



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 172

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2026

No. 47

House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 16, 2026.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE COLLINS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2026, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

HONORING SPECIALIST KRISTOFER LOPEZ

(Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and military service of Specialist Krystofer Lopez of Biglerville, Pennsylvania, who died following a training exercise at Letterkenny Army Depot in Franklin County on March 12.

Specialist Lopez served as a military police officer for the Letterkenny Directorate of Emergency Services Law

Enforcement Division and was a Personnel Force Innovation member assigned to the 947th Quartermaster Company, which is based out of Letterkenny.

Specialist Lopez is remembered for his love of this great country and his commitment to the United States Armed Forces. Specialist Lopez was described by his twin sister, Kiki Lopez, as a man who always went above and beyond. Kiki noted that her brother always made sure to put his family before himself.

Specialist Lopez enlisted in the Army during his junior year of high school and wrestled for Biglerville High School. As a tribute to Specialist Lopez, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania flags over all State facilities, public buildings, and grounds are lowered to half-staff. In recognition of his dedicated service and his sacrifice, Specialist Lopez was posthumously promoted to the rank of Specialist.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the entire 13th Congressional District and a grateful nation, I offer prayers and condolences to Specialist Lopez' family, his friends, his fellow soldiers at Letterkenny Army Depot, and to the entire Biglerville community.

RECOGNIZING PHIL RICCIO

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Phil Riccio of Altoona, Pennsylvania, as a recipient of the Outstanding Service Award for Pennsylvania as presented by the National Federation of State High School Associations.

Throughout his nearly 30-year career as an educator, athletic director, and head coach of the Altoona Area High School football team, Coach Riccio has been an inspirational leader and advocate for high school sports.

To the spirit of the Outstanding Service Award and the mission of the national organization that bestowed it, Coach Riccio is devoted. He is devoted to ensuring that all students have an

opportunity to enjoy healthy participation, achievement, and good sportsmanship in any education-based activity.

Mr. Speaker, it is with pride that I join everyone in the Altoona Area School District and the entire community in congratulating Coach Riccio on his selection for this prestigious award. I thank Coach Riccio for his enduring impact on the development of the district's students.

RECOGNIZING JESSE SHRINER

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Jesse Shriner for 50 years of dedicated service as a member of the Alexandria Volunteer Fire Company in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania.

Jesse was recently honored by the fire company with three prestigious awards: the President's Award, the Chief's Award, and the Firefighter of the Year Award. Collectively, this trifecta of awards pays tribute to Jesse for his enduring dedication.

Over the years, Jesse has served the fire company as a trustee, as a chaplain, and a fire police officer.

Jesse's community impact also includes his past leadership as president of the Juniata Valley Lions Club.

His 50-year commitment to public safety and the protection of property is an inspiration.

Mr. Speaker, I express gratitude to Jesse for the many ways that he has contributed to the Alexandria Volunteer Fire Company's legacy of service and extend him best wishes.

RECOGNIZING DR. WAYNE MYERS

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Wayne Myers on his selection as Pharmacist of the Year by the Pennsylvania Pharmacists Association.

The selection of Dr. Myers honors his longstanding commitment to advancing independent community pharmacies.

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H2487

Dr. Myers is owner of Norland Avenue Pharmacy in Chambersburg and Carl's Drug Store in Greencastle.

Dr. Myers has enrolled Norland Avenue Pharmacy as a Long-Term Care at Home Pharmacy, thereby increasing medication packaging and delivery services to improve the safety, adherence, and access for vulnerable patients.

Mr. Speaker, I extend congratulations to Dr. Myers on his selection as Pharmacist of the Year and express my personal gratitude for his enduring commitment to the core values of independent pharmacies, that is service, integrity, innovation, and ultimately community care.

SUPPORTING TEMPLE ISRAEL AND MICHIGANDERS

(Ms. STEVENS of Michigan was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, the Jewish community in West Bloomfield, Michigan, narrowly avoided a fatal act of anti-Semitic terrorism. The temple may be burned and battered, but every single life inside that sacred space was saved and spared.

Michigan is forever grateful to the private security guards who sprang into action and put their lives on the line to avoid serious tragedy. Because of their bravery and training, as well as the quick response of law enforcement, the congregants of Temple Israel are alive and safe.

We saw the images on our television screens. Dozens and dozens of police vehicles showed up immediately. We thank Oakland Sheriff Mike Bouchard, along with the West Bloomfield and Bloomfield Township Police Departments for answering the call.

In far too many houses of worship—in synagogues, in churches, in mosques—Americans now find themselves praying under the watchful eye of armed guards. No one should have to fear gathering at a synagogue, sending their kids to religious school, or simply practicing their faith.

Tragically, this appears to be our new normal. Anti-Semitism is at its highest levels in decades. Driven by hate and vitriol and stirred up by social media, it has become widespread and all too common.

It has consequences. Anti-Semitic incidents are up 900 percent over the last decade. In just one year, we have seen deadly attacks in Boulder, Colorado, as well as Washington, D.C. A temple in Mississippi burned down. America's only Jewish Governor and his family were victims of arson. America's Jewish community is scared by what this means for them and their place in our society.

There is nothing like it when we see this hit our own community. When I got that first phone call on Thursday afternoon, I nearly fell to the ground.

Michigan's 11th District is home to one of the most vibrant Jewish commu-

nities in the United States. They make our State and our country better in every way, and I am proud to represent them here in the Halls of Congress.

I spent the last few days speaking with parents, religious leaders, and community members. I was honored to join the congregation for Shabbat services on Friday night. They are shaken, but they are resilient. They are grateful for the outpouring of support the world has shown their community in recent days.

Mr. Speaker, we must call out anti-Semitism wherever we see it. It is no longer just enough to condemn it, though. We must root it out everywhere, and Congress must act. We have to fund Holocaust education programs. We must invest in efforts to combat anti-Semitism. We must urgently fund the Nonprofit Security Grant Program to ensure that houses of worship, regardless of faith, can keep their congregations safe from acts of terror.

Congress has fallen short. The security guards who saved Temple Israel were only there thanks to private grant funding from the Jewish Federations of North America. We must make sure we never come this close to tragedy again.

I want to offer a glimmer of hope. In the worst moment, we saw the best of Michigan. In the aftermath of the attack, the 140 students—young children—and the staff inside this building were escorted safely across the street to the Shenandoah Country Club, founded by the Chaldean Iraqi immigrants who escaped persecution themselves.

In a world of division, lies, and fear, the Chaldeans welcomed their Jewish neighbors with open arms. They offered them shelter, food, and safety. They gave the kids coloring books and M&M's. Chicken tenders and fries were brought out. The parents were given the space to process and call loved ones.

Then 24 hours later, this Iraqi Christian country club hosted the whole congregation for Friday night Shabbat services.

This is America, and this is Michigan. That selflessness, that patriotism, and the love for thy neighbor makes me so proud to be a Michigander and the Congresswoman for Oakland County. We come together in times like this because that is who we are.

Mr. Speaker, Jewish families in Michigan and around the world are rightfully shaken, but they will do what they have done for centuries. They will endure. They will keep going. Temple Israel will reopen. We will rebuild. In Michigan, we write our own story. We will not be defined by one act of extremism.

Our Jewish community should be proud of who they are. We want them to know that we see them and we stand with them from the neighborhoods of West Bloomfield to the Halls of Congress. We will be alongside them in times of celebration and in times of

difficulty. They are resilient, they are unbreakable, and their Congresswoman is with them.

CONGRATULATING HUNTER HUSS HUSKIES

(Mr. MOORE of North Carolina was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. MOORE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the student athletes of Hunter Huss High School in Gastonia, North Carolina, for winning the North Carolina boys' State basketball championship.

In North Carolina, basketball is a part of who we are. From packed high school gyms to college arenas, our State takes great pride in the game. This tradition is alive and well at Hunter Huss High School.

These students spent countless hours practicing, preparing, and pushing themselves to be their best. Their hard work and determination paid off in a season that we will never forget.

A State championship is never won by just one person. It is a testament to the coaches, to the families, to the teachers, and the supporters who stood behind this team all season long.

Mr. Speaker, achievements like this bring our community together, and I can say that Gaston County and all of North Carolina are very proud of this great team. We congratulate the Hunter Huss Huskies for an outstanding season and a well-earned State title.

□ 1215

NEW SOURCE OF ENERGY FOR NEW ENGLAND

(Mr. COURTNEY of Connecticut was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, as this headline on the whiteboard proclaims, we in New England received welcomed news on Friday that, after years of hard work and massive investments by both the private sector and the government, a new, reliable source of energy for our electrical grid was officially turned on.

This project, known as Revolution Wind, will add 700 megawatts that will power over 350,000 homes in Rhode Island and Connecticut. At a time of tight supply and rising energy costs, adding hundreds of megawatts and electrical capacity is an obvious way to reduce costs, rather than just offloading the burden onto energy users.

This project is locked into a 20-year contract price of 9 cents per kilowatt-hours at a time when the average price from other sources to the region's grid is 30 cents per kilowatt-hour. Obviously, this is a beneficial response and solid solution to addressing New England's and our Nation's high-cost economy.

Even more significant is the fact that this power source is not at the mercy of the global fossil fuel markets that

have skyrocketed the cost of home heating oil and gas at the pumps since the start of the war in Iran 16 days ago.

Today, home heating oil in Connecticut is \$5.10 per gallon, up from \$4.28 per gallon just last week and \$3.74 per gallon a year ago. Gas at the pump is going for \$3.65 per gallon. It was \$2.90 per gallon 1 month ago.

Mr. Speaker, the men and women who have been hard at work at the State pier in New London, Connecticut, for the last 6 years, transforming a decrepit, underutilized dock into a state-of-the-art port that can handle massive cargo carriers, delivering enormous towers, blades, and the nacelles that connect the towers and the blades. Sensors are mounted on the nacelles to detect wind speed, which then moves blades into the wind to maximize output. It is ingenious.

Union operating engineers, electricians, and laborers kept this project moving forward, despite the persistent, hostile obstruction of the Trump administration's Department of the Interior, which issued two illegal halt work orders in 2025. The Department's orders were soundly rejected by Federal district courts in Washington, D.C., and Virginia.

The Department's unfounded claims that Revolution Wind posed a national security threat were decisively and swiftly dismissed given the fact that the Department of Defense, in consultation with the Air Force, Navy, and Coast Guard, thoroughly examined this project and issued a permit in December 2024.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to include in the RECORD a letter dated December 13, 2024, from the Assistant Secretary of Defense, who found that this project "would not have adverse impacts to DOD missions in the area."

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

There was no objection.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE,
Washington, DC, December 13, 2024.

Reference Federal Aviation Administration
Aeronautical Study Number: 2021-WTE-
2881-OE and 23 associated structures.

Ms. WHITNEY MARSH,
Ørsted, Providence, RI.

DEAR Ms. MARSH: Thank you for your participation in the Mitigation Response Team to assess and overcome military impacts from your proposed Revolution Wind project off the coast of Squibnocket Beach in Chilmark, Massachusetts. In a letter dated October 27, 2021, the Department of Defense (DoD) described the potential impacts to military operations for the project.

