

Are you on the side of law enforcement or the guy who pardoned the drug dealer who let in all the fentanyl?

Are you on the side of workers or the robber barons who want to fleece people out of their paychecks and rob them of their hard-earned benefits?

Are you on the side of the American taxpayers or Elon Musk, a nepo baby who sucks up government subsidies and uses tax money to enrich himself while spreading hate and lies on his broken website?

Democrats know what side we are on. We are on the side of the people. We are going to continue to show up, and we are going to continue to fight back.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everybody to vote “no” on this rule, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I just have to say that I am appalled. I understand they get the right to say whatever they want to during this time of debate on the rule for the HALT Fentanyl Act. I understand that, but they say you have to choose what side you are on, then bring up Elon Musk, and then say vote “no.” This bill has nothing to do with Elon Musk. This bill is about fentanyl-related substances and fentanyl analogues. It perplexes me, other than it is an attempt to confuse everybody on what this bill is about.

If they want to make all those statements, they can, but I would think they would be in favor of getting this bill done. If you are going to choose to say whose side you are on with this bill, you are making a choice. You are making a choice. We have an opportunity today, right here and now, to pass a rule and then tomorrow to pass a bill that will make a step forward in stopping the cartels, the Chinese precursors, and the folks who are doing the bad things in our country and in other countries from bringing their substances into this country and trying to use a gimmick, a chemical technique, saying that it is not really fentanyl, that it is a fentanyl analogue, and get around our laws.

That is what this bill is about. Every Member ought to be in favor of that. Why you wouldn't be in favor of at least bringing that bill to the floor and having a vote on it is beyond me. If we are choosing sides, I am going to choose to take a step forward. I am going to take a step forward to try to stop this scourge of fentanyl poisoning, fentanyl analogue poisoning, and fentanyl-related substances coming into our country. That is the side I am going to choose.

I understand they want to talk about all kinds of other things. I think it is a pretty darn good bill, and I think we should pass it.

Now, let me get to my script. I would like to reiterate the importance of the bill to permanently schedule fentanyl analogues as schedule I while still allowing for research into these substances.

This is one small step in fighting the opioid crisis our country faces. If we allow this temporary extension to expire in March—as it will if we take no action, if we choose the wrong side today and tomorrow—it will bring back the incentives for traffickers to bring these fentanyl analogues and fentanyl-related substances into our country.

I truly don't believe my colleagues on the other side want that. I understand they get fired up on the floor sometimes and say things that maybe later, in retrospect, they think maybe they shouldn't have gone that far.

If we are going to choose sides, I urge everybody to pass the rule and choose the side of stopping the fentanyl scourge in our country, the fentanyl analogue scourge in our country, and urge the passage of this rule and for final passage of the underlying bill.

The material previously referred to by Mr. MCGOVERN is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 93 OFFERED BY
MR. MCGOVERN OF MASSACHUSETTS

Strike all after the resolved clause and insert the following:

That immediately upon adoption of this resolution, the House shall proceed to the consideration in the House of the bill consisting of the text of H.R. 4531 of the 118th Congress, as passed by the House, to reauthorize certain programs that provide for opioid use disorder prevention, recovery, and treatment, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 4531.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

EMERGENCY WILDFIRE FIGHTING TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 2025

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 836) to require the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, and the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an evaluation with respect to the use of the container aerial firefighting system (CAFFS), and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 836

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 “Emergency Wildfire Fighting Technology Act of 2025”.

SEC. 2. CONTAINER AERIAL FIREFIGHTING SYSTEM (CAFFS).

(a) EVALUATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the National Interagency Aviation Committee and the Interagency Airtanker Board, shall jointly conduct an evaluation of the container aerial firefighting system to assess the use of such system to mitigate and suppress wildfires.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the National Interagency Aviation Committee and the Interagency Airtanker Board, shall jointly submit to the appropriate committees a report that includes the results of the evaluation required under subsection (a).

(c) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate committees” means—

(1) the Committees on Agriculture and Natural Resources of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) 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 may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 836, 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.

I rise in strong support of Congressman VALADAO's bill, the Emergency Wildfire Fighting Technology Act of 2025. This timely legislation offers us a chance to equip land managers with another tool in their arsenal to combat the catastrophic wildfire crisis by testing a new and innovative method for wildfire suppression.

Last month, wildfires in southern California took the lives of at least 29 people and changed thousands of lives forever. These fires destroyed more than 16,000 structures and racked up untold fire suppression costs and economic damages.

This tragedy is a wake-up call for millions of Americans and demonstrates just how important it is to proactively address the wildfire crisis. Unfortunately, decades of inadequate forest management have created an unprecedented forest health crisis. Across our country, 1 billion acres are now at risk of wildland fire. In the absence of dramatic change, the future outlook remains bleak.

When it comes to fighting these out-of-control infernos, it is critical that we utilize all available technologies that could improve the cost efficiency and effectiveness of fire suppression. Wildland firefighters on the front lines of these disasters must have all the tools and methods available to fight fires and protect lives and property.

