

Reorganization Act of 1970 to authorize the Legislative Counsel of the House of Representatives to designate more than one of the attorneys of the Office of the Legislative Counsel as a Deputy Legislative Counsel, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.  
The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 9487

*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 "House Office of Legislative Counsel Modernization Act".

#### SEC. 2. DESIGNATION OF MULTIPLE DEPUTY LEGISLATIVE COUNSELS.

(a) DESIGNATION.—Section 522(b)(1) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 (2 U.S.C. 282a(b)(1)) is amended—

(1) by amending the first sentence to read as follows: "The Legislative Counsel shall designate one or more of the attorneys appointed under subsection (a) as a Deputy Legislative Counsel."; and

(2) in the second sentence, by striking "the Deputy Legislative Counsel shall perform the functions of the Legislative Counsel." and inserting "the functions of the Legislative Counsel shall be performed by a Deputy Legislative Counsel. If there is more than one Deputy Legislative Counsel, the Deputy Legislative Counsel who shall perform such functions shall be determined in accordance with the order specified in a notice filed with the Speaker and the Minority Leader of the House by the Legislative Counsel.".

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 522(b)(2) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 282a(b)(2)) is amended by striking "Deputy Legislative Counsel" and inserting "Deputy Legislative Counsels".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MORELLE) 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 H.R. 9487, the House Office of Legislative Counsel Modernization Act.

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 today to urge my colleagues to support H.R. 9487, the House Office of Legislative Counsel Modernization Act.

Originally called the Legislative Drafting Service, the Office of the Legislative Counsel has been providing legislative drafting services to the House for over 100 years. Since its inception, the office has helped countless Members of Congress turn their legislative ideas into thoughtful, meaningful bills and amendment text.

This legislation addresses a need raised by the Legislative Counsel team to help manage their team of experts. It would allow the designation of more

than one Deputy Legislative Counsel to help manage their office. Passage would give the Legislative Counsel flexibility to meet staffing needs and handle vacancies as they arise.

This small change would allow the Legislative Counsel to name one deputy to fulfill leadership responsibilities for the office upon a vacancy or any other issue. A well-equipped Legislative Counsel Office helps us as Members deliver for our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have worked with Ranking Member MORELLE on this effort to assist our Legislative Counsel. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 9487, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 9487. This bipartisan bill amends the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 to clarify the responsibilities of the Deputy Legislative Counsel and grant the Legislative Counsel the authority to designate a deputy to carry out their duties in the event of an absence or vacancy in the position.

We may be repeating ourselves quite a bit here, but I think that just indicates our support and cooperation that we were able to generate to pass this package of bills, which I am grateful for.

The Office of the Legislative Counsel, as my learned colleague has indicated, plays an essential role in supporting the work of Congress by providing impartial and confidential drafting services to Members and committees. The office is critical in our ability to function as an institution, and it enables us to work more efficiently on behalf of the American people.

The expert attorneys within the Office of the Legislative Counsel draft tens of thousands of bills and resolutions each Congress. That number grows exponentially when accounting for the many drafts of measures as they are refined, as well as the increasing number of amendments submitted by Members to the various committees.

I would like to take a moment to briefly recognize two of those attorneys right now. First, I thank Wade Ballou for his more than 40 years of service with the office. That service culminated with his appointment to Legislative Counsel in 2016. Wade recently announced his retirement. I wish him well as he moves into the next phase of his professional and personal life.

I also recognize the Deputy Legislative Counsel, Noah Wofsy, for his outstanding leadership. He and his team do a masterful job of supporting the House's legislative agenda, including the Committee on House Administration in particular. We would not have been able to bring this measure to the floor or any others without their dedication, patience, and commitment to task.

As the demands on the Office of the Legislative Counsel will undoubtedly

continue to grow, it is vital we provide its attorneys with the support necessary for them to perform their jobs effectively. This includes ensuring the office has succession plans in place to maintain the continuity of congressional operations.

While this legislation may seem modest in scope, it is a critical step in strengthening the resilience of our institution, so I strongly urge my colleagues to support the measure.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank my friend and colleague, Mr. STEIL, chairman of our committee, and the staff for their work on this.

Mr. Speaker, for all the reasons previously articulated, I think this is a fine piece of legislation that helps move the institution forward. I encourage all of my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this piece of legislation. As my colleague said, it may be modest in scope, but sometimes you take a small step forward when you can get it.

I am appreciative of all those who work in the Legislative Counsel's Office. My colleague recognized a few by name, and I second that comment. I think it is important to recognize the hard work that goes on inside the Office of the Legislative Counsel. This opportunity to modernize it to allow it to operate a little more efficiently is well worth our support.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support 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 Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 9487.

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.

#### SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL CONGRESSIONAL TIME CAPSULE ACT

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6394) to provide for the creation of a Congressional time capsule in commemoration of the semiquincentennial of the United States, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6394

*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 "Semiquincentennial Congressional Time Capsule Act".