As a result of discussions between Ørsted and the U.S. Air Force and a resulting mitigation agreement signed by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment on November 4, 2024, the Military Aviation and Installation Assurance Siting Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse) has found that construction of the Revolution Wind project, with no more than 65 wind turbines up to 873 feet above sea level and no more than two offshore sub-

stations up to 228 feet above sea level, would not have adverse impacts to DoD missions in the area. The Clearinghouse has entered a determination of "No Objection with Provision" for this project via the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Obstruction Evaluation/Airport Airspace Analysis system.

Our response to the FAA included a notification that additional structure proposals or an increase to the current maximum structure height may present an adverse impact. We encourage you to engage DoD prior to any proposed expansion or height increase.

Sincerely,

STEVEN J. SAMPLE,
Executive Director, Military Aviation and
Installation,
Assurance Siting Clearinghouse.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I think all of New England and the mid-Atlantic States owe a huge thanks to Judge Royce Lambeth, the Reagan appointee who lived up to his oath and twice asserted the power of the judiciary, a coequal branch of government, to rein in the administration's ludicrous, harmful abuse of executive power.

As our economy is reeling today from the oil and gas aftershock of the war in Iran, the news this weekend that offshore wind can provide a reliable, affordable source of energy that is produced in America and for American energy consumers is hopefully going to force a reconsideration of the attack on renewable energy by this administration and, unfortunately, my colleagues in the House who have legislatively crushed this industry, depriving American consumers of an affordable source of home-grown energy.

Wind power alone will not solve our energy demands, but 700 new megawatts surging into New England is undeniable proof that our Nation's innovators, our building trades union, and the merchant mariners are up to the job to power our country in the 21st century.

REAL RELIEF FOR WORKERS RELYING ON TIPPED WAGES

(Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS of Iowa was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, hardworking Americans deserve to keep more of what they earn. For millions of workers across our country, especially in restaurants and the service industry, tips are not extra income. They are a critical part of the paycheck.

That is why I was proud to support the Working Families Tax Cut Act, which reduces Federal taxes on tips and delivers real relief to workers who rely on them to support their families. Nearly 6 million Americans report tipped wages. Under this reform, workers can now deduct up to \$25,000 in qualified tips each year.

The impact will be especially meaningful in States like Iowa. In the first year alone, tipped workers across Iowa are expected to save approximately \$59 million in Federal income taxes.

That is money that will stay in the pockets of hardworking Americans who earned it. That is money for groceries, rent, childcare, prescription drugs, and everyday expenses. It is real relief for workers who put in long hours serving in our communities. Reducing taxes on tips rewards hard work, strengthens families, and supports the local businesses that power our economy.

I was proud to help pass the Working Families Tax Cut Act, and I will continue fighting to ensure that hardworking Americans can keep more of what they earn.

CONGRATULATING KEVIN MCKEE

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Davenport native Kevin McKee, who represented Team USA at the 2026 Milano-Cortina Paralympic Winter Games in Italy and has now earned his fourth Paralympic Gold Medal. Kevin competed in his fourth Paralympic Games as a member of the United States sled hockey team, continuing a remarkable career of representing our Nation on the world stage.

A proud Davenport native, a player at the Quad City Veterans Outreach adaptive sports center, and member of the Chicago Blackhawks sled hockey team, Kevin has worn the Team USA jersey since 2012.

Born with a rare spinal disorder, Kevin has turned determination into excellence, helping to lead Team USA to a Paralympic Gold Medal in 2014, 2018, 2022, and now again in 2026.

With a 6-2 victory over Canada, Team USA once again captured the gold medal, demonstrating the strength, teamwork, and resilience that define American athletes.

Kevin McKee's perseverance and leadership make Davenport, the Quad City Veterans Outreach Center, the State of Iowa, and our entire Nation proud. I congratulate Kevin and the entire Team USA sled hockey team on this incredible achievement, and I thank them for representing our country with such pride and excellence.

CONGRATULATING JEFF BLADEL

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Chief Jeff Bladel on his retirement after 31 years of dedicated service with the Davenport Police Department.

Appointed chief in 2022, Chief Bladel followed in his father's footsteps, who served as Davenport's police chief from 2000 to 2008.

A lifelong Davenport resident, Chief Bladel returned home after serving our Nation as an airborne military officer in the United States Army and committed his career to protecting his community.

Under his leadership, the department strengthened data-driven crime reduction efforts and advanced key public safety initiatives, including the Department of Justice's Public Safety Partnership, the Smart Policing Initiative, the National Network for Safe Communities, the Quad City NIBIN initiative, and a co-responding program

pairing officers with mental health professionals.

Chief Bladel also helped to implement group violence intervention strategies that connected at-risk individuals with community resources to break cycles of violence.

Over the past 3 years, the city has seen a reduced number of crimes. Chief Bladel leaves behind a safer Davenport and a lasting legacy of service, leadership, and community partnership.

Mr. Speaker, I wish a very happy birthday today to Lola VanDeWalle, who happens to be the genesis behind the Quad City Veterans Outreach Center.

Happy birthday, Lola.

Mr. Speaker, I wish my daughter, Taylor, a very happy birthday.

Happy birthday, Taylor.

Mr. Speaker, I extend happy birthday greetings to Davenport's Vince Martinez, a soon-to-be 100-year-old on April 5 and World War II veteran. May he continue to live long and continue to help all of our veterans.

AMERICANS STRANDED IN MIDDLE EAST

(Mr. SUBRAMANYAM of Virginia was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I have spoken here about how this administration did not adequately warn U.S. citizens in the Middle East before launching attacks against Iran. They left American citizens in the Middle East stranded and told them that they were on their own.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud them for correcting this mistake and working really hard to try to get people flights out and helping them to evacuate. Unfortunately, it looks like that was only a temporary response because this week, I am having constituents tell me that, once again, they are being told that they are on their own.

One family I am working with is in Kuwait right now and was told to take a commercial flight out and that the State Department couldn't help them. The problem is that Kuwaiti airspace is actually closed right now. The family was told that they would have to take a bus to Saudi Arabia and that the State Department wouldn't really help them with that. Even if they did get there, there are frequent restrictions on flights in Saudi Arabia due to continued missile and drone threats.

Again, I am left wondering why we are telling Americans that we have billions of dollars to spend on bombs, missiles, and warships, but we don't have the money to get American citizens who want to get out, out of the Middle East, particularly ones who are in dangerous areas where there are no commercial flights.

It is insulting to tell the American people to foot the bill to get out of the Middle East in a dangerous position when we didn't warn them in the first place.

Once again, I am calling on the administration to help Americans who need to get out, get out. The safety of the American people should come first.

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS AI STARTUPS

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, AI is massively reshaping our economy and our small businesses. When most people think of companies leading on AI, they think of the Big Tech companies, but there is more to this AI economy than those big companies. They are AI small businesses and startups that play a key role in innovation. They are the drivers of innovation, economic growth, and American technological supremacy.

They can often be more agile than bigger tech companies and create fantastic solutions and products, but they aren't always working on an even playing field.

That is why I am introducing this week the small AI innovators empowerment act. This bill would look at challenges that small AI businesses and startups face, including areas like access to funding, hiring and retention of talented employees, and the impact of regulatory uncertainty.

Supporting small-tech businesses helps us to stay ahead of international competition as our world becomes increasingly reliant on AI. I thank Congressman OBERNOLTE for sponsoring this bill with me.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting AI small businesses by supporting this small AI innovators empowerment act.

CONGRATULATING THE FLOWER GALLERY

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate The Flower Gallery of Virginia on its 50th anniversary. The Flower Gallery has contributed to the joy of residents in our community, including Manassas and Northern Virginia, since 1976, when Doug Burroughs first bought the shop from his employer.

Over that time, The Flower Gallery has helped our community celebrate life's milestones, including many birthdays, weddings, and anniversaries. It also provides local youth and civic organizations with flowers for fundraisers and community events.

I congratulate Doug for creating such a beloved institution and for 50 years of success. I am wishing Doug and The Flower Gallery many more years of prosperity.

OPPOSING ATTACK ON FEDERAL WORKERS

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, we know that this administration has been constantly attacking our Nation's Federal workers and contractors. They have chased out people with specialized skills and decades of experience, making our country less safe and less healthy, while also making our agencies either understaffed, or led by unqualified loyalists.

The latest attack might actually be one of the worst, and that is the creation of the Schedule P/C positions. We knew that there would be an attack on

Schedule F. This basically would make it easier for career civil servants to be fired and to be replaced with loyalists who are not qualified.

Federal workers would lose job protections, and it would make it incredibly difficult to attract people, retain them, and get the best talent in the country to come work in the Federal Government. We have been working on this across many administrations, and this is undoing a lot of that work.

The reality is that Federal workers and contractors pledge allegiance to our country and not to a President or an ideology. This rule would hurt our country for many years to come, and it would do irreparable damage to our institutions and to the people who rely on them.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this rule. It is not well thought out, and it is going to hurt us in the long run.

WELCOMING AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION TO NATION'S CAPITAL

(Ms. FOXX of North Carolina was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise to welcome the American Optometric Association to our Nation's Capital for the 2026 Federal Keyperson Summit.

Since 1898, the AOA has distinguished itself among medical specialists and policymakers for its outstanding leadership, reliability, and advocacy for optometric professionals and students.

From years of standing at the forefront of innovation and high quality in healthcare, we understand that steadfast leadership is essential for positive outcomes in public health policy and a patient's health.

The advocates of the AOA are a model of just that, providing insight on pertinent issues so that optometric doctors, professionals, and students are primed to deliver the critical, high-quality care that patients deserve.

□ 1230

I am confident that this year's summit will prove to be a valuable experience, and I commend the advocates and members of the AOA for their dedication to their profession and patients.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. FOXX) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Most Holy Lord, we stand in the need of prayer. Too often we claim to be without sin, though our sin is ever before us, and so we pray: Forgive us our debt to Your marvelous mercy in our lives, to the bounty of grace You have shown us that we could never repay. Pardon us and help us to receive Your unmerited favor with contrite hearts and humble spirits.

Forgive us our trespasses, the way we overstep the boundaries You, in Your love for us, have established to protect us from the dangers our own choices could bring upon us. Bring us back from the consequences of our own decisions and receive us into Your parental embrace.

Forgive us our sins, the countless ways we have offended You, even as we have offended one another. Forgive us the many times we have separated ourselves from Your love, even as we have failed to show Your love to those around us.

Have mercy on us, O God, according to Your unfailing love. According to Your compassion, blot out our transgressions. Wash away all our iniquity, and cleanse us from our sin.

In your merciful name, we pray.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. LATIMER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. LATIMER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNIZING BRUCE FRANKEL

(Mr. LATIMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LATIMER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Bruce Frankel, a longtime youth baseball coach and active member of his community in Larchmont, as he celebrates his 73rd birthday this month.

Bruce has been deeply involved in the village he has called home for more than two decades. He currently serves on the village's zoning board, co-chairs the Larchmont Traffic Commission, and is an active member of the Larchmont Temple.

He is best known by Larchmont families for his time coaching in the

Larchmont-Mamaroneck Little League and the town's travel baseball program.

Through this program, he has taught hundreds of kids not only the fundamentals of baseball but also the values of hard work, determination, adaptability, and perseverance.

Mr. Speaker, from the floor of the House of Representatives, I wish a happy birthday to Bruce Frankel and thank him for all he has done for our community.

