

These accords mark a generational shift in Middle Eastern relations. This bill will further that effort and that mission, and we must continue the work. This special envoy will be dedicated to this purpose.

I have to say that RITCHIE TORRES came up with this idea. He worked with our side of the aisle, and he and Congressman LAWLER worked together on this legislation. That is what Congress should look like, working together on a goal that can promote peace, prosperity, and cooperation—in this case, in the Middle East.

I may not see it in my lifetime, but I hope I do. However, I do know that this bill will move it one step forward toward that great goal that we all share here today.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. McCRAIN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3099, 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. MCCAUL. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

#### CHANGING AGE-DETERMINED ELIGIBILITY TO STUDENT INCENTIVE PAYMENTS ACT

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 467) to modify the age requirement for the Student Incentive Payment Program of the State maritime academies.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 467

*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 “Changing Age-Determined Eligibility To Student Incentive Payments Act” or the “CADETS Act”.

##### SEC. 2. AGE REQUIREMENT FOR THE STUDENT INCENTIVE PAYMENT PROGRAM OF THE STATE MARITIME ACADEMIES.

Section 51509 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(i) **AGE REQUIREMENT.**—The Secretary may make an agreement under this section only with a qualified student who will meet the age requirement for enlistment or commission in the Navy Reserve at the time of graduation from the academy.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. KIM) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 467, the CADETS Act.

The CADETS Act was introduced earlier this year by a bipartisan group of Senators led by Senator PETERS of Michigan. It passed the Senate by unanimous consent last month. I am the proud sponsor of the companion legislation here in this House.

The CADETS Act will begin to help solve the problem our Nation faces in recruiting qualified mariners to serve in the Navy Reserve and crew our strategic sealift vessels.

Our fleet of strategic sealift vessels is critical to our ability to project and sustain U.S. forces around the world and defend ourselves and our allies. However, we can't do that without qualified Americans willing and able to crew these ships.

S. 467 will incentivize Americans to serve in this critical defense role by making those older than 25 years of age eligible for MARAD's Student Incentive Payment Program.

The Student Incentive Payment Program provides financial assistance to cadets who attend one of the six State maritime academies and commit to a post-graduation service obligation in the Navy Reserve.

I am proud to represent the Great Lakes Maritime Academy in Traverse City, Michigan, and I was honored to address the cadets at their graduation ceremony just a few weeks ago in May.

Cadets at Great Lakes and other maritime academies can receive up to \$32,000 in incentive payments over 4 years to help offset the cost of tuition and other education expenses. However, current law prohibits candidates older than 25 years of age from participating in the program. This is despite the fact that Americans between the ages of 18 and 42 can currently join the Navy Reserve and that State maritime academies are actively seeking to enroll veterans and servicemembers, many of whom are older than age 25.

S. 467 amends the Student Incentive Payment Program to align its eligibility age with the age requirements for enlisting or commissioning in the United States Navy Reserve.

This is a good bipartisan bill that will help our veterans transition to well-paying jobs, support the great work done by our State maritime academies, and help fill critical national security vacancies.

Madam Speaker, I urge all Members to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KIM of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I join my colleague, Mr. BERGMAN, and rise in support of the CADETS Act.

This bipartisan bill raises the age requirement for MARAD's Student Incentive Payment Program, which provides financial support to cadets who attend one of six State maritime academies and commit to a post-graduation service obligation.

Current age requirements for the Student Incentive Payment Program limit participation to people between 17 and 25 years of age. This proposal would expand eligibility to people up to age 42. This bill would widen the pool of potential candidates and aligns the age requirements with that of the Navy Reserve.

Many military veterans attend these State academies, but many applicants are too old to qualify for aid or the program.

Graduates from the State maritime academies become licensed officers in the U.S. Merchant Marine and are part of the Navy's Strategic Sealift Officer Force. Currently, our merchant mariner force is around 1,800 officers short of wartime needs. Because the average age of a merchant mariner is 47, we need to increase the number of eligible individuals for this program.

This bill would open up additional opportunities to our best and brightest and bolster our national security.

State maritime academies provide our veterans unique opportunities to transition to well-paying jobs and continue to serve in support of our Nation.

For those reasons, Madam Speaker, I urge Members to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, I urge all Members to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 467.

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. BERGMAN. Madam 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 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

#### BLOCK GRANT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2023

Mrs. CAMMACK. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 662) to amend the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations

Act, 2023 to improve disaster relief funding for agricultural producers, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 662

*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 “Block Grant Assistance Act of 2023”.

#### SEC. 2. DISASTER RELIEF SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2023 AMENDMENT.

Title I of the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 (division N of Public Law 117-328), is amended, in the matter under the heading “OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY” under the heading “PROCESSING, RESEARCH AND MARKETING” under the heading “AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS” under the heading “DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE”, by inserting “: Provided further, That the Secretary of Agriculture may provide assistance for losses described under this heading in this Act in the form of block grants to eligible States and territories” before the period at the end.

