

PRAYER

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

O infinite one, Your love for us is great. You who are rich in mercy, bend Your ear to us and hear our prayers. Draw near to us this day and allow us to experience Your generous and forgiving embrace and to receive Your manifold kindness.

Then may we respond with the faith of our hearts and not just the ideas from our heads, for nothing we can conceive in our minds will come anywhere near to the devotion You desire of us. Help us to trust You with our innermost being and not just rely on the work of our hands, for the tasks You set before us are best accomplished when we yield our wills to Yours and align our efforts with Your grace plan.

For we are what You have made us to be. We are each unique witnesses to Your handiwork, created to do the good work You have called us to do.

Grant that all of us this day demonstrate the faith and trust You deserve in all that You have prepared for us. Then may our lives serve to glorify You as we call upon Your name.

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.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina 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.

FAMILIES FIGHTING INFLATION
AND DEBT IN 2023

(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, last year was difficult for the American family. Under disastrous policies of Biden and the Democrat-led Congress, inflation reached 40-year highs, causing everyday prices to skyrocket.

December marked the 21st straight month that inflation was higher than real wages. As a result, Americans are relying on credit cards as payment, and nearly half are carrying debt from month to month, up 39 percent from last year, according to Bankrate.

Credit card balances increased 15 percent versus last year, the largest increase in more than 20 years, according to a recent quarterly report of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

When Biden took office in 2021, inflation was 1.4 percent, but it has risen nearly 14 percent since then, destroying jobs.

The House Republican majority is committed to fighting inflation and lowering the cost of living, creating jobs.

In conclusion, God bless our troops who successfully protected America for 20 years as the global war on terrorism continues, moving from the Afghanistan safe haven to America.

Our sympathy to the family of Tom Young, Sr., of Aiken, South Carolina.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF
CAPTAIN JOHNATHAN BENTON

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

Mr. ELLZEY. Mr. Speaker, today, I come before the House of Representatives to honor the legacy of Captain Johnathan Benton. Captain Benton tragically lost his life on January 16, 2023, in a small plane crash.

Johnathan was a man of service. He served our country faithfully for over 25 years in the Air Force. During that time, he was a command pilot with over 4,000 hours in the C-130 and KC-135. He was also an instructor and evaluator pilot.

He spent over 750 days deployed in support of conflicts in Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. He eventually retired as a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force's Air National Guard for the State of Oklahoma.

After his time in the military, Johnathan served as the Government Affairs Committee chairman for CAPA as well as the Allied Pilots Association.

Johnathan never stopped serving our country. Through his role as chairman for CAPA and APA, he continued to advocate on behalf of Americans.

To his wife, Bridget, and two children, Nathan and Ashlynn Marie, I am

truly sorry. Your husband and father was a great man. He had a great big heart and loved you all dearly. What he gave our country cannot be summed up in a 1-minute speech, but the legacy he leaves and the good works he has done will last forever.

DEFENDING THE SECOND
AMENDMENT

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

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in defense of the Second Amendment, which is, once again, under attack by the unelected Federal bureaucrats in Washington.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives is seeking to reclassify firearms with pistol braces as short-barreled rifles, a classification which threatens to make criminals of tens of millions of law-abiding Americans who have already purchased these.

The extra red tape, fees, and registrations that the ATF wants to require is an unnecessary punishment for shooting enthusiasts who purchased perfectly legal accessories to their legal firearms.

This follows a long pattern we have seen for decades in Washington's antigun, unconstitutional policies, which could never make it through Congress as a law that is imposed upon the public through the rule-making process.

Americans are tired of unelected Federal agencies spending their tax dollars attacking and curtailing the constitutional rights of law-abiding citizens.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 8 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1730

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WITTMAN) at 5 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

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

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

CHANCE TO COMPETE ACT OF 2023

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill

(H.R. 159) to implement merit-based reforms to the civil service hiring system that replace degree-based hiring with skills- and competency-based hiring, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 159

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 2023”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

(a) **TERMS DEFINED IN SECTION 3304 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE.**—In this Act, the terms “agency”, “Director”, “examining agency”, “Office”, “subject matter expert”, and “technical assessment” have the meanings given those terms in subsection (c)(1) of section 3304 of title 5, United States Code, as added by section 3(a).

