

across our district, as well as throughout the country.

This historic contract acknowledges their hard work and sacrifices and raises the bar for all workers in all industries.

I was proud to join my Labor Caucus colleagues last week in sending a bipartisan letter reaffirming my constituents' right to collectively bargain, and I will always stand with workers to support higher wages, safer working conditions, and better benefits.

Congratulations, again, to the 340,000 Teamsters at UPS, and I thank them for their dedication to setting a new standard for workers across the country.

SUPPORTING AMERICAN FARMERS, RANCHERS, AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

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

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, I am here to speak about the fiscal year '24 Agriculture Appropriations bill, specifically how this legislation supports American farmers and ranchers by slashing regulations and reducing spending back to prepandemic levels.

Georgia is the top poultry producer in the Nation. Our poultry industry generates an economic impact of \$28 billion for our State.

This bill eliminates harmful regulations that unnecessarily dictate how to raise and market livestock which negatively impact Georgia producers and consumers alike. It also cuts spending to account for the end of the COVID pandemic emergency by saving \$32 billion in taxpayer dollars.

My colleagues and I in the House are going to have the opportunity to discuss this legislation and support our rural communities and farmers.

RECOGNIZING IRENE PEREZ PLOKE SGAMBELLURI

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

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Irene Perez Ploke Sgambelluri. A proud mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, and a World War II survivor are just some of the words used to describe Ms. Irene Perez Ploke Sgambelluri, or as many call her, Aunty Irene.

Aunty Irene has been a fighter for World War II survivors, a champion for Guam's Greatest Generation, and one who has worked tirelessly over the decades to ensure that those who endured the atrocities of the occupation are recognized by the Federal Government.

Aunty Irene advocated for the payments of World War II reparations for decades, and the fruits of her labor were rewarded when former President Donald Trump enacted legislation to ensure these reparations were fulfilled.

During the month our community celebrates Guam's liberation, I honor her for her years of advocacy.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Aunty Irene, and may God continue to bless her and her family.

RECOGNIZING NORTHSIDE HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL TEAM FOR WINNING CLASS 3 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

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

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Northside High School Women's Softball team on winning the class 3 State championship, the program's first State title since 2010 and its second win in history.

Beating the York Falcons by 3-1, the Vikings delivered strong performances needed to win.

These talented athletes include Baylee Compton, McKenzie Taylor, Leila Aguilar, Sydney Jordan, Karlee Austin, and Abbie Caldwell.

Baylee pitched a five-hitter for the Vikings, striking out 16 of the Falcons' players and walking one.

The Vikings scored twice in the top of the fifth to grab a 2-1 lead. In the seventh inning, the ladies scored another run, then held strong on defense to prevent the Falcons from catching up.

Mr. Speaker, all of these young ladies are a true testament that with hard work and determination, you can achieve your dreams.

We congratulate, again, all of the players, Coach Kassie Brammer, their families, as well as the Northside faculty and staff.

Virginia's Sixth Congressional District is incredibly proud of their accomplishment.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4366, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2024; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF S.J. RES. 9, PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE RELATING TO "ENDANGERED AND THREATENED WILDLIFE AND PLANTS; LESSER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN; THREATENED STATUS WITH SECTION 4(D) RULE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTINCT POPULATION SEGMENT AND ENDANGERED STATUS FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTINCT POPULATION SEGMENT"; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF S.J. RES. 24, PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE RELATING TO "ENDANGERED AND THREATENED WILDLIFE AND PLANTS; ENDANGERED SPECIES STATUS FOR NORTHERN LONG-EARED BAT"

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 614 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 614

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4366) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 or clause 5(a) of rule XXI are waived.

SEC. 2. (a) No amendment to the bill shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, amendments en bloc described in section 3 of this resolution, and pro forma amendments described in section 4 of this resolution.

(b) Each amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules shall be considered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be

subject to amendment except as provided by section 4 of this resolution, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole.

(c) All points of order against amendments printed in the report of the Committee on Rules or against amendments en bloc described in section 3 of this resolution are waived.

SEC. 3. It shall be in order at any time for the chair of the Committee on Appropriations or her designee to offer amendments en bloc consisting of amendments printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution not earlier disposed of. Amendments en bloc offered pursuant to this section shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees, shall not be subject to amendment except as provided by section 4 of this resolution, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole.

SEC. 4. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees may offer up to 10 pro forma amendments each at any point for the purpose of debate.

SEC. 5. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommend.

SEC. 6. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the joint resolution (S.J. Res. 9) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service relating to "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Lesser Prairie-Chicken; Threatened Status With Section 4(d) Rule for the Northern Distinct Population Segment and Endangered Status for the Southern Distinct Population Segment". All points of order against consideration of the joint resolution are waived. The joint resolution shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the joint resolution are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to commit.

SEC. 7. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the joint resolution (S.J. Res. 24) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service relating to "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Endangered Species Status for Northern Long-Eared Bat". All points of order against consideration of the joint resolution are waived. The joint resolution shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the joint resolution are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to commit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. D'ESPOSITO). The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. RESCIENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Colorado (Mr. NEGUSE) pending which time I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RESCIENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RESCIENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be amended by striking the last sentence in the first section of the resolution and insert "All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived."

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RESCIENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this rule and in support of the underlying legislation.

House Resolution 614 provides for consideration of three measures: H.R. 4366, S.J. Res. 9, and S.J. Res. 24.

The rule provides for H.R. 4366, the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2024 to be considered under a structured rule with 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member on the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees, and provides one motion to recommit.

The rule makes in order 41 amendments.

Additionally, the rule provides for consideration S.J. Res. 9, a resolution of congressional disapproval related to the lesser prairie-chicken under a closed rule with 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources or their designees, and provides one motion to commit.

Finally, the resolution provides for consideration of S.J. Res. 24, a resolution of congressional disapproval related to the northern long-eared bat under a closed rule with 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources or their designees, and provides one motion to commit.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4366 fulfills our commitment to America's veterans by fully funding their healthcare programs and benefits, providing robust funding for mental health services, and rejecting the Biden administration's efforts to insert far-left policies into the VA.

As a Navy veteran, I am proud that this bill improves the quality of life for servicemembers by investing more than \$17.6 billion in military construction and family housing for our heroes.

