6. COMPTROLLER GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION IN FEDERAL PROCUREMENT.

Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress and make publicly available a report that—

(1) assesses the current level of small business participation in Federal procurement, identifying barriers, opportunities, and the impact of existing policies on the ability of small businesses to compete in Federal procurement;

(2) catalogs and evaluates the effectiveness of programs intended to support small business participation in Federal procurement; and

(3) analyzes trends in small business involvement in Federal technology projects, including data on contract awards, the diversity of sectors represented, and the geographic distribution of small business contractors.

SEC. 7. CONFLICT OF INTEREST PROCEDURES.

The Federal Acquisition Regulatory Council and the Administrator shall update the Federal Acquisition Regulation as necessary to provide additional guidance to executive agencies to address personal and organizational conflicts of interest involving members of the acquisition workforce.

SEC. 8. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDING.

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated for the purpose of carrying out this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BURLISON) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURLISON. 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 this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 9595, the FIT Procurement Act. This bill streamlines the procurement process for small businesses and small transactions and would enable the government to take full advantage of commercial best practices.

This legislation achieves this in three ways: first, by increasing the micro purchase threshold, or the MPT, from \$10,000 to \$25,000; second, by increasing the simplified acquisition threshold, or the SAT, from \$250,000 to \$500,000; and, third, by authorizing advance payments for certain types of software and cloud computing.

On the first, I would note that purchases under the MPT, which currently account for a tiny fraction of overall government contract spending, do not require the involvement of a Federal contracting officer. For this reason, raising the MPT from \$10,000 to \$25,000 is estimated by George Mason's Baroni Center for Government Contracting to save more than \$40 million annually in Federal administrative costs. This allows contracting officers to focus more time on larger acquisitions, where the potential for waste, fraud, and abuse is far greater.

Further, purchases above the MPT and below the SAT are subject to simplified procedures in order to reduce administrative costs and promote opportunities for small businesses.

By increasing the SAT from \$250,000 to \$500,000, this bill provides opportunities for small businesses and reduces administrative burdens for smaller government contracts.

Finally, by allowing for advance payments for software services, this bill saves taxpayer dollars by allowing Federal agencies to access the discounts that are currently available through upfront payments to the private sector.

I thank Chairman COMER and his staff for working with me on this effort in the Oversight Committee, and I thank Senators PETERS and CRUZ for leading the Senate companion to this legislation.

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

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

I rise in support of H.R. 9595, the FIT Procurement Act. This bill is modeled after a bipartisan Senate bill led by Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman GARY PETERS, along with Senator CRUZ.

The act streamlines and simplifies Federal procurement to help agencies acquire commercial technology in a timelier way and to make it easier for businesses to compete for contracts.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to support this bill today. I associate myself with the remarks of the distinguished gentleman from Missouri. I urge passage of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, which will streamline the procurement process for small businesses and small transactions, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BURLISON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 9595.

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.

1ST LIEUTENANT ANDRES
ZERMENO POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6244) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1535 East Los Ebanos Boulevard in Brownsville, Texas, as the "1st Lieutenant Andres Zermeno Post Office Building".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6244

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. 1ST LIEUTENANT ANDRES ZERMENO POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1535 East Los Ebanos Boulevard in Brownsville, Texas, shall be known and designated as the "1st Lieutenant Andres Zermeno Post Office Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "1st Lieutenant Andres Zermeno Post Office Building".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BURLISON) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURLISON. 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 this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, which would rename a post office in Texas after 1st Lieutenant Andres Zermeno. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 6244, introduced by Congressman VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas, which would honor the impressive legacy and the sacrifice of 1st Lieutenant Zermeno by naming a post office after him in Brownsville.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ).

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 6244, to rename the post office located at 1535 East Los Ebanos Boulevard in Brownsville, Texas, after 1st Lieutenant Andres Zermeno.

Mr. Speaker, 1st Lieutenant Zermeno was born November 30, 1984, in Brownsville, Texas. He went on to graduate from St. Mary's University in San Antonio. While a student at St. Mary's, he participated in the university's ROTC program and enlisted in the Texas National Guard.

After graduating from St. Mary's, he was commissioned into the United States Army as a first lieutenant. On September 25, 2011, while serving in a combat operation known as Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, while on patrol, 1st Lieutenant Zermeno was sadly killed in action by a rocket-propelled grenade.

Lieutenant Zermeno is a hero who laid down his life to protect our freedoms, leaving his loving wife and two children behind.

By passing H.R. 6244, we as a nation will honor 1st Lieutenant Zermeno and the sacrifice he made on behalf of our great Nation. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in honoring the life and legacy of an American hero.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his compelling remarks, and I support passage of H.R. 6244. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill to designate a post office for 1st Lieutenant Zermeno, an American war hero who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to his country.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BURLISON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6244.

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.

SERGEANT MAJOR BILLY D.
WAUGH POST OFFICE

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3946) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1106 Main Street in Bastrop, Texas, as the "Sergeant Major Billy D. Waugh Post Office".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3946

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SERGEANT MAJOR BILLY D. WAUGH POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1106 Main Street in Bastrop, Texas, shall be known and designated as the "Sergeant Major Billy D. Waugh Post Office".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Sergeant Major Billy D. Waugh Post Office".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BURLISON) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURLISON. 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 this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, which would rename a post office located in Texas in honor of Sergeant Major Billy D. Waugh.

Sergeant Major Waugh served for five decades as an Army paratrooper, Special Forces soldier, combat veteran, USPS mail handler, and CIA paramilitary operations officer. He passed away in April 2023.

I support naming a post office in honor of Sergeant Major Waugh, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Just to complete a little bit of the portrait of Sergeant Major Waugh, which was begun by Mr. BURLISON, Sergeant Major Waugh also served in the Green Berets within the U.S. Army Special Forces in 1954.

When he retired from the Army, he returned to serve as a paramilitary officer within the CIA Special Activities Division. Waugh was one of the oldest

field operatives at the age of 71, providing critical intelligence and guidance to Afghan troops.

In his career, he earned a Silver Star, four Bronze Stars, eight Purple Hearts, and the CIA's Intelligence Star. He passed away in April 2023 at 93 years old.

The legislation would honor his legacy, his extraordinary more-than-50-year military career, and his dedication to the country by naming a post office after him in his hometown of Bastrop, Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL).

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, you and I just returned from Luxembourg to honor the veterans of World War II who fought in the Battle of the Bulge. I was there on behalf of the House of Representatives at the Speaker's request to honor the Greatest Generation and their sacrifices to defeat evil and ensure that freedom would persevere.

□ 1815

Those soldiers that braved the Nazi onslaught and the frozen forest of the Ardennes to liberate Europe are known as the Greatest Generation.

Sergeant Major Billy D. Waugh was part of that great generation. The service website military.com, using the colloquial name for Special Forces made famous during the Vietnam war, called Mr. Waugh, "the unparalleled godfather of the Green Berets," for his long years of service and numerous missions with them.

He led a lifelong commitment to his country from a young age. He understood, as Reagan did, that freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for and protected.

Sergeant Major Waugh was born in 1929 and raised in Bastrop, Texas, in my district, and in 1945, after meeting two local United States Marines who returned from fighting World War II, the then 15-year-old Mr. Waugh was inspired to enlist in the Marine Corps.

Knowing that it was unlikely that he would be allowed to enlist in Texas due to his young age, Waugh decided to hitchhike to Los Angeles where he believed he only had to be 16 years of age.

He got as far as Las Cruces, New Mexico, before being turned around and sent back to Bastrop by a local police officer. That shows you the amount of patriotism this young 15-year-old had. Later, in 1948, he did enlist and serve his country as an Army paratrooper and Special Forces soldier until 1972.

Sergeant Major Waugh was no stranger to the front and served 7 years in combat during the Korean and Vietnam wars where he was shot multiple times. While in combat, he was part of a high-altitude, low-opening, or HALO, parachute assault, the first of its kind in military history.

For his service, Sergeant Major Waugh received dozens of military awards and medals, including the Silver Star, four Bronze Stars, a Presidential Unit Citation, and eight Purple Hearts for his combat wounds, placing him third on the list of most Purple Hearts ever received in the history of the United States military.

After retirement, he joined the United States Postal Service before again serving his country as a paramilitary operations officer in the Central Intelligence Agency where he pursued terrorists, including Carlos the Jackal and Osama Bin Laden.

Mr. Waugh never lost his sense of duty, patriotism, and his enduring love of freedom. At the age of 71 Mr. Waugh participated in Operation Enduring Freedom from October to December 2001 as a member of the CIA's Northern Alliance Liaison Team, which went into Afghanistan to work to topple the Taliban regime and al-Qaida at the Battle of Tora Bora.

Sergeant Major Billy D. Waugh passed away last year at the age of 93. He epitomized the American values of courage, patriotism, and self-sacrifice. Through his unparalleled life of service, he undoubtedly saved countless American lives and pushed back terrorism and evil around the world.

After a life of service to his country, it is only fitting that the post office located 1106 Main Street in Bastrop, Texas, be named after him.

Naming this post office after him is a testament to a life well lived and an opportunity for all Texans to pay homage to this great American hero.

I am inspired by him, as I know are all Americans. We are inspired that he is from Texas. I support this measure, and may God hold Sergeant Major Waugh in the palm of his hand.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I encourage my House colleagues to support this bill honoring Sergeant Major Waugh, an American hero, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BURLISON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3946.

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.

CHANCE TO COMPETE ACT OF 2024

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 59) to implement merit-based reforms to the civil service hiring system that replace degree-based hiring with skills- and competency-based hiring.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 59

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 “Chance to Compete Act of 2024”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

(a) AMENDATORY DEFINITIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 3304 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by redesignating subsections (b) through (g) as subsections (h) through (m), respectively;

(B) by redesignating subsection (a) as subsection (b); and

(C) by inserting before subsection (b), as so redesignated, the following:

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) AGENCY.—The term ‘agency’ means an Executive agency.

“(2) DIRECTOR.—The term ‘Director’ means the Director of the Office.

“(3) EXAMINATION.—The term ‘examination’ means the process by which an applicant demonstrates knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies.

“(4) EXAMINING AGENCY.—The term ‘examining agency’ means—

“(A) the Office; or

“(B) an agency to which the Director has delegated examining authority under section 1104(a)(2).

“(5) OFFICE.—The term ‘Office’ means the Office of Personnel Management.

“(6) PASSING SCORE.—The term ‘passing score’ means a minimum acceptable score or rating, consistent with applicable law, that may include a quantitative or qualitative assessment that an applicant can pass or fail.

“(7) RELEVANT COMMITTEES.—The term ‘relevant committees’ means—

“(A) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate; and

“(B) the Committee on Oversight and Accountability of the House of Representatives.

“(8) SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT.—The term ‘subject matter expert’ means an employee or selecting official—

“(A) who possesses an understanding of the duties of, and knowledge, skills, and abilities required for, the position for which the employee or selecting official is developing or administering an examination; and

“(B) whom the delegated examining unit of the examining agency that employs the employee or selecting official designates to assist in the development and administration of technical assessments.

“(9) TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT.—The term ‘technical assessment’ means a position-specific tool that is relevant to the position for which the tool is developed that—

“(A) allows for the demonstration of job-related skills, abilities, knowledge, and competencies;

“(B) is based upon a job analysis; and

“(C) does not solely include or principally rely upon a self-assessment from an automated examination.”.

(2) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE.—Part III of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(i) in chapter 33—

(I) in section 3302(2), by striking “3304(a)” and inserting “3304(b)”; and

(II) in section 3330a(a)(1)(B), by striking “3304(f)(1)” and inserting “3304(l)(1)”; and

(ii) in section 9810(b), by striking “3304(b)” and inserting “3304(h)”.

(B) ACT TO ESTABLISH A COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE.—Section 8(d)(2) of the Act entitled, “An Act to establish a Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe”, approved June 3, 1976 (22 U.S.C. 3008(d)(2)) is amended by striking “3304(c)(1)” and inserting “3304(i)(1)”.

(C) U.S.—CHINA RELATIONS ACT OF 2000.—Section 308(e)(2) of the U.S.—China Relations Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 6918(e)(2)) is amended by striking “3304(c)(1)” and inserting “3304(i)(1)”.

(D) ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY ACT OF 2007.—Section 136(i)(1) of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17013(i)(1)) is amended by striking “3304(a)(3)” and inserting “3304(b)(3)”.

(E) SUBSECTION HEADINGS.—Section 3304 of title 5, United States Code, as amended by paragraph (1) of this subsection, is amended—

(i) in subsection (b), by striking “The President” and inserting “RULES.—The President”;

(ii) in subsection (h), by striking “An individual” and inserting “EXAMINATION OR EXCEPTION REQUIRED.—An individual”;

(iii) in subsection (i), by striking “(1) For the purpose” and inserting “TECHNICIANS.—(1) For the purpose”;

(iv) in subsection (j), by striking “The Office” and inserting “CONSIDERATION OF EXPERIENCE.—The office”;

(v) in subsection (k), by striking “Employees” and inserting “USE OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS.—Employees”;

(vi) in subsection (l), by striking “(1) Preference eligibles or veterans” and inserting “PREFERENCE ELIGIBLES AND VETERANS.—(1) Preference eligibles or veterans”.

(b) FREESTANDING DEFINITIONS.—In this Act—

(1) each term that is defined in section 3304(a) of title 5, United States Code, as added by subsection (a) of this section, shall have the meaning given the term in such section 3304(a); and

(2) the term “competitive service” has the meaning given the term in section 2102 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 3. MODERNIZING FEDERAL HIRING.

Section 3304 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after subsection (b), as redesignated by section 2, the following:

“(c) EXAMINATIONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—For the purpose of testing applicants for appointment for a position, or class of positions, in the competitive service, an examining agency shall conduct an examination pursuant to subsection (b).

“(2) INTERIM EXAMINATION PERIOD.—

“(A) PREFERENCE FOR TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT.—During the 3-year period beginning on the date of enactment of the Chance to Compete Act of 2024, an examining agency shall preference the use of a technical assessment, to the maximum extent practicable, to assess the job-related skills, abilities, knowledge, and competencies of an applicant for a position in the competitive service.

“(B) USE OF ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT.—During the 3-year period beginning on the date of enactment of the Chance to Compete Act of 2024, if an examining agency determines that the use of a technical assessment to assess the job-related skills, abilities, knowledge, and competencies of an applicant for a position in the competitive service is not practicable, the examining agency may use an alternative assessment for that purpose if the examining agency includes a brief description of the rationale for the use of the alternative assessment in the job posting.

“(3) TRANSITION PLANNING.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later 18 months after the date of enactment of the Chance to Compete Act of 2024, the Director shall submit to the relevant committees a plan to transition Federal hiring practices to adopt technical assessments in accordance with subsection (d), which shall include—

“(i) the prioritization of—

“(I) job classifications; and

“(II) resource requirements; and

“(ii) a timeline for full implementation of the transition.

“(B) ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION.—In developing the plan under subparagraph (A), the Director shall consult with, at minimum—

“(i) the Director of the Office of Management and Budget;

“(ii) the Chair of the Chief Human Capital Officers Council;

“(iii) employee representatives; and

“(iv) relevant external stakeholders.

“(4) IMPLEMENTATION OF TECHNICAL ASSESSMENTS.—

“(A) IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of the Chance to Compete Act of 2024, the Director shall implement the plan submitted under paragraph (3).

“(B) ADOPTION OF TECHNICAL ASSESSMENTS.—On and after the date that is 3 years after the date of enactment of the Chance to Compete Act of 2024, an examining agency shall use a technical assessment to examine applicants for positions in the competitive service in accordance with subsection (d).

“(C) WAIVER.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The requirement under subparagraph (B) shall not apply to an examining agency with respect to a particular job series if—

“(I) the examining agency determines that use of a technical assessment is impracticable for the job series; and

“(II) the head of the examining agency submits to the Director and the relevant committees a certification that use of the technical assessment is impracticable, which certification shall include—

“(aa) identification of the job series;

“(bb) identification of the number of positions that are included in the job series within the agency for which the examining agency is conducting examinations; and

“(cc) a description of the rationale for the determination.

“(ii) EFFECTIVENESS OF WAIVER.—A waiver under this subparagraph shall be effective for the period—

“(I) beginning on the date that is 1 day after the date on which the applicable certification is submitted under clause (i)(II); and

“(II) ending on the date that is 3 years after the date on which the applicable certification is submitted under clause (i)(II).

“(iii) NO DELEGATION OF CERTIFICATION AUTHORITY.—The head of an examining agency may not delegate the authority to submit a certification under clause (i)(II).

“(d) TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—For the purpose of conducting an examination for a position in the competitive service, an individual who is determined by an examining agency to be a subject matter expert in the subject and job field of the position may—

“(A) develop, in partnership with human resources employees of the examining agency, a position-specific assessment that is relevant to the position, based on job analysis, which may include—

“(i) a structured interview;

“(ii) a work-related exercise;

“(iii) a custom or generic procedure used to measure an applicant’s employment or career-related qualifications and interests; or

“(iv) another assessment that—

“(I) allows for the demonstration of job-related technical skills, abilities, and knowledge; and

“(II) is relevant to the position for which the assessment is developed; and

“(B) administer the assessment developed under subparagraph (A) to—

“(i) determine whether an applicant for the position has a passing score to be qualified for the position; or

“(ii) rank applicants for the position for category rating purposes under section 3319.

“(2) FEASIBILITY STUDY ON SHARING AND CUSTOMIZATION OF ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Chance to Compete Act of 2024, the Director shall—

“(A) conduct a feasibility study that examines the practicability, including a cost benefit analysis, of—

“(i) the sharing of technical assessments by an examining agency with another examining agency;

“(ii) mechanisms for each examining agency to maintain appropriate control over examination material that is shared by the examining agency as described in clause (i);

“(iii) limits on customization of a technical assessment that is shared as described in clause (i) and mechanisms to ensure that the resulting technical assessment satisfies the requirements under part 300 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation); and

“(iv) the development of an online platform on which examining agencies can share and customize technical assessments as described in this subparagraph; and

“(B) submit to the relevant committees a report on the study conducted under subparagraph (A).

“(e) FEDERAL AGENCY TALENT TEAMS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—An agency may establish 1 or more agency talent teams, including at the component level.

“(2) DUTIES.—An agency talent team shall provide hiring support to the agency, including by—

“(A) improving examinations;

“(B) facilitating the writing of job announcements for the competitive service;

“(C) sharing high-quality certificates of eligible applicants; and

“(D) facilitating hiring for the competitive service using examinations.

“(f) OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT TALENT TEAM.—The Director may establish a Federal talent team to support agency talent teams by—

“(1) facilitating hiring actions across the Federal Government;

“(2) providing training;

“(3) creating tools and guides to facilitate hiring for the competitive service; and

“(4) developing technical assessments.

“(g) RULEMAKING.—The Director shall promulgate such regulations as are necessary to implement and interpret this section.”.

SEC. 4. COMPETITIVE SERVICE CANDIDATE HIRING AND REFORM.

(a) REVIEW.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall conduct a review of examinations for hiring for each position in the competitive service that an examining agency has determined requires a minimum educational requirement because the position is of a scientific, technical, or professional nature pursuant to section 3308 of title 5, United States Code, to determine whether data, evidence, or other information justifies the need for educational requirements for the position.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Director shall consult with, at minimum—

(A) agencies, as deemed appropriate by the Director;

(B) employee representatives;

(C) external experts; and

(D) relevant stakeholders.

(b) REPORT ON HIRING PRACTICES.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall submit to the relevant committees recommendations to amend the hiring practices of examining agencies in accordance with the findings of the review conducted under subsection (a)(1).

SEC. 5. REPORTS.

(a) IMPLEMENTATION REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and each year thereafter ending with the fifth publication and submission of the report, the Director shall publish on a public-facing website, and submit to the relevant committees, a report that—

(A) examines the progress of examining agencies in implementing the requirements of this Act and the amendments made by this Act; and

(B) identifies any significant difficulties encountered in the implementation described in subparagraph (A).

(2) INCLUSION IN ANNUAL REPORT.—The Director may include the report required under paragraph (1) as an addendum to the report required under subsection (b).

(3) DELAYED REPORTING.—If the Director is unable to publish and submit the report within the timeline required under paragraph (1), the Director shall publish on a public-facing website, and submit to the relevant committees, a notification of the delay that—

(A) provides a reason for the delay; and

(B) advises the public and the relevant committees of the anticipated date of publication and submission of the report.

(b) ANNUAL REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and each year thereafter, the Director shall publish on a public-facing website and submit to the relevant committees a report that, with respect to categories of positions in the competitive service for which an examining agency examined applicants during the applicable period, includes—

(A) the type of examination used; and

(B) summary data from examinations that are closed, audited, and anonymous on the use of examinations for the competitive service, including technical assessments.

(2) DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Director shall break the data down by applicant demographic indicators to facilitate direct comparability and trendline comparisons to data available as of October 1, 2020, as a baseline.

(3) LIMITATIONS.—In carrying out this subsection, the Director may only publish and submit to the relevant committees data relating to examinations for which—

(A) the related announcement is closed;

(B) certificates have been audited; and

(C) all hiring processes are completed.

(4) DELAYED REPORTING.—If the Director is unable to publish and submit the report within the timeline required under paragraph (1), the Director shall publish on a public-facing website, and submit to the relevant committees, a notification of the delay that—

(A) provides a reason for the delay; and

(B) advises the public and the relevant committees of the anticipated date of publication and submission of the report.

(c) PROVISION OF DATA BY AGENCIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall issue guidance to examining agencies regarding the data that the Director needs from the examining agencies in order to comply with subsections (a) and (b).

(2) REPORTING TIMELINES.—Each examining agency shall provide the data outlined in the guidance issued by the Director under paragraph (1) on a quarterly basis.

SEC. 6. GAO REPORT.

Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report that—

(1) assesses the implementation of this Act and the amendments made by this Act;

(2) assesses the impact of modifications made by this Act to the hiring process for the competitive service under section 3304 of title 5, United States Code; and

(3) makes recommendations for the improvement of the hiring process for the competitive service.

SEC. 7. EVALUATION FOR POTENTIAL UPDATES OR REVISIONS TO GOVERNMENT-WIDE SYSTEMS OF RECORDS AT THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall evaluate whether the Government-wide system of records notices, the OPM/GOVT-5 Recruiting, Examining, and Placement Records, and the OPM/GOVT-6 Personnel Research and Test Validation Records, or any successor materials thereto, require updating or revision in order to support the implementation of this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

(b) ISSUANCE OF UPDATES OR REVISIONS; NOTICE TO CONGRESS.—If the Director determines under subsection (a) that any updates or revisions are necessary, the Director, in accordance with section 552a of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the “Privacy Act”), shall promptly—

(1) issue the updates or revisions; and

(2) notify the relevant committees.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BURLISON) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURLISON. 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 this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 59, the Chance to Compete Act.

The concept of this bill is very simple: Let's hire applicants for Federal positions based on whether they have the skills to do the job. Too frequently, the Federal hiring process is based on whether or not somebody has a degree even if that degree has nothing to do with the position.

Additionally, Federal hiring managers also rely on required self-assessments filled out by applicants to determine their own skill sets, strengths, and weaknesses. Not surprisingly, such self-assessments do not work very well. The Chance to Compete Act authorizes agencies to develop appropriate skills-based examinations so that applicants for Federal jobs can show what they know.

Federal supervisors have said that their top concern is getting a pool of quality candidates to perform necessary jobs. The Chance to Compete Act addresses this problem head-on. It will create teams of subject matter experts to help agencies create assessments that are geared for the job.

This idea is supported by Federal managers, and it builds off of work begun in the Trump administration, which the Biden administration has continued.

I thank Representative FOXX, the sponsor of the House companion bill, along with Representatives CONNOLLY, KHANNA, MFUME, and MACE for their support.

This is a good policy that will help the American people's government work better, and I urge my colleagues to support S. 59.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 59, introduced in the Senate by Senators SINEMA and LANKFORD. The House passed a substantially similar bill to this in January of last year. I commend Representatives FOXX and CONNOLLY for their excellent work on the bill.

The legislation makes evaluations more useful in assessing the skills of candidates for Federal jobs and makes the hiring process more efficient and more effective rather than relying on attainment of an educational degree to determine candidate qualifications in the Federal hiring process.

Subject matter experts in agencies would develop assessments that are designed to test specific knowledge needed for the position. This overhaul would better match qualified applicants with open positions and expand employment opportunities to candidates with various professional and educational backgrounds.

The Chance to Compete Act aligns with the Office of Personnel's guidance released in May of 2022, which strives to modernize the process of assessing and hiring Federal job candidates. Establishing hiring methods that are more skills-based will improve agency managers' ability to hire people who possess the right skills and knowledge to do the job and also allow agencies to hire from a much broader pool of qualified applicants.

The bill directs OPM to study the feasibility of creating an online platform for sharing candidate assessments between agencies. Under the legislation, agencies may also assemble talent teams to support this assessment of job candidates in the hiring process.

The OPM Director would be required to submit annual progress reports to Congress for 5 years on the use and the effectiveness of the new skills-based assessments.

The GAO would be required to submit a report on implementation of the bill 3 years after enactment. The bill streamlines the hiring process for agencies and will shorten the time it takes to bring new and well-qualified employees aboard.

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

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX).

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, hiring people based on their unique individual skills is something I have promoted all my life. It is precisely why I introduced the Chance to Compete Act.

As the largest employer in the Nation with almost 2.2 million employees, it is time for the Federal Government to base its hiring on verifiable skills instead of degrees or self-evaluation.

People should be hired on their ability to do the job. This is a common-sense idea that the private sector figured out a long time ago. It is easy to see that current Federal hiring practices are broken.

These hiring practices rely on how many degrees one has and on self-evaluations that allow candidates to grossly inflate their own qualifications. They can claim to be experts on a particular subject, but they are not being evaluated by an objective standard.

Hardworking American taxpayers are the ones who are forced to pay for employees who cannot properly perform their own jobs. I have even seen this play out recently while my office has been dealing with FEMA and other Federal agencies in the wake of Hurricane Helene.

Fortunately, there is a better way. The Chance to Compete Act allows the Federal Government to retain subject matter experts, those who know what it takes to do a job, who design and administer skills-based assessments to job seekers. This is designed to identify candidates who have the professional wherewithal to complete a job.

These assessments also weed out those applicants who merely claim to be experts and have the right degree on paper. The Trump administration recognized this issue with an executive order in 2020 by directing agencies to identify qualified applicants to hire people based on objective standards, such as structured interviews, knowledge, or writing tests.

It is good that the Congress will codify this effort by passing this law and the Trump administration will be able to implement it. The Federal Government owes it to taxpayers to hire people based on their ability to do the job. The House recognized this when it passed the House version of the Chance to Compete Act in January of 2023 in a vote of 422 to 2.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass this carefully crafted Senate compromised version, S. 59, today.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support S. 59, and I salute Ms. FOXX on her excellent leadership and stewardship of this legislation.

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 Missouri (Mr. BURLISON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 59.

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.

DIANNE FEINSTEIN POST OFFICE

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 4077) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 180 Steuart Street in San Francisco, California, as the "Dianne Feinstein Post Office".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 4077

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DIANNE FEINSTEIN POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 180 Steuart Street in San Francisco, California, shall be known and designated as the "Dianne Feinstein Post Office".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Dianne Feinstein Post Office".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina.

□ 1830

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. FOXX. 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 this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

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

This bill would rename a post office in San Francisco, California, as the Dianne Feinstein Post Office.

Feinstein was the longest serving Senator to represent California and the longest serving female Senator in the history of the United States.

S. 4077 would honor the memory of Dianne Feinstein.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise also in strong support of S. 4077 introduced in the Senate by the distinguished California Senator PADILLA, which would honor the legacy and public service of the late Senator Dianne Feinstein. She was a trailblazer, breaking barriers as the first woman to be elected as mayor of San Francisco, California.

After her election to the U.S. Senate from California, she became the first woman to serve on the Senate Judiciary Committee, the first woman chair of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, the first female chair on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and the first woman to serve as ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

She championed legislation to advance civil rights, civil liberties, human rights, and environmental protection.

Thanks to her leadership, Congress secured the first Federal assault weapons ban in 1994.

Her legacy is one of unswerving devotion to public service and the common good.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this legislation which would name a post office in the birthplace of her political career, San Francisco, in her honor.

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I have no further comments, and I am ready to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I also have no further speakers. I support passage of S. 4077, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BUCSHON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 4077.

The question was taken.

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

Ms. FOXX. 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:

Concurring in the Senate amendment to H.R. 7213;

Passing S. 3998;

Passing S. 141; and

Passing S. 4077.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 2-minute votes.

AUTISM COLLABORATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND SUPPORT ACT OF 2024

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 7213) to amend the Public Health Service Act to enhance and reauthorize activities and programs relating to autism spectrum disorder, and for other purposes, 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 Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 374, nays 15, not voting 40, as follows:

[Roll No. 502]

YEAS—374

Adams	Clyde	Goldman (NY)
Aderholt	Cohen	Gomez
Aguilar	Cole	Gonzales, Tony
Alford	Collins	Gonzalez, V.
Allen	Comer	Gooden (TX)
Allred	Connolly	Gottheimer
Amo	Correa	Graves (LA)
Amodei	Costa	Graves (MO)
Arrington	Courtney	Green (TN)
Auchincloss	Craig	Green, Al (TX)
Babin	Crockett	Greene (GA)
Bacon	Crow	Griffith
Baird	Cuellar	Grothman
Balderson	Curtis	Guest
Balint	Davidis (KS)	Guthrie
Banks	Davidson	Hageman
Barr	Davis (IL)	Harder (CA)
Barragán	Davis (NC)	Harris
Beatty	De La Cruz	Harshbarger
Bentz	Dean (PA)	Hayes
Bera	DeGette	Hern
Bergman	DeLauro	Higgins (LA)
Beyer	DelBene	Hill
Bice	Deluzio	Himes
Bilirakis	DeSaulnier	Hinson
Bishop (GA)	DesJarlais	Horsford
Bishop (NC)	Diaz-Balart	Houchin
Blunt Rochester	Dingell	Houlahan
Bonamici	Doggett	Hoyer
Bost	Donalds	Hoyle (OR)
Boyle (PA)	Duarte	Hudson
Brown	Duncan	Huffman
Brownley	Dunn (FL)	Huizenga
Buchanan	Ellzey	Issa
Bucshon	Emmer	Ivey
Budzinski	Escobar	Jackson (IL)
Burchett	Eshoo	Jackson (NC)
Burgess	Españillat	Jacobs
Bush	Estes	James
Calvert	Ezell	Jayapal
Cammack	Fallon	Jeffries
Caraveo	Feenstra	Johnson (GA)
Carbajal	Finstad	Johnson (SD)
Cárdenas	Fischbach	Jordan
Carey	Fitzgerald	Joyce (OH)
Carl	Fitzpatrick	Joyce (PA)
Carson	Fleischmann	Kamlager-Dove
Carter (GA)	Fletcher	Kaptur
Carter (LA)	Flood	Kean (NJ)
Carter (TX)	Fong	Keating
Cartwright	Foster	Kelly (IL)
Casar	Foushee	Kelly (MS)
Case	Fox	Kennedy
Casten	Franklin, Scott	Khanna
Castor (FL)	Frost	Kiggans (VA)
Castro (TX)	Fry	Kildee
Cherfilus-	Fulcher	Kiley
McCormick	Gallego	Kilmer
Chu	Garamendi	Kim (CA)
Ciscomani	Garbarino	Krishnamoorthi
Clark (MA)	Garcia (IL)	Kuster
Clarke (NY)	Garcia (TX)	Kustoff
Cleaver	Garcia, Robert	LaHood
Cline	Gimenez	LaLota
Clyburn	Golden (ME)	LaMalfa

Landsman	Neal	Smith (NJ)
Langworthy	Neguse	Smith (WA)
Larsen (WA)	Nehls	Smucker
Latta	Newhouse	Sorensen
Lawler	Nickel	Soto
Lee (CA)	Norcross	Spanberger
Lee (FL)	Nunn (IA)	Stansbury
Lee (NV)	Obernalte	Stanton
Lee (PA)	Ocasio-Cortez	Stauber
Lee Carter	Omar	Steele
Leger Fernandez	Owens	Stefanik
Lesko	Pallone	Steil
Letlow	Palmer	Stevens
Levin	Panetta	Strickland
Lofgren	Pappas	Strong
Lopez	Peltola	Suozi
Loudermilk	Pence	Swalwell
Lucas	Perez	Sykes
Luetkemeyer	Perry	Takano
Luttrell	Peters	Tenney
Lynch	Pettersen	Thanedar
Mace	Pluger	Thompson (CA)
Magaziner	Phillips	Thompson (MS)
Malliotakis	Pingree	Thompson (PA)
Maloy	Pocan	Timmons
Mann	Posey	Titus
Manning	Quigley	Tlaib
Mast	Ramirez	Tokuda
Matsui	Raskin	Torres (CA)
McBath	Reschenthaler	Torres (NY)
McCaul	Rogers (AL)	Trahan
McClain	Rogers (KY)	Turner
McClellan	Rose	Underwood
McClintock	Ross	Valadao
McCollum	Rouzer	Van Drew
McCormick	Ruiz	Van Dyne
McGarvey	Rulli	Van Orden
McGovern	Ruppersberger	Vargas
McIver	Rutherford	Vasquez
Meeke	Ryan	Veasey
Menendez	Salazar	Velázquez
Meng	Salinas	Wagner
Meuser	Sánchez	Walberg
Miller (IL)	Sarbanes	Wasserman
Miller (OH)	Scalise	Schultz
Miller (WV)	Scanlon	Waters
Miller-Meeks	Schneider	Watson Coleman
Mills	Scholten	Weber (TX)
Molinaro	Schrier	Wenstrup
Moolenaar	Schweikert	Westerman
Mooney	Scott (VA)	Wied
Moore (AL)	Scott, Austin	Williams (GA)
Moore (UT)	Scott, David	Williams (NY)
Moore (WI)	Sessions	Williams (TX)
Moran	Sewell	Wilson (SC)
Morelle	Sherman	Wittman
Moskowitz	Sherrill	Womack
Mrvan	Simpson	Yakym
Mullin	Slotkin	Zinke
Nadler	Smith (MO)	
Napolitano	Smith (NE)	

NAYS—15

Bean (FL)	Cloud	Norman
Biggs	Crane	Rosendale
Boebert	Good (VA)	Roy
Brecheen	Gosar	Self
Burlison	Massie	Steube

NOT VOTING—40

Blumenauer	Jackson (TX)	Pressley
Bowman	Kelly (PA)	Rodgers (WA)
Chavez-DeRemer	Lamborn	Schakowsky
Crawford	Larson (CT)	Spartz
Crenshaw	LaTurner	Tiffany
D'Esposito	Lieu	Tonko
Edwards	Luna	Trone
Evans	McHenry	Waltz
Ferguson	Mifune	Webster (FL)
Frankel, Lois	Moulton	Wexton
Garcia, Mike	Murphy	Wild
Granger	Ogles	Wilson (FL)
Grijalva	Pelosi	
Hunt	Porter	

□ 1855

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

Messrs. NEAL, MOORE of Alabama, and MEEKS changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 502.