(b) **OTHER TERMS.**—In this Act, the term “competitive service” has the meaning given the term in section 2102 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 3. DEFINING THE TERM “EXAMINATION” FOR PURPOSES OF HIRING IN THE COMPETITIVE SERVICE.

(a) **EXAMINATIONS; TECHNICAL ASSESSMENTS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 3304 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by redesignating subsections (c) through (f) as subsections (d) through (g), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subsection (b) the following:

“(c) **EXAMINATIONS.**—

“(1) **DEFINITIONS.**—

“(A) **EXAMINATION.**—

“(i) In this chapter, the term ‘examination’—

“(I) means an opportunity to directly demonstrate knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies, through a passing score assessment;

“(II) includes a résumé review that is—

“(aa) conducted by a subject matter expert; and

“(bb) based upon indicators that—

“(AA) are derived from a job analysis; and

“(BB) bear a rational relationship to performance in the position for which the examining agency is hiring; and

“(III) on and after the date that is 2 years after the date of enactment of the Chance to Compete Act of 2023 does not include a self-assessment from an automated examination, a résumé review (except as provided in subclause (II)), or any other method of determining the experience or level of educational attainment of an individual, alone.

“(ii)(I) An agency’s Chief Human Capital Officer may waive clause (i)(III) when needed to enable the filling of a position or class of positions.

“(II) Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the Chance to Compete Act of 2023, the Director shall provide agencies guidance and instruction on the data, evidence, and circumstances that Chief Human Capital Officers of agencies should consider in determining whether to grant a waiver under subclause (I).

“(III)(aa) An agency shall post any waiver granted under subclause (I) on a public website within 30 days of the granting of the waiver.

“(bb) A waiver shall not be considered in effect until it is posted on the public website pursuant to item (aa).

“(IV)(aa) Each agency shall submit to the Director on a semiannual basis a report summarizing the number of waivers granted by

the Chief Human Capital Officer of the agency under subclause (I) during the preceding 6-month period and the reasons therefor.

“(bb) The Director shall submit annually 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 summarizing the number of waivers granted by the Chief Human Capital Officers of all agencies under subclause (I) during the preceding year and the reasons therefor provided by the agencies.

“(V) Not more than 10 percent of an agency’s positions filled through competitive hiring procedures during a fiscal year may be filled under the authority of a waiver granted under clause (I), and an agency shall obtain the Director’s approval to fill more than 5 percent of such positions under such authority.

“(B) **OTHER DEFINITIONS.**—In this subsection—

“(i) the term ‘agency’ means an agency described in section 901(b) of title 31;

“(ii) the term ‘Director’ means the Director of the Office;

“(iii) the term ‘examining agency’ means—

“(I) the Office; or

“(II) an agency to which the Director has delegated examining authority under section 1104(a)(2) of this title;

“(iv) the term ‘passing score assessment’ means an assessment that an individual can pass or fail;

“(v) the term ‘subject matter expert’ means an employee or selecting official—

“(I) who possesses 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 assessment; and

“(II) whom the agency that employs the employee or selecting official designates to assist in the development and administration of technical assessments under paragraph (2); and

“(vi) the term ‘technical assessment’ means an assessment developed under paragraph (2)(A)(i) that—

“(I) allows for the demonstration of job-related technical skills, abilities, and knowledge;

“(II)(aa) is based upon a job analysis; and

“(bb) is relevant to the position for which the assessment is developed; and

“(III) may include—

“(aa) a structured interview;

“(bb) a work-related exercise;

“(cc) a custom or generic procedure used to measure an individual’s employment or career-related qualifications and interests; or

“(dd) another assessment that meets the criteria under subclauses (I) and (II).

“(2) **TECHNICAL ASSESSMENTS.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—For the purpose of conducting an examination for a position in the competitive service, an individual or individuals whom an agency determines to have an expertise in the subject and job field of the position, as affirmed and audited by the Chief Human Capital Officer or Human Resources Director (as applicable) of that agency, may—

“(i) develop, in partnership with human resources employees of the examining agency, a position-specific assessment that is relevant to the position; and

“(ii) administer the assessment developed under clause (i) 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.