This includes critical investments in childcare development centers, upgrades to barracks housing, and billions to counter China in the Indo-Pacific.

Additionally, H.R. 4366 includes a provision prohibiting the closure of Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and also prohibiting the use of funds to build detainee facilities on U.S. soil.

□ 1230

As a veteran of the global war on terror and someone who prosecuted terrorists in the Iraqi court system, I saw firsthand the destruction and chaos caused by these radical extremists. Bringing these terrorists to U.S. soil is unthinkable to me, and many of these terrorists were directly involved in the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Mr. Speaker, the underlying legislation also provides important congressional oversight of the Biden administration.

S.J. Res. 9 and S.J. Res. 24 utilize the Congressional Review Act to nullify the Department of the Interior's rules related to the lesser prairie-chicken and the northern long-eared bat.

In both instances, bureaucrats from the Biden administration are placing red tape on economic development and private land use, and without warrant. These rules expose farmers to litigation and lawsuits for routine farming activities, shut down existing conservation efforts from private industry, and impose new restrictions on farmers and ranchers.

This is just another example, another instance, of far-left, extreme Democrats in Washington, D.C., making it more costly for Americans to make a living, put food on the table, and develop our rural communities.

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

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman, my friend from Pennsylvania, for the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman said, today's rule provides for consideration of three bills. The first of those bills is H.R. 4366, the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024.

Mr. Speaker, this is typically a bipartisan bill, one of the most bipartisan bills that we consider in the United States Congress. That is not the case this year. Why? Because House Republicans decided to inject into this bill extreme policy riders that threaten the freedoms of each and every American. They have kicked off appropriations season by doubling down on funding bills that endanger essential services.

Just to speak frankly, neither this bill nor any of the others that they will bring to the floor on the appropriations

side have any chance of becoming law. My colleagues across the aisle know that.

Today, they come to the floor to proudly tout a bill that would slash \$1.3 billion—not my number; their number—from military construction programs that support quality-of-life services for members of the Armed Forces and their families.

Democrats fight against cuts to vital programs that help the American people. Unfortunately, House Republicans are doing the opposite.

We saw this cycle many times, Mr. Speaker. Throughout the last 7 months, it has been hard to understand what my colleagues across the aisle truly want.

At the beginning of this Congress, the other side of the aisle voted for a House rules package that promised an open rules process for amendments. Yet, here we are, debating another rule structured by Speaker MCCARTHY and Republican leadership.

Now, House Republicans threaten to shut down the government in order to fulfill an unpopular agenda full of far-right policy riders that undermine equal opportunity, restrict access to abortion, and more.

We are going to hear a lot from my colleague, my friend on the other side of the aisle, about what he claims this bill will do. It is important for the American people to understand three simple things.

It cuts military construction by \$1.3 billion. Think about the impact that will have, Mr. Speaker, on servicemembers across the country.

It funds no infrastructure backlog for the Department of Defense. Mr. Speaker, we have a \$100 billion infrastructure backlog in the Department of Defense for installations across the world, across the country, and in our districts. The President asked for \$2 billion to start to address that backlog. House Republicans said no. How much did they give? Zero.

Finally, the bill does nothing to address toxic PFAS contamination—not a thing. Last year, House Democrats, under President Biden's leadership, appropriated \$200 million toward PFAS remediation to address the toxic chemicals that are literally killing people across the country. This bill appropriates how much? None.

Those are the facts.

If that weren't enough, as the gentleman said, we are considering two other bills today. The American people watching this might think that perhaps House Republicans would decide to bring a bill to the floor to lower costs, address inflation, try to reduce the cost of healthcare, grow the middle class, build safer communities, or address school safety. No. House Republicans have declined to put any of those bills on the floor. Instead, what are we left with? Hearings and bills on gas stoves and, today, bills on the lesser prairie-chicken and the northern long-eared bat. That is what we are here to debate, Mr. Speaker.

I think the American people would be deeply disappointed at the choice of priorities that House Republicans are pursuing. Let's get back to the core issues at hand. Let's negotiate in good faith. Let's do the people's business.

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

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

Let's just go back and look at what has been said over the last few months. For the last few months, the administration and extreme congressional Democrats have been spreading lies that House Republicans were cutting veterans benefits. These lies were merely designed to score cheap political points at the expense of our veterans.

Let's go through a few of the quotes from extreme Democrats.

President Biden stated in May: "Republicans in Congress proposed budget cuts that would threaten veterans housing services, medical care, and mental health care."

It didn't stop there. Ranking Member TAKANO stated, on April 26, they are holding veterans benefits "hostage, again pointing to concerns about fiscal responsibility."

In the Senate, Senate Majority Leader SCHUMER stated, on March 1: "Republican proposals would narrow healthcare eligibility for veterans and cut VA mandatory funding."

Now we get to this week, when House Republicans will pass a bill that will fully fund veterans benefits, fully fund veterans healthcare, and fully fund all other veterans programs. This bill provides the VA \$16.4 billion over the fiscal year 2023 enacted level and matches the President's budget request for fiscal year 2024.

There is no question who was and who was not misleading the American people. There is no question that our actions today support veterans. Just watch to see how many of those Democrats will vote "no" tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LANGWORTHY), my good friend and a member of the House Rules Committee.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for yielding me time to address the House today.

I rise today in support of keeping the promises made to our Nation's veterans. Millions of men and women served this Nation in uniform bravely, and they have been failed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Too often, the VA has left veterans and their loved ones with long delays, substandard service, and neglect. Now, rather than continue the Trump administration's work to hold the VA accountable, the Biden administration is instead focused on promoting divisive ideologies and radical leftist priorities.

Mr. Speaker, the VA should be focused on the needs of our Nation's vet-

erans, not promoting a political agenda. The legislation before us today puts the VA back on the task at hand, caring for the men and women who gave their all for this country, like finally pushing the VA to fix its electronic health record system, where patient safety issues have been so dire that they have even resulted in several deaths.

Let me say that again. The inability of the VA to do its job has resulted in injury and death to veterans. Sadly, this isn't the first time we have heard of such negligence. We need to do better. We owe better, and this bill will help accomplish this today.

I think I speak today for all the veterans in my district when I say that they are sick and tired of indignities and substandard care due to electronic records.

