

H.R. 259 would provide an innovative and comprehensive approach to tracking Federal disaster projects and assistance, as well as the funds.

It establishes a single online repository to report information about Federal disaster assistance to provide transparency to the American taxpayer.

This proposal, developed in collaboration with the Project of Government Oversight, would establish a subpage for transparency of disaster assistance on the USASpending.gov website to better inform the public about the status of the use of disaster funding. And believe me, Mr. Speaker, every time I go back to the district every weekend this is the first question I receive from my constituents: What happened with the funds to the bridge?

What happened with the funds to the school?

What happened to the funds to the roads that are still damaged 5 years after a hurricane?

Many people ask themselves these questions: Where is the Federal funding that has been approved by Congress?

Where is the money that has been allocated to the Federal agencies?

Does a contractor have it?

Did the local government spend the money well?

Those are general questions that everybody, at least in Puerto Rico, are asking.

So this bill would require agencies that offered disaster assistance, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Small Business Administration, the Department of Agriculture, and many others, to regularly submit updated information to the Office of Management and Budget to ensure that the best possible data is available in an easily accessible format.

The data to be published would include: the amount of disaster assistance provided by the agencies; the amount of disaster assistance that has been obligated or expended to projects or activities; and a detailed list of all projects or activities for which disaster assistance dispersed by the agency was expended, obligated, or used, including a description of the project or activity, as well as an evaluation of the completion status of that project.

I think this will help not just the general public, not just American taxpayers, but also the government agencies to know where the funding is and when those projects are going to be completed.

During the last few years, my district, like many others represented here in the House, has faced multiple hardships due to disasters. In Puerto Rico, we are still working through the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, the earthquakes of 2020, and last year's Hurricane Fiona. Much of the support has been approved for rebuilding—this Congress passed legislation allocating billions of Federal funding not just to Puerto Rico, but to Texas,

to California, and to many other States—and, of course, we need better accountability and oversight to ensure this funding is being used as intended by Congress.

H.R. 259 will foster accessibility and transparency of information to track Federal funding and its status. It will also enable local mayors and legislators, nongovernmental organizations, and individual constituents to know what funding has been used for, where the funding will go, and how much funding is left to be spent, among other information.

In Puerto Rico we have put money here for hospitals, for piers, and for bridges, and people don't even know where the money is because the projects have not even begun yet. This kind of information will not only help Federal and local agencies but mostly the American taxpayers.

This will allow better awareness of progress and utilization of resources and to ensure that streams of available funding are not overlooked or underutilized.

The transparency provided with this bill will be essential for better congressional oversight of disaster recovery in all the States and communities where it has been received so agencies can account for how effectively it is being used, and if it is getting to the hands of the individuals and communities that need it and that it was intended to go to.

Mr. Speaker, passing this legislation will assist efforts to improve Federal disaster response and make it more accountable and effective. I urge my colleagues to vote for passage of H.R. 259, the Post-Disaster Assistance Online Accountability Act.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, the House passed this bipartisan bill on suspension as well in the past two Congresses. I look forward to passing this commonsense transparency measure again today.

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

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, in closing, this commonsense accountability measure is going to enable taxpayers to get a greater sense of where their money is going and allow agencies to see where they can coordinate post-disaster recovery efforts.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 259.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION REAL ESTATE LEASING AUTHORITY REVOCATION ACT

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 388) to eliminate the leasing authority of the Securities and Exchange Commission, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 388

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 "Securities and Exchange Commission Real Estate Leasing Authority Revocation Act".

SEC. 2. LEASING OF SPACE FOR SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3304 of title 40, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(e) LEASING OF SPACE FOR SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, on and after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Securities and Exchange Commission may not lease general purpose office space. The Administrator may lease such space for the Securities and Exchange Commission under section 585 and this chapter.”.

(b) LIMITATION ON STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION.—The amendment made by subsection (a) may not be construed to invalidate or otherwise affect a lease entered into by the Securities and Exchange Commission before the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. INDEPENDENT LEASING AUTHORITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on the review described in subsection (b).

(b) REVIEW.—The Comptroller General shall complete a review under which the Comptroller General shall update the 2016 report of the Comptroller General (GAO-16-648) with a specific focus on the following:

(1) Updating the information included in Appendix II: Federal Entities That Reported Having Independent Leasing Authority for Domestic Offices and Warehouses of such report.

(2) Determining to what extent Federal entities with independent leasing authorities have had such authorities rescinded or amended and the number and amount of office and warehouse space such entities lease.

(3) Determining to what extent have agencies with independent leasing authority utilized the General Services Administration for leasing, including utilization of delegation of authority.

