

2007, after moving into the headquarters, the SEC shuffled its employees to different office space at a cost of over \$3 million without any cost-benefit analysis or justifiable explanation.

In 2010, the SEC conducted a deeply flawed analysis to justify the need to lease 900,000 square feet and to commit over \$500 million over 10 years, overestimating its space needs by over 300 percent. In addition, the SEC failed to provide complete and accurate information and prepared a faulty and backdated justification and approval after it had already signed the lease.

In August 2016, the General Services Administration and the SEC entered into an occupancy agreement to authorize the GSA to secure a new 15-year lease. In December 2016, the GSA, with the approval of the SEC, submitted a prospectus to Congress for approximately 1.3 million square feet, which Congress approved in 2018. By July 2019, the GSA had received final bids, resolved all protests, and even selected a final bidder. A month later, the SEC canceled the occupancy agreement, citing concerns about the value of the purchase option, which the SEC refused to document to Congress. The SEC effectively vetoed the entire 3-year procurement process, despite not having the authority or funding to exercise the purchase option without the GSA's involvement.

Finally, after much back and forth between the two agencies, the GSA entered into a lease for a new SEC headquarters in September 2021. The SEC says it will continue to have the GSA do its leasing in the future, but the SEC's history of egregious leasing conduct, having squandered hundreds of millions of dollars, makes this bill necessary.

These public blunders also risk undermining the reputation of the GSA and the Federal Government among the developers and building owners that participate in Federal lease procurements and ultimately driving up the costs of all GSA real estate procurement due to the threat of uncertainty.

It is time for Congress to return the SEC's leasing authority to the GSA, the Federal Government's civilian real estate arm. As the SEC has demonstrated over three decades, it is incredibly inefficient, wasteful, and redundant to have the SEC involved in real estate procurements when the GSA exists for that very reason. Like other Federal agencies, the SEC would continue to have input and involvement in the real estate decision-making process, but the GSA will have the ultimate authority.

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

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1468, as the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia indicated, helps to restore the SEC's

leasing authority back to the confines of the General Services Administration. It ensures that we have a uniform approach to leasing space in Federal agencies.

I thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia for her perseverance on this bill. I know this has been a priority of hers for a very long period of time. But I want to give you a little bit of background.

In 2012, the SEC leased approximately 1.4 million square feet of office space for \$566 million. I want to say that again. The SEC leased 1.4 million square feet of office space for \$566 million, in violation of the law. They exceeded their authority when they entered into this lease.

When there was Republican leadership, there was an investigation that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure did over the SEC's actions. The SEC Inspector General similarly commissioned an investigation.

The conclusion of these investigations found that not only did the Securities and Exchange Commission exceed their authority in that lease, but this was a trend. They had a history of mismanagement of their leasing authority.

Unfortunately, recent actions by the SEC during the GSA's procurement of leased space for the SEC indicates that they may be returning back to their old ways.

I want to say again, I commend the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia, ensuring that we have a uniform approach, ensuring that taxpayer dollars are being managed in a way that we can all be proud of, respecting the people who have worked hard for those dollars, and we don't need to be mismanaging them.

The bill will ensure that the Securities and Exchange Commission, like other Federal agencies, uses the GSA, the General Services Administration, for its space needs and provide more safeguards for taxpayer dollars.

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

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

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

In closing, H.R. 1468 will better protect taxpayer money by ensuring the SEC works with the General Services Administration on leasing to improve oversight, reduce costs, and minimize Antideficiency Act violations in the future.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House

suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1468, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. ROY. 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.

WILDFIRE RECOVERY ACT

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1066) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide flexibility with the cost share for fire management assistance, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1066

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 "Wildfire Recovery Act".

SEC. 2. FIRE MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE COST SHARE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 420 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (f); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (d) the following:

“(e) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of assistance under this section shall be not less than 75 percent of the eligible cost of such assistance.”.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall only apply to amounts appropriated on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. RULEMAKING.

Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the President, acting through the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, shall conduct and complete a rulemaking to provide criteria for the circumstances under which the Administrator may recommend the President increase the Federal cost share for section 420 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5187). Such criteria shall include a threshold metric that assesses the financial impact to a State or local government from responding to a fire for which fire management assistance is being provided.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. CRAWFORD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. 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. 1066, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia? There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1066, the Wildfire Recovery Act, a bill introduced by Mr. NEGUSE from Colorado. This legislation will remove some of the financial burdens communities face after suppressing a wildfire.