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 4 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1500

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. VALADAO) at 3 p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Lasky, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 6644. An act to increase the supply of housing in America, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 327. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to deny any foreign tax credit or deduction with respect to taxes paid or accrued to the Russian Federation.

S. 836. An act to amend the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 to Strengthen protections relating to the online collection, use, and disclosure of personal information of children and teens, and for other purposes.

S. 2074. An act to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to expand the definition of an active duty military consumer for purposes of certain credit monitoring requirements, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 118-49, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, and in consultation with the Chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate and the Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate, appoints the following individuals to serve as members of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) Reform Commission:

The Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD).

John Demers of Virginia.
Stewart Baker of Virginia.

The message also announced that pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 9355(a), as amended by Public Law 118-159, the Chair, on behalf of the Democratic Leader, appoints the following Senators to the Board of Visitors of the U.S. Air Force Academy:

The Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS).

The Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN).

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.

SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC SECURITY ACT

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3971) to extend the SBIR and STTR programs, and for other purposes.

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

S. 3971

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 "Small Business Innovation and Economic Security Act".

SEC. 2. BOLSTERING RESEARCH SECURITY OF SBIR AND STTR AWARDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 9 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638) is amended—

(1) in subsection (g)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (15), (16), and (17) as paragraphs (16), (18), and (19), respectively;

(B) by inserting after paragraph (14) the following:

“(15) evaluate whether a small business concern presents a security risk for any reason, through measures including—

“(A) the due diligence process required under subsection (vv);

“(B) disclosures submitted under this subsection; or

“(C) coordination with the intelligence community, as defined in section 3 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003), Federal law enforcement, and other counterintelligence capabilities of the Federal Government;”;

(C) in paragraph (16), as so redesignated—

(i) by striking subparagraph (B);

(ii) by striking “that—” and all that follows through “the small business concern submitting” and inserting “that the small business concern submitting”;

(iii) by redesignating clauses (i), (ii), and (iii) as subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C), respectively, and adjusting the margins accordingly;

(iv) in subparagraph (B), as so redesignated, by striking “or” at the end;

(v) in subparagraph (C), as so redesignated, by striking “and” at the end; and

(vi) by adding at the end the following:

“(D) has a security risk connecting the small business concern to an entity, including any affiliates of the entity, or individual on—

“(i) the UFLPA Entity List maintained by the Department of Homeland Security;

“(ii) the Non-SDN Chinese Military-Industrial Complex Companies List of the Office of Foreign Assets Control maintained by the Department of the Treasury;

“(iii) the Section 889 Prohibition List established under section 889 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (Public Law 115–232; 132 Stat. 1917) and maintained by the Department of Defense;

“(iv) the list of Chinese Military companies required under section 1260H of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (10 U.S.C. 113 note) and maintained by the Department of Defense;

“(v) the Military End User List maintained by the Bureau of Industry and Security of the Department of Commerce;

“(vi) the Entity List maintained by the Bureau of Industry and Security of the Department of Commerce;

“(vii) the List of Equipment and Services maintained by the Federal Communications Commission; or

“(viii) the Withhold Release Orders and Findings List maintained by U.S. Customs and Border Protection;

“(E) has a security risk with a primary source that is classified; or

“(F) has a security risk that the Federal agency determines warrants a denial;”;

(D) by inserting after paragraph (16), as so redesignated, the following:

“(17) provide for—

“(A) a process under which, upon making an award decision to deny an application on the basis of a determination under paragraph (16), or upon making a determination under paragraph (16) that a small business concern has a security risk described in that paragraph, the Federal agency provides to the small business concern, as appropriate pursuant to the discretion of the Federal agency and in a manner that does not compromise national security, a notification—

“(i) advising the small business concern of such determination; and

“(ii) identifying the basis for such determination; and

“(B) a policy that clarifies that receipt of an award decision denying an application does not prohibit the small business concern from being eligible for an award in a subsequent award cycle;”;

(E) in paragraph (19), as so redesignated—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking “paragraph (16)(A)” and inserting “paragraph (18)(A)”;

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking “paragraph (16)(B)” and inserting “paragraph (18)(B)”;

(2) in subsection (o)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (19), (20), and (21) as paragraphs (20), (22), and (23), respectively;

(B) by inserting after paragraph (18) the following:

“(19) evaluate whether a small business concern presents a security risk for any reason, through measures including—

“(A) the due diligence process required under subsection (vv);

“(B) disclosures submitted under this subsection; or

“(C) coordination with the intelligence community, as defined in section 3 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003), Federal law enforcement, and other counterintelligence capabilities of the Federal Government;”;

(C) in paragraph (20), as so redesignated—

(i) by striking subparagraph (B);

(ii) by striking “that—” and all that follows through “the small business concern submitting” and inserting “that the small business concern submitting”;

(iii) by redesignating clauses (i), (ii), and (iii) as subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C), respectively, and adjusting the margins accordingly;

(iv) in subparagraph (B), as so redesignated, by striking “or” at the end;

(v) in subparagraph (C), as so redesignated, by striking “and” at the end; and

(vi) by adding at the end the following:

“(D) has a foreign risk connecting the small business concern to an entity, including any affiliates of the entity, or individual on—

“(i) the UFLPA Entity List maintained by the Department of Homeland Security;

“(ii) the Non-SDN Chinese Military-Industrial Complex Companies List of the Office of Foreign Assets Control maintained by the Department of the Treasury;

“(iii) the Section 889 Prohibition List established under section 889 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (Public Law 115–232; 132 Stat. 1917) and maintained by the Department of Defense;

“(iv) the list of Chinese Military companies required under section 1260H of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (10 U.S.C. 113 note) and maintained by the Department of Defense;

“(v) the Military End User List maintained by the Bureau of Industry and Security of the Department of Commerce;

“(vi) the Entity List maintained by the Bureau of Industry and Security of the Department of Commerce;

“(vii) the List of Equipment and Services maintained by the Federal Communications Commission; or

“(viii) the Withhold Release Orders and Findings List maintained by U.S. Customs and Border Protection;

“(E) has a security risk with a primary source that is classified; or

“(F) has a security risk that the Federal agency determines warrants a denial;”;

(D) by inserting after paragraph (20) the following:

“(21) provide for—

“(A) a process under which, upon making an award decision to deny an application on the basis of a determination under paragraph (20), or upon making a determination under paragraph (20) that a small business concern has a security risk described in that paragraph, the Federal agency provides to the small business concern, as appropriate pursuant to the discretion of the Federal agency and in a manner that does not compromise security, a notification—

“(i) advising the small business concern of such determination; and

“(ii) identifying the basis for such determination; and

“(B) a policy that clarifies that receipt of an award decision denying an application does not prohibit the small business concern from being eligible for an award in a subsequent award cycle;”;

(E) in paragraph (23), as so redesignated—

(i) in subparagraph (B), by striking “paragraph (20)(A)” and inserting “paragraph (22)(A)”;

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking “paragraph (20)(B)” and inserting “paragraph (22)(B)”;

(3) in subsection (vv)(2)—

(A) by amending subparagraph (A) to read as follows:

“(A) assess, using a risk-based approach as appropriate—

“(i) the cybersecurity practices of a small business concern;

“(ii) patent analysis;

“(iii) employee analysis;

“(iv) foreign ownership of a small business concern seeking an award, including the fi-

ancial ties and obligations (which shall include surety, equity, and debt obligations) of the small business concern and employees of the small business concern to a foreign country, foreign person, or foreign entity;

“(v) foreign affiliations of a covered individual, owner, or other key personnel of a small business concern with an entity in a foreign country of concern;

“(vi) investment relationships of a small business concern with an individual or entity in a foreign country of concern;

“(vii) technology licensing agreements or joint ventures (including joint venture-like agreements) with an individual or entity in a foreign country of concern; and

“(viii) business relationships between a covered individual, owner, or other key personnel of a small business concern and an individual or entity in a foreign country of concern;”;

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(C) examine any relationship of a small business concern seeking an award to any entity or individual included on the lists described in subsections (g)(16)(D) and (o)(20)(D).”.

(b) GAO STUDY.—Section 4(b)(4) of the SBIR and STTR Extension Act of 2022 (Public Law 117–183; 136 Stat. 2183) is amended by striking “3 years” and inserting “8 years”.

SEC. 3. PHASE II STRATEGIC BREAKTHROUGH FUNDING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 9 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638) is amended—

(1) in subsection (aa), by adding at the end the following:

“(6) STRATEGIC BREAKTHROUGH ALLOCATION.—The requirement under paragraph (1) and the requirement to receive a waiver from the Administrator under paragraph (4) do not apply to a Federal agency for awards of not more than \$30,000,000 to a small business concern with funds made available under a strategic breakthrough allocation (as defined in subsection (ff)(3)(A)).”; and

(2) in subsection (ff), by adding at the end the following:

“(3) STRATEGIC BREAKTHROUGH AWARDS.—

“(A) STRATEGIC BREAKTHROUGH ALLOCATION DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the term ‘strategic breakthrough allocation’ means, with respect to a Federal agency with a required expenditure under subsection (f)(1) in excess of \$100,000,000, an expenditure amount from the SBIR allocation under subsection (f)(1) of such agency of not more than 0.50 percent of the extramural budget for research or research and development designated for such agency for fiscal year 2026 and every fiscal year thereafter.

“(B) AWARD.—Under this paragraph, a funding agreement may be awarded to a small business concern by a Federal agency using funds made available under a strategic breakthrough allocation.

“(C) FUND PARAMETERS.—In the case of a Phase II agreement that is awarded to a small business concern by a Federal agency using funds made available under a strategic breakthrough allocation, the following requirements shall apply:

“(i) AWARD SIZE AND PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE.—A Federal agency may award from a strategic breakthrough allocation not more than \$30,000,000 to a small business concern, including its affiliates, in a single award or series of awards based on reaching production or development milestones, if the total period of performance of the project with respect to which such funds are awarded is not more than 48 months.

“(ii) SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN REQUIREMENTS.—The small business concern shall—

“(I) have been awarded not less than 1 prior Phase II award under the SBIR or STTR program;

“(II) demonstrate not less than 100 percent matching funds from—

“(aa) new private capital as a result of an award using funds made available under a strategic breakthrough allocation;

“(bb) new funding awarded by a government agency under a program other than Phase I or II of the SBIR or STTR program as a result of an award using funds made available under a strategic breakthrough allocation; or

“(cc) a combination of funds described in items (aa) and (bb);

“(III) demonstrate a technology that is an effective solution, as determined by market research; and

“(IV) only be eligible for an award from the strategic breakthrough allocation at the Department of Defense if the small business concern—

“(aa) provides a product, process, or technology that meets a necessary level of readiness and has a commitment for inclusion in a program objective memorandum from an official with the rank of program acquisition executive or higher in an acquisition organization of the Department of Defense;

“(bb) provides a product, process, or technology that will meet high priority requirements or operational needs of a military department through a successful transition and into the acquisition process; and

“(cc) demonstrates not less than 20 percent of the required matching funds under subclause (II) come from new funding awarded by the Department of Defense under a program other than Phase I or II of the SBIR or STTR program as a result of an award using funds made available under a strategic breakthrough allocation.

“(iii) DEADLINE.—The Federal agency shall complete any contract awards using strategic breakthrough allocation funds not later than 90 days after receiving a proposal from a small business concern for the award.

