

definition to mean the two latest published editions of building codes, which is expected to prevent significant administrative burdens on States and local municipalities responsible for producing hazard mitigation plans, reduce burdensome regulations on trade industries responsible for adapting their techniques to meet new building standards and codes, and to support stabilized building costs that would otherwise be interrupted by frequently changing building codes and rising construction costs.

Using the latest two editions of building codes does not jeopardize home resilience and will continue to ensure our communities are prepared for disaster if it ever strikes.

Additionally, the Promoting Resilient Buildings Act, as amended, establishes a pilot program to fund individual resilient home retrofits with FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities, or BRIC, program.

In order to increase disaster mitigation among States, it is imperative we expand program flexibility. This expansion includes providing opportunities for individual homeowners to access pre-hazard mitigation funding to minimize the impact of natural disasters. I thank the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS) for her amendment, as reported by the committee, to provide this important flexibility.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues support this bill, which is important to homebuilders and community members through NC-11 and across the Nation.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I am not going to ping-pong this back and forth. I yield back the balance of my time.

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

This bill extends the current building code definition set in the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 to allow greater flexibility for States and local governments, ultimately ensuring that disaster victims have an easier time rebuilding after a disaster.

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. 5473, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AIRPORT AND AIRWAY EXTENSION ACT OF 2023, PART II

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6503) to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend au-

thorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6503

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2023, Part II".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—FEDERAL AVIATION PROGRAMS

Sec. 101. Airport improvement program.

Sec. 102. Extension of expiring authorities; miscellaneous authorizations.

Sec. 103. Federal Aviation Administration operations.

Sec. 104. Air navigation facilities and equipment.

Sec. 105. Research, engineering, and development.

Sec. 106. Small community air service.

TITLE II—AVIATION REVENUE PROVISIONS

Sec. 201. Expenditure authority from Airport and Airway Trust Fund.

Sec. 202. Extension of taxes funding Airport and Airway Trust Fund.

TITLE I—FEDERAL AVIATION PROGRAMS

SEC. 101. AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 48103(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking paragraph (7) and inserting the following:

"(7) \$1,464,480,874 for the period beginning October 1, 2023, and ending on March 8, 2024."

(b) OBLIGATION AUTHORITY.—Subject to limitations specified in advance in appropriation Acts, sums made available pursuant to the amendment made by subsection (a) may be obligated at any time through September 30, 2024, and shall remain available until expended.

(c) PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.—For purposes of calculating funding apportionments and meeting other requirements under sections 47114, 47115, 47116, and 47117 of title 49, United States Code, for the period beginning on October 1, 2023, and ending on March 8, 2024, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall—

(1) first calculate such funding apportionments on an annualized basis as if the total amount available under section 48103 of such title for fiscal year 2024 was \$3,350,000,000; and

(2) then reduce by 56 percent—

(A) all funding apportionment amounts calculated under paragraph (1); and

(B) amounts made available pursuant to subsections (b) and (f)(2) of section 47117 of such title.

(d) EXTENSION OF PROJECT GRANT AUTHORITY.—Section 47104(c) of title 49, United States Code, is amended in the matter preceding paragraph (1) by striking "December 31, 2023," and inserting "March 8, 2024,".

(e) EXTENSION OF SPECIAL RULE FOR APPORTIONMENTS.—Section 47114(c)(1)(J) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking "December 31, 2023," and inserting "March 8, 2024,".

SEC. 102. EXTENSION OF EXPIRING AUTHORITIES; MISCELLANEOUS AUTHORIZATIONS.

(a) AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE INSURANCE.—Section 44310(b) of title 49, United States

Code, is amended by striking "December 31, 2023" and inserting "March 8, 2024".

(b) UNMANNED AIRCRAFT TEST RANGES.—Section 44803(h) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking "December 31, 2023" and inserting "March 8, 2024".

(c) SPECIAL AUTHORITY FOR CERTAIN UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS.—Section 44807(d) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking "December 31, 2023" and inserting "March 8, 2024".

