

rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPEAL REQUIREMENT FOR CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE TO PREPARE ANNOTATED CONSTITUTION AND SUPPLEMENTS IN HARDBOUND VERSION

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7592) to direct the Librarian of Congress to promote the more cost-effective, efficient, and expanded availability of the Annotated Constitution and pocket-part supplements by replacing the hardbound versions with digital versions.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7592

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

SECTION 1. REPEAL REQUIREMENT FOR CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE TO PREPARE ANNOTATED CONSTITUTION AND SUPPLEMENTS IN HARDBOUND VERSION.

(a) REPEAL.—The first section of Public Law 91-589 (2 U.S.C. 168) is amended—

(1) by striking “the Librarian of Congress” and inserting “(a) subject to subsection (b), the Librarian of Congress”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(b)(1) Upon the completion of the October 2031 term of the Supreme Court and upon the completion of each tenth October term of the Supreme Court thereafter, the Librarian of Congress shall have prepared a digital decennial revised edition of the Constitution Annotated, which shall contain annotations of all decisions theretofore rendered by the Supreme Court construing provisions of the Constitution, in place of the hardbound decennial revised edition of the Constitution Annotated described in subsection (a)(3).

“(2) Upon the completion of the October 2023 term of the Supreme Court and upon the completion of each subsequent October term of the Supreme Court beginning in an odd-numbered year (the final digit of which is not a 1), the Librarian shall have prepared a digital cumulative pocket-part supplement to the most recent decennial revised edition of the Constitution Annotated, which shall contain cumulative annotations of all such decisions rendered by the Supreme Court which were not included in the most recent revised edition of the Constitution Annotated, in place of the hardbound editions of the cumulative pocket-part supplement described in subsection (a)(4).”.

(b) ENSURING AVAILABILITY OF DIGITAL VERSIONS.—Section 2 of Public Law 91-589 (2 U.S.C. 168a) is amended—

(1) by striking “All hardbound” and inserting “(a) All hardbound”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(b)(1) The digital decennial revised editions of the Constitution Annotated prepared under subsection (b)(1) of the first section of this Joint Resolution and the digital cumulative pocket-part supplements prepared under subsection (b)(2) of the first section of this Joint Resolution shall be available at a public website of the Library of Congress.

“(2) The Librarian of Congress shall ensure the continuing availability of the documents referred to in paragraph (1) to Congress and the public.”.

(c) REPEAL OF ADDITIONAL PRINTING REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) MANDATORY PRINTING OF ADDITIONAL COPIES.—Section 3 of Public Law 91-589 (2 U.S.C. 168b) is amended—

(A) by striking “There shall be printed” and inserting “(a) There shall be printed”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(b) Subsection (a) does not apply after completion of the October 2023 term of the Supreme Court, and the Librarian of Congress shall provide the decennial revised editions of the Constitution Annotated and the cumulative pocket part supplements prepared under this Joint Resolution exclusively in a digital format available at a public website of the Library of Congress.”.

(2) PRINTING OF ADDITIONAL COPIES PURSUANT TO CONCURRENT RESOLUTION.—Section 4 of Public Law 91-589 (2 U.S.C. 168c) is repealed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. KILMER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STEIL. 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 the bill, H.R. 7592.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 7592. Today, Congress will save taxpayers \$5 million. Yes, you heard me correctly: Congress will save taxpayer dollars today.

While our Nation is running \$32 trillion in debt, and we have a long way to go to get our country back on track, this is a good policy. It will save taxpayers money.

We do this by getting rid of the statutory requirement to print hardbound copies of the Constitution Annotated, or CONAN, as it is better known today.

An easily accessible and up-to-date online version of it already exists and is already used by millions of Americans. Continuing to print hardbound copies not only wastes taxpayer dollars, but it also wastes the time of CRS staff, who could better support the more pressing work of Congress.