“(B) **SHARING AND CUSTOMIZATION OF ASSESSMENTS.**—

“(i) **SHARING.**—An examining agency may share a technical assessment with another examining agency if each agency maintains appropriate control over examination material.

“(ii) **CUSTOMIZATION.**—An examining agency with which a technical assessment is shared under clause (i) may customize the assessment as appropriate, provided that the resulting assessment satisfies the requirements under part 300 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation).

“(iii) **PLATFORM FOR SHARING AND CUSTOMIZATION.**—

“(I) **IN GENERAL.**—The Director shall establish and operate an online platform on which examining agencies can share and customize technical assessments under this subparagraph.

“(II) **ONLINE PLATFORM.**—The Director shall ensure that the online platform described in subclause (I) includes the ability of its users to rate the utility of the content and technical assessments shared in the online platform to allow for a ranking of such contents.

“(3) **REGULATIONS.**—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of the Chance to Compete Act of 2023, the Office of Personnel Management shall prescribe regulations necessary for the administration of this subsection with respect to employees in each agency.”.

(2) **ALTERNATIVE RANKING AND SELECTION PROCEDURES.**—Section 3319(a) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following: “To be placed in a quality category under the preceding sentence, an applicant shall be required to have passed an examination in accordance with section 3304(b).”.

(3) **TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.**—Section 3330a(a)(1)(B) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking “section 3304(f)(1)” and inserting “section 3304(g)(1)”.

(b) **IMPLEMENTATION OF PASSING SCORE ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director and the head of any other examining agency shall eliminate the use of any examination for the competitive service that does not satisfy the definition of the term “examination” in subsection (c)(1)(A) of section 3304 of title 5, United States Code (as amended by subsection (a)(1)(B)).

(2) **REPORT REQUIRED.**—One year following the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall submit to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report examining agencies’ progress in implementing the requirement specified in paragraph (1), identifying any significant difficulties encountered in such implementation.

(c) **OPM REPORTING.**—

(1) **PUBLIC ONLINE TOOL.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Director of the Office of Personnel Management shall maintain and periodically update a publicly available online tool that, with respect to each position in the competitive service for which an examining agency examined applicants during the applicable period, includes—

(i) the type of assessment used, such as—

(I) a behavioral off-the-shelf assessment;

(II) a résumé review conducted by a subject matter expert;

(III) an interview conducted by a subject matter expert;

(IV) a technical off-the-shelf assessment; or

(V) a cognitive ability test;

(ii) whether or not the agency selected a candidate for the position; and

(iii) the hiring authority used to fill the position.

(B) TIMING.—

(i) INITIAL DATA.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall update the online tool described in subparagraph (A) with data for positions in the competitive service for which an examining agency examined applicants during the period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act and ending on the date of submission of the report.

(ii) SUBSEQUENT UPDATES.—Not later than October 1 of each fiscal year beginning after the date on which the online tool is initially updated under clause (i), the Director shall update the online tool described in subparagraph (A) with data for positions in the competitive service for which an examining agency examined applicants during the preceding fiscal year.

(2) ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each year, the Director, in accordance with subparagraphs (B) and (C), shall make publicly available and submit to Congress an overall progress report that includes summary data from examinations that are closed, audited, and anonymous on the use of examinations (as defined in subsection (c)(1)(A) of section 3304 of title 5, United States Code, as added by subsection (a) of this section) for the competitive service, including technical assessments.

(B) CATEGORIES; BASELINE DATA.—In carrying out subparagraph (A), the Director shall—

(i) break the data down by applicant demographic indicator, including veteran status, race, gender, disability, and any other measure the Director determines appropriate; and

(ii) use the data available as of October 1, 2020, as a baseline.

(C) LIMITATIONS.—In carrying out subparagraph (A), the Director may only make publicly available and submit to Congress data relating to examinations for which—

- (i) the related announcement is closed;
- (ii) certificates have been audited; and
- (iii) all hiring processes are completed.

(d) GAO REPORT.—Not later than 5 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 section and the amendments made by this section;

(2) assesses the impact and modifications to the hiring process for the competitive service made by this section and the amendments made by this section; and

(3) makes recommendations for the improvement of the hiring process for the competitive service.

SEC. 4. AMENDMENTS TO COMPETITIVE SERVICE ACT OF 2015.