(d) EXTENSION OF AIRPORT SAFETY AND AIRSPACE HAZARD MITIGATION AND ENFORCEMENT.—Section 44810(h) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking "December 31, 2023" and inserting "March 8, 2024".

(e) COMPETITIVE ACCESS REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Section 47107(r)(3) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking "January 1, 2024" and inserting "March 9, 2024".

(f) MARSHALL ISLANDS, MICRONESIA, AND PALAU.—Section 47115(i) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking "December 31, 2023" and inserting "March 8, 2024".

(g) SUPPLEMENTAL DISCRETIONARY FUNDS.—Section 47115(j)(4)(A) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking clause (vi) and adding at the end the following:

"(vi) \$244,177,049 for the period beginning on October 1, 2023, and ending on March 8, 2024."

(h) COMPATIBLE LAND USE PLANNING AND PROJECTS BY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.—Section 47141(f) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking "December 31, 2023" and inserting "March 8, 2024".

(i) NON-MOVEMENT AREA SURVEILLANCE PILOT PROGRAM.—Section 47143(c) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking "January 1, 2024" and inserting "March 9, 2024".

(j) WEATHER REPORTING PROGRAMS.—Section 48105 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking paragraph (5) and adding at the end the following:

"(5) \$17,049,180 for the period beginning on October 1, 2023, and ending on March 8, 2024."

(k) LEARNING PERIOD.—Section 50905(c)(9) of title 51, United States Code, is amended by striking "January 1, 2024" and inserting "March 9, 2024".

(l) MIDWAY ISLAND AIRPORT.—Section 186(d) of the Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act (Public Law 108-176; 117 Stat. 2518) is amended by striking "December 31, 2023," and inserting "March 8, 2024,".

(m) FINAL ORDER ESTABLISHING MILEAGE AND ADJUSTMENT ELIGIBILITY.—Section 409(d) of the Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act (49 U.S.C. 47131 note) is amended by striking "December 31, 2023" and inserting "March 8, 2024".

(n) CONTRACT WEATHER OBSERVERS.—Section 2306(b) of the FAA Extension, Safety, and Security Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-190; 130 Stat. 641) is amended by striking "January 1, 2024" and inserting "March 9, 2024".

(o) REMOTE TOWER PILOT PROGRAM.—Section 161(a)(10) of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (49 U.S.C. 47104 note) is amended by striking "December 31, 2023" and inserting "March 8, 2024".

(p) AIRPORT ACCESS ROADS IN REMOTE LOCATIONS; STORAGE FACILITIES FOR SNOW REMOVAL EQUIPMENT.—Section 162 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (49 U.S.C. 47102 note) is amended by striking "December 31, 2023" and inserting "March 8, 2024".

(q) UAS REMOTE DETECTION AND IDENTIFICATION PILOT PROGRAM.—Section 372(d) of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (49 U.S.C. 44810 note) is amended by striking "December 31, 2023" and inserting "March 8, 2024".

(r) ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR AVIATION CONSUMER PROTECTION.—Section 411(h) of the

FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (49 U.S.C. 42301 note) is amended by striking “December 31, 2023” and inserting “March 8, 2024”.

(s) AVIATION CONSUMER ADVOCATE.—Section 424(e) of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (49 U.S.C. 42302 note) is amended by striking “December 31, 2023” and inserting “March 8, 2024”.

(t) ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AIR TRAVEL NEEDS OF PASSENGERS WITH DISABILITIES.—Section 439(g) of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (49 U.S.C. 41705 note) is amended by striking “December 31, 2023” and inserting “March 8, 2024”.

(u) ENHANCED TRAFFIC SERVICES.—Section 547(e) of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (49 U.S.C. 40103 note) is amended by striking “December 31, 2023” and inserting “March 8, 2024”.

(v) PILOT PROGRAM FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF AIRPORT PROPERTIES.—Section 822(k) of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (49 U.S.C. 47141 note) is amended by striking “December 31, 2023” and inserting “March 8, 2024”.

