

to the President, and to the Secretary of the Interior under Executive Order 10264, dated June 29, 1951, under which the Constitution of American Samoa was approved and may be amended without requirement for further congressional action, subject to the authority of Congress under the Territorial Clause in article IV, section 3, clause 2 of the United States Constitution.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6062

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

**SECTION 1. REMOVAL OF RESTRICTION ON AMENDMENTS TO OR MODIFICATIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION OF AMERICAN SAMOA.**

Section 12 of Public Law 98-213 (48 U.S.C. 1662a) is repealed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

**GENERAL LEAVE**

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 6062, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 6062, sponsored by Delegate RADEWAGEN, aims to improve the amendment process for the Constitution of American Samoa. I appreciate Delegate RADEWAGEN's work on this bill and her tireless efforts to represent the needs and views of American Samoa.

H.R. 6062 would repeal section 12 of Public Law 98-213, which requires any amendments or modifications to the Constitution of American Samoa, as approved by the Secretary of the Interior, to be made only by an Act of Congress. This law was enacted in 1983 when there was concern among American Samoans about the Department of the Interior making unilateral amendments to the Constitution of American Samoa. The change in Federal law ensured Congress would step in if the DOI attempted to make such amendments.

These concerns proved to be unfounded, and since 1984, American Samoa has made attempts to return to the previous policy of Department of the Interior Secretarial approval. Many now believe the current congressional approval requirement has stalled American Samoa's constitutional amendment process.

H.R. 6062 would revert American Samoa's constitutional amendment process to the pre-1983 status quo by requiring

approval from the Secretary of the Interior for amendments to the Constitution of American Samoa.

I would like to note that Congress will retain authority over American Samoa as provided by the Territorial Clause of the United States Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6062, which is sponsored by our colleague from American Samoa (Mrs. RADEWAGEN).

This bill would eliminate the requirement for Congress to approve changes to the American Samoan Constitution in addition to the Secretary of the Interior.

When American Samoa drafted and ratified its constitution in the 1960s, only the Secretary of the Interior was empowered to ratify amendments to it. However, in 1983, legislation was enacted to add Congress, in addition to the Secretary of the Interior, to the approval process for making changes to the American Samoan Constitution.

American Samoan leaders at the time objected to this additional step and urged returning to the prior process of needing only the Secretary to approve changes to their constitution.

In particular, American Samoan leaders feared that congressional involvement could threaten their current political status, which incorporates their traditional "matai," "chief" and communal land ownership system.

This legislation removes the duplicative, unnecessary step of requiring congressional approval for American Samoa to amend its own constitution. It is a commonsense bill that promotes democracy and self-determination.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from American Samoa (Mrs. RADEWAGEN), who is the sponsor of the bill.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 6062, which repeals the outdated statute requiring amendments to American Samoa's Constitution be ratified by Congress.

I want to thank Chairman WESTERMAN and Subcommittee Chair HAGEMAN for their efforts to move this bill through committee, and I thank Ranking Members GRIJALVA and LEGER FERNANDEZ for making this a bipartisan effort. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to my fellow territorial Delegates, Delegate MOYLAN and Delegate SABLAN, for their cosponsorship and support.

The original piece of legislation that H.R. 6062 repeals was moved through without regular order, and over the past several decades, multiple attempts were made to walk back the bill and allow the necessary hearings and oversight to occur. Today that misstep has been corrected.

H.R. 6062 provides equal treatment among the U.S. territories, as no other territory has a similar restriction on editing their local laws. It is a critical and key piece of legislation for American Samoa, allowing us to enact constitutional changes as approved by our people without the burden of unnecessary bureaucracy in Washington.

This bill is designed to restore the essential structure of our government to what it was intended to be, providing a much-needed adjustment to the previous 1983 law. The 1983 law, as it stands, is inconsistent with the principles of local self-government over local affairs, an area where Congress has rightly delegated local authority to us. The current law imposes restrictions that are outdated and counterproductive, hindering our ability to govern ourselves effectively.

This bill is about more than just procedural changes. It is about reaffirming our commitment to self-governance and democratic values. By removing unnecessary obstacles, we are reinforcing the principle that the people of American Samoa have the right and the ability to govern themselves.