Aircraft and helicopters provide life-saving support to ground crews, often by delivering water or fire retardant. In order to drop water or fire retardant from a plane or helicopter, the aircraft must be designed or retrofitted for such purpose, which limits the number of aircraft available.

Representative VALADAO has worked with various stakeholders who have developed and improved container aerial firefighting systems that drop water or fire retardant from aircraft via disposable containers. This technology could decrease the response time to wildfires by increasing the number of aircraft available, which could, in turn, save lives and critical infrastructure.

This technology is not new and is used successfully in other parts of the world. However, U.S. wildland firefighting agencies have not recently studied the system.

H.R. 836 would require the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to evaluate the use of container aerial firefighting systems in response to wildfires. The evaluation will focus on effectiveness, cost, ease of delivery, and safety.

Directing our wildfire firefighting agencies to study new and emerging technologies is a win for the wildland firefighting crews and a win for those who live in vulnerable, fire-prone areas.

I applaud Congressman VALADAO for his leadership on this important topic. His legislation passed the House unanimously last year, and it has also passed the House twice with bipartisan support as part of the Fix Our Forests Act.

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

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

I rise in support of this legislation introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO).

In a few minutes, I will also have a lot to say about one of the bills that

was abruptly and outrageously pulled from our agenda today, but right now, I am happy to support my friend's bill.

I point out that the text of this bill passed the House as part of Chair WESTERMAN's H.R. 471 less than 2 weeks ago. I recognize that this is the beginning of a new Congress. Things are pretty chaotic, and our friends across the aisle want to appear busy amidst all the unconstitutional chaos and illegal action that is flooding our in-boxes and our newspapers, and we are constantly on the defensive because our democracy is under attack by someone who doesn't want to be a President—he wants to be a king—and has no regard for Article I of the Constitution.

We have silence from our friends across the aisle about all of that, but I guess we have time today to move a bill that we have already passed and that nobody opposes. Congratulations for this particular head-scratcher.

□ 1330

It is a real missed opportunity since we could be using this time to talk about critical issues like the Federal wildland firefighting pay and benefits that are set to expire a few weeks from now.

I think there is bipartisan support to extend those, but I can't get my friends across the aisle to talk about that, let alone come together and move some legislation to get it done.

Of course, fixing firefighter pay wasn't in the recent Republican package. It is not on the agenda today either. I hope we get to it at some point, but we are not doing it today, and that is a shame.

We should also be talking about disaster relief for California, but that is not on the agenda today either. Since we are considering this bill for a second time, Groundhog Day on this bill, instead of all of the other priorities, I will say committee Democrats continue to support this bill.

There is no opposition to this bill. We are going to pass it again and again, maybe, if we run out of other things to do this in this Congress.

The legislation would require relevant Federal agencies to complete an updated evaluation of the Container Aerial Firefighting System to support wildland fire mitigation and suppression efforts across the country. The system involves using a box or a container for aerial drops of water or fire retardant.

Its proponents claim that the utilization of this technology could improve delivery time and make it easier for aircrafts to fight fires. That is fine. That is a good thing.

However, back in 2011, the Forest Service conducted a study and determined that this particular system did not meet existing standards and posed safety risks to our communities and forests. Since that initial report, there have been technological advancements.

This bill aims to take another look at a potentially useful tool while en-

suring the Forest Service retains its authority to decide if the tool is ready to use or not. This is an important safeguard for wildland firefighters and the communities who are impacted by the wildfire crisis.

As we saw in the recent southern California fires, the climate crisis is clearly increasing the severity and duration of wildfire season. Evaluating new technology that can help keep communities safe needs to be a priority.

This bill is one of many examples of the potential for truly bipartisan collaboration on the issue of wildfires. I hope we can keep this work going. I hope we can extend it to actually be a permanent fix for the firefighter pay problem that we need to address.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes," and I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friends across the aisle for their overwhelming support of Representative VALADAO's bill. We should have that kind of support for a bill that is addressing a huge issue in our country with wildland fire and the dangers that it imposes.

Mr. Speaker, I believe you and Mr. VALADAO both serve on the Committee on Appropriations where Republicans brought an Interior appropriations bill to the floor with firefighter pay funding in that bill, and it was voted down by our friends across the aisle.

We do need to take care of our firefighters. When we get bills on the floor that increase pay for firefighters, I would hope we could get more bipartisan support on that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Emergency Wildfire Fighting Technology Act of 2025, which would dramatically increase the number of airlift assets available for wildfire emergencies.

Containerized Aerial Firefighting Systems, or CAFFS, are airdrop-capable disposable containers for water or fire retardant, which can be dropped from much higher altitudes and with less visibility than current aerial firefighting operations.

Current operations depend on single-mission aircraft, but CAFFS can be used by any standard cargo plane. The use of CAFFS provides for more coverage for firefighters on the ground and allows teams to quickly respond to prevent smaller fires from raging out of control.

These systems are used by other countries, but the United States has not utilized them. We have the technology that we can deploy to stop or minimize the devastation these fires cause, and we should be using it.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chair WESTERMAN and his staff at the Committee on Natural Resources for their work on this important bill to combat and contain wildfires in a quicker and more efficient way.