I strongly support the underlying legislation before us today, and I hope my colleagues can overcome partisan outrage to stand with our Nation's veterans.

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, let me just say that only in Washington can politicians demand recognition after being shamed into doing the right thing. That is what we just heard.

We all know that the default on America act that House Republicans pursued was primed to cut veterans benefits. House Democrats, President Biden, and Senate Democrats led the charge to convince our colleagues to come back from the brink, and now they have the audacity to demand that we thank them for it.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, this comes from the same party that overwhelmingly voted against the Honoring our PACT Act, the most comprehensive healthcare legislation for veterans in my lifetime, the proudest vote I have taken since I was sworn into the United States Congress.

Mr. Speaker, 174 of them voted against it, including the gentleman from Pennsylvania. Now they have the audacity to claim that they are fighting for veterans?

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), the distinguished assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

I rise to take note of the sad irony that the extreme Republican majority is bringing this appropriations bill to the floor on the 75th anniversary of President Truman's desegregation of the Armed Forces.

President Truman's heritage would suggest that he would be an unlikely champion for civil rights. He grew up in a segregated town in Missouri, in a family that owned slaves and defended slavery.

When our 33rd President heard of the blinding of Sergeant Isaac Woodard, Jr., a decorated Black World War II veteran who was brutally attacked by a police officer while traveling home to

Winnsboro, South Carolina, on a Greyhound bus—still in his uniform after being honorably discharged—Truman was moved to forsake his upbringing and desegregate the Armed Forces.

President Truman courageously recognized and acted to further our Nation's fundamental obligation to our servicemembers and veterans, regardless of their backgrounds.

We should be working to build upon the progress he made, but regrettably, the MILCON-VA bill that the majority is bringing to the floor today would constitute a significant step backward.

This ill-conceived legislation, in addition to reducing funds for the military construction projects that are fundamental to our servicemembers' quality of life, is also an attack on the dignity of our veterans.

It attacks the dignity of women veterans by blocking reproductive healthcare when their health is endangered.

It attacks the dignity of veterans in need of gender-affirming care by blocking the VA from providing it, even if it is recommended by a doctor.

It attacks the dignity of veterans and all Americans of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality by blocking the Biden administration's ongoing efforts to advance equity.

President Truman recognized that our national security is enhanced by respecting the dignity of all American patriots who sacrifice to defend it. This legislation being brought today by the extreme Republican majority is at odds with that principle.

□ 1245

If the Members of today's extreme Republican majority were in office in 1948, I fear they would have attacked President Truman's desegregation order as an unacceptable diversity, equity, and inclusion measure, which section 417 of this legislation would ban.

I fear that if this bill were enacted into law, it would prevent the military from discussing the blinding of Sergeant Isaac Woodard and its influence on President Truman because the topic would be deemed critical race theory, which would be banned by section 415, rather than the historical fact that it was.

Will this section ban our military leaders from making repairs to the GI Bill benefits that were denied Black World War II veterans?

Mr. Speaker, when President Truman was informed of Isaac Woodard's blinding, he reportedly exclaimed: "My God, I had no idea it was as terrible as that. We have got to do something." Sadly, this extreme Republican majority seems to find new ways to be terrible every week.

I rise in opposition to the consideration of this awful bill because Democrats know we have got to do something to prevent them from pushing us off our trek toward a more perfect

Union that President Truman so courageously advanced 75 years ago today.

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

Mr. Speaker, since we are discussing the Department of the Interior's out-of-touch rulemaking decisions this week, let's talk about last week with the Department of the Interior. The Department proposed a new rule adding barriers to the future of energy production. This decision will drastically impact oil and gas investments and will raise energy costs for hardworking Americans.

Let's not forget that under the Trump administration, our Nation was energy independent, and this rulemaking will only deepen our reliance on foreign adversaries for energy.

According to a recent Morning Consult poll, 88 percent of Americans believe we should produce oil and gas here in the United States, and 85 percent agree domestic energy production counters China and Russia. Again, that is 85 percent. In addition, 88 percent believe that domestic energy production will help lower costs for families. That is 88 percent. These seem to me like pretty overwhelming numbers.

However, we have a bunch of unelected, career bureaucrats who are accountable to no one who are making these decisions. It is clear that Biden's Department of the Interior rulemaking continues to hurt our national security, our economy, and our energy independence, not to mention how wildly out of step this administration is with the American people. It is time that extreme Democrats stop the war on American energy.

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

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ), a distinguished member of the Rules Committee.

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I really wish I could say that caring for our veterans is a bipartisan issue, something we all agree on. Instead, for the first time in years, the appropriations for military construction and VA will not be bipartisan because my colleagues across the aisle have not put veterans first. Instead, they have tacked onto their VA bill a kitchen sink of culture wars.

H.R. 4366 would trample on our veterans' freedoms, slash access to reproductive care, and slash access to gender-affirming care. It would prohibit training that helps people from different backgrounds work together that addresses the inequalities that still exist in our military. It would allow homophobia to run rampant.

This legislation makes our VA facilities less welcoming for the thousands of diverse New Mexicans who receive care there.

Every homeowner knows it is better to fix a leaking roof right away because if not, it is going to be really expensive.

Yet, this bill cuts \$1.5 billion from military construction. Our military housing and health clinics are leaking, but these cuts will cost us so much more in the future. We must do more than just thank our veterans for their service. We can't just use words. We must actually back it up with resources.

When Democrats led the House, we passed the Honoring our PACT Act to expand healthcare coverage and compensate veterans exposed to toxic substances, which 174 Republicans voted against. Democrats listened to the needs of our communities and passed legislation that made an actual difference in their lives.

Now veterans have until August 9 to file a claim to receive retroactive 2023 benefits. To make sure our veterans know about these benefits, I am hosting a PACT Act townhall on August 1.

That is what it looks like to not just thank veterans but to truly care about the patriots who served our country. That is the difference that Democratic leadership makes.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I understand it is a little empty on the other side of the aisle. There are perhaps not many Members who want to come to the floor to defend the propriety of this bill that cuts military construction funding, and I don't blame them.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. RESCHENTHALER), whom I respect, has the unenviable task of trying to make the case for a bill that cuts military construction funding, does nothing to address the infrastructure backlog, and cuts PFAS toxic exposure remediation, to say nothing of the many other ills within the legislation.