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

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I, too, have no further requests for time, and I am prepared to close.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, once again, H.R. 6062 would reinstate the process to approve amendments to the Constitution of American Samoa via approval by the Secretary of the Interior and address concerns of American Samoans.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Delegate RADEWAGEN for her work on this legislation. I urge adoption 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 Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6062.

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.

**ACCELERATING APPRAISALS AND CONSERVATION EFFORTS ACT**

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5443) to establish a policy regarding appraisal and valuation services for real property for a transaction over which the Secretary of the Interior has jurisdiction, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5443

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 “Accelerating Appraisals and Conservation Efforts Act” or the “AACE Act”.

# SEC. 2. APPRAISAL AND VALUATION SERVICES FOR REAL PROPERTY.

(a) **LICENSE, CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT.**—A covered appraiser needs to be licensed or certified in only 1 State to perform appraisal or valuation services for real property in any State for a transaction over which the Secretary has jurisdiction.

(b) **USE OF NON-FEDERAL COVERED APPRAISERS.**—If the Secretary uses a non-Federal covered appraiser to perform appraisal or valuation services for real property for a transaction described in subsection (a), the Secretary—

(1) shall, to the maximum extent practicable, use a non-Federal covered appraiser who is a certified general real property appraiser licensed in a State in which the real property that is the subject of the transaction is located; and

(2) may only use a non-Federal covered appraiser who is a certified general real property appraiser licensed in a State other than one in which the real property that is the subject of the transaction is located if a non-Federal covered appraiser described in paragraph (1) is, as determined by the Secretary—

(A) unavailable to complete an assignment within a reasonable period of time;

(B) not assignment qualified; or

(C) not cost competitive.

(c) **REPORT.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this section, and annually thereafter for at least the following 4 years, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that includes the following:

(1) A comparison using quantitative data of—

(A) the number of requests for appraisal and valuation services received by the Department during the reporting period and the number of requests for such services received by the Department in each of the 5 years before the reporting period; and

(B) the amount of time required for the Department to complete a request for appraisal or valuation services before the date of the enactment of this section and after the date of the enactment of this section.

(2) A qualitative assessment of the impact of subsection (a) in providing flexibility to the Secretary when contracting with non-Federal covered appraisers.

(3) Recommendations, if any, for congressional action that could help the Department operate more efficiently or overcome challenges with respect to timely completion of requests for appraisal or valuation services while ensuring the independence, impartiality, and objectivity of such services.

(4) An overview of the workforce of the Department with regard to appraisal and valuation services provided by the Department, including hiring and staffing during the reporting period with respect to employees and contractors of the Department.

(5) A complete list of cases in which the authority granted under section 2 of this Act was used during the reporting period, describing for each case the specific criteria used to satisfy the conditions of this Act.

(d) **STATUTORY CLARIFICATIONS.**—

(1) **APPLICABILITY OF RELEVANT LAWS AND REGULATIONS.**—Except as provided in paragraph (3), nothing in this section shall be interpreted to affect the application of any Federal or State law or regulation to a non-Federal covered appraiser with regard to the performance by such non-Federal covered appraiser of appraisal and valuation services for real property.

(2) **JURISDICTION REQUIREMENT.**—Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to authorize a

non-Federal covered appraiser to perform appraisal and valuation services for real property in a State in which such non-Federal covered appraiser is not licensed or certified to perform such services except to the extent that such services are performed for a transaction over which the Secretary has jurisdiction.

(3) **NONAPPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN RELEVANT LAWS AND REGULATIONS.**—Any provision of a Federal or State law or regulation enacted before the date of the enactment of this section that requires a covered appraiser to be licensed or certified in a specific State to perform appraisal or valuation services for real property in that State shall not apply to any transaction over which the Secretary has jurisdiction.

(e) **PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.**—Not later than 90 days after the enactment of this Act, the text of all policies (including any successor policies), including reference manuals, guidance documents, handbooks, standard operating procedures, and statements of policy specific to the scoping, contracting, and review of appraisals performed for the Department by Federal or non-Federal covered appraisers, shall be made publicly available online and provided upon request.

(f) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **COVERED APPRAISER.**—The term “covered appraiser” means a State-licensed or -certified real property appraiser.

(2) **DEPARTMENT.**—The term “Department” means the Department of the Interior.

(3) **REPORTING PERIOD.**—The term “reporting period” means the 1-year period before the date on which a report is submitted under subsection (c).