#### SEC. 2. SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL CONGRESSIONAL TIME CAPSULE.

(a) CREATION BY ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL.—The Architect of the Capitol shall create a Congressional time capsule, to be

known as the “Semiquincentennial Congressional Time Capsule” (in this Act referred to as the “Time Capsule”).

(b) CONTENTS.—

(1) DETERMINATION BY CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP.—The Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Office of the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, Office of the Majority Leader of the Senate, and Office of the Minority Leader of the Senate shall jointly determine the contents of the Time Capsule, taking into account the requirements of paragraph (2).

(2) SPECIFICATIONS.—The contents of the Time Capsule shall include—

(A) a representative portion of all books, manuscripts, miscellaneous printed matter, memorabilia, relics, and other materials relating to the United States Semiquincentennial;

(B) copies or representations of important legislative and institutional milestones of Congress during the time before the Time Capsule is buried;

(C) a message from Congress to the future Congress when the Time Capsule will be opened; and

(D) such other content as the offices described in paragraph (1) consider appropriate.

(3) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out this subsection, the offices described in paragraph (1) may consult with the Architect of the Capitol, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, and such other entities of the Federal Government as the offices consider appropriate.

(c) DUTIES OF ARCHITECT.—The Architect of the Capitol shall—

(1) prepare the Time Capsule to be sealed and buried on the West Lawn of the Capitol, at a location specified by the Architect, on or before July 4th, 2026, at a time which would permit individuals attending this event to also attend the burial of a time capsule in Independence Mall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, under section 7(f)(1) of the United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016 (36 U.S.C. 101 note prec.); and

(2) install a plaque to provide such information about the Time Capsule as the Architect considers appropriate.

(d) UNSEALING.—The Time Capsule shall be sealed until July 4th, 2276, on which date the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall present the Time Capsule to the 244th Congress, and such Congress shall determine how the contents within should be preserved or used.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MORELLE) 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. 6394.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6394. This bipartisan legislation would authorize a time capsule to be buried on the Cap-

itol grounds to mark the Nation's semiquincentennial.

America is turning 250 on July 4, 2026. This time capsule represents one way that Congress will participate in the Nation's yearlong celebration of democracy and freedom.

The contents of the capsule will be sealed by the Office of the Speaker of the House, Office of the Minority Leader of the House, and Offices of the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate.

The contents of the capsule will remain sealed until July 2, 2276, the Nation's 500th anniversary.

Representative WATSON COLEMAN introduced H.R. 6394 as a member of the commission, together with an additional 54 cosponsors.

The Architect of the Capitol has provided technical input to the commission and would work with the congressional leadership to implement the capsule.

I am pleased to have Ranking Member MORELLE's efforts and support on this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support this and vote in favor of H.R. 6394.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6394. This bipartisan legislation, as my colleague has indicated, would authorize the Architect of the Capitol to bury a time capsule commemorating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 2026, to be opened on our Nation's 500th anniversary in the year 2276.

I will note parenthetically, one of my favorite lines in the musical *Hamilton* says: “Legacy. What is a legacy? It's planting seeds in a garden you never get to see.” I think this qualifies for that. I suspect I won't be here at the opening of the time capsule.

Nonetheless, the items in the capsule will be determined by bipartisan, bicameral congressional leaders and include written materials relating to the anniversary, representations of notable legislative and institutional milestones, and a message from this Congress to our future colleagues in the 244th Congress.

The upcoming anniversary marks a powerful testament to the resilience of the American experiment. Our Nation has faced countless tests to our strength and unity, including a civil war, two world wars, natural disasters, and more.

Yet, through each challenge, this country has stood strong and remains committed to fulfilling the ideals set forth in the Declaration of Independence nearly 250 years ago.

As we face new challenges in a time of deep division, partisanship, and extremism, this anniversary serves as a reminder of our shared responsibility to uphold the values of liberty and equality championed by our Founding Fathers.

I extend my thanks to the United States Semiquincentennial Commission for its leadership in planning for this momentous occasion. I particularly commend my colleague and friend, Congresswoman WATSON COLEMAN, for her introduction of this measure.

I also acknowledge the service of my fellow New Yorker, former Representative Joe Crowley, who has lent his time and efforts to the work of the commission.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to seeing the items chosen for the time capsule and recommend my colleagues' support for this measure.

I thank my friend and colleague for putting the bill before to the House and for his leadership in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN).

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, was an essential milestone in the progress of all humanity toward a more fair, just, and democratic society, work that continues to this day.

As we reflect on the last 250 years of progress toward those ideals, we must impart the lessons that we have learned to future generations. As co-founder and co-chair of the Congressional America250 Caucus along with my co-chairs, Mr. EVANS, Mr. ADERHOLT, and Ms. SALAZAR, it is an honor to see this legislation come forward today as just one small part of our Nation's 250th anniversary celebration.

This bill, as you know, authorizes the Architect of the Capitol to create the time capsule and have it buried on the west lawn to remain sealed until July 2276, the Nation's 500th anniversary.