It is a positive step in modernizing Congress. At the beginning of the 118th Congress, the Committee on House Administration took the important step of working to modernize how Congress works. The Modernization Subcommittee is led by Chairwoman STEPHANIE BICE and Ranking Member DEREK KILMER. The subcommittee is bringing good ideas to life by focusing on what we can do to make Congress a more effective and efficient institution.

I have argued that the work of modernizing Congress extends to Congress'

support agencies. They need to work in a way that reflects how today's Congress works.

The CONAN print requirement reflects how Congress worked 50 years ago, before the internet even existed. Today, the rules don't make much sense.

We do ourselves a disservice when we require CRS to do work that is no longer necessary, no longer meets our needs. The more Congress can do to optimize tremendous resources like CRS, the better off Congress is, and H.R. 7592 moves us toward that goal.

I recognize Modernization Subcommittee Chairwoman STEPHANIE BICE, who, along with subcommittee Ranking Member DEREK KILMER, Representative CAREY, and Representative MORELLE, introduced this measure and worked on a bipartisan basis to bring it to the floor today.

I also recognize Chairwoman BICE for demonstrating that subcommittees have an important role to play in the legislative process. This was the first time in 31 years that a subcommittee of the House Administration Committee held a markup.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the hard work that went into this important measure, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 7592. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to stand before you today to speak about two bills that have come from the Modernization Subcommittee, which encompass the select committee's mission to make Congress work better for the American people. Each of these bills addresses a problem or challenge we identified through the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress.

I thank our subcommittee chair, STEPHANIE BICE, and our subcommittee colleagues, JOE MORELLE and MIKE CAREY, for their bipartisan partnership on these bills, too, as well as our full committee chairman, BRYAN STEIL.

As many of you know, the Congressional Research Service, or CRS, mission is to provide timely, objective, and authoritative research and analysis to Congress, its Members, committees, and staff.

The policy proposals we put forth are better for CRS' involvement and support of us. That is why our subcommittee took it very seriously when CRS' interim director, Robert Newlen, approached us about a few challenges CRS was having and ways we could help.

In the select committee, we recommended congressional committees consider the authorities for congressional support agencies and identify those that need updating. H.R. 7592 and our next bill, H.R. 7593, are perfect examples of this.

Under existing law, the Library of Congress is required to produce hardbound copies of the Constitution

with annotations, also referred to as CONAN.

You actually have to be as strong as Conan to lift this. My mother tells me that at birth, I was 6 pounds, 8 ounces. This is 8 pounds, 14 ounces, so it is larger than small DEREK KILMER.

The task of printing this behemoth has fallen to CRS, and the most recent CONAN print cost \$1 million per year to print, not to mention the considerable staff time and attention spent formatting, printing, and distributing said books.

The law requiring printed CONAN copies predated widespread internet access. Since 2019, the Library of Congress and CRS have made this same information available online, free of cost, with the added benefit of real-time updates that just aren't possible with printed books.

This bill simply replaces the requirement for the Library of Congress and CRS to prepare hardbound versions of the CONAN and replaces it with a requirement to prepare digital versions and publish them online instead, as they already have been doing.

Through this bill, the American people can receive better and more up-to-date information online. We can save taxpayer dollars and valuable CRS staff capacity. We can eliminate the 8 pounds and 14 ounces of print. I personally would like to eliminate 8 pounds and 14 ounces after the weight I have gained over the August recess.

I think this is a commonsense bill, and I thank my colleague, Chairwoman BICE, for her leadership on this.

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

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Oklahoma (Mrs. BICE) to speak on the bill.

Mrs. BICE. Mr. Speaker, as was mentioned by my colleague Mr. KILMER, this is the Constitution Annotated, or CONAN, as it is better known today. Its origins date back to 1797 when Congress passed legislation requiring that every Member of Congress be provided a copy of the Constitution.

These copies were then expanded to include Supreme Court case citations so that Members could see which clauses of the Constitution the Court used to decide those cases.