SEC. 103. FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION OPERATIONS.

Section 106(k) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1) by striking subparagraph (G) and inserting after subparagraph (F) the following:

“(G) \$5,208,743,169 for the period beginning on October 1, 2023, and ending on March 8, 2024.”; and

(2) in paragraph (3) by striking “December 31, 2023” and inserting “March 8, 2024”.

SEC. 104. AIR NAVIGATION FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT.

Section 48101(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking paragraph (7) and adding at the end the following:

“(7) \$1,287,431,694 for the period beginning on October 1, 2023, and ending on March 8, 2024.”.

SEC. 105. RESEARCH, ENGINEERING, AND DEVELOPMENT.

Section 48102(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking paragraph (16) and inserting the following:

“(16) \$111,475,410 for the period beginning on October 1, 2023, and ending on March 8, 2024.”.

SEC. 106. SMALL COMMUNITY AIR SERVICE.

(a) ESSENTIAL AIR SERVICE AUTHORIZATION.—Section 41742(a)(2) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking “\$89,191,486 for the period beginning on October 1, 2023, and ending on December 31, 2023,” and inserting “\$155,115,628 for the period beginning on October 1, 2023, and ending on March 8, 2024.”.

(b) AIRPORTS NOT RECEIVING SUFFICIENT SERVICE.—Section 41743(e)(2) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking “\$2,513,661 for the period beginning on October 1, 2023, and ending on December 31, 2023,” and inserting “\$4,371,585 for the period beginning on October 1, 2023, and ending on March 8, 2024.”.

TITLE II—AVIATION REVENUE PROVISIONS

SEC. 201. EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY FROM AIRPORT AND AIRWAY TRUST FUND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 9502(d)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) by striking “January 1, 2024” and inserting “March 9, 2024”; and

(2) in subparagraph (A) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting “or the Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2023, Part II;”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 9502(e)(2) of such Code is amended by striking “January 1, 2024” and inserting “March 9, 2024”.

SEC. 202. EXTENSION OF TAXES FUNDING AIRPORT AND AIRWAY TRUST FUND.

(a) FUEL TAXES.—Section 4081(d)(2)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking “December 31, 2023” and inserting “March 8, 2024”.

(b) TICKET TAXES.—

(1) PERSONS.—Section 4261(k)(1)(A)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking “December 31, 2023” and inserting “March 8, 2024”.

(2) PROPERTY.—Section 4271(d)(1)(A)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking “December 31, 2023” and inserting “March 8, 2024”.

(c) FRACTIONAL OWNERSHIP PROGRAMS.—

(1) FUEL TAX.—Section 4043(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking “December 31, 2023” and inserting “March 8, 2024”.

(2) TREATMENT AS NONCOMMERCIAL AVIATION.—Section 4083(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking “January 1, 2024” and inserting “March 9, 2024”.

(3) EXEMPTION FROM TICKET TAX.—Section 4261(j) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking “December 31, 2023” and inserting “March 8, 2024”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) 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 into the RECORD on H.R. 6503.

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. 6503 extends the statutory authorities of the Federal Aviation Administration through March 8, 2024. This bill also authorizes the continued collection of aviation excise taxes, which are user fees that are critical to ensuring the safe operation of our air traffic control system and for capital infrastructure projects at airports all over the country.

This subsequent extension is necessary because the Senate has yet to finalize their FAA reauthorization bill. The House did its part to provide for a long-term reauthorization when we passed H.R. 3935 in an overwhelmingly bipartisan fashion on July 20 with more than 350 votes.

I commend my House colleagues for their commitment to reauthorizing the FAA on time and ahead of schedule. I remain committed to enacting a long-term comprehensive FAA bill as soon as possible, and I know that that goal is shared by our counterparts in the Senate. In the meantime, however, we have to keep the lights on at the FAA to ensure continued safe operation of the national airspace system.

