

city's 52-year championship drought, the longest in professional sports history.

No city has witnessed as many heart-breaking moments in sports. But not this time, Mr. Speaker. This time, it was our time. Over those 52 years, our fans never wavered, never lost hope. We always believed.

Mr. Speaker, the wait is over. Victory is ours. Congratulations to the NBA world champion Cleveland Cavaliers.

ISLAMIC TERRORIST GLOBAL THREAT

(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 Associated Press reported Friday the global reach of the Islamic State. This clearly clarifies we are in a global war on terrorism, confirming we must defeat Islamic terrorists overseas or they will murder here again, as they did in Orlando and San Bernardino.

The article reveals:

"The U.S. battle against the Islamic State has not yet curbed the group's global reach and as pressure mounts on the extremists in Iraq and Syria, they are expected to plot more attacks on the West and incite violence by lone wolves, CIA Director John Brennan told Congress.

"In a rare open hearing, Brennan gave the Senate Intelligence Committee an update on the threat from Islamic extremists . . . 'ISIL has a cadre of Western fighters who could potentially serve as operatives for attacks in the West' . . . 'Furthermore, as we have seen in Orlando, San Bernardino and elsewhere, ISIL is attempting to inspire attacks by sympathizers who have no direct links to the group.' . . . 'our efforts have not reduced the group's terrorism capability and global reach.'"

In conclusion, God bless our troops and may the President, by his actions, never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

CLOSE A DANGEROUS LOOPHOLE

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, Congress has no greater responsibility than acting to keep the American people safe. That is why House Democrats, focused on a strong and smart national security plan, have repeatedly made attempts to close a dangerous loophole that allows suspected terrorists to buy deadly weapons, weapons like those that we just saw used in the horrific mass shooting in Orlando.

Eighty percent of Americans, an overwhelming majority, support a law that would prevent people on the FBI's terrorist watch list from being able to buy guns. For the American people, it is common sense. It is a no-brainer.

Yet Republicans in Congress continue to do everything they can to stop us not just from acting, but to stop us from even having a vote on the floor of the House of Representatives as to whether this legislation ought to go forward. In the Senate, they have blocked efforts—they just did yesterday—to bring up this commonsense legislation.

Speaker RYAN and House Republicans continue to keep us from bringing up a bill authored by one of the Republican Members of this House that would prevent an individual on the terrorist watch list from buying a gun.

It is long past time. Congress needs to act.

HELPING MINNESOTA'S YOUTH

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

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address childhood obesity in the recent efforts in Minnesota, my home State, to address this concern for families throughout our State and across this country.

Over the past decade, as a nation, we have seen a great deal of time and energy dedicated to combatting childhood obesity, and thus far, we have seen great successes.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation recently highlighted St. Cloud, the largest city in Minnesota's Sixth Congressional District, because of an impressive 24 percent decline in obesity for 12-year-olds over the past 7 years. This incredible shift in the health and well-being for Minnesota's youth could not have occurred without joint community effort.

As an example, in St. Cloud, we have been lucky enough to have the help of healthcare providers like CentraCare, who look past the boundaries of their hospitals and their clinics and bring their work into the communities where they live.

I applaud the efforts of great Minnesota companies and organizations like CentraCare, Coborn's, Bernick's, and many others who are dedicated to working together to improve the overall health in our Minnesota communities.

HUWALDT 80TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Harrison and Varedo Huwaldt of Randolph, Nebraska, celebrating their 80th wedding anniversary today, June 21, 2016. Yes, that is 80 years together. After meeting on a blind date in 1935, the Huwaldts married within a year and began their life together.

During their 80 years of marriage, they have visited all 50 States, operated their own filling station and a

trucking business, and enjoyed water skiing, golfing, and taking cruises together. They have three children, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

They have also been active members in their community. Harrison served on the city council for more than 50 years, while Varedo served as church organist for 25 years.

Now, at the ages of 100 and 99, respectively, the Huwaldt's eight-decade commitment to each other inspires all who hear their love story. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Harrison and Varedo Huwaldt on their remarkable 80 years of marriage.

REPORT ON H.R. 5538, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017

Mr. CALVERT from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114-632) on the bill (H.R. 5538) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes, which was referred to the Union Calendar and ordered to be printed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1, rule XXI, all points of order are reserved on the bill.