#### SEC. 3. EMERGENCY DESIGNATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—This Act and the amendments made by this Act are designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 4(g) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (2 U.S.C. 933(g)).

(b) DESIGNATION IN SENATE.—In the Senate, this Act and the amendment made by this section are designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 4001(a)(1) of S. Con. Res. 14 (117th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2022.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CAMMACK. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, this bill, led by my colleagues Representatives SCOTT FRANKLIN and DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, both of the Sunshine State as well, has the support of the entire Florida delegation, which is very urgently calling, on behalf of the citrus producers in our State, to pass this bill.

Hurricane Ian impacted more than 375,000 acres of citrus groves, costing nearly \$675 million in damages to the industry. More than 90 percent of all Florida citrus production was impacted by tropical storms in 2022. I will repeat that because I think it bears repeating: More than 90 percent of all Florida citrus produce was impacted by tropical storms in 2022.

□ 1715

In December of last year, Congress appropriated \$3.7 billion, with a b, to address agricultural losses from hurricanes and other natural disasters. However, to date, no citrus grower has received any of the agricultural disaster relief funds. None.

When speaking to Secretary Vilsack, Secretary of the USDA, during a recent Ag Committee hearing, the Secretary stated that they, being USDA, needed this authority from Congress, and if we give USDA the authority, they will do everything that they can to get these funds to those who need it most.

The exact quote from Secretary Vilsack was:

If you, Congress, direct us, USDA, and give us the power to do so, we will do everything we can to get the resources to the people who need it as quickly as we can.

This bill would allow the Secretary of Agriculture to create a program within USDA to support specialty crops, including citrus, damaged by natural disasters. In 2017, this relief model was successfully used to help growers recover from Hurricane Irma. The Block Grant Assistance Act would provide that exact same flexibility to the Secretary to help Florida citrus growers recover from Hurricane Ian.

In 2018, Congress gave USDA the authority to issue block grants to States to assist with recovery efforts after Hurricane Irma. In conjunction with the USDA Farm Service Agency, the FSA, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and the Florida Division of Emergency Management, the Florida Citrus Recovery Block Grant Program was created to support citrus growers impacted by Hurricane Irma. The CRBG program was widely successful in aiding the Florida citrus industry. Unfortunately, for our citrus producers, the language in the fiscal year ‘23 omnibus bill did not provide Secretary Vilsack the direct authority to disburse the appropriated disaster funds via block grant.

Citrus is a crucial part of the Florida economy. The industry has more than 400,000 acres of citrus groves across the State. The industry contributes \$6.8 billion to the economy each year and supports over 33,000 jobs. Citrus growers have had no shortage of challenges over the past several decades, from citrus greening to natural disasters, high input costs, labor concerns, and beyond. However, our State growers have continued to remain resilient. This bill would help our citrus growers recover from Hurricane Ian by allowing the Secretary to efficiently deploy the funds that have already been appropriated by Congress.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H.R. 662, the Block Grant Assistance Act of 2023.

I am a proud cosponsor of this bill, along with my fellow Floridians, in-

cluding Mrs. CAMMACK, Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I thank Chairman THOMPSON and Ranking Member DAVID SCOTT for their assistance in moving this bill to the floor in a fairly expedited fashion.

The bill authorizes the Department of Agriculture to utilize block grants to provide funding to States and territories to assist agricultural producers with losses due to natural disasters in the calendar year 2022. This does not address future disaster assistance. It simply allows USDA to get the money already appropriated to producers in our home States sooner, although we should look at that going forward as a longer-term reform.

Why is this important? Hurricane Ian devastated both southwest and central Florida. A category 4 storm hitting on September 28 of last year, it was tied for the fifth strongest hurricane ever to make landfall in the United States.

Less than 2 months later, on November 10, 2022, Hurricane Nicole made landfall near Vero Beach, Florida. Nicole devastated parts of our east coast.

The devastation was horrific, and the impact on Florida citrus and other segments of our agriculture industry has been devastating. My colleagues from Florida and other impacted areas were grateful for Congress’ support in the omnibus.

However, with losses to the citrus industry of somewhere between \$416 million and \$675 million, we need help quicker for these losses. The citrus industry is responsible for \$6.8 billion in revenue and 33,000 jobs in Florida, including in Florida’s Ninth Congressional District. Our Florida Department of Citrus and Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services have utilized the block grant authority previously to help deliver assistance to our cattle and timber producers, as well. However, the money hasn’t gotten there yet.

I applaud our Agriculture Secretary Vilsack for making a promise. He came down to Polk County in central Florida, met with citrus growers, and promised them he would get the money to these hard-fighting growers throughout central and south Florida.