FEDERAL JUDICIARY
STABILIZATION 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 (S. 3998) to provide for the permanent appointment of certain temporary district judgeships 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 South Carolina (Mr. FRY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 2-minute vote. The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 390, nays 0, not voting 39, as follows:

[Roll No. 503]
YEAS—390

Adams	Castro (TX)	Foster
Aderholt	Cherfilus-	Foushee
Aguilar	McCormick	Foxx
Alford	Chu	Franklin, Scott
Allen	Ciscomani	Frost
Allred	Clark (MA)	Fry
Amo	Cleaver	Fulcher
Amodei	Cline	Galleo
Arrington	Cloud	Garamendi
Auchincloss	Clyburn	Garbarino
Babin	Clyde	García (IL)
Bacon	Cohen	García (TX)
Baird	Cole	García, Robert
Balderson	Collins	Gimenez
Balint	Comer	Golden (ME)
Banks	Connolly	Goldman (NY)
Barr	Correa	Gomez
Barragán	Costa	Gonzales, Tony
Bean (FL)	Courtney	Gonzalez, V.
Beatty	Crane	Good (VA)
Bentz	Crawford	Gooden (TX)
Bera	Crockett	Gosar
Bergman	Crow	Gottheimer
Beyer	Curtis	Graves (LA)
Bice	Dauids (KS)	Graves (MO)
Biggs	Davidson	Green (TN)
Bilirakis	Davis (IL)	Green, Al (TX)
Bishop (GA)	Davis (NC)	Greene (GA)
Bishop (NC)	De La Cruz	Griffith
Blunt Rochester	Dean (PA)	Grothman
Boebert	DeGette	Guest
Bonamici	DeLauro	Guthrie
Bost	DelBene	Hageman
Boyle (PA)	Deluzio	Harder (CA)
Brecheen	DeSaulnier	Harris
Brown	DesJarlais	Harshbarger
Brownley	Diaz-Balart	Hayes
Buchanan	Dingell	Hern
Bucshon	Doggett	Higgins (LA)
Budzinski	Donalds	Hill
Burchett	Duarte	Himes
Burgess	Duncan	Hinson
Burlison	Dunn (FL)	Horsford
Bush	Ellzey	Houchin
Calvert	Emmer	Houlahan
Cammack	Escobar	Hoyer
Caraveo	Eshoo	Hoyle (OR)
Carbajal	Espallat	Hudson
Cárdenas	Estes	Huffman
Carey	Ezell	Huizenga
Carl	Fallon	Issa
Carson	Feenstra	Ivey
Carter (GA)	Finstad	Jackson (IL)
Carter (LA)	Fischbach	Jackson (NC)
Carter (TX)	Fitzgerald	Jackson (TX)
Cartwright	Fitzpatrick	Jacobs
Casar	Fleischmann	James
Case	Fletcher	Jayapal
Casten	Flood	Jeffries
Castor (FL)	Fong	Johnson (GA)

Johnson (SD)	Miller-Meeks
Jordan	Mills
Joyce (OH)	Molinaro
Joyce (PA)	Moolenaar
Kamlager-Dove	Mooney
Kaptur	Moore (AL)
Kean (NJ)	Moore (UT)
Keating	Moore (WI)
Kelly (IL)	Moran
Kelly (MS)	Morelle
Kennedy	Moskowitz
Khanna	Mrvan
Kiggans (VA)	Mullin
Kildee	Nadler
Kiley	Napolitano
Kilmer	Neal
Kim (CA)	Neguse
Krishnamoorthi	Nehls
Kuster	Newhouse
Kustoff	Nickel
LaHood	Norcross
LaLota	Norman
LaMalfa	Nunn (IA)
Landsman	Obermole
Langworthy	Ocasio-Cortez
Larsen (WA)	Omar
Larson (CT)	Owens
Latta	Pallone
Lawler	Palmer
Lee (CA)	Panetta
Lee (FL)	Pappas
Lee (NV)	Peltola
Lee (PA)	Pence
Lee Carter	Perez
Leger Fernandez	Perry
Lesko	Peters
Letlow	Pettersen
Levin	Pfluger
Lofgren	Phillips
Lopez	Pingree
Loudermilk	Pocan
Lucas	Posey
Luetkemeyer	Quigley
Luttrell	Ramirez
Lynch	Raskin
Mace	Reschenthaler
Magaziner	Rogers (AL)
Malliotakis	Rogers (KY)
Maloy	Rose
Mann	Rosendale
Manning	Ross
Massie	Rouzer
Mast	Roy
Matsui	Ruiz
McBath	Rulli
McCaul	Ruppersberger
McClain	Rutherford
McClellan	Ryan
McClintock	Salazar
McCollum	Salinas
McCormick	Sánchez
McGarvey	Scarbanes
McGovern	Scalise
McIver	Scanlon
Meeks	Schneider
Menendez	Scholten
Meng	Schrier
Meuser	Schweikert
Miller (IL)	Scott (VA)
Miller (OH)	Scott, Austin
Miller (WV)	Scott, David

NOT VOTING—39

Blumenauer	Granger
Bowman	Grijalva
Chavez-DeRemer	Hunt
Clarke (NY)	Kelly (PA)
Craig	Lamborn
Crenshaw	LaTurner
Cuellar	Lieu
D'Esposito	Luna
Edwards	McHenry
Evans	Mfume
Ferguson	Moulton
Frankel, Lois	Murphy
García, Mike	Ogles

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1900

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SENATOR ELIZABETH DOLE 21ST
CENTURY VETERANS
HEALTHCARE AND BENEFITS IM-
PROVEMENT ACT

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 (S. 141) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve certain programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs for home and community based services for veterans, and for other purposes, 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 Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 2-minute vote. The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 382, nays 12, not voting 35, as follows:

[Roll No. 504]
YEAS—382

Adams	Cherfilus-	Fleischmann
Aderholt	McCormick	Fletcher
Aguilar	Chu	Flood
Alford	Ciscomani	Fong
Allen	Clark (MA)	Foster
Allred	Clarke (NY)	Foushee
Amo	Cleaver	Foxx
Amodei	Cline	Franklin, Scott
Arrington	Cloud	Frost
Auchincloss	Clyburn	Fry
Babin	Clyde	Fulcher
Bacon	Cohen	Galleo
Baird	Cole	Garamendi
Balderson	Collins	Garbarino
Balint	Comer	García (IL)
Banks	Connolly	García (TX)
Barr	Correa	García, Robert
Barragán	Costa	Gimenez
Bean (FL)	Courtney	Golden (ME)
Beatty	Craig	Goldman (NY)
Bentz	Crawford	Gomez
Bera	Crenshaw	Gonzales, Tony
Bergman	Crockett	Gonzalez, V.
Beyer	Crow	Gooden (TX)
Bice	Cuellar	Gottheimer
Bilirakis	Curtis	Graves (LA)
Bishop (GA)	Dauids (KS)	Graves (MO)
Bishop (NC)	Davidson	Green (TN)
Blunt Rochester	Davis (IL)	Green, Al (TX)
Bonamici	Davis (NC)	Greene (GA)
Bost	De La Cruz	Griffith
Boyle (PA)	Dean (PA)	Grothman
Brown	DeGette	Guest
Brownley	DeLauro	Guthrie
Buchanan	DelBene	Hageman
Bucshon	Deluzio	Harder (CA)
Budzinski	DeSaulnier	Harshbarger
Burgess	DesJarlais	Hayes
Burlison	Diaz-Balart	Hern
Bush	Dingell	Higgins (LA)
Calvert	Doggett	Hill
Cammack	Donalds	Himes
Caraveo	Duarte	Hinson
Carbajal	Duncan	Horsford
Cárdenas	Dunn (FL)	Houchin
Carey	Ellzey	Houlahan
Carl	Emmer	Hoyer
Carson	Escobar	Hoyle (OR)
Carter (GA)	Eshoo	Hudson
Carter (LA)	Espallat	Huffman
Carter (TX)	Estes	Huizenga
Cartwright	Ezell	Issa
Casar	Fallon	Ivey
Case	Feenstra	Jackson (IL)
Casten	Finstad	Jackson (NC)
Castor (FL)	Fischbach	Jackson (TX)
Castro (TX)	Fitzgerald	Jacobs
	Fitzpatrick	James

Jayapal Miller (IL)
 Jeffries Miller (OH)
 Johnson (GA) Miller (WV)
 Johnson (SD) Miller-Meeks
 Jordan Mills
 Joyce (OH) Molinaro
 Joyce (PA) Moolenaar
 Kamlager-Dove Mooney
 Kaptur Moore (AL)
 Kean (NJ) Moore (UT)
 Keating Moore (WI)
 Kelly (IL) Moran
 Kelly (MS) Morelle
 Kennedy Moskowitz
 Khanna Mrvan
 Kiggans (VA) Mullin
 Kildee Nadler
 Kiley Napolitano
 Kilmer Neal
 Kim (CA) Neguse
 Krishnamoorthi Nehls
 Kuster Newhouse
 Kustoff Nickel
 LaHood Norcross
 LaLota Nunn (IA)
 LaMalfa Obernolte
 Landsman Ocasio-Cortez
 Langworthy Omar
 Larsen (WA) Owens
 Larson (CT) Pallone
 Latta Palmer
 Lawler Panetta
 Lee (CA) Pappas
 Lee (FL) Peltola
 Lee (NV) Pence
 Lee (PA) Perez
 Lee Carter Perry
 Leger Fernandez Peters
 Lesko Pettersen
 Letlow Pfluger
 Levin Phillips
 Lofgren Pingree
 Lopez Pocan
 Loudermilk Posey
 Lucas Quigley
 Luetkemeyer Ramirez
 Luttrell Raskin
 Lynch Reschenthaler
 Mace Rogers (AL)
 Magaziner Rogers (KY)
 Malliotakis Rose
 Maloy Ross
 Mann Rouzer
 Manning Ruiz
 Massie Rulli
 Mast Ruppertsberger
 Matsui Rutherford
 McBath Ryan
 McCaul Salazar
 McClain Salinas
 McClellan Sánchez
 McClintock Sarbanes
 McCollum Scalise
 McCormick Scanlon
 McGarvey Schneider
 McGovern Scholten
 McIver Schrier
 Meeks Schweikert
 Menendez Scott (VA)
 Meng Scott, Austin
 Meuser Scott, David

NAYS—12

Biggs Crane
 Boebert Good (VA)
 Brecheen Gosar
 Burchett Harris

NOT VOTING—35

Blumenauer Kelly (PA)
 Bowman Lamborn
 Chavez-DeRemer LaTurner
 D'Esposito Lieu
 Edwards Luna
 Evans McHenry
 Ferguson Mfume
 Frankel, Lois Moulton
 Garcia, Mike Murphy
 Granger Ogles
 Grijalva Pelosi
 Hunt Porter

Sessions
 Sewell
 Sherman
 Sherrill
 Simpson
 Slotkin
 Smith (MO)
 Smith (NE)
 Smith (NJ)
 Smith (WA)
 Smucker
 Sorensen
 Soto
 Spanberger
 Stansbury
 Stanton
 Stauber
 Steel
 Stefanik
 Steil
 Steube
 Stevens
 Strickland
 Strong
 Suozzi
 Swalwell
 Sykes
 Takano
 Tenney
 Thanedar
 Thompson (CA)
 Thompson (MS)
 Thompson (PA)
 Timmons
 Titus
 Tlaib
 Tokuda
 Tonko
 Torres (CA)
 Torres (NY)
 Trahan
 Turner
 Underwood
 Valadao
 Van Drew
 Van Dуйne
 Van Orden
 Vargas
 Vasquez
 Veasey
 Velázquez
 Wagner
 Walberg
 Wasserman
 Schultz
 Waters
 Watson Coleman
 Weber (TX)
 Wenstrup
 Westerman
 Wied
 Williams (GA)
 Williams (NY)
 Williams (TX)
 Wilson (SC)
 Wittman
 Womack
 Yakym
 Zinke

NORMAN

Norman
 Rosendale
 Roy
 Self

Pressley
 Rodgers (WA)
 Schakowsky
 Spartz
 Tiffany
 Trone
 Waltz
 Webster (FL)
 Wexton
 Wild
 Wilson (FL)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1905

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DIANNE FEINSTEIN POST OFFICE

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 (S. 4077) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 180 Steuart Street in San Francisco, California, as the “Dianne Feinstein Post Office”, 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 gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. Foxx) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 2-minute vote

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 348, nays 39, answered “present” 5, not voting 37, as follows:

[Roll No. 505]

YEAS—348

Adams Chu
 Aderholt Ciscamani
 Aguilar Clark (MA)
 Alford Clarke (NY)
 Allen Cleaver
 Allred Cline
 Amo Clyburn
 Amodei Cohen
 Arrington Cole
 Auchincloss Collins
 Babin Comer
 Bacon Connolly
 Baird Correa
 Balderson Costa
 Balint Courtney
 Banks Craig
 Barr Crawford
 Barragán Crenshaw
 Bean (FL) Crockett
 Beatty Crow
 Bentz Cuellar
 Bera Curtis
 Bergman Davids (KS)
 Beyer Davis (IL)
 Bice Davis (NC)
 Bilirakis De La Cruz
 Bishop (GA) Dean (PA)
 Blunt Rochester DeGette
 Bonamici DeLauro
 Boyle (PA) DelBene
 Brown Deluzio
 Brownley DeSaunier
 Buchanan DesJarlais
 Bucshon Diaz-Balart
 Budzinski Dingell
 Bush Doggett
 Calvert Duarte
 Caraveo Dunn (FL)
 Carbajal Ellze
 Cárdenas Emmer
 Carey Escobar
 Carl Eshoo
 Carson Espailat
 Carter (GA) Estes
 Carter (LA) Ezell
 Carter (TX) Fallon
 Feenstra Jayapal
 Casar Finstad
 Case Fitzgerald
 Casten Fitzpatrick
 Castor (FL) Fleischmann
 Castro (TX) Fletcher
 Cherfilus-Flood
 McCormick Fong

Kean (NJ)
 Keating
 Kelly (IL)
 Kelly (MS)
 Kennedy
 Khanna
 Kiggans (VA)
 Kildee
 Kiley
 Kilmer
 Kim (CA)
 Krishnamoorthi
 Kuster
 Kustoff
 LaHood
 LaLota
 LaMalfa
 Landsman
 Langworthy
 Larsen (WA)
 Larson (CT)
 Latta
 Lawler
 Lee (CA)
 Lee (FL)
 Lee (NV)
 Lee (PA)
 Lee Carter
 Leger Fernandez
 Letlow
 Levin
 Lofgren
 Lopez
 Loudermilk
 Lucas
 Luetkemeyer
 Luttrell
 Lynch
 Mace
 Magaziner
 Malliotakis
 Maloy
 Mann
 Manning
 Matsui
 McBath
 McCaul
 McClain
 McClellan
 McClintock
 McCollum
 McGarvey
 McGovern
 McIver
 Meeks
 Menendez
 Meng
 Meuser
 Miller (OH)
 Miller (WV)
 Sessions
 Sewell
 Sherman
 Moolenaar

NAYS—39

Biggs
 Bishop (NC)
 Boebert
 Brecheen
 Burchett
 Burgess
 Burlison
 Cammack
 Cloud
 Clyde
 Crane
 Davidson
 Donalds

ANSWERED “PRESENT”—5

Grothman
 Mooney
 Rosendale
 Roy

NOT VOTING—37

Blumenauer
 Bost
 Bowman
 Chavez-DeRemer
 D'Esposito
 Edwards
 Evans
 Ferguson
 Frankel, Lois
 Garcia, Mike
 Granger
 Grijalva
 Hunt
 Kelly (PA)
 Lamborn
 LaTurner
 Lieu
 Luna
 McHenry
 Mfume
 Moulton
 Murphy
 Ogles
 Pelosi
 Porter
 Pressley

Simpson
 Slotkin
 Smith (MO)
 Smith (NE)
 Smith (NJ)
 Smith (WA)
 Smucker
 Sorensen
 Soto
 Spanberger
 Stansbury
 Stanton
 Stauber
 Steel
 Stefanik
 Steil
 Stevens
 Strickland
 Suozzi
 Swalwell
 Sykes
 Takano
 Tenney
 Thanedar
 Peltola
 Pence
 Perez
 Peters
 Pettersen
 Phillips
 Pingree
 Pocan
 Posey
 Quigley
 Ramirez
 Raskin
 Reschenthaler
 Rogers (KY)
 Rose
 Ross
 Rouzer
 Ruiz
 Rulli
 Ruppertsberger
 Rutherford
 Ryan
 Salazar
 Salinas
 Sánchez
 Sarbanes
 Scalise
 Scanlon
 Schneider
 Scholten
 Schrier
 Schweikert
 Scott (VA)
 Scott, Austin
 Sessions
 Sewell
 Sherman
 Sherrill
 Simpson
 Slotkin
 Smith (MO)
 Smith (NE)
 Smith (NJ)
 Smith (WA)
 Smucker
 Sorensen
 Soto
 Spanberger
 Stansbury
 Stanton
 Stauber
 Steel
 Stefanik
 Steil
 Stevens
 Strickland
 Suozzi
 Swalwell
 Sykes
 Takano
 Tenney
 Thanedar
 Thompson (CA)
 Thompson (MS)
 Thompson (PA)
 Timmons
 Titus
 Tlaib
 Tokuda
 Tonko
 Torres (CA)
 Torres (NY)
 Trahan
 Turner
 Underwood
 Valadao
 Van Dуйne
 Van Orden
 Vargas
 Vasquez
 Veasey
 Velázquez
 Wagner
 Walberg
 Wasserman
 Schultz
 Waters
 Watson Coleman
 Weber (TX)
 Wenstrup
 Westerman
 Wied
 Williams (GA)
 Williams (NY)
 Williams (TX)
 Wilson (SC)
 Wittman
 Womack
 Yakym
 Zinke

Lesko
 Massie
 Mast
 McCormick
 Miller (IL)
 Mills
 Nehls
 Norman
 Perry
 Pfluger
 Self
 Steube
 Strong
 Rodgers (WA)
 Rogers (AL)
 Schakowsky
 Spartz
 Tiffany
 Trone
 Waltz
 Webster (FL)
 Wexton
 Wild
 Wilson (FL)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1911

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present to cast my vote on Roll Call Nos. 502, 503, 504, and 505 today. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call Nos. 502, 503, 504, and 505.

PERMISSION FOR MEMBER TO BE CONSIDERED AS FIRST SPONSOR OF H.R. 1765

Mrs. McIVER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I may hereafter be considered to be the first sponsor of H.R. 1765, a bill originally introduced by Representative DONALD PAYNE, Jr., of New Jersey, for the purpose of adding cosponsors and requesting reprintings pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII.

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

There was no objection.

PERMISSION FOR MEMBER TO BE CONSIDERED AS FIRST SPONSOR OF H.R. 1361

Mrs. McIVER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I may hereafter be considered to be the first sponsor of H.R. 1361, a bill originally introduced by Representative DONALD PAYNE, Jr., of New Jersey, for the purpose of adding cosponsors and requesting reprintings pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII.

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

There was no objection.

BIDEN-HARRIS DEI SPENDING BINGE

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, a new report from Parents Defending Education, PDE, revealed that the Biden-Harris administration spent over \$1 billion of taxpayer money on so-called diversity, equity, and inclusion programming.

DEI is the woke addiction that the Biden-Harris administration simply cannot quit. Instead of becoming a more perfect Union, DEI turns our schools, communities, and cities into cesspools of divisiveness and hate. We know DEI bureaucracies are also notorious drivers of campus anti-Semitism.

PDE's new report is jaw-dropping, and it confirms that this administra-

tion was more concerned about controlling the minds of America's future leaders rather than educating them.

This relentless push to tell students what to think instead of how to think must stop. Fortunately for parents, students, and hardworking taxpayers, President Trump sees DEI for what it is: a cancer that is divisive, excessive, and ineffective.

CONGRATULATING ATTORNEY BORDEN PARKER

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

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I was told sometime ago that a good name will carry you a long way.

I rise to congratulate Attorney Borden Parker on the recent naming of the new Wayne County Department of Health and Human Services building in his honor.

Borden has a long history of public service. He served our Nation in the United States Army Judge Advocate General's Corps.

Borden returned home to follow in his father's footsteps and became the county's attorney. I may add that he has also provided incredible counsel to the Greene County Board of Commissioners.

The naming of this building is not just a tribute to Borden's extraordinary career, but it is a symbol of the lasting impact he has made in improving lives across eastern North Carolina.

I congratulate Borden. His good name has made a difference.

HONORING DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS RECIPIENTS IN TENNESSEE'S SECOND DISTRICT

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

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor 11 brave airmen who were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for their part in Operation True Promise on April 13, 2024: Lieutenant Colonel Willis Parker, Major Cody Gaby, Major Lance Welch, Major Stacy Sells, Captain Joshua Johnson, Captain James Spearman, Captain Andrew Weber, Technical Sergeant Gage Seymour, Technical Sergeant Joshua Osborne, Technical Sergeant Hunter Ricks, and Senior Airman Jonah Parham.

On April 13, 2024, Iran launched a salvo of missiles and drones at Israel. Iran's assault marked the first time the country directly struck Israel from within Iranian territory and was the single largest drone attack carried out by any country.

Crew members of the 134th Air Refueling Wing courageously took off during this attack and offloaded tens of thousands of pounds of fuel to ensure the fighters remained airborne for the

defense and protection of Israel. Due to the efforts of those 11 brave members, 99 percent of the drones and missiles launched by Iran were intercepted.

It is my honor to recognize these airmen as Tennessee's Second District's December 2024 Veterans of the Month.

DISASTER RECOVERY

(Mrs. LEE CARTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LEE CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of Texas' 18th Congressional District, which has endured devastating disasters, from Hurricane Katrina in 2005, which displaced over 200,000 New Orleans families to Houston, many of which now live in the 18th; to Hurricane Harvey in 2017, which displaced 30,000 families across the city.

In 2021, the Texas Freeze left millions without power statewide. Over 100,000 households in my district and all 254 counties were impacted by power outages.

Just this year, Hurricane Beryl and Houston's derecho storm destroyed more than 12,000 homes.

These are not just numbers. They are real people whose communities have been torn apart.

My late mother, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, worked with every President to ensure that her residents received what they needed, working with churches and nonprofits like the Houston Food Bank to provide critical resources.

I am grateful that President Biden has requested an additional \$98.6 billion in funding, including \$40 billion for FEMA, to support continuing relief, and I urge it to be included in the funding legislation going forward. We can always use more because so many families are still suffering. I call on my colleagues to support funding for FEMA so that communities can rebuild back stronger than ever.

HONORING COMMANDER STEVE DMETRUK

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Commander Steve Dmetruk, a distinguished member of my Military Academy Nominations Board and Navy veteran whose life of dedicated service exemplifies the very best of America.

A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Commander Dmetruk served 6 years on Active Duty and 16 years in the Navy Reserve.

As a supply officer aboard the USS *Rogers*, he bore the heavy responsibility of supporting a 300-member crew, ensuring they were well equipped during critical operations in Vietnam.

His ship witnessed the emotional release of American POWs at the war's

end, a moment etched in history and in the hearts of all who served.

Commander Dmetruk's commitment extended beyond Active Duty. In the Reserves, he modeled the Navy's core values of honor, courage, and commitment while continuing to impact lives through his civilian career and volunteerism.

Today, Commander Dmetruk and his wife, Suzy, serve as guardians for Honor Flights, welcoming veterans home and ensuring they feel the gratitude they deserve. He reminds us of the enduring importance of saying: "Thank you for your service," a simple act of recognition that carries profound meaning.

We salute Commander Dmetruk and all veterans who have shaped our Nation's legacy. May we honor their sacrifice with unwavering gratitude.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO FORMER CONGRESSMAN FRANK GUARINI

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, at this holiday season, please let me pay tribute to a remarkable American, a patriot who has dedicated his life to building our Nation and world into a more just and livable planet.

I extend grateful holiday wishes to the now current oldest-living former U.S. Congressman, Frank Guarini of Jersey City, New Jersey. He and his family and friends are celebrating his 100 years of life as an American patriot, faithful to his family, his friends, Jersey City, and Hudson County.

His milestone life includes service in this House from 1979 to 1993. Hailing from Jersey City, New Jersey, Frank distinguished himself as an extraordinary patriot, a champion swimmer, and a World War II Navy decorated combat veteran of the Pacific campaign.

He rose to the rank of lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, and he continues to pursue his business and philanthropic interests as a proud son of Jersey City. Here, he served as a distinguished member of the Ways and Means Committee, specializing in international trade and fair taxation.

Frank endowed his alma mater, Dartmouth College's School of International Relations, as well as John Cabot University in Italy, the Italian American Foundation, and countless and endless works of good will toward others.

We wish him, his family, and friends, like former New York Members Charles Rangel and posthumously Ben Gilman and his family joy in these holidays. Celebrating Frank's life makes 2024 a memorable holiday season. I send heartfelt congratulations to Congressman Frank Guarini at age 100.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to place an important newspaper article in the RECORD.

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

[From New Jersey Globe, Aug. 20, 2024]

HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY, CONGRESSMAN FRANK GUARINI

(By David Wildstein)

America's oldest living former congressman; Jersey City Democrat served in N.J. State Senate from 1966 to 1972, ran for U.S. Senate in 1970, and was a congressman from 1979 to 1993.

Frank J. Guarini, Jr., who served as a congressman from a Hudson County district for fourteen years, celebrates his 100th birthday today.

The Jersey City Democrat is the oldest living former congressman from New Jersey, the oldest living former statewide candidate, the oldest living former state senator, and the oldest living member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Guarini had spent most of his life around politics. His father had represented Hudson County in the State Assembly in 1931 and 1932. A Dartmouth graduate, Guarini was a decorated World War II combat veteran.

A 40-year-old attorney and the chairman of the America Red Cross' Jersey City Chapter, Guarini decided to run for office in 1965 when reapportionment following the U.S. Supreme Court's One Man, One Vote ruling increased Hudson County's presence in the New Jersey State Senate from one seat to three.

Hudson County Democratic Chairman John V. Kenny and other party leaders picked Guarini and William V. Musto, an eleven-term assemblyman and the mayor of Union City, to run for State Senate on a slate with two-term incumbent William F. Kelly (D-Jersey City). Musto had been an automatic pick, but Guarini edged out Bayonne city attorney James Dugan.

The Democrats won the general election by over 100,000 votes.

During his first term, Democrats controlled the Senate and Guarini became chairman of the newly created Senate Air and Water Pollution and Public Health Committee.

Another round of reapportionment gave Hudson a fourth Senate seat in 1967, Kenny and the Hudson Democrats put Assemblyman Frederick Hauser (D-Hoboken), who had spent eighteen years in the lower house, on the ticket.

The four Democrats easily outdistanced their Republican rivals: Norman Roth, who had come within just 56 votes of winning a seat in Congress in 1956 against Rep. Alfred Sieminski (D-Jersey City); Cresenzi W. Castaldo, who had won 21 percent in a congressional bid in 1964; Eugene P. Kenny, who won 21 percent in his 1962 House campaign; and 31-year-old attorney Geoffrey Gaulkin, who later served as the Hudson County Prosecutor and Superior Court Judge.

In his second term, Guarini championed the construction of a new stadium in the Meadowlands and was among the first to meet with New York Giants owner Wellington Mara to pitch New Jersey as a future NFL home.

U.S. SENATE BID

In 1970, Guarini decided to challenge two-term U.S. Senator Harrison A. Williams, Jr. in the Democratic primary. A decade before the Abscam scandal that ended his career, Williams had been censured by the New Jersey NAACP for showing up drunk at a meeting where he was the main speaker.

In late 1969, Williams had released endorsements from eighteen Democratic county chairmen, in a bid to prevent a primary fight from Guarini, some party leaders offered him

the post of Senate Minority Leader—the incumbent, J. Edward Crabel (D-Milltown) was willing to give up—but Guarini (and Kenny) refused.

Guarini, who had won two Democratic primaries for State Senate with the support of the Hudson County Democratic organization, made a bid for an open primary. He essentially sought to end New Jersey's system of preferential ballot positions for organization-backed candidates more than fifty years ago, but without success.

He did that with the support of Kenny, the Hudson boss who had split from most of the state's Democratic establishment when he refused to back former Gov. Robert Meyner's bid for a third term against Rep. William Cahill (R-Collingswood). Cahill carried Hudson by fifteen percentage points.

Former New Jersey Attorney General Arthur Sills, supporting Guarini, attacked Williams for his alcoholism, a move backfired after the Democratic Senator had acknowledged his drinking problem.

With just the Hudson organization line, Guarini lost to Williams by 90,647 votes, a 66 percent-34 percent race. Guarini carried only Hudson County—he scored a 16,194-vote plurality (62 percent-38 percent)—and Williams won everywhere else.

After the primary, Guarini refocused on local issues. He proposed the construction of a freeway that would have connected Tonnelle Avenue in North Bergen to Route 80, sponsored legislation to change the legal voting age in New Jersey from 21 to 18, attempted to legalize Jai Alai, and tried to persuade the San Francisco Giants to move to New Jersey and play in a new baseball stadium he wanted built in the Meadowlands.

The lifelong bachelor was the only senator to vote against a bill to make it easier for New Jerseyans to get a divorce.

But in 1971, Guarini decided to eschew a bid for re-election to the State Senate. That happened when reapportionment reduced Hudson's Senate delegation from four to three and Guarini became a redistricting casualty.

Hudson County lost a congressional seat in 1972, when a new district was created in Morris Warren, Sussex and Hunterdon counties. Rep. Cornelius Gallagher (D-Bayonne), had been expected to keep the seat—party leaders were going to tell Rep. Dominick Daniels (D-Jersey City), who was 20 years older than Gallagher, to retire. Gallagher was indicted on tax evasion charges and the accusations against him came at a considerable cost.

The Hudson County Democratic Organization, in deep trouble. Kenny had gone to prison and reformer Paul Jordan was elected Mayor of Jersey City in 1971. Guarini was a fierce critic of Jordan.

For a short time, there was talk of dropping Daniels and Gallagher with Guarini becoming the compromise machine candidate against Jordan's candidate, West New York Mayor Anthony DeFino. But they decided to stick with Daniels, who won the primary by a 51 percent-32 percent margin against DeFino. Gallagher came in third with just 15 percent of the vote, with 2 percent going to former Congressman Vincent Dellay, who had won the other Hudson House seat in 1956 as a Republican and later switched parties.

Guarini also explored taking on three-term Republican U.S. Senator Clifford Case in 1972, but party leaders settled on former Rep. Paul Krebs (D-Livingston) for a nomination not worth fighting for.

In late 1972, a list of potential gubernatorial candidates drawn up by Democratic State Chairman Salvatore Bontempo to take on Cahill the following year included Guarini, but he never made any moves to run.

Guarini supported State Sen. Ralph DeRose (D-South Orange) for governor in 1973. He signed on to help DeRose after the Hudson County Democratic Chairman, Francis Fitzpatrick, agreed to give the organization line to Superior Court Judge Brendan Byrne.

When Daniels retired in 1976, Hudson leaders agreed to give the seat to Assembly Speaker Joseph LeFante (D-Bayonne). Guarini sharply criticized the move to leave Jersey City without a congressman.

RETURN TO PUBLIC OFFICE

Guarini backed Thomas F.X. Smith, the city clerk, in the 1977 Jersey City mayoral election against Jordan's handpicked successor, Bill Macchi.

Smith won by a 54 percent–26 percent margin. The seismic shift in Jersey City politics in May caused Jordan to withdraw as a candidate for governor and led to the defeat of several incumbents in the June primary for State Senate and Assembly.

With support from Smith and Musto—and later from Bayonne Mayor Dennis Collins—Guarini was elected Hudson County Democratic Chairman, succeeding a Jordan ally, Bernard Harnett.

In late 1977, Guarini began seeking party support to challenge Case in the 1978 U.S. Senate race. He joined a field that included former New York Nicks star Bill Bradley, State Treasurer Richard Leone, Rep. Andrew Maguire (D-Ridgewood), and former State Sen. Alexander Menza (D-Hillside).

Smith had indicated that he would support Guarini if he ran, but he was also feeling pressure from Byrne, who wanted the Hudson line to go to Leone. Guarini announced he would not run and suddenly became a leading candidate to serve as chairman of the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, then a hugely powerful post.

But instead, Guarini decided that the Hudson congressional seat should return to Jersey City and that LeFante would be a one-term congressman.

After LeFante left Congress, Byrne put him in his cabinet as Commissioner of Community Affairs.

Guarini won 82 percent of the vote in the Democratic House primary against two minor candidates, and 64 percent in the general election against Republican Henry Hill, a Kearney councilman.

As a freshman congressman, Guarini was assigned to the powerful House Ways and Means Committee. He also served on the House Budget Committee.

During his fourteen years in Congress, Guarini became one of the House's experts on international trade issues. He was part of the first U.S. trade mission to China, served as a delegate to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and sponsored the Caribbean Basin Initiative that created increased trade with Caribbean and Latin American nations.

Guarini played a major role in revising the Internal Revenue Code in 1986 and led efforts to modernize trade and tariff laws.

He also led the fight against the proposed Westway project in Manhattan, which sought to construct an above-water roadway adjacent to the West Side Highway. Guarini's success helped protect New Jersey's view of the New York skyline, something that helped pave the way for redevelopment in places like Jersey City and Hoboken.

In 1986, he defeated Albio Sires, then a West New York gadfly running as a Republican, with 71 percent of the vote. Sires is retiring this year after fourteen years in Congress as a Democrat.

Congressional redistricting in 1992 redrew Guarini's district to include a substantial number of Hispanic voters in North Hudson that had previously been in a Bergen Coun-

ty-based district—and the addition of parts of Newark, Linden, Elizabeth, Woodbridge and Perth Amboy—Guarini declined to run for re-election rather than face a primary against State Sen. Bob Menendez (D-Union City). Menendez had been eyeing a run for Congress.

After leaving Congress, Guarini continued to practice law and became a highly successful real estate developer.

President Bill Clinton appointed him as U.S. Representative to the General Assembly of the United Nations, a post that carried the rank of Ambassador.

Guarini spearheaded a lawsuit against New York that led to the U.S. Supreme Court returning 90 percent of Ellis Island to New Jersey.

Jersey City's main post office is the Congressman Frank Guarini Post Office, and other buildings bear his name: a library; a New Jersey City University; the business school, Institute for Government and Leadership, and the college president's residence at St. Peter's University; John Cabot University's Rome campus; and the Hudson County justice complex.

AMERICANS WANT SECURE BORDERS

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, beyond the usual incompetence on the border security that the Biden-Harris administration has exhibited, they are now sneakily selling off materials intended for the border wall in Arizona. These are materials that taxpayers have already paid for and were meant to secure our southern border.

Earlier this year, I visited the border once again and saw firsthand the challenges that our agents, local law enforcement, local businesses, and local communities face every day and the impact that these challenges have on them.

Border agents are stretched thin as they work around the clock to try to protect us, yet this administration continues to undermine their mission at every turn.

This isn't the first time. Last year, they sold off materials intended for a critical 20-mile stretch of border wall, leaving gaps. The gaps are easily found, and they pour through. Members should see the trash and the stuff that is on the ground in the arroyos from the people passing through illegally because they have a green light.

Their actions sent a clear message from this administration: border security isn't really a priority for them, even though Vice President HARRIS tried to pretend so in this last election.

Americans want secure borders. Instead of addressing this crisis, the administration is doubling down on failed policies that are just putting our border at risk.

□ 1930

DO NOT GET RID OF 14(C) CERTIFICATES

(Mr. GROTHMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I will address the Biden administration's treatment of community rehabilitation providers. I think many people would be aware of them as a place for people with some disabilities, perhaps Down syndrome, whatever, to work because their abilities are a little less than a lot of other citizens.

In any event, in order to operate these places, they need 14(c) certificates to have people work for under minimum wage. They can afford to work for under minimum wage because they are getting other benefits such as SSI.

However, these facilities are very important to them. It gives them a purpose in life, a little bit of independence to earn their own paycheck, and a chance to socialize with so many other people they wouldn't otherwise.

I am going to introduce legislation shortly to make sure the Biden administration, on the way out the door, does not get rid of 14(c) certificates, which are necessary for these valuable citizens to work full time.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NOTRE DAME ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

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

Mr. WIED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate my high school alma mater, Notre Dame Academy in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Last month, for just the third time in our school's history, the Notre Dame Tritons football team won the Division 3 High School State championship.