“(iv) ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES.—Eligible activities by a small business concern using strategic breakthrough allocation funds are any critical technology areas or requirements deemed necessary by the Federal agency.

“(v) SELECTION CRITERIA.—In making awards using funds made available under a strategic breakthrough allocation, the Federal agency shall consider—

“(I) the potential of the small business concern to advance the national security capabilities of the United States;

“(II) the potential of the small business concern to provide new technologies or processes, or new applications of existing technologies, that will enable new alternatives to existing programs;

“(III) whether a customer in a Federal agency has expressed an intent to purchase and integrate technology from the small business concern into its operations; or

“(IV) whether a particular technology area is undercapitalized by private investment.

“(D) USE OF STREAMLINED CONTRACTING MECHANISMS.—Each Federal agency shall implement streamlined processes and requirements for submitting proposals and applying for awards using funds made available under a strategic breakthrough allocation.”

(b) COMMERCIALIZATION READINESS PROGRAM.—Section 9(y) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(y)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking “shall identify” and inserting “shall—

“(A) identify”;

(B) in subparagraph (A), as so designated—

(i) by inserting “, including small business concerns with an award from the strategic breakthrough allocation (as defined in sub-

section (ff)(3)(A),” before “that have the potential”;

(ii) by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(B) ensure, in collaboration with SBIR program managers of each component, that research programs identified under subparagraph (A) are analyzed within the programming and budgeting process as budget requests are developed; and

“(C) provide to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committees on Small Business and Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives information on the integration of SBIR and STTR awardees in budget rollouts for research, development, testing, and evaluation activities.”;

(2) by striking paragraph (3);

(3) by redesignating paragraphs (4), (5), and (6) as paragraphs (3), (4), and (5), respectively; and

(4) in paragraph (5), as so redesignated—

(A) in subparagraph (B), by striking “and” at the end;

(B) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (D); and

(C) by inserting after subparagraph (B) the following:

“(C) establish a mechanism to provide small business concerns with direct access to program and requirements offices that may purchase technology from the small business concern under Phase III of the SBIR program; and”.

(c) BRIEFINGS.—

(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(A) the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives; and

(C) the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives.

(2) GENERAL REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the head of each Federal agency that is eligible to make an award from funds made available under a strategic breakthrough allocation (as defined in paragraph (3) of subsection (ff) of section 9 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638), as added by this section) shall brief the appropriate committees of Congress on whether that Federal agency plans to make awards pursuant to the authority provided under such paragraph (3), including the reasons why the Federal agency plans to, or does not plan to, use that authority.

(3) RECURRING BRIEFING BY FEDERAL AGENCIES USING FUNDING AUTHORITY.—The head of each Federal agency that opts to make awards pursuant to the authority under paragraph (3) of subsection (ff) of section 9 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638), as added by this section, shall, on a recurring basis until the Federal agency finalizes procedures for making those awards, brief the appropriate committees of Congress regarding the implementation of such paragraph (3) by that Federal agency.

(d) TERMINATION.—Effective on September 30, 2031—

(1) this section and the amendments made by this section shall cease to have effect; and

(2) the provisions of law amended by this section shall be restored as if such amendments had not been enacted.

SEC. 4. REDUCING ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN.

Section 9 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(aaa) REDUCING ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—With respect to fiscal year 2027 and each fiscal year thereafter, the

Director of the SBIR or STTR program office of each Federal agency shall, pursuant to authority that may not be delegated, set equally for all small business concerns a limit on the maximum number of proposals that a small business concern may submit in response to Phase I solicitations and Phase II solicitations under subsection (cc), published by that Federal agency, including all components of that Federal agency, in a single fiscal year. In establishing such a limitation, the Director of the SBIR or STTR program office of each Federal agency shall use 1 of the following methods:

“(A) A limit for any small business concern on a fiscal year basis.

“(B) A limit for any small business concern on a solicitation basis.

“(C) A limit for any small business concern on a topic basis.

“(2) WAIVER.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—On a topic by topic basis, the Director of the SBIR or STTR program office of each Federal agency may grant a waiver of the proposal limit under paragraph (1) at the time of a solicitation announcement for a specific topic for the SBIR or STTR program of the Federal agency if the topic is time-sensitive and urgent to the mission of the Federal agency.

“(B) WRITTEN JUSTIFICATION.—For each topic for which a waiver is sought under subparagraph (A), the Director of the SBIR or STTR program office of the Federal agency shall provide a written justification to the Administrator, and to the Undersecretary described in subparagraph (C), for why the use of the waiver authority is imperative for the agency’s mission and the nature of the immediate and critical need that the Director reasonably believes cannot be met by small business concerns that have not reached the proposal limit under paragraph (1).

“(C) TIMING.—The Undersecretary overseeing the SBIR or STTR program at a Federal agency and the Administrator are required to approve or disapprove a waiver and written justification not later than 15 days after the date on which the Undersecretary receives from the Director the waiver request described in subparagraph (A) and the written justification described in subparagraph (B).

“(D) NONDELEGATION.—The authority to grant or approve a waiver under subparagraph (A) or (C), respectively, may not be delegated.

“(E) WAIVER EFFECTS.—If the Federal agency grants a waiver under subparagraph (A) with respect to a topic for the SBIR or STTR program of a Federal agency, paragraph (1) shall not prohibit any small business concern from submitting an SBIR or STTR proposal to that Federal agency under such topic.

“(F) RECORD REQUIREMENT.—Participating agencies shall maintain information on topics to which waivers of the proposal limit under this paragraph are granted, including the written justifications for those waivers.

“(G) LIMITATION.—A Federal agency may not grant a waiver under this paragraph with respect to more than 5 percent of the topics of the SBIR and STTR programs of the Federal agency in any fiscal year.

“(3) REPORTING.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Director of the SBIR or STTR program office of a Federal agency sets or changes a limit under paragraph (1), the head of that Federal agency shall provide to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives the methodology for setting or changing that

limit, the considerations made in setting or changing that limit, and how many small business concerns are impacted by that limit based on historical data.

“(B) WRITTEN NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Director of the SBIR or STTR program office of a Federal agency grants a waiver under paragraph (2), the Director shall provide to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives a written notification regarding the granting of that waiver, which shall include the information described in paragraph (2)(F) with respect to that waiver.

“(4) TIMING.—The Director shall establish the proposal limit under paragraph (1) not later than 90 days before the start of fiscal year 2027 and each fiscal year thereafter.”.

SEC. 5. PHASE III AWARD EDUCATION.

Section 9 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638) is amended—

(1) in subsection (e)—
(A) in paragraph (18), by striking “and” at the end;

(B) in paragraph (19), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(20) the term ‘agency acquisition workforce’ means the employees of a Federal agency that have procurement or acquisition responsibilities, including—

“(A) employees described in section 1703 of title 41, United States Code; and

“(B) individuals that are part of the acquisition workforce, as defined in section 101(a) of title 10, United States Code.”;

(2) in subsection (r), by adding at the end the following:

“(5) WORKFORCE TRAINING.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, the Administrator of General Services, and the head of any other Federal agency that the Administrator determines appropriate, shall establish training activities for contracting officers and the agency acquisition workforce of Federal agencies to ensure that all such individuals are fully aware of all aspects of Phase III awards under the SBIR and STTR programs, as applicable.

“(B) TRAINING TOPICS.—The training activities required under subparagraph (A) shall include training on—

“(i) the missions, goals, and authorities of the SBIR and STTR programs;

“(ii) the use of Phase III agreements;

“(iii) Phase III data rights; and

“(iv) the execution of Phase III sole source award contracts.

“(C) FUNDING.—The training activities required under subparagraph (A) may be carried out using funds made available to carry out subsections (y) and (mm).”; and

(3) in subsection (mm)(1)—

(A) in subparagraph (J), by striking “and” at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (K), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(L) contracting officer and acquisition workforce training activities pursuant to subsection (r)(5).”.

SEC. 6. PHASE III IMPROVEMENTS.

(a) PROCUREMENT CENTER REPRESENTATIVE DIRECTIVES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 9(j)(4) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(j)(4)) is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: “, and advocate for the maximum practicable use and transition of products, services, and technologies developed under SBIR or STTR programs to Phase III by means of Phase III awards to small business concerns”.

(2) MODIFICATION DEADLINE.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall modify the policy directives issued pursuant to subsection (j) of section 9 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(j)) in accordance with paragraph (4) of that subsection, as amended by paragraph (1).

(b) PHASE III AWARD SIMPLIFICATION.—Section 9(r)(4) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(r)(4)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(C) develop simplified and standardized procedures and model contracts for Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III SBIR awards and report to the Administrator on actions taken by the Federal agency in support of these objectives; and

“(D) as applicable, issue standardized solicitation provisions and contract clauses that provide clear guidance on the information that small business concerns participating in SBIR or STTR programs can be expected to provide as part of market research or as part of a proposal by those small business concerns to establish eligibility for Phase III awards.”.

SEC. 7. TECHNICAL AND BUSINESS ASSISTANCE IMPROVEMENTS.

Section 9 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(q)), as amended by this Act, is amended—

(1) in subsection (q)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A)—

(I) by striking “may enter into an agreement with 1 or more vendors selected under paragraph (2)(A) to provide small business concerns engaged in SBIR or STTR projects with technical and business assistance services” and inserting “shall authorize recipients of awards under the SBIR program or the STTR program to select, if desired, technical and business assistance provided under subparagraph (A) or (B) of paragraph (2) with respect to SBIR or STTR projects”;

(II) by inserting “cybersecurity assistance,” after “intellectual property protections,”; and

(III) by striking “such concerns” and inserting “such recipients”;

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking “and” at the end;

(iii) in subparagraph (D), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(iv) by adding at the end the following:

“(E) screening for potential foreign involvement in technology development or commercialization activities.”; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in the paragraph heading, by striking “VENDOR SELECTION” and inserting “ELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS.—”;

(ii) by striking subparagraph (A);

(iii) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as subparagraph (A); and

(iv) by inserting after subparagraph (A), as so redesignated, the following:

“(B) STAFF.—A small business concern may, by contract or otherwise, use funding provided under this section to hire new staff, augment staff, or direct staff to conduct or participate in training activities consistent with the goals listed in paragraph (1).”; and

(C) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by striking subparagraphs (A) and (B) and inserting the following:

“(A) PHASE I.—A Federal agency described in paragraph (1) shall authorize a recipient of a Phase I SBIR or STTR award to use not more than \$6,500 per project, included as part

of the award of the recipient or in addition to the amount of the award of the recipient as determined appropriate by the head of the Federal agency, for the services described in paragraph (1)—

“(i) provided through a vendor selected by the small business concern under paragraph (2)(A); or

“(ii) achieved through the activities described in paragraph (2)(B).