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 on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

END TAXPAYER FUNDED CELL PHONES ACT OF 2016

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5525) to prohibit universal service support of commercial mobile service and commercial mobile data service through the Lifeline program.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5525

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 "End Taxpayer Funded Cell Phones Act of 2016".

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON LIFELINE SUPPORT FOR MOBILE SERVICE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on January 1, 2017, a provider of commercial mobile service or commercial mobile data service may not receive universal service support under sections 214(e) and 254 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 214(e); 254) for the provision of such service through the Lifeline program of the Federal Communications Commission.

(b) CONTRIBUTIONS.—For calendar year 2017, the amount that telecommunications carriers that provide interstate telecommunications services and other providers of interstate telecommunications are required to contribute under section 254(d) of the Communications Act of 1934 to Federal universal service support mechanisms shall be determined—

(1) without regard to subsection (a); and

(2) as if the same amount of support for the provision of commercial mobile service and commercial mobile data service through the Lifeline program that is provided in calendar year 2016 is provided in calendar year 2017.

(c) EXCESS COLLECTIONS.—The amount collected pursuant to subsection (b)(2) shall be deposited in the general fund of the Treasury of the United States, for the sole purpose of deficit reduction. No portion of such amount may be treated as a credit toward future contributions required under section 254(d) of the Communications Act of 1934.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COMMERCIAL MOBILE DATA SERVICE.—The term “commercial mobile data service” has the meaning given such term in section 6001 of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1401).

(2) COMMERCIAL MOBILE SERVICE.—The term “commercial mobile service” has the meaning given such term in section 332 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 332).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5525, the End Taxpayer Funded Cell Phones Act of 2016, which would prohibit universal service fund support through the Lifeline program to commercial mobile and data service carriers.

This legislation would restore the Lifeline program to its original intent of providing access to telecommunication services for eligible individuals via landline phones.

Many of us in this body and many of our constituents have witnessed tents and stands outside of our grocery stores or on the street corner giving away so-called free phones. At a time when everyday Americans are working harder and harder to make ends meet and when government spending is out of control, our constituents don't understand why this is still going on. And, Mr. Speaker, neither do I.

Before I go further, I want to be clear. These Americans who accept these free phones are not the ones who are taking advantage of this system. It

is the carriers who stand to benefit from the system that are taking advantage of our citizens, and the program is systemically unable to stop the cycle of waste, fraud, and abuse.

When offered something for free with little or no verification and with little or no knowledge about who is paying for that item, I believe you would be hard pressed to find someone who wouldn't, at least, consider taking the item. The problem is that there is a financial incentive for the carriers to expand the number of Lifeline users, and there is far less incentive to diligently verify the eligibility of the individuals who apply.

The Lifeline program, created under President Reagan to serve a legitimate need, has largely gone unchecked and has ballooned since 2005, when it was expanded to include mobile phone services.

While the FCC has implemented reforms aimed at rooting out the waste, fraud, and abuse in the program, serious issues remain to this day. For example, the National Lifeline Accountability Database was created to help carriers prevent duplication of service. However, certain carriers use the independent economic household override to easily circumvent the one-phone-number-per-household rule by merely checking the box on a form without any supporting documentation.

Data recently obtained by the FCC reveals that between October of 2014 and April of 2016, carriers enrolled 4,291,647 duplicate subscribers to the Lifeline program by widespread use of this targeted exception to the program's one-person household rule. When skirting the rules is so easy, fraud becomes rampant.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, in April of this year, the FCC fined a carrier, Total Call Mobile, for overbilling the Lifeline program for millions of dollars by fraudulently enrolling duplicate and ineligible consumers. Again, the carrier, Total Call Mobile, was able to do this by circumventing the National Lifeline Accountability Database and manipulating customer information.

These reports come on the heels of the FCC's recent announcement to increase the so-called budget for Lifeline by \$725 million, a tax increase on Americans which is neither subject to congressional oversight nor approval.

□ 1415

While the widespread fraud is not hindering eligible recipients from receiving phones, it is costing taxpaying Americans money. In order to increase the Lifeline budget, if you will, the FCC must increase the universal service fee. I bet most Americans don't know what fee I am talking about.

The universal service fee is a tax on the bottom of your phone bill right here. That so-called fee is what pays for the FCC's Universal Service Fund, which includes the Lifeline program.

When the costs of the Lifeline program go up because of waste, fraud, and abuse, you know who pays for it?