The Tritons used the State championship to cap off a perfect season with a 49–28 win over Catholic Memorial.

A special shout-out to their coach, Mike Rader, on an incredible season.

I also will give a special shout-out to senior running back, Christian Collins, who rushed for a record breaking 408 yards and 5 touchdowns.

Mr. Speaker, we are all very proud of the Tritons and look forward to their future success. I congratulate them again.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. WIED. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, December 17, 2024, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS,
ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-6307. A letter from the Program Analyst, Livestock and Poultry Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Natural Grass Sod Promotion, Research, and Information Order; Referendum Procedures [Doc. No.: AMS-LP-21-0028] (RIN: 0581-AE07) received December 13, 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-6308. A letter from the Program Analyst, Rural Development, Rural Business-Cooperative Services, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Biobased Markets Program [Docket No.: RBS-22-BUSINESS-0004] (RIN: 0570-AB05) received December 13, 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-6309. A letter from the Senior Legal Advisor for Regulatory Affairs, Office of Investment Security, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Penalty Provisions, Provision of Information, Negotiation of Mitigation Agreements, and Other Procedures Pertaining to Certain Investments in the United States by Foreign Persons and Certain Transactions by Foreign Persons Involving Real Estate in the United States [Docket ID: TREAS-DO-2024-0006] (RIN: 1505-AC85) received December 9, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

EC-6310. A letter from the Counsel, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, transmitting the Office's final rule — Appraisals for Higher-Priced Mortgage Loans Exemption Threshold [Docket No.: OCC-2024-0013] (RIN: 1557-AF28) received December 12, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

EC-6311. A letter from the Director, Office of Standards, Regulations and Variances, Mine Safety and Health Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule — Testing, Evaluation, and Approval of Electric Motor-Driven Mine Equipment and Accessories [Docket No.: MSHA-2020-0018] (RIN: 1219-AB93) received December 13, 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-6312. A letter from the Congressional and Public Affairs Specialist, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Additions and Modifications to the Entity List; Removals From the Validated End-User (VEU) Program [Docket No.: 241126-0303] (RIN: 0694-AJ77) received December 9, 2024, 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-6313. A letter from the Congressional and Public Affairs Specialist, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — Foreign-Produced Direct Product Rule Additions, and Refinements to Controls for Advanced Computing and Semiconductor Manufacturing Items [Docket No.: 241126-0302] (RIN: 0694-AJ74) received December 9, 2024, 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-6314. A letter from the Biologist, Branch of Delisting and Foreign Species,

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Endangered Species Status for the Plumineous Swallowtail Butterfly, Harris' Mimic Swallowtail Butterfly, and Hahnel's Amazonian Swallowtail Butterfly [Docket No.: FWS-HQ-ES-2023-0067; FXES111090FEDR-256-FF09E21000] (RIN: 1018-BG69) received December 13, 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-6315. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, NMFS, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region; Amendment 42 [Docket No.: 191202-0098] (RIN: 0648-BI98) received December 9, 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-6316. A letter from the Fisheries Regulations Specialist, NMFS, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries; General Category December Quota Transfer [Docket No.: 220919-0193; RTID 0648-XE450] received December 9, 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-6317. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class C Airspace; Austin, TX [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2524; Airspace Docket No.: 24-AWA-3] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6318. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Lady Lake, FL [Docket No.: FAA-2023-2166; Airspace Docket No. 23-ASO-45] received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6319. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Rose Hill, KS [Docket No.: FAA-2023-1624; Airspace Doc. No.: 24-ACE-7] received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6320. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class D Airspace; Dallas, TX [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2370; Airspace Docket No.: 23-ASW-18] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6321. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 31575; Amdt. No.: 4139] received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6322. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 31574; Amdt. No.: 4138] received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6323. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 31573; Amdt. No.: 4137] received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6324. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; MD Helicopters, LLC, Helicopters [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2011; Project Identifier AD-2023-01121-R; Amendment 39-22885; AD 2024-23-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6325. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Embraer S.A. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2426; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00625-T; Amendment 39-22886; AD 2024-23-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6326. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Safran Helicopter Engines, S.A. (Type Certificate Previously Held by Turbomeca S.A.) [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2537; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00631-E; Amendment 39-22892; AD 2024-24-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6327. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Safran Aerosystems (Formerly AVOX Systems Inc.; Scott Aviation) Oxygen Cylinder and Valve Assemblies, and Oxygen Valve Assemblies [Docket No.: FAA-2024-0759; Project Identifier AD-2023-01040-T; Amendment 39-22857; AD 2024-19-15] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6328. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Canada Limited Partnership (Type Certificate Previously Held by C Series Aircraft Limited Partnership (CSALP); Bombardier, Inc.) Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-0464; Project Identifier MCAI-2022-01556-T; Amendment 39-22875; AD 2024-22-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6329. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final

rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2007; Project Identifier MCAI-2023-01270-T; Amendment 39-22871; AD 2024-21-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6330. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-0767; Project Identifier MCAI-2023-00723-T; Amendment 39-22786; AD 2024-14-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6331. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-1894; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00036-T; Amendment 39-22873; AD 2024-22-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6332. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Zanesville, OH [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2159; Airspace Docket No.: 24-AGL-20] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6333. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2015; Project Identifier MCAI-2023-00769-T; Amendment 39-22887; AD 2024-23-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6334. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Canada Limited Partnership (Type Certificate Previously Held by C Series Aircraft Limited Partnership (CSALP)) Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-1474; Project Identifier MCAI-2023-01014-T; Amendment 39-22884; AD 2024-23-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6335. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce Deutschland Ltd & Co KG [Docket No.: FAA-2024-1899; Project Identifier MCAI-2023-01169-E; Amendment 39-22870; AD 2024-21-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6336. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce Deutschland Ltd & Co KG Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2014; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00162-E; Amendment 39-22883; AD 2024-23-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6337. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-1897; Project Identifier AD-2023-00774-T; Amendment 39-22882; AD 2024-23-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6338. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-0463; Project Identifier AD-2023-00792-T; Amendment 39-22890; AD 2024-23-11] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6339. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Robinson Helicopter Company [Docket No.: FAA-2024-1477; Project Identifier AD-2023-01015-R; Amendment 39-22880; AD 2024-23-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6340. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2545; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00672-R; Amendment 39-22901; AD 2024-24-51] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6341. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2023-1053; Project Identifier AD-2023-00164-T; Amendment 39-22891; AD 2024-24-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6342. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2023-2403; Project Identifier AD-2023-00888-T; Amendment 39-22893; AD 2024-24-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6343. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-1698; Project Identifier AD-2024-00005-T; Amendment 39-22895; AD 2024-24-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6344. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; ATR-GIE Avions de Transport Régional Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2128; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00136-T; Amendment 39-22896; AD 2024-24-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6345. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; MHI RJ Aviation ULC (Type Certificate Previously Held by Bombardier, Inc.) Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-0995; Project Identifier MCAI-2023-01075-T; Amendment 39-22897; AD 2024-24-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6346. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Defense and Space S.A. (Formerly Known as Construcciones Aeronauticas, S.A.) Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2134; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00125-T; Amendment 39-22894; AD 2024-24-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6347. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2025; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00120-T; Amendment 39-22888; AD 2024-23-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6348. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-1890; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00087-T; Amendment 39-22899; AD 2024-24-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6349. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2139; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00123-T; Amendment 39-22900; AD 2024-24-10] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6350. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; ATR-GIE Avions de Transport Régional Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2129; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00066-T; Amendment 39-22889; AD 2024-23-10] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6351. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 31578; Amdt. No.: 4142] received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6352. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous

Amendments [Docket No.: 31577; Amdt. No.: 4141] received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6353. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 31579; Amdt. No.: 582], pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6354. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class D Airspace and Amendment of Class E Airspace; Auburn, AL [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2062; Airspace Docket No.: 24-ASO-27] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6355. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace and Establishment of Class E Airspace; Flagstaff, AZ [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2221; Airspace Docket No.: 24-AWP-107] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6356. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace; Gainesville, FL [Docket No.: FAA-2023-2176; Airspace Docket No.: 23-ASO-47] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6357. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace and Revocation of Class E Airspace; Youngstown/Warren, OH [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2294; Airspace Docket No.: 24-AGL-21] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6358. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of United States Area Navigation Route Q-8 and Revocation of United States Area Navigation Route Q-18 in Alaska [Docket No.: FAA-2024-1934; Airspace Docket No.: 23-AAL-60] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6359. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of VOR Federal Airways V-258, V-519, and RNAV Route T-426; and Revocation of Jet Routes J-213 and J-526, and VOR Federal Airway V-59 in the Vicinity of Beckley, WV [Docket No.: FAA-2024-1396; Airspace Docket No.: 24-AEA-3] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6360. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation,

transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Rose Hill, KS [Docket No.: FAA-2023-1624; Airspace Docket No.: 24-ACE-7] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6361. A letter from the Federal Register Liaison, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final regulations — Definition of Energy Property and Rules Applicable to the Energy Credit [TD 10015] (RIN: 1545-BO40) received, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

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. GRAVES of Missouri: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 1586. A bill to allow the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to use a fire retardant, chemical, or water for fire suppression, control, or prevention activities; with an amendment (Rept. 118-721, Pt. 2). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 670. A bill to amend title IV of the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a clearinghouse on intellectual disabilities, and for other purposes; with amendments (Rept. 118-874). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Ms. FOX: Committee on Education and the Workforce. H.R. 3120. A bill to ban anti-competitive terms in facility and insurance contracts that limit access to higher quality, lower cost care; with an amendment (Rept. 118-875, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Ms. FOX: Committee on Education and the Workforce. H.R. 9457. A bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to prohibit increased payments under a group health plan or group health insurance coverage for telehealth services furnished by a provider located at a facility; with an amendment (Rept. 118-876, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Ms. FOX: Committee on Education and the Workforce. H.J. Res. 181. A resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to "Definition of 'Employer'-Association Health Plans" (Rept. 118-877). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Ms. FOX: Committee on Education and the Workforce. H.J. Res. 142. A resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to "Retirement Security Rule: Definition of an Investment Advice Fiduciary" (Rept. 118-878). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 9533. A bill to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to optimize conservation through resource prioritization, incentivize wildlife conservation on private lands, provide for greater incentives to recover listed species, create greater transparency and accountability in recovering listed species, and limit reasonable and pru-

dent measures; with an amendment (Rept. 118-879). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 8665. A bill to amend the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to direct research, development, demonstration, and commercial application activities in support of supercritical geothermal and closed-loop geothermal systems in supercritical various conditions, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-880, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 6748. A bill to provide for the recognition of certain Alaska Native communities and the settlement of certain claims under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-881). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 6210. A bill to designate the General George C. Marshall House, in the Commonwealth of Virginia, as an affiliated area of the National Park System, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-882). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 6489. A bill to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide that Village Corporations shall not be required to convey land in trust to the State of Alaska for the establishment of Municipal Corporations, and for other purposes (Rept. 118-883). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 6494. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to provide enhanced safety in pipeline transportation, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-884 Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 5089. A bill to amend the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to clarify Congressional intent regarding the regulation of the use of pesticides in or near navigable waters, and for other purposes (Rept. 118-885 Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. BURGESS: Committee on Rules. H. Res. 1616. A resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 115) to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for en bloc consideration in resolutions of disapproval for "midnight rules", and for other purposes (Rept. 118-886). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 9748. A bill to require the Under Secretary of the Science and Technology Directorate of the Department of Homeland Security to develop a Department-wide policy and process to safeguard research and development from unauthorized access to or disclosure of sensitive information in research and development acquisitions, and for other purposes (Rept. 118-887). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Agriculture discharged from further consideration. H.R. 1586 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Agriculture discharged from further consideration. H.R. 5089

referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Energy and Commerce discharged from further consideration. H.R. 6494 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

TIME LIMITATION OF REFERRED BILL

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XII, the following action was taken by the Speaker:

H.R. 9457. Referral to the Committee on Energy and Commerce extended for a period ending not later than December 19, 2024.

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 Ms. TENNEY:

H.R. 10410. A bill to establish a commission to study the relocation of certain agencies outside of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

By Ms. TENNEY:

H.R. 10411. A bill to implement a 5-year pilot program establishing a performance-based pay structure for certain Federal employees in order to enhance productivity, accountability, and employee satisfaction in public service; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

By Ms. TENNEY:

H.R. 10412. A bill to impose restrictions on Federal agencies with respect to appointments, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

By Ms. TENNEY:

H.R. 10413. A bill to provide for across-the-board rescissions of nonsecurity discretionary spending, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. CLYDE (for himself, Mr.

DONALDS, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. ROY, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. BIGGS, Mr. BURCHETT, Mr. MOONEY, Mr. NEHLS, Mr. BURLISON, Mr. TIF-FANY, Mr. MOORE of Alabama, Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, Mr. GOOD of Virginia, Ms. BOEBERT, Ms. GREENE of Georgia, Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina, Mr. NORMAN, and Ms. VAN DUYNÉ):

H.R. 10414. A bill to repeal the Impoundment Control Act of 1974; to the Committee on the Budget, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, 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. ARRINGTON:

H.R. 10415. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide that employment authorization is only available to aliens who are lawfully present in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, Education and the Workforce, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Oversight and Accountability, 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. BANKS (for himself and Ms. ROSS):

H.R. 10416. A bill to require the Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office to establish and carry out a pilot program to expedite the examination of applications for certain patents, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. BEATTY (for herself, Ms. MENG, Ms. NORTON, Ms. SHERRILL, and Ms. WILSON of Florida):

H.R. 10417. A bill to amend the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act to permit services provided by grant recipients to include provision of sanitary napkins and tampons; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BEYER:

H.R. 10418. A bill to cap the emissions of greenhouse gases through a requirement to purchase carbon permits, to distribute the proceeds of such purchases to eligible individuals, and for other purposes; 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. CÁRDENAS (for himself, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, and Mr. FITZPATRICK):

H.R. 10419. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish a Medicare demonstration program relating to crisis response services; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, 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. CISCOMANI (for himself, Ms. PEREZ, Mr. ZINKE, and Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina):

H.R. 10420. A bill to amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to expand the capacity of junior or community colleges and area career and technical education schools to conduct training services, education, and outreach activities for careers in the residential construction industry; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. CLEAVER:

H.R. 10421. A bill to establish a permanent rural housing preservation and revitalization program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CLEAVER:

H.R. 10422. A bill to amend the Community Development Banking and Financial Institutions Act of 1994 to reauthorize and improve the community development financial institutions bond guarantee program, and for other purposes, amend the Community Development Banking and Financial Institutions Act of 1994 to reauthorize and improve the community development financial institutions bond guarantee program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. CROCKETT (for herself, Mr. MOSKOWITZ, and Mr. EDWARDS):

H.R. 10423. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the work opportunity tax credit for hiring displaced disaster victims; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. DINGELL:

H.R. 10424. A bill to amend part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to require States to follow certain procedures in placing a child who has been removed from the custody of his or her parents; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. FOXX (for herself and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia):

H.R. 10425. A bill to amend and reauthorize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity

Act and the Older Americans Act of 1965; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and Energy and Commerce, 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. GARCIA of Texas (for herself, Mr. POCAN, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. TORRES of New York, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. CHU, Mr. FROST, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Ms. JACOBS, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Mrs. LEE CARTER, Ms. MCCLELLAN, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. MCIVER, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. PRESSLEY, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mrs. RAMIREZ, and Ms. TLAIB):

H.R. 10426. A bill to amend part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to require States to prohibit genital surgery on foster children with variations in sex characteristics who are under six years of age as a condition of receiving grants under such part; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GROTHMAN (for himself and Mr. STEEL):

H.R. 10427. A bill to require the Secretary of Labor to withdraw a proposed rule relating to certificates issued under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1937; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. HUFFMAN:

H.R. 10428. A bill to support and fund the Federal procurement of clean energy products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Accountability, and Transportation and Infrastructure, 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. KHANNA:

H.R. 10429. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish a State and local general sales tax credit for small businesses; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LALOTA:

H.R. 10430. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Department of Veterans Affairs to furnish hospital care and medical services outside a State to veterans with service-connected disabilities rated as permanent and total, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. LANDSMAN:

H.R. 10431. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to require the United States Secret Service to reimburse States and units of local government for support in the form of the use of services, personnel, equipment, and facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MCGARVEY (for himself, Mrs. HOUCHIN, Mr. LANDSMAN, and Mr. DELUZZIO):

H.R. 10432. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to establish an Ohio River Basin Restoration Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. MOULTON:

H.R. 10433. A bill to provide for consideration of all modes of transportation and all road users in certain highway and transit programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. OGLES:

H.R. 10434. A bill to amend the Consumer Product Safety Act to increase reliance by the Consumer Product Safety Commission

on voluntary consumer product safety standards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. PLASKETT:

H.R. 10435. A bill to extend preferential duty treatment program for Haiti under the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. SÁNCHEZ (for herself, Mr. CORREA, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Ms. ESCOBAR, Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ, and Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois):

H.R. 10436. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the members of Escuadrón 201; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, 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. SCHNEIDER (for himself, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. SEWELL, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. EVANS, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY):

H.R. 10437. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the guaranteed issue of Medigap policies to all Medigap-eligible Medicare beneficiaries and Medicare Advantage enrollees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, 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. SCHRIER (for herself and Ms. UNDERWOOD):

H.R. 10438. A bill to expand cost-sharing reductions with respect to qualified health plans offered through an Exchange, and for other purposes; 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. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia (for himself and Ms. NORTON):

H.R. 10439. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to expand research and education with respect to endometrial cancer, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. TONKO (for himself and Mr. PALLONE):

H.R. 10440. A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to provide assistance for States, territories, areas affected by natural disasters, and water systems and schools affected by PFAS or lead, and to require the Environmental Protection Agency to promulgate national primary drinking water regulations for PFAS, microcystin toxin, and 1,4-dioxane, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and Transportation and Infrastructure, 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. WATERS (for herself, Mr. LIEU, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. COHEN, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California, Ms. NORTON, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE, Ms. SCANLON, and Ms. LEE of California):

H.R. 10441. A bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act to prohibit the use of hydrogen fluoride (hydrofluoric acid) at petroleum refineries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

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 Ms. TENNEY:

H.R. 10410.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I

The single subject of this legislation is:

Creating a commission to study the feasibility of relocating nonsecurity agencies outside of the Washington, DC area.

By Ms. TENNEY:

H.R. 10411.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I

The single subject of this legislation is:

Creating a pilot program to transition federal bureaucrats' pay to merit and incentive based pay.

By Ms. TENNEY:

H.R. 10412.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I

The single subject of this legislation is:

Prohibiting the executive branch from hiring additional nonsecurity agency bureaucrats above replacement levels.

By Ms. TENNEY:

H.R. 10413.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I

The single subject of this legislation is:

Prohibiting additional appropriations above a one percent increase year over year.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.R. 10414.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18, [The Congress Shall Have Power] "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: This bill repeals the Impoundment Control Act of 1974

By Mr. ARRINGTON:

H.R. 10415.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

The single subject of this legislation is: immigration

By Mr. BANKS:

H.R. 10416.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority of Congress to enact this legislation is provided by Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress).

The single subject of this legislation is: Critical technologies

By Mrs. BEATTY:

H.R. 10417.

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 of the U.S. Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is: Appropriations that Place Conditions on an Expenditure

By Mr. BEYER:

H.R. 10418.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To cap the emissions of greenhouse gases through a requirement to purchase carbon permits and distribute the proceeds of such purchases to eligible individuals.

By Mr. CARDENAS:

H.R. 10419.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 1.

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

The single subject of this legislation is:

To create a Medicare demonstration program for the provision of crisis stabilization services.

By Mr. CISCOMANI:

H.R. 10420.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article One, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is: to expand the residential construction workforce.

By Mr. CLEAVER:

H.R. 10421.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8.

The single subject of this legislation is:

To establish a permanent rural housing preservation and revitalization program, and for other purposes.

By Mr. CLEAVER:

H.R. 10422.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8.

The single subject of this legislation is:

To amend the Community Development Banking and Financial Institutions Act of 1994 to reauthorize and improve the community development financial institutions bond guarantee program, and for other purposes.amend the Community Development Banking and Financial Institutions Act of 1994 to reauthorize and improve the community development financial

By Ms. CROCKETT:

H.R. 10423.

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 the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the work opportunity tax credit for hiring displaced disaster victims.

By Mrs. DINGELL:

H.R. 10424.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority of Congress to enact this legislation is provided by Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution.

The single subject of this legislation is:

This bill amends part E of the Title IX of the Social Security Act to require States to follow certain procedures in placing a child who has been removed from the custody of his or her parents.

By Ms. FOX:

H.R. 10425.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8.

The single subject of this legislation is:

To amend and reauthorize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Older Americans Act of 1965

By Ms. GARCIA of Texas:
H.R. 10426.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8.

The single subject of this legislation is:
Families, Civil Rights and Liberties
By Mr. GROTHMAN:
H.R. 10427.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is:
Employment Law
By Mr. HUFFMAN:
H.R. 10428.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8
The single subject of this legislation is:
Clean energy development
By Mr. KHANNA:
H.R. 10429.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution gives Congress the power to make laws that are necessary and proper to carry out its enumerated powers.
The single subject of this legislation is:
Taxes
By Mr. LALOTA:
H.R. 10430.

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 amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Department of Veterans Affairs to furnish hospital care and medical services outside a State to veterans with service-connected disabilities rated as permanent and total, and for other purposes.
By Mr. LANDSMAN:
H.R. 10431.

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:
To amend title 18, United States Code, to require the United States Secret Service to reimburse States and units of local government for support in the form of the use of services, personnel, equipment, and facilities, and for other purposes.
By Mr. MCGARVEY:
H.R. 10432.

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:
To amend title 18, United States Code, to require the United States Secret Service to reimburse States and units of local government for support in the form of the use of services, personnel, equipment, and facilities, and for other purposes.
By Mr. MCGARVEY:
H.R. 10432.

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:
To amend title 18, United States Code, to require the United States Secret Service to reimburse States and units of local government for support in the form of the use of services, personnel, equipment, and facilities, and for other purposes.
By Mr. MCGARVEY:
H.R. 10432.

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:
Environment
By Mr. MOULTON:
H.R. 10433.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution gives Congress the power to make laws that are necessary and proper to carry out its enumerated powers.
The single subject of this legislation is:
Transportation
By Mr. OGLES:
H.R. 10434.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section VIII
The single subject of this legislation is:
Reforming rulemaking from Consumer Product Safety Commission
By Ms. PLASKETT:
H.R. 10435.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution.
The single subject of this legislation is:
To extend and enhance the preferential duty treatment program for Haiti.

By Ms. SANCHEZ:
H.R. 10436.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8.
The single subject of this legislation is:
Congressional Gold Medal
By Mr. SCHNEIDER:
H.R. 10437.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8
The single subject of this legislation is:
Providing for the guaranteed issue of Medigap policies to all Medigap-eligible Medicare beneficiaries and Medicare Advantage enrollees
By Ms. SCHRIER:
H.R. 10438.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.
The single subject of this legislation is:
health
By Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia:
H.R. 10439.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises in order to provide for the general Welfare of the United States.
The single subject of this legislation is:
Healthcare
By Mr. TONKO:
H.R. 10440.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: The Congress shall have power to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.
The single subject of this legislation is:
Amending the Safe Drinking Water Act to improve the quality, reliability, and affordability of drinking water in the United States.

By Ms. WATERS:
H.R. 10441.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1 of the U.S. Constitution.
The single subject of this legislation is:
Refinery safety.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 20: Mrs. MCIVER.
H.R. 210: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 427: Mr. MURPHY.
H.R. 451: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 595: Mr. GOMEZ, Mr. SUOZZI, and Ms. DELBENE.
H.R. 866: Mr. LEVIN, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mrs. SYKES, Mrs. CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
H.R. 987: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
H.R. 1002: Ms. WILD, Ms. BALINT, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. CARBAJAL, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. AMO, Mrs. SYKES, Mrs. CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mrs. HAYES.
H.R. 1139: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.
H.R. 1666: Mr. GARCIA of Illinois, Mrs. FISCHBACH, and Mr. QUIGLEY.

H.R. 2367: Ms. SPANBERGER.
H.R. 2539: Mr. PAPPAS.
H.R. 2730: Mr. GARCIA of Illinois.
H.R. 2982: Mr. MENENDEZ.
H.R. 3074: Mr. HORSFORD.
H.R. 3139: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 3186: Ms. SPANBERGER and Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 3421: Mrs. MCIVER.
H.R. 3894: Ms. TENNEY.
H.R. 3904: Mr. CROW.
H.R. 3959: Mr. SUOZZI.
H.R. 3962: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 4006: Mr. JACKSON of Texas.
H.R. 4176: Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania and Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.
H.R. 4189: Ms. HOYLE of Oregon.
H.R. 4227: Mr. CROW.
H.R. 4236: Mr. COSTA.
H.R. 4263: Mr. CARSON.
H.R. 4273: Ms. PORTER.
H.R. 4274: Mr. MENENDEZ.
H.R. 4319: Ms. CRAIG.
H.R. 4333: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H.R. 4432: Mrs. MCIVER, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. SWALWELL, Mr. DOGGETT, and Mr. KENNEDY.
H.R. 4525: Mrs. RAMIREZ.
H.R. 4663: Mr. NICKEL.
H.R. 4769: Mr. MENENDEZ.
H.R. 4771: Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 4856: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 4914: Mr. GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 5012: Mr. SUOZZI.
H.R. 5041: Mr. EVANS.
H.R. 5080: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 5532: Mr. AMO, Ms. SANCHEZ, and Mr. KEAN of New Jersey.
H.R. 5568: Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 5780: Mr. COSTA.
H.R. 5844: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 5976: Ms. PORTER.
H.R. 6016: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 6031: Mrs. MCIVER.
H.R. 6041: Mrs. DINGELL.
H.R. 6124: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 6384: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 6454: Mr. NEHLS.
H.R. 6554: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 6763: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 7003: Ms. JAYAPAL.
H.R. 7039: Mr. HORSFORD.
H.R. 7055: Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 7127: Mr. GOMEZ.
H.R. 7170: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 7212: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 7248: Mr. DOGGETT.
H.R. 7310: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 7618: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 7749: Mr. PALLONE.
H.R. 7801: Mr. AMODEI and Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 7829: Mrs. DINGELL and Mr. HARDER of California.
H.R. 7840: Mr. CASTEN.
H.R. 7865: Ms. JACOBS, Mr. SMUCKER, and Mr. OWENS.
H.R. 7925: Mr. PAPPAS.
H.R. 8061: Ms. TLAI, Mr. DOGGETT, and Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 8067: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 8147: Mr. KELLY of Mississippi.
H.R. 8231: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 8312: Mr. LAWLER and Mr. LALOTA.
H.R. 8481: Mr. CROW.
H.R. 8545: Ms. SPANBERGER.
H.R. 8571: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 8622: Ms. HOYLE of Oregon.
H.R. 8679: Mr. CARTER of Texas.
H.R. 8732: Mrs. MCIVER.
H.R. 8800: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 8899: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 9007: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 9113: Mr. AUCHINCLOSS.
H.R. 9131: Ms. SCHRIER.
H.R. 9165: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 9166: Ms. SPANBERGER.
H.R. 9211: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 9218: Mr. LANGWORTHY.

H.R. 9233: Ms. BONAMICI.
H.R. 9298: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.
H.R. 9402: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 9408: Ms. MCCOLLUM.
H.R. 9448: Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois.
H.R. 9481: Mr. NUNN of Iowa.
H.R. 9501: Mr. MENENDEZ.
H.R. 9581: Mr. GOLDMAN of New York.
H.R. 9614: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 9636: Ms. BALINT.
H.R. 9789: Mr. VASQUEZ.
H.R. 9855: Mr. GOMEZ.
H.R. 9950: Mr. MOYLAN, Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas, and Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 9982: Ms. PORTER.
H.R. 10045: Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. MOORE of Utah, and Mrs. FLETCHER.

H.R. 10113: Mr. CARTER of Texas and Mr. WEBER of Texas.
H.R. 10172: Ms. GARCIA of Texas and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
H.R. 10173: Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 10219: Mr. SHERMAN.
H.R. 10221: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 10254: Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois.
H.R. 10267: Mr. BERGMAN.
H.R. 10287: Ms. ROSS and Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ.
H.R. 10303: Mr. LARSEN of Washington.
H.R. 10316: Ms. ADAMS.
H.R. 10329: Mr. KILEY.
H.R. 10331: Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 10337: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Ms. ROSS.

H.R. 10366: Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK.
H.R. 10385: Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. TLAIB, and Ms. TITUS.
H.J. Res. 72: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.
H. Res. 439: Mr. COURTNEY and Ms. BUDZINSKI.
H. Res. 1079: Mr. KHANNA.
H. Res. 1297: Mr. VALADAO.
H. Res. 1499: Mr. EVANS and Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.
H. Res. 1551: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.
H. Res. 1558: Ms. PORTER.
H. Res. 1597: Mr. MORELLE.
H. Res. 1613: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Mr. EVANS, and Mr. MULLIN.



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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TAMMY DUCKWORTH, a Senator from the State of Illinois.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by Lisa Wink Schultz of the Senate Chaplain's Office here in Washington, DC.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

God of all comfort, we thank You that Your steadfast love endures forever. Today, we offer our thanksgiving for Your word that counsels us, for Your Spirit that guides us, and for prayer that sustains us.

Give our Senators grace and wisdom to fix their eyes on You and to meditate on all Your ways, knowing that Your testimonies are better than silver and gold. As we anticipate the end of Advent and look forward to the wondrous beginning of Christmas, we ask You to come light our world.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The assistant bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, December 16, 2024.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable TAMMY DUCKWORTH, a Senator from the State of Illinois, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. DUCKWORTH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

WILDLIFE INNOVATION AND LONGEVITY DRIVER REAUTHORIZATION ACT—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 5009, which the clerk will report.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 5009, a bill to reauthorize wildlife habitat and conservation programs and for other purposes.

Pending:

Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill.

Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Schumer amendment No. 3317 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill), to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 3318 (to amendment No. 3317), to add an effective date.

Schumer motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Armed Services, with instructions, Schumer amendment No. 3319, to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 3320 (to the instructions (amendment No. 3319) of the motion to refer), to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 3321 (to amendment No. 3320), to add an effective date.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, as is typical this time of year, the Senate's attention is focused squarely on a long list of business, with deadlines fast approaching. Extending government funding by Friday is our top priority. Shutting the government down is a one-way ticket to needless disruption of important functions. It has never been a winning proposition, and this time is no different.

Delivering urgent disaster relief is a nonnegotiable. As communities across the country continue to pick up the pieces from a devastating storm season, they are watching closely for the Senate to deliver on the promise of a much needed helping hand.

And after months of unnecessary delay, the Senate will finally vote on the National Defense Authorization Act. The Armed Services Committee reported this year's NDAA 6 months ago by an overwhelming bipartisan vote. The fact that it has only reached the floor a week before Christmas is really inexcusable; so is the absence of a vote on defense appropriations legislation. And the blame for this neglect will rest squarely on the outgoing Senate majority. Ranking Member WICKER and our colleagues on the committee tried mightily to ensure that the final bill—Congress's main annual opportunity to shape national defense priorities—backs tough talk on growing threats with the tools required to meet them.

But the NDAA, like all major legislation, is a compromise product, and the absence of the Senate-backed increase

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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to topline investments will go down as a tremendous—tremendous—missed opportunity. Artificial budget restraints mean that major bill provisions, like a pay raise for enlisted servicemembers, will come at the expense of investments in the critical weapons systems and munitions that deter conflict and keep them safe.

For all the talk about growing threats to America's national security, it is past time for an honest conversation about the military requirements to meet those needs. And if this NDAA offers any valuable lesson, it is that we have a tremendous amount of work to do.

TRIBUTE TO MIKE BRAUN

Madam President, on an entirely different matter, my earliest participation in politics was wearing an "I like Ike" pin on school picture day. But, last month, the State of Indiana was chanting: "I like MIKE."

MIKE BRAUN's fellow Hoosiers like him so much, in fact, they have decided to steal him back from Washington to be their Governor. And if I know anything about Indiana's junior Senator, he is probably looking forward to trading in the trappings of this institution for a job a lot closer to home. But I would like to say just a few words before he goes.

Years ago, a local reporter asked MIKE BRAUN about his approach to life and work. He told them:

You live like you are going out of business every day, and it makes you healthy.

For a spry, former three-sport athlete like MIKE, that much checks out. But, needless to say, in the process of keeping him young, our colleague's mantra also brought a fair bit of political success.

Sure, a cushy, white-collar gig and a predictable corporate ladder would have been the natural next step for a high achiever fresh out of Harvard Business School. But where is the fun in that? For MIKE, in order to live like you are going out of business, you have to run a business yourself. You have to build a team and take risks. And what better place to do that than in your own hometown.

Most of us are familiar with at least some of what came next for MIKE and his high school sweetheart Maureen. The life and professional lessons of MIKE's dad Amos, a decorated World War II vet; steering a 15-person operation through the aftermath of the 1980s farm crisis and turning it into a national team spread across 38 States; for years, running that success, with sleeves rolled up, from a trailer office; and raising four kids along the way, three of whom have found their own callings in the family business—as I understand it, we have Maureen to thank that this incredible story of hard work and entrepreneurial spirit took a turn into politics in the first place. When friends around Jasper tried drafting her to run for the school board, she offered MIKE instead. And so began two decades and counting of life in politics.

Here in the Senate, MIKE's "going out of business" approach to public service made an early impression. Careful observers ranked him, at one point, the most effective freshman in the Chamber. He dove head first into legislation that mattered to him and to Indiana. He advocated passionately for farmers and for families impacted by rare diseases. He fought for outcomes, and he stood on principle.

But Hoosiers will be proud to know that he still doesn't like dressing up here on the Senate floor. And who can blame him? By MIKE's own admission, most of what he likes to do—tend the farm, fish, and hunt both animals and mushrooms—he can do within 60 miles of Jasper. So it speaks to MIKE's commitment to his neighbors that, even though he is leaving Washington, he is not quite going home just yet, nor will he be able to hang up the coat and the tie.

The trust of the people of Indiana is rightly a great source of pride for our colleague, second only to his pride in the family he and Maureen built, and I know he can't wait to get to work for all of them in Indianapolis.

So I know I speak for our colleagues when I thank MIKE for his service these past 6 years. We wish him all the best in his next chapter.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The senior Senator from Illinois.

BITCOIN ATM FRAUD

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, the next time you are checking out at your local grocery or convenience store, take a look around. There is a good chance you will see a kiosk marked with the letter B with two vertical lines running through it. It looks like the form of a dollar sign. It is the symbol for Bitcoin. And what you are looking at is a Bitcoin ATM.

Take a closer look. Is there somebody using the machine? Are they on their phone while they are using the machine? Do they seem stressed? If so, they might just be one of the growing number of victims of Bitcoin ATM fraud.

These scams, which frequently target elderly Americans, start with a phone call. A criminal calls his target and claims he is from their bank, the IRS, or some Federal Agency. He tells his victim that their bank account has been hacked or that they are late paying their taxes and explains that they need to go to their bank immediately and take out money—sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars.

He directs his victim to a local business that hosts a Bitcoin ATM. He might even order them an Uber driver to pick them up. From there, he walks them through, step by step, how to deposit their money into the machine; how to use it to buy Bitcoin; and how to transfer the Bitcoin to a digital wallet controlled by the criminal himself.

In a matter of minutes, the money is gone, lost to the anonymity and irreversibility inherent to cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin.