(a) PLATFORMS FOR SHARING CERTIFICATES OF ELIGIBLES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 3318(b) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “240-day” and inserting “1-year”;

(B) by redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (6); and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

“(5) ONLINE TOOL FOR SHARING RÉSUMÉS OF INDIVIDUALS ON CERTIFICATES OF ELIGIBLES.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of the Chance to Compete Act of 2023, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management shall establish and operate an online tool on which an appointing authority can share, with other appointing authorities and the Chief Human Capital Officers Council established under section 1303 of the Chief Human Capital Officers Act of 2002 (5 U.S.C.

1401 note; Public Law 107–296), the résumés of individuals who are on a certificate of eligibles requested by the appointing authority. In carrying out this paragraph, the Director shall consult with the Chief Human Capital Officers Council and its membership to develop a plan to establish such online tool.”.

(2) PLAN.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall provide to Congress a plan to develop the online tool required in paragraph (5) of section 3318(b) of title 5, United States Code, as added by paragraph (1) of this subsection. Such plan shall—

(A) incorporate the input and feedback collected during the required consultation under such paragraph; and

(B) include estimated costs for building and operating the online tool.

(b) MAXIMIZING SHARING OF APPLICANT INFORMATION.—Section 2 of the Competitive Service Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–137; 130 Stat. 310) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as subsections (d) and (e), respectively; and

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

“(c) EXPLORING THE BENEFITS OF MAXIMIZING SHARING OF APPLICANT INFORMATION.—

“(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection—

“(A) the terms ‘agency’, ‘Director’, and ‘Office’ have the meanings given those terms in section 3304(c)(1) of title 5, United States Code; and

“(B) the term ‘competitive service’ has the meaning given the term in section 2102 of title 5, United States Code.

“(2) MAXIMIZING SHARING.—The Director shall maximize the sharing of information among agencies regarding qualified applicants for positions in the competitive service, including by—

“(A) providing for the delegation to other agencies of the authority of the Office to host multi-agency hiring actions to increase the return on investment on high-quality pooled announcements; and

“(B) sharing certificates of eligibles and accompanying résumés for appointment.”.

SEC. 5. MODERNIZING AND REFORMING THE ASSESSMENT AND HIRING OF FEDERAL JOB CANDIDATES.

(a) OPM REVIEW.—The Director shall conduct a review of all examinations for hiring for a position that the Office or any other examining agency has determined requires a minimum educational requirement because the nature of the duties of such position is of a scientific, technical, or professional position pursuant to section 3308 of title 5, United States Code, to determine whether there are data, evidence, or other information that justifies the need for educational requirements for such position. The Director shall consult with appropriate agencies, employee representatives, external experts, and other stakeholders when making any such determinations.

(b) ONLINE TOOL REGARDING POSITION DUTIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than two years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall create and maintain an online tool that lists each of the duties determined to require minimum educational requirements and the data, evidence, or other information that justifies the need for these educational requirements. This online tool shall include a mechanism to receive feedback regarding data, evidence, or information that could affect the determination that a duty requires a minimum educational requirement.

(2) HIRING PRACTICES.—Not later than one year after the creation of the online tool under paragraph (1), the Director and the head of any other examining agency shall

amend the hiring practices of the Office or the other examining agency, respectively, in accordance with the findings of the review made by subsection (a).

(c) ONLINE TOOL REGARDING RECRUITING.—Upon the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall establish and maintain an online tool that provides Federal agencies guidance on, and information about, all programs and authorities that help agencies attract, recruit, hire, and retain individuals.

SEC. 6. TALENT TEAMS.

(a) FEDERAL AGENCY TALENT TEAMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An agency may establish one or more talent teams (referred to in this section as “agency talent teams”), including at the component level.

(2) DUTIES.—An agency talent team shall provide hiring support to the agency and other agencies, including by—

(A) improving examinations (as defined in subsection (c)(1)(A) of section 3304 of title 5, United States Code, as added by section 3(a));

(B) facilitating writing job announcements for the competitive service;

(C) sharing high-quality certificates of eligibles; and

(D) facilitating hiring for the competitive service using examinations (as defined in such subsection (c)(1)(A)) and subject matter experts.

