

REAL Reform Act of 2018. Unfortunately, neither of these bills was signed into law.

I hear from the many Federal agencies that I work with that it can be difficult to obtain information from GSA on the status of projects authorized by Congress, especially the construction of new courthouses. Once we authorize an activity, whether it is a leasing activity or construction of a new building, we currently have little access to how, when, and if the project has been executed.

This lack of information became apparent after GSA submitted a prospectus to build a new courthouse in Los Angeles, California, in 2000 as part of its FY 2001 capital investment program. Even though there were already two courthouses in Los Angeles, the Judicial Conference insisted that the L.A. courthouse complex was so short of space for judges that it was the number one space emergency in the country.

GSA submitted a prospectus to build a new courthouse totaling 712,102 gross square feet at a cost of \$266 million, and the committee approved it. The design of the building, however, exceeded the congressionally authorized size by 13 courtrooms, 260,000 square feet, and \$100 million, and the scope of the project changed so often that GSA eventually just canceled the project in 2006, despite saying it had been an emergency.

Then, in 2011, the courts and GSA announced that they would move forward with a downsized project that would not exceed the size and cost originally authorized by Congress more than 10 years earlier, without providing any notification to Congress.

Some members of the T&I Committee were so concerned about GSA's actions and lack of transparency on the Los Angeles courthouse project that they requested a GAO study of the courthouse construction program and held a series of hearings about GSA's construction of Federal courthouses.

Although Chairmen Shuster and Barletta are no longer with us here in Congress, their concerns, as well as the longtime concerns of my colleague, Congresswoman NORTON, are still relevant, and this legislation is more necessary than ever.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation so we can ensure GSA is being a good steward of taxpayer dollars. I thank Chairman PERRY for his help in getting this to the floor, and I urge Members to vote in favor of it.

Madam Speaker, I think this is a bill that is worth bragging about. It is not very sexy and probably won't get a lot of press, but it is one of those things that can really make a difference. It will encourage GSA to move forward with needed projects. It will shorten the amount of time it takes to get these projects on the ground. No doubt, it will also save taxpayer dollars.

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

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

I agree with the gentlewoman from Nevada that maybe it is not going to get a lot of press, but I think we both agree that it is simply good governing. Project proposals can grow stale, and if GSA fails to proceed on the authorization within 5 years, the agency should be required to resubmit the proposal. A lot of things can change in 5 years, and we have seen that.

H.R. 6316 would increase GSA's accountability to Congress and, more importantly, to the American people, ultimately aiding in our ability to conduct appropriate oversight of these leases and these projects.

Madam Speaker, I urge support of 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6316.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2023

Mr. PERRY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6254) to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a review on the Public Buildings Service, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6254

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 "Public Buildings Accountability Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. REPORT ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS SERVICE.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a review of the Public Buildings Service and submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate a report containing the results of such review, including—

(1) a review of the administration and management of all Public Buildings Service real estate programs and activities, including—

(A) a review and accounting of the number of employees and contract workers, including functions and the sources of funding (for example building operations, reimbursable work, project-specific funding) categorized by region and organizational, management, and oversight structure within the Public Building Service, including identification of components, programs, and reporting structures;

(B) an accounting of in-person attendance by employee category and function;

(C) an analysis, trends, and comparisons of staffing numbers and associated costs and other administrative costs over the 10 years preceding the review; and

(D) an analysis of the effectiveness of organizational structure, management, and oversight in carrying out the mission of the Public Buildings Service; and

(2) a review of the building operations account of the Federal Buildings Fund established by section 592 of title 40, United States Code, including activities and costs associated with conferences, training, and travel and transportation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PERRY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the RECORD on H.R. 6254.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, H.R. 6254 directs the Government Accountability Office to review the General Services Administration's Public Building Service personnel structure, including staffing trends, work locations, and organizational structure.

GSA's Public Building Service administrative budget, including staffing, is paid for out of the Federal Buildings Fund. Because it is buried in a larger fund, it is difficult to track and evaluate the Public Buildings Service workforce and its management to conduct appropriate oversight.

This bill would seek to address that issue, increasing transparency and, ultimately, greater oversight.

Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Wisconsin (Mr. VAN ORDEN) for introducing H.R. 6254, the Public Buildings Accountability Act of 2023, and for his leadership on this important issue.

Madam Speaker, I urge support of this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this Public Buildings Accountability Act of 2023, H.R. 6254, which directs the GAO to review the administration and management of GSA's real estate programs, activities, funding, and staffing.

Information and data are essential for Congress to conduct proper oversight of the agencies under its jurisdiction. Having GAO do an independent analysis of the efficacy of the GSA's operations will help the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee better evaluate GSA authorization requests.

However, GAO must work with the Department of Homeland Security's Interagency Security Committee to ensure that security concerns for the employees and buildings are addressed.

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I recommend that GAO, as they are drafting the parameters of the study, ensure that information that could impact the security of Federal employees and Federal facilities is protected.

Madam Speaker, I support the legislation, I urge my colleagues to do the same, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PERRY. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. VAN ORDEN), to speak on his bill.