Bitcoin ATM scams like these have exploded in recent years. According to the data released by the Federal Trade Commission, the amount consumers report losing in this form of fraud increased nearly tenfold between 2020 and 2023, from \$12 million to \$114 million. In the first half of this year alone, victims lost a staggering \$65 million.

A disproportionate number of these victims were elderly Americans. In 2023, the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center received nearly 2,700 Bitcoin fraud complaints from individuals aged 60 and older—more than all other age groups combined.

Earlier this summer, the Illinois Times reported that a small business owner in my hometown of Springfield, IL, stepped in after he witnessed a Bitcoin ATM in his store repeatedly being used by elderly individuals to deposit large sums of money at the urging of fraudsters. He explained to the Illinois Times:

One hundred percent of the time that we saw somebody at the machine they were being scammed. So I was like, this machine has to go. I'm not going to be a part of that.

He wisely removed the Bitcoin ATM from the store.

In Texas, a good Samaritan called 9-1-1 after she, in her words, "noticed an elderly lady feeding thousands of dollars into the cryptocurrency machine" at the urging of a criminal. She tried to stop the victim from feeding more and more of her money into the machine but was unsuccessful. Only when the responding officer arrived and intervened did the victim finally understand that she had been scammed.

Scenarios like these are playing out all across America. While we should applaud bystanders who step in and stop—or at least limit—the damage caused by these criminals, relying on good Samaritans is not a solution to this growing problem.

That is why I led six of my colleagues in sending letters to the 10 largest Bitcoin ATM operators this last September. We wanted to understand what they were doing, if anything, to prevent fraudulent use of their machines. The responses we received were not reassuring.

While some safeguards, such as warning screens and ID checks, were employed by all responding companies, other commonsense measures, like analyzing transactions and digital wallets to identify and stop fraud, were not.

Other best practices, such as setting maximum transaction sizes, were left to the vagaries of State law, leaving too many Americans at risk in too many States.

That simply isn't good enough. A company should meet certain specific antifraud measures before dropping one of their machines into our communities. That is why I am going to introduce legislation in the next few weeks that establishes a Federal antifraud baseline for Bitcoin ATMs.

And as I start to develop this bill, there are a few things that strike me

as absolutely necessary. First, Bitcoin ATMs should have daily transaction limits, particularly for new customers. As these machines are increasingly used to perpetrate fraud, we should limit potential losses.

Second, any transactions initiated by a new customer should be held for some reasonable period of time before it is processed. This will allow new customers to cancel their transactions—particularly if they learn that they have been victims of fraud.

Minnesota and Connecticut recently passed legislation requiring Bitcoin ATM operators to wait 72 hours before processing a new customer's transaction. This seems like a good place to start.

Third, Bitcoin ATM operators should be required to use analytics to screen for fraudulent or otherwise illicit transactions. Many Bitcoin ATM operators already employ this technology; there is no reason it shouldn't be used across the board.

Fourth, Bitcoin ATMs should be required to provide transaction receipts that include transaction hashes. This will allow law enforcement to more easily trace the transaction, collect evidence of the crime, and maybe even recover the stolen funds.

These are just a few pillars that this legislation will include.

I plan to work with stakeholders to make this the best bill possible. That includes State attorneys general and organizations like AARP, who have been real leaders on this issue.

It also includes Bitcoin ATM operators. In their responses to my letters, many of these companies offered to work with Congress to craft appropriate regulations for the industry. I hope they will come to the table in good faith.

I am not going to stand idly by while thousands of Americans—particularly elderly Americans—are ripped off in Bitcoin ATM scams. My bill will address this problem before it spirals out of control.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

DR. BARRY C. BLACK

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, first, our thoughts and our prayers are with our dear friend Chaplain Barry Black, who was unexpectedly hospitalized Thursday afternoon. We are relieved and thankful that he is expected to make a smooth recovery.

Chaplain Black is one of the most beloved individuals in the entire Senate. Every day we gavel into session, he is

always here to start us off in prayer, delivered with his profound sense of wisdom, grace, and eloquence.

So we pray for the Chaplain and can't wait to see him back very soon.

DRONE SIGHTINGS

Madam President, now on drone sightings, yesterday, I called on Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas to quickly deploy any available drone-detecting tools to help New York and New Jersey deal with the mysterious drone sightings of the past few weeks. This week, I will also come to the floor of the Senate to seek passage of legislation that will give local officials greater authority to swiftly respond to these sightings.

The reports of the past few weeks have ignited immense anxiety and confusion for millions of people across the Northeast. Thankfully, there is no reason to believe these drone sightings pose a national security threat, but even so, they can be disruptive if they fly over restricted airspace, particularly near airports and bases.

While there is no shortage of reports about possible drone activity, we still have very few answers on where some of these drones come from and who may be operating them. The people of New York and New Jersey have a lot of questions and haven't gotten many answers. We know one thing, though: Local officials now don't have the resources nor the authority to get to the bottom of what is happening. This is Federal jurisdiction. But, of course, because drones are so new and there are so many in so many different places, including recreational users, we need to do a lot more.

So to repeat, this week, I will move for the Senate to pass legislation giving local officials the tools and authorities necessary to act quickly and in lockstep with the Department of Homeland Security and other Agencies. Local authorities can do a lot to help answer our questions, but right now, they are not empowered to do so because the Federal Government has total jurisdiction.

In the meantime, I urge DHS to take all necessary action to deploy as many drone-detecting resources as possible. Right now, they have not deployed close to enough, and that is why these questions that so many people have are going unanswered.

Some of the new technology, like the Robin's systems, are 360-degree radar—they can see 360 degrees, not at one beam—and could go a long way to help local officials collect real data about where these drones are coming from. I want to see a flock of Robin-like technology systems deployed across the New York City metropolitan area, so we need the Department of Homeland Security to spring into action.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Madam President, Senate business on the NDAA, the CR, WRDA, and noms: The Senate gavels back into session for a very busy week. We must finish our work on the NDAA, and we must keep

the government open, act on the Social Security Fairness Act, act on WRDA and EDA, and confirm more of the President's nominees. It is going to take cooperation from our Republican colleagues to get these things done in a timely fashion.

First, as I said, we must pass our annual Defense authorization bill, the NDAA. This afternoon, we will take the first procedural vote on the NDAA package sent to us last week by the House. If cloture is invoked, I hope we can find a path to passing NDAA as soon as tomorrow.

This year's NDAA is not a perfect bill, but it nonetheless has some good things that Democrats have worked hard for and that will strengthen military families and boost tech innovation here at home—something very important to me and to the Presiding Officer. To be sure, the NDAA has some bad provisions Democrats would not have included, and there are other provisions that were left out of NDAA which we still hope can get done elsewhere.

I want to thank Chairman REED, Ranking Member WICKER, and all the members of the Armed Services Committee for their good work on this year's Defense bill.

Madam President, on another matter, by the end of the week, the Senate must also pass a temporary extension of government funding before December 20 or else the government will shut down right before Christmas.

Democrats have spent weeks working in good faith with our Republican counterparts on crafting a strong CR that will keep the government open while also providing much needed disaster relief for the American people. We kept working through the weekend on finalizing an agreement, but our Republican colleagues are still sorting through disagreements on their end, and there are many.

Democrats will keep working to finish the job on passing a strong and bipartisan CR. We don't want the government to shut down during the holiday season, and I expect that many, if not most, of our Republican colleagues feel the same way. So let's finish the job.

Besides keeping the government open, the Senate will also vote later this week on reauthorizing WRDA and the Economic Development Administration.

Reauthorizing WRDA, the Water Resources Development Act, is vital for strengthening America's ports and waterways, preventing flood damage, protecting our wetlands, and boosting our economy. Reauthorizing the EDA would provide critical investments in infrastructure, workforce, and domestic supply chains that will help the United States outcompete the rest of the world.

The House passed WRDA and EDA with overwhelming bipartisan support last week. We expect it to pass here with equally robust support, and we will work with our Republican colleagues on finding time to hold a floor

vote. I thank them for working with us to get these bills done.

Madam President, finally, before I get to the Social Security Fairness Act, the Senate will also be working on nominations. Later today, I will file cloture on the nominations of Benjamin Cheeks to be U.S. district judge for the Southern District of California and Serena Murillo to be U.S. district judge for the Central District of California. Members should be ready to vote on and confirm these outstanding public servants as soon as Wednesday. I will have more to say on our outstanding nominees throughout the week.

SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS ACT

Madam President, now on Social Security, this week, the Senate will vote to take up a bipartisan piece of legislation that impacts millions of public retirees and their spouses: the Social Security Fairness Act. I am proud to cosponsor this bill with my good friend Senator BROWN as a staunch advocate for working Americans, and he is a very staunch advocate as well.

The Senate has a golden opportunity to deliver for our retired firefighters, postal workers, teachers, and other public servants who are retired by passing the Social Security Fairness Act this week.

The bill would ensure no public retiree or spouse is denied their well-deserved Social Security benefits by repealing two widely criticized policies that have eaten away at the benefits of millions of people—the Windfall Elimination Provision, WEP, and Government Pension Offset, GPO. Many of these retirees contributed toward Social Security for years but are being penalized because at one point they worked as a teacher, a firefighter, a postal worker, a police officer, or some other public sector job.

The bill has already won immense support from Democrats and Republicans alike. In fact, the House passed the bill with an overwhelming 327-to-75 vote margin. There is no reason for the outcome to be different in the Senate. Senate Democrats are ready to vote yes on this legislation. We hope our Republican colleagues will join us.

Retirees have been pushing for action on WEP and GPO for decades, and this week the Senate is going to act. We will vote, and every Senator will choose. Where are you? Do you stand on the side of public retirees who deserve their benefits or bungle this golden opportunity by blocking this bill?

NEW YORK COUNTY TOUR

Finally, the 62-county tour. Today is a very special day for me because today you can flip one of my favorite numbers, 62—that is the number of counties in New York—and get another very important number, 26. For the 26th year in a row, I have just completed, earlier this afternoon, my annual tour of all 62 counties in New York State.

It is a promise I never fail to keep, not even after being named majority leader, not even during COVID because

it is the best way I keep up with everything New Yorkers are doing, thinking, and saying.

Just as everyone knows here, you sit at your desk, talk on the telephone, it is not the same as being out there. And the 62-county tour makes sure I am out there week in and week out. I am so, so happy that we have completed the tour, and I can't wait in January to start doing it again for the 27th year.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 849.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Benjamin J. Cheeks, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 849, Benjamin J. Cheeks, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Tammy Duckworth, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Tammy Baldwin, Catherine Cortez Masto, Debbie Stabenow, Patty Murray, Amy Klobuchar, Chris Van Hollen, Jack Reed, Jeanne Shaheen, Andy Kim, Margaret Wood Hassan, Elizabeth Warren, Christopher A. Coons, Adam B. Schiff, Jeff Merkley.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 850.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Serena Raquel Murillo, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 850, Serena Raquel Murillo, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Tammy Duckworth, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Tammy Baldwin, Catherine Cortez Masto, Debbie Stabenow, Patty Murray, Amy Klobuchar, Chris Van Hollen, Jack Reed, Jeanne Shaheen, Andy Kim, Margaret Wood Hassan, Elizabeth Warren, Christopher A. Coons, Adam B. Schiff, Jeff Merkley.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 5009

Mr. SCHUMER. As if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the cloture vote on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 5009 be waived.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

OUTBOUND INVESTMENT TRANSPARENCY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, last week, I came to the Senate floor to discuss provisions that would address outbound investment transparency that Congress neglected to put in the National Defense Authorization Act conference report, which we are presently considering.

Well, I am back again, and I wish I had better news to share. As I mentioned last week, no one can claim to be serious about the China threat while turning a blind eye toward outbound investment transparency. Simply put, American investment in Chinese companies is the lifeblood of the Chinese economy. If the People's Republic of China, the Chinese Communist Party,

were part of the rules-based international order, it would be one thing, but they are not.

The People's Republic of China and the Chinese Communist Party welcome that foreign investment to build their economy while they modernize their military and rearm their country, threatening peace in the region and beyond.

Quite frankly, I am disappointed the House and the Senate have so far failed to take action on this matter that is of critical importance to our strategic competition with the Chinese Communist Party. The House and the Senate will have one last chance this year to address the outbound investment transparency provision I am discussing in the continuing resolution before we leave for the holiday recess.

But consider for a moment, we are awaiting an announcement that this continuing resolution has somehow been agreed to by the leaders here when we are talking about financing the government that we should have done before the end of the fiscal year last September. And now here we are, at the last minute, trying to figure out how to kick the can down the road to March.

But notwithstanding this terrible way to do business and to handle our country's finances—threatening, once again, another government shutdown, a completely unnecessary drama—I would urge my colleagues not to miss this opportunity to include this outbound investment transparency provision in the continuing resolution. We simply cannot wait another year to address this issue.

While Members of the House and Senate hem and haw, China is aggressively building up their defensive and offensive capabilities. The Chinese military continues to conduct joint exercises with Russia, and they continue to engage in provocative and aggressive behavior toward our treaty ally, the Philippines, in the South China Sea.

It is no secret that President Xi has ordered the Chinese military to be ready and capable of taking Taiwan by force by the year 2027, barely 2 years from now. The last thing the United States of America should be doing is financing the very economy and the weapons systems that will be used to try to destroy our allies and, potentially, us.

As we all know, China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea have joined together as the axis of autocracies in opposition to the democracies across the planet. This is a very dangerous alliance which foreshadows the sort of things that led to the runup to World War II.

It is simply foolish for the United States to help China to modernize its military and create this very dangerous scenario by investing in technologies that could be used ultimately to kill American soldiers.

I could care less if American investors want to build another Starbucks or another Burger King in the People's

Republic of China. I do care about dual-use technology and advanced technology that they could use to defeat us in the Indo-Pacific. By some estimates, U.S. investments in Chinese companies total \$2.3 trillion in market value by the end of 2020. This includes, incredibly enough, \$21 billion in semiconductors, \$54 billion in military companies, and a whopping \$221 billion in artificial intelligence. Those are American companies investing in China to build those things.

A recent report from the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission found that more than 90 percent of the total U.S. investment in these sectors is concentrated in the semiconductor industry. When it comes to China's AI industry, the report cites an analysis that found U.S. investors account for 37 percent of the \$110 billion in global financing raised by firms from 2015 to 2021. This is in AI.

To capture this picture from another angle, the report points out that U.S. investors consistently contribute more than double the capital to these sectors compared to all non-U.S. investors combined.

Consider the fact that we passed the Chips and Science Act in 2021 to create programs that would bolster our ability to compete with China and to eliminate vulnerable supply chains when it comes to advanced semiconductors. We made this critical investment in reshoring the manufacturing of advanced semiconductors, but also we made critical investments in quantum computing and AI to ensure that we win the competition with China. And we established guardrails to make sure that these funds could not be used by our adversaries or to fund them.

But how foolish would it be for us to have made this investment and still continue to fund the growth of China's capabilities and these sectors at the exact same time? By turning a blind eye to this reality, we are feeding the hand that is preparing to bite us. And the truth is, addressing outbound investment transparency will only become more painful if we wait.

This is a can that the United States of America cannot afford to kick down the road anymore. As I said, China's President Xi Jinping has made his plans for the People's Liberation Army to be ready to invade Taiwan by 2027. He could not be more clear.

What are we waiting for? And while I know I have painted a rather grim picture—which I unfortunately believe to be completely accurate—I remain optimistic that progress will be made on this critical matter before the end of the year. It has to. We simply cannot put it off. It has to be in the continuing resolution.

And while our political environment is divided, there is one thing that Democrats and Republicans—hawks and doves—alike can agree on, and that is the threat posed by China and the Chinese Communist Party.

I have been working on this matter for a long time now, and I have been amazed at the amount of bipartisan and bicameral agreement that exists on addressing outbound investment transparency.

So what is the delay? Why haven't we done it yet? Minority leader HAKEEM JEFFRIES originally blocked outbound investment transparency provisions from being included in the NDAA last week, but I remain hopeful that he will continue to work in a bipartisan manner with Republicans on including this critical tool in this end-of-year funding package, which must be acted on by the end of this week.

I would like to thank the Speaker of the House MIKE JOHNSON for his strong commitment to making sure this gets done in a timely fashion. Last year, my amendment to address outbound investment passed the Senate by 91 to 6—91 to 6. But it was not included in the final version of the National Defense Authorization Act. However, Speaker JOHNSON assured me he would make sure those provisions were included in the end-of-year funding package. Likewise, Senator SCHUMER made the same commitment. And I know they will keep their word.

So I look forward to continuing work with all my colleagues to make sure this critical matter is addressed in this year's funding measure. We simply cannot put it off any longer. We cannot continue to fly blind when it comes to American companies investing in China in industries and areas that can be used not only to build their economy but threatens peace and stability in the region and beyond.

As I said last week, no one can seriously claim to care about the threat posed by China if they support continued U.S. investment in Chinese defense technologies.

China is certainly not waiting around, and neither should we.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Minnesota.

RULES COMMITTEE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise today to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who have been involved in work with the Rules Committee.

I have led that committee as chair for the last 4 years and as ranking member before that.

As we look ahead to the new Congress, I would like to thank our ranking member, Senator FISCHER, for her partnership in the last 2 years and the opportunity to do important work with her. And I look forward to continuing

our work together next month on the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies that I chair.

I also want to express my gratitude to my friend, former Senator Blunt, for our work when we led the committee together and to congratulate our incoming chair, Leader MCCONNELL, and Ranking Member Senator PADILLA.

In addition, I want to thank the Rules Committee members for their service, and I look forward to continuing to serve on the committee. And that would be Senator SCHUMER and Senator WARNER; MERKLEY; Senator PADILLA, of course; Senator OSSOFF; BENNET; WELCH; Senator SCHIFF, who just joined the committee in place of Senator BUTLER—we also thank her; Senator MCCONNELL; Senator CRUZ; Senator CAPITO; Senator WICKER; Senator HYDE-SMITH; Senator HAGERTY; and Senator BRITT, as well as the staff who have supported our work, including my staff director who is here, Elizabeth Farrar, who has been with me for a very long time as my counsel and judiciary and leg director, has done incredible work. I also want to thank former staff director Lizzy Peluso and Lindsey Kerr and the other members of our Rules Committee staff, some of whom are here today, including Steve Spaulding, who has done excellent work on elections; Ben Driscoll; Counsel Kristin Mollet; Allison Hunn; Kulani Jalata; Khalil Lee; and our clerks, Cami Morrison and Kasie Jones, as well as the staff for Senator FISCHER and the nonpartisan staff as well.

The Rules Committee is a little different than some of the other committees, and if we have disagreements, we have tended to work them out. As Senator Blunt used to say: The chair and ranking member of the committee are kind of like the mayors of the Capitol, kind of getting involved in many issues regarding the building itself, regarding the personnel, regarding our Senators, and making sure that this place functions. And that means you don't want to have a lot of public brawls over how to fix things.

We have managed to get a lot done and made a lot of changes that are really positive over the last few years. What may be our committee's lasting contribution to the Senate and the country will be on display next month when we convene to certify the results of the election in line with the significant reforms that we have made to the Electoral Count Act.

Senator Blunt and I shepherded that bill through the Rules Committee and worked on the bill, along with, of course, Senator COLLINS and Senator MANCHIN.

We got a bipartisan vote on our committee of 14 to 1 to significant changes to make sure that the will of the voters prevails and that, in fact, we don't have situations where one Senator or one House Member can block the electoral count or that claims can be made that a Vice President can overcome the will of the people and the like. That

was an old law that needed to be changed; we changed it for generations to come.

We also will see the changes as we see key security improvements that we have made, thanks in large part to Capitol Police Chief Tom Manger, someone who we installed after January 6, and as well as the men and women of the Capitol Police who stand in defense of the Capitol every single day.

We also thank Sergeant At Arms General Karen Gibson for her good work. We had a final hearing of the Rules Committee last week involving Chief Manger. It was our eighth hearing on the Capitol Police, including two hearings that I held with the Homeland Security Committee—major, major joint hearings after January 6 in which our focus was on security failures and how they had to be fixed after January 6.

We also had our first joint hearing of the Capitol Police Board with the House, with Representative STEEL—first hearing since 1945. As the Chief testified at our hearing last week, the Capitol Police have made significant progress in the last 4 years. In that time, the Department has made necessary enhancements impacting all aspects of work, including implementing the bipartisan security report that came out of those major, major hearings that were televised in which we called the former Police Chief of the Capitol Police, the former Sergeant At Arms at the House and the Senate, and major leaders in the FBI and in Homeland Security to figure out what went wrong.

On my mind is always the haunting voice of the officer on the police line that day that went over the police radio saying: Does anyone have a plan, does anyone have a plan; the horror story of 75 percent of the cops not having access to riot gear; that a number of their gears were actually locked on a bus that they couldn't access, with the insurrectionists sometimes having better gear than our police officers had.

Senator Blunt and I then led legislation, which has passed, to allow the Capitol Police to request immediate assistance from the National Guard in an emergency. It was like a phone tree they had to go through that led to significant delays. That legislation has passed and allowed the Police Chief to do that.

The bipartisan security report that Senators Blunt, PETERS, Portman, and I put in the wake of our hearings, those changes have been made, and 103 recommendations from the Department inspector general have been implemented—all 103 recommendations. The way we know that is we had a hearing, and half were done. Then we had another hearing, and more were done. That is accountability. That is the bipartisan job of the U.S. Senate—to oversee these things and make sure they get done for the safety of our po-

lice officers, for the security of the people who work in this Capitol, and not just the Members but the court reporters and the people who are working in the cafeteria and the people who are keeping things clean around here. They need that protection. They were the ones hiding in closets.

(Mr. WELCH assumed the Chair.)

We also passed my bipartisan legislation with Senator FISCHER to improve accountability and empower Congress to appoint and remove the Architect of the Capitol. We learned that day through hearings from the House of Representatives as well as our work in the Senate that the then-Architect of the Capitol didn't even come in that day. He said he was in his mobile van. That person has been terminated, but we found out in the course of all this that we didn't have the ability to terminate the Architect of the Capitol in the House and the Senate, so we passed the legislation that gave us the ownership of it. We hire this person on a bipartisan basis—with the Senate and the House, Republicans and Democrats—who supervises the work of thousands of employees in this Capitol, and we also have the right to terminate that person—not the President; us. As a result, we have our new Architect of the Capitol, Tom Austin, and he was supported with unanimous bipartisan and bicameral support.

With the support of so many servicemembers, veterans, and military families, our committee passed a resolution that paved the way—I see the Presiding Officer, Senator WELCH, was part of this—to pass a rule that paved the way for an eventually voluntary agreement so that more than 400 military promotions would move forward after months and months of delay.

I thank my Republican colleagues that stood up on this floor to get those nominations through, as well as all the Democrats, and I thank the Democrats on the committee for working with me on this resolution so that we could pass it to change the rules, and that eventually put some pressure on to get this done.

During my time in the committee, thanks to our great members, we have taken on a whole host of issues: reopening the buildings after the pandemic; reforming the outdated process of the reporting and handling of harassment claims on Capitol Hill, which was something I did with former-Senator Blunt as well as Senators SCHUMER and MCCONNELL—they showed great leadership, all of them; making closed captioning available for all Senate committee hearings.

We worked to ensure that the people we venerate in this Capitol more closely reflect the people of this country. It is not just about removing paintings and statues; it is about who you put up there so that when little kids come in, they see them and think, oh, that is someone who looks like me.

We passed my legislation, with Senators MURKOWSKI, COLLINS, and

SINEMA, for two statues of two former, trailblazing Supreme Court Justices—one appointed by a Democratic President and one by a Republican—Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Once those are completed, there will be 21 women finally represented in statues in the Capitol. Of the 209 statues in the Capitol, 192 are men—but, OK, I am not counting—but I changed this one statue at a time. We have added five of those statues of women just in the time I have been chair.

We also dedicated the first rooms in the Senate wing of the Capitol—this was sort of ironic. We had not one room in the Capitol named after a woman when I came in—not one; zero—when we had, in fact, many women leaders in the Congress. We dedicated those first rooms in the Senate wing in honor of women—I am talking about the Senate wing here—former Senators Barbara Mikulski and Margaret Chase Smith.

Margaret Chase Smith was from Maine, and she was the first Republican on the Armed Services Committee and the first major candidate for President on the Republican side.

The bust of Justice Taney, who authored the Dred Scott decision, was removed and will be replaced with one of Justice Thurgood Marshall—that sounds like a pretty good trade to me—the first African American to serve on our Nation's High Court.

When our restaurant workers unionized, we fought to make sure they had a fair contract.

In one of my favorite moments—and this was one of my more fun things we worked on. I work on a lot of kind of detailed things which involve Senators telling me when there is too long of a line of visitors trying to come into the Capitol, sending me pictures, making sure we have people working at those gates, making sure Senators are able to get to and from, that they get offices they need, that they get their hideaways. Some of that isn't fun, but it is still important.

But what was really fun was when Senator Blunt and I worked to update the rules so that Senator DUCKWORTH, who was just presiding over the Senate, and everyone in her wake are able to bring their babies onto the Senate floor. Before that, we only allowed dogs onto the Senate floor.

Senator DUCKWORTH already had a toddler. She said that if there were late-night votes, she would have to bring her baby with her. The House already allowed for this.

What I most remember from that time is that I had to use a Dr. Seuss rhyme, which I am not going to use, about how we had to get this done because she wasn't going to burp the baby in the house; she would be as quiet as a mouse. It was really long. I am not going to go into the whole thing, but it was quite effective.

So out of that, after some of maybe the more senior Members of the Senate didn't want to change the rule and they

didn't want to talk about breastfeeding and things like that—but none of that ever happened. We changed the rule. It is a good thing.

I will never forget the first day TAMMY DUCKWORTH brought her little baby Maile Pearl—now not so little but at the time, all 6 pounds of her—here onto the floor, wheeling her in on her wheelchair, with all the reporters looking down and not really a dry eye in the house, and it was kind of an amazing moment. So things have changed in little ways one thing at a time.

We have done important work, as I note, much of it behind the scenes to help so many of our colleagues with issues that impact their ability to do their work, regardless of party or ideology. We help to support repairs and updates to offices here in Washington. In their home States, we have implemented new security measures. We have made sure that constituents can be hosted and feel welcome in this place.

We strived to make sure the security lines to get in the buildings were moving along—there was some transition after the pandemic—and we literally have worked to make sure the trains in the basement were running smoothly. I got a lot of texts from Members about that.

As we look ahead to the new Congress, we have worked with the Secretary of the Senate, the Architect of the Capitol, and the Sergeant at Arms to welcome our newly elected colleagues on both sides of the aisle to the Senate and make sure they have what they need to run their offices on day one.

We also have worked tirelessly to support the safety of those in the Capitol, which I mentioned, especially the Parliamentarian's office, which was really at risk—as I look at some of my favorite employees in the Senate—that day of January 6, and we take their input and try to make changes whenever we can with those concerns.

We work to support the Agencies in the committee's jurisdiction here in our Nation's Capital. The Library of Congress has expanded public access to its digital collections, and its new David M. Rubenstein Treasures Gallery opened to the public earlier this year, featuring special items from the Library's collection, like a draft of the Gettysburg Address, handwritten by President Lincoln; President James Madison's crystal flute; and the original handwritten lyrics from "The Sound of Music." I thought that was cool.

We celebrated the arrival of the new pandas that will be ready to meet visitors at the National Zoo next month. I got to see them already. They are really cute.

Since two new Smithsonian museums were established with bipartisan support after legislation passed the committee unanimously in 2020, we are at this moment working to get those locations nailed down. The locations have

been chosen, and tens of millions of dollars have been raised for both the Women's Museum and the Latino Museum.

We have 50 Republicans in the House of Representatives on the bill, on the joint bill, and we are doing everything we can to get this done at the end of the year. I really don't understand what people's issue is when this is not a money situation; this is a location situation. So they can raise even more money than they have already to build these museums. The Smithsonian is supportive of this. These will be very positive museums. People want to go see the Women's Museum, they want to see the Latino Museum, and this is our big opportunity to get this done on a bipartisan basis.

Fundraising is now at—private fundraising—\$68 million for each new museum. Directors have been hired and staff working to build the collections because of Congress. Congress gave them the authority to move forward. They have done it, and they have done it incredibly well and found locations that both Senator Blunt and I have signed off on.

These two open sites on the National Mall will look even better to anyone who goes and looks at them and actually looks at it and thinks about it, and the Smithsonian Board of Regents has determined that.

Our work to get the needed waivers to begin construction, as I noted, is ongoing, with over 100 cosponsors, evenly split between the parties, on the House bill, led by Representative NICOLE MALLIOTAKIS of New York, a Republican, and JUDY CHU of California.

As we are nearing the end of this Congress, we have two major challenges—one, getting the two new museums the waivers so they can continue progressing. Our leaders on both sides will decide the fate of the Women's Museum. The four men who are leading our Congress in the Senate and the House will make this decision. Many women have been involved in pushing this issue so we can finally move forward on this, and we appreciate Senator SCHUMER's strong support for this.

Through the past several years, we have not stopped fighting to protect our free and fair elections, the cornerstone of our democracy, which is our second challenge—to continue that work—supporting our State and local election workers on the frontlines, ensuring they have needed resources, and successfully urging the Election Assistance Commission to enable them to use funding to protect against threats. We held our first field hearing in 20 years in Georgia on the Freedom to Vote Act, which we are looking forward to reintroducing next year.

I am very focused on artificial intelligence in our elections and bipartisan work. I have one bill with Senator MURKOWSKI and another with Senator HAWLEY to take this on.

In closing, I want to end my work on the Rules Committee with a story that

Senator Blunt always loved to share with our colleagues. It is a story of a bust that he always had in his office called *The Unknown Cleric*, a statue, and it is a guy that looked very distinguished.

Senator Blunt did a bunch of research, and he could never figure out who this guy was. It was over 100 years ago that they made this beautiful statue of him, and no one could figure who he was except that he is a cleric, because of his collar, so he called him *The Unknown Cleric*.

At the time, they thought this man was so important, but today, as Senator Blunt likes to tell people who came to his office, whether they were Senators or school kids, today, no one even knows who he is.

So what is the message we learn from that? That what we do here is more important than who we are. Most people aren't going to remember who we are 100 years from now—and I like to remind my colleagues of that—but they are going to remember when we do good things that help them, that help their kids, that help their grandkids. They are going to remember, when they walk into that Women's Museum or that Latino Museum, that someone back at this point had the foresight to think, OK, these are pretty important things in American history, and maybe we should honor them. Or maybe they are going to think 100 years from now, I am sure glad we still have our democracy because somewhere back there, they changed an old law and made sure that we reformed our election process or that we protected our democracy or we stood up for democracy, because what we do is more important than who we are.

That is why this committee, which has been run on such a strong bipartisan basis over the last decades under both Democrat and Republican leadership, has been a big part of that.

I look forward to working with our incoming Rules Committee chair, Leader MCCONNELL, and ranking member, Senator PADILLA. I know they are both well suited to do this work. I think maybe Senator MCCONNELL knows a little bit about the Capitol and how it is run. I look forward to working with them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

FARM BILL

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I am sorry that I am here at this hour of the day on Monday, the beginning of what we hope to be the last week of this congressional session, as we recess for about a week before returning for the new session of the U.S. Congress.

I am here this evening to hope to express my hope that things that have not happened that have created challenges for farmers and ranchers across Kansas and around the country are addressed in legislation pending before the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives.

We have made mistakes, errors. We have failed in a couple of significant ways this congressional session in regard to the appropriations process and the consequences that the failure to pass a farm bill has upon farmers across my State and around the country.

First of all, I am saddened that we have not completed the appropriations process, the 12 appropriations bills that should have marched across this Senate floor and across the House and already been sent to the President.

In the Senate Appropriations Committee, of which I am a senior member, we passed all but one of those bills and reported them to the Senate floor with no further action. As a result of that, one of the items that has not occurred is that there is no appropriations bill dealing with agriculture that is ready for the President's signature or that should have been signed by September 30, earlier this year.

Secondly, the Senate Committee on Agriculture has not provided us with a renewed, improved farm bill. We are operating under an extension, and I would expect, before the end of the week, we will extend the farm bill one more time.

As a result, we are combining the effort to meet the needs of farmers and ranchers in this process by which we will pass a continuing resolution funding the Federal Government, presumably, to March; and included in that continuing resolution is what we call disaster assistance.

The disasters that occurred across the country—Helene, Milton; the damage that was done by tropical storms in Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee—and the storm damage in many places across the country are to be addressed this week in an addition to the continuing resolution that funds the Federal Government. I support that.

There are significant challenges to people that have occurred through no fault of their own. One of those challenges is to farmers and ranchers, who, through no fault of their own, have no farm bill—therefore, no safety net—and who have no opportunity to address the needs as they go to their bankers—their financial bankers—to plan for the new year—no farm bill in place to provide a safety net and, without passage of disaster assistance, no assistance to help them get through the planting season for agriculture commodities across the country.

So before the end of this week, we need to do serious and significant work. And the point I want to make tonight is that, without the inclusion of assistance to farmers and ranchers in the continuing resolution, I will not vote for the continuing resolution. I despise voting for them regardless, all the time. I have because I so oppose government shutdowns. But in the absence of solving the challenges that farmers and ranchers meet—through disaster assistance, through financial

assistance to those farmers—the CR will not attain my vote.

So the negotiations are ongoing, as I understand it. They were to have been completed, perhaps a long time ago, but they were certainly to have been completed last night and filed. It has not happened yet, and the deadline is December 20, before there is a government shutdown.

The circumstances that we face is no—let me repeat this so I can make it perhaps clearer. Without a farm bill, there is no safety net. The safety net that was present under the old farm bill, even if extended, does not meet today's current challenges that farmers face.

The cost of inputs—fuel, fertilizer, seed, labor, land values, interest rates, in particular—have skyrocketed, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture has determined that “on the farm” income will be down more than 43 percent over what it was when we passed the last farm bill, now 6 years ago—no farm bill to meet the needs, no farm policy to meet the needs of the challenges that ranchers and farmers have.

And then, unless we provide the disaster assistance—the natural disaster assistance that is so needed—and, again, I mentioned States that have had hurricanes. I will highlight that, in the State of Kansas, we have been in a drought for the last 4 or 5 years. This is the most severe year yet.

Seventy-nine percent of Kansas agriculture experienced drought across our State, most of it in severe fashion. This past year, Kansas wheat farmers experienced their smallest crop since 1961, largely due to lack of moisture.

So you add these things together—terribly high input costs, low commodity prices, and then if you have no commodity to sell because you couldn't grow anything—one of my staffers told me, when I said: You should be home for harvest earlier this year.

He said: JERRY, we plant wheat; we don't harvest wheat.

And that is exactly what happened across the State this year and, unfortunately, for past years.

Some will say we have crop insurance to deal with this issue. Crop insurance is hugely important to producers around the country, but it doesn't work when there are multiple-year disasters because the average for which you can receive compensation is based on previous years.

So we have never figured out—RMA, the Department of Agriculture have never figured out—a crop insurance product that meets the needs of farmers who, year after year after year, have less production.

The point I want to make is, this is a real circumstance that has huge consequences, not only on the farmers of Kansas and other States across the country but upon the need to meet our hunger needs around the world and the need to meet the nutrition and safety and well-being of Americans across the country.

Again, I ask my colleagues to make certain that the continuing resolution include assistance to agriculture producers and it be done in a way that actually meets their needs. And then, let's make certain we get a farm bill done—again, already late, but can we get it done early in 2025?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the rollcall vote scheduled at 5:30 begin immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 5009, a bill to reauthorize wildlife habitat and conservation programs, and for other purposes.

Charles E. Schumer, Jack Reed, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Catherine Cortez Masto, Alex Padilla, Debbie Stabenow, Margaret Wood Hassan, Tina Smith, Richard Blumenthal, Martin Heinrich, Richard J. Durbin, Gary C. Peters, Christopher A. Coons, John W. Hickenlooper, Tammy Duckworth, Tim Kaine, Chris Van Hollen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 5009, a bill to reauthorize wildlife habitat and conservation programs, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 83, nays 12, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 324 Ex.]