Wildfires are causing an unprecedented amount of damage to the natural and built environment. This bill will require the Federal Emergency Management Agency to cover at least 75 percent of the costs to suppress wildfires that qualify for a Fire Management Assistance Grant. Local officials have said that this fix would allow them to speed up the recovery process and invest more money in mitigation efforts.

Rural communities that typically receive this type of grant assistance will benefit most from this legislation. Providing more Federal assistance in the wake of the worst fires will assist stretched local budgets.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the Wildfire Recovery Act ensures that communities affected by wildfire disasters are treated similarly as communities affected by other disasters.

The bill provides parity by making a Federal cost share amount adjustable for Fire Management Assistance Grants, ensuring it is consistent with other FEMA assistance programs at 75 percent.

H.R. 1066 also clarifies the ability for Fire Management Assistance Grants to help communities recover after wildfire disasters and rebuild their infrastructure.

I thank my colleagues, including Mr. LAMALFA of California, who is a cosponsor, for their leadership on this legislation. I urge support of this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

In closing, I urge support of this legislation, thank our colleagues for cosponsoring, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1066, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. ROY. 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.

□ 1530

CIVILIAN RESERVIST EMERGENCY WORKFORCE ACT OF 2021

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2293) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide certain employment rights to reservists of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2293

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 “Civilian Reservist Emergency Workforce Act of 2021” or the “CREW Act”.

SEC. 2. PERSONNEL PERFORMING SERVICE RESPONDING TO PRESIDENTIALLY DECLARED MAJOR DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES.

Section 306 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5149) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d) PERSONNEL PERFORMING SERVICE RESPONDING TO DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES.—

“(1) USERRA EMPLOYMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS.—The protections, rights, benefits, and obligations provided under chapter 43 of title 38, United States Code, shall apply to intermittent personnel appointed pursuant to subsection (b)(1) to perform service to the Federal Emergency Management Agency under sections 401 and 501 or to train for such service.

“(2) NOTICE OF ABSENCE FROM POSITION OF EMPLOYMENT.—Preclusion of giving notice of service by necessity of service under subsection (b)(1) to perform service to the Federal Emergency Management Agency under sections 401 and 501 or to train for such service shall be considered preclusion by ‘military necessity’ for purposes of section 4312(b) of title 38, United States Code, pertaining to giving notice of absence from a position of employment. A determination of such necessity shall be made by the Administrator and shall not be subject to review in any judicial or administrative proceeding.”.

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF CERTAIN EMPLOYMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS TO FEMA RESERVISTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 4303 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (13), by inserting before “, and a period” the following: “, a period for which a person is absent from a position of employment due to an appointment into service in the Federal Emergency Management Agency as intermittent personnel under section 306(b)(1) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5149(b)(1))”;

(2) by redesignating the second paragraph (16) (relating to uniformed services) as paragraph (17); and

(3) in paragraph (17), as so redesignated, by inserting before “and any other category” the following: “intermittent personnel who

are appointed into Federal Emergency Management Agency service under section 306(b)(1) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5149(b)(1)) or to train for such service.”.

(b) MODIFICATION OF EXCEPTION FOR REQUIREMENT FOR MEMBERS OF UNIFORMED SERVICES TO PROVIDE NOTICE TO EMPLOYERS TO OBTAIN CERTAIN EMPLOYMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS.—Section 4312(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking the second sentence;

(2) by inserting “(1)” before “No notice”; and

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

“(2) A determination of military necessity for purposes of paragraph (1) shall be made—

“(A) except as provided in subparagraphs (B) and (C), pursuant to regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense;

“(B) for persons performing service to the Federal Emergency Management Agency under section 327 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5165f) and as intermittent personnel under section 306(b)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5149(b)(1)), by the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency as described in sections 327(j)(2) and 306(d)(2) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5165f(j)(2) and 5149(d)(2)), respectively; or

“(C) for intermittent disaster-response appointees of the National Disaster Medical System, by the Secretary of Health and Human Services as described in section 2812(d)(3)(B) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300hh–11(d)(3)(B)).

“(3) A determination of military necessity under paragraph (1) shall not be subject to judicial review.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. CRAWFORD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 2293.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia? There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2293, the Civilian Reservist Emergency Workforce Act of 2021, which extends Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act protections to the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s reservist workforce.

Reservists assist disaster survivors and first responders on an on-call basis. They are prepared to deploy when disaster strikes and make up the majority of FEMA’s workforce. While reservists are critical to Federal disaster response, these essential personnel are only paid by FEMA during deployments and have no protections that prevent them from losing their full-time jobs when called to a disaster.

FEMA’s workforce has been stretched to its limits by increasingly