We heard a lot earlier about the supposed work that House Republicans are doing on the appropriations front. Of course, this is the first appropriations bill that has come to the floor. However, we still can't get House Republicans to commit to protecting Social Security and Medicare, as House Democrats have championed. Of course, we know why. It is because they have been unabashed about their efforts to cut both vital programs.

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment that we have offered before to the rule to provide for consideration of a resolution which unambiguously states that it is the House's duty to keep our solemn promise to American workers and seniors to protect and preserve Social Security and Medicare and reject any cuts to these critical programs.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment into the RECORD along with any extraneous material immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. SCHOLTEN) to discuss our very important proposal.

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle may not have something to say today, but I surely do.

I rise today to express my profound disappointment in House Republicans' decision to prioritize their extremist agenda over passing a strong, bipartisan appropriations bill.

I pride myself on always looking for ways to find common ground with my Republican colleagues, and the bill to fund the VA and military construction usually provides ample opportunity to do so. We need to do everything we can to ensure that our current and former servicemembers are provided the best possible care.

I was hoping I could count on my friends across the aisle to put forth a bill that we could all support, just like we have done time and time again. Instead, extremists in the party have hijacked this bill and removed dedicated funding for PFAS cleanup, eliminated funding for climate resilience during a time of increasingly severe weather events, and put women and families at risk by restricting access to potentially lifesaving healthcare.

By including these provisions, extremists on the right have decided that playing partisan politics is more important than improving the lives of our Nation's heroes.

Mr. Speaker, unlike our colleagues across the aisle, Democrats are focused on delivering results on the things that matter to our communities. For this reason, if we defeat the previous question, we will bring up a resolution affirming our commitment to protecting Social Security and Medicare.

Why don't Republicans want to do the same thing? These programs are critically important lifelines for tens of millions of Americans across the country. In west Michigan, my home district, Medicare provides lifesaving healthcare coverage for over 100,000 seniors. Additionally, nearly 150,000 recipients receive \$264 million in monthly Social Security benefits, including over 110,000 seniors.

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

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Michigan.

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Mr. Speaker, these are the sorts of programs we should be spending our time working on and strengthening, not unserious messaging bills which will be dead on arrival in the Senate. We are just wasting time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to defeat the previous question so we can bring up this important legislation.

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

Mr. Speaker, it is amazing, I guess if you say something to knock people,

you just assume they are going to think it is true.

Let's talk about the facts. Let's talk about the numbers. This bill provides the VA \$16.4 billion above FY23 levels. We are over the levels the Democrats passed last year. We are actually at the levels that the President wanted, that he put in his budget request for FY24. We are fully funding the VA.

My crystal ball is broken today, but I am willing to bet that every single Democrat will vote "no" on this bill which, again, fully funds the VA and all the programs that they are talking about. Let's just see where they vote tomorrow. It is quite amazing.

The talk about DEI in the military, under the Biden administration DEI created a recruiting and retention crisis without any reason for doing this, and that has weakened our military readiness. I was in the Navy. I lived through this.

I can tell you that DEI and CRT are plummeting our recruitment numbers. For what? From 2015 to 2020, the Army went on a witch hunt. The Army reported 21 of roughly a million soldiers were subject to disciplinary actions due to participation in extremist organizations. That was in 2020, they said a million soldiers were involved in this.

In 2021, the DOD did a study on that, and it reported that less than 100 of the over 2 million servicemembers actually participated in prohibited activity. For those of you without a calculator, that is roughly 0.00005 percent. That is what we are fighting over here.

The underlying legislation we are talking about actually eliminates wasteful spending for DEI and CRT, and puts it where we need it, in veterans' programs and military construction. It also does a lot to reverse the negative impact on military readiness and what is driving down our recruitment—just one of the many things that is driving down our recruitment.

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

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman talked about facts. Again, these are not my numbers. These are their numbers. This year in this bill, House Republicans appropriate \$17.5 billion for military construction. That is \$1.5 billion less than the current level. In other words, it is a decrease. It is a cut of \$1.5 billion to military construction, which is used for housing for our servicemembers.

Under current levels, there is \$200 million dedicated to PFAS remediation. In this bill, there is none.

President Biden requested \$2 billion to address the infrastructure backlog in our military. Under this bill, there is none.

These are not my numbers. These are their numbers.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to include in the RECORD an article from The Hill today titled: "Senate GOP fears House actions could lead to shutdown: It's going to be a problem."

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

There was no objection.

[From The Hill, June 15, 2023]

SENATE GOP FEARS HOUSE ACTIONS COULD LEAD TO SHUTDOWN: 'IT'S GOING TO BE A PROBLEM'

(By Al Weaver)

Senate Republicans are worried the House GOP's decision to write government funding bills at levels below those laid out in the recently passed bipartisan debt ceiling bill will create a tough road for lawmakers to avert a government shutdown.

House Republican leaders this week announced a plan to write 2024 spending bills at fiscal 2022 levels, an attempt to assuage House Freedom Caucus members who effectively shut down all work in the chamber last week over their dissatisfaction with the debt ceiling deal struck by Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) and President Biden.

The news outraged Democrats and landed like a thud with GOP appropriators in the Senate, leaving them to scramble to get a funding bill through Congress before the end of September.

"It's going to be a problem," Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (W.Va.), the No. 5 Senate Republican and an Appropriations Committee member, told The Hill. "I don't want to co-opt what Sen. [Susan] Collins [R-Maine] might say, but . . . we struck an agreement that will write to those numbers."

"We'll go into a collaborative conference, try to hash it out," Capito continued. "But I don't think it's going to be easy."

The Senate has eight working weeks between now and the end of September before a spending deal is needed, with the annual monthlong August recess sandwiched in between.

In total, the decision to put the bills together at the 2022 levels would represent a \$120 billion haircut that Democrats in both chambers and most Senate Republicans are not at all prepared to swallow.

A number of Senate Republicans were already upset that the debt ceiling agreement likely will not allow for an increase in defense spending in any 2024 funding deal, and the possibility of even greater cuts is making the road to an agreement even more treacherous than before.

"I'm not concerned that we lack the capacity to do it," Sen. Bill Hagerty (R-Tenn.), a Senate Appropriations Committee member, told The Hill. "But we have to have the will to get on it."