Everyday Americans, who are already struggling to make ends meet, get a tax increase on their phone bill.

The FCC is asking for Americans to shoulder the cost of this increase without fully addressing the fraud, waste, and abuse within the program. It is clear that this lack of accountability and rampant fraud is systemic to the Lifeline program, and the price of this continues to be paid by Americans across the country.

American taxpayers are already overburdened, Mr. Speaker, and should not be forced to pay for a program that is unquestionably riddled with waste, fraud, and abuse. It is simple good governance to rein in programs like Lifeline that have vastly expanded in scope and have done so with an ever-increasing share of Americans' hard-earned dollars. Congress must act to impose fiscal discipline to ensure increased costs are not shouldered by Americans.

I do not stand here today and say that there is not a need for Lifeline, nor do I deny the fact that there are a good number of people in this country who are eligible for this program. We should continue to ensure that the Lifeline program exists to provide those people with access to critical telecommunications services, but we should also remember the many people making just barely enough not to be eligible for assistance through Lifeline who would be hurt by any increase in the taxes on their phone bill: an increase caused by a government that won't deal with the crisis of waste, fraud, and abuse.

The original intent of the Lifeline program was pure: provide access to telecommunications services to consumers, including low-income consumers at reasonable and affordable rates. My legislation aims to restore that original intent. We can provide for people in need without taking from those who have nothing left to give.

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

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

I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 5525. A few weeks ago when Speaker RYAN presented his anti-poverty plan, many of us were skeptical and argued that his proposals would not actually help the poor. The Ryan plan was simply a rebranding of failed policies that congressional Republicans have been pushing for years.

Unfortunately, we are quickly finding out that our fears were justified, Mr. Speaker. Today, Speaker RYAN and the Republican majority are bringing a bill to the floor that would eliminate the successful Lifeline program that provides millions of low-income Americans access to basic communication services. It would leave people with no way to search for job postings, no way to schedule interviews, and no way to get a call back from a potential employer.

This goes far beyond jobs, Mr. Speaker. Cell phones are a necessity in modern, everyday life. Low-income Americans rely more heavily on mobile phones and mobile Internet service than the overall population. Children from low-income homes use Lifeline to help do their homework. Seniors use it to manage their health care and call their family and loved ones. Victims of domestic violence use it to find the help and support they need, and victims of assaults use their Lifeline phones to call 911 in an emergency, which makes me question how exactly this bill fits into Speaker RYAN's anti-poverty agenda.

The legislation is so extreme when you consider that congressional Republicans are looking to gut a Lifeline program created in the Reagan administration and expanded to include wireless service in the Bush administration. At least 9.8 million Americans depend on the Lifeline program to stay connected using mobile phones, and this bill would leave these people stranded.

Some claim that the program is fraught with government waste. I heard that from the gentleman from Georgia. But these claims ignore the fact that the Obama administration has eliminated nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars in waste, fraud, and abuse.

This bill will do absolutely nothing to help taxpayers. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that this bill would essentially create a \$1.2 billion tax. Specifically, the bill directs the FCC to continue collecting funds from the American people that had been used for the Lifeline program, but not pay any benefits out. Rather than cut taxes, this bill essentially creates a new one.

When it comes down to it, congressional Republicans already know there are significant problems with this bill. They don't want it to pass. That is the only way to explain why they came up with this cynical procedural move to ignore regular order and set up the bill to fail. They are bringing it up under a suspension of the rules, which requires a two-thirds majority. They think that the American people will not hold them accountable for their bad policies if they let Democrats kill the bill.

Worse, this maneuver comes from a committee that normally obsesses with process for the agencies in our jurisdiction. It seems those concerns apply only to others. Well, I think more highly of our constituents. I think they see through these kinds of ploys.

The American people know that if Republicans are really serious about battling poverty and shrinking the size of Lifeline, they would work with us to create more jobs for those who are unemployed or underemployed. The best way to lower the costs of the Lifeline program is to lift people up and not to take away their connection to a better life.

We should not be spending our time on bills like this. We could be looking

at ways to take guns from terrorists instead of taking phones from Americans who are looking for jobs. We could be working together to increase the minimum wage and repair our crumbling infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, this bill abandons our most vulnerable, and I urge all of my colleagues to oppose it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS).

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, today we are on the floor for a very important question, and the question is: Will Congress ignore knowledge of some \$476 million that is considered documented fraud that is taking place on behalf of taxpayers of the United States of America?