YEAS—83

Barrasso	Casey	Fischer
Bennet	Collins	Gillibrand
Blackburn	Coons	Graham
Blumenthal	Cornyn	Grassley
Boozman	Cortez Masto	Hagerty
Braun	Cotton	Hassan
Britt	Cramer	Hawley
Brown	Crapo	Heinrich
Budd	Cruz	Hickenlooper
Cantwell	Daines	Hirono
Capito	Duckworth	Hoeben
Cardin	Durbin	Hyde-Smith
Carper	Ernst	Johnson

Kaine	Murphy	Sinema
Kelly	Murray	Smith
Kennedy	Ossoff	Sullivan
Kim	Padilla	Tester
King	Peters	Thune
Klobuchar	Reed	Tillis
Lankford	Ricketts	Tuberville
Lujan	Risch	Van Hollen
Lummis	Rosen	Warner
Manchin	Rounds	Warnock
Marshall	Schmitt	Welch
McConnell	Schumer	Whitehouse
Moran	Scott (FL)	Wicker
Mullin	Scott (SC)	Young
Murkowski	Shaheen	

NAYS—12

Baldwin	Merkley	Schiff
Booker	Paul	Stabenow
Lee	Sanders	Warren
Markey	Schatz	Wyden

NOT VOTING—5

Cassidy	Romney	Vance
Fetterman	Rubio	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). On this vote, the yeas are 83, the nays are 12, and the motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Cloture having been invoked, the motion to refer and the amendments pending thereto fall.

The senior Senator from Vermont.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, the time is long overdue for Congress to get its priorities right.

And we can begin moving in that direction by rejecting and voting no on a \$900 billion defense bill which is full of waste and fraud and cost overruns.

I find it amusing that anytime we come to the floor and Members point out that we have a housing crisis, that we have some 600 million Americans who are homeless, that we have millions and millions of people in this country spending 40, 50, 60 percent of their limited incomes on housing, and that we need to invest in low-income and affordable housing, what I hear is we don't have the money. We don't have the money to build affordable housing.

When we have 85 million Americans who are uninsured or underinsured—60,000 die each year because they don't get to a doctor on time—well, we don't have the money to invest in primary healthcare. When all over this country, working parents are searching desperately to find quality and affordable childcare, we don't have the money to invest in childcare. Madam President, 25 percent of senior citizens in this country are trying to survive on \$15,000 a year or less. I don't know anybody in America who could survive on \$15,000 or less.

But when we talk about increasing Social Security benefits, well, we just can't afford to do that. We just can't afford to expand Medicare to cover dental, hearing, or vision.

We just cannot afford to make higher education in America affordable. That is what I hear every single day. When there is an effort to improve life for the working class in this country, I hear no, no, no, we can't afford it. But when it comes to the military industrial

complex and their needs, what we hear is yes, yes, yes, with almost no debate.

There is nobody who has studied the Pentagon who does not believe there is massive waste and fraud and cost overruns in that industry. Defense contractors routinely overcharge the Pentagon by 40 percent, and just in October, a few months ago, RTX, formerly Raytheon, was fined \$950 million for inflating bills to the Department of Defense. They lied about labor costs and about material costs, and they were busy paying bribes to secure foreign business. But it is not just Raytheon.

In June, Lockheed Martin was fined \$70 million for overcharging the Navy for aircraft parts, the latest in a long line of similar abuses. Fraud is rampant within the military industrial complex.

The F-35, the most expensive weapons system in history, has run up hundreds of billions of dollars in cost overruns. GAO now estimates it will cost more than \$2 trillion to develop, maintain, and operate that fighter jet through its lifetime.

The simple point that I am making is that when it comes to the needs of the military industrial complex and their lobbyists, and that industry which makes millions in campaign contributions, we give them what they want, despite the overwhelming evidence of waste and fraud and the fact that they have not been able to go through an independent audit for the last 7 years.

They can't account, literally, for trillions of dollars in property and stuff that they own. They have no idea where the money is going, but we give them more and more money.

So my request is simple. I think this week we are going to be voting on a \$900 billion defense budget. I think it is time to tell the military industrial complex that they cannot get everything they want. It is time to pay attention to the needs of working families.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Nebraska.

SWANSON AND HUGH BUTLER RESERVOIRS LAND CONVEYANCES ACT

LAHAINA NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA STUDY ACT

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate en bloc consideration of the following bills, which were received from the House: H.R. 8413 and H.R. 8219.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bills by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 8413) to provide for the conveyance of certain Federal land at Swanson Reservoir and Hugh Butler Reservoir in the State of Nebraska, and for other purposes.

A bill (H.R. 8219) to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess

the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land as the Lahaina National Heritage Area, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills en bloc.

Mrs. FISCHER. I ask unanimous consent that the bills be considered read a third time and passed en bloc, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bills (H.R. 8413 and H.R. 8219) were ordered to a third reading, were read a third time, and passed.

SWANSON AND HUGH BUTLER RESERVOIRS LAND
CONVEYANCES ACT

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, working with the rest of the Nebraska delegation, as well as the Bureau of Reclamation, I have introduced legislation supported by all parties. It transfers ownership of the land from the Federal Government to local officials, benefiting everyone involved.

The residents and their local government officials support this bill. The Energy and Natural Resources Committee supported it, passing it earlier this year by a voice vote. The Bureau of Reclamation, which we worked with through this process, also supports my bill.

Chairman MANCHIN himself has even withdrawn his original concern about this bill's impact on a larger land package. I am grateful to him for understanding how important this issue is to my State.

I appreciate my colleagues for understanding the gravity of this situation. This bill will now be on its way to the President's desk.

I want to thank Representative ADRIAN SMITH and the entire Nebraska congressional delegation for their work over many years. It wouldn't have been possible without their collaboration and their support.

But, most importantly, I want to thank the citizens at Swanson and Red Willow, as well as the other local leaders. The love these Nebraskans have for their communities and their determination to save them, that made all the difference.

I also want to thank my colleague from Hawaii Senator HIRONO for putting forward a bill that will help her constituents and her State as well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Hawaii.

LAHAINA NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA STUDY ACT

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I rise in support of H.R. 8219, the Lahaina National Heritage Study Act. This bill requires the Secretary of the Interior to study the potential for Lahaina to be designated as a national heritage area.

The August 2023 wildfires brought to the forefront how special Lahaina is to Maui, to Hawaii, to our country, and, indeed, the world. So many people responded with their support of the recovery of the people who were impacted by this horrific wildfire.

A national heritage area designation could bring important Federal resources to help to promote and manage the historic, national, and cultural resources that are unique to Lahaina.

And I want to thank Senator FISCHER for her partnership, and I thank my colleagues for joining me in passing this bill, along with her bill today, so that the President can sign them into law and the National Park Service can begin working with the partners—all of our partners—in this effort.

And just to listen to my colleague from Nebraska talk about all of the people that she worked with to get her bill onto this agenda tonight really shows the importance of this bill to her constituents.

And, of course, to the people of Lahaina, to provide this designation is a start in reinforcing how important Lahaina is historically. It was the capital of the Kingdom of Hawaii in the past.

So I recognize that a number of my colleagues also have public lands bills that they hoped would be included in an "end of the year" package. It now appears that such a package is not going to happen. And while that is unfortunate, we should not let that doom these two bills, both of which passed the House with broad bipartisan support and have no substantive opposition in the Senate.

Rather than seeing all similarly situated bills fail, we have passed these two bills tonight.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, again, thank you to my colleague from Hawaii. Thank you for my colleagues here in the Senate for passing this unanimous consent tonight. I look forward to our two bills being signed by the President of the United States and having them in law in a few days.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The majority leader.

ORDER FOR STAR PRINT—H.R. 5887

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on September 18, 2024, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs ordered H.R. 5887 to be reported without amendment favorably. I ask unanimous consent that Calendar No. 686, H.R. 5887, be star printed with the following text that reflects the committee's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BRIDGING AGENCY DATA GAPS
AND ENSURING SAFETY FOR NA-
TIVE COMMUNITIES ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 559, S. 465.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 465) to require Federal law enforcement agencies to report on cases of missing or murdered Indians, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Indian Affairs with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) *SHORT TITLE.*—This Act may be cited as the "Bridging Agency Data Gaps and Ensuring Safety for Native Communities Act" or the "BADGES for Native Communities Act".

(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—BRIDGING AGENCY DATA GAPS

Sec. 101. National Missing and Unidentified Persons System Tribal facilitator.

Sec. 102. Report on Indian country law enforcement personnel resources and need.

TITLE II—ENSURING SAFETY FOR NATIVE COMMUNITIES

Sec. 201. Demonstration program on Bureau of Indian Affairs law enforcement employment background checks.

Sec. 202. Missing or murdered response coordination grant program.

Sec. 203. GAO study on Federal law enforcement agency evidence collection, handling, and processing.

Sec. 204. Bureau of Indian Affairs and Tribal law enforcement officer counseling resources interdepartmental coordination.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) *DEATH INVESTIGATION.*—The term "death investigation" has the meaning determined by the Attorney General.

(2) *DEATH INVESTIGATION OF INTEREST TO INDIAN TRIBES.*—The term "death investigation of interest to Indian Tribes" means a case involving—

(A) a death investigation into the death of an Indian; or

(B) a death investigation of a person found on, in, or adjacent to Indian land or a Village.

(3) *DIRECTOR.*—The term "Director" means the Deputy Bureau Director of the Office of Justice Services of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

(4) *FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.*—The term "Federal law enforcement agency" means the Office of Justice Services of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and any other Federal law enforcement agency that—

(A) has jurisdiction over crimes in Indian country; or

(B) investigates missing persons cases of interest to Indian Tribes, death investigations of interest to Indian Tribes, unclaimed human remains cases of interest to Indian Tribes, or unidentified remains cases of interest to Indian Tribes.

(5) *INDIAN.*—The term "Indian" has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

(6) *INDIAN COUNTRY.*—The term "Indian country" has the meaning given the term in section 1151 of title 18, United States Code.

(7) *INDIAN LAND.*—The term "Indian land" has the meaning given the term "Indian lands" in section 3 of the Native American Business Development, Trade Promotion, and Tourism Act of 2000 (25 U.S.C. 4302).

(8) *INDIAN TRIBE.*—The term "Indian Tribe" has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

(9) **MISSING PERSONS CASE OF INTEREST TO INDIAN TRIBES.**—The term “missing persons case of interest to Indian Tribes” means a case involving—

(A) a missing Indian; or
(B) a missing person whose last known location is believed to be on, in, or adjacent to Indian land or a Village.

(10) **NATIONAL CRIME INFORMATION DATABASES.**—The term “national crime information databases” has the meaning given the term in section 534(f)(3) of title 28, United States Code.

(11) **RELEVANT TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.**—The term “relevant Tribal organization” means, as applicable—

(A) a Tribal organization or an urban Indian organization; and

(B) a national or regional organization that—
(i) represents a substantial Indian constituency; and

(ii) has expertise in the fields of—
(I) human trafficking of Indians;
(II) human trafficking on Indian land or in a Village;

(III) violence against Indians;
(IV) missing or murdered Indigenous persons;

or
(V) Tribal justice systems.

(12) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

(13) **SEXUAL VIOLENCE CASE OF INTEREST TO INDIAN TRIBES.**—The term “sexual violence case of interest to Indian Tribes” means a case involving an allegation of sexual violence (as defined in section 204(a) of Public Law 90–284 (25 U.S.C. 1304(a))).

(14) **TRIBAL JUSTICE OFFICIAL.**—The term “Tribal justice official” has the meaning given the term “tribal justice official” in section 2 of the Indian Law Enforcement Reform Act (25 U.S.C. 2801).

(15) **TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.**—The term “Tribal organization” has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

(16) **UNCLAIMED HUMAN REMAINS CASE OF INTEREST TO INDIAN TRIBES.**—The term “unclaimed human remains case of interest to Indian Tribes” means a case involving—

(A) unclaimed Indian remains identified by Federal, Tribal, State, or local law enforcement; or

(B) unclaimed human remains found on, in, or adjacent to Indian land or a Village.

(17) **UNIDENTIFIED REMAINS CASE OF INTEREST TO INDIAN TRIBES.**—The term “unidentified remains case of interest to Indian Tribes” means a case involving—

(A) unidentified Indian remains; or
(B) unidentified remains found on, in, or adjacent to Indian land or a Village.

(18) **URBAN INDIAN ORGANIZATION.**—The term “urban Indian organization” has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1603).

(19) **VILLAGE.**—The term “Village” means the Alaska Native Village Statistical Area covering all or any portion of a Native village (as defined in section 3 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1602)), as depicted on the applicable Tribal Statistical Area Program Verification Map of the Bureau of the Census.

TITLE I—BRIDGING AGENCY DATA GAPS

SEC. 101. NATIONAL MISSING AND UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS SYSTEM TRIBAL FACILITATOR.

(a) **APPOINTMENT.**—The Attorney General shall appoint 1 or more Tribal facilitators for the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System.

(b) **DUTIES.**—The duties of a Tribal facilitator appointed under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) coordinating the reporting of information relating to missing persons cases of interest to Indian Tribes, unclaimed human remains cases of interest to Indian Tribes, and unidentified remains cases of interest to Indian Tribes;

(2) consulting and coordinating with Indian Tribes and relevant Tribal organizations to address the reporting, documentation, and tracking of missing persons cases of interest to Indian Tribes, unclaimed human remains cases of interest to Indian Tribes, and unidentified remains cases of interest to Indian Tribes;

(3) developing working relationships, and maintaining communication, with Indian Tribes and relevant Tribal organizations;

(4) providing technical assistance and training to Indian Tribes and relevant Tribal organizations, victim service advocates, medical examiners, coroners, and Tribal justice officials regarding—

(A) the gathering and reporting of information to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System; and

(B) working with non-Tribal law enforcement agencies to encourage missing persons cases of interest to Indian Tribes, unclaimed human remains cases of interest to Indian Tribes, and unidentified remains cases of interest to Indian Tribes are reported to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System;

(5) coordinating with the Office of Tribal Justice, the Office of Justice Services of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, State law enforcement agencies, and the National Indian Country Training Initiative, as necessary; and

(6) conducting other training, information gathering, and outreach activities to improve resolution of missing persons cases of interest to Indian Tribes, unclaimed human remains cases of interest to Indian Tribes, and unidentified remains cases of interest to Indian Tribes.

(c) **REPORTING AND TRANSPARENCY.**—

(1) **ANNUAL REPORTS TO CONGRESS.**—During the 3-year-period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, acting through the Director of the National Institute of Justice, shall submit to the Committees on Indian Affairs, the Judiciary, and Appropriations of the Senate and the Committees on Natural Resources, the Judiciary, and Appropriations of the House of Representatives an annual report describing the activities and accomplishments of the Tribal facilitators appointed under subsection (a) during the 1-year period preceding the date of the report.

(2) **PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY.**—Annually, the Attorney General, acting through the Director of the National Institute of Justice, shall publish on a website publicly accessible information describing the activities and accomplishments of the Tribal facilitators appointed under subsection (a) during the 1-year period preceding the date of the publication.

SEC. 102. REPORT ON INDIAN COUNTRY LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL RESOURCES AND NEED.

(a) **OFFICE OF JUSTICE SERVICES OF THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.**—Section 3(c)(16) of the Indian Law Enforcement Reform Act (25 U.S.C. 2802(c)(16)) is amended by striking subparagraph (C) and inserting the following:

“(C) a list of the unmet—
“(i) staffing needs of law enforcement, corrections, and court personnel, including criminal investigators, medical examiners, coroners, forensic technicians, indigent defense staff, crime victim services staff, and prosecution staff, at Tribal and Bureau justice agencies, including the Missing and Murdered Unit of the Office of Justice Services of the Bureau;
“(ii) replacement and repair needs of Tribal and Bureau corrections facilities;
“(iii) infrastructure and capital needs for Tribal police and court facilities, including evidence storage and processing; and
“(iv) public safety and emergency communications and technology needs, including equipment and internet capacity needs; and”.

(b) **DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.**—

(1) **DEFINITION OF DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.**—In this subsection,

the term “Department of Justice law enforcement agency” means each of—

(A) the Federal Bureau of Investigation;
(B) the Drug Enforcement Administration;
(C) the United States Marshals Service;
(D) the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; and

(E) the Offices of the United States Attorneys.

(2) **ANNUAL REPORT.**—Each fiscal year, the Attorney General shall submit to the Committees on Indian Affairs, the Judiciary, and Appropriations of the Senate and the Committees on Natural Resources, the Judiciary, and Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report for that fiscal year that includes—

(A) the number of full-time employees of each Department of Justice law enforcement agency that are assigned to work on criminal investigations and prosecutions in Indian country;

(B) the percentage of time the full-time employees, as identified under subparagraph (A), spend specifically working in Indian country;

(C) the turnover rate during the 5-year period preceding the report of full-time employees assigned to work on criminal investigations and prosecutions in Indian country;

(D) the average years of experience at the Department of Justice of full-time employees assigned to work on criminal investigations and prosecutions in Indian country;

(E) the number of vacant positions with responsibilities for criminal investigations and prosecutions in Indian country;

(F) an identification of expertise and skills necessary to achieve the strategic goals of the Department of Justice relating to public safety in Indian country;

(G) an estimate of the number of employees needed with specific skills and competencies to fulfill responsibilities assigned for criminal investigations and prosecutions in Indian country; and

(H) a list of measures identified to indicate whether and how the Department of Justice plans to execute its hiring, retention, and training strategies.

(3) **GAO STUDY AND REPORT.**—

(A) **STUDY.**—

(i) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 18 months after the date on which the first annual report is submitted under paragraph (2), the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a review of unmet staffing identified by the Department of Justice law enforcement agencies tasked with work on criminal investigations and prosecutions in Indian country.

(ii) **REQUIREMENT.**—In conducting the study required under clause (i), the Comptroller General of the United States shall take into account the results of the most recent report, as of the date of enactment of this Act, relating to Indian country investigations and prosecutions prepared by the Attorney General pursuant to section 10(b) of the Indian Law Enforcement Reform Act (25 U.S.C. 2809(b)).

(B) **REPORT.**—On completion of the review under subparagraph (A), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committees on Indian Affairs, the Judiciary, and Appropriations of the Senate and the Committees on Natural Resources, the Judiciary, and Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report that describes the results of the study, including, as appropriate, proposals for methods by which the Department of Justice can better measure its unmet staffing and other needs for Department of Justice law enforcement agencies tasked with work on criminal investigations and prosecutions in Indian country.

TITLE II—ENSURING SAFETY FOR NATIVE COMMUNITIES

SEC. 201. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM ON BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS LAW ENFORCEMENT EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND CHECKS.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT OF DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.**—

(1) *IN GENERAL.*—The Secretary shall establish a demonstration program for the purpose of conducting or adjudicating, in coordination with the Director, personnel background investigations for applicants for law enforcement positions in the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

(2) *BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS AND SECURITY CLEARANCE DETERMINATIONS.*—

(A) *BIA INVESTIGATIONS.*—As part of the demonstration program established under paragraph (1), the Secretary may carry out a background investigation, security clearance determination, or both a background investigation and a security clearance determination for an applicant for a law enforcement position in the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

(B) *AGREEMENTS.*—The Secretary may enter into a memorandum of agreement with a State or local government, Indian Tribe, or Tribal organization to develop steps to expedite the process of receiving and obtaining access to information pertinent to background investigation and security clearance determinations for use in the demonstration program.

(3) *SUNSET.*—The demonstration program established under paragraph (1) shall terminate 5 years after the date of the commencement of the demonstration program.

(b) *SUFFICIENCY.*—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a background investigation conducted or adjudicated by the Secretary pursuant to the demonstration program established under subsection (a)(1) that results in the granting of a security clearance to an applicant for a law enforcement position in the Bureau of Indian Affairs shall be sufficient to meet the applicable requirements of the Office of Personnel Management or other Federal agency for such investigations.

(c) *REPORT.*—Not later than 3 years after the date on which the demonstration program is established under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Indian Affairs, the Judiciary, and Appropriations of the Senate and the Committees on Natural Resources, the Judiciary, and Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report on the demonstration program, which shall include a description of—

(1) the demonstration program and any recommended changes or updates to the demonstration program, including whether the demonstration program should be reauthorized;

(2) the number of background investigations carried out under the demonstration program;

(3) the costs, including any cost savings, associated with the investigation and adjudication process under the demonstration program;

(4) the processing times for the investigation and adjudication processes under the demonstration program; and

(5) any other information that the Secretary determines to be relevant.

SEC. 202. MISSING OR MURDERED RESPONSE COORDINATION GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) *ESTABLISHMENT OF GRANT PROGRAM.*—The Attorney General shall establish within the Office of Justice Programs a grant program under which the Attorney General shall make grants to eligible entities described in subsection (b) to carry out eligible activities described in subsection (c).

(b) *ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.*—

(1) *IN GENERAL.*—To be eligible to receive a grant under the grant program established under subsection (a) an entity shall be—

(A) an Indian Tribe;

(B) a relevant Tribal organization;

(C) subject to paragraph (2), a State, in consortium with—

(i) 1 or more Indian Tribes; and

(ii) relevant Tribal organizations, if any;

(D) a consortium of 2 or more Indian Tribes or relevant Tribal organizations; or

(E) subject to paragraph (2), a consortium of 2 or more States in consortium with—

(i) 1 or more Indian Tribes; and

(ii) relevant Tribal organizations, if any.

(2) *STATE ELIGIBILITY.*—To be eligible under subparagraph (C) or (E) of paragraph (1), a State shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Attorney General that the State—

(A)(i) reports missing persons cases in the State to the national crime information databases; or

(ii) if not, has a plan to do so using a grant received under the grant program established under subsection (a); and

(B) if data sharing between the State and the Indian Tribes and relevant Tribal organizations with which the State is in consortium is part of the intended use of the grant received under the grant program established under subsection (a), has entered into a memorandum of understanding with each applicable Indian Tribe and relevant Tribal organization.

(c) *ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES.*—An eligible entity receiving a grant under the grant program established under subsection (a) may use the grant—

(1) to establish a statewide or regional center—

(A) to document and track—

(i) missing persons cases of interest to Indian Tribes;

(ii) sexual violence cases of interest to Indian Tribes; and

(iii) death investigations of interest to Indian Tribes; and

(B) to input information regarding missing persons cases of interest to Indian Tribes, unclaimed human remains cases of interest to Indian Tribes, and unidentified remains cases of interest to Indian Tribes into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System and the Missing Persons File in the National Crime Information Center;

(2) to establish a State or regional commission to respond to, and to improve coordination between Federal law enforcement agencies, and Tribal, State, and local law enforcement agencies of the investigation of, missing persons cases of interest to Indian Tribes, sexual violence cases of interest to Indian Tribes, and death investigations of interest to Indian Tribes; and

(3) to document, develop, and disseminate resources for the coordination and improvement of the investigation of missing persons cases of interest to Indian Tribes, sexual violence cases of interest to Indian Tribes, and death investigations of interest to Indian Tribes, including to develop local or statewide rapid notification or communication systems for alerts and other information relating to those cases.

(d) *AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.*—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out the grant program established under subsection (a)(1) \$1,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029.

SEC. 203. GAO STUDY ON FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY EVIDENCE COLLECTION, HANDLING, AND PROCESSING.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study—

(1) on the evidence collection, handling, response times, and processing procedures and practices of the Office of Justice Services of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in exercising jurisdiction over crimes involving Indians or committed in Indian country;

(2) on barriers to evidence collection, handling, response times, and processing identified by the agencies referred to in paragraph (1);

(3) on the views of law enforcement officials at the agencies referred to in paragraph (1) and their counterparts within the Offices of the United States Attorneys concerning any relationship between—

(A) the barriers identified under paragraph (2); and

(B) United States Attorneys declination rates due to insufficient evidence; and

(4) that includes a description of barriers to evidence collection, handling, response times, and processing identified and faced by—

(A) Tribal law enforcement agencies; and
(B) State and local law enforcement agencies that exercise jurisdiction over Indian country.

(b) *REPORT.*—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committees on Indian Affairs, the Judiciary, and Appropriations of the Senate and the Committees on Natural Resources, the Judiciary, and Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report describing the results of the study conducted under subsection (a).

SEC. 204. BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS AND TRIBAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER COUNSELING RESOURCES INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION.

The Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Attorney General shall coordinate with the Director—

(1) to ensure that Federal training materials and culturally appropriate mental health and wellness programs are locally or regionally available to law enforcement officers working for the Office of Justice Services of the Bureau of Indian Affairs or an Indian Tribe; and

(2) to determine whether law enforcement agencies operated by the Office of Justice Services of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Tribes are eligible to receive services under—

(A) the Law Enforcement Assistance Program of Federal Occupational Health of the Department of Health and Human Services; or

(B) any other law enforcement assistance program targeted to meet the needs of law enforcement officers working for law enforcement agencies operated by the Federal Government or an Indian Tribe.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 465), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

DHS BORDER SERVICES CONTRACTS REVIEW ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 658, H.R. 4467.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4467) to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to assess contracts for covered services performed by contractor personnel along the United States land border with Mexico, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 4467) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CONTAMINATED WELLS RELOCATION ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be discharged from further consideration of S. 5300 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 5300) to authorize the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to reimburse the Town of Chincoteague, Virginia, for costs directly associated with the removal and replacement of certain drinking water wells.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 5300) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 5300

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 "Contaminated Wells Relocation Act".

SEC. 2. DRINKING WATER WELL REPLACEMENT FOR CHINCOTEAGUE, VIRGINIA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration may enter into an agreement, as appropriate, with the Town of Chincoteague, Virginia, for a period of up to five years, for reimbursement of the Town of Chincoteague's costs directly associated with—

(1) the development of a plan for removal of drinking water wells currently situated on property administered by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and

(2) the establishment of alternative drinking water wells on property under the administrative control, through lease, ownership, or easement, of the Town of Chincoteague.

(b) ELEMENTS.—An agreement under subsection (a) shall include, to the extent practicable—

(1) a provision for the removal and relocation of the three remaining wells described in that subsection;

(2) a description of the location of the site to which such wells will be relocated or are planned to be relocated; and

(3) a current estimated cost of such relocation, including for the purchase, lease, or use of additional property, engineering, design, permitting, and construction.

(c) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, in coordination with the heads or other appropriate representatives of relevant entities, shall submit to the appropriate commit-

tees of Congress any agreement entered into under subsection (a).

FAIR CREDIT FOR AMERICAN HOSTAGES ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 5543, introduced earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 5543) to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to prohibit consumer reporting agencies from furnishing consumer reports containing adverse items of information about a consumer that resulted from that consumer being unlawfully or wrongfully detained abroad or held hostage abroad.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read three times and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 5543) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 5543

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 "Fair Credit for American Hostages Act".

SEC. 2. ADVERSE INFORMATION ABOUT CONSUMERS UNLAWFULLY OR WRONGFULLY DETAINED ABROAD OR HELD HOSTAGE ABROAD.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Fair Credit Reporting Act (15 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 605C the following:

"§ 605D. Adverse information about consumers unlawfully or wrongfully detained abroad or held hostage abroad

"(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) COVERED CONSUMER.—The term 'covered consumer' means an individual who has been—

"(A) a United States national unlawfully or wrongfully detained abroad, as determined under section 302(a) of the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act (22 U.S.C. 1741(a)); or

"(B) a United States national taken hostage abroad, as determined by the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell established by section 304 that Act (22 U.S.C. 1741b).

"(2) DETENTION OR HOSTAGE DOCUMENTATION.—The term 'detention or hostage documentation' means documentation that—

"(A) certifies a consumer is a covered consumer under this section;

"(B) identifies the time period during which the covered consumer was unlawfully or wrongfully detained abroad or held hostage abroad; and

"(C) is authenticated by—

"(i) the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs established by section 303 of the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act (22 U.S.C. 1741a); or

"(ii) the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell established by section 304 of that Act (22 U.S.C. 1741b).

"(b) ADVERSE INFORMATION.—If a consumer reporting agency described in section 603(p)

is able to authenticate detention or hostage documentation provided by a covered consumer, the consumer reporting agency may not furnish a consumer report containing any adverse item of information about the covered consumer dating during the time period the covered consumer was unlawfully or wrongfully detained abroad or held hostage abroad."

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of the Fair Credit Reporting Act is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 605C the following:

"605D. Adverse information about consumers unlawfully or wrongfully detained abroad or held hostage abroad."

GSA TECHNOLOGY ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 688, H.R. 7524.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 7524) to amend title 40, United States Code, to require the submission of reports on certain information technology services funds to Congress before expenditures may be made, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 7524) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CLARIFYING WHERE COURT MAY BE HELD FOR CERTAIN DISTRICT COURTS IN TEXAS AND CALI- FORNIA

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 5465 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 5465) to clarify where court may be held for certain district courts in Texas and California.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 5465) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 5465

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. ORGANIZATION OF TEXAS DISTRICT COURTS.

Section 124(b)(2) of title 28, United States Code, is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph (3), by inserting “and College Station” before the period at the end.

SEC. 2. ORGANIZATION OF CALIFORNIA DISTRICT COURTS.

Section 84(d) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting “and El Centro” after “at San Diego”.

AMENDING TITLE 28, UNITED STATES CODE, TO CONSOLIDATE CERTAIN DIVISIONS IN THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from the further consideration of H.R. 7177 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 7177) to amend title 28, United States Code, to consolidate certain divisions in the Northern District of Alabama.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 7177) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

MORNING BUSINESS

TRIBUTE TO NAN SHERIDAN-MANN

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise to honor a member of my staff Nan Sheridan-Mann on the occasion of her retirement. Nan is retiring after over 5 and a half years as my western Maryland regional director and will be sorely missed.

Coming to my team from the Frederick County Chamber of Commerce, Nan has been instrumental in engaging with small businesses, nonprofit organizations, community leaders, and constituents alike throughout western Maryland. The daughter of a World War II veteran, she has been a champion for the veterans' community, serving as the cochair for Serving Together's Western Region Veteran Collaborative, an executive member of the Frederick County Community Veterans Engagement Board, and a member of the Veterans Advisory Council of

Frederick County. Nan is tireless and always willing to lend a hand; Nan has not only been a community outreach resource but has worked to tackle individual cases for constituents across the State. Indeed, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, she helped to resolve over 1000 unemployment insurance cases and bring families security and peace of mind.

A Midwesterner by birth, we are grateful to call Nan Sheridan-Mann a Marylander and emeritus member of Team Van Hollen. We have treasured her good humor, abundant generosity, authenticity, and buoyant spirit. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Nan for her outstanding service to Maryland and the U.S. Senate and wish her the best for a well-deserved and fulfilling retirement.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Stringer, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a nomination which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and an amendment to the title:

S. 1253. A bill to increase the number of U.S. Customs and Border Protection Customs and Border Protection officers and support staff and to require reports that identify staffing, infrastructure, and equipment needed to enhance security at ports of entry (Rept. No. 118-290).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 4495. A bill to enable safe, responsible, and agile procurement, development, and use of artificial intelligence by the Federal Government, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-291).

S. 4679. A bill to amend title XLI of the FAST Act to improve the Federal permitting process, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-292).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and an amendment to the title:

S. 4898. A bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to include extreme heat in the definition of a major disaster (Rept. No. 118-293).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 4900. A bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to incentivize certain preparedness measures, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-294).

S. 5099. A bill to prescribe requirements relating to the management of the Federal property commonly known as Plum Island, New York, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-295).

S. 5310. A bill to amend title 41, United States Code, to make changes with respect to the Federal Acquisition Security Council, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-296).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

H.R. 255. An act to amend the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 to develop a study regarding streamlining and consolidating information collection and preliminary damage assessments, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-297).

H.R. 272. An act to amend title 31, United States Code, to authorize transportation for Government astronauts returning from space between their residence and various locations, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-298).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. LEE:

S. 5533. A bill to repeal the Impoundment Control Act of 1974; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Ms. SMITH (for herself, Mr. BROWN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. WELCH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 5534. A bill to authorize a grant program for educational institutions to analyze, digitize, and map historic records relating to housing discrimination, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MARSHALL (for himself and Mr. BENNET):

S. 5535. A bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase penalties for group health plans and health insurance issuers for practices that violate balance billing requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Mr. RICKETTS):

S. 5536. A bill to prohibit United States Government assistance to the Government of the People's Republic of China and affiliated entities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Mr. WELCH):

S. 5537. A bill to require the Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office to establish and carry out a pilot program to expedite the examination of applications for certain patents, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 5538. A bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to amend certain regulations to permit certain children to accompany their parents or legal guardians

through Global Entry airport lanes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. WELCH (for himself and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 5539. A bill to require systematic review of artificial intelligence systems before deployment by the Federal Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 5540. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to clarify payment rules for manual wheelchairs under part B of the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCHMITT:

S. 5541. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Training Program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HAGERTY:

S. 5542. A bill to prohibit the use of Federal funds to remove the border wall or to dispose of materials previously acquired by the Federal Government to construct the border wall; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 5543. A bill to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to prohibit consumer reporting agencies from furnishing consumer reports containing adverse items of information about a consumer that resulted from that consumer being unlawfully or wrongfully detained abroad or held hostage abroad; considered and passed.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. BOOKER:

S. Res. 927. A resolution commemorating and supporting the goals of World AIDS Day; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 1631

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1631, a bill to enhance the authority granted to the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice with respect to unmanned aircraft systems and unmanned aircraft, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. KIM, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1631, supra.

S. 2311

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2311, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles, California.

S. 2454

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2454, a bill to require reports on

and investments in pharmaceutical supply chain resiliency to reduce reliance on the People's Republic of China for finished pharmaceutical products and active pharmaceutical ingredients.

S. 2975

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2975, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve payment and processing of payments or allowances for beneficiary travel, and for other purposes.

S. 3661

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3661, a bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to periodically assess cybersecurity threats to, and vulnerabilities in, the agriculture and food critical infrastructure sector and to provide recommendations to enhance their security and resilience, to require the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct an annual cross-sector simulation exercise relating to a food-related emergency or disruption, and for other purposes.

S. 3815

At the request of Mr. TILLIS, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3815, a bill to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to promulgate rules with respect to the electronic delivery of certain required disclosures, and for other purposes.

S. 4057

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4057, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to postpone tax deadlines and reimburse paid late fees for United States nationals who are unlawfully or wrongfully detained or held hostage abroad, and for other purposes.

S. 4280

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4280, a bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to require skilled nursing facilities, nursing facilities, intermediate care facilities for the intellectually disabled, and inpatient rehabilitation facilities to permit essential caregivers access during any period in which regular visitation is restricted.

S. 4365

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4365, a bill to provide public health veterinary services to Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations for rabies prevention, and for other purposes.

S. 4510

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Michigan

(Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4510, a bill to amend the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 to delay implementation of the inclusion of oral-only ESRD-related drugs in the Medicare ESRD prospective payment system.

S. 4619

At the request of Ms. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4619, a bill to revise sections 552, 1461, and 1462 of title 18, United States Code, and section 305 of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1305), and for other purposes.

S. 5148

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 5148, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow certain family caregivers to contribute to a Roth IRA.

S. 5329

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 5329, a bill to amend section 321 of the Tariff Act of 1930 to enhance transparency with respect to shipments seeking an administrative exemption from duties for low-value entries, and for other purposes.

S. 5391

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 5391, a bill to establish a National STEM Week to promote American innovation and enhance STEM education pathways for all students, including those in rural, urban, and underserved communities.