(4) Identifying progress made on implementing the recommendations in such report.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all

Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material in the RECORD on H.R. 388.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 388 revokes the Securities and Exchange Commission's, or the SEC's, leasing authority for general office space and brings them in line with current leasing practices through the General Services Administration, or the GSA.

In 2012, the SEC violated Federal law by signing a lease for 1.4 million square feet that cost taxpayers \$566 million. This resulted in investigations by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the SEC's Inspector General.

The conclusions of these investigations indicated that not only did the SEC exceed its authority with this lease, but also that the SEC had a history of mismanaging its leasing authority.

Recent actions by the SEC during GSA's procurement of leased space for the SEC seem to indicate that the agency may be turning back to its old ways.

This bill ensures that the SEC, like other Federal agencies, continues to use the GSA for its space needs and provides more safeguards for the taxpayers' money.

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

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 388, the Securities and Exchange Commission Real Estate Leasing Authority Revocation Act.

This legislation, introduced by Delegate ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON of the District of Columbia revokes the independent real estate leasing authority of the SEC and directs the Government Accountability Office to update its 2016 report on Federal entities with independent real estate leasing authority.

While some Federal agencies have independent real estate leasing authority and have used it responsibly, the SEC has a history of egregious real estate practices.

Congress granted the SEC independent leasing authority in 1990, which means the SEC does not need to use the General Services Administration for its real estate needs like most other government agencies do.

In 2010, anticipating the agency would expand in response to the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, the SEC leased 900,000 square feet of space in the Constitution Center building in Washington, D.C.

Then, a year later, in 2011, the SEC's Office of Inspector General issued a re-

port which found that the SEC Office of Administrative Services conducted a flawed analysis to justify the need for this leased space and potentially committed Anti-Deficiency Act violations.

SEC's Office of Inspector General found that OAS grossly overestimated the amount of space needed at SEC headquarters for the SEC's projected expansion and prepared a faulty Justification and Approval to support eliminating competition.

Thankfully, Delegate NORTON introduced identical legislation to repeal this authority during the 117th Congress, and that bill, H.R. 1468, passed both the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the House of Representatives with bipartisan support. Unfortunately, H.R. 1468 was not considered by the Senate. Today, we are trying one more time to approve this commonsense legislation.

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

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Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank Chair GRAVES and Ranking Member LARSEN for bringing this important bill to the floor.

This bill would revoke the independent real estate leasing authority of the Securities and Exchange Commission and direct the Government Accountability Office to update its 2016 report on independent real estate leasing authority in the Federal Government. The House passed this bill last Congress.

While a number of Federal agencies have independent real estate leasing authority, the SEC has a history of egregious real estate practices.

In 2005, the SEC disclosed that it had unbudgeted costs of approximately \$48 million for the construction of its headquarters near Union Station.

In 2007, after moving into 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 GSA to secure a new 15-year lease.

In December 2016, GSA, with the approval of SEC, submitted a prospectus

to Congress for approximately 1.3 million square feet, which Congress approved in 2018.

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

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 2 minutes to the gentleman.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me more time.

By July 2019, 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 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 GSA's involvement.

Finally, after much back and forth between the two agencies, GSA entered into a lease agreement for a new SEC headquarters in September 2021. The SEC says it will continue to have 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 GSA and the Federal Government among developers and building owners who participate in Federal lease procurements. The threat of uncertainty ultimately drives up the cost of all GSA real estate procurements.

It is time for Congress to return the SEC's leasing authority to 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 GSA exists for that very reason.

Like other Federal agencies, the SEC will continue to have input with the GSA and involvement in the real estate decision-making process, but GSA would have the ultimate authority.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

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

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, it is time for Congress to return the SEC's leasing authority to the GSA, the Federal Government's civilian real estate arm. This legislation would do just that.

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

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

H.R. 388 ensures that the SEC is going to work with the GSA on leasing to improve oversight, reduce costs, protect taxpayers against wasteful spending, and minimize Anti-Deficiency Act violations in the future.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 388.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NOTAM IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2023

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 346) to establish a task force on improvements for notices to air missions, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 346

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 “NOTAM Improvement Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. FAA TASK FORCE ON NOTAM IMPROVEMENT.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall establish a task force to be known as the FAA Task Force on NOTAM Improvement (in this section referred to as the “Task Force”).