Mr. Speaker, a letter from Commissioner Pai at the Federal Communications Commission dated June 8, 2016—not even a month ago—goes to Mr. Chris Henderson, chief executive officer, Universal Service Administrative Company of the United States. It documents abuse in here, and I would read if I may:

“Thank you again for your May 25 letter, which contained detailed data on how wireless resellers have used the National Lifeline Accountability Database. My staff has concluded further analysis of that data, and I am now concerned that the abuse of the Universal Service Fund's Lifeline program is more widespread than I first thought.”

Mr. Speaker, Mr. SCOTT is here on the floor today to protect the taxpayers of this country and the integrity of the laws that we have passed and that we have oversight of by virtue of being Members of Congress. The \$476 million is a problem because it is documented that it is duplicate use by organizations that have been fined over \$50 million by the FCC.

In no way is Mr. SCOTT or this legislation attempting to take away Lifeline service that is very important to not only members particularly in rural areas, but other areas of the United States to provide them access to broadband that has been created by our American ingenuity. I would note, however, that what we are doing is that we do not believe the government has any business in funding the fraud that has been made available.

Mr. Speaker, I was on the original Labs team out of New Jersey that developed broadband in the mid-1980s. I was on the original team that brought forth this product to the American people, and it was done with great anticipation to help better people's lives, to allow all areas of the United States—and probably the world—to better connect itself for the new transitional world that we would live in.

I don't think it was ever envisioned that we would want it to be misused in such a way that it would cost taxpayers of this country \$500 million a

year in fraud. It is there as an advocate for people to gain jobs, to understand education better, and to use the avenues of technology to better their lives.

Where you have documented fraud, the United States Congress has a responsibility to stand up. I believe that is what we are saying today. By this suspension vote, we are expecting two-thirds of this body to recognize that where there is widespread fraud that the United States Congress, on behalf of the taxpayer who paid the bill for the fraud, that something responsible would be done about it.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD this letter from Commissioner Pai. I would ask, more importantly, that this Congress be responsible about saying it is documented fraud that we are after, not Lifeline service.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION,
Washington, DC, June 8, 2016.

Mr. CHRIS HENDERSON,
Chief Executive Officer, Universal Service Administrative Company, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. HENDERSON: Thank you again for your May 25 letter, which contained detailed data on how wireless resellers have used the National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD). My staff has concluded further analysis of that data, and I am now concerned that abuse of the Universal Service Fund's Lifeline program is more widespread than I first thought.

Before 2012, it was well known that duplicate subscribers (that is, individuals getting multiple subsidies) plagued the Lifeline program. In the 2012 Lifeline Reform Order, the Commission codified the one-per-household rule, which prohibits more than one Lifeline subscription from going to a single household. To curb the problem of duplicate subscriptions and enforce the one-per-household rule, the FCC established the NLAD. The NLAD is designed to help carriers identify and resolve duplicate claims for Lifeline service and prevent future duplicates from enrolling.

Although the NLAD rejects multiple subscribers at the same address, the FCC also instructed USAC to “implement procedures to enable applicants to demonstrate at the outset that any other Lifeline recipients residing at their residential address are part of a separate household.” USAC did so by allowing carriers to override NLAD's rejection of an applicant with the same address as another subscriber. As USAC's website explains, to carry out an independent economic household (IEH) override (as USAC calls it), an applicant must merely check a box on a form and need not provide any supporting documentation.

Unfortunately, this well-intentioned exception to the override process appears to be undermining the one-per-household rule. The NLAD is not preventing a large number of duplicate subscribers from claiming Lifeline subsidies.

We saw in the Total Call Mobile case how unscrupulous carriers could regularly register duplicate subscribers by fraudulently using the address of a local homeless shelter, altering a person's name, and using fake Social Security numbers to evade detection. As a result, USAC had to de-enroll 32,498 duplicates from Total Call Mobile's rolls.

But your May 25 letter reveals an even greater problem. Specifically, USAC's data reveal that Carriers enrolled 4,291,647 subscribers between October 2014 and April 2016 using the IEH override process. That's more than 35.3% of all subscribers enrolled in

NLAD-participating states during that period. Indeed, that's more people than live in the State of Oregon. And the price to the taxpayer is steep—just one year of service for these apparent duplicates costs taxpayers \$476 million.