(4) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

(5) **STATE.**—The term “State” means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, and each territory and possession of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

## GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 5443, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5443, legislation offered by Representatives LEE and JOYCE. This bill would allow appropriately credentialed non-Federal appraisers to perform appraisal and valuation services for the Department of the Interior regardless of whether they are licensed or certified in a particular State.

This has been a longstanding practice for Federal appraisers. However, non-Federal appraisers must be credentialed in the State where they are conducting valuation or appraisal services. This disparity has led, in part, to an appraisal backlog that prevents the Department of the Interior from fulfilling its responsibilities to convey, exchange, or dispose of land in a timely manner.

The Committee on Natural Resources has heard numerous concerns about the length and complexity of Federal land transactions throughout this Congress, including the cumbersome appraisal process. This process affects communities that wish to take over Federal land for economic or conservation purposes, as well as sportsmen and -women who seek to consolidate checkerboard land ownership to allow for greater public access.

This bill will address inefficient bureaucratic bottlenecks without jeopardizing the integrity of the valuation and appraisal process.

Under this legislation, all appraisals must still be conducted in accordance with applicable standards found in the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions and the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice.

This is good, bipartisan legislation that will remedy inefficiencies and improve land management. I would like to commend Representatives LEE and JOYCE for their efforts on this bill and thank them for engaging the committee early in the legislative process.

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

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chair of the committee for his leadership.

Today, I am pleased that the House is considering the Accelerating Appraisals and Conservation Efforts Act, known as the AACE Act, my bipartisan, bicameral bill to cut red tape for everyone who relies on the Federal Government to buy, sell, or transfer public land.

It will speed up appraisals and approvals for Nevada housing projects and cut governmental red tape that drives up housing costs. Outdoor enthusiasts will be able to enjoy the public lands they have fought to preserve, and it will allow for better and faster infrastructure to power our communities.

The U.S. Department of the Interior oversees hundreds of millions of acres of public lands nationwide. Its Bureau of Land Management alone stewards roughly 70 percent of the lands in my home State of Nevada.

Before the Department of the Interior is able to buy, sell, lease, trade, or conduct any type of land-related transaction, it must first make sure that these activities are done at fair market value to protect the public trust.

However, while full-time Federal appraisers are able to work quickly and easily across State lines, the private appraisers on whom the Department of the Interior must now rely to satisfy the growing demands on the agency can only work in specific States or territories in which they are individually credentialed.

This is slowing progress across the country on a range of conservation,

economic, housing, and infrastructure goals, all dependent on the Department of the Interior's ability to complete land transactions promptly.

My bipartisan AACE Act would help alleviate and prevent appraisal bottlenecks by building upon a decades-old precedent of limited license reciprocity for appraisers established under the Bush-Quayle administration.

It would enable the Department of the Interior to contract with private appraisers who are appropriately credentialed in one State to perform appraisal valuation services on the Department of the Interior's behalf in any State.

Importantly, it would also require the Department of the Interior to continue to prioritize working with local appraisers, unlocking the enhanced flexibility provided by the bill only when no assignment-qualified or cost-competitive local appraisers are available.

In short, this legislation would maximize DOI's efficiency without spending a single additional dollar of taxpayers' money. It better positions America's principal land management agency to complete land transactions of all kinds more effectively and efficiently, ensuring that the Federal Government can deliver on these critical projects without getting in its own way.

That is why the bill has the support of Republican and Democratic Members of Congress, Senators, and Governors. It is also supported by the DOI and organizations ranging from Conservation Lands Foundation to Trout Unlimited to the Nevada Housing Coalition and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. It benefits everyone, from conservationists to developers, who all find themselves waiting at the back of the same Federal appraisals line.

□ 1645

I thank my colleague and good friend, Representative DAVE JOYCE, for writing this much-needed legislation with me to provide a simple, bipartisan solution to a simple, bipartisan problem.

I thank Senator CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO for championing this common-sense legislation in the Senate. It is essential that we pass the bill in this Congress so we can get it to the President's desk without delay and deliver as soon as possible on the lands projects that Americans need.

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

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

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I urge my colleagues to support my legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, in a previous career having been licensed to do appraisals and having studied the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice and been tested on

that, I am glad to say that this legislation doesn't exempt appraisers from having to abide by those standards. It just streamlines the process on Federal land so that appraisals can happen in a more timely manner.