S. 5408

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 5408, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the life and legacy of Roberto Clemente.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 927—COMMEMORATING AND SUPPORTING THE GOALS OF WORLD AIDS DAY

Mr. BOOKER submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 927

Whereas, as of the end of 2023, an estimated 39,900,000 people were living with human immunodeficiency virus (referred to in this preamble as "HIV") or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (referred to in this preamble as "AIDS"), including 1,400,000 children;

Whereas, in the United States, more than 790,000 people with AIDS have died since the

beginning of the HIV epidemic, including over 19,000 deaths among people with diagnosed HIV in 2022, with the disease disproportionately affecting communities of color;

Whereas, in 2022, over 37,000 people became newly diagnosed with HIV in the United States;

Whereas, while all races and ethnicities are affected by HIV in the United States, communities of color are disproportionately impacted;

Whereas, in order to address the HIV epidemic in the United States, on August 18, 1990, Congress enacted the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act (Public Law 101-381; 104 Stat. 576) (commonly referred to as the “Ryan White CARE Act”) to provide primary medical care and essential support services for people living with HIV who are uninsured or underinsured;

Whereas the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program provides services and support for over half of all people diagnosed with HIV in the United States;

Whereas, to further focus attention on the HIV/AIDS epidemic among minority communities in the United States, in 1998, the Minority AIDS Initiative was established to provide funds to State and local institutions and organizations to best serve the health care costs and support the needs of racial and ethnic minorities living with HIV;

Whereas the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals established a global target to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030;

Whereas, in order to further address the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, in 2003, Congress and the Administration of President George W. Bush, with bi-partisan support, created the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (referred to in this preamble as “PEPFAR”), which, for more than 2 decades, has served as the primary policy instrument of the United States to address HIV/AIDS in the developing world;

Whereas the United States PEPFAR program remains the largest commitment in history by any country to combat a single disease;

Whereas 25,000,000 lives have been saved through PEPFAR;

Whereas, as of September 30, 2023, PEPFAR has supported treatment for more than 20,000,000 people, and has enabled 5,500,000 infants of mothers living with HIV to be born HIV-free;

Whereas, in fiscal year 2023, PEPFAR directly supported HIV testing and counseling for 71,100,000 people;

Whereas the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was launched in 2002, and, as of 2023, has helped provide antiretroviral therapy to approximately 25,000,000 people living with HIV/AIDS and to 695,000 pregnant women to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS to their children, saving an estimated 65,000,000 lives;

Whereas the United States is the largest donor to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and every \$1 contributed by the United States leverages an additional \$2 from other donors, as required by law;

Whereas considerable progress has been made in the fight against HIV/AIDS, including a nearly 40-percent reduction in new HIV infections, a 60-percent reduction in new HIV infections among children, and a 50-percent reduction in the number of AIDS-related deaths between 2010 and 2023;

Whereas approximately 30,700,000 people had access to antiretroviral therapy in 2023, compared to only 7,800,000 people who had access to such therapy in 2010;

Whereas research funded by the National Institutes of Health found that HIV treat-

ment not only saves the lives of people living with HIV, but people living with HIV on effective antiretroviral therapy and who are durably virally suppressed cannot sexually transmit HIV, proving that HIV treatment is prevention;

Whereas it is estimated that, without treatment, half of all infants living with HIV will die before their second birthday;

Whereas, despite the remarkable progress in combating HIV, significant challenges remain;

Whereas there were approximately 1,300,000 new HIV infections in 2023 globally, structural barriers continue to make testing and treatment programs inaccessible to highly vulnerable populations, and an estimated 5,400,000 people living with HIV globally still do not know their HIV status;

Whereas children living with HIV are significantly less likely than adults to know their HIV status, and, as a result, are prevented from accessing life-saving treatment;

Whereas the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that over 37,000 people were diagnosed with HIV in the United States in 2022, and 13 percent of the 1,200,000 people in the United States living with HIV are not aware of their HIV status;

Whereas men who have sex with men (referred to in this preamble as “MSM”), particularly young MSM of color, are the population most affected by HIV in the United States;

Whereas southern States bear the greatest burden of HIV in the United States, accounting for 49 percent of new infections in 2022;

Whereas people living with HIV are frequently susceptible to other infections, such as hepatitis B and C and tuberculosis;

Whereas the opioid and heroin epidemics have led to increased numbers of new HIV infections among people who inject drugs, and the crisis has disproportionately affected nonurban areas, where HIV prevalence rates have been low historically and have limited services for HIV prevention and treatment and substance use disorder treatment;

Whereas December 1 of each year is internationally recognized as “World AIDS Day”; and

Whereas, in 2024, commemorations for World AIDS Day will recognize the essential role of community and collective action to sustain and accelerate HIV progress in the global HIV/AIDS response: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of World AIDS Day, including the goal to achieve zero new human immunodeficiency virus (referred to in this resolution as “HIV”) infections, zero discrimination, and zero acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (referred to in this resolution as “AIDS”)—related deaths;

(2) commends achievements in combating HIV/AIDS through the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act (Public Law 101-381; 104 Stat. 576), the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Extension Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-87; 123 Stat. 2885), the Minority HIV/AIDS Initiative, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Office of Minority Health, and the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Services;

(3) commends achievements in combating HIV/AIDS made by the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS;

(4) supports efforts to end the HIV epidemic in the United States and around the world by 2030;

(5) supports continued funding for prevention, care, and treatment services, and research programs for communities impacted by HIV and people living with HIV in the United States and globally;

(6) urges, in order to ensure that an AIDS-free generation is achievable, rapid action by all countries toward further expansion and scale-up of testing and antiretroviral treatment programs, including efforts to reduce growing disparities and improve access for children to life-saving medications;

(7) encourages the scaling up of comprehensive prevention services, including biomedical and structural interventions, to ensure inclusive access to programs and appropriate protections for all people at risk of contracting HIV, especially in communities disproportionately impacted;

(8) calls for greater focus on the HIV-related vulnerabilities of women and girls, including women and girls at risk for or who have survived violence or faced discrimination as a result of the disease;

(9) supports continued leadership by the United States in domestic, bilateral, multilateral, and private sector efforts to fight HIV;

(10) encourages input from civil society in the development and implementation of domestic and global HIV policies and programs that guide the response;

(11) encourages and supports greater degrees of ownership and shared responsibility by developing countries in order to ensure the sustainability of the domestic responses to HIV/AIDS by those countries; and

(12) urges other members of the international community to sustain and scale up their support for and financial contributions to efforts around the world to combat HIV.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3331. Mr. CRAPO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 82, to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3332. Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. KIM, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. SMITH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. FETTERMAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. HENRICH) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 5009, to reauthorize wildlife habitat and conservation programs, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 333. Mr. CRAPO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 82, to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike section 4 and insert the following:

SEC. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by this Act shall take effect on the date on which the condition described in paragraph (1) of subsection (b) is met and shall apply with respect to monthly insurance benefits payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) for months beginning on or after such date.

(b) REQUIREMENT TO OFFSET GPO AND WEP REPEAL.—

(1)IN GENERAL.—The condition described in this paragraph is that there are enacted into law such changes to the Social Security program under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) (or to any other provision of law) as are necessary to fully offset any negative impacts on the actuarial balance of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust established under such title that would result from the amendments made by this Act.

(2)DETERMINATION THAT CONDITION IS MET.—For purposes of subsection (a), the Board of Trustees of the Trust Funds established under section 201(c) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401(c)) shall determine the date on which the condition described in paragraph (1) is met.

(c)RECOMPUTATION OF PRIMARY INSURANCE AMOUNTS FOLLOWING REPEAL OF WEP.—Notwithstanding section 215(f) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 415(f)), the Commissioner of Social Security shall adjust primary insurance amounts to the extent necessary to take into account the amendments made by section 3.

SA 3332. Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. KIM, Ms. WARREN, Ms.

HIRONO, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. SMITH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. FETTERMAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. HEINRICH) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 5009, to reauthorize wildlife habitat and conservation programs, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike section 708.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 17, 2024

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it recess until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, December 17; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that following the conclusion of morning business, the Senate resume

consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 5009, postcloture, and that all time during recess, morning business, and leader remarks count postcloture; and, further, that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucus meetings.

RECESS UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand in recess under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:17 p.m., recessed until Tuesday, December 17, 2024, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nomination received by the Senate:

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

ANTON GEORGE HAJJAR, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2029, VICE DONALD LEE MOAK, TERM EXPIRED.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE TO FRANCISCO IGNACIO FREDRICKSON

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Nativity Catholic School Third Grade Class, and the entire Nativity Community, to pay tribute to Francisco Ignacio Fredrickson. Francisco was born on November 27, 2015, and passed away at the age of nine on December 5, 2024, in the loving arms of his parents. The Nativity Parish, Catholic School and especially Ms. Fetzler's third grade class will miss his ever-smiling face and positive attitude.

In June of 2023 Francisco was diagnosed with DIPG, an aggressive form of childhood brain cancer that is terminal. The doctors gave him nine months to live, and yet Francisco persevered and lived 18 months. DIPG is especially devastating because the cancer is located on the brain stem which makes it inoperable and while it leaves their cognitive skills intact, it slowly takes away a person's motor skills. This leaves patients unable to walk, talk, move, and eventually unable to eat, drink or breathe, all while their minds are fully aware of what is happening to their bodies. While DIPG is rare—only 150 to 300 diagnosis per year—it is devastating for the children and their families.

However, much like Francisco, I do not want to focus on the illness but on a life lived well. Francisco loved everything to do with space and NASA. He was able to visit Kennedy Space Center and watch a launch at Cape Canaveral in Florida in the fall of 2023. Francisco was a boy of deep faith and was fond of joking with Nativity Catholic School's Priests, Monsignor Bob Cilinski, Father Bresnahan, and Father Bennett. He also loved a good party and often hosted wonderful gatherings at his grandparent's house where he and his friends could run and play. Francisco is survived by his mother and father, Laura and Ryan; his sister Mariana; his twin brothers, Gabriel and Mateo; his grandparents, John and Carole Fredrickson, Teresa Hernandez and Wilfredo Lizarzaburu; as well as his aunts and uncles, Carlos Lizarzaburu, Diana Lopez, and Brenna and Jamie Fredrickson.

In the words of his mother, "We know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Francisco is now where he so intensely longed to be: at Home with Jesus. Now that his body rests, his soul is free. And with that freedom he is doing all the things he was so looking forward to doing . . . Playing soccer, playing piano ("with both hands, like a pro!"), partying it up with the Saints, and finally making those Nutella pancakes that he said he'd make for Jesus as soon as he got to Heaven. Many hearts are grieving our boy's death, ours included. But know as well, how elated we are. Francisco didn't get to marry the love of his

life, or to have children, or do any of those big life milestones . . . But that's because he was meant to skip all those and go straight to the absolute biggest milestone there will ever be: to go straight to Jesus, to hug him, to sit next to him, and to crack him up with his absolutely silly, lovable nature."

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the life of Francisco Ignacio Fredrickson and in sending his family our sincere condolences. Though Francisco only lived nine short years, he brought a lifetime of joy to his family, friends and school community. The light and love he brought to the world remains and is carried forth in the hearts of many.

HONORING THE LEADERSHIP OF FRED AIKENS

HON. WILEY NICKEL

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor Frederick Aikens, a dedicated public servant and Chief of Staff to Senate Minority Leader Dan Blue, for his outstanding leadership and service to the people of North Carolina.

Fred Aikens has spent over three decades serving our state with distinction, from his early work as a fiscal analyst in the General Assembly to his role at the North Carolina Department of Transportation, where he served as Deputy Secretary and Acting Commissioner of the Division of Motor Vehicles.

As Chief of Staff, Fred Aikens has been a crucial leader, helping Senator Blue guide the Democratic caucus through some of the most challenging legislative sessions in our state's history.

A native of Wilmington, Fred's long career in public service is marked by his strategic vision and his ability to navigate complex challenges with integrity.

In addition to his contributions to the public sector, Fred Aikens has served our country as a Lt. Colonel in the North Carolina Army National Guard. His commitment to public service, whether in state government or in uniform, has been nothing short of exemplary.

Today, I commend Fred Aikens for his remarkable career and thank him for his enduring service to the people of North Carolina. His leadership, wisdom, and dedication have made our state stronger, and we are grateful for all he has done.

RECOGNIZING ANTHONY BARONE—EAGLE SCOUT

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, today, I celebrate Anthony Barone for reaching the cov-

eted rank of Eagle Scout after many outstanding years of achievement. Anthony's journey began six years ago, a testament to his unwavering dedication to the Boy Scouts. He earned his way through each of the respected positions, demonstrating his commitment and earning 21 merit badges in the areas of citizenship, personal fitness, and family life. While working on his photography merit badge, he discovered a passion for photography—a hobby which has only added to his well-roundedness. Anthony's love for the community shone through as he acquired over 250 volunteer hours, feeding people experiencing homelessness, and mentoring the younger Cub Scouts in town. For his Eagle Scout project, he honored our men and women in uniform by installing six flagpoles to the town Veteran Memorial, to house each of America's branches of service, complete with a granite marker to honor our troops. Anthony is currently a senior at Kingsway Regional High School in the Woolwich Township of South Jersey, where he is taking three college-level courses, which led to his induction into the National Honor Society. He has many plans for his future and greatly enjoys public speaking and speechwriting. He plans to utilize these skills by writing a book that will inspire others to follow in his footsteps. First, he plans to attend Rowan University and pursue a degree in Business Administration. I have complete faith that whatever Anthony puts his mind to, he will accomplish, and I look forward to seeing the great things he will achieve in the future. God Bless Anthony and God Bless our United States of America.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF CHAIRMAN JEFFREY BOHM

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize St. Clair County Commissioner Jeffrey "Jeff" Bohm, who will be chairing his last Board of Commissioners meeting this evening.

Throughout Jeff's career as a county commissioner, Jeff has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to his community. Thanks largely to his leadership, St. Clair County has remained a great place to live and raise a family.

Jeff has been known by many to start conversations and "brag" about St. Clair County—and rightfully so. Jeff has a passion for learning, is known to bring people together, and will always take time to listen. These are values reflective of any good leader.

Jeff has always put his community first. After his service, I am confident that he will continue to inspire and serve his neighbors—even without a title.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Chairman Bohm for over 20 years of service to his community. I am proud to

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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

represent Jeff in Congress, and I wish him, his wife Carrie, and their two daughters, Jessica and Christina, the best of luck in the years to come.

RECOGNIZING DEVIN SCILLIAN'S
SERVICE TO THE NATION AND
HIS COMMUNITY

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Devin Scillian of Grosse Pointe, Michigan, on the occasion of his retirement from WDIV Local 4 News in Detroit. As a local news anchor, his steady presence and informative programs have been a stalwart part of life in Southeastern Michigan for the last twenty-eight years, and his service to his community is worthy of commendation.

Devin was born in Kansas in 1963 to Billie Hugh and Betti Jo Scillian. His late father earned four bronze stars and a Meritorious Service Medal over two tours in Vietnam. His mother, a writer with a history in community theater, he credits with being his creative spark. Devin started dating his wife, Corey, while they were in high school after his family moved off base at Fort Riley, Kansas.

After graduating from the School of Journalism at the University of Kansas in 1985, Devin began his career in local news at WIBW in Topeka, Kansas. This was followed by stops at WAND in Decatur, Illinois, KLTW in Tyler, Texas, and KFOR in Oklahoma City. It was at KFOR in 1995 where his coverage of the bombing at the Murrah Federal Building helped the station win a Peabody Award.

Devin joined WDIV in Detroit in 1995 as a reporter before moving to the anchor position in 1996. In this position he has traveled the world, including stops in Beijing, the Vatican, Jerusalem, and Moscow. He has covered six Olympiads and has three times won the Edward R. Murrow Award for excellence in broadcast journalism. His weekly program, Flashpoint, has become almost mandatory viewing for those who wish to be in the know for the most pressing issues in Southeastern Michigan. He has used his position to champion charities, whether that is hosting a dinner for the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, collecting shoes for Lace Up Detroit, or recording a song for "A Michigan Christmas of Hope"—a compilation of Christmas songs brought to you by some of Detroit & Michigan's Best artists and bands to benefit Holy Cross Children's Services.

Outside of his career in local news, Devin is also an accomplished musician. He won the Detroit Music Award for Best Country Vocalist in 2018 and Best Country Performer in 2001. He and his band "Arizona Son" have opened for artists such as Toby Kieth, Reba McEntire, and LeAnn Rimes. He is also the author of 22 children's books, including *S is For Sunflower*, which won the Bill Martin, Jr. Picture Book Award in 2007.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing Devin Scillian for the lifetime of dedication to his community. From Kansas to Michigan, his consistent and reliable reporting has a boon for the community which he is serving. Though we are sad to

see him leave, he is certainly going to continue to be a presence in our lives through his music and his writing. We thank him for his service and wish him all the happiness as he starts this next chapter in his life. I thank Devin.

HONORING MARK ROOT'S SERVICE
TO ST. JOSEPH COUNTY, INDIANA

HON. RUDY YAKYM III

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate my friend and devoted public servant Mark Root as he prepares to step down from the St. Joseph County Council after nearly two decades of service in elected office.

As Councilman, Mark's commitment to meeting the needs of St. Joseph County Hoosiers has been deep and unwavering. Quite simply, Mark is the kind of person that you want in your corner as well as serving in government and making decisions that affect peoples' lives.

Mark's leadership abilities have brought important projects and investments to St. Joseph's County over the course of his twenty years serving on the Council, and he has helped keep St. Joseph County on the move through both good economic times and bad. Mark's focus has always been on making his home county an even better place to live, work, and raise a family, something he has done through bringing to bear his expertise on fiscal and budgetary matters, and his commitment to being a responsible steward of taxpayers' dollars.

Through his time on the Council, Mark has developed a well-deserved reputation for being a thoughtful leader who is easy to work with. Regardless of their political beliefs, so many people have testified to Mark's good nature, his personal loyalty, and his Hoosier common sense.

In addition to his service to the people of St. Joseph County in elected office, Mark has also been a mentor to me and a close personal friend. In fact, Mark is the one who taught me how to comb through election results on a precinct-by-precinct basis, a lesson that has been invaluable to me in my political career.

As Mark's time and career in public service comes to a close, I have absolutely no doubt that St. Joseph County and our communities are better off thanks to this good man with a servant's heart. I also know that Mark's wife Sara and his whole family are very proud of him, a sentiment I share wholeheartedly.

I join Hoosiers throughout St. Joseph County and Indiana's Second Congressional District in expressing our gratitude to Mark Root for his service and in wishing him a very happy retirement and all the best going forward.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND
SERVICE OF MARY L. ADAMS

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the extraordinary career and service of

Mary L. Adams, who has tirelessly dedicated herself to the people of Monterey County. Today, at her last meeting of the Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Council, and upon her well-earned retirement, it is fitting to honor her leadership and enduring contributions to our community.

Mary L. Adams has served with distinction as the Fifth District Supervisor for the County of Monterey, skillfully navigating numerous complex challenges with compassion and foresight. Her accomplishments exemplify a lifetime of hard work and community dedication.

Mary played a vital role in leading Monterey County through major emergencies, including multiple atmospheric river events and wildfires such as the Soberanes, River, Carmel, Dolan, and Palo Colorado fires. Her leadership in organizing efforts, like the Big Sur Helicopter Commodity Drop, provided critical support to isolated communities, ensuring the safety and resilience of residents during these crises.

She has been instrumental in addressing key local challenges, including coordination during the Pfeiffer Bridge repairs, implementing safety measures along Highway 1 near Point Lobos State Park and the Bixby Creek Bridge, and overseeing the Scenic Road Carmel Lagoon Environmental Impact Report. Each of these efforts has significantly contributed to the preservation of Monterey County's natural beauty and infrastructure.

Mary's leadership in infrastructure improvements has also been transformative. She spearheaded upgrades to Carmel Valley Road and played a key role as Chair of the Carmel Valley Road Advisory Committee, culminating in the finalization of the Carmel Valley Road and Laureles Grade Roundabout project.

A steadfast advocate for housing solutions, Mary worked tirelessly to update the Vacation Rental Ordinance, protect neighborhood character, and champion sustainable, long-term housing initiatives. Under her leadership, the County invested in the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership Housing Trust Fund, unlocking millions in funding for affordable housing projects. She also supported innovative public-private partnerships and employer-sponsored housing initiatives, while prioritizing the community's best interests in updating the Housing Element.

During the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mary provided steady and compassionate leadership, ensuring critical resources reached those in need. Her advocacy extended to sustainable water solutions, supporting the passage of Measure J for public water ownership and hosting Regional Water Forums to engage the community on pressing water challenges.

Throughout her tenure, Mary has exemplified transparency and accountability in governance. Her instrumental role in the hiring of key county officials, including the County Administrative Officer and County Counsel, has strengthened the foundation for Monterey County's future success.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the career and accomplishments of Mary L. Adams. Her legacy of leadership and dedication to the people of Monterey County will inspire generations to come. We thank her for her service and wish her the very best in her well-deserved retirement.

HONORING CIVIL SOCIETY AND
IL-03 STAFF

HON. DELIA C. RAMIREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, as we get close to the end of the 118th Congress, my first term representing the greatly diverse Illinois Third Congressional District, I rise in full gratitude for all of those who have supported me and held me during these not-so-easy two years in what we call the People's House.

And we've heard that it takes a village to represent, to fight, and to deliver for our communities.

But recently, 219 members of this body opted to persecute the village, passing a bill that puts all of civil society at risk.

They took that action at the precise moment we should be uplifting and celebrating civil society as the first and most resilient line of defense for many vulnerable communities.

Without a robust civil society, countries can descend into instability, their governments becoming prone to authoritarianism, human rights abuses, and the erosion of democratic freedoms.

So, while some of my colleagues came to the floor to do harm to civil society, I have come to the floor to commend the countless nonprofit organizations, faith communities, schools and universities, advocacy groups, and cultural institutions that compose the powerful civil society of Illinois' 3rd Congressional District.

Since my time as the executive director of a nonprofit in Chicago, I have seen community organizations nurture and sustain a healthy democracy by providing life-saving services including housing and warm meals—while holding those in power accountable.

It is clear that strengthening, repairing, and defending our democracy is not solely the work of government. It requires the fabric of our communities, civil society organizations, weaving their work together on the frontlines to protect, defend, and enrich our communities and our neighborhoods.

So today, I am grateful for faith communities like the member institutions of the Logan Square Ecumenical Alliance and DuPage United; for community organizations like Onward Neighborhood House, La Casa Norte, and Habitat for Humanity DuPage; for schools and universities like Northeastern University El Centro and North Park University; for early childhood centers like EduCare DuPage and Chicago Commons; for human rights advocates like Palenque LSNA and AFIRE; for cultural organizations like the National Veterans Art Museum and the Mexican Cultural Center of DuPage.

There are too many strong civil society organizations to name. I thank the many, many civil service organizations across IL-03. Gracias.

I appreciate the opportunities and possibilities they create for our neighbors—independent of their zip code, citizenship status, or past actions—and the way they keep me rooted in a community ready to fight like hell for our neighbors.

As I celebrate the work of our civil society, I also want to uplift the team that puts in the long hours; that makes so many sacrifices for

the people of IL-03; and who is seldomly mentioned, seldomly seen in public. And that is my staff.

My staff, who despite the challenges of this Congress and despite a Congress that often-times negates the humanity of their own family, has used their professional and lived experiences to introduce and champion transformative and progressive legislation, has pushed the government to work for our constituents and deliver resources back to Illinois Third, and has ensured our neighbors receive the lifesaving services that they deserve.

I thank my entire team: Ellen Meredith Ray, Luis Miguel Carrizales Castillo, Claudia Dolores Peralta, Karsen Patrick Bailey, Deepa Pinakin Patel, Noemi Avelar, Jowen Halber Ortiz Cintrón, Marina Kristine Sangit, Daniela A. Guerrero Diaz, Valeria Nicolle Metzgen Castro, Katherine Gitsel Carranza Bahena, Jennifer Ho, Nataly Miranda-Castañeda, Vianey Luna Lopez, Micaela Unzueta, Magda Karina Herron, Levi Casmir Iseminger Todd, and Rogelio Elizondo-Juarez, as well as the countless interns, fellows, and past staffers who have supported our work.

I thank them for their time, energy, emotion, and passion they pour into our fight for working people.

They are seen. They are appreciated. I am so proud of the work we have begun together in this term and will continue in the next.

Through gratitude, I find hope.

Because both the community at home and the team I have here in Congress have reminded me that in uncertain times, one thing is certain—our communities are prepared to organize, to protect each other, and to unite no matter what the next four years bring us. I am forever grateful. And I am ready.

RECOGNIZING THE DISTINGUISHED
CAREER OF ANTHONY J. MAIELLO

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the distinguished career of Anthony J. Maiello.

Anthony Maiello received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music Education from Ithaca College in 1965 and 1967. He then went on to the Crane School of Music, Potsdam College of SUNY, Potsdam, New York where he served as a Professor of Music and Chairman of Performance. He spent 20 years at the Crane School, and taught Advanced Instrumental Conducting, Applied Clarinet, Woodwind Techniques, Percussion Techniques and conducted the Crane Wind Ensemble.

In 1986, Maiello joined the faculty at George Mason University (GMU) as a Professor of Music. He taught applied lessons in Conducting, Aural Skills, and classes in Instrumental Conducting. From 1996 to 2009, he conducted the Mason Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra. Under his direction, the ensembles commissioned new works, made numerous recordings, and appeared at national and international conferences. In 2007, Maiello was awarded the title of "University Professor" by the GMU Board of Visitors, the highest rank given to Mason faculty members.

Anthony Maiello also has made professional appearances both nationally and abroad conducting music festivals, adjudicating ensembles, and presenting clinics, lectures, and workshops throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Bahamas, and Europe. He conducted musical activities for the Gold Medal Ceremonies at the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York; served as Musical Director for Music Festivals International; was selected as President of the International Association of Jazz Educators—New York State Chapter; and is a guest clinician for Yamaha Corporation and Warner Bros. Publications. In March of 2010, he was inducted into the Bands of America Hall of Fame at Music for All's Indianapolis headquarters.

Throughout his career, Maiello accumulated an impressive list of recording credits. This includes conducting the American Wind Symphony and additional studio ensembles for Alfred/Belwin Publications. Locally, Maiello has served as Associate Conductor of the McLean Orchestra, was appointed an Honorary Conductor of the United States Navy Band, and was a participant in the National Conducting Institute with Leonard Slatkin and the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C.

In addition to his service in music and education, Maiello is a volunteer police officer for Fairfax County and is very involved with his church. He has been administering the Eucharist on Sundays for decades, and since retiring, he plans to administer the Eucharist during the week to the sick at their homes.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Anthony J. Maiello on an incredible career. He has been able to impact countless lives and help shape the futures of his students over the past 60 years. Best wishes for a happy and safe retirement, filled with time with his loving wife, Susan Maiello, and his daughters Carol and Nancy. I ask that my colleagues join me in applauding this inspired and dedicated educator, conductor, and mentor.

CELEBRATING BANGLADESH
VICTORY DAY

HON. TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, today we join the people of Bangladesh and Bangladeshi communities around the world in celebrating Victory Day on December 16, 2024. It acknowledges a day of triumph, remembrance, and persistence through the courage and unity of the Bangladeshi people.

As we honor this significant moment in history, we must remember the sacrifices made by the patriotic individuals who fought for freedom, peace, and justice. Victory Day serves not only as a celebration but as a demonstration of the steep costs of liberty. This inspiring commemoration exemplifies the values of democracy, human rights, and self-determination.

In a short period of time, Bangladesh has shown power of determination and innovation. On December 16, 1971, after a 9-months-long liberation war, Bangladesh claimed victory. With a skilled workforce, technological advancement, strong healthcare, and a vibrant

youth population, Bangladesh is emerging as a leader, building on its rich history. With more transformative innovation, the country is developing adaptation strategies to combat the climate crisis with leadership in protecting the environment and strengthening its climate resilience.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in celebrating Bangladesh Victory Day as we acknowledge and celebrate the sacrifices made by countless brave souls and citizens who fought for a future of justice and sovereignty. Let us also take this moment to recognize the vibrant Bangladeshi-American community throughout our country. Their dedication to cultural contributions enriches our Nation, and we are all the better for it.

RECOGNIZING REVEREND KEVIN
MOUANOUTOUA

HON. VINCE FONG

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. FONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the pastoral life of Reverend Kevin Mouanoutoua of the Lao Evangelical Church of Fresno.

Reverend Kevin dedicated his life to serving the Central Valley of California, serving as Pastor of the Lao Evangelical Churches of Tulare, Porterville, and Fresno, where he taught about God's love and grace to many faithful congregations. He also spent decades as a social worker for the Fresno County Department of Social Services' Child Protective Services. Reverend Kevin has served as a strong leader to his congregations and someone who represents the compassion of Christ in both his words and actions.

On behalf of my constituents in the Central Valley of California, I would like to congratulate Reverend Kevin Mouanoutoua on his decades of devoted service to faith and to others. As he enters this exciting new chapter in his life, I thank him for his many contributions to our community.

CELEBRATING WILLIAMSON COUNTY
EMS DIRECTOR MIKE
KNIPSTEIN

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to recognize Williamson County EMS Director Mike Knipstein for his exemplary 30-year career of service to residents. A career of such longevity and impact is truly commendable and deserving of recognition. Throughout his tenure, Director Knipstein has demonstrated unwavering dedication to public safety and healthcare, leaving a lasting legacy of excellence and compassionate service to the community.

Mike began his career as a paramedic in 1994 and has earned the Williamson County EMS Paramedic of the Year award twice for his exceptional care. Following his promotion to Lieutenant, he pioneered the creation of a medical continuing education program that re-

mains instrumental in training medics and first responders today.

From 2003 to 2014, as a Commander, Mike shaped the department's future through professional development initiatives, infection control management, and strategic growth planning. As Division Commander of EMS Operations, he introduced budgetary tracking measures that improved overtime cost management.

In 2015, Mike became Deputy Director, leading Williamson County EMS to achieve and maintain accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services, the EMS industry's "gold standard." Since 2016, as Director, he has enhanced services by securing stable funding for the Community Health Paramedic Program, implementing innovative safety policies, and ensuring resource readiness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Director Knipstein's leadership has profoundly elevated EMS services and improved countless lives in Williamson County. On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I extend my deepest gratitude for his remarkable service and wish him continued success.

HONORING THE LIFE OF FORMER
PENNSYLVANIA STATE REP-
RESENTATIVE ISABELLA V.
FITZGERALD

HON. DWIGHT EVANS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the extraordinary life and enduring legacy of Former Pennsylvania State Representative Isabella V. Fitzgerald, a beloved leader, trailblazer, and pillar of the Northwest Philadelphia community. Affectionately known as "Izzy," Representative Fitzgerald departed this earthly life peacefully on December 6, 2024, leaving a legacy of service, compassion, and transformative impact.

In 2017, Representative Fitzgerald made history as the first African American woman elected to serve as State Representative for the 203rd Legislative District, a role she held with distinction for three terms. During her tenure, she championed many issues, including public safety, small business development, community revitalization, and healthcare access. Her dedication to her community is exemplified by her efforts to modernize public spaces, her creation of the Community Angel Awards to honor unsung heroes, and her revival of Super Saturday, a celebration of Northwest Philadelphia neighborhoods.

Representative Fitzgerald's legislative accomplishments included sponsoring House Bill 579, which improved insurance coverage for breast imaging and was signed into law by Governor Tom Wolf in 2020. Her advocacy for affordable housing, health care, and education reflected her deep commitment to addressing the challenges faced by families in her community. A staunch supporter of public engagement, she fostered partnerships with local law enforcement and organized events such as National Night Out to promote community safety.

Even in retirement, Representative Fitzgerald's dedication to her neighbors and

community never waned. She continued to organize grassroots efforts, advocate for breast cancer awareness, and provide mentorship to countless individuals.

Beyond her professional achievements, Isabella Fitzgerald was a devoted mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and friend.

In recognition of her incredible contributions, the intersection of Stenton Avenue and Washington Lane in Philadelphia was renamed "Isabella Fitzgerald Way" on December 15, 2024—a fitting tribute to a woman who dedicated her life to uplifting her community.

HONORING THE LEADERSHIP OF
PHIL BADDOUR

HON. WILEY NICKEL

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor Phil Baddour, a distinguished North Carolinian whose career has been defined by a commitment to public service, advocacy, and leadership.

Phil Baddour served in the North Carolina House of Representatives from 1993 to 2002, representing the 11th district with integrity and dedication. As House Democratic Leader for two terms, he was a key voice in shaping policy that benefited working families across our state. His leadership extended beyond the General Assembly, as he chaired the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, working tirelessly to preserve North Carolina's natural resources for future generations.

A lifelong resident of Goldsboro, Phil has spent more than fifty years practicing law in his hometown, advocating for justice and fairness. His contributions to the legal profession are profound, having served as President of the North Carolina Advocates for Justice, one of our state's leading groups of attorneys. His dedication to public service is reflected in his leadership roles with the North Carolina Economic Development Board, the Board of Transportation, and the Commission for the Future of the Courts in North Carolina.

Beyond his work in the legal and public policy arenas, Phil Baddour has also served his country. He retired as a Colonel in the North Carolina National Guard, where he provided distinguished leadership as Staff Judge Advocate.

Please join me in recognizing Phil Baddour for his lifetime of service, his commitment to justice, and his profound contributions to the people of North Carolina.

HONORING LEROY SOMMER

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize and commend Mr. Leroy Sommer, the Airport Manager of College Park Airport in College Park, Maryland, on his retirement after a decade of exemplary service to the aviation community.

For the past ten years, Mr. Sommer has led one of our Nation's most historic airports with

remarkable dedication and skill. College Park Airport, known as the world's oldest continuously operating airport, is a cornerstone of aviation history and a symbol of the ingenuity and perseverance of the early pioneers of flight. Under Mr. Sommer's capable leadership, the airport has continued to thrive, serving as both a vital resource for general aviation and a living monument to our Nation's rich aviation heritage.

Mr. Sommer's unwavering commitment to safety, operational excellence, and community engagement has been instrumental in the airport's success. His tireless efforts have ensured that College Park Airport remains a beacon for aviation enthusiasts and a trusted partner to the local community.

Throughout his tenure, Mr. Sommer has built strong relationships with residents, businesses, government agencies, and the aviation industry. These partnerships reflect his exceptional leadership and his dedication to fostering collaboration and trust—qualities that are vital to maintaining the strength and vitality of our Nation's aviation infrastructure.

As Mr. Sommer transitions into this well-deserved next chapter, we honor his significant contributions to aviation and to College Park Airport's enduring legacy. His stewardship of this historic landmark has preserved its place in history while ensuring its relevance for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Mr. Leroy Sommer for his service and in wishing him all the best in his retirement. His legacy will be felt for years to come, and he will always have a place among the great stewards of aviation history.

RECOGNIZING THE COLORADO
SCHOOL OF MINES CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Colorado School of Mines Men's Cross Country Team for winning their fourth NCAA Division II National Championship.

Over the past ten years, the Orediggers have dominated Division II Athletics. This season, they won the team title in every race and six out of seven runners earned All-American honors. The championship race was especially impressive, with three runners finishing in the top ten. This team, made up of Logan Bocovich, Loic Scomparin, Ethan Grolnic, Paul Knight, Dawson Gunn, Jeremiah Vaille, and Max Bonenger, showed the very best in competitiveness that the Colorado School of Mines Athletic Department has to offer.

This achievement was earned by the commitment of the runners, support from students, guidance from Athletic Director David Hansburg, and the coaching of Chris Siemers. Their Division II championship title, cements Colorado School of Mines's reputation as an academic and athletic powerhouse in Colorado and across the country.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's Seventh Congressional District, it is my honor to congratulate the Orediggers on their successful season.