It is alarming that over one-third of subscribers—costing taxpayers almost half a billion dollars a year—were registered through an IEH override. Therefore, I respectfully request that you provide the following information to my office:

1. Of the 4,291,647 subscribers enrolled using an IEH override between October 2014 and April 2016, how many are still enrolled in the Lifeline program? To the extent these subscribers are no longer enrolled, please quantify (1) how many subscribers left the program of their own volition, (2) how many de-enrolled as a result of a specific investigation, audit, or review, and (3) how many de-enrolled as a result of annual verification checks.

2. Please explain the process USAC used to establish the current IEH override process. Specifically, please explain why carriers are not required to collect any documentation demonstrating that a subscriber is “part of a separate household” for purposes of an IEH override and why staff do not review either the certification form or any documentation before authorizing an IEH override.

3. Please describe the steps USAC has taken to verify the integrity of the IEH override process. Specifically, I am interested in understanding the steps taken to verify that subscribers enrolled with an IEH override are in fact economically independent from other Lifeline subscribers at the same address.

a. For example, one Total Call Mobile sales agent testified that he filled out applications, checking off the boxes he knew applicants needed to check to enroll. What process does USAC use to minimize and detect such behavior?

b. Does USAC contact existing subscribers at a particular address before enrolling a new subscriber at that address to verify economic independence?

c. Has USAC sampled a set of subscribers to determine whether subscribers can demonstrate economic independence through documentation (such as tax forms)?

d. Has USAC coordinated with federal or state agencies to determine whether subscribers have consistently represented themselves as economically independent?

4. According to the 2014 Lifeline Biennial Audit Plan, independent auditors were required to create a list of apparent duplicates for each carrier subject to the audit and verify for a sample of 30 apparent duplicates that “at least one subscriber at each address [has] complete[d] a one-per-household worksheet.” Were auditors required to verify whether such subscribers were actually economically independent from other Lifeline subscribers at the same address for a sample of apparent duplicates? If not, why not?

5. Please describe any investigations, audits, or reviews that USAC has conducted from October 2014 to the present to verify that subscribers enrolled with an IEH override are in fact economically independent from other Lifeline subscribers at their address. Please include any such reports drafted or issued by USAC or, in the case of no such report, a summary of USAC's findings.

6. Please describe any recommendations USAC has to improve the IEH override process to ensure that taxpayer funds are not wasted. Please identify any FCC rule changes that would be necessary to effectuate such improvements.

7. You reported in your May 2 letter that USAC also conducts Payment Quality Assurance (PQA) reviews and regularly analyzes the NLAD for “anomalies, duplicates, or

other errors that may signal improper payments of potentially fraudulent behavior.” As a result of those reviews, USAC discovered and de-enrolled 373,911 duplicates from the NLAD between February and May 2015. Please describe any other investigations, audits, or reviews that USAC has conducted from October 2014 to the present to eliminate duplicate subscribers from the NLAD. Please include any such reports drafted or issued by USAC or, in the case of no such report, a summary of USAC's findings.

8. In the Total Call Mobile case, one sales agent alleged that he could enroll the same person multiple times in the NLAD so long as the applicant used different devices within a 15-minute timespan. Is this claim true? If so, what steps will USAC take to close this apparent loophole?

I appreciate USAC's continued work to protect the American taxpayer and safeguard the Universal Service Fund. I also appreciate that USAC often takes instruction from the FCC in fulfilling its role. Given the hundreds of millions in taxpayer funds apparently lost to unscrupulous behavior in the Lifeline program, I hope you will agree that USAC's paramount task must be to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse from the Lifeline program. I therefore ask that you respond with the requested information by July 28, 2016. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely,

AJIT PAI,

*Commissioner, Federal Communications
Commission.*

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO).

Mr. TAKANO. I thank the ranking member from New Jersey for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 5525, a bill that undermines the Lifeline program and demonstrates the majority's continued indifference to the struggle of low-income Americans.

The Lifeline program helps 9.8 million people across this country access cell phone service which, as we all know, is a necessity for modern everyday life. For decades, helping struggling Americans access basic technology was a bipartisan initiative. It was started under President Reagan, and then expanded under President George W. Bush. I am surprised and disappointed that my Republican colleagues have chosen today to end that tradition of bipartisanship on behalf of struggling families.