“(B) PHASE II.—A Federal agency described in paragraph (1) shall authorize a recipient of a Phase II SBIR or STTR award to utilize not more than \$50,000 per project, included as part of the award of the recipient or in addition to the amount of the award of the recipient as determined appropriate by the head of the Federal agency, for the services described in paragraph (1)—

“(i) provided through a vendor selected by the small business concern under paragraph (2)(A); or

“(ii) achieved through the activities described in paragraph (2)(B).”; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

“(5) TARGETED REVIEW.—A Federal agency may perform targeted reviews of technical and business assistance funding as described in subsection (mm)(1)(F).”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(bbb) I-CORPS PARTICIPATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Each Federal agency with an Innovation Corps program (commonly known as ‘I-Corps’) that is required to conduct an SBIR or STTR program shall—

“(A) provide an option for requesting participation in an I-Corps teams course, I-Corps bootcamp, or another equivalent training program to recipients of an award under the SBIR or STTR program; and

“(B) authorize the recipients described in subparagraph (A) to use amounts authorized under subsection (q) to participate in the I-Corps teams course, I-Corps bootcamp, or another equivalent training program.

“(2) COST OF PARTICIPATION.—The cost of participation by a recipient described in paragraph (1)(A) in an I-Corps course, I-Corps bootcamp, or another equivalent training program may be provided by—

“(A) an I-Corps team SBIR or STTR grant;

“(B) funds awarded to the recipient under subsection (q);

“(C) funds made available to carry out subsection (mm);

“(D) the participating teams or other sources as appropriate; or

“(E) any combination of sources described in subparagraphs (A), (B), (C), and (D).”.

SEC. 8. IMPROVING SBIR AND STTR DATA COLLECTION.

(a) ADDITIONAL DATA FIELDS IN SBIR DATABASE.—Section 9(k)(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(k)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (E)(iv), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (F)(v), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(G) for each award granted, whether the award is classified or designated as—

“(i) direct to Phase II, under subsection (ce);

“(ii) subsequent Phase II, under subsection (bb)(1);

“(iii) a strategic breakthrough award under subsection (ff)(3);

“(iv) a Phase III prime contract award; or

“(v) a Phase III subcontract award.”.

(b) IMPROVING FEDERAL PROCUREMENT DATA SYSTEMS DATA TRACKING.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(A) FEDERAL AGENCY; PHASE II; PHASE III; SBIR; STTR.—The terms “Federal agency”, “Phase II”, “Phase III”, “SBIR”, and “STTR” have the meanings given those terms in section 9(e) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(e)).

(B) **SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN.**—The term “small business concern” has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632).

(2) **REQUIREMENT TO UPDATE.**—The Administrator of General Services shall update the Federal Procurement Data System described in section 1122(a)(4) of title 41, United States Code, or any successor system, to—

(A) require reporting on whether an award under the SBIR or STTR program under section 9 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638) is classified or designated as—

(i) direct to Phase II, under subsection (cc) of such section;

(ii) subsequent Phase II, under subsection (bb)(1) of such section;

(iii) a strategic breakthrough award under subsection (ff)(3) of such section, as added by this Act;

(iv) a Phase III prime contract award; or

(v) a Phase III subcontract award;

(B) require reporting on whether a contract is designated as a Phase III contract;

(C) require reporting on whether non-SBIR contracts and subcontracts are using SBIR- or STTR-funded technology; and

(D) require a government contracting officer, when recording a Phase II or Phase III contract following on from work done by a small business concern during a Phase I or Phase II award, to reference an SBIR or STTR contract identification number for relevant prior SBIR or STTR work done.

SEC. 9. EXTENDING SBIR AND STTR AUTHORIZATION.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 9 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638), as amended by this Act, is amended—

(1) in subsection (m), by striking “September 30, 2025” and inserting “September 30, 2031”; and

(2) in subsection (n)(1)(A), by striking “2025” and inserting “2031”.

(b) **CARRY OVER FUNDS.**—If a Federal agency that participates in the SBIR or STTR program has funds remaining at the end of fiscal year 2026 from amounts required to be expended under subsection (f)(1) or (n)(1), respectively, of section 9 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638), the Federal agency may use those remaining funds in fiscal year 2027 for the SBIR or STTR program, as applicable, of the Federal agency.

SEC. 10. EXTENSION OF SBIR AND STTR PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES.

(a) **PHASE FLEXIBILITY.**—Section 9(cc) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(cc)) is amended—

(1) by striking “During fiscal years 2012 through 2025” and inserting “Until September 30, 2031”;

(2) by striking “, and the Department of Education” and inserting “the Department of Energy, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Department of Education”; and

(3) by inserting “or STTR program” after “SBIR program” each place that term appears.

(b) **COMMERCIALIZATION READINESS PROGRAM FOR CIVILIAN AGENCIES PILOT PROGRAM.**—Section 9(gg)(7) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(gg)(7)) is amended by striking “2025” and inserting “2031”.

(c) **ACCELERATED AWARDS.**—Section 9(hh)(2)(C) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(hh)(2)(C)) is amended by striking “September 30, 2025” and inserting “September 30, 2031”.

(d) **PHASE 0 PILOT PROGRAM.**—Section 9(jj)(7) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(jj)(7)) is amended by striking “2025” and inserting “2031”.

(e) **ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE.**—Section 9(mm)(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(mm)(1)) is amended by striking “Sep-

tember 30, 2025” and inserting “September 30, 2031”.

(f) **INCREASED MINIMUM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS.**—Section 9(qq)(3)(I) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(qq)(3)(I)) is amended by striking “September 30, 2025” and inserting “September 30, 2031”.

(g) **COMMERCIALIZATION ASSISTANCE PILOT PROGRAMS.**—Section 9(uu)(3) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(uu)(3)) is amended by striking “September 30, 2025” and inserting “September 30, 2031”.

(h) **DUE DILIGENCE PROGRAM.**—Section 9(vv)(3)(C) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(vv)(3)(C)) is amended by striking “September 30, 2025” and inserting “September 30, 2031”.

(i) **STTR PARTICIPATION OF MILITARY RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS PILOT PROGRAM.**—Section 9(yy)(2) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(yy)(2)) is amended by striking “September 30, 2025” and inserting “September 30, 2031”.

(j) **BUDGET CALCULATION PILOT PROGRAM.**—Section 9(zz)(3) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(zz)(3)) is amended by striking “September 30, 2025” and inserting “September 30, 2031”.

(k) **SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND PILOT.**—Section 851(e) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (10 U.S.C. 4901 note) is amended by striking “September 30, 2025” and inserting “September 30, 2031”.

(l) **GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE MANDATE SUNSET.**—The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 (Public Law 112-81) is amended by striking section 5142 (15 U.S.C. 638a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. VAN DUYNE) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. VAN DUYNE. 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 gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 3971, the Small Business Innovation and Economic Security Act, which reauthorizes the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs through September 30, 2031.

The SBIR and the STTR programs are critical to American innovation and help ensure the United States remains a step ahead of foreign adversaries.

This reauthorization package is the culmination of countless hours of bipartisan and bipartisan negotiations over several months.

I thank my colleagues in the House—Chairman WILLIAMS and Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ with the Committee on Small Business and Chairman BABIN and Ranking Member LOFGREN with the Committee on Science, Space &

Technology—for their work to get these programs reauthorized.

I thank Chairman ERNST and Ranking Member MARKEY for advancing this bill through the Senate.

Today is the day we get these programs back online for small businesses across the country. The SBIR and the STTR programs have helped small businesses turn big ideas into real solutions by providing early-stage funding for more than 40 years. These investments have produced groundbreaking technologies that strengthen America's economy and our national defense.

Unfortunately, both these programs were shut down for the first time for the last 5 months due to the Senate's inability to pass a short-term clean reauthorization while negotiations continued.

This lapse created uncertainty for small businesses, delayed critical innovation, and risked allowing critical technology to fall into the hands of foreign adversaries.

This reauthorization package contains several bipartisan reforms that restore stability and strengthen the programs by safeguarding American technology, reducing administrative burdens, and accelerating the development of emerging technologies.

This bill also aims to bridge the valley of death between research and commercialization by providing training for acquisition officials, improving data collection across participating agencies, and modernizing technical and business assistance for small businesses.

The chairman and ranking member have shown their commitment to ensuring these programs remain strong, operate efficiently, and support small business innovators, while advancing research and development.

From lifesaving medical advancements to next-generation defense capabilities, the SBIR and the STTR programs empower Main Street to deliver real solutions for both the government and the private sector.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and their staff for working to find a bipartisan path forward to reauthorizing these critical programs. I look forward to seeing this bill enacted and the new innovative ideas that follow. I urge my colleagues to support this unanimous commonsense solution.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 3971, the Small Business Innovation and Economic Security Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer, SBIR and STTR, programs saw their reauthorizations lapse last October. As a result, nearly \$6 billion in funding for small, innovative companies was frozen.

These programs are overwhelmingly successful, boasting a demonstrated return across over 40 years of operation,

resulting in groundbreaking technologies that have revolutionized medicine, telecommunications, and military capabilities. Unfortunately, negotiations started too late and disagreements were too great to reach a deal before the deadline.

I am proud to say that, after months of uncertainty, we are finally turning the lights back on. The product before us today is the result of that monthslong deliberation while the program was lapsed. Thanks to the hard work of everyone involved, this legislation is something we can all be proud of.

Ideas from our majority like strategic breakthrough funding will help attract both private capital and government buy-in to rapidly scale promising technologies.

At the same time, ideas from myself and Senator MARKEY serve to strengthen our program's Phase III by investing in contract officer training and ensuring the PCRs advocate for small firms with successful products in the government. Together, these provisions mark a cohesive effort at bridging the valley of death for small, innovative companies.

Longstanding bipartisan priorities such as strengthening the program's data collection system, as well as making improvements to technical and business assistance and the Innovative Corps program, have finally made it across the finish line.

In addition, my colleagues on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee made real improvements to the foreign due diligence program, protecting small firms from espionage by our adversaries.

Over and above all, after a period of tremendous uncertainty, a reauthorization period of longer than 5 years will give small businesses and agencies the certainty they need for long-term planning.

The lapse in authorization over the past 5 months has been excruciating and unprecedented for small firms and labs who are at the cutting edge of technology. It has also been painful for families who are waiting for a cure for diseases that afflict their loved ones, only to see the companies working on those cures lose funding.

This lapse was avoidable, and the costs were real. We must be active in efforts to ensure it never happens again.

I am grateful for the work of my colleagues and our staff for bringing this agreement together in the spirit of compromise. That is how this program has always worked and must continue to work. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

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

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, we must pass S. 3971 to ensure that Federal investment yields results for our country.

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

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HOULAHAN).

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a big win for small businesses and innovators in my district and across the country, as well.

For years, I proudly led the bipartisan RAMP for Innovators Act, a bill that gives our small businesses the tools they need to turn great ideas into market-ready products.

Today, I am thrilled that a significant portion of that work is included in the Small Business Innovation and Economic Security Act. Thanks to this bill, these very important provisions and improvements will soon be law.

Today's passage is a testament to what bipartisan and bicameral collaboration can achieve. It was a real disservice that the SBIR and STTR programs lapsed last year, which are the lifeblood of innovation on Main Street. They help both entrepreneurs and small businesses in places like Pennsylvania's Sixth District turn ideas into real products and businesses.

□ 1510

Thanks to this legislation, the programs are back and stronger than before.

Importantly, the bill incorporates key provisions for my RAMP for Innovators Act that give small businesses more control over their commercialization efforts. Under this legislation, companies can now use technical and business assistance funds not just to utilize outside experts but to also hire new staff, expand existing teams, and to train their employees to move their technologies to market.

Agencies will continue to provide oversight to ensure that funds are used effectively, but awardees now have a lot more flexibility to direct these resources to where they are most needed.

