

rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

### PLAIN LANGUAGE IN CONTRACTING ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7987) to require plain language and the inclusion of key words in covered notices that are clear, concise, and accessible to small business concerns, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7987

*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 "Plain Language in Contracting Act".

#### SEC. 2. ACCESSIBILITY AND CLARITY IN COVERED NOTICES FOR SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Each covered notice shall be written—

(1) in a manner that is clear, concise, and accessible to a small business concern; and

(2) in a manner consistent, to the extent practicable, with the Federal plain language guidelines established pursuant to the Plain Writing Act of 2010 (5 U.S.C. 301 note).

(b) INCLUSION OF KEY WORDS IN COVERED NOTICES.—Each covered notice shall, to the maximum extent practicable, include key words in the description of the covered notice such that a small business concern seeking contract opportunities using the single governmentwide point of entry described under section 1708 of title 41, United States Code, can easily identify and understand such covered notice.

(c) RULEMAKING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall issue rules to carry out this section.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED NOTICE.—The term "covered notice" means a notice pertaining to small business concerns published by a Federal agency on the single Government-wide point of entry described under section 1708 of title 41, United States Code.

(2) SMALL BUSINESS ACT DEFINITIONS.—The terms "Federal agency" and "small business concern" have the meanings given those terms, respectively, in section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632).

#### SEC. 3. COMPLIANCE WITH CUTGO.

No additional amounts are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act or the amendments made by this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7987, the Plain Language in Contracting Act, introduced by Representatives LALOTA and THANEDAR.

Far too often, the government uses language that is difficult to understand when it solicits contract opportunities. No one feels the burden of this government-speak more than small business owners looking to break into the Federal marketplace.

We have heard from small business owners about how their limited resources often prevent them from employing a team of attorneys to sift through government solicitations to interpret what the government is actually trying to purchase. One entrepreneur even told our committee that they examined thousands of government contracts, and only 3 percent were written in a way that someone without a college degree could understand.

The number of small businesses contracting with the government has been shrinking for years. We consistently hear that the barriers to entry are simply too high.

H.R. 7987 will finally remove this barrier facing small businesses by forcing the government to take commonsense action and write contract solicitations using simple and plain language.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 7987, the Plain Language in Contracting Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their work on this bill, which states that certain contracting documents should be written in a way that is "clear, concise, and accessible" for small businesses.

This bill is an attempt to reduce confusion and add clarity for some small firms that contract with or are looking to contract with the Federal Government.

While we have concerns about how elements of this legislation could be implemented, simplifying the contracting process and recruiting new entrants into the Federal marketplace are priorities that we share. There are certainly ways for the government to improve in both of those areas.

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

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA).

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Speaker, America's small businesses from Long Island and throughout our great country should not need an attorney on staff or a compliance department to apply for and win a Federal contract.

That is why I have introduced the Plain Language in Contracting Act,

which is aimed at simplifying the process for small businesses to secure government contracts.

I extend my gratitude to my colleague, Representative THANEDAR of Michigan, for co-leading this crucial legislation across party lines, and to the skipper, Chairman WILLIAMS, and his diligent staff for seeing to it that this bill got to the floor today.

With over 33 million small businesses in America, only a very small fraction win Federal contracts. Many entrepreneurs cite the complexity of government procurement processes as a major deterrent.

The language used in contract solicitations is often ambiguous and unnecessarily complex, deterring small businesses from even attempting to bid on a contract.

A study by the Naval Postgraduate School revealed that less than 3 percent of Department of Defense contract solicitations are written in plain English. This complexity drives small businesses away from Federal contracting, eroding competition and harming our economy.

My bill mandates Federal agencies to use clear language in contract solicitations, fostering greater accessibility to contract bids for small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation recognizing the pivotal role small businesses play in our Nation's economy. Together, let's pave the way for a more accessible Federal contracting process for all small businesses. Doing so benefits small businesses, the Federal Government, and all of our taxpayers.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. THANEDAR).

Mr. THANEDAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7987, the Plain Language in Contracting Act, which I am co-leading with Representative NICK LALOTA of New York. I applaud Representative LALOTA's leadership, and it is a pleasure to work with him on this bipartisan bill.

I am also, as an entrepreneur, delighted and excited to be working on the Small Business Committee led so well by Chairman WILLIAMS and Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ.

Having experienced the challenges of running a small business, I recognize the urgent need to cut through the jargon of bureaucracy and provide clear, concise, and accessible information to our Nation's small business owners.

This bill would require all notices related to small business concerns to comply with the Federal plain language guidelines established by the Plain Writing Act of 2010, reflecting our core values of transparency, efficiency, and unwavering dedication to fostering a level playing field for all businesses, regardless of size.

By including key words and sticking to the Federal plain language guidelines, we are not just drafting legislation. We are empowering small businesses to navigate the complexity of

government contracting with confidence and ease.

This is about more than just policy. It is about supporting our economy and ensuring that every entrepreneur has the opportunity to succeed.

Walking down the streets of my district, I meet a lot of small business owners every day. Often, I hear from these small businesses, the mom-and-pop shops, the entrepreneurs who are working so hard, that the complexity of the language contributes to the difficulty in obtaining Federal contracts.