Let's be clear, a vote for this bill is a vote to take critical devices away from people who need them the most. We are taking service away from older Americans who use it to manage their health care and call their loved ones. We are taking service away from students who use cell data to do their homework. We are taking service away from victims of domestic violence who use it to get help and support. We are taking service away from unemployed workers who use it to find a good-paying job. Most importantly, we are taking devices out of the hands of Americans who use Lifeline to call 911 during an emergency.

Why?

The majority says it will save consumers money, but the way that the

bill is written, it will not save a dime for consumers or American taxpayers. We continue to collect the fees, but we do not provide Lifeline services. This legislation will do one thing and only one thing: Make it harder for low-income Americans to get back on their feet.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote “no” on H.R. 5525.

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. SCOTT for allowing me time to speak on this.

Obviously, I rise today in support of H.R. 5525, the End Taxpayer Funded Cell Phones Act of 2016.

This administration has continued to expand existing programs for their own political benefit, with one of the most glaring examples being the “Obama phone,” also known as the Lifeline program. This was created back in the 1980s. Lifeline brought telecommunication services to consumers, including those with low income.

While this program started with good intentions, like most programs do, the Lifeline program has spiraled out of control, and the budget for this program is growing astronomically.

In an effort to curb wasteful spending, I am proud to support my colleague from Georgia's legislation. It is a commonsense approach to reining in wasteful spending in Washington. Americans are tired of the Federal Government spending taxpayer money that is not accounted for, and this bill is a step in the right direction.

Americans watch their money, and Washington should too. This legislation restores the Lifeline program back to its original purpose and narrows its scope to cut fraud and abuse, which has been mentioned multiple times here this morning. We have to put an end to bloated bureaucracy one Federal program at a time.

□ 1430

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES).

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I was a 911 dispatcher for 17½ years in Los Angeles. It used to be that, when we had land lines, you didn't have to be a subscriber to telephone service to be able to dial 911 for police emergencies, fire emergencies, or paramedic services. People could simply keep their phone plugged in and be able to dial 911.

That is no longer the case, as more and more phone companies are doing away with land lines. More and more people now have to subscribe to telephone service in order to be able to access 911 for paramedics, for a police emergency, or for a fire service emergency.

So we have created a system that is working against the poorest of the poor in our communities, and now the Republicans want to take that away from them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. PALLONE. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I urge a "no" vote on this. Allow the people in the United States to be able to access an ambulance, a police officer, or a firefighter for free. The poorest of the poor are depending on you to vote "no" on this bill.

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia has 9½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from New Jersey has 12½ minutes remaining.

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to correct a couple of things that were said from the start.

First of all, this piece of legislation does not eliminate the Lifeline program. It does move it back to land lines and away from the cellular services.

I would also, respectfully, submit that multiple pieces of legislation have been introduced in an effort to address the waste, fraud, and abuse in this program. The number that I mentioned earlier—4,291,647—is cases where we believe there has been an abuse of the system. The phone companies get approximately \$10 a month per phone that they hand out. That is a tremendous amount of waste, fraud, and abuse. It is almost \$500 million.

So when we see that much waste, fraud, and abuse in the system, we as a Congress have a responsibility to put the integrity back into that system.

There have been a tremendous number of pieces of legislation that have been introduced. They have all not been able to come to the floor. I want to thank our leadership for putting a bill on the floor that does the one thing in attempting to eliminate that waste, fraud, and abuse of this system.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to address some of the points that the gentleman from Georgia made.

First of all, 85 percent of the program goes toward wireless service; mobile phones. So when the gentleman says that we are eliminating wireless and that it doesn't matter because we will go back to land lines, that is just simply not the case. That is what the gentlewoman from California just explained.

I am concerned that what I am really hearing from the gentleman from Georgia is the notion that somehow, if there are more than two lines at a given address, it is fraud. I just want to eliminate that notion because I think that criticism misses the point.

There is an exception in the Lifeline program that can permit more than

one line per household. This exception is a critical feature that allows people without a long-term home address to take advantage of the program. These are the very people Lifeline was designed to help.

The system allows those living in a homeless shelter, without a stable address, to have access to a phone. It even allows veterans in a group home to access the Internet. So it is not fraud to allow these people access to phones because they happen to have the same address.

While this particular feature of the program may not be the cause of harm that has been alleged, Democrats are serious about eliminating the waste, fraud, and abuse from the Lifeline program. We stand ready to work with Republicans to make the program better.

