

His vision for America's air power laid the groundwork for today's advances in space exploration and defense.

May we always remember General Patrick's contribution to our Nation.

□ 1415

COMMUNICATION FROM THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable HAKEEM JEFFRIES, Democratic Leader:

February 7, 2025.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER JOHNSON: Pursuant to section 803(a) of the Congressional Recognition for Excellence in Arts Education Act (2 U.S.C. 803 (a)), I am pleased to appoint the Honorable David Trone of Potomac, Maryland to the Congressional Award Board.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

HAKEEM JEFFRIES,
Democratic Leader.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1600

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas) at 4 p.m.

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.

DISABLED VETERANS HOUSING SUPPORT ACT

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 224) to amend section 102(a)(20) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 to require the exclusion of service-connected disability compensation when determining whether a person is a person of low and moderate income, a person of low income, or a person of moderate income, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 224

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 "Disabled Veterans Housing Support Act".

SEC. 2. SERVICE CONNECTED DISABILITY COMPENSATION.

Section 102(a)(20) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5302(a)(20)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(C) SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY COMPENSATION.—When determining whether a person is a person of low and moderate income, a person of low income, or a person of moderate income under this paragraph, a State, unit of general local government, or Indian tribe shall exclude any service-connected disability compensation received by such person from the Department of Veterans Affairs."

SEC. 3. REPORT.

The Comptroller General of the United States shall, not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, submit to the Congress a report that—

(1) examines how service-connected disability compensation is treated for the purposes of determining eligibility for all programs administered by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development;

(2) identifies any instances where service-connected disability compensation is treated in a manner inconsistent with the amendment made by section 2; and

(3) with respect to each program administered by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in which service-connected disability compensation is treated inconsistently, provides legislative recommendations relating to how such program could better serve veteran populations, and under-served communities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) and the gentleman from California (Mr. VARGAS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. 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.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 224, the Disabled Veterans Housing Support Act, introduced by my good friend from Texas, Congresswoman MONICA DE LA CRUZ.

It has been said that what the American people desire is not bigger government but a much better and more effective government. The reforms proposed in this bill would accomplish just that. This bill would reform a program meant to assist those in need, HUD's, Housing and Urban Development's, Community Development Block Grant program. This includes helping our Nation's low-income veterans with the

housing challenges that many of them face across our Nation. However, the bureaucratic obstacles at HUD know no bounds.

Mr. Speaker, today, veterans are being turned away from this very positive CDBG program. How is that? The formula HUD tells communities to use to see if veterans qualify as low income and are therefore eligible to participate in the CDBG program counts service-connected disability compensation as income, whereas other government programs correctly do not.

The result has been, in some places, especially in our most rural areas, communities have to tell low-income, disabled veterans they are too wealthy to qualify for help.

Truly, Mr. Speaker, you cannot make this up.

Excluding low-income veterans because they are disabled is not what Congress intended for communities to take action on by receiving CDBG funds. Of course, HUD understands this exclusion has been happening. Yet, rather than fix the issue by providing clear rules on how to calculate the income of disabled veterans, the Biden administration kept saying that it was someone else's problem.

Mr. Speaker, that ends today with this good bill.

This bill would reform CDBG's income calculation formula, telling HUD, in no uncertain terms, to stop including service-connected disability compensation as income.

Fixing programmatic flaws and bureaucratic obstacles is exactly what the American people have sent these Members to this House floor to do. It is unfortunate that HUD has had several opportunities to fix its flawed guidance without Congress, but it has refused to act even with multiple letters from our Financial Services Committee.

This commonsense fix, which passed out of the committee with strong bipartisan support and on suspension in this House during the previous Congress, ensures that disabled veterans who have served our Nation with honor receive the benefits that they have earned and deserved. Under the leadership of Representative DE LA CRUZ, we will ensure that HUD stops excluding our Nation's heroes.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 224, the Disabled Veterans Housing Support Act, sponsored by Representative DE LA CRUZ.

While I appreciate Ms. DE LA CRUZ's intention to better serve our veterans who have served this country, it is ironic that this bill seeks to improve a program that the Trump administration has already threatened to dismantle through an illegal funding freeze.

Specifically, the Trump administration and Musk's illegal DOGE unit continue to threaten to cut programs and

freeze Federal funding that has already gone out the door, including funds meant to serve veterans. In fact, committee staff continue to hear that some CDBG grantees remain locked out of their payment systems and are therefore unable to access Federal funds authorized by Congress. These are funds that are meant to help low-income and moderate-income communities, including disabled veterans, the very people this bill claims to want to help.

If Republicans are concerned about housing upgrades for disabled veterans who honorably served this Nation, then they should find the honor and courage to stop the Trump administration's and the billionaire boy's illegal actions that are harming our Nation's veterans, whether it is stealing private Federal data on millions of Americans or stealing the funding that would otherwise help a disabled veteran upgrade their home to make it more accessible and livable.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to stand up for disabled veterans and oppose copresident Musk's illegal takeover, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Mr. VARGAS from California, for his strong support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. DE LA CRUZ), who is the lead sponsor of the bill.