Additionally, this bill ensures that SBIR and STTR recipients can participate in the Innovation-Corps, or I-Corps, programs, which provide key trainings that help turn research into market-ready products. Under the provisions in my RAMP for Innovators Act, businesses can use TABA funds and other funding sources for participation in I-Corps, giving small businesses the flexibility they need to fully take advantage of these opportunities.

Having scaled a lot of businesses in southeastern Pennsylvania, I know how critical these resources are. They can literally mean the difference between a promising and even life-changing idea sitting on a shelf and a product that creates jobs and strengthens our economy.

I thank Representative BALDERSON for his continued participation and bipartisan partnership on this, the RAMP for Innovators Act, and to Senator COONS for championing these provisions in the Senate. Together, we are ensuring that

small businesses have the support that they need to grow, hire, and bring bold ideas to market.

This is a really proud moment for Main Street, for innovators, and for my community. I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes" for the Small Business Innovation and Economic Security Act.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for closing.

Mr. Speaker, I once again thank my colleagues in the Senate for their hard work in bringing this together, as well as our House partnership of myself, Chairman WILLIAMS, Chairman BABIN, and Ranking Member LOFGREN for working in a bipartisan way to reauthorize this program.

The time for delay is over. I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes" and get this bill to the President as soon as possible.

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

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of S. 3971 to support small businesses across the country in advancing technology and innovation. It is time for small businesses to access SBIR and STTR programs again after 5 long months.

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

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 3971, a reauthorization of the SBIR and STTR Programs.

For more than 40 years, and Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR), and later its companion program the Small Business Technology Transfer Program (STTR), have been contributing to U.S. leadership in technological innovation through support for small business research and development.

I have had a front-row seat to the explosive growth of entrepreneurship in Silicon Valley over my lifetime. I understand well the importance of innovative small businesses to our local economy and to the U.S. economy. I also understand the challenges these businesses face accessing capital. The SBIR program has long been called "America's Seed Fund" because they invest in small businesses at the higher-risk early stages before private capital is willing to invest. I also recognize that every agency has a different mission, and tailors their SBIR program accordingly. While that diversity in missions was an undercurrent in the negotiations, in the end we arrived at a good compromise that continues to support competition and innovation while giving the agencies necessary flexibility.

Last fall, as these programs faced imminent closure, the House sent the Senate a one-year, simple extension to keep the programs open to small businesses as the parties continued to negotiate. Unfortunately, there was not unanimity in the Senate to keep supporting small businesses across the country as we continued to negotiate some policy changes. The 6-month halt in the program has had real consequences for businesses and their employees, for innovation, and even for clinical trials and their patients. All of that was avoidable.

Fortunately, we are here today with a very good bill that provides new forms of support and resources for innovative small businesses, increases access and competition, and strengthens guardrails. I am especially pleased that the bill authorizes the programs through fiscal year 2031. Small businesses need certainty that the funding will be available, and agencies need certainty to manage the program efficiently.

I thank Small Business Committee Chairman WILLIAMS and Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ and Science Committee Chairman BABIN, for their partnership in getting this done. I thank all of the committee staff for their hard work and patience through these months of negotiations. And I thank our partners in the Senate for continuing to work with us to find a path forward. I strongly urge all of my colleagues to support S. 3971 without delay.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. VAN DUYNE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3971.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. 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 motion will be postponed.

HOLOCAUST EXPROPRIATED ART RECOVERY ACT OF 2025

Ms. LEE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1884) to clarify the Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act of 2016, to appropriately limit the application of defenses based on the passage of time and other non-merits defenses to claims under that Act.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1884

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 “Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act of 2025”.

SEC. 2. HOLOCAUST EXPROPRIATED ART RECOVERY ACT OF 2016 IMPROVEMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act of 2016 (22 U.S.C. 1621 note) is amended—

(1) in section 2—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (8) as paragraph (10);

(B) by inserting after paragraph (7) the following:

“(8) The intent of this Act is to permit claims to recover Nazi-looted art to be brought, notwithstanding the passage of time since World War II. Some courts have frustrated the intent of this Act by dismissing recovery lawsuits in reliance on defenses based on the passage of time, such as laches (for example, *Zuckerman v Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 928 F.3d 186 (2d Cir. 2019)) or adverse possession, acquisitive prescription, or usucapion (for example, *Cassirer v. Thyssen-Bornemisza Foundation*, 89 F.4th

1226 (9th Cir. 2024)) or on other non-merits discretionary defenses, such as the act of state doctrine (for example, *Von Saher v Norton Simon Museum of Art at Pasadena*, 897 F.3d 1141 (9th Cir. 2018)), forum non conveniens, international comity, or prudential exhaustion. In order to effectuate the purpose of the Act to permit claims to recover Nazi-looted art to be resolved on the merits, these defenses must be precluded.

“(9) This Act also is intended to allow claims in accordance with the procedures under this Act for the recovery of artwork or other property lost during the covered period because, or as a result, of Nazi persecution, including by a covered government (as defined in section 1605(h)(3)(B) of title 28, United States Code) or an agent or associate of a covered government, regardless of the nationality or citizenship of the alleged victim, notwithstanding the ‘domestic takings’ rule under *Federal Republic of Germany v. Philipp*, 592 U.S. 169 (2021).”; and

(C) in paragraph (10), as so redesignated, by striking “will yield just and fair resolutions in a more efficient and predictable manner” and inserting “may, in some circumstances, yield just and fair resolutions as well”;

(2) in section 3(2), by inserting “and other non-merits defenses” after “statutes of limitation”;

(3) in section 5—

(A) by striking subsection (g);

(B) by redesignating subsections (e) and (f) as subsections (h) and (i), respectively;

(C) by redesignating subsections (b), (c), and (d) as subsections (c), (d), and (e), respectively;

(D) by inserting after subsection (a) the following:

“(b) RELATION TO FOREIGN STATE IMMUNITIES.—Notwithstanding any other law or prior judicial decision, any civil claim or cause of action covered by subsection (a) shall be deemed to be an action in which rights in violation of international law are in issue for purposes of section 1605(a)(3) of title 28, United States Code, without regard to the nationality or citizenship of the alleged victim.”;

(E) in subsection (d), as so redesignated, in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “subsection (e)” and inserting “subsection (h)”;

(F) in subsection (e), as so redesignated—

(i) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “Subsection (a)” and inserting “Subsections (a), (b), (f), and (g)”;

(ii) in paragraph (2), by striking “during the period” and all that follows and inserting “on or after the date of enactment of this Act.”; and

(G) by inserting after subsection (e), as so redesignated, the following:

“(f) DEFENSES BASED ON PASSAGE OF TIME AND OTHER NON-MERITS DEFENSES.—With respect to any claim that is otherwise timely under this Act—

“(1) all defenses or substantive doctrines based on the passage of time, including laches, adverse possession, acquisitive prescription, and usucapion, may not be applied with respect to the claim; and

“(2) all non-merits discretionary bases for dismissal, including the act of state doctrine, international comity, forum non conveniens, prudential exhaustion, and similar doctrines unrelated to the merits, may not be applied with respect to the claim.

“(g) NATIONWIDE SERVICE OF PROCESS.—For a civil action brought under subsection (a) in any State or Federal court, process may be served in the judicial district where the case is brought or any other judicial district of the United States where the defendant may be found, resides, has an agent, or transacts business.”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 6. SEVERABILITY.

“If any provision of this Act, or the application of a provision of this Act to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the remainder of this Act, and the application of such provision to other persons and circumstances, shall not be affected thereby.”.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to any civil claim or cause of action that is—

(1) pending in any court on the date of enactment of this Act, including any civil claim or cause of action that is pending on appeal or for which the time to file an appeal has not expired; or

(2) filed on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. LEE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. LEE of Florida. 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 S. 1884.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to bring this legislation before the House today. I thank my bipartisan colleagues in both Chambers who have worked to advance this important effort.

In the House, I thank Ranking Member JAMIE RASKIN and Representatives SCOTT FITZGERALD, JERRY NADLER, and MAGGIE GOODLANDER.

In the Senate, I thank Senators JOHN CORNYN, TED CRUZ, RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, and CHUCK SCHUMER.

The Nazi regime committed unimaginable atrocities during the Holocaust, murdering millions of Jews and destroying families, communities, and livelihoods.

The regime also carried out a systematic campaign of cultural theft. Hundreds of thousands of works of art and cultural objects were confiscated or misappropriated from Jewish families and other persecuted groups across Europe. These were not simply possessions. They were pieces of family history, identity, and legacy.

After World War II, the United States and our Allies attempted to return stolen artwork to their rightful owners, yet many pieces were never reunited with the families from whom they were taken.

In the decades since, these works have surfaced in museums, galleries, and private collections around the world.

In 1998, the United States convened the Washington Conference on Nazi-Confiscated Art with more than 40 nations. The conference produced the

Washington Principles, which called on governments and institutions to take steps to achieve just and fair solutions for families seeking return of their stolen property. Congress took an important step toward that goal in 2016 when it enacted the Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act.

That law was designed to ensure that Holocaust survivors and their heirs would have a fair opportunity to pursue claims in court and that those claims would be decided on their merits, not dismissed because too much time had passed.

Unfortunately, courts have sometimes applied technical defenses in ways that undermine Congress' intent. This means that families who lost everything during the Holocaust can still be denied their day in court because of procedural barriers. This bill fixes that problem.

This bill removes the upcoming expiration date in the original law and clarifies that these cases should be decided on the facts, not dismissed on technicalities.

As someone who previously served as a judge in Florida and now serves on the Judiciary Committee, I believe deeply that Congress must speak clearly and provide judges with standards and guidance to apply in their courtrooms.

Justice should not depend on procedural loopholes or arbitrary decisions when families are seeking the return of property that was stolen during one of history's greatest crimes. Behind every claim is a family story.

Even today, descendants of Holocaust victims are still searching for works of art that once hung in their grandparents' homes. In some cases, families spent a generation preserving photographs, letters, and fragments of evidence in hopes of one day recovering a painting or a sculpture that represents their family's past.

For many of these families, these cases are not about the monetary value of the artwork. They are about restoring a piece of history that was taken from them.

The Nazi regime stole not only lives but legacies. They stole hundreds of thousands of artwork pieces in what has been termed the greatest displacement of art in human history. The Nazis looted over 600,000 works of art and artifacts. To this day, more than 100,000 of these works are not yet recovered. More than 100,000 works of art and artifacts are still missing.

This legislation helps to ensure that survivors and their heirs have the opportunity to reclaim those legacies and that their claims are heard fairly in American courts.

I thank the many organizations that are supporting this effort, including Art Ashes, the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, Jewish Women International, the Florida Holocaust Museum, and many others who continue working to preserve memory and pursue justice. Despite

the passage of time since the horrors of the Holocaust, it is never too late to do the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill and ensure that families seeking the return of their stolen heritage are given the justice that they deserve.

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

□ 1520

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 1884, the Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act of 2025, or the HEAR Act.

As the lead House Democratic sponsor of this bipartisan legislation, I am proud to have helped bring together my colleagues to ensure this bill is passed and sent to the President's desk.

During the Holocaust, the Nazis stripped Jewish families of countless works of art, culture, and heritage. The effects of these atrocities are still being felt today by survivors and their families.