RECOGNIZING DICK LUNDY'S
SERVICE TO HIS COMMUNITY

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dick Lundy, a resident of Dexter, Michigan, who is retiring after 45 years on the Dexter School Board. His decades of service to his community and its children are worthy of commendation.

Dick earned a degree in electrical engineering from the University of Michigan and started his own business, Control-O-Matic, later COM Inc., in 1972. He served as its President and CEO until it was sold in 1999.

Dick was first elected to the Dexter School Board in 1979, the first of eleven elections that he would win. He also spent 40 years as Treasurer and another four as Vice President. During his time on the board, he has seen a plethora of changes, from Michigan's shift to per-student state funding in 1994 or the introduction of computers and every new technology since. This also includes the successful passage of half a dozen school bonds, the construction of multiple new buildings and development of the school campus, and the hiring of seven superintendents and two interim superintendents, in addition to the vast financial oversight of the district. Both of his children as well as three grand-children have graduated from Dexter Schools, and two great-grandchildren are currently enrolled.

Outside of his time on the Dexter School Board, Dick has served on the board of many local nonprofits, including the Washtenaw United Way, the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum, the Dexter United Methodist Church, and Emergent Health Partners. In addition, Dick has served on the Dexter Downtown Development Authority and the Local Development Finance Authority which created the Dexter Business and Research Park. He also worked with the nonprofit Michigan From the Heart, where he's assisted in connecting University of Michigan student athletes with patients at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in celebrating Dick Lundy and his 45 years of service to the Dexter community. The future of Dexter is much brighter because of Dick's hard work. We wish him the best in retirement and thank him for all he has done.

CELEBRATING JOHNNY 5 V2.0'S
ACHIEVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL
ROBOTICS COMPETITIONS

HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sawyer Rinn and Tristan Souza, of Johnny 5 v2.0, a robotics team from the 11th District of Illinois, on their recent achievements in representing the United States at two international competitions.

In November, Sawyer and Tristan earned 5th place at the World Robot Olympiad (WRO) International Finals, competing against 100

teams from 90 countries. Their success was the result of their exceptional engineering, problem-solving, and innovation skills, which enabled them to design and program a robot capable of completing complex tasks. Additionally, in October, the team placed 1st at the World Robotics Olympiad Americas Open in Puerto Rico, where they competed against 25 teams from 17 countries.

Coach William Wong of Naperville leads the team. He is the founder of Chasewood Learning, which has produced multiple national robotics champions. His programs inspire children to develop STEM skills and pursue related careers. Sawyer Rinn, 12, from Geneva, Illinois, in his third year of robotics, won the 2022 WRO National Championship and placed 27th at the WRO International Finals. Tristan Souza, 12, from Hinsdale, Illinois, in his second year, reached the FIRST LEGO League state finals in 2022. Both aspire to study engineering at top universities.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have outstanding students and mentors in my district who drive innovation and promote STEM career pathways. Please join me in congratulating Sawyer Rinn, Tristan Souza, and Coach William Wong on their impressive achievements.

RECOGNIZING THE 2024 WASHINGTON REGIONAL ALCOHOL PROGRAM LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENTS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) and to congratulate the recipients of the 27th Annual Law Enforcement Awards of Excellence for Impaired Driving Prevention.

Founded in 1982, WRAP is an award-winning, public-private coalition formed to fight drunk driving, drugged driving, and underage drinking in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region. Through educational and innovative public outreach programs, WRAP is credited with keeping local alcohol-related death rates consistently below the national average. Its programs educate students and the general public on the dangers of alcohol and drugs, particularly driving while under the influence. Through the WRAP Holiday SoberRide program, individuals who are impaired can request a free cab ride home. Since SoberRide was launched in 1991, over 80,000 safe rides have been provided in the Washington Metropolitan area, preventing potential accidents and deaths.

Since 1997, WRAP has sponsored an annual Law Enforcement Awards Ceremony to honor local law enforcement professionals who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in the fight against drunk driving. It is my honor to include in the RECORD the names of the 2024 Law Enforcement Awards of Excellence for Impaired Driving Prevention recipients:

City of Falls Church Police Department: Sergeant Matthew Parker and Private First Class Matthew Aguiniga

Maryland State Police: Trooper First Class Logan Speak

Town of Herndon Police Department: Private First Class Neil Simpson

Prince William County Police Department: Officer Godson Vondee

Loudoun County Sheriffs Office: Deputy First Class Samuel Zinkgraf

Arlington County Police Department: Corporal Kellsey Costello-Mays

Alexandria Police Department: Officer Whitney Watts-Cerrato

Metropolitan Police Department: Officer Hakim Bouaichi

Virginia State Police: Trooper Collin Kashmer

United States Park Police: Officer Christian Callahan

Fairfax County Police Department: Private First Class Justin Yorkdale

Montgomery County Police Department: Sergeant Patrick Keep

Prince George's County Police Department: Corporal Brendan Hughes

Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority: Corporal Joshua Morris and Corporal Ian Pharoah

United States Capitol Police: Officer Seth Carl

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the recipients of the Law Enforcement Awards of Excellence and in recognizing WRAP for its 42 years of public service. Their efforts combined with the support of partner organizations and law enforcement agencies have saved lives and are deserving of our highest praise and gratitude. I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding this group of remarkable citizens.

RECOGNIZING THE ENGAGEMENT OF BRIAN JOHNSON AND CAROLINE REYNOLDS

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to congratulate Brian Johnson and Caroline Reynolds on the occasion of their engagement. It is with great pleasure and excitement that I share the wonderful news.

Brian, a steadfast friend and dedicated professional, has been a true partner in our work with Veterans Guardian, helping countless veterans across the Nation achieve their well-deserved disability rating increases.

Fate brought Brian and his incredible fiancé, Caroline Reynolds, together at the U.S. Open during an event hosted by our mutual friend and colleague, Congressman RICHARD HUDSON. Their story reached a beautiful milestone over the Thanksgiving holiday on November 26, when Brian proposed to Caroline in her charming hometown of Nacogdoches, Texas. The engagement was a heartwarming celebration, surrounded by family, friends, and joyous festivities.

Love and marriage represent the joining of two hearts and lives, built on a foundation of trust, respect, and shared dreams. Brian and Caroline embody the promise to stand together through life's joys and challenges, growing stronger as individuals and as partners. Their love story is a testament to the beauty of finding someone who not only inspires you but also walks beside you every step of the way.

Mr. Speaker, let us all join in congratulating Brian and Caroline on this exciting new chapter in their lives. I wish them boundless happiness, love, and success as they embark on their journey together.

HONORING THE LIFE OF LAURENS "LARRY" RUBEN

HON. SUZAN K. DELBENE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the remarkable life and legacy of Laurens "Larry" Ruben, a beloved professor, whose influence not only shaped my life but also the lives of countless students, colleagues, family, and friends. A source of light and a friend to all, we recognize the extraordinary impact Larry had on the many lives he touched.

Larry Ruben graduated from the University of Michigan with Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Biology. After moving to New York with his wife and longtime lab partner, Judith, he earned his Ph.D. from Columbia University and completed post-doctoral work at Princeton University before joining Reed College in 1955. At Reed, Larry was instrumental in developing the Biology Department's research-rich curriculum, improving student research opportunities, and emphasizing the importance of outside funding to support the program. In his research lab, which remained open until he was 86 years old, I had the privilege to conduct research during my time at Reed. Larry contributed significant insights into immunology and cancer biology.

Larry was not only an outstanding researcher but also an inspiring teacher and mentor. Known for his kindness and generosity, he was deeply committed to his students and their success. As my thesis advisor, he inspired my early career in immunology. Beyond his work in biology, Larry helped establish the Arts Division at Reed College and often sang with a Reed-based rock and roll band. He was also known for his exceptional dance moves, which left a lasting impression on everyone fortunate enough to witness them.

Larry Ruben was a friend, a mentor, and a man whose immense kindness and contributions will never be forgotten. We extend our deepest condolences to Larry's family, friends, students, and colleagues. Larry's impact will live on in all those he touched.

HONORING THE LEADERSHIP OF DON RAINS

HON. WILEY NICKEL

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor Don Rains, a dedicated public servant and lifelong resident of Princeton, North Carolina, who has made significant contributions to his community through more than two decades of service as Mayor.

For 22 years, Don Rains led Princeton with vision, determination, and an unwavering com-

mitment to the town's future. Under his leadership, the town saw critical infrastructure improvements, including advancements in water, sewer, and stormwater management, all of which helped prepare Princeton for future growth.

His leadership in key projects like the Princeton Community Center and the work surrounding the future Interstate 42 will have a lasting impact on the town and its residents for years to come.

In addition to his work as Mayor, Don Rains has served his community through his involvement in Princeton United Methodist Church, the Princeton Lions Club, and St. Patrick's Masonic Lodge. His leadership extended beyond the town, serving as Chair of the Triangle J Council of Governments and the US 70/1-42 Commission, where he advocated for regional and statewide development.

Don and his family believe deeply in giving back, and through their efforts, they have bolstered initiatives to enhance the quality of life for all Princeton residents, including support for the Princeton Public Library and the new Community Center.

Please join me in recognizing Don Rains for his exemplary leadership, dedication, and service to Princeton, North Carolina. His contributions will continue to shape the community he loves for generations to come.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF COLONEL ROBERT R. "BART" BARTRAN, III

HON. MICHAEL GUEST

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of Colonel Robert R. "Bart" Bartran, III. COL Bartran is a fellow Mississippian who has dedicated his life to serving our country and the great state of Mississippi.

COL Bartran was appointed as the Director of the Counterdrug Program for the Mississippi National Guard (MNG) in August of 2021, where he also served as the Commandant of the Regional Counterdrug Training Academy (RCTA) on Naval Air Station Meridian. He relinquished the responsibilities as Commandant of the RCTA in December of 2023 but continues to serve as the Counterdrug Coordinator (CDC) for the MNG to this date. In these roles, COL Bartran has led with distinction the critical counterdrug training program for the National Guard and Federal, state, and local law enforcement across Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Tennessee.

COL Bartran graduated from West Jones High School in 1988 and attended Jones County Junior College, graduating with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Southern Mississippi. He then completed his Master's Degree at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. COL Bartran valued continuing education and graduated from the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officer Training Academy in Jackson, Mississippi.

Prior to being selected for the Active Guard and Reserve Program, COL Bartran was a police officer with the City of Ridgeland Police Department and the City of Laurel Police Department. His civilian law enforcement career

that spanned nearly a decade culminated with service as the Senior Narcotics Agent for the Jones County Sheriff's Department in Laurel, Mississippi.

COL Bartran entered the service on September 17, 1988, as a Private assigned to Service Battery, 3rd/83rd Field Artillery in the United States Army Reserves in Laurel, Mississippi. In August of 1991 he transferred to the 2/112th Armored Brigade in the Texas National Guard with duty in Fort Worth, Texas. In 1993, COL Bartran transferred back to the Great State of Mississippi and became a member of the National Guard. Assigned to the 184th Transportation Brigade, shortly followed by movement into the 112 Military Police Battalion, COL Bartran pursued his dream of becoming a Military Police Officer. On January 26, 1995, he graduated from Federal Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia, and was commissioned into the Mississippi Army National Guard as a Second Lieutenant in the Military Police Corps.

In February of 1995, COL Bartran attended Military Police Officer Basic Course and was assigned to the 113th Military Police Company. For the next 8 years, COL Bartran would serve in multiple Military Police Officer positions to include Platoon Leader, Detachment Commander, and Company Commander of the 114th Military Police Company where he would deploy twice back-to-back in that capacity. The culminating event as a Military Police Officer for COL Bartran was in August of 2018 when he was selected as the Battalion Commander for the 112th Military Police Battalion in Canton, Mississippi, and served honorably in that position until February of 2021.

Upon his return from the second deployment, COL Bartran would take on a series of Staff Positions serving as a Maintenance Officer, Personnel Officer, Training Officer, Operations Officer, Plans Officer, Executive Officer, and then a Deputy Commander before being appointed as the Deputy Inspector General for the Mississippi National Guard. The majority of the aforementioned positions were performed in a full-time status after being hired into the Active Guard and Reserve System in April of 2004. COL Bartran has served at every echelon in the state from the platoon level all the way up to the State Headquarters Primary/Special Staff and a Brigade Command Equivalent.

COL Bartran's Awards include the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with 1 Silver Oak Leaf Cluster and one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Commendation Medal with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Achievement Medal with 2 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal with 1 Silver Oak Leaf Cluster and 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, National Defense Service Medal with 1 Bronze Star, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with 2 Bronze Stars, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal with Numeral 2, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Silver Hourglass Device and M Device and Numeral 5, Non Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon with Numeral 4, Army Reserve Component Overseas Training Ribbon with Numeral 2, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Medal, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Medal (International Security and Assistance Forces), Joint Meri-

torious Unit Award with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Superior Unit Award, Mississippi Magnolia Cross, Mississippi Magnolia Medal with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, Mississippi Commendation Medal, Mississippi War Medal with 1 Bronze Star, Mississippi Emergency Service Medal with 3 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters, Mississippi Counterdrug Service Medal, Mississippi Service School Medal, Mississippi Longevity Medal with 1 Silver Oak Leaf Cluster, German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge, Inspector General's Badge, and the coveted Air Assault Badge. Additionally, to COL Bartran's credit are five deployments over the course of his 35-year career, taking him overseas to Germany, Cuba, and multiple tours in Afghanistan.

I am thankful for Colonel Bartran's exceptional service to our country and the state of Mississippi, and I wish him all the best in his retirement.

CONGRATULATING THE TIA MARIA
FOUNDATION'S 1ST ANNUAL
SCHOLARSHIP GALA

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to offer my heartfelt congratulations to The Tia Maria Foundation on the momentous occasion of its First Annual Scholarship Gala. Tonight is a special moment—not only because it marks a significant milestone for the foundation but because it celebrates the presentation of its inaugural scholarship to a well-deserving student. This organization has been built on the outstanding legacy Maria M. Luis left behind after a remarkable life that began in Terceira, Portugal, over 100 years ago. Maria endured countless hardships that began at the beginning of her life when she lost her mother during childbirth, causing her to step into the role of caregiver to her eight younger brothers and sisters. She valiantly took on this job and ensured that her siblings received the care and love that every child deserves. Maria didn't get a chance to pursue higher education due to her responsibilities tending to her family and other obstacles from her health, but this did not stop her from chasing a better life for herself and family. She migrated to the United States in 1970 and ensured that her children and grandchildren could have an excellent education. Now, The Tia Maria Foundation, under the leadership of Chairman Gavin Szilvasi, is continuing Maria's mission by empowering the youth of Elizabeth, New Jersey. By awarding scholarships, this foundation is making a tangible difference in the lives of students, ensuring they have the resources they need to pursue the higher education that Maria so greatly valued. Your foundation is not just awarding scholarships, but it is also about making a way for students to reach their highest academic potential and achieve their greatest dreams. This mission is something we can all be proud of, and I want to take a moment to thank them for the difference they are making in so many lives. Congratulations on a great year. I understand that the journey to this point has not been easy, and I commend their resilience and dedication. I hope they have a great time tonight and take tonight

to celebrate the real difference their work in the community has had. God Bless The Tia Maria Foundation and God Bless our United States of America.

HONORING RAMSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONER
VICTORIA REINHARDT

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the distinguished career of Ramsey County Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt on her retirement after 28 years of public service on the Ramsey County Board. Since her election in 1996, residents of District 7 in Maplewood, North Saint Paul and White Bear Lake have been well-served by her leadership. Currently, she also leads the board for the third time as Chair.

During her 28 years of distinguished leadership, Commissioner Reinhardt has made lasting impacts in areas including transportation, housing, public safety, fiscal responsibility, environmental stewardship, and more. In 1999, she testified before a congressional committee on how local units of government can work together more effectively. In 2000, she was presented with the Bruce F. Vento Distinguished Service Award by the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless. In 2012 she was named County Commissioner of the year by the Association of Minnesota Counties. Under her leadership as longtime chair of the budget committee, Ramsey County has earned the top bond rating for 21 consecutive years.

Commissioner Reinhardt's long-standing advocacy for environmental sustainability that originally led her to run for a seat on the county board against a 22-year incumbent. Previously, she was a founding board member and chairperson of the Recycling Association of Minnesota and chairperson of the White Bear Lake Recycling Advisory Committee. She is currently a member of the Association of Minnesota Counties' Environment and Natural Resources Committee, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Local Government Advisory Committee, Vice Chair of the Environment, Energy and Land Use Committee for the National Association of Counties, and Vice-Chair of the Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy Board. She is recognized across the country as a leader in environmental stewardship and a champion for sustainable practices throughout Minnesota's east metro communities.

Commissioner Reinhardt holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Masters of Business Administration from Metropolitan State University in Saint Paul. She received a Doctorate in Public Administration from Hamline University, where her dissertation informed her county work by focusing on calculating the cost savings of juvenile crime prevention.

It has been an honor to have Commissioner Reinhardt serve as my commissioner. I have deep respect for Victoria's work and dedication to public service and am grateful to call her a friend. As she retires, I wish her well, along with her husband JP and her entire family.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in this well-deserved tribute to Commissioner Victoria

Reinhardt on the occasion of her retirement after nearly three decades of distinguished public service on the Ramsey County Board.

CELEBRATING BELL COUNTY
SHERIFF EDDY LANGE

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to honor Sheriff Eddy Lange and congratulate him on an outstanding career spanning decades of dedicated community service. Sheriff Lange's passion for keeping the citizens of Central Texas safe is clearly demonstrated by a lifetime of unwavering commitment.

Sheriff Lange's political career began in 1992 when he was elected as the first Republican Justice of the Peace in his county. After serving in this role for 12 years, Sheriff Lange was elected to the County Commissioner's office. Soon after, he was elected Bell County Sheriff, a position he held for another 12 years. He will retire with an impressive record of 14–0 contested elections.

Throughout his tenure, Sheriff Lange implemented several initiatives to enhance public safety. This includes the installation of new technology, such as in-car video systems and body cams, and the creation of the Mental Health Unit of the Sheriff's Department, which assists in mental evaluations, provides guidance and resources, and works to provide daily support within the jail system. He also adeptly managed the rapid growth of the inmate population, which doubled during his tenure.

Sheriff Lange founded several high-impact programs that have left a lasting impression on Bell County. He established the School Resource Officer Program, which has since grown from one to seven officers across three different school districts. This program was designed to facilitate quick responses to emergencies on school campuses and to foster positive relations between officers and the community. Along with his wife, Amy, Sheriff Lange created the Crossroads Program, a rehabilitation initiative to teach life skills to inmates and pave the way for their success. Finally, Sheriff Lange is the founder of the Bell County Sheriff's Foundation, which supports families who have lost loved ones in the line of duty. As well as providing scholarships to Bell County Peace Officers, the Foundation raises funds in the hopes of constructing a memorial to honor those who have given their lives in service to Bell County.

Please join me in commending Sheriff Lange's lifelong commitment to keeping our neighborhoods safe. His legacy of achievement and service represents the very best of Central Texas.

RECOGNIZING WES RHODES

HON. BETH VAN DUYNÉ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Ms. VAN DUYNÉ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Wes Rhodes of Euless, who is

retiring after 38 years of service to North Texas. After graduating from Arlington High School, Wes received his associate's degree in Fire Protection Technology from Tarrant County College in Fort Worth. He began his career with the Haltom City Fire Department and spent 25 years as a Firefighter and EMT before quickly moving up the ranks to Fire Chief. In 2011, Wes accepted the position of Fire Chief for the City of Euless. During his time with the Euless Fire Department, Wes focused on community involvement, regional training, empowering the ranks, and maintaining open lines of communication with his team.

Wes' commitment to North Texas has been acknowledged through numerous accolades, including the Outstanding Leadership Award from Tarrant County Fire Service Training Center, Distinguished Alumni Award from Tarrant County Fire Service Training Center, Texas Association of Fire Educators' Instructor of the Year, and Fire Officer of the Year in 1996, 1998, and 1999 from Haltom City Fire/Rescue. His contributions extend beyond fire service, being named the 2024 Hurst-Euless-Bedford Rotarian of the Year for his work as president of the Hurst-Euless-Bedford Rotary Club.

Wes holds an array of certifications and licenses, including Certified Public Manager through Texas State University, Fire Service Chief Executive Officer through Texas A&M University, EMT, Master Firefighter, Master Fire Inspector, Fire Officer IV, HazMat Technician, Fire Investigator, Fire Instructor, Certified Head of Department, Fire Safety Officer, Swift Water Technician, and graduate of the Texas Fire Chiefs Academy. In 2021, he was promoted to Assistant City Manager of Euless. Wes and his wife Mary have been married for 34 years and are proud parents of two grown children, one of whom has followed in his father's footsteps as a Driver and Engineer with Grapevine Fire Department.

I thank Mr. Rhodes, for his unwavering dedication to protecting and serving our community. I congratulate him on his well-deserved retirement.

HONORING FLORENCE DUNLEVY'S
105TH BIRTHDAY

HON. ANGIE CRAIG

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Ms. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Florence Dunlevy, a constituent from West St. Paul, who will be celebrating her 105th birthday on December 21st.

Florence was born in Armour, South Dakota, in 1919 into a farm family, and raised a farming family of her own with her husband John. Throughout her life, Florence has been a loving mother at home and avid volunteer at church and in her community. These days, she has many hobbies to stay busy, including knitting blankets, hats, mittens, and tablecloths, many of which she has given away to U.S. servicemembers.

Her advice for a good life? Be happy, smile, enjoy your friends and family, and always try to live your best life.

We can all take inspiration from Florence's long life of humility and service. Happy birthday to Florence.

HONORING BILLY AND JACKIE
GLINES

HON. RANDY K. WEBER, SR.

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor a remarkable couple who have been pillars of our community in Friendswood, Texas. The Glines Family, as some of the earliest residents of our beloved town, have left an indelible mark on the fabric of our society.

Billy and Jackie Glines share a love story that reads like a fairytale. They met in 1957, and it wasn't long before sparks flew. Their first date in July of that year set the stage for a lifelong romance. By late October, Billy was called to serve our great country. Knowing he had found his soulmate, Billy was determined to marry Jackie before someone else did, for he knew he would "never find another girl like her."

On Christmas leave from basic training, Billy and Jackie had a quaint ceremony on December 23, 1957. Their love was tested early on, as Billy soon departed for Germany to serve as an Advanced Weapons Support Commander.

Their bond only grew stronger over the miles and years. In November 1960, they welcomed their first child, Kimberly, followed by Britt in April 1964. Kimberly and her husband, Stan, have two children, while Britt and his wife, Shannon, have three. The Glines family legacy continues to thrive through these wonderful families.

Billy's career journey led him to establish the Mustang Auto Shop with his brother-in-law, a business that remains in operation today, serving the Friendswood community. Jackie, after initially working at a weight loss facility, found her calling as a secretary at Accident Insurance Company from 1958 to 1960. She paused her career to raise her children, then dedicated 30 years as a beloved school secretary at her son's elementary school.

Last Christmas, Billy and Jackie celebrated 67 years of enduring love and commitment. Their contributions to Friendswood are immeasurable, and their story is an inspiration to us all.

I first learned about this remarkable story through an excellent article authored by Ashley Forrest and published by Angela Knight in Friends of Friendswood Magazine July 2024 Edition. Their work in capturing and preserving the legacy of local families like the Glines deserves heartfelt appreciation.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent folks like Billy and Jackie Glines, whose lives are a testament to the values we hold dear—love, dedication, and service. Their story is a shining example of the American spirit, and their enduring marriage is a beacon of hope and stability in our community.

Here's to Billy and Jackie Glines, for their steadfast love, their service to our country, and their unwavering commitment to our community. May they continue to share many more happy years together.

RECOGNIZING THE 2024 BEST OF
BRADDOCK AWARDEES

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the recipients of the annual Best of Braddock Awards. These awards are the result of collaborative work between the Braddock District Council and Braddock District Supervisor and are presented to individuals and organizations whose extraordinary efforts make our community a better place.

I have been proud to represent this community since my days as Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. I have often said that civic engagement is a key indicator of a healthy community, and tonight's event proves that Braddock District continues to be one of the healthiest communities in all of Northern Virginia.

It is my honor to include in the RECORD the following recipients of the 2024 Best of Braddock Awards:

Organization or Club Making a Difference: The Young Hearts Club at C.G. Woodson High School, for their work in supporting students and their families facing serious medical challenges, to bring awareness to these issues and to fund research for cures and treatments.

Neighborhood Beautification, Enhancement, or Community-Building Effort: Burke Centre Conservancy (BCC), Open Space Committee, for supporting the BCC Board of Trustees with engagement, training, recommendations, and integration regarding environmental affairs and impacts within the Burke Centre community to aid in keeping Burke Centre in line with its motto, "In Harmony with Nature".

Most "Can-Do" Public Employee: Justen Allen Moreland, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, for his exemplary qualities of leadership, character and integrity as the Heavy Rescue driver at Fire Station 14.

Honorable Mention: Bob Lund, Lake Braddock, for leading the effort to cut down dead or dying trees and prune other trees as needed in the Lake Braddock common areas for many years.

Civic Engagement: Bob Cosgriff, Chair of Braddock District Council, for his tenacious and dedicated work to building a Council that greatly benefits its member neighborhoods.

Young Person of the Year: Callum Chang, Robinson Secondary School, for his passion for community service and his dedication to helping others.

Citizen of the Year: Bonnie Hopler, for her volunteer work all around Fairfax County including with the NOVA Lifetime Learning Institute, FACETS, and the Lamb Center.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the 2024 Best of Braddock honorees for their tremendous contributions to Northern Virginia. The level of civic engagement celebrated by these awards is a testament to the community spirit of the Braddock District. We are a better place for them.

HONORING THE LEADERSHIP OF
SENATOR DAN BLUE

HON. WILEY NICKEL

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor Senator Dan Blue, a dedicated public servant and lifelong North Carolinian, for his remarkable leadership as Senate Minority Leader and his tireless commitment to the people of our state.

From his early days growing up in Robeson County to becoming the first African American Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives, Senator Blue has been a trailblazer and an advocate for working families. His leadership has focused on investing in public education, creating jobs, protecting the environment, and ensuring access to affordable healthcare.

Throughout his distinguished career, Senator Blue has consistently been one of the most effective legislators in North Carolina. He has shaped significant reforms in workplace safety, public schools, and the criminal justice system, leaving a lasting impact on the state. As Senate Minority Leader, his steady and principled leadership has been a guiding force for his caucus during some of the most challenging political times.

As he steps down from his leadership role, I honor Senator Blue's decades of public service and his unwavering dedication to the people of North Carolina. His legacy as a leader, advocate, and mentor will continue to inspire future generations of public servants.

Please join me in recognizing Senator Dan Blue for his extraordinary service to North Carolina.

RECOGNIZING SEAN ANNUZZI—
EAGLE SCOUT

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to congratulate Sean Annuzzi on his exemplary achievement of attaining the rank of Eagle Scout. This distinguished honor represents the culmination of his dedication, having earned nearly 40 merit badges across a wide array of skill sets. From Automotive Maintenance to American Business to Archaeology, Sean has shown a deep commitment to becoming a well-rounded young man, always eager to learn. To achieve the rank of Eagle Scout, he completed 14 additional merit badges, including Citizenship in the Nation, Personal Fitness, and Lifesaving. These accomplishments not only signify his dedication to personal growth but also his unwavering commitment to serving his community. Outside of his studies, he is already making a meaningful impact by mentoring children and teenagers with disabilities, exemplifying the spirit of compassion and service that the Scouting program seeks to instill. In his free time, Sean trains youth and teenagers in karate, equipping them with skills that foster both confidence and resilience. His efforts in this regard are highly commendable and are a testa-

ment to his character and leadership. Sean's family takes immense pride in his accomplishments, and I am honored to share in this sentiment. I have no doubt he will continue to do amazing things in the future. May God bless Sean and God bless the United States of America.

HONORING SISTER MARTA CICHON

HON. DELIA C. RAMIREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sister Marta Cichon, a woman who has profoundly transformed the lives of Polish immigrant families and uplifted single mothers in Illinois.

Born in Zabkowice, Poland, Sister Marta's duty to humanity led her across the globe, serving in Australia before arriving in the United States in 2000.

Here, she recognized a pressing need to support mothers and their children who were vulnerable to homelessness, hunger, and lack of assistance.

Ultimately, she established the Single Mothers Home in 2008. The Single Mothers Home offers essential services, from legal assistance to mental health support, empowering women to rebuild their lives.

For nearly 15 years, Sister Marta has provided refuge, hope, and a path to independence for over 140 mothers and 180 children, including those who have experienced domestic violence.

To this day, these families maintain a close bond with Sister Marta, who considers them family.

I commend Sister Marta for her compassion, her resilience, and her unwavering service to our community.

Thank you (Dziękuję), Sister Marta.

Panie MARSZALKU. Zabieram dzis glos, aby oddac czesc siostrze Marcie Cichon, kobiecie, ktora gleboko zmienila zycie rodzin polskich imigrantow i podniosla na duchu samotne matki w Illinois.

Siostra Marta, urodzona w Zabkowicach, w Polsce, dzieki swojej powinosci wobec ludzkosci podrozowala po calym swiecie, sluzac w Australii, zanim w 2000 roku przybyla do Stanow Zjednoczonych.

Dostrzegla tam pilna potrzebe wsparcia matek i ich dzieci, ktore byly zagrozone bezdomnoscia, glodem i brakiem pomocy.

Ostatecznie w 2008 roku zalozyla Dom Samotnej Matki. Dom Samotnej Matki oferuje podstawowe uslugi, od pomocy prawnej po wsparcie w zakresie zdrowia psychicznego, umozliwiajac kobietom odbudowanie swojego zycia.

Siostra Marta przez blisko 15 lat dawala schronienie, nadzieje i droge do samodzielnosci ponad 140 matkom i 180 dzieciom, w tym tym, ktore doswiadczyly przemocy domowej.

Do dzis te rodziny utrzymuja bliska wiaz z Siostra Marta, ktora uwaza je za rodzine.

Chwale Siostrze Marte za jej milosierdzie, odpornosc i niezachwiana sluzbe dla naszej spolecznosci.

Dziękuję Siostrze Marto.

RECOGNIZING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE METRA COMMUTER RAIL SYSTEM

HON. BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, today I proudly rise to recognize the 40th Anniversary of the Metra rail system serving the people throughout Chicago and across the region.

The Metra commuter rail system—specifically the Milwaukee District North, the Union Pacific North, and the North Central Service lines—connects Illinois's 10th district to the city of Chicago and neighboring communities. From Winthrop Harbor through Zion, Waukegan, North Chicago, Lake Bluff, Lake Forest, Highwood, Highland Park, Glenco, Winnetka, and Kenilworth; from Antioch through Lake Villa, Round Lake Beach, Grayslake, Libertyville, Mundelein, Vernon Hills, Vernon Township, Buffalo Grove, and Wheeling; and from Fox Lake through Long Lake, Round Lake, Deerfield, and Northbrook, Metra is literally a lifeline for the citizens of the 10th District.

Metra began as an amalgamation of private rail services, some of which had existed for more than a century. Today, Metra is the fourth-busiest commuter rail system in the country and serves millions of riders throughout the region with eleven lines moving between 243 stations. Metra serves as a critical backbone for workers and families who depend on reliable, safe transportation through the frigid winter and sweltering summers. Metra is more than just a commuter rail system—it is an indelible feature of life in Chicagoland, serving workers, sports fans, students, the elderly, and many more.

I have been honored to consistently advocate for Metra's priorities during my service in Congress, and proud to have secured funding for projects for station modernization, accessibility improvements, and platform rehabilitation. These historic investments in our transportation infrastructure—made possible under the Biden Administration's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law—will help Metra flourish well into the future.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the accomplishments and service Metra, and the people who ensure the trains run, have provided for the past 40 years. To the engineers, conductors, planners, maintenance workers, advocates, and organizational leaders who dedicated countless hours over the decades to elevate Metra to where it is today—I thank and commend them for their vision and hard work. I look forward to continuing my work with Metra to promote its continued success—not just for the good of the Tenth District, but for all the people in the Chicago region.

RECOGNIZING METRA COMMUTER RAILROAD'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JONATHAN L. JACKSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Metra, the commuter

railroad serving my constituents in Chicago, on its 40th anniversary.

Forty years ago, commuter rail operations largely relied on private railroads. However, due to inflation and the emergence of alternative transportation options, funding decreased significantly, and riders threatened to discontinue their use of commuter services. To address this issue, voters approved the creation of the Regional Transportation Authority, which established the Northeast Illinois Railroad Corporation to directly operate the trains. When the Rock Island and Milwaukee Road railroads went bankrupt, a new rail division was created to provide subsidies that kept the trains running and passengers on board.

As Metra faced a fragmented system of commuter rail operations, it acquired the Metra Electric and Illinois Central Gulf in 1987, ultimately taking over the operations of the Heritage Corridor, SouthWest Service, and North Central Service—marking the first new commuter line in Chicago in 70 years.

Today, Metra continues to subsidize operations on four lines owned and operated by freight railroads. After 40 years, Metra has become the fourth-busiest commuter rail system in our country, consistently providing reliable and essential transportation services to my constituents.

Earlier this year, I was pleased to assist Metra in securing federal funding for the Morgan Street Bridge Replacement project. This funding will replace the current timber rail bridge, built in 1974 as a temporary solution, with a new steel bridge. This upgrade will reduce maintenance needs and enhance safety and reliability for nearly 7.34 million annual riders.

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Metra on its 40th anniversary. I look forward to continuing our partnership to ensure Metra's success for many years to come.

CELEBRATING JOHN M. BARR'S CAREER AND SERVICE, YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of John M. Barr and his dedication to the legal profession. As City Attorney of Ypsilanti, Michigan for decades and founder of Barr, Anhut and Associates, P.C., John's commitment to serving his community is worthy of commendation.

John attended Michigan State University where he earned a Bachelor of Art in Social Science. He then earned his J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School. Throughout his successful legal career, John has been admitted into the State Bar of Michigan, the U.S. Federal District Court, the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court. Outside of the law, John heroically served his country as member of the United States Army.

John has served as City Attorney for Ypsilanti since 1981. For over 43 years, he has served as the chief legal advisor to the City Council, Manager, and various city departments. As a testament to his dedication to the community, John founded Barr, Anhut and As-

sociates, P.C., which focuses on municipal law, estate planning/probate, real estate, and corporate law. His firm often provides bar recommended pro-bono services and John has always expected his staff to be active members of their community through volunteering and other service.

Outside of his career, John has personally served in numerous community organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, and Washtenaw 100. He currently serves as board member of HighScope Educational Research Foundation, which aims to provide high-quality, equitable early childhood education to every child. He also serves as a board member of the Michigan Municipal League Foundation, which aims to create financial security among local communities to address individual social and economic needs across a wide set of industries.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in celebrating the magnificent career of John M. Barr and congratulating him on his retirement. His dedication to the city of Ypsilanti and the broader Michigan community has created a more just and equitable community for all. I thank John for his decades of service to our community, and we wish him all the best as he moves on to the next chapter of his life.

CELEBRATING DR. VENU GOVINDARAJU AS PERSON OF THE YEAR BY THE COUNCIL OF HERITAGE AND ARTS OF INDIA

HON. TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate Dr. Venu Govindaraju as Person of the Year by the Council of Heritage and Arts of India. Dr. Govindaraju, a renowned professor and Vice President for Research and Economic Development at the University at Buffalo, is a trailblazer whose pioneering research has transformed artificial intelligence and document analysis, leaving an indelible mark on technological innovation and societal progress.