Failure to enact this legislation would result in a loss of revenue total-

ing \$50 million per day from the Airport and Airway Trust Fund. In other words, not passing this bill would directly and immediately increase our national debt by more than \$50 million a day and leave our aviation system less safe.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support this bill so that we can maintain safety in the national airspace system in the absence of a long-term reauthorization. I urge support of this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I am standing in lieu of the ranking member Mr. LARSEN, who can't be here, and he asked me to do this as I am the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Aviation, which this bill came out of.

I was here earlier today on a veterans' bill, and I mentioned that people sometimes don't think we work together, but military and veterans' issues are a place where Democrats and Republicans come together. We also come together on transportation issues generally, and this time we most assuredly did. There was an overwhelmingly large majority passing this bill on the floor, and it was because of the work of Chairman GRAVES, Ranking Member LARSEN, and the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES).

This is a good bill. It protects the flying public. It takes care of consumers who have been left in the breach either on the tarmac or left for hours with the plane not leaving or getting in late, giving them the right to get refunds, compensation, water, all those other things they would like to have. It takes care of trying to see that our air traffic controllers have a larger group of people to choose from, opening it up to minorities who have not really been encouraged and/or permitted so much into the air traffic control system.

We need more and more air traffic controllers, so this bill encourages more people to get involved in that because when we have a lack of air traffic controllers, we have got potential safety problems. We have had 9, 10, or 11—I don't know exactly how many—near-collisions because the air traffic controllers had too much work, some of them were doing other things, and they just don't have enough folks. For safety, we need to get this passed, as well as for consumers.

There are many other improvements detailed in the bill, but I am not going to go through these eight wonderful pages that my staffer has drawn up for me to read. I will just say it is a good bill. The Senate should get their work done and join with us in improving the public's safety in the air and their rights as consumers. The bill includes improvements in airport construction and also gives people with disabilities many more opportunities, too.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage everybody to vote “aye” and pass this bill. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the words of the gentleman from Tennessee.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS), a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, merry Christmas. I thank Chairman GRAVES for yielding and for his leadership this year as we have worked to address many challenging issues that are facing our aviation industry.

Hopefully, soon we will be celebrating enactment of the FAA reauthorization bill that was shepherded through the House in July rather than debating additional short-term extensions. However, Mr. Speaker, here we are, and I rise in support of the Airport and Airway Extension Act.

This legislation will continue the current authorization of the Airport Improvement Program, Essential Air Service, and other key programs through March while we wait for the Senate to act on H.R. 3935.

As we know, our Nation's airports—including Hartsfield-Jackson, which serves my home State of Georgia and, by the way, is the busiest in the world—are constantly working to build new infrastructure in response to rising demand for passenger and cargo services.

They depend on AIP to keep those projects rolling and people and goods flying. That is why I support the Airport and Airway Extension Act, but I also call on the Senate to act quickly on our long-term FAA reauthorization bill, which will modernize FAA operations, grow the aviation workforce, strengthen the general aviation sector, improve the passenger experience, and so much more.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in the House to support the bill before us today and look forward to continuing our work to keep America's skies the safest and most efficient in the world.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, in response to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS), my friend, who wished us all merry Christmas, I wish him merry Christmas and happy Hanukkah.

Today is the Hanukkah party at the White House, and the Speaker has yet to limit votes so that the Members who attend can attend and not miss votes. We had votes moved on Christmas, and they should be moved on Hanukkah, too. I know the Speaker is very concerned about the Bible, and in the Bible, Moses said, let my people go. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), the chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, this body is often fighting over things. We are at one of the most polarized points in our Nation that I have ever experienced, but in this case, this is an instance where Republicans and Democrats are coming together. I thank my good friend, STEVE COHEN, not just for this bill but also for the 5-

year authorization that we passed out of this Chamber back in July. I also thank RICK LARSEN, the ranking member of the full committee; and, of course, SAM GRAVES, the full committee chairman, a good friend, and probably the best expert on aviation in the entire House of Representatives, for their work on aviation this year.