(b) OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT.—The Director may establish a Federal talent team to support agency talent teams in facilitating pooled hiring actions across the Federal Government, providing training, and creating technology platforms to facilitate hiring for the competitive service, including—

(1) the development of technical assessments; and

(2) the sharing of certificates of eligibles and accompanying résumés under sections 3318(b) and 3319(c) of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 7. UPDATES TO SYSTEM OF RECORDS FOR HIRING ACTIONS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

(a) UPDATE TO SELECT SYSTEM OF RECORDS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and on a regular basis thereafter, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall provide guidance to all Federal departments and agencies to ensure appropriate use of a system of records, including any government-wide systems of records, to meet the requirements of section 552a of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the “Privacy Act”), in hiring actions in the civil service.

(b) GOVERNMENTWIDE SYSTEMS OF RECORDS AT THE OFFICE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Office of Personnel Management, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, shall ensure that any system of records notice updates required pursuant to the guidance provided under subsection (a) account for any use of newer technologies that capture records (as defined in section 552a(a)(4) of title 5, United States Code) in video, audio, and video/audio combination formats and accommodate maintenance of such video, audio, and video/audio combination records.

(2) EVALUATION FOR POTENTIAL UPDATES OR REVISIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management shall evaluate whether the governmentwide System of Records Notices (referred to in this paragraph as “SORNs”) “OPM/GOVT–5 Recruiting, Examining, and Placement Records” and “OPM/GOVT–6 Personnel Research and Test Validation Records”, or any successor materials thereto, require updating or revision to implement the purposes of this Act.

(B) ISSUANCE OF UPDATES OR REVISIONS; NOTICE TO CONGRESS.—If the Director, after the evaluation under subparagraph (A), finds that any updates or revisions to the SORNs identified in that subparagraph are necessary and appropriate to support implementation of this Act, the Director shall promptly—

- (i) issue the updates or revisions; and
- (ii) notify the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Oversight and Accountability of the House of Representatives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COMER. 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 Kentucky?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, Congress is charged with overseeing the executive branch. This includes overseeing the general management and operations of government agencies.

For the success of our government's missions and Federal programs, we must have a competent and skilled workforce to deliver services to the American people, defend our Nation, and execute the laws passed by Congress. However, agencies lack the tools to identify and hire the best candidates to fill these positions.

The problem is that hiring for the Federal civil service has over-relied on the paper credentials and self-administered job proficiency assessments of candidates. The reintroduced Chance to Compete Act of 2023 ensures agencies use objective, skills-based assessments to evaluate job candidates.

The private sector already uses such structured interviews, knowledge tests, and writing samples for the hiring process. It is time for the Federal Government to do so as well.

Agencies should be able to hire professionals that can do the work, and there are many ways to build the right kind of professional expertise. H.R. 159 represents one of those rare bipartisan legislative reforms that targets a specific problem, implements tested solutions, and reflects private-sector best practices.

The bill codifies and improves upon the policy initiatives begun in the Trump administration and which the Biden administration is continuing to implement.

I thank the chairwoman of the Committee on Education and Workforce, Dr. VIRGINIA FOXX, who is also a senior member of the House Oversight Committee, and Congressman GERRY CON-

NOLLY for working quickly to ready this bipartisan bill.

I also thank Representative RO KHANNA for, again, supporting this bill that will help us modernize our government.

I hope that our Senate colleagues can swiftly advance this important legislation so that it can be signed into law this year.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important bill, and 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 H.R. 159, the Chance to Compete Act.

The bipartisan Chance to Compete Act was introduced by Representative FOXX, who I see is here with us, and Representative CONNOLLY. I thank them both for their hard work on it.

The bill aims to make evaluations more useful in assessing the skills of candidates for Federal positions and to alleviate inefficiencies that have long hampered the hiring process.

The bill turns away from current reliance on self-assessment and attainment of educational degrees to determine candidate qualifications in the hiring process. Instead, subject matter experts and agencies would design assessments that test specific knowledge for a position for which the agency is hiring.

This overhaul would better match qualified applicants with positions and expand opportunities to candidates with more diverse professional and educational backgrounds.

The Chance to Compete Act aligns with the Office of Personnel Management's guidance of last May to facilitate an executive order to modernize the process of hiring Federal job candidates.