Mr. VAN ORDEN. Madam Speaker, the work-from-home standard for Federal employees which the Biden administration has empowered has enabled an already overcompensated Federal bureaucracy to continue to not show up for work and leave the taxpayers on the hook for empty, unused Federal office space across the country.

Back in July, I asked the Commissioner of the Public Buildings Services a simple question during a roundtable: How many of your employees are actually at work today?

She was incapable of answering that. Three months later I asked her exactly the same question during a committee hearing chaired by Mr. PERRY, and she was still incapable of answering that question.

Their truancy has led to possibly the worst customer service of any Federal agency, and that is an incredibly low standard to fail to meet.

From my own personal experience, it took over a month to get a single phone line in my public building as a Member of Congress, and we wound up moving my office out of the public space because of their inability to perform customer service functions. I had the luxury of doing that as a Member of Congress. Other members of the United States Government do not have that same luxury.

This is just not that hard. As an Active Duty Navy SEAL, I managed military maneuvers on three continents simultaneously. I could tell you, Madam Speaker, within a 10-meter square where each one of those individuals was 24 hours a day. So this simply is not that difficult to do.

I am incredibly proud and pleased that this committee is focusing on legislation to help ensure that Federal agencies are using the office space they are assigned and selling the space they are not, saving taxpayer dollars.

The GSA currently manages over 370 million square feet of owned and leased assets, and yet they have no idea how much of this space is truly occupied. Approximately 75 percent of building space in Washington, D.C., is not occupied, but, unfortunately, we can't actually get a square footage from the GSA.

I introduced the Public Buildings Accountability Act of 2023 to enforce transparency and accountability within the public buildings service to do just that.

H.R. 6254 will shed light on the effectiveness of the Public Buildings Serv-

ice staffing structure and funding within the GSA by providing information to enhance the committee's ongoing oversight work to maximize the return of Federal employees to in-person work.

These reports will provide greater clarity to PBS' funding needs and ensure the responsible use of hard-working taxpayers' dollars.

Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman PERRY very much for his patience in getting this through and for our counterparts on the other side of the aisle for participating in this incredibly important legislation.

Mr. PERRY. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COHEN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PERRY. I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. COHEN. Do you think this could be expanded in some way to show the effects of the Capitals and the Wizards moving to Virginia and the effect that will have on properties in downtown D.C., and the opportunities to have good restaurants and good commerce in downtown Washington?

Mr. PERRY. I am not sure that that one particular singular focus should be an amendment or something like that, but as a general theme, I don't know that the committee would mind. We could take a look at that kind of activity and the effects.

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Madam Speaker, in closing, we support the bill. Information and data are essential for Congress to conduct proper oversight of the agencies under its jurisdiction, even those peripheral to its jurisdiction like the Capital One Arena.

Madam Speaker, this bill will provide Congress with information needed in its oversight of the General Services Administration. I support it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Again, Madam Speaker, this bill will improve transparency and oversight of GSA's Public Buildings Service, and its staffing management structure.

Further, H.R. 6254 will inform the committee's oversight efforts to maximize the return of Federal employees to in-person work. I do urge support for this.

I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. VAN ORDEN) for offering this and to acknowledge his strident and outspoken work on the behalf of constituents, otherwise known as our bosses, who demand and deserve an answer when they call these folks who work for us and work for them. I thank him for his diligence and dogged determination.

Madam Speaker, I, again, urge support, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6254.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HAROLD L. MURPHY FEDERAL BUILDING AND UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 532) to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 600 East First Street in Rome, Georgia, as the "Harold L. Murphy Federal Building and United States Courthouse".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 532

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

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Judge Harold L. Murphy was born in Felton, Georgia, in 1927.

(2) He attended West Georgia College before serving in the United States Navy during the closing years of World War II.

(3) He resumed his studies at the University of Mississippi and the University of Georgia School of Law, where he graduated in 1949.

(4) He began a law practice in Haralson County, Georgia, and in 1950 was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives as the youngest Member at the time.

(5) Judge Murphy served five consecutive terms before stepping down in 1961 to focus on practicing law.

(6) In 1971, Judge Murphy was appointed by Governor Jimmy Carter to the Superior Court for the Tallapoosa Judicial Circuit, and following his election in 1976, President Carter nominated Judge Murphy to the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

(7) Judge Murphy was confirmed by the United States Senate on July 28, 1977.

(8) For 45 years, he served his country on the Federal bench and became an acclaimed jurist and legal icon with a stellar reputation that extended far beyond Georgia.

(9) He always displayed a quick wit and a keen sense of humor, was kind and empathetic, and treated all those who appeared before him with courtesy and respect.

(10) Judge Murphy worked tirelessly and carried a full docket until the age of 90, when he took senior judge status in the Northern District of Georgia.

(11) He continued to preside over cases until his death on December 28, 2022.

(12) Judge Murphy received many professional awards and recognitions, including from the State Bar of Georgia and the University of Georgia School of Law.

(13) In 2014, Alabama State University renamed its graduate school after Judge Murphy in recognition of his landmark ruling in *Knight v. Alabama*, a long-running case that the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals asked him to handle involving the vestiges of racial segregation then present in the Alabama University System.

(14) Above all else, Judge Murphy was a loving and devoted husband and father—and a strong role model.