□ 1530

Mr. Speaker, I often hear people quote John Dingell, who said that the other party is the opposition, but the Senate is the enemy. In this case, I think that is exactly what we are experiencing.

Right now, we are in a situation where the House of Representatives, in this very polarized environment, passed a bipartisan FAA bill that we worked on for over 18 months.

The aviation team did an amazing job going through and distilling over 2,000 requests from Members of Congress and stakeholders and generating a bill, while not a metric of success, over 900 pages, ultimately passing the House Transportation Committee unanimously and passing the House of Representatives by a vote of 351 to only 69 people who didn't understand the bill.

Mr. Speaker, that shows huge momentum. We were able to work through complicated issues, as you heard others say, things like improving the passenger experience and making regulatory decisions for the FAA to ensure that we continue to play the leadership role in aviation innovation; to ensure that we have regulatory certainty and that we are not sending innovators and entrepreneurs to other countries to make investments because we don't have regulations, stability, or predictability in the aviation sector where new entrants are coming in at a remarkable rate; to ensure that we move the ball forward and properly strike that balance, as I know the full committee chair is so concerned about, between general aviation and commercial aviation; and to ensure that commercial space travel is properly regulated and has the certainty that they need.

Mr. Speaker, we reorganized the FAA. We improved the training of air traffic controllers. We improved addressing the major cliff that we are going over on pilots, A&P mechanics, and others involved in the aviation space who are so critical to this country.

Rather than sending a bill to the President's desk to do a long-term reauthorization of the FAA for 5 years, which addresses most of the problems in the FAA, we find ourselves now doing a 3-month extension until March 8 because the Senate has been unable to get their job done.

Just 2 weeks ago, we had a hearing in the Aviation Subcommittee where we went through and explored these issues. We looked at this.

The FAA now finally has an Administrator. I am fully supportive of the Ad-

ministrator of the FAA, Administrator Whitaker, for being in there, but we have to have long-term certainty.

While I am voting for this bill and support it, it does not address the problems in the aviation space. They will not be addressed until the Senate takes up the bill and, ultimately, goes to conference with the House to where we are working on a conference report and sending a long-term authorization to the President.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I thank the other members of the Big Four: Mr. COHEN, Mr. LARSEN, and Mr. SAM GRAVES. I thank everybody for working on this. I thank the aviation team on both sides.

I support this legislation, and I urge its adoption, but we cannot take the pressure off of the United States Senate to ultimately do their job and pass a long-term FAA reauthorization.

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I will yield back the balance of my time and not ask Mr. GRAVES who won the Heisman Trophy because he knows well—the LSU quarterback.

New and persistent challenges facing the U.S. aviation system make clear that the status quo is unsustainable. We must extend the FAA's current authorization and recommit to passing a long-term, comprehensive reauthorization to avoid repeating this scenario. I support H.R. 6503 fully, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

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

Again, I urge all Members to support this must-pass bill so we can keep our aviation system operating safely. Failing to pass an extension would cost the Federal Government more than \$50 million a day in those lost revenues.

What is more, the FAA would be prohibited from making new obligations from the aviation trust fund to fund FAA's important safety, operational, and research functions.

To be clear, and I want to be clear to my colleagues, this bill provides a clean extension of FAA authorities. This bill does not include any policy riders at all.

Again, I know there is an appetite across the Capitol to enact a long-term and comprehensive FAA bill, and that continues to be my priority. I urge the Senate to act soon on its FAA bill so that Congress can deliver certainty to the aviation industry and the FAA.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6503.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays. The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

COUNTERING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION EXTENSION ACT OF 2023

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3224) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to extend the authorization of the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3224

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 “Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Extension Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF THE COUNTERING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

(a) EXTENSION.—

(1) TERMINATION DATE.—Section 1901 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 591) is amended by striking subsection (e) and inserting the following new subsection:

“(e) TERMINATION.—The Office shall terminate on the date that is two years after the date of the enactment of the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Extension Act of 2023.”.