At a time when the practice of artificial intelligence seemed far-fetched, Dr. Govindaraju led a team that developed the world's first autonomous system for deciphering handwritten addresses. Initially funded by the U.S. Postal Service, this comprehensive technology processes mail at a staggering speed of 13 pieces per second, interpreting natural handwriting mail in the United States, with no additional guidelines, structured forms, or meticulously printed text. Subsequently adopted by the Australia Post and the UK Royal Mail, the system now reads nearly all the handwritten mail in the United States. Its efficiency stands as a cornerstone achievement in artificial intelligence.

The impact of Dr. Govindaraju's work extends far beyond postal automation. His contributions have overarched in diverse fields such as digital libraries, healthcare, and education. For the New York State Department of Health, his techniques have enabled early detection of illness outbreaks through automated healthcare analysis. Currently, as Director and Principal Investigator of the National Institute for Exceptional Education, he is leading a National Science Foundation-funded initiative to

develop AI tools for early screening of children with Dysgraphia and Dyslexia. This groundbreaking project aims to provide teachers with AI-based intervention tools to efficiently help them overcome their limitations.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in celebrating Dr. Venu Govindaraju as Person of the Year by the Council of Heritage and Arts of India. His contributions have not only advanced AI research but also demonstrated its profound impact on industries and communities. Dr. Govindaraju's leadership exemplifies the transformative power of science, innovation, and technology in addressing real-world challenges that have left an indelible mark on our city, and we are all the better for it.

REMEMBERING MARY HAMMER, A
PIVOTAL FOUNDER OF MOUNTAIN
COMMUNITY RESOURCES

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of Mary Hammer, a beloved community leader. She was a steadfast advocate for families in the San Lorenzo Valley and founded the Mountain Community Resources, originally known as the Valley Resource Center. Originally from Alameda, Ms. Hammer embodied our community values of positivity and hard work.

Ms. Hammer attended UC Berkeley, and shortly after graduating, she traveled abroad to teach in Germany where she met her husband, Joe. In 1965 Mary and Joe settled in the San Lorenzo Valley, a place very dear to Mary. She began teaching in San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District leaving a lasting impact on those she taught. While raising her family, Ms. Hammer quickly began to become an active leader in her community.

Engaging in local political campaigns, her efforts not only safeguarded vital water resources but also played a key role in shaping Santa Cruz County. As an environmentalist, her leadership was vital for emergency responses when a devastating flood and storms barreled through the community in 1982 and 1983. Mary's dedicated advocacy pushed local leaders to prioritize emergency preparedness, setting the stage for the Neighborhood Survival Network and Volunteer Emergency Preparedness Project.

Her leadership at Valley Resource Center as the center's first Executive Director guided the community through multiple natural disasters and paved the way for the center to transform from a volunteer-led organization to a nonprofit. Ms. Hammer Received the Outstanding Public Service Award from FEMA in Washington, D.C., which was one of many achievements she would go on to receive.

As a founding leader of the Valley Women's Club of San Lorenzo Valley, Ms. Hammer championed efforts for natural resource preservation and disaster preparedness. Today, Mountain Community Resources provides essential services such as food, clothing, counseling, legal assistance, and parenting classes to residents in need.

Mary loved being with family and friends, teaching, reading, and exploring nature as an avid cyclist, camper, and hiker. Mary is sur-

vived by her children, Eric and Lisa, and her grandchildren, Ruby, Charlie, and Nicole. She now joins her beloved husband, Joe, whom she fondly called "Joey."

COMMENDING COMMISSIONER
WAYNE GOODWIN

HON. WILEY NICKEL

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Wayne Goodwin, a dedicated public servant whose exemplary work as Commissioner of the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles has made a lasting impact on our state.

Wayne Goodwin has served North Carolina in many capacities, including four terms in the State House and eight years as Commissioner of Insurance. Since being appointed DMV Commissioner in 2022, he has tackled the challenges of a demanding agency with leadership, vision, and a commitment to improving services for all North Carolinians.

Under Commissioner Goodwin's leadership, the DMV has seen significant progress. He's made customer service a top priority, implementing extended business hours, introducing DMV self-service kiosks, and expanding online services. These innovations have reduced wait times and provided more convenience for citizens across the state. His efforts to address the agency's staffing shortages, reducing a 30 percent vacancy rate to 12 percent, speak to his dedication to supporting state employees.

A native of Hamlet and a Morehead Scholar at UNC-Chapel Hill, Wayne Goodwin's longstanding dedication to public service, from his time as a young lawmaker to his leadership at the DMV, has greatly benefited our state.

I'm honored to recognize Wayne Goodwin for his extraordinary service and the lasting contributions he's made to the people of North Carolina.

RECOGNIZING MICHELLE HINES

HON. BRETT GUTHRIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Michelle Hines on her retirement from 33 years of working in community service with the Barren River Area Development District (BRADD).

A Logan County native, Michelle was born, raised, and resides in Auburn, Kentucky. After graduating from Logan County High School and Western Kentucky University, Michelle's first job out of college was with the Barren River Area Development District. In her tenure, which spans over three decades, Michelle has been a faithful servant to her community, advocating and supporting citizens throughout the region she oversees. She has been part of many critical initiatives including supporting the 2021 Tornado Relief fund, countless food drives, and BRADD's Veterans Directed Care Services expansion.

Mrs. Hines can best be described by all who know her as devoted, humble, and ready to

act. Her devotion throughout her career has inspired many people and enriched the lives of countless constituents. I want to thank Michelle for her work that has put the needs of others first and give recognition to her tenured career as she enjoys retirement spending more time with her husband, Kevin, and daughter, Rachel.

RECOGNIZING MY 2024 FALL INTERN CLASS FOR THEIR SERVICE TO ILLINOIS' 13TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

HON. NIKKI BUDZINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Ms. BUDZINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding class of interns who supported my office during the Fall 2024 term. Whether they were working in the bustling U.S. Capitol or amongst the cornfields of Illinois, their contributions to Illinois' 13th Congressional District have made a significant impact.

In my Washington Office, I was honored to work alongside Daryl Salinas, Wedad Osman, Stella Linn, and Sophia Hinich. These four interns have worked tirelessly to support my staff, skillfully navigating the complexities of working on Capitol Hill. They have been instrumental in managing direct correspondence with our constituents, drafting numerous memos and letters, and assisting with in-depth policy research. I am especially grateful for their work in preparing my office to transition to the 119th Congress.

Back in Illinois, I was honored to work with Avery Martin in my Campaign Office. Her commitment to constituent service by assisting my casework team has been tremendous, and I applaud her for the dedication she showed to the people of Central and Southern Illinois while also being a full-time student at the University of Illinois.

The impact that these five individuals left in my office will be felt for years to come as we transition to the 119th Congress, and we will be very sad to say farewell to this spectacular group of interns. I thank Daryl, Wedad, Stella, Sophia, and Avery for their service. I wish them all the best as they continue their professional and academic journeys.

HONORING STATE REPRESENTATIVE ESTHER HAYWOOD

HON. CORI BUSH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Ms. BUSH. Mr. Speaker, I along with the people of St. Louis, rise today to honor the extraordinary life of Esther Jean Hill Haywood, a trailblazer, educator, public servant, and unwavering advocate for civil rights and social justice. Born in Memphis, Tennessee on January 15, 1940, Esther's early commitment to service shaped a lifetime of transformational contributions to her community and our nation. She dedicated herself to fostering equity in education, leading initiatives for underserved youth, and tirelessly advocating for social

progress. Esther Haywood's life exemplifies the power of purpose, passion, and perseverance.

As an educator, Esther broke barriers in the Shelby County Public School System, becoming one of the first African-American teachers to integrate its classrooms in 1967. Her pioneering efforts set the stage for generations of students and educators who followed. Her passion for educational equity continued in East St. Louis, Illinois, where she dedicated over 27 years to uplifting young minds as a math specialist, an organizer of student trips to Washington, D.C., and a mentor to countless youth.

Beyond education, Esther's service extended to leadership in civic and community organizations. As President of the St. Louis County Branch of the NAACP, she reactivated and expanded its influence, earning national acclaim. Her tenure as a Missouri State Representative demonstrated her commitment to justice and equity through legislation combating hate crimes, advocating for educational funding, and commemorating the contributions of civil rights icons. Esther's advocacy reached global audiences through her role as an Ambassador for Peace, reflecting her belief in the universal power of community and unity.

Esther Haywood's legacy is a testament to her boundless love for her family and community. Her devotion to her husband, Edward, their two daughters, and her grandchildren, exemplified the values of family, mentorship, and enduring strength. Her unparalleled contributions, whether in education, public service, or civil rights, will forever inspire those who follow in her footsteps. On behalf of Missouri's First Congressional District, I am honored to celebrate the life of a truly remarkable woman who embodied the spirit of service and uplifted everyone around her.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL T. McCAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. McCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I had an emergency medical procedure and was absent from votes on December 10, 2024. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll call No. 493; YEA on Roll call No. 494; YEA on Roll call No. 495; YEA on Roll call No. 496; YEA on Roll call No. 497; and YEA on Roll call No. 498.

CELEBRATING DR. CHARLES BREITHAUP

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Dr. Charles Breithaupt for a lifetime of service to Texas education and student athletics. His active leadership in advancing interscholastic opportunities for young people and his steadfast commitment to student safety exemplify the very best of Texas.

Dr. Breithaupt has dedicated over 16 years as the Vice President of the University of

Texas at Austin and as the Executive Director of Texas' University Interscholastic League (UIL), supervising academic, athletic, and music competitions at thousands of schools across Texas. Throughout his tenure, he has made several pioneering achievements, including the implementation of a six-conference alignment, the establishment of the National High School Football Summit and the formation of the UIL Medical Advisory Committee. The Committee, under his leadership, has developed protocols mitigating health risks for students in high-impact sports.

Dr. Breithaupt's 50-year career exemplifies his passion for student success. Before working as Executive Director, Dr. Breithaupt served 17 years as a public-school teacher, coach, athletic director, and principal in Southeast Texas. He currently serves on the Texas Interscholastic League Foundation Board, which awards hundreds of scholarships annually to students attending Texas colleges and universities.

Dr. Breithaupt's numerous accolades include being named 1991 Texas State Coach of the Year, inductions into the Texas Basketball and Texas High School Football Halls of Fame, and two Lone Star Emmy Awards for his role as Fox Sports Southwest High School Spotlight Show Executive Producer.

I join Dr. Breithaupt's family, friends, and colleagues in celebrating his unwavering dedication and contributions. His efforts reflect his outstanding leadership and commitment to fostering a legacy of opportunity and achievement for Texas students.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. NICK LaLOTA

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. LaLOTA. Mr. Speaker, I regret to have missed this vote. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 499.

RECOGNIZING GRAYFORD F. PAYNE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Grayford F. Payne on the occasion of his retirement from the U.S. Department of the Interior after 38 years of Federal service.

Grayford Payne has spent his career serving the American people in a number of roles within the federal government. Shortly after graduating from George Mason University in 1980 with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting, Mr. Payne served as an Auditor-in-Charge in the Naval Audit Service. In this role, he was responsible for audit and program reviews of Department of Defense National Security Science and Technology programs.

After eight years, Mr. Payne joined the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission where he served seven years as Director of Financial Services. During his time there, he was in

charge of the Commission's financial accounting system and its automated revenue billing and collection system.

In 2002, he joined the Department of the Interior as the Deputy Chief Financial Officer for Indian Affairs where he was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer which included all financial, accounting, budget, procurement, and property functions. He was promoted just three years later to the role of Chief Financial Officer and then again to the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary-Management in 2008.

There, he oversaw the planning and execution of the Indian Affairs \$4.5 billion annual budget, and his organizational responsibilities encompassed all administrative functions to include finance, budget, acquisition, property management, human resources, homeland security, planning, audit and evaluation, and more.

Mr. Payne moved to the Bureau of Reclamation within the U.S. Department of the Interior in 2010 and was named Reclamation's Deputy Commissioner for Policy, Administration and Budget, a role he held until his retirement. He oversaw agency resources, policy formulation, finance, law enforcement, dam safety, program and budget, and more. He also served as Reclamation's Chief Financial Officer.

Throughout his public service, Mr. Payne received numerous awards for his dedication and leadership. He was honored with the Secretary of the Interior's Gold Leadership Award in 2007, Bronze Leadership Award in 2006, and Silver Leadership Award in 2005.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Grayford F. Payne on his retirement. I am proud to represent Mr. Payne in Congress, and I thank him and his family, wife Sharon and children Robert, Katherine, Elizabeth, and Carolyn, for his honorable 38 years of service to our Nation.

RECOGNIZING MATTHEW GLEASON—EAGLE SCOUT

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, I have the privilege of recognizing and celebrating Matthew Gleason for achieving the great rank of Eagle Scout after 13 years of steadfast commitment to the Scout Oath and Law. Matthew's scouting career began as a Cub Scout in the fall of 2011, where he rapidly ascended to leadership roles, including Assistant Patrol Leader and Patrol Leader. Early on, he earned the prestigious Arrow of Light award, a testament to his dedication and hard work. Matthew's commitment to community service has been nothing short of exemplary. He logged nearly 200 hours helping neighbors, friends, and strangers alike, demonstrating an inspiring dedication to those around him. In addition to his service, he has shown impressive physical fitness by completing a challenging 33-mile hike through rigorous terrain, successfully reaching every mission-required destination. For his Eagle Scout project, he dedicated over 160 hours to the Aura Volunteer Fire Company, where he built a shed for their antique fire truck, preserving

and honoring the department's rich history. Beyond his scouting achievements, Matthew is a remarkable student. He has consistently made the honor roll ten times and has been recognized on the Superintendent's List five times. As a standout soccer player, he has lettered three times at Delsea Regional High School and has earned a spot on the All-County team for all three years. Looking ahead, Matthew has clear and ambitious goals: he plans to pursue a degree in Civil Engineering and eventually establish his own engineering firm. In a beautiful full circle moment, inspired by the tremendous support he received from firefighters during his project, Matthew is determined to serve his community as a volunteer firefighter. I am confident that Matthew will excel in any path he chooses, and I eagerly anticipate the significant impact he will make in our world. May God bless Matthew and God bless our United States of America.

COMMENDING JIMMY "MRBEAST"
DONALDSON

HON. WILEY NICKEL

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Jimmy Donaldson, better known as MrBeast, a remarkable North Carolinian who has significantly impacted both the digital world and our local communities.

Raised in Greenville, MrBeast has become one of the most influential figures in digital media while embodying the values of entrepreneurship, innovation, and philanthropy that drive North Carolina forward.

MrBeast's ventures, including the Team Trees and Team Seas campaigns, have drawn attention to critical environmental causes. Team Trees raised over \$24 million to

plant more than 24 million trees worldwide, and Team Seas collected over \$30 million to remove 30 million pounds of trash from our oceans.

His commitment to giving back is also seen through the MrBeast Philanthropy channel, which has delivered over a million meals to those in need across eastern North Carolina. These efforts have not only rallied millions of supporters but have set a new standard for global activism.

With over 330 million YouTube subscribers and millions more on other platforms, MrBeast has turned his success into an opportunity to bring industry, jobs, and creativity to our state.

I honor Jimmy Donaldson today not only for his entrepreneurial success but for his philanthropic endeavors and his efforts to create a more connected and inspired community.

Please join me in recognizing Jimmy Donaldson for his contributions to North Carolina and beyond.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the *Extensions of Remarks* section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, December 17, 2024 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

DECEMBER 18

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Business meeting to consider the nominations of Caroline A. Crenshaw, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission, and Gordon I. Ito, of Hawaii, to be a Member of the Financial Stability Oversight Council.

SD-538

10 a.m.

Committee on the Budget

To hold hearings to examine the climate-driven insurance crisis.

SD-608

Committee on Finance

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of James Bernard Coughlan, of Illinois, Halie L. Craig, of Pennsylvania, and William Patrick J. Kimmitt, of Virginia, each to be a Member of the United States International Trade Commission.

SD-215

2 p.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

Subcommittee on Intellectual Property

To hold hearings to examine the RESTORE Patent Rights Act, focusing on restoring America's status as the global IP leader.

SD-226

2:30 p.m.

Select Committee on Intelligence

To receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters.

SH-219

Joint Economic Committee

To hold hearings to examine trade wars and tariffs.

210-CHOB

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S7045–S7061

Measures Introduced: Eleven bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 5533–5543, and S. Res. 927. **Pages S7058–59**

Measures Reported:

S. 1253, to increase the number of U.S. Customs and Border Protection Customs and Border Protection officers and support staff and to require reports that identify staffing, infrastructure, and equipment needed to enhance security at ports of entry, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 118–290)

S. 4495, to enable safe, responsible, and agile procurement, development, and use of artificial intelligence by the Federal Government, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 118–291)

S. 4679, to amend title XLI of the FAST Act to improve the Federal permitting process, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 118–292)

S. 4898, to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to include extreme heat in the definition of a major disaster, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 118–293)

S. 4900, to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to incentivize certain preparedness measures, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 118–294)

S. 5099, to prescribe requirements relating to the management of the Federal property commonly known as Plum Island, New York, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 118–295)

S. 5310, to amend title 41, United States Code, to make changes with respect to the Federal Acquisition Security Council, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 118–296)

H.R. 255, to amend the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 to develop a study regarding streamlining and consolidating information collec-

tion and preliminary damage assessments. (S. Rept. No. 118–297)

H.R. 272, to amend title 31, United States Code, to authorize transportation for Government astronauts returning from space between their residence and various locations. (S. Rept. No. 118–298)

Page S7053

Measures Passed:

Swanson and Hugh Butler Reservoirs Land Conveyances Act: Senate passed H.R. 8413, to provide for the conveyance of certain Federal land at Swanson Reservoir and Hugh Butler Reservoir in the State of Nebraska. **Pages S7053–54**

Lahaina National Heritage Area Study Act: Senate passed H.R. 8219, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land as the Lahaina National Heritage Area. **Pages S7053–54**

BADGES for Native Communities Act: Senate passed S. 465, to require Federal law enforcement agencies to report on cases of missing or murdered Indians, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S7054–56**

DHS Border Services Contracts Review Act: Senate passed H.R. 4467, to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to assess contracts for covered services performed by contractor personnel along the United States land border with Mexico. **Pages S7056–57**

Contaminated Wells Relocation Act: Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation was discharged from further consideration of S. 5300, to authorize the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to reimburse the Town of Chincoteague, Virginia, for costs directly associated with the removal and replacement of certain drinking water wells, and the bill was then passed. **Page S7057**

Fair Credit for American Hostages Act: Senate passed S. 5543, to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to prohibit consumer reporting agencies from furnishing consumer reports containing adverse items of information about a consumer that resulted from

that consumer being unlawfully or wrongfully detained abroad or held hostage abroad. **Page S7057**

GSA Technology Accountability Act: Senate passed H.R. 7524, to amend title 40, United States Code, to require the submission of reports on certain information technology services funds to Congress before expenditures may be made. **Page S7057**

Texas and California District Courts: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. 5465, to clarify where court may be held for certain district courts in Texas and California, and the bill was then passed. **Pages S7057–58**

Northern District of Alabama: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 7177, to amend title 28, United States Code, to consolidate certain divisions in the Northern District of Alabama, and the bill was then passed. **Page S7058**

House Messages:

Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 5009, to reauthorize wildlife habitat and conservation programs, taking action on the following motions and amendments proposed thereto:

Pending:

Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill. **Pages S7045–48**

Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Schumer Amendment No. 3317 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill), to add an effective date. **Page S7045**

Schumer Amendment No. 3318 (to Amendment No. 3317), to add an effective date. **Page S7045**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 83 yeas to 12 nays (Vote No. EX. 324), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, having voted in the affirmative, Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill. **Page S7053**

Schumer motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Armed Services, with instructions, Schumer Amendment No. 3319, to add an effective date, fell when cloture was invoked on Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill. **Page S7045**

Schumer Amendment No. 3320 (to the instructions (Amendment No. 3319) of the motion to refer), to add an effective date, fell when Schumer motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Armed Services, with instructions, Schumer Amendment No. 3319 (listed above) fell. **Page S7045**

Schumer Amendment No. 3321 (to Amendment No. 3320), to add an effective date, fell when Schumer Amendment No. 3320 (to the instructions (Amendment No. 3319) of the motion to refer) fell. **Page S7045**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the House Message to accompany the bill, post cloture, at approximately 10 a.m., on Tuesday, December 17, 2024; and that all time during recess, morning business and Leader remarks count post-cloture. **Page S7061**

Government Service Delivery Improvement Act—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that H.R. 5887, to amend chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code, to improve Government service delivery, and build related capacity for the Federal Government, which on September 18, 2024, was reported without amendment favorably from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, be star printed with text that reflects the committee's action. **Page S7054**

Cheeks Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Benjamin J. Cheeks, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California. **Page S7048**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur on Wednesday, December 18, 2024. **Page S7048**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S7048**

Murillo Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Serena Raquel Murillo, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California. **Page S7048**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Benjamin J. Cheeks, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California. **Page S7048**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S7048**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S7048**

Nomination Received: Senate received the following nomination:

Anton George Hajjar, of Maryland, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2029. **Page S7061**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page S7059**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions:
Pages S7059–60

Additional Statements:

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S7060–61**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—324) **Page S7053**

Recess: Senate convened at 3 p.m. and recessed at 7:16 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, December 17, 2024. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S7061.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

No committee meetings were held.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 32 public bills, H.R. 10410–10441, were introduced.

Pages H7228–30

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H7230–31**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 670, to amend title IV of the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a clearinghouse on intellectual disabilities, and for other purposes, with amendments (H. Rept. 118–874);

H.R. 3120, to ban anticompetitive terms in facility and insurance contracts that limit access to higher quality, lower cost care, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–875, Part 1);

H.R. 9457, to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to prohibit increased payments under a group health plan or group health insurance coverage for telehealth services furnished by a provider located at a facility, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–876, Part 1);

H.J. Res. 181, providing for congressional disapproval—under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to “Definition of ‘Employer’-Association Health Plans” (H. Rept. 118–877);

H.J. Res. 142, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to “Retirement Security Rule: Definition of an Investment Advice Fiduciary” (H. Rept. 118–878);

H.R. 9533, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to optimize conservation through resource prioritization, incentivize wildlife conservation on private lands, provide for greater incentives to recover listed species, create greater transparency and accountability in recovering listed species, and limit reasonable and prudent measures, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–879);

H.R. 8665, to amend the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to direct research, development, demonstration, and commercial application activities in support of supercritical geothermal and closed-loop geothermal systems in supercritical various conditions, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–880, Part 1);

H.R. 4748, to provide for the recognition of certain Alaska Native communities and the settlement of certain claims under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–881);

H.R. 6210, to designate the General George C. Marshall House, in the Commonwealth of Virginia, as an affiliated area of the National Park System, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–882);

H.R. 6489, to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide that Village Corporations shall not be required to convey land in trust to the State of Alaska for the establishment of Municipal Corporations, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 118–883);

H.R. 1586, to allow the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to use a fire retardant, chemical, or water for fire suppression, control,

or prevention activities, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–721, Part 2);

H.R. 6494, to amend title 49, United States Code, to provide enhanced safety in pipeline transportation, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–884, Part 1);

H.R. 5089, to amend the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to clarify Congressional intent regarding the regulation of the use of pesticides in or near navigable waters, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 118–885, Part 1);

H. Res. 1616, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 115) to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for en bloc consideration in resolutions of disapproval for “midnight rules”, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 118–886); and

H.R. 9748, to require the Under Secretary of the Science and Technology Directorate of the Department of Homeland Security to develop a Department-wide policy and process to safeguard research and development from unauthorized access to or disclosure of sensitive information in research and development acquisitions, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 118–887). **Pages H7227–28**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Fitzgerald to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H7145**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:28 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H7148**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Rear Admiral Gregory Todd, Chief of Chaplains, United States Navy, Washington, DC **Page H7148**

Member Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Armstrong, wherein he resigned as Representative for the At-Large District of North Dakota, effective at 11:59 p.m. on December 14, 2024. **Page H7148**

Whole Number of the House: The Chair announced to the House that, in light of the resignation of the gentleman from North Dakota, Mr. Armstrong, the whole number of the House is 430. **Page H7148**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Secure Handling of Internet Electronic Donations Act: H.R. 9488, amended, to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to require the disclosure of the card verification value as a condition of the acceptance of online contributions made through the use of credit or debit cards in elections for Federal office and to prohibit the acceptance of

contributions made through the use of gift cards and prepaid credit cards in such elections; **Pages H7149–51**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: “To amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to require the disclosure of the card verification value as a condition of the acceptance of online contributions made through the use of credit or debit cards in elections for Federal office and to prohibit the acceptance of contributions made through the use of gift cards in such elections, and for other purposes”; **Page H7149**

No Congressionally Obligated Recurring Revenue Used as Pensions To Incarcerated Officials Now Act: S. 932, to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for the halt in pension payments for Members of Congress sentenced for certain offenses; **Pages H7151–53**

Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress Sunset Act of 2024: H.R. 9489, to sunset the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress; **Page H7153**

House Office of Legislative Counsel Modernization Act: H.R. 9487, to amend the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 to authorize the Legislative Counsel of the House of Representatives to designate more than one of the attorneys of the Office of the Legislative Counsel as a Deputy Legislative Counsel; **Pages H7153–54**

Semiquincentennial Congressional Time Capsule Act: H.R. 6394, amended, to provide for the creation of a Congressional time capsule in commemoration of the semiquincentennial of the United States; **Pages H7154–56**

Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act: H.R. 3343, to require the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to submit to Congress a plan for the Assistant Secretary to track the acceptance, processing, and disposal of certain Form 299s; **Pages H7156–57**

Promoting United States Wireless Leadership Act: H.R. 1377, to direct the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to take certain actions to enhance the representation of the United States and promote United States leadership in communications standards-setting bodies; **Pages H7157–59**

Expediting Federal Broadband Deployment Reviews Act: H.R. 3293, amended, to require the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to establish an interagency strike force to ensure that certain Federal land management agencies, including the organizational units of such

agencies, prioritize the review of requests for communications use authorizations; **Pages H7159–61**

Autism Collaboration, Accountability, Research, Education, and Support Act: Concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 7213, to amend the Public Health Service Act to [enhance activities of the National Institutes of Health with respect to research on autism spectrum disorder and enhance programs relating to autism/reauthorize certain programs with respect to autism spectrum disorder?], by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yeas-and-nays vote of 387 yeas to 15 nays, Roll No. 502; **Pages H7161–64, H7219–20**

Amending the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Training Program: H.R. 7224, to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Training Program; **Pages H7164–66**

Amending the Controlled Substances Act to fix a technical error in the definitions: S. 223, to amend the Controlled Substances Act to fix a technical error in the definitions; **Page H7166**

Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act: H.R. 4534, amended, to require a review of women and lung cancer; **Pages H7166–67**

Shandra Eisenga Human Cell and Tissue Product Safety Act: H.R. 7188, amended, to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct a national, evidence-based education campaign to increase public and health care provider awareness regarding the potential risks and benefits of human cell and tissue products transplants; **Pages H7167–70**

Honor Our Living Donors Act: H.R. 6020, amended, to amend the Public Health Service Act to eliminate consideration of the income of organ recipients in providing reimbursement of expenses to donating individuals; **Pages H7170–71**

Amending title 36, United States Code, to designate the bald eagle as the national bird: S. 4610, to amend title 36, United States Code, to designate the bald eagle as the national bird; **Pages H7171–72**

Federal Judiciary Stabilization Act: S. 3998, to provide for the permanent appointment of certain temporary district judgeships, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yeas-and-nays vote of 390 yeas with none voting “nay”, Roll No. 503; **Pages H7172–73, H7220,**

Designating the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as the James Mountain Inhofe VA Medical Center: S. 5314, to designate the medical center of the Depart-

ment of Veterans Affairs in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as the James Mountain Inhofe VA Medical Center; **Pages H7173–74**

Designating the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Lynchburg, Virginia, as the “Private First Class Desmond T. Doss VA Clinic”: S. 3938, to designate the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Lynchburg, Virginia, as the “Private First Class Desmond T. Doss VA Clinic”; **Pages H7174–75**

Naming the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, as the “Henry Parham VA Clinic”: H.R. 4955, to name the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, as the “Henry Parham VA Clinic”; **Pages H7175–77**

Renaming the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Cadillac, Michigan, as the “Duane E. Dewey VA Clinic”: H.R. 8667, to rename the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Cadillac, Michigan, as the “Duane E. Dewey VA Clinic”; **Pages H7177–78**

Naming the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Auburn, California, as the “Louis A. Conter VA Clinic”: H.R. 9124, to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Auburn, California, as the “Louis A. Conter VA Clinic”; **Pages H7178–79**

Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act: S. 141, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve certain programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs for home and community based services for veterans, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yeas-and-nays vote of 382 yeas to 12 nays, Roll No. 504; **Pages H7179–H7207, H7220–21**

Veterans Benefits Improvement Act: S. 2513, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; **Pages H7207–09**

Reducing Excessive Vetting Authorities to Maintain our Ports Act: H.R. 8150, amended, 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; **Pages H7209–10**

Working Dog Health and Welfare Act: S. 2414, to require agencies with working dog programs to implement the recommendations of the Government

Accountability Office relating to the health and welfare of working dogs; **Pages H7210–11**

Financial Management Risk Reduction Act: S. 4716, to amend section 7504 of title 31, United States Code, to improve the single audit requirements; **Pages H7211–12**

Federal Improvement in Technology Procurement Act: H.R. 9595, to improve Federal technology procurement; **Pages H7212–14**

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1535 East Los Ebanos Boulevard in Brownsville, Texas, as the “1st Lieutenant Andres Zermeno Post Office Building”: H.R. 6244, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1535 East Los Ebanos Boulevard in Brownsville, Texas, as the “1st Lieutenant Andres Zermeno Post Office Building”;

Pages H7214–15

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1106 Main Street in Bastrop, Texas, as the “Sergeant Major Billy D. Waugh Post Office”: S. 3946, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1106 Main Street in Bastrop, Texas, as the “Sergeant Major Billy D. Waugh Post Office”;

Page H7215

Chance to Compete Act: S. 59, to implement merit-based reforms to the civil service hiring system that replace degree-based hiring with skills- and competency-based hiring; and

Pages H7215–18

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 180 Steuart Street in San Francisco, California, as the “Dianne Feinstein Post Office”: S. 4077, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 180 Steuart Street in San Francisco, California, as the “Dianne Feinstein Post Office”, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yea-and-nay vote of 348 yeas to 39 nays with 5 answering “present”, Roll No. 505.

Pages H7218–19, H7221–22

Senate Referrals: S. 920 was held at the desk. S. 3857 was held at the desk. S. 4000 was held at the desk. S. 59 was held at the desk. S. 141 was held at the desk. S. 2513 was held at the desk. S. 2783 was held at the desk. S. 2908 was held at the desk. S. 4365 was held at the desk. S. 4370 was held at the desk. S. 5046 was held at the desk. **Page H7149**

Senate Messages: Messages received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appear on page S7149.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Four yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H7219–20, H7220, H7220–21 and H7221–22.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 p.m. and adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Committee Meetings

MIDNIGHT RULES RELIEF ACT

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 115, the “Midnight Rules Relief Act”. The Committee granted, by a record vote of 8–2, a rule providing for consideration of H.R. 115, the “Midnight Rules Relief Act”, under a closed rule. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary or their respective designees. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit. Testimony was heard from Representatives Biggs and Nadler.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, p. D1138)

H.R. 1432, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the deductibility of charitable contributions to certain organizations for members of the Armed Forces. Signed on December 12, 2024. (Public Law 118–146)

H.R. 3821, to reauthorize the Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2018. Signed on December 12, 2024. (Public Law 118–147)

H.R. 5863, to provide tax relief with respect to certain Federal disasters. Signed on December 12, 2024. (Public Law 118–148)

S. 91, to award a Congressional Gold Medal collectively to 60 diplomats, in recognition of their bravery and heroism during the Holocaust. Signed on December 12, 2024. (Public Law 118–149)

S. 4243, to award posthumously the Congressional Gold Medal to Shirley Chisholm. Signed on December 12, 2024. (Public Law 118–150)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2024

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine legalized sports gambling, 10 a.m., SD-226.

Subcommittee on Competition Policy, Antitrust, and Consumer Rights, to hold hearings to examine a bipartisan path forward for antitrust enforcement and reform, 2:30 p.m., SD-226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH-219.

House

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime and Federal Government Surveillance, hearing entitled “Oversight of the Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division”, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Subcommittee on Health, hearing on H.R. 214, the “Veterans’ True Choice Act of 2023”; H.R. 3176, the “Veterans Health Care Freedom Act”; H.R. 5287, the “Veterans Access to Direct Primary Care Act”; H.R. 8481, the “Emergency Community Care Notification Time Adjustment Act of 2024”; H.R. 10012, to amend title 38, United States Code, to include eyeglass lens fittings in the category of medical services authorized to be furnished to veterans under the Veterans Community Care Program, and for other purposes; H.R. 9924, the “What Works for Preventing Veteran Suicide Act”; H.R. 8347, the “Improving Menopause Care for Veterans Act”; H.R. 6333, the “Veterans Emergency Care Reimbursement Act”; legislation on the Supporting Medical Students and VA Workforce Act; and H.R. 10267, the “Complete the Mission Act of 2024”, 2:30 p.m., 360 Cannon.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM AHEAD

Week of December 17 through
December 20, 2024

Senate Chamber

On *Tuesday*, Senate will continue consideration of the House Message to accompany H.R. 5009, Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025, post-cloture.

Roll call votes are expected during Tuesday’s session.

During the balance of the week, Senate may consider any cleared legislative and executive business.

Senate Committees

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: December 18, business meeting to consider the nominations

of Caroline A. Crenshaw, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission, and Gordon I. Ito, of Hawaii, to be a Member of the Financial Stability Oversight Council, 9:30 a.m., SD-538.

Committee on the Budget: December 18, to hold hearings to examine the climate-driven insurance crisis, 10 a.m., SD-608.

Committee on Finance: December 18, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of James Bernard Coughlan, of Illinois, Halie L. Craig, of Pennsylvania, and William Patrick J. Kimmitt, of Virginia, each to be a Member of the United States International Trade Commission, 10 a.m., SD-215.

Committee on the Judiciary: December 17, to hold hearings to examine legalized sports gambling, 10 a.m., SD-226.

December 17, Subcommittee on Competition Policy, Antitrust, and Consumer Rights, to hold hearings to examine a bipartisan path forward for antitrust enforcement and reform, 2:30 p.m., SD-226.

December 18, Subcommittee on Intellectual Property, to hold hearings to examine the RESTORE Patent Rights Act, focusing on restoring America’s status as the global IP leader, 2 p.m., SD-226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: December 17, to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH-219.

December 18, Full Committee, to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH-219.

House Committees

Committee on Homeland Security, December 18, Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security, hearing entitled “Examining the Polar Security Cutter: An Update on Coast Guard Acquisitions”, 10 a.m., 310 Cannon.

Committee on House Administration, December 18, Full Committee, hearing entitled “American Confidence in Elections: Prohibiting Foreign Interference”, 10 a.m., 1310 Longworth.

Committee on the Judiciary, December 18, Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet, hearing entitled “IP and Strategic Competition with China: Part IV—Patents, Standards, and Lawfare”, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

December 18, Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Government, hearing entitled “Revisiting the Implications of the FACE Act: Part II”, 2 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, December 18, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Restoring Congressional Power over VA After Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo”, 10:15 a.m., 360 Cannon.

Joint Meeting

Joint Economic Committee: December 18, to hold hearings to examine trade wars and tariffs, 2:30 p.m., 210-CHOB.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Tuesday, December 17

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Tuesday, December 17

Senate Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Senate will continue consideration of the House Message to accompany H.R. 5009, Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025, post-cloture.

Roll call votes are expected during Tuesday's session.

(Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. for their respective party conferences.)

House Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Consideration of measures under suspension of the Rules.

Extension of Remarks, as inserted in this issue.

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