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 224, the Disabled Veterans Housing Support Act.

Veterans, particularly disabled veterans, have made extraordinary sacrifices for our Nation, and it is simply unacceptable that those who selflessly defended our freedoms are met with bureaucratic red tape when they return home.

Government overregulation should never stand in the way of veterans' ability to receive the help they need. That is what this legislation will fix.

Due to inconsistencies in the way income eligibility is determined for Community Development Block Grant assistance, a veteran could be disqualified simply because their service-connected disability compensation is counted as income in one case but excluded in another. This simply doesn't make sense.

This is the result of HUD currently allowing multiple different definitions of income for CDBG assistance, some of which count service-connected disability received from the VA as income while one does not. To put it more simply, the same veteran who may have been disqualified for assistance could very well be eligible if the grantee would only have used the proper definition of income.

This legislation will create a standard and ensure VA service-connected disability income is always excluded from income calculations when determining eligibility for CDBG assistance.

By passing this bipartisan legislation, we are correcting an issue that HUD has failed to address. Further, we will require a report from the GAO to identify any additional inconsistencies in the treatment of service-connected disability income within housing programs.

Last Congress, I was proud to see this legislation garner bipartisan support in the Financial Services Committee and pass out of this House as recently as this past December. We will continue to build on this progress to ensure federally funded programs best serve our veterans and do not penalize them for the benefits that they have earned.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the bipartisan cosponsors for this legislation, including Congressman BRAD SHERMAN, and I urge my colleagues to join me and vote in favor of H.R. 224.

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I believe this is the first time the gentleman from Arkansas has been presenting as the chairman, and I want to say that, as a friend, I am very proud of the gentleman, and it is good to see him as chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN), who is the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Capital Markets.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I join with the gentleman in his comments about how we need to protect our veterans from the ill-considered actions of President Trump and, I was about to say Secretary Musk, whatever he is. I, of course, join with Mr. VARGAS in welcoming our new chair of the Financial Services Committee.

I want to focus on the bill at hand, actually two bills at hand. We are dealing with this bill now and about four other bills will go by, and then we will deal with the companion legislation.

Ms. DE LA CRUZ is the chief Republican on my bill, which is going to come up in what I hope will be only 30 or 40 minutes. I am the chief Democrat on her bill.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has created various Federal programs to help those who are housing insecure, particularly veterans. Of course, to qualify for those programs, Mr. Speaker, you have to have an income under a certain threshold, so we have to define what is income. In particular, we have to ask: Do disability benefits paid by the VA count as income which might put a veteran over the threshold and deny the veteran participation in the housing benefits?

I think it should not for a number of reasons. First, we don't want disabled American veterans who are homeless or near homeless to be excluded from homeless programs. Second, the Internal Revenue Code already recognizes that disability benefits paid to veterans should not be considered income.

At the urging of many of us—I was particularly strong on this—the Department of Housing and Urban Development

has reached the same conclusion, at least from now, but here in Washington, it is not always good to just rely on an agency determination. A simple stroke of a Sharpie can change it one way or the other, now or in 4 years. What you want, Mr. Speaker, is legislation because that is near permanent.

Mr. Speaker, we have statutory provisions that make it clear that disability benefits paid by the VA should not be included in determining eligibility for veterans' housing. There is a reason for that, Mr. Speaker, and that is that you ordinarily think that if two people have the same income, then they are living at the same level. That is not true if you are a disabled veteran because you have the additional difficulties and the additional expenses of being disabled.

A veteran may have to pay for a health aide. The veteran can't get across town to take advantage of a sale. He or she is going to have a variety of additional costs because they are disabled, and that is what their disability benefit pays for, those additional costs. It doesn't necessarily mean that they have a standard of living that includes their disability payment.

Now, we deal with Congresswoman DE LA CRUZ's bill, which I strongly support. I hope it will pass unanimously in the next few minutes. This deals with the HUD Community Development Block Grant program. As I said, my legislation, which will come up hopefully not too long from now, deals with a different HUD program.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support both bills. They both have no score, so this doesn't cost the Federal Government any money.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 10 seconds to the gentleman from California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, both bills are overwhelmingly supported by veterans organizations, including the VFW, Vietnam Veterans of America, The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, U.S.VETS, and Black Veterans Empowerment Council.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bill and its companion legislation.

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Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUNN).

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. DE LA CRUZ) for bringing this bill forward, the Disabled Veterans Housing Support Act, which I am proud to co-lead as a bipartisan sponsor on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, our country is facing a housing shortage crisis, and our veterans are hit the hardest, like the Vietnam veterans I spoke to in Bloomfield,

Iowa, who highlighted their lack of affordable quality housing.