(b) **COMPOSITION.**—The Task Force shall consist of members appointed by the Administrator, including at least one member of each of the following:

- (1) Air carrier representatives.
- (2) Airport representatives.
- (3) Labor union representatives of airline pilots.
- (4) The labor union certified under section 7111 of title 5, United States Code, to represent FAA air traffic control specialists assigned to the United States NOTAMs Office.
- (5) The labor union certified under section 7111 of title 5, United States Code, to represent FAA aeronautical information specialists.
- (6) General and business aviation representatives.
- (7) Aviation safety experts with knowledge of NOTAMs.
- (8) Human factors experts.
- (9) Computer system architecture and cybersecurity experts.

(c) **DUTIES.**—The duties of the Task Force shall include—

- (1) reviewing existing methods for presenting NOTAMs and flight operations information to pilots;
- (2) reviewing regulations and policies relating to NOTAMs, including their content and presentation to pilots;
- (3) evaluating and determining best practices to organize, prioritize, and present flight operations information in a manner that optimizes pilot review and retention of relevant information; and
- (4) providing recommendations for—
 - (A) improving the presentation of NOTAM information in a manner that prioritizes or highlights the most important information, and optimizes pilot review and retention of relevant information;

(B) ways to ensure that NOTAMs are complete, accurate, and contain the proper information;

(C) any best practices that the FAA should consider to improve the accuracy and understandability of NOTAMs and the display of flight operations information;

(D) ways to work with air carriers, other airspace users, and aviation service providers to implement solutions that are aligned with the recommendations under this paragraph; and

(E) ensuring the stability, resiliency, and cybersecurity of the NOTAM computer system.

(d) **REPORT.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of the establishment of the Task Force, the Task Force shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report detailing—

(1) the results of the reviews and evaluations of the Task Force under paragraphs (1) through (3) of subsection (c);

(2) the best practices identified and recommendations provided by the Task Force under subsection (c)(4);

(3) any recommendations of the Task Force for additional regulatory or policy actions to improve the presentation of NOTAMs; and

(4) the degree to which implementing the recommendations of the Task Force described under paragraph (2) will address National Transportation Safety Board Safety Recommendation A-18-024.

(e) **APPLICABLE LAW.**—The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Task Force.

(f) **SUNSET.**—The Task Force shall terminate on the later of—

(1) the date on which the Task Force submits the report required under subsection (d); or

(2) the date that is 18 months after the date on which the Task Force is established under subsection (a).

(g) **AUTHORITY.**—The Administrator shall have the authority to carry out the recommendations of the Task Force detailed in the report required under subsection (d).

(h) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **FAA.**—The term “FAA” means the Federal Aviation Administration.

(2) **NOTAM.**—The term “NOTAM” means notices to air missions required by international or domestic regulation or law, as described in FAA Order 7930.2S.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the RECORD on H.R. 346, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 346, as amended, the NOTAM Improvement Act of 2023.

Just 2 weeks ago, Americans woke to the largest ground stop of aircraft

since 9/11 due to the outage of the Federal Aviation Administration's, FAA's, notice to air mission, more commonly called the NOTAM system.

As a professional pilot, I use the NOTAM system on a regular basis and know firsthand just how important it is to ensure that it is reliable and functional.

This incident highlights a huge vulnerability in our transportation system. As much as I wish we could say that this incident surprised us, this kind of issue was inevitable. Committee leaders have repeatedly raised the alarm about our woefully out-of-date NOTAM system.

This same bill has been introduced and passed two Congresses in a row, and multiple laws coming out of the Transportation Committee have demanded that the Department of Transportation and the FAA step up and address the well-known issues with the NOTAM system.

What occurred nearly 2 weeks ago is unacceptable, and the American people deserve much better. Hopefully, this incident was the wake-up call that the DOT and the FAA needed to shake off their ongoing failure to properly maintain our Nation's air traffic control system.

H.R. 346, as amended, is going to help address this failure by identifying issues with the NOTAM system and proposing solutions to prevent an incident of this magnitude from ever occurring in the future.

This bill creates a special task force to improve the utility, stability, resiliency, and cybersecurity of the FAA's NOTAM system. Composed of representatives from airlines, aviation safety experts, and other important aviation stakeholders, the task force is going to review existing NOTAM policies, regulations, and the system's overall integrity to determine best practices to increase the system's efficiency and decrease its susceptibility to outages, which cause other disruptions.

Originally, this bill was focused on improving the NOTAM presentation so that pilots and dispatchers could focus on critical information that matters. In 2017, an Air Canada flight nearly landed on a crowded taxiway in San Francisco because the NOTAM informing them of a runway closure was buried on page 8 of 27.

Mr. Speaker, we urgently need a better system and a more stable system. I thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. DESAULNIER) for their leadership and foresight on this particular piece of legislation.

H.R. 346 is a good, bipartisan, and timely aviation safety bill. It shows that the people's House can rise to the urgent issues of the day.

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

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.