As the number of citations grew, Members became frustrated with the new format. The hundreds of citations listed under each clause of the Constitution were useless to most of them because they had no idea what the cases were about and what questions were before the Court.

In 1921, Congress passed a resolution requiring reprints of the Constitution to include explanatory language that would make sense of all the case citations throughout. This requirement made the reprints much more useful to the Members, and the format created then is one that is still used today.

Initially, CONAN was printed every 10 years or so, but by 1970, Members

began to complain that it was outdated almost as soon as it was printed. They addressed this by passing a resolution requiring that a paperbound supplement to CONAN be printed every 2 years, in addition to printing the hardbound version of the CONAN every 10.

Since 1972, that is what we have done: Print a hardbound version of CONAN every 10 years and a paperbound supplement every 2.

CONAN obviously has a rich history dating back over two centuries. The Constitution provides the framework for our government, and understanding that framework and how the Supreme Court has applied it to its decisions over the years is as essential today as it was over 200 years ago.

Nothing about H.R. 7592 erases or changes this important history. In fact, the legislative history of CONAN makes it clear that Congress has consistently prioritized up-to-date interpretation and analysis of court cases, and this resolution honors that longstanding tradition.

Today, people rely on digital sources for the most up-to-date information. This is true whether we are talking about breaking news, airfares, restaurant reviews, or Supreme Court case citations.

CONAN is a case in point. According to the GPO, the number of print copies of CONAN requested in 2012 by the House, Senate, and Joint Committee on Printing was just over 1,000. Ten years later, in 2022, the number of requested copies dropped to just 659.

It is no coincidence that this drop in requests for the hardbound version of CONAN coincides with the 2019 launch of a digital version of CONAN.

Over the past 5 years, the CONAN website has become an invaluable resource to individuals, citizens, schools, libraries, and, of course, Congress. The user-friendly site has received more than 28 million visits since it was created and features hundreds of pages of constitutional analysis and content.

The site is publicly accessible, easy to search, and provides links to Supreme Court decisions. Perhaps most importantly, it is updated in real time by CRS.

All of this raises the question of why we are wasting taxpayer dollars printing this giant hardcover version of CONAN along with paperbound supplements when a superior digital version already exists.

According to the CBO, replacing this version of CONAN with a digital version would reduce the Library of Congress' operating costs by millions over the next few years.

Eliminating the print requirement will also eliminate inefficient use of CRS staff time. In addition to updating the online version of CONAN in real time, CRS staff have to spend countless hours formatting and paginating the print version of CONAN. A more efficient CRS ultimately benefits Congress and, in turn, our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, replacing the CONAN print requirement with a digital requirement is a no-brainer. The digital version provides Members and other users with the most up-to-date information and analysis available at a significant cost savings for taxpayers.

History shows that Congress has consistently taken steps to ensure that CONAN meets the evolving needs of Members and other users. Passing this legislation is a logical next step in maintaining CONAN's relevancy and usefulness, both to Congress and to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 7592.

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Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I don't have any additional speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I again thank the gentlewoman from Oklahoma (Mrs. BICE), the Modernization Subcommittee chairwoman, for her leadership on this measure that will save taxpayer dollars.

I also recognize, once again, the subcommittee ranking member Mr. KILMER as well as Mr. CAREY and Mr. MORELLE. I urge all of my colleagues who want to save taxpayers \$5 million to vote in support of H.R. 7592. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7592.

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.

MODERNIZING THE CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE'S ACCESS TO DATA ACT

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7593) to enhance the authority of the Director of the Congressional Research Service to obtain information directly from agencies of the Federal government.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7593

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 "Modernizing the Congressional Research Service's Access to Data Act".

SEC. 2. ACCESS OF CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE TO GOVERNMENT INFORMATION.

(a) DIRECT ACCESS TO INFORMATION.—Section 203 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 166) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (j) as subsection (k); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (i) the following new subsection:

“(j)(1) In carrying out the duties and functions of the Congressional Research Service