When we had a hearing in the Energy and Commerce Committee, one of the points we were making was, just cutting the program doesn't eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse. You understand, this bill simply says we are going to cut the funds. It doesn't say how that is going to eliminate the waste, fraud, and abuse.

I will tell you there never was a markup. It just came to the floor. We did have a hearing. There was no markup. So this is not regular order. But the bottom line is, we said over and over again, as Democrats: work with us to eliminate the fraud and abuse. The Obama administration has always done that.

This doesn't do that. This just cuts the program and goes back to what my two colleagues from California were saying: you now have all these people who are poor and working people, who don't have enough money to pay for these phones. They just don't have the phone anymore, and so they don't have access to a mobile phone in order to make those critical calls for some of the purposes that were mentioned.

As I said, during the Obama administration, the FCC has already reduced expenditures by nearly a billion dollars. In fact, the FCC recently took additional substantial steps to prevent potential abuses of the program. The FCC very recently created an independent, third-party National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier. So there is a singular, disinterested referee making Lifeline eligibility decisions.

So an effort is being made—a serious effort—that has already saved a lot of money to try to improve this program. But, again, the bill before us does nothing to target waste, fraud, or abuse. It just cuts off truly deserving low-income Americans from a program that can help them improve their lives.

So for that reason, I urge my colleagues to oppose the bill.

In closing, I don't want to keep repeating the same thing, but I think it is pretty clear where I and my colleagues on this side of the aisle stand. This bill would cut off millions of low-income persons from having wireless service and access to the Internet. If

enacted, it would prohibit commercial wireless providers from receiving money from the Universal Service Fund Lifeline program, and that program subsidizes phones for low-income Americans. Without this program, millions of Americans will be left stranded, without any phones.

The bill is being brought to the floor under suspension of the rules, even though no committee has actually held a markup on the bill.

I urge Members to vote "no," to protect low-income Americans' Lifeline wireless phone service.

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

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I, again, want to reiterate that this bill does not eliminate the Lifeline program. It takes it back to the original intent.

I appreciate the newfound commitment to deal with the waste, fraud, and abuse, and I look forward to working with you on that legislation, if this one should not pass. We have a responsibility to make sure that, when we are creating access to any program, we have integrity in this program. This is not in any way, shape, or form intended to do anything but to bring that integrity back.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is about eliminating approximately \$500 million a year worth of waste, fraud, and abuse.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition of H.R. 5525, the End Taxpayer Funded Cell Phones Act of 2016, because it will end an essential program that helps millions of elderly, low-income and poor people have access to cellphone service.

As the founder and chair of the Children's Caucus I am particularly focused on the needs of children and their families.

H.R. 5525 would deny the Universal Service Fund, the charge levied on land lines to help fund telecommunications services for low-income people, the ability to use funds to help people purchase cell phones.

The Lifeline Program was first implemented in 1985 by President Reagan and expanded in 2005 by President George W. Bush to include commercial mobile service and commercial data service, the Lifeline program ensures that all Americans have the opportunities, assistance, and security that phone service brings.

Lifeline is a successful program, currently supporting over 12 million people who make up our nation's most vulnerable populations to call 911 and other emergency services, contact prospective and current employers, and connect with essential health, social, employment, and educational services.

According to one Lifeline provider, more than 80 percent of Lifeline subscribers in 2011 had an average household income below \$15,000; more than 45 percent of Lifeline subscribers were Caucasian compared to 40 percent who were African American and 7 percent who were Hispanic.

In the 2016 Lifeline Modernization Order, the Commission included broadband as a support service in the Lifeline program.

The Commission also set out minimum service standards for Lifeline-supported services to ensure maximum value for the universal service dollar, and established a National Eligibility Verifier to make independent subscriber eligibility determinations.

Lifeline enables the most vulnerable among us to be participating members of our society; cutting wireless services could prevent individuals from being able to, among other things: receive a communication about a child's illness at school while they are at work; summon medical help in a car accident; speak with their employers about additional work shifts while commuting by public transit; or

alert first-responders of public emergencies (such as a fast-moving fire, a flooded road, or a violent attack) that pose a threat to the larger community.

Today, 9.8 million Americans depend on the Lifeline program to stay connected using mobile phones.

The legislation comes on the heels of real enforcement by the FCC to crack down on carriers that have abused the program, including a \$51 million fine against Total Call Mobile announced in April.

Even more, this shameful bill was not considered under regular order and has not been considered by any committee.