He also came to the Agriculture Committee, as my colleague Mrs. CAMMACK mentioned already, making that same promise, if we gave him the statutory authority to do that. Today, on the House floor, we made good on our role in helping Secretary Vilsack’s promise.

Citrus faces a lot of challenges. Citrus greening continues to wreak havoc on our yields. We have new and promising pesticides that are working out, but we have a long way to go to get back to the heyday of the mid-2000s.

Citrus is also America’s vitamin C source. We can’t afford to export this critical set of nutrients to foreign producers. We need to protect it right here at home. This iconic Florida crop is critical for now and into the future.

Madam Speaker, I stand here today and ask my colleagues to support this

critical bill and join me in voting “yes” on H.R. 662. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN).

Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of my bill, H.R. 662, the Block Grant Assistance Act.

This bill authorizes the Department of Agriculture to provide funding via block grants to States and territories to assist agricultural producers who suffered losses due to natural disasters that occurred in calendar year 2022.

More than 90 percent of all Florida citrus production was wiped out by Hurricanes Ian and Nicole in 2022, totaling over 375,000 acres impacted. It is not just a single season loss. The thousands of new trees that must be planted to replace those that were lost will not yield fruit for 3 to 5 years. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services expects these devastating losses to cost as much as \$675 million.

Congress did its part, passing supplemental disaster relief back in December, \$3.7 billion to be exact. This money was set aside to assist recoveries from the consequences of droughts, wildfires, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, winter storms, and a host of other disasters that struck Americans throughout the country last year. However, previous disaster bills that assisted and addressed similar losses included explicit discretionary language and authority to the Secretary of Agriculture to deliver assistance via block grants. Unfortunately, the omnibus bill from last December did not include this needed authority language.

Failure to provide this authority will result in longer delays in distributing relief to a citrus industry already devastated by invasive diseases and trade disadvantages. In fact, 8 months after the hurricanes, not a penny of Emergency Relief Program funds have been disbursed to anyone, especially our citrus growers. They simply cannot continue to absorb blow after blow, especially when we can provide the needed assistance quickly. Without this authority, there is a real threat in Florida that our citrus groves will go under, and vital agricultural land will be ceded to developers at fire sale prices.

Madam Speaker, this bill does not appropriate any new funds. There is no additional expense to taxpayers. It simply gives the USDA the ability to quickly disburse already appropriated disaster relief funds via block grants. The Congressional Budget Office has reviewed it, and it will have zero impact on our Federal budget. The money is there. We just need to get it to the folks who need it now before it is too late.

In a recent Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Sub-

committee hearing, Secretary Vilsack acknowledged the critical need for disaster relief and agreed that this is a viable solution. The USDA inspector general also testified to us in an oversight hearing that, historically, disaster block grants have been a highly effective tool in delivering much-needed relief in a quick and efficient manner.

I thank Representative KAT CAMMACK, DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, DARREN SOTO, and the rest of my Florida colleagues who unanimously joined this effort. Senators SCOTT and RUBIO have a Senate companion bill, as well.

Madam Speaker, this is not just a Florida concern. I am honored to represent Florida's 18th Congressional District, which is home to more than 70 percent of Florida's citrus industry, so, yes, this is near and dear to me. My constituents are suffering. They sent me here to Washington to be their voice and to fight for them.

This bill also helps secure relief for more than just those who earn their living from citrus. In addition to other Florida ag producers who were devastated last year, this bill impacts agricultural communities all across the country who were affected by disasters in 2022.

I extend my thanks to my colleagues in the Texas, California, and Washington delegations for their bipartisan cosponsorship of this much-needed adjustment. I urge all my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, I have no additional speakers and yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Madam Speaker, I urge adoption of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. CAMMACK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 662, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO BELARUS—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 118-47)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90

days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Belarus that was declared in Executive Order 13405 of June 16, 2006, which was expanded in scope in Executive Order 14038 of August 9, 2021, is to continue in effect beyond June 16, 2023.

The actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Belarus and other persons, and the Belarusian regime's harmful activities and longstanding abuses, continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13405 with respect to Belarus.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.  
THE WHITE HOUSE, June 12, 2023.

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable HAKEEM JEFFRIES, Democratic Leader:

JUNE 12, 2023.

Hon. KEVIN MCCARTHY  
*Speaker, House of Representatives,*  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER MCCARTHY: Pursuant to Section 114(b) of the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service Training and Development Act (2 U.S.C. 1103), I hereby reappoint the Honorable Terri A. Sewell of Alabama to the Board of Trustees for the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service Training and Development for a term of six years.

Sincerely,

HAKEEM JEFFRIES,  
*Democratic Leader.*

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 29 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. OBERNOLTE) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

#### 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 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.