The contents will include items that represent important legislation and institutional milestones of Congress, a message from the 119th Congress to the 244th Congress, and other items that reflect our history.

No one here today will see it, as has been said, but to be redundant, an old Greek proverb goes: “A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.”

This body does its best work when we don't seek fame or followers, renown or retweets, but rather when we work so that distant generations of Americans for whom our names will be mere footnotes will enjoy the fruits of our work here today.

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

Mr. Speaker, again, I encourage support from my colleagues for this bill.

I will use this moment, if I can, as these are likely the final bills of our committee for the 118th Congress, to certainly thank my friend, Mr. STEIL, for his cooperation, his leadership, and his friendship during the last 2 years.

I thank all the members of the committee and certainly all the members of the staff on both sides of the aisle

who worked diligently each and every day. I know there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes.

While we at times disagree, I think we work very well together in our interests collectively as to advance the work of this great institution and the support and service of the American people, and I thank the gentleman for that.

To all of my colleagues and those listening, I wish them the very happiest whatever their holiday tradition or faith tradition is. Merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah, and to everyone, I wish them a very, very healthy and happy New Year.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I echo my colleague's remarks. It is true, we don't always agree on every policy issue of the day, but it is an honor to work with him. As is shown by these five pieces of legislation, this is a real opportunity for us to work together to move this institution and this country ahead.

As noted by my colleague, this would not be possible without the hard-working staff of both the majority and minority side, navigating through thorny issues at times. I thank my colleague and all the members of the committee as well as the staff for their hard work over the course of this Congress to make sure that the important work of this institution, but more importantly of the American people, is getting done.

I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation before us, as we have done with the previous four.

As my colleague jokingly said he does not suspect he will be here in 250 years when this capsule is opened in 2276. May the RECORD reflect I know I won't be here in 250 years, but I do think those that are here and open this capsule will be able to reflect back at the time we have spent working on behalf of our country here.

Mr. Speaker, I support and urge its passage, and I yield back 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. 6394, 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.

#### FEDERAL BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT TRACKING ACT

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3343) to require the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to submit to Congress a plan for the Assistant Sec-

retary to track the acceptance, processing, and disposal of certain Form 299s, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3343

*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 "Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act".

#### SEC. 2. PLAN FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TO TRACK THE ACCEPTANCE, PROCESSING, AND DISPOSAL OF CERTAIN FORM 299S.

(a) PLAN.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a plan containing a description of—

(1) the process by which the Assistant Secretary proposes to—

(A) track the acceptance, processing, and disposal of each Form 299 for communications use authorization;

(B) provide applicants additional transparency with respect to the status of the applicable Form 299 for communications use authorization; and

(C) most expeditiously implement the plan; and

(2) any potential barriers to implementing the plan that are identified by the Assistant Secretary.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(A) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(2) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term "Assistant Secretary" means the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

(3) COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY.—The term "communications facility" has the meaning given the term communications facility installation in section 6409(d) of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1455(d)).

(4) COMMUNICATIONS USE.—The term "communications use" means the placement and operation of a communications facility.

(5) COMMUNICATIONS USE AUTHORIZATION.—The term "communications use authorization" means an easement, right-of-way, lease, license, or other authorization—

(A) provided by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture;

(B) to locate or modify a communications facility on covered land; and

(C) for the primary purpose of authorizing the occupancy and use of such covered land for communications use.

(6) COVERED LAND.—The term "covered land" means—

(A) public lands; and

(B) National Forest System land.

(7) FORM 299.—The term "Form 299" means the form established under section 6409(b)(2)(A) of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1455(b)(2)(A)), or any successor form.

(8) NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.—The term "National Forest System" has the meaning given the term in section 11(a) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1609(a)).

(9) PUBLIC LANDS.—The term "public lands" means land under the management of—

(A) the Bureau of Land Management;

(B) the National Park Service;

(C) the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; or

(D) the Bureau of Reclamation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3343, the Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act. This bill requires the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to develop a plan for tracking the broadband permitting applications on Federal lands.

Broadband is essential to participate in everyday activities. Americans rely on their internet for their work, healthcare, education, and more. Congress has provided billions of dollars to close the digital divide. The NTIA is in the process of administering the \$42.45 billion BEAD program and must ensure that these dollars are spent wisely.

Too often, broadband deployment is delayed or prevented due to unnecessary red tape in the form of burdensome permitting requirements. Federal agencies are some of the biggest culprits behind the red tape, delaying the deployment of broadband to the communities that are in need.

The process of application approval for some of these permits has unfortunately become duplicative, ineffective, and time consuming. Worse, there is no transparency in the process.

Opaque Federal permitting review processes leave applicants in the dark on whether their application is complete, where it is in the review process, and when they can finally expect a decision.

The Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act addresses these concerns by providing clarity into the Federal permitting process, giving applicants transparency into the status of their reviews and improving the processing speed and disposition of applications.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important moment in time, and we must do all we can to ensure that every American can access reliable broadband.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3343, the Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act.