If there's anything that makes some senators hopeful that they can reach a resolution, it's the carrot and stick included in the debt ceiling deal. If a spending accord is not struck, a 1 percent cut across the board for defense and nondefense priorities would go into effect next year—a result almost no one in the upper chamber wants.

Senators on both sides of the aisle are warning the national security implications will be dire if the cuts take place.

"I think there's an incentive for both sides to try and get to a deal even though it's going to be really hard," said Sen. John Thune (S.D.), the No. 2 Senate Republican. "Moving bills here is hard enough. It's going to be really challenging I think in the House."

McCarthy and House Republicans have attempted to assuage concerns that a shutdown may be the end result of their decision and have insisted they are adhering to the debt deal. They say the budget caps represent a ceiling, not a floor, meaning writing bills at 2022 numbers is reasonable.

Democrats could not disagree more. They note lawmakers generally look at spending caps as spending levels to aim for, not a number to come in under, and they believe McCarthy is "reneging" on his deal with the

White House, according to Sen. Angus King (I-Maine).

"This is a big problem," said Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), a Senate appropriator. "This is obviously a bad start in the House because the ink was barely dry . . . before Speaker McCarthy ran away from the bargain he struck."

"It seems pretty clear that Speaker McCarthy's No. 1 priority is political survival and I think feels he has to cater to the far-right, MAGA crowd there," Van Hollen continued. "It's clearly going to make for some rocky moments over the next couple of [months]."

The gripes of Senate Democrats echo their House colleagues. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.) said Democrats will oppose anything under the spending levels laid out in the debt ceiling deal.

"The Senate is going to mark up to the deal that was made. And so House Republicans are going to completely make themselves irrelevant [and] make their members vote on these deep, deep cuts, and it has no possibility of becoming law," Rep. Pete Aguilar (Calif.), the chair of the House Democratic Caucus, told reporters Tuesday in the Capitol.

Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, has already vowed to bring up the series of a dozen appropriations bills at the levels agreed to in the recently passed debt ceiling bill.

And some in the Senate are simply ignoring the House's actions as lawmakers realize that any spending deal will have to move in a similar fashion to the debt ceiling deal, which drew conservative ire but ultimately passed in a bipartisan fashion.

"It doesn't strike me as serious. . . . I don't think it can pass the House and even if it does it definitely can't pass the Senate," said Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii), a Senate appropriator. "We're going to have to do a bipartisan appropriations bill and they can start out with whatever partisan position they want, but this ain't it."

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, that article is quoting a Republican Senator from the gentleman's region, his neighbor, Senator SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO.

□ 1300

When House Republicans shut down the government in 66 days, which they seem committed to doing, the American people will be right to ask the question, they will be justified to ask the question of why House Republicans decided to focus their time on the northern long-eared bat and the lesser prairie-chicken. It is a fair question for the American people to ask.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado for his leadership, and the manager of our friends on the other side of the aisle.

The United States military, each and every soldier, each and every member of every single branch, take an oath when they leave their loved ones and accept the responsibility of dying for this country. If you have been able to fight on a battlefield and become a veteran, you still have taken that oath and you were willing to die for this country.

With the enormous cuts that are facing our soldiers, our families in this

military construction legislation, let me make it plain for my colleagues. They will deny those who take an oath, Active Duty, their families, job opportunities. They will deny them housing.

Has anyone been to bases and seen some of the military housing that needs absolute either rebuild or rehab?

Have you understood the importance of food assistance, particularly to veterans' families depending on that?

Do they know how important it is for the soldiers to feed their families, to keep roofs over their heads?

Do they know how important it is to provide education and training opportunities for those who leave the United States military?

Let me remind you of the importance of their oath, and then let me remind you of the hard-earned work that this Congress did with President Biden to provide the PACT Act. The proposed cuts would have drastic consequences for the PACT Act. That is the bill that recognizes the toxicity that our brave men and women were in while they were fighting battles. That exposure fund could lead to slashing the medical care resources in the fund by 86 percent and fully abandoning the toxic exposure fund next year.

Are we defaulting on our commitment to those who took the oath to die for this Nation? I think that is worthy of shame.

Cities will be vulnerable when their veterans do not have the resources that are necessary for them to have.

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

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, can you imagine the burden on local cities?

Our veterans are homeless. Our veterans are suffering, many times from PTSD, and if we do not have the kind of support services for them that this legislation provides, where are we in terms of the kind of housing and other assistance that they may need?

I just simply ask my friends on the other side of the aisle, we stand here on the floor, I am fighting for the cities and the States that receive these dollars ultimately, because that is where the people are.

I do want to oppose the bills that are endangering our endangered species, S.J. Res. 9 and H.R. 4366. I oppose endangering our endangered species.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in opposition to H.R. 4366, Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024.

This is a bill that appropriates funding for our military, the Department of Veteran Affairs, and other related agencies for fiscal year 2024.

I strongly oppose this bill's realignment of military construction funding from priority projects to other less relevant projects.

The level of funding allocations in this bill does not help the Veteran Affairs to support key priorities of its Administration such as ending veteran homelessness, increasing access

to mental healthcare, and providing suicide prevention services, as well as investments in other critical areas, including caregiver support programs, overdose prevention, and treatment programs.

While it is important to make annual adjustments to bills such as this, our national strategic planning cannot be based on vague predictions; it must present a concrete plan that goes beyond the current year.

This Congress, and other relevant elements of the U.S. government should focus on a real integrated strategy that considers all aspects of national security spending while also helping to protect our veterans.

Any reckless policies that attempt to claw back billions in funding for veterans' medical care would have negative impact on our veterans and put their healthcare in jeopardy.

This bill should reflect efforts by the Congress to secure protection for adequate funding to ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs will be able to continue to spend those essential resources for veterans' medical care.

Doubling down on the Default on America Act by cutting over \$142 billion in funding does nothing but hurts our veterans, farmers, and their families by denying them access vital programs that they rely on.

Surprisingly, Republicans do not want to end there; recent reports indicate that they want to go up to over \$159 billion in funding cuts, and even as high as \$189 billion with their insatiable desire for drastic cuts in funding for programs that support American families.

Republicans need to stand by their word and let this House and the American people know where they stand on their support for veterans.