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

Mr. Speaker, I certainly didn't think I was engaging in personalities by talking about a President that wants to be a king. I thought I was just acknowledging the reality of what is happening in this country.

I was also referring to these 19-year-olds in hoodies that have been given read-write access to our most sensitive, personal data who are inside the Treasury Department's payment system right now rummaging through our private information doing who knows what.

We can't even get answers because our friends across the aisle don't want to talk about it. They want to rerun all these bills that we have already passed and that are, frankly, not opposed, and this is a waste of our time here on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" again on this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Again, I would remind Members to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 836 is a good, commonsense piece of legislation that has passed the House three times on a bipartisan basis.

I commend Representative VALADAO for his proven leadership on bipartisan solutions that meaningfully improve forest health and reduce wildfires. If we could get the Senate to act on some of these bills, we wouldn't have to pass them so many times.

I appreciate Representative VALADAO being so persistent and continuing to work on his good legislation. I encourage adoption of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, 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. 836.

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.

CONVEYANCE OF PLEASANT VALLEY RANGER DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SITE TO GILA COUNTY, ARIZONA

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 837) to require the Secretary of Agriculture to convey the Pleasant Valley Ranger District Administrative Site to Gila County, Arizona.

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

H.R. 837

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

SECTION 1. CONVEYANCE OF PLEASANT VALLEY RANGER DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SITE TO GILA COUNTY, ARIZONA.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COUNTY.—The term "County" means Gila County, Arizona.

(2) MAP.—The term "map" means the map entitled "Pleasant Valley Admin Site Proposal" and dated September 23, 2021.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service.

(b) CONVEYANCE REQUIRED.—Subject to this section, if the County submits to the Secretary a written request for conveyance of the property described in subsection (c) not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall convey to the County all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the property described in subsection (c).

(c) DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The property referred to in subsection (b) is the parcel of real property, including all land and improvements, generally depicted as "Gila County Area" on the map, consisting of approximately 232.9 acres of National Forest System land located in the Tonto National Forest in Arizona.

(2) MAP.—

(A) MINOR ERRORS.—The Secretary may correct minor errors in the map.

(B) AVAILABILITY.—A copy of the map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the Forest Service.

(3) SURVEY.—The exact acreage and legal description of the National Forest System land to be conveyed under subsection (b) shall be determined by a survey satisfactory to the Secretary.

(d) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The conveyance under subsection (b) shall be—

(1) subject to valid existing rights;

(2) made without consideration;

(3) made by quitclaim deed; and

(4) subject to such other terms and conditions as the Secretary considers to be appropriate to protect the interests of the United States.

(e) COSTS OF CONVEYANCE.—As a condition of the conveyance under subsection (b), the County shall pay all costs associated with the conveyance, including the cost of—

(1) a survey, if necessary, under subsection (c)(3);

(2) any environmental analysis or resource survey required under Federal law; and

(3) any analysis required to comply with division A of subtitle III of title 54, United States Code (commonly referred to as the "National Historic Preservation Act").

(f) ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS.—Notwithstanding section 120(h)(3)(A) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9620(h)(3)(A)), the Secretary shall not be required to provide any covenant or warranty for the land and improvements conveyed to the County under subsection (b).

(g) USE OF LAND.—The land conveyed to the county under subsection (b) shall be used by the County only for the purposes of serving and supporting veterans of the Armed Forces.

(h) REVERSION.—If any land conveyed under subsection (b) is used in a manner that is inconsistent with the requirements of subsection (g), all right, title, and interest in and to the land shall revert to the United States, at the discretion of the Secretary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) 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 may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 837, 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 strong support of H.R. 837, which is led by my friend from Arizona, Representative CRANE.

This is a good bill that would transfer land from the Forest Service to create a retreat facility in Gila County, Arizona, for veterans and their families. Over 5,000 veterans call Gila County home, and there are over 500,000 veterans in all of Arizona.

Creating this facility will help the brave men and women who have served our country find healing, reconnect with nature, and ease the transition back to civilian life.

Nearly 60 percent of the land in Gila County is Federally owned, which creates significant limitations on available land for commendable efforts like the veterans' retreat center. The proposed location of this new center is a Forest Service site that is scheduled to be torn down.

This 232-acre site includes 17 buildings, 2 residences, 2 barracks, a historic ranger house and barn, and helipads.

Gila County plans to remodel and renovate many of the buildings to provide an excellent experience for veterans and their families. Repurposing the site is a win-win, as it will be a great resource for Arizona's veterans while freeing the Forest Service from maintaining property it no longer needs.

I commend Representative CRANE for his leadership on this effort on behalf of his constituents. As a veteran himself, I know he understands how important this center will be for his community. His diligent work with Gila County and the Forest Service has led to this important effort, which will make a meaningful difference in the lives of Arizona's veterans.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation. My Democratic colleagues and I agree that it is a good idea to authorize the conveyance of the Pleasant Valley Ranger District Administrative Site to Gila County in Arizona.

However, I do want to talk about the broader context for this bill because it