If the critics of the Lifeline program sincerely think the costs of the program are a problem, they should work with Democrats to address inequality, to close the gender pay gap, to raise the minimum wage, and to put more people to work through universal broadband infrastructure projects.

The Lifeline Program is working in my state of Texas.

Texans are eligible for lifeline cell phone service if they receive benefits from any of the following programs:

National School Lunch (free program only);
Federal Public Housing Assistance / Section 8;

Health Benefit Coverage under Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP);

Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)

Medicaid;
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps);

Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance;
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families;
Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families;

Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations;

You may also qualify for lifeline service in Texas if your Total Household Income is at or under 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

For these reasons I join the NAACP in strongly opposing H.R. 5525, because it will do real damage to our national effort to expand indispensable access to telephone and cellphone service.

I ask my colleagues to join me in opposing H.R. 5525.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5525.

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. PALLONE. 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.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Pate, one of his secretaries.

AUTHORIZING USE OF PASSENGER FACILITY CHARGES FROM ONE AIRPORT AT A PREVIOUSLY ASSOCIATED AIRPORT

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4369) to authorize the use of passenger facility charges at an airport previously associated with the airport at which the charges are collected.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4369

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

SECTION 1. USE OF PASSENGER FACILITY CHARGES FROM ONE AIRPORT AT A PREVIOUSLY ASSOCIATED AIRPORT.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) On December 22, 2015, the Los Angeles City Council, the Los Angeles Board of Airport Commissioners, the Los Angeles World Airports, the Ontario City Council, and the Ontario International Airport Authority agreed to transfer ownership and control of Ontario International Airport from the city of Los Angeles and Los Angeles World Airports to the Ontario International Airport Authority, a local joint powers authority established by and between the county of San Bernardino and the city of Ontario.

(2) Pursuant to the agreement, the Ontario International Airport Authority intends to use between \$70,000,000 and \$120,000,000 in passenger facility charges collected at Ontario International Airport to finance eligible projects at Los Angeles International Airport, as compensation for passenger facility charges collected, consistent with section 40117(b)(1) of title 49, United States Code, at Los Angeles International Airport for use at Ontario International Airport in the 1990s, when both airports were controlled by Los Angeles World Airports.

(3) The amendment made by subsection (b) applies exclusively to Ontario International Airport, allowing passenger facility charges to be used for eligible projects at Los Angeles International Airport while making no other changes to passenger facility charges eligibility requirements.

(4) No additional appropriations are required to implement the agreement described in paragraph (1) or the amendment made by subsection (b).

(b) PASSENGER FACILITY CHARGES.—Section 40117(b) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(8) USE OF PFC REVENUES AT PREVIOUSLY ASSOCIATED AIRPORT.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the requirements of paragraph (1) and subject to subparagraph (B), the Secretary may authorize use of a passenger facility charge to finance an eligible airport-related project if—

“(i) the eligible agency seeking to impose the new charge controls an airport where a \$2 passenger facility charge became effective on January 1, 2013; and

“(ii) the airport described in clause (i) and the airport at which the project will be carried out were under the control of the same eligible agency on October 1, 2015.

“(B) LIMITATION.—Not more than \$120,000,000 in passenger facility charges collected under subparagraph (A) may be used to carry out an eligible airport-related project described in that subparagraph.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. COMSTOCK) and the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. COMSTOCK. 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. 4369.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4369, a bill that will provide regulatory relief to Los Angeles International Airport and Ontario International Airport and facilitate a transfer of Ontario International Airport to a new airport authority.

I want to thank Mr. CALVERT, the sponsor of the bill, for introducing this legislation and for his leadership on this issue.

With that, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4369.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4369, as you heard, is a bipartisan, narrowly tailored bill to address a time-sensitive issue in southern California that impacts the Ontario and Los Angeles International Airports, both of which serve my district in southern Nevada.

This bill has the support of my colleagues from southern California, and I appreciate them coming to the floor today to speak about its importance to their districts.

Mr. Speaker, when one airport authority takes ownership of an airport from another authority, there needs to be a process by which that new authority can repay the passenger facility charges that were collected up to that point. This bill would provide such a mechanism.

There is urgency in addressing this issue, as the current transfer authority between these two airports is set to expire at the end of this year. I support that, but I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the fact that, while we stand on the floor today discussing this urgent matter affecting our aviation system, we are mere weeks away from