Establishing hiring methods that are more skills-based will improve agency managers' ability to hire people who possess the knowledge and experience to do the job and to hire from a wider array of qualified applicants.

The bill also directs OPM to create an online platform for sharing candidate assessments between agencies and maintain a portal for hiring managers to find candidates who have already demonstrated their qualifications for certain positions but were not yet hired.

Under this legislation, agencies may assemble talent teams to support this assessment of candidates in the hiring process. The OPM Director would be required to submit annual progress reports to Congress on use of the new assessments. After 5 years, the GAO would conduct a study of the implementation of the Federal job assessment reforms and their impacts on the hiring process.

This bill streamlines the hiring process for agencies and will shorten the time it takes to bring new, well-qualified employees on board.

I thank Dr. FOXX for her leadership in introducing it. The bill is the result

of constructive collaboration by several members of our committee from both sides of the aisle, including Mr. CONNOLLY.

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

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX).

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans and Democrats can agree that every hard-working, taxpaying American deserves a Federal Government that is built upon a solid foundation that breathes efficiency and is peopled by those with appropriate skills, not necessarily degrees.

To achieve that end, we must eliminate the bureaucratic snares that have hamstrung the Federal hiring process over the course of decades, and fast.

In its current state, this dilapidated and archaic hiring process serves as a deterrent to attracting qualified and high-quality candidates. The simple truth is that it seriously undermines the Federal workforce's ability to serve the American people in both a proper and efficient manner.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that something must be done to turn the tide. That is precisely why I have introduced the Chance to Compete Act of 2023 alongside Representative GERRY CONNOLLY, Oversight and Accountability Committee Chairman JAMES COMER, and Representative RO KHANNA.

This legislation builds upon a solid record of bipartisan collaboration and proven success in codifying key skills-based hiring reforms.

More specifically, under this legislation, Federal agencies will be able better to distinguish practical performers in a field of candidates and focus on hiring individuals who can perform at the highest level in the jobs they assume within the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this much-needed bipartisan legislation.

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

Mr. Speaker, I urge everyone to support passage of this bipartisan legislation. It is an auspicious way for us to begin on the Oversight Committee. I salute the chairman for his wisdom in bringing this forward, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, this is a commonsense bill aimed at hiring applicants for Federal positions based on whether they have the relevant skills to do the job. The American people deserve nothing less from their Federal Government.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 159, the Chance to Compete Act of 2023, as amended, that implements

merit-based reforms to the civil service hiring system and would replace degree-based hiring with skills- and competency-based hiring.

It is critically important that we make skills- and competency-based hiring, the fundamental method of assessment for hiring in the competitive civil service.

No person, with the requisite skill, training, and competency should be prevented from securing a job because of a requirement that they hold a higher education degree.

As modern industry and technology evolve, so too do the pathways to professional achievement.

Recently, apprenticeship programs are an increasingly viable alternative to a traditional degree as they give students new opportunities to gain both knowledge of the subject matter and a skill set tailored specifically to their chosen profession.

These programs allow them to pursue jobs which align with their passions and strengths while still providing the students with important recognition in the form of a certificate which demonstrates their expertise in the field.

Undeniably, these skills focused models have opened doors for many who have been marginalized economically—giving them access to well-deserved dignity and success within their communities.

It is past time that the competitive civil service do away with degree requirements and make skills- and competency-based hiring the fundamental method of assessment.

This change will expand the pipeline of candidates who can access the competitive civil service jobs.

I have long been a champion of education and workforce development.

Several institutions in my district, including Houston Independent School District, Lone Star College, and Houston Community College have very successful trade and skills and based training programs.

These programs cover the gamut from culinary arts to auto-mechanic programs, to certificate programs for estheticians.

In 2017, Hurricane Harvey, killed 67 people, flooded 154,000 homes and 500,000 vehicles, and inflicted \$125 billion in damage, primarily from catastrophic rainfall—triggering the worst flooding in the Houston metropolitan area history.

In the aftermath, I advocated for funding for Houston Community College for a water disaster resilience training, certification and onboarding of skills, technologies, and training for first responders and the public to better prepare for the unique challenges posed by massive urban flood events.

This and other programs offer the opportunity to gain practical and in-demand skills needed to build a successful career in today's economy.