This bipartisan bill will improve the management of hundreds of millions of acres of land and is a commonsense solution to make government more efficient. We need that.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption 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 Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5443, 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.

## RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 46 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

## AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LATURNER) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Motions to suspend the rules and pass:

H.R. 897; and

H.R. 5441.

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

## ALABAMA UNDERWATER FOREST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY AND PROTECTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 897) to provide for the establishment of the Alabama Underwater Forest National Marine Sanctuary, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 349, nays 19, not voting 64, as follows:

[Roll No. 336]

YEAS—349

Adams	DesJarlais	Kiggans (VA)
Aderholt	Dingell	Kildee
Aguilar	Donalds	Kiley
Alford	Duarte	Kilmer
Allen	Duncan	Kim (CA)
Allred	Edwards	Kim (NJ)
Amo	Ellzey	Krishnamoorthi
Amodei	Emmer	Kustoff
Armstrong	Escobar	LaHood
Arrington	Eshoo	LaLota
Auchincloss	Españillat	Lamborn
Bacon	Estes	Landsman
Baird	Ezell	Langworthy
Balderson	Fallon	Larsen (WA)
Balint	Feenstra	Larson (CT)
Banks	Ferguson	Latta
Barr	Finstad	LaTurner
Barragán	Fischbach	Lawler
Beatty	Fitzgerald	Lee (CA)
Bentz	Fitzpatrick	Lee (FL)
Bera	Fleischmann	Lee (NV)
Bergman	Flood	Lee (PA)
Beyer	Fong	Leger Fernandez
Bice	Foster	Letlow
Bilirakis	Foushee	Levin
Bishop (GA)	Fox	Lieu
Blumenauer	Frankel, Lois	Lofgren
Boebert	Franklin, Scott	Loudermilk
Bonamici	Frost	Lucas
Bost	Fry	Luetkemeyer
Boyle (PA)	Gaetz	Luna
Brown	Garbarino	Lynch
Brownley	Garcia (IL)	Mace
Bucshon	Garcia, Mike	Malliotakis
Budzinski	Garcia, Robert	Maloy
Burchett	Jimenez	Manning
Burgess	Golden (ME)	Matsui
Bush	Goldman (NY)	McBath
Calvert	Gomez	McClain
Caraveo	Gonzales, Tony	McClellan
Carbajal	Gonzalez,	McClintock
Carey	Vicente	McCollum
Carl	Gooden (TX)	McCormick
Carson	Gottheimer	McGarvey
Carter (GA)	Graves (LA)	McGovern
Carter (LA)	Green (TN)	McHenry
Carter (TX)	Grothman	Meeks
Cartwright	Guthrie	Menendez
Casar	Hageman	Meng
Case	Harder (CA)	Meuser
Casten	Harris	Mfume
Castor (FL)	Harshbarger	Miller (IL)
Castro (TX)	Hayes	Miller (OH)
Chavez-DeRemer	Hern	Miller (WV)
Cherfilus-	Higgins (LA)	Miller-Meeks
McCormick	Hill	Mills
Chu	Hinson	Molinaro
Ciscomani	Horsford	Moolenaar
Clark (MA)	Houchin	Moore (UT)
Clarke (NY)	Houlahan	Moran
Cleaver	Hoyle (OR)	Morelle
Cline	Hudson	Moulton
Cohen	Huizenga	Mrvan
Cole	Issa	Mullin
Collins	Ivey	Murphy
Comer	Jackson (IL)	Napolitano
Connolly	Jackson (NC)	Neal
Correa	Jackson (TX)	Neguse
Costa	Jacobs	Nehls
Courtney	James	Newhouse
Craig	Jayapal	Nickel
Crawford	Jeffries	Norcross
Crockett	Johnson (GA)	Nunn (IA)
Crow	Johnson (LA)	Oberholte
Cuellar	Johnson (SD)	Ocasio-Cortez
Curtis	Jordan	Omar
D'Esposito	Joyce (OH)	Pallone
Davids (KS)	Joyce (PA)	Palmer
Davidson	Kamlager-Dove	Panetta
Davis (NC)	Kaptur	Pappas
Dean (PA)	Kean (NJ)	Pascarell
DeGette	Keating	Pelosi
DeLauro	Kelly (IL)	Perez
DeBene	Kelly (MS)	Peters
Deluzio	Kelly (PA)	Pettersen
DeSaulnier	Kennedy	Pfleger