(2) EXCEPTION.—The termination date specified in subsection (e) of section 1901 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended by paragraph (1), shall not apply to sections 1931 and 1932 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 597 and 597a; relating to the Chief Medical Officer and the medical countermeasures program of the Department of Homeland Security).

(b) ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY.—

(1) EMPLOYEE MORALE.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary for the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office of the Department of Homeland Security shall submit a report to and brief the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate regarding an employee engagement action plan and strategy to continuously improve morale within the Office.

(2) COMPTROLLER GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a review of and brief the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate regarding the following with respect to the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office of the Department of Homeland Security:

(A) The efforts of the Office to prioritize the programs and activities that carry out the mission of the Office, including research and development.

(B) The consistency and effectiveness of the Office's stakeholder coordination across

the mission of the Department, including operational and support components of the Department and State and local entities.

(C) The efforts of the Office to manage and coordinate the lifecycle of research and development within the Office and with other components of the Department, including the Science and Technology Directorate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. D'ESPOSITO) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. IVEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3224.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my bill, H.R. 3224, the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Extension Act of 2023.

Authorized in 2018, the mission of the Department of Homeland Security's Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office is to enable its operational partners at the Federal, State, and local levels to prevent the use of WMDs against the United States of America and to promote readiness for chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats.

At the Federal level, CWMD works with the United States Customs and Border Protection to acquire radiation portal monitors that scan cargo at U.S. ports of entry, as well as works with the U.S. Coast Guard to procure personal radiation detectors.

At the local level, the CWMD Office achieves its mission of supporting State, local, Tribal, and territorial partners through funding, equipment, and expertise.

In my home State of New York and in many other States across this great country, the CWMD Office operates the Securing the Cities program, which helps build regional capabilities to detect, analyze, and report nuclear and other radioactive materials.

My bill, the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Extension Act of 2023, will extend the sunset clause to ensure that the vital work of the CWMD Office continues.

Additionally, my legislation takes meaningful steps to address some longstanding challenges the office has faced, such as dwindling employee morale, and requires the Assistant Secretary for the CWMD Office to submit a report to Congress on how the office will continuously improve morale and employee engagement within the office.

Further, my bill requires the Government Accountability Office to conduct

a review of the CWMD Office's coordination with stakeholders and efforts to provide the programs and activities that carry out the office's mission, among other items.

From aviation and border security to emergency response and cybersecurity, the Department of Homeland Security has one common mission, Mr. Speaker, and that is to keep America safe.

The Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office facilitates its mission by ensuring that operational partners have the tools and support needed to safeguard the United States of America against chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats.

Although we hope that we never ever see the day when one of our adversaries deploys a weapon of mass destruction against this great Nation, we cannot neglect the ever-present threat of terrorism that continues to exist today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this common-sense bill, H.R. 3224, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are here today to consider H.R. 3224, the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Extension Act of 2023. I commend my Republican colleague from New York for introducing this legislation.

The CWMD Office within the Department of Homeland Security plays a pivotal role in safeguarding our Nation's security by addressing the threat of weapons capable of causing harm to our communities and infrastructure.

CWMD improves our Nation's capability to plan for, detect, and guard against chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and health security threats, otherwise known as CBRN.

CWMD further enables CBRN detection programs, training, and other capabilities for State, local, Tribal, and territorial partners and provides ground support for national special security events such as Presidential inaugurations and major sporting events.

Without the support of dedicated DHS components like CWMD, terrorists could exploit the absence of comprehensive measures. It could leave the Nation vulnerable to catastrophic attacks with the potential for widespread harm, loss of life, and severe disruption to national security and public safety.

CWMD operates important programs such as Securing the Cities, which provides 14 local governments across the country with detection equipment, training, exercise support, operational and technical subject matter expertise, and programmatic support.

When CWMD was authorized in 2018, Congress included a sunset for December 21, 2023, with the idea that we could closely monitor the progress of the office. The last continuing resolution extended CWMD through February 2, 2024, but the office needs a longer extension to ensure that its programs and staff have continuity.