In 2016, former Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte and I introduced the first HEAR Act, which was a landmark bill that aimed to aid these victims and their families in recovering their rightful property, a small act of light in the memory of the darkest period in human history. I am grateful that Congress passed that measure unanimously and that President Obama signed it into law.

Unfortunately, time has demonstrated that the original HEAR Act was not sufficient. In addition to the bill's impending expiration, more than 100,000 of the over 600,000 works of art looted by the Nazis remain unrecovered. We must confront this unacceptable and repugnant reality, which continues to allow entities and individuals to profit off the Jewish people's pain.

We must reaffirm that, in the United States, every family member with a credible claim deserves to have their day in court, with their case heard on the merits alone. Justice must not be denied due to procedural technicalities and legislative sunset provisions.

While we cannot reverse the horrors of the Holocaust, we can ensure that in an American courtroom, the truth of a family's legacy carries more weight than a legal loophole.

Some might have you believe, Mr. Speaker, that this bill addresses a problem mostly for Europe to resolve, but they would be wrong. In fact, the September 2025 report from the World Jewish Restitution Organization found that U.S. museums hold well over 100,000 objects that were in Europe during the Holocaust, yet only about 10 percent of those objects have been made publicly accessible online for provenance research. Additionally, among 160 major museums in the United States, only 21 percent provide easily accessible object-level Nazi-era provenance information.

If relevant pieces are not made available for research, how can we even know the true scope of this problem? What do the holders of these pieces have to hide?

This is not an issue that is relevant only to decades-old legal cases or an issue faced only by a few dying survivors and their families. Nazi-looted art is still being discovered regularly.

Just a few months ago, an online auction was intercepted in Ohio for two 17th century floral paintings by a famous Dutch still-life painter with original Nazi inventory numbers, S-16 and S-17, still on the back. The works had been sitting in an abandoned safe deposit box in Texas for decades before surfacing.

In 2023, the Manhattan District Attorney's Office seized seven works by a famous Austrian expressionist painter, valued at nearly \$10 million, that had for decades been displayed in a variety of museums and collections in New York. The DA's office rightfully returned the pieces to the heirs of Fritz Grunbaum, a Jewish collector murdered at Dachau concentration camp in 1941.

That is why we must reauthorize and improve the HEAR Act of 2016 by passing the bill before us today, to ensure that the provenance of pieces that can be proven are able to be fully litigated on their merits alone, and to send a clear message from the Halls of Congress to those who knowingly hold Holocaust-looted art that the United States will no longer tolerate such barbaric behavior.

It is important for us to be abundantly clear about what this bill does and does not do.

Fundamentally, this bill seeks to ensure that claims regarding Nazi-looted art are decided on their merits alone, without hiding behind procedural technicalities.

The bill also eliminates the original HEAR Act sunset provision, which is scheduled to expire in December 2026. That deadline was intended to encourage museums and holders to complete provenance research on the relevant pieces and to resolve any applicable claims.

Unfortunately, this limited time frame has allowed some institutions to delay, withhold information, and run out the clock. I hope we can all agree, Mr. Speaker, that justice for victims of the Holocaust and their families should not come with an expiration date.

Here is what this bill does not do. It does not decide who wins and loses any case. It does not undermine, in letter or intent, any agreements made by any entity regarding any Holocaust-related or other matters. It does not impact or seek to influence any other categories of Holocaust claims outside of those that are art-related and specifically described in the legislation.

The issues this legislation seeks to address are not new. In fact, it even appeared in the early 2000s popular TV show "The West Wing." In a second-

season episode, a Jewish woman on a White House tour begins screaming after recognizing a painting that had belonged to her father in France before it was seized by the Vichy regime during the Holocaust and later gifted to the White House. In the television show, the painting is swiftly and voluntarily returned to the woman and her family.

The show is obviously a work of fiction, but if all similar claims were resolved in such a way in reality, there would be much less need for this legislation. Unfortunately, like much of "The West Wing," such a resolution is too good to be true.

Finally, there are many individuals and organizations that have worked hard to draft and promote this legislation. I thank all of them, and especially the Art Shesher organization. Without their tireless advocacy, this day would not be possible.

I also thank the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. LEE) for her partnership in introducing this bill in the House.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation to ensure that victims of the Holocaust and their families are able to have their claims heard on their merits alone.

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

Ms. LEE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, Representatives LEE and NADLER, for bringing this very important piece of legislation to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support, as a cosponsor, of the Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act, the HEAR Act.

Mr. Speaker, during the Holocaust, the Nazi regime and its collaborators systematically looted hundreds of thousands of works of art and cultural treasures from Jewish families across Europe. These were not simply valuable objects. They were pieces of family history, family identity, and family heritage.

For decades, many survivors and their heirs have fought simply for the chance to have their claims heard in court. The original HEAR Act, passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in this Chamber in 2016, tried to ensure that these claims would be decided only on their merits, rather than being dismissed because of technical objections, such as the passage of time.

Mr. Speaker, however, the courts did not follow Congress' intent on many issues, and new legal barriers have emerged that threaten to close or have closed the courthouse doors once again.

This legislation expressly reverses the ability of defendants to use non-merit-based defenses, such as the Supreme Court's decision in *Germany v. Philipp*, which held that Germany's expropriation of German Jews' property in the Holocaust was simply a "domestic taking" and not a violation

of international law under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act.

If not corrected by Congress, that decision would prevent Holocaust survivors and their heirs from recovering most of the art held by foreign governments and their museums. It would excuse the historical and moral culpability of Nazi Germany and its allies and collaborators for perpetrating the Holocaust. An affirmative vote today closes that huge loophole.

Mr. Speaker, time is not on our side. Roughly 30,000 Holocaust survivors remain alive today in the United States of America, many now in their nineties, some of whom live in my district. They deserve to see in their lifetimes—and the world needs to hear—that in these times of rising anti-Semitism, Congress wishes to right these historical wrongs.

Mr. Speaker, this bill does not guarantee outcomes. It simply ensures that claims are heard fairly and decided on their merits. Passing this legislation reaffirms our Nation's commitment to justice, historical truth, and the memory of those who suffered one of history's darkest crimes.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support the HEAR Act.

□ 1530

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN), the distinguished ranking member of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. NADLER for his extraordinary leadership on this legislation and on this issue.

I rise in strong support of S. 1884, the Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act of 2025. This bill, which has already passed the Senate by unanimous consent, amends the Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act of 2016 in a number of key ways to ensure that Holocaust survivors and their heirs have a fair opportunity in court to recover all of the artwork that was stolen by the Nazi regime or what is left of it. In doing so, this bill will provide these victims the chance to obtain some small measure of justice for the horrors and the injustices and indignities their families have endured.

During its reign of hatred and terror, the Nazis committed theft and murder on a mass industrial scale through the relentless killings of the *Einsatzgruppen* in the Bloodlands of Europe and through the death camps they established at Auschwitz, Treblinka, Belzec, Sobibor, and many others.

For the victims' families, these pieces of art are both stolen objects and stolen connections to their own family members whose memories the Nazis have tried to permanently erase from history.

In many cases, the artwork serves as the final tangible connection of the victims' families to their lost family

members, providing proof of their existence and a testament to their suffering and their loss.

Congress passed the 2016 HEAR Act, which established a 6-year Federal statute of limitations for claims arising from Nazi-stolen artwork out of concern that the State statutes of limitations would prevent most litigation. In its findings, Congress observed that the unique and horrific circumstances of World War II and the Holocaust make statutes of limitations especially burdensome to the victims and their heirs. It further noted the difficulty of piecing together their cases from a fragmentary historical record ravaged by persecution, war, and genocide. This costly process often cannot be done within the time constraints imposed by what was then the existing law.

Alas, several court decisions since the 2016 HEAR Act's passage have undermined the statute's purpose of trying to give victims a fair hearing on the merits of their cases regardless of the passage of time. These decisions have dismissed numerous cases precisely based on passage of time defenses like laches or adverse possession or other non-merits defenses like *forum non conveniens*, the act of state doctrine, or foreign sovereign immunity.

This bill addresses these court decisions and related concerns. It eliminates the HEAR Act's sunset provision so that defendants no longer have an incentive to simply run out the clock on victims' families. It also prohibits courts from dismissing lawsuits on grounds related to the passage of time or other non-merit defenses. Finally, it clarifies that claims for recovery of the artwork fall within an existing expropriation exception to foreign sovereign immunity regardless of the victim's citizenship or nationality.

This bill will help give victims and their heirs the chance to obtain a small measure of justice for the grave and dehumanizing wrongs they suffered as a result of the Holocaust. It will also give victims' families a chance to recover at least a partial connection to their loved ones, a connection that was stolen in every single way possible by the Nazis.

I applaud Representative LEE, and I applaud our Senate colleagues who have worked to advance this bill. I especially recognize my colleague Representative NADLER for his longtime aggressive and unswerving leadership on seeing justice done in this case and to see passage of both the 2016 Act and this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly advocate for this legislation, and I urge all of our colleagues to support it.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I urge my colleagues to support this measure. I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. LEE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is just for Holocaust survivors and their heirs to continue to have their claims relating to art stolen from them

by the Nazis heard in court. These claims should be decided on the merits, not dismissed due to technical defenses. The Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act of 2025 will ensure just that.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues 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 gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. LEE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1884.

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.

ENHANCED IRAN SANCTIONS ACT OF 2025

Mrs. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1422) to impose sanctions with respect to persons engaged in logistical transactions and sanctions evasion relating to oil, gas, liquefied natural gas, and related petrochemical products from the Islamic Republic of Iran, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1422

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 “Enhanced Iran Sanctions Act of 2025”.

SEC. 2. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to fully enforce sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran, including with respect to Iran’s petroleum and petrochemical sectors;

(2) through such sanctions, to deny Iran financial resources—

(A) to advance its nuclear weapons capabilities;

(B) to finance the development of weapons of mass destruction;

(C) to support missile and drone proliferation;

(D) to fund and facilitate international terrorism;

(E) to engage in destabilizing efforts abroad, including the targeting of United States citizens; and

(F) to repress the rights of Iranian citizens; and

(3) to strengthen coherence among members of the international community with respect to enforcing sanctions against malign activities of Iran.

SEC. 3. EXPANDING THE REWARDS FOR JUSTICE PROGRAM TO COVER PERSONS VIOLATING OR EVADING UNITED STATES SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAN.

Section 36(b) of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 2708(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (14), by striking “; or” and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (15), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; or”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following paragraph:

“(16) the identification of each person described in section 4(a) of the Enhanced Iran

Sanctions Act of 2025 or section 3 of the Stop Harboring Petroleum Act (22 U.S.C. 8572) that has attempted or is attempting to evade sanctions imposed under either such Act with proceeds generated by transactions related to oil, condensates, or other petroleum or petrochemical products from the Islamic Republic of Iran.”.

SEC. 4. IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO PERSONS ENGAGED IN TRANSACTIONS RELATED OR INCIDENTAL TO OIL, CONDENSATES, PETROLEUM OR PETROCHEMICAL PRODUCTS FROM IRAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President may impose the sanctions described in subsection (b) with respect to any foreign person that the President determines—

(1) has knowingly engaged in any significant transaction related or incidental to the processing, refining, export, transfer or sale of oil, condensates, or other petroleum or petrochemical product in whole or in part from Iran;

(2) is a subsidiary of a foreign person described in paragraph (1);

(3) is a corporate officer, principal executive officer, or other person performing similar functions of either such officer, of a foreign person described in paragraph (1);

(4) is an immediate family member of a foreign person described in paragraph (1) who demonstrably benefits from any activity described in paragraph (1); or

(5) directly or indirectly conducts a significant transaction with, for, or on behalf of a foreign person described in paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of section 3(b) of the Stop Harboring Iranian Petroleum Act (22 U.S.C. 8572).