This bill goes a long way in simplifying the matter, helping our small businesses that create most of the jobs to be able to acquire Federal contracts and work with the Federal Government.

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

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELAZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Again, I thank the sponsors for their work on this bill, and I believe that the goals are laudable.

It is a mandate of our committee to regularly review the processes that SBA and Federal agencies put in place to recruit, retain, and contract with small businesses—and do so with the goal of making it easier for them to compete for and win Federal awards.

Given that small businesses are leaving the Federal market at a record pace, and fewer small businesses are choosing to work with the government to begin with, we must use the tools available to us to provide remedies where we can.

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In closing, I thank the chairman and the sponsors of the legislation for their commitment and dedication to our Nation's small business owners.

National Small Business Week is a good reminder that we need to work together in a bipartisan way to create more opportunities for our Nation's 33 million entrepreneurs.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't mention there are a sizeable number of Democratic bills that have been reported favorably from the committee but have not been scheduled for the floor.

In a spirit of bipartisanship, which is what National Small Business Week showcases to our constituents, I look forward to the chairman bringing more of these bills to the floor soon.

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

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressmen LALOTA and THANEDAR for this bill. Interpreting the Federal contracting language should not be a barrier that small businesses need to overcome in order to compete for a government contract.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I hear what the rank-

ing member is saying. It is a great week for small business and the National Small Business Week we have ahead of us.

This is another example of what this committee is doing, Mr. Speaker, on bipartisan legislation that we are getting out to help America. We can get it done in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the 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 Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7987.

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.

#### FIRE WEATHER DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2024

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4866) to direct the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish a program to improve fire weather and fire environment forecasting, detection, and local collaboration, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4866

*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 “Fire Weather Development Act of 2024”.

##### SEC. 2. FIRE WEATHER FORECASTING AND DETECTION.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, shall establish a program (in this Act referred to as the “Program”) to improve fire weather and fire environment forecasting, detection, and delivery of products or services through collaboration with Federal and State agencies or departments, local emergency managers, and relevant entities.

(b) GOALS.—The goals of the Program shall be to develop and improve accurate fire weather and fire environment forecasts and warnings in order to reduce loss of life, reduce injuries, protect property, and reduce damage to the economy from wildfires. The Program shall seek to improve the assessment of fire weather and fire environments, the understanding and prediction of wildfires, and the communications regarding such assessments with State and local emergency officials in a timely and streamlined fashion, with a focus on improving the following:

(1) The prediction of ignition, intensification and spread of wildfires.

(2) The observation and monitoring of fire weather and fire environments.

(3) The forecast and communication of smoke dispersion from wildfires.

(4) Information dissemination and risk communication to develop more effective watch and warning products relating to wildfires.

(5) The early detection of wildfires, including pre-ignition analysis and ground condition characterizations.

(6) The development, testing, and deployment of novel tools and techniques related to understanding, monitoring, and predicting fire weather and fire environments.

(7) The understanding and association of climate change and its impacts on fire weather and fire environments.

(8) The unique characteristics, including observation or modeling requirements, related to fires at the wildland-urban interface.

(9) The forecasting and understanding of the impacts of prescribed burns (as such term is defined in section 2 of the Prescribed Burn Approval Act of 2016 (16 U.S.C. 551c-1 note)).

(c) COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS.—In developing the Program required under this section, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall solicit and take into consideration input from the weather industry, such academic entities as the Administrator considers appropriate, and other relevant stakeholders.

(d) ACTIVITIES.—To achieve the goals specified in subsection (b), the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration may conduct research, development, testing, demonstration, and operational transition activities related to fire weather and fire environments, including regarding the following:

(1) Tools and services to inform, support, and complement active land management, local emergency personnel, the United States Forest Service, and State, local, and Tribal entities during their response and mitigation efforts.

(2) Sensing technologies, such as infrared, microwave, and active sensors suitable for potential deployment on spacecraft, aircraft, and unmanned aircraft systems, to improve the monitoring and forecasting of fire fuel and active wildfires, wildfire behavior models and forecasts, mapping efforts, and the prediction of wildfires and the impacts of such.

(3) Grid-based assessments and outlooks of fuel moisture and danger levels.

(4) Social and behavior sciences related to fire weather and fire environment warning products.

(5) Advanced satellite detection products coupled with atmosphere and fire weather modeling systems.

(6) Education and training to expand the number of students and researchers in areas of study and research related to wildfires, fire weather, and fire environments.

(7) Modeling systems to link long-term climate predictions to localized or general land management decisions.

(8) Communication and outreach to communities, energy utilities, owners and operators of critical infrastructure, and other relevant stakeholders regarding fire weather and fire environment risk.

(9) Stewardship and dissemination, to the extent practicable, of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration scientific data and related products and services in formats meeting shared standards to enhance the interoperability, usability, and accessibility of such data in order to better meet the needs of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, other Federal agencies, and relevant stakeholders.

(10) Improvement of spatial and temporal resolution observations.

(11) Any other topic or activity the Administrator determines relevant.

(e) NOVEL TOOLS FOR MONITORING AND PREDICTION.—The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in consultation with the heads of the agencies specified in section 3, or other appropriate