Any radical cuts in funding by Republicans to the Department of Housing and Urban Development would be devastating to more than 50,000 veterans who rely on the Housing Choice Vouchers for their housing needs.

Cutting funding to the Department of Labor by as high as 30 percent would result in more than 4,200 veterans losing the job training, counseling, and job readiness services they so desperately need; a group that is already either experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Earlier versions of Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill that Republicans supported in subcommittee provided for the transfer of \$4.5 billion in critical funding for veterans' medical care to other purposes.

The Republican-backed bill, if passed, could have resulted in drastic cuts to dedicated funding for veterans exposed to Agent Orange, burn pits, and other toxic substances.

Republican proposed cuts would have drastic consequences for the PACT Act Toxic Exposures Fund and could lead to slashing the medical care resources in the Fund by 86 percent, and fully abandoning the Toxic Exposures Fund next year.

I, along with my Democrat colleagues, will continue to work with veterans' organizations to ensure that this bill does not pass with these unreasonable cuts to critical programs and services that veterans across the country depend on.

Congress cannot renege on the pledge and promises that are contained in the PACT Act; to provide the necessary, dedicated, funding; this bill requires nothing short of full funding for the Toxic Exposures Fund.

Even with all these necessary measures, the 2024 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies funding bill still

falls short of our commitment to veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

This Committee should not pass a bill that cuts military construction by billions of dollars in effort to cut down on the entire process of funding the government.

Through the PACT Act, the Biden administration continue to deliver its promise to better serve and better take care of our veterans of all wars who have been exposed to harmful chemicals like Agent Orange, burn pits, and other toxic substances.

That funding for toxic exposures should not have to compete with other discretionary priorities; it should complement other funding sources.

In addition to these drastic cuts, Section 258 of H.R. 4366 would prevent the VA from using funds to implement, administer, or carry out the Interim Final Rule (IFR) published on September 9, 2022, which expanded access to abortion for certain veterans, a provision which also prevents the VA from providing needed care to veterans when the health of the woman is endangered.

Our country must ensure that the department of Veteran Affairs is able to provide access to abortions, especially in instances where the life or health of the pregnant veteran would be endangered if the pregnancy were carried to term, or when a pregnancy is the result of rape or incest.

Sections 414, 415, and 417 of this H.R. 4366 further outline provisions that seek to limit efforts by the Federal Government to implement a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty, inequality, and diversity.

In its current state, this bill would prevent the Veteran Affairs from using funds to display any but the listed flags, intended to prevent the Veteran Affairs from displaying flags demonstrating support for historically marginalized groups such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex veterans.

This would indiscriminately undermine same sex marriage while also unduly complicating the routine business of the Department to provide healthcare and other services for veterans.

The President's budget proposal presents a viable solution to provide desperately needed funding for construction projects and the military construction bill must prove to support the President's commitments to our veterans.

Any real, pragmatic progress in Veteran Affairs' infrastructure backlog requires dedicated investment in our facilities outside the normal discretionary funding streams.

It is my sincere hope that this military construction appropriation would ensure the quality of care at Veteran Affairs facilities for our veterans and Veteran Affairs employees.

As our military leadership has indicated, 30 percent of our military infrastructure worldwide remains in poor condition; cutting funding for military construction is not a viable solution to this problem.

With the present need to address recruitment and retention problem that currently faces our military, and to ensure a major quality of life issue for our servicemembers, we cannot afford these senseless cuts to military construction funding.

I cannot support the passage of this military construction bill because our nation cannot to

backtrack on our commitment to our servicemembers and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I speak in opposition to S.J. Res. 9, a resolution that provides for congressional disapproval to legislatively de-list the lesser prairie-chicken from protection under the Endangered Species Act.

Specifically, this bill calls on Congress to disapprove the rules submitted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service relating to protections for endangered and threatened wildlife and plants.

The population and habitat of the lesser prairie-chicken, an endangered southwestern prairie grouse, is under growing threat.

Originally numbering in the millions, the population of this bird has decreased by as much as 97%, and it now only inhabits 16% of its former habitat.

Aerial survey results from 2012 through 2022 estimate a 5-year average lesser prairie-chicken population of 32,210 across the five-state region in Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, as well as my state of Texas.

The conversion of natural grasslands to agriculture, energy development, fire suppression, drought, and the use of herbicides to kill Shinnery Oak habitat are all ongoing challenges that cause habitat loss and fragmentation.

Additional harm is caused to these birds' habitats by fencing, power wires, and other tall structures that entice perching by predatory animals.

The lesser prairie-chicken is a sign of healthy prairies and grasslands because it requires huge, undamaged natural grassland parcels to support self-sustaining populations.

This makes them a crucial indicator of the general well-being of America's grasslands, a treasured and iconic terrain.

It is essential that we work together to uphold the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which is responsible for the recovery of iconic species like the bald eagle.

I urge my colleagues to support science-based decisions and join me in opposing this bill, S.J. Res. 9.

Mr. Speaker, I speak in opposition to S.J. Res. 24, which relates to the endangered species status of the Northern Long-Eared Bat.

S.J. Res. 24 is a resolution of congressional disapproval to legislatively down-list the Northern Long-Eared Bat from "endangered" to "threatened."

Not only would this downgrade the Northern Long-Eared Bat's status today, but it would effectively block the species from being moved up to a higher endangered threat level, no matter how close the species comes to extinction.

It would be irresponsible to use extreme legislation, not science, to down-list the Northern Long-Eared Bat, thereby effectively scaling back its protections under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Without ESA protections, states, industries, and other entities will have little incentive to conserve or recover the Northern Long-Eared Bat.

It is highly likely that the bat populations would likely dwindle further towards extinction.

Moreover, by using the Congressional Review Act Process, this Congress is effectively limiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from making similar future listings for this bat species.

This move would prevent the agency from using its discretion to take the necessary

measures for species conservation and will impede long term recovery efforts.

Ultimately, Congressional action in this arena gives industries, not science, the upper hand in species listings.

It is clear that some of my colleagues are doing the bidding of the timber and agriculture industries, despite the consequences that Northern Long-Eared Bat extinction could have on biodiversity and long-term agriculture and timber industry practices.