The Chance to Compete Act of 2023 will open new pathways for those without a degree, and allow them to access job roles in the competitive civil service that may have otherwise been inaccessible which gives them the opportunity to advance their lives and careers.

Furthermore, access to jobs in the competitive civil service based on skill and competency will grant people an unprecedented level of access to the dignity of work that fulfills a great need in today's society.

We must remain committed to recognizing the power and potential of non-degree based

assessments for access to new employment paths, especially in light of today's changing job market.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, the civil service is the lifeblood of our government and provides taxpayers, small businesses, and vulnerable populations vital resources and services throughout the country.

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Operations for the past 4 years, I held a series of hearings focused on revitalizing and rejuvenating the federal workforce.

What we found is that proposals like Chance to Compete should exist in a constellation of improvements to federal workforce recruitment that includes better pay, reforming federal internships to improve the intern to employee pipeline, and remaining competitive with the private sector in areas such as hybrid work—all of which are the subjects of legislation produced by the Government Operations Subcommittee last Congress (FAIR Act, Next Gen Feds Act, and Telework and Metrics Cost Savings Act).

I am proud to be the lead-cosponsor of the Chance to Compete Act, which leverages skill assessments to build a more competitive, equitable, and inclusive workforce.

This bill has bipartisan support and through demonstration projects at agencies proven empirical success.

In short, this legislation allows an agency that has an open position to develop a skills-based assessment to evaluate candidates in a way that goes above and beyond the traditional review of past work and education experience.

Furthermore, this bill:

Enables agencies to share their assessment findings with other agencies, streamlining the overall hiring process and ensuring competitive candidates do not fall between the cracks if they have already proven their ability to perform.

And deploys talent teams at agencies to ensure the development and implementation of the goals of this bill.

I thank Representative VIRGINIA FOXX, for her hard work and leadership on this bill as well as the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), Partnership for Public Service (PPS), the Senior Executives Association (SEA), Professional Managers Association (PMA), and others who have endorsed this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 159, 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. COMER. 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.

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT INFORMATION DATABASE ACT OF 2023

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill

(H.R. 300) to amend chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code, to require the publication of settlement agreements, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 300

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 “Settlement Agreement Information Database Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. INFORMATION REGARDING SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS ENTERED INTO BY FEDERAL AGENCIES.

(a) REQUIREMENTS FOR SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS.—Chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§307. Information regarding settlement agreements

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) LOCAL GOVERNMENT.—The term ‘local government’ has the meaning given that term in section 6501 of title 31.

“(2) ORDER TYPE.—The term ‘order type’ means the type of action or instrument used to settle a civil or criminal judicial action.

“(3) SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.—The term ‘settlement agreement’ means a settlement agreement (including a consent decree) that—

“(A) is entered into by an Executive agency; and

“(B) relates to an alleged violation of Federal civil or criminal law.

“(4) STATE.—The term ‘State’ means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, each territory or possession of the United States, and each federally recognized Indian Tribe.

(b) SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT INFORMATION DATABASE.—

“(1) EXECUTIVE AGENCY REQUIREMENT.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), the head of each Executive agency shall, in accordance with guidance issued pursuant to paragraph (2), submit the following information to the database established under paragraph (3):

“(i) A list of each settlement agreement, in a categorized and searchable format, entered into by the Executive agency, as a party to a lawsuit, which shall include, for each settlement agreement—

“(I) the order type of the settlement agreement;

“(II) the date on which the parties entered into the settlement agreement;

“(III) a list of specific violations that specify the basis for the action taken, with a description of the claims each party settled under the settlement agreement;

“(IV) the amount of attorneys’ fees and other litigation costs awarded, if any, including a description of the statutory basis for such an award;

“(V) the amount each party settling a claim under the settlement agreement is obligated to pay under the settlement agreement;

“(VI) the total amount the settling parties are obligated to pay under the settlement agreement;

“(VII) the amount, if any, the settling party is obligated to pay that is expressly specified under the settlement agreement as a civil or criminal penalty or fine;

“(VIII) any payment made under the settlement agreement, including a description of any payment made to the Federal Government;

“(IX) the projected duration of the settlement agreement, if available;

“(X) a list of State or local governments that may be directly affected by the terms of the settlement agreement;