Nearly 22 percent of all of Iowa's disabled veterans are finding it a challenge not only to find affordable housing but are also being put in a position where they can no longer gain access.

Mr. Speaker, no more. As a 20-year Air Force veteran, it pains me to see my fellow servicemen and -women literally on the streets in the heart of the heartland.

I have heard directly from our veterans services officers, and this is one of their top concerns. Ms. DE LA CRUZ' bill takes a positive step forward in helping more of our veterans access the resources they need to get into affordable housing. It ensures disability payments do not restrict their access to housing, whether they are in urban, suburban, or rural America.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to take up this bipartisan call and support our veterans who need help now, particularly those who have given their all and served in a disabled capacity but have still earned the respect to live in affordable housing.

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close if the gentleman from Arkansas has no further speakers.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, as the Trump administration continues its attack on the poor, the homeless, and on federally funded assistance with no Republicans stepping up to provide a check and balance on an illegal government takeover, House Democrats cannot sit here and have an honest debate about this policy.

What is more, the Trump administration has vowed to put more of America's housing in the hands of big investors and private equity firms.

The data shows what happens when private investors get their hands on more housing: Costs and junk fees go up, maintenance gets deferred, and evictions go up.

That is why I support this bill, most certainly. I think it goes the other way.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 224 as put forward by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. DE LA CRUZ). She has heard strong support on a bipartisan basis on both sides of the aisle from our friends, Mr. VARGAS and Mr. SHERMAN in the minority, and Mr. NUNN in the majority.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to support this 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. HILL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 224.

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.

CHINESE CURRENCY ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2025

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 386) to require the United States Governor of, and the United States Executive Director at, the International Monetary Fund to oppose an increase in the weight of the Chinese renminbi in the Special Drawing Rights basket of the Fund, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 386

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 "Chinese Currency Accountability Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. OPPOSITION OF THE UNITED STATES TO AN INCREASE IN THE WEIGHT OF THE CHINESE RENMINBI IN THE SPECIAL DRAWING RIGHTS BASKET OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND.

The Secretary of the Treasury shall instruct the United States Governor of, and the United States Executive Director at, the International Monetary Fund to use the voice and vote of the United States to oppose any increase in the weight of the Chinese renminbi in the basket of currencies used to determine the value of Special Drawing Rights, unless the Secretary of the Treasury has submitted to the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate a written report which includes a certification that—

(1) the People's Republic of China is in compliance with all its obligations under Article VIII of the Articles of Agreement of the Fund;

(2) in the preceding 12 months, there has not been a report submitted under section 3005 of the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 or section 701 of the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015 in which the People's Republic of China has been found to have manipulated its currency; and

(3) the People's Republic of China adheres to the rules and principles of the Paris Club and the OECD Arrangement on Officially Supported Export Credits.

SEC. 3. SUNSET.

Section 2 shall have no force or effect beginning 10 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) and the gentleman from California (Mr. VARGAS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. 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 this bill.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 386, the Chinese Currency Accountability Act.

I thank my good friend, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. DAVIDSON), for sponsoring this important legislation.

As chairman of the House Financial Services Committee in this Congress, I am delighted that Mr. DAVIDSON has assumed the chairmanship on our Subcommittee on National Security, Illicit Finance, and International Financial Institutions.

The Chinese Currency Accountability Act is not a new initiative. It passed the House under suspension of the rules last year after our committee reported it unanimously to the full House.

This bill is important to limit China's influence over one of our most crucial international, multilateral organizations. The International Monetary Fund, the IMF, acts as the world's critical lender to nations, particularly those heavily indebted, to handle critical balance of payments financing. It conducts its business through Special Drawing Rights, or SDRs.

SDRs not only serve as a unit of account for the IMF, but they also act as a reserve asset on the balance sheet of central banks and, as such, SDR assets earn interest.

Prior to 2016, both the value and the interest rate of the SDR was determined by a basket of currencies issued by the independent central banks of the world and overseen by democratic governments. These currencies were the U.S. dollar, the euro, the Japanese yen, and the pound sterling in the United Kingdom.

In 2016, the IMF then added the Chinese renminbi to the basket, even though the use of the renminbi was miniscule and the People's Bank of China is controlled by the Chinese Communist Party. Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that the rule of law in China merits this inclusion.

The decision in 2022 by the IMF to increase the weight of the Chinese currency in that basket was equally shocking. Not only did China's political control of the central bank remain unchanged, but the IMF also knew that China's predatory lending through its Belt and Road predatory lending program to emerging markets was threatening the future of the IMF's own programs.

The fact that it went ahead and boosted China's weight in that important SDR basket at the Fund is an embarrassment. Now the IMF finds itself lecturing other countries about central bank independence, but it charges them interest that is partially determined by the decisions at the People's Bank of China.

Hopefully, on this House floor, that irony is not lost on any Member or any