Down-listing this species would be especially dangerous in the current moment because the Northern Long-Eared Bat population is actively under threat from white nose syndrome, a deadly fungus that has caused a rapid decline in bat populations.

The Northern Long-Eared Bat's current endangered status provides adequate protections while wildlife scientists work to address the underlying causes of white-nose syndrome.

More broadly, Congress should not be interfering with the work of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under its Endangered Species Act authority.

Species populations are constantly fluctuating based on environmental factors, invasive species, climate change, and other emerging threats.

To remain up to date, the ESA requires periodic study and updates to ensure protections align with the best available science.

By blocking future up-listing decisions, using the Congressional Review Act undercuts the ESA's inherent flexibility and agencies' science-based decision-making for species conservation.

I urge my colleagues to support science-based decisions for endangered and threatened species and oppose this bill.

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

We can sit here and talk about the numbers all day because the Republicans, we have actually increased military construction \$800 million over what President Biden requested in his budget. We are \$800 million over what the President wanted.

Where are we using that money? Well, we are using it in places like the South Pacific. Today, China is the global leader in human rights abuses.

In 2021, the Trump administration determined that the CCP is committing genocide against the Uyghurs. In the South China Sea, China is militarizing disputed territory and growing their malign influence.

In 2020, let's not forget that China ended Hong Kong's longstanding autonomy and a democracy came crashing down.

In 2019, a manmade virus escaped from a Chinese lab in Wuhan, killing tens of millions around the world. In the near future, the CCP plans to invade our ally, the free and independent democracy of Taiwan.

That is why I support the underlying legislation which focuses investment in the Pacific theater by providing \$1.425 billion for infrastructure related to the Pacific Deterrence Initiative and \$131 million for U.S. INDOPACOM. That is the Indo-Pacific Command.

Again, think about those numbers. Think about combating China and their malign influences. When the Democrats sit here and say they are going to vote against this bill, they are voting against strengthening our Pacific theater against the malign influence of the CCP.

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

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

Again it feels like Ground Hog Day. Again, I have great respect for my friend from Pennsylvania, but I don't understand what numbers he is looking at.

Does he deny that in statute we appropriated last year \$19 billion for military construction?

He is an appropriator. I am happy to engage in a colloquy with him to the extent that he wishes to clarify that.

Last year, military construction was funded at \$19 billion. This year, it is funded at \$17.5 billion. Not complicated, and, of course, the gentleman knows that because half of his caucus is bragging about the fact that they have cut military construction and a variety of other programs, juxtaposed against the levels that were set by Congressional Democrats.

This is not disputed anywhere but apparently during this particular debate. They are cutting military construction. They are not funding military infrastructure backlog needs that the President has requested of this Congress; and they have zeroed out any dedicated funding for PFAS remediation. Those are the facts.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MCGARVEY).

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule on H.R. 4366 and the underlying bill. I oppose this bill because it hurts our servicemembers, it hurts our veterans, and it weakens our military.

This bill fails our servicemembers and hurts our military readiness. It cuts over \$1.5 billion for military construction projects all over the country, and includes no funding, no funding to make military installations like Fort Knox and Fort Campbell more resilient against climate change and the natural disasters that have ravaged my home State of Kentucky.

Instead of writing a bill that strengthens our military or will improve resources for our servicemembers, my Republican colleagues are bringing to the floor a bill riddled with the partisan provisions to get rid of diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, restrict women's access to abortion and reproductive healthcare, and make VA facilities less welcoming for all of those who served our country.

These are distractions. We shouldn't pick and choose which servicemembers we honor. Anyone who answers the call to serve our country deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, and they deserve to have access to quality

healthcare, food, housing assistance, and more.

Mr. Speaker, this bill does nothing to actually support our military, our veterans, and our servicemembers.

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time remains on both sides.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Colorado has 5½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 18½ minutes remaining.

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

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers at this time, and I am prepared to close.

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

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

Again, I thank my friend and colleague from Pennsylvania for the respectful debate. I understand that we don't see eye to eye on the bills that this House will unfortunately be considering this week but, nonetheless, I appreciate his courtesy.

Mr. Speaker, today marks 200 days since House Republicans gaveled us into this 118th Session of the United States Congress; 200 days that they have been in control; 200 days that they have had the gavels here in Washington, D.C.

The American people would be justified in asking how have House Republicans spent those 200 days. Any bills to address inflation, to lower costs for working families, any bills to grow the middle class, to build safer communities? The answer is none.

Instead, they have pursued extreme policy after extreme policy, and this MILCON appropriation bill is no exception. Gas stoves, the northern long-eared bat, the lesser prairie-chicken, and whatever other issue House Republicans conjure up when we are back in session, that is how they have chosen to spend their time and taxpayer dollars.

When House Democrats were in control, working with President Biden and our colleagues in the upper Chamber, we focused on issues that mattered to the American people:

A bipartisan infrastructure law that, unfortunately, most of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle in this Chamber voted against that is rebuilding bridges and roads and highways across this country from Pennsylvania to Colorado, ensuring folks have clean water to drink and clean air to breathe;

The PACT Act, the most comprehensive veterans' healthcare legislation enacted in my lifetime, that 174 Republicans in this Chamber voted against;

The Inflation Reduction Act, capping insulin costs at \$35 for seniors participating in Medicare across the country. That is how we spent our time.

As I said earlier, we know that in 66 days, House Republicans will shut down the government. They are

telegraphing that. Many of their Members have said publicly that they want to shut down the government; that, in their view, a shutdown of the government is the desired outcome; 66 days.

Mr. Speaker, in 72 hours, Republicans will gavel this Chamber out of session. They will adjourn this Chamber for a 45-day recess.

Mr. Speaker, 66 days until the government runs out of funding, 45-day recess, 72 hours until that recess, and we are here debating the lesser prairie-chicken and the northern long-eared bat.

It is deeply disappointing, and it does not comport with how the American public expects us to operate here in Washington, D.C. We can do better, and I would challenge my Republican colleagues to come back from the brink that I described earlier, work with us in good faith. Help us deliver for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this rule, and to vote "no" on the underlying bills. If you support cutting military construction, if you support not addressing military infrastructure backlog, if you support zeroing out PFAS remediation then, by all means, vote for the MILCON bill. But if you oppose those draconian cuts, as I do, then I hope you will vote "no."

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

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

I thank my good friend from Colorado for the spirited debate. I always enjoy it.

We are here today because the Biden administration wants to tell the American people what they can do, how they can live. They want to tell you what kind of car you have to drive. They want to tell you what kind of stove that you can buy. They want to tell you what kind of energy you can use to heat your home.

Now, under these Department of the Interior rules, Biden bureaucrats want to place further burdens on our farmers and ranchers, our rural communities, and economic development and on public and private land.

Instead of focusing on the lesser prairie-chicken and the long-eared bat, maybe the Department should focus on securing our domestic energy supply chains and supporting American energy independence. Maybe that is the real purpose of why we are here talking about these issues, to force this Department to actually focus on what matters to American security and the American economy.

I urge my colleagues to send that message to the Biden administration and support the underlying legislation.

Additionally, as a Navy veteran, I support the underlying legislation that fulfills our commitments to America's veterans, our servicemembers, and their families.

□ 1315

Let's not forget that this MILCON-VA bill is \$800 million for military construction over what President Biden requested in his budget request for FY24. It is also at the President's requested level of FY24. Maybe instead of attacking these numbers, my Democratic colleagues should be attacking their far-left Democratic President who wanted numbers below what the Republicans wrote for these numbers, and, again, we are fully funding Biden's requested VA numbers.

It is simple that a "no" vote on this is a vote against our veterans, and that is absolutely horrifying. Our country has sent generations of heroes around the globe to defend our freedoms and the freedoms of others. It is essential that we now take care of those who took care of us.

For those reasons, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the previous question and "yes" on the rule.

The material previously referred to by Mr. NEGUSE is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 614 OFFERED BY
MR. NEGUSE OF COLORADO

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

SEC. 8. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution, the House shall proceed to the consideration in the House of the resolution (H. Res. 178) affirming the House of Representatives' commitment to protect and strengthen Social Security and Medicare. The resolution shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the resolution and preamble to adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question except one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means or their respective designees.

SEC. 9. Clause 1 (c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H. Res. 178.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

Mr. NEGUSE. 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 question are postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for a period of less than 15 minutes.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 16 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1330

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro

tempore (Mr. D'ESPOSITO) at 1 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Ordering the previous question on House Resolution 614;

Adoption of House Resolution 614, if ordered; and

The motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3395, if ordered.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4366, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2024; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF S.J. RES. 9, PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE RELATING TO "ENDANGERED AND THREATENED WILDLIFE AND PLANTS; LESSER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN; THREATENED STATUS WITH SECTION 4(D) RULE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTINCT POPULATION SEGMENT AND ENDANGERED STATUS FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTINCT POPULATION SEGMENT"; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF S.J. RES. 24, PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE RELATING TO "ENDANGERED AND THREATENED WILDLIFE AND PLANTS; ENDANGERED SPECIES STATUS FOR NORTHERN LONG-EARED BAT"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 614) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4366) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the joint resolution (S.J. Res. 9) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service relating to "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Lesser Prairie-Chicken; Threat-

ened Status With Section 4(d) Rule for the Northern Distinct Population Segment and Endangered Status for the Southern Distinct Population Segment"; and providing for consideration of the joint resolution (S.J. Res. 24) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service relating to "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Endangered Species Status for Northern Long-Eared Bat", on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 208, nays 191, not voting 35, as follows:

[Roll No. 367]

YEAS—208

Aderholt	Foxx	Mast
Alford	Franklin, C.	McCarthy
Allen	Scott	McCaul
Amodei	Fulcher	McClain
Armstrong	Gaetz	McClintock
Arrington	Gallagher	McCormick
Babin	Garbarino	McHenry
Bacon	Garcia, Mike	Meuser
Baird	Jimenez	Miller (IL)
Balderson	Gonzales, Tony	Miller (OH)
Banks	Gooden (TX)	Miller (WV)
Barr	Gosar	Miller-Meeks
Bean (FL)	Granger	Mills
Bentz	Graves (LA)	Molinaro
Bergman	Graves (MO)	Moolenaar
Bice	Green (TN)	Mooney
Biggs	Griffith	Moore (AL)
Boebert	Grothman	Moore (UT)
Bost	Guest	Moran
Brecheen	Guthrie	Murphy
Buchanan	Hageman	Nehls
Buck	Harris	Newhouse
Bucshon	Harshbarger	Norman
Burchett	Hern	Nunn (IA)
Burgess	Higgins (LA)	Oberholte
Burlison	Hill	Ogles
Calvert	Hinson	Owens
Cammack	Houchin	Palmer
Carey	Hudson	Pence
Carl	Huizenga	Perry
Carter (GA)	Hunt	Pfleger
Chavez-DeRemer	Issa	Posey
Ciscomani	Jackson (TX)	Reschenthaler
Cline	James	Rodgers (WA)
Cloud	Johnson (LA)	Rogers (AL)
Clyde	Johnson (OH)	Rogers (KY)
Cole	Johnson (SD)	Rosendale
Collins	Jordan	Rouzer
Comer	Joyce (PA)	Roy
Crane	Kean (NJ)	Rutherford
Crawford	Kelly (MS)	Santos
Crenshaw	Kelly (PA)	Scalise
Curtis	Kiggans (VA)	Schweikert
D'Esposito	Kiley	Scott, Austin
Davidson	Kim (CA)	Self
De La Cruz	Kustoff	Simpson
DesJarlais	LaHood	Smith (MO)
Diaz-Balart	LaLota	Smith (NE)
Donalds	LaMalfa	Smith (NJ)
Duarte	Lamborn	Smucker
Duncan	Langworthy	Spartz
Dunn (FL)	Latta	Stauber
Edwards	LaTurner	Steel
Ellzey	Lawler	Stefanik
Emmer	Lee (FL)	Steil
Estes	Lesko	Steube
Ezell	Letlow	Stewart
Fallon	Loudermilk	Strong
Feenstra	Lucas	Tenney
Ferguson	Luetkemeyer	Thompson (PA)
Finstad	Luna	Tiffany
Fischbach	Luttrell	Turner
Fitzgerald	Mace	Valadao
Fitzpatrick	Malliotakis	Van Duyn
Fleischmann	Mann	Van Orden
Flood	Massie	Wagner