(b) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The sanctions described in this subsection are the following:

(1) BLOCKING OF PROPERTY.—The President shall, pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.), block and prohibit all transactions in property and interests in property of a foreign person subject to sanctions pursuant to subsection (a) if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

(2) ALIENS INADMISSIBLE FOR VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

(A) VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—In the case of an alien subject to sanctions pursuant to subsection (a), the alien is—

(i) inadmissible to the United States;

(ii) ineligible to receive a visa or other documentation to enter the United States; and

(iii) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

(B) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The visa or other entry documentation of an alien described in subparagraph (A) shall be revoked, regardless of when such visa or other entry documentation was issued.

(ii) IMMEDIATE EFFECT.—A revocation under clause (i) shall—

(I) take effect in accordance with section 221(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1201(i)); and

(II) cancel any other valid visa or entry documentation that is in the alien’s possession.

(c) EXCEPTIONS.—

(1) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS.—Sanctions under subsection (a) shall not apply with respect to an alien if admitting or paroling the alien into the United States is necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the

United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, or other applicable international obligations.

(2) EXCEPTION FOR AUTHORIZED INTELLIGENCE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES.—Sanctions under subsection (a) shall not apply with respect to activities subject to the reporting requirements under title V of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3091 et seq.) or any authorized intelligence, law enforcement, or national security activities of the United States.

(3) EXCEPTION FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR THE PEOPLE OF IRAN.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Sanctions under subsection (a) shall not apply to—

(i) the conduct or facilitation of a transaction for the provision of agricultural commodities, food, medicine, medical devices, or humanitarian assistance, or for humanitarian purposes to or for the people of Iran; or

(ii) transactions that are necessary for or related to the activities described in clause (i).

(B) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph—

(i) the term “agricultural commodity” has the meaning given that term in section 102 of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 5602);

(ii) the term “medical device” has the meaning given the term “device” in section 201 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321); and

(iii) the term “medicine” has the meaning given the term “drug” in section 201 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321).

(4) EXCEPTION FOR SAFETY OF VESSELS AND CREW.—Sanctions under subsection (a) shall not apply with respect to a person providing provisions to a vessel otherwise subject to sanctions under this section if such provisions are intended for the safety and care of the crew aboard the vessel, the protection of human life aboard the vessel, or the maintenance of the vessel to avoid any environmental or other significant damage.

(d) WAIVER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President may, on a case-by-case basis for a period of not more than 180 days, waive the application of sanctions imposed with respect to a foreign person under subsection (a) if the President—

(A) certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that the waiver is in the national interests of the United States; and

(B) submits with the certification required under subparagraph (A) a detailed justification explaining the reasons for the waiver.

(2) RENEWAL OF WAIVER.—The President may, on a case-by-case basis, renew a waiver issued under paragraph (1) for additional periods of not more than 180 days if the President—

(A) determines that the renewal of the waiver is vital to the national interests of the United States; and

(B) submits to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the renewal of the waiver that includes—

(i) a justification for the renewal of the waiver;

(ii) a detailed plan to phase out the need for any such waiver issued with respect to such foreign person; and

(iii) for reoccurring waivers, steps taken to implement or otherwise further the plan described in clause (ii).

(e) IMPLEMENTATION; REGULATIONS; PENALTIES.—

(1) IMPLEMENTATION.—The President may exercise all authorities provided under sections 203 and 205 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704) to carry out subsection (a).

(2) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall issue regulations or other guidance as may be necessary for the implementation of this section.

(3) PENALTIES.—The penalties provided for in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) shall apply to any person who violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of any prohibition of this section, or an order or regulation prescribed under this section, to the same extent that such penalties apply to a person that commits an unlawful act described in section 206(a) of such Act (50 U.S.C. 1705(a)).

(f) TERMINATION OF SANCTIONS.—Consistent with the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-172; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note), the requirement to impose sanctions under subsection (a) shall cease to be effective beginning on the date that is 30 days after the date on which the President certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that—

(1) the Government of Iran no longer repeatedly provides support for international terrorism as determined by the Secretary of State pursuant to—

(A) section 1754(c)(1)(A) of the Export Control Reform Act of 2018 (50 U.S.C. 4318(c)(1)(A));

(B) section 620A of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2371);

(C) section 40 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2780); or

(D) any other related provision of law; and

(2) Iran has ceased the pursuit, acquisition, and development of, and verifiably dismantled its, nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and ballistic missiles and ballistic missile launch technology.

(g) EXCEPTION RELATING TO THE IMPORTATION OF GOODS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The authorities and requirements to impose sanctions under this section shall not include the authority or a requirement to impose sanctions on the importation of goods.

(2) GOOD DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “good” means any article, natural or manmade substance, material, supply, or manufactured product, including inspection and test equipment, and excluding technical data.

SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMITTED; ALIEN.—The terms “admitted” and “alien” have the meanings given those terms in section 101(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)).

(2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives.

(3) FOREIGN PERSON.—The term “foreign person” means a person that is not a United States person, including the government of a foreign country.

(4) KNOWINGLY.—The term “knowingly”, with respect to conduct, a circumstance, or a result, means that a person has actual knowledge, or should have known, of the conduct, the circumstance, or the result.

(5) PROPERTY; INTEREST IN PROPERTY.—The terms “property” and “interest in property” have the meanings given the terms “property” and “property interest”, respectively, in section 560.325 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(6) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term “United States person” means any United States citizen, permanent resident alien, entity organized under the laws of the United States or any jurisdiction within the United States (including foreign branches), or any person in the United States.

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to impose sanctions with respect to persons engaged in significant transactions related or incidental to the processing, refining, export, transfer or sale of oil, condensates, or other petroleum or petrochemical products in whole or in part from the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. LATIMER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1422, the Enhanced Iran Sanctions Act.

For decades, the Iranian regime has brutally suppressed its own people while exporting terror across the globe. Tehran has pursued nuclear weapons, expanded its missile and drone programs, sponsored terrorism, and targeted Americans and our allies.

On February 28, under President Trump’s leadership, U.S. Central Command launched Operation Epic Fury after Iran rejected diplomatic off-ramps and refused to dismantle its nuclear program.

Since then, the regime has escalated further by targeting civilian infrastructure and threatening to hold the Strait of Hormuz and our global energy supply hostage. These actions are funded by Iran’s illicit oil and gas sales, and now is the time to cut off its revenue streams.

H.R. 1422 strengthens secondary sanctions on entities that are enabling Iran to evade existing restrictions and profit from its petroleum trade.

This bill sends a very clear message that the United States will not tolerate those who finance the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,

Washington, DC, June 16, 2025.

Hon. BRIAN MAST,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MAST: I write regarding H.R. 1422, the Enhanced Iran Sanctions Act of 2025. Provisions of this bill fall within the Judiciary Committee’s Rule X jurisdiction, and I appreciate that you consulted with us on those provisions. The Judiciary Com-

mittee agrees that it shall be discharged from further consideration of the bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

The Committee takes this action with the understanding that forgoing further consideration of this measure does not in any way alter the Committee’s jurisdiction or waive any future jurisdictional claim over these provisions or their subject matter. We also reserve the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees in the event of a conference with the Senate involving this measure or similar legislation.

I ask that you please insert this letter in the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 1422 on the House floor. I appreciate the cooperative manner in which our committees have worked on this matter, and I look forward to working collaboratively in the future on matters of shared jurisdiction. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

JIM JORDAN,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, June 23, 2025.

Hon. JIM JORDAN,
Committee on the Judiciary,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs and agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1422, the Enhanced Iran Sanctions Act of 2025, so that the measure may proceed expeditiously to the House Floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this measure or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointments of any appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference of this legislation.

I will submit the exchange of letters to be published in the Congressional Record. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together on matters of shared jurisdiction during this Congress.

Sincerely,

BRIAN J. MAST,
Chairman.

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

□ 1540

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1422.

Mr. Speaker, no one in this Chamber should be under any illusions about the nature of the Iranian regime. For decades, Iran has funded terrorist proxies, threatened our partners and allies, supplied training and arms that killed and maimed dozens of American forces in Iraq, and pursued weapons capabilities that destabilize the Middle East and endanger global security.

Congress has long acted in a bipartisan way to confront that threat. One of the most powerful tools available to the United States has been economic pressure, sanctions that deny the regime the revenue it uses to fund terrorism, repression, and regional aggression.

That is precisely what this legislation seeks to strengthen. The House Foreign Affairs Committee passed this bill out of committee almost 1 year ago. The purpose was straightforward: to tighten enforcement against Iran's oil trade and target the global financial networks that allow Tehran to continue selling its petroleum despite existing sanctions.

This bill provides the executive branch with additional tools to do exactly that, although it is unfortunate that some of the sanctions authorities have been watered down at the Trump administration's request.

This legislation expands secondary sanctions authorities to target foreign companies that knowingly purchase, transport, refine, insure, or finance Iranian oil and petroleum products. That includes shipping companies, port operators, insurance providers, and other logistical actors that help move Iranian crude around the world.

Crucially, it focuses attention on the network of foreign refineries and intermediaries, particularly in China, that have become the primary buyers of sanctioned Iranian oil, giving the executive branch clearer authority to penalize those actors and disrupt that trade.

Taken together, these measures are intended to close loopholes in the existing sanctions architecture and make it far more difficult for Tehran to generate billions of dollars in oil revenue.

Unfortunately, the Trump administration spent years talking about maximum pressure. The reality looked very different. In practice, the administration often failed to fully enforce the sanctions authorities already available to it and at times actively undermined them. Last year, President Trump pardoned the founder of Binance, who pleaded guilty to a sanctions evasions crime pertaining to Iran in 2023.

The administration also failed to meaningfully disrupt the Iran-China energy trade or marshal the sustained diplomatic effort required to build international pressure against Tehran's illicit oil exports.

As a result, Iran continued generating billions in energy revenue while the administration's policy drifted. Now we find ourselves in a very different, and far more dangerous, situation.

The United States started a war with Iran that Congress did not authorize and the American people overwhelmingly think makes us less safe. Thirteen Americans have died in the conflict, and over 140 have been injured. The administration started this military campaign without a strategy or an endgame. The regime has not collapsed, but gas prices are up 30 percent. Americans are paying \$2 billion each and every day because of this administration's impulsive and illegal war.

Consider the trade-off: The money Trump has already spent on this war could have paid for a full year of ACA premium tax credit extensions for Americans here at home.

What about that price at the pump?

In a ham-handed attempt to fix a problem of its own making, the Trump administration has suspended sanctions against Russian oil used to finance Putin's war machine, while at the same time it dawdles on a peace solution in Ukraine. It is possible that the President will soon declare victory and move on. However, the question of Iran will remain, as will its threats of retaliation and destabilization. It may very well emerge from this conflict damaged, unstable, and led by a leadership even more extreme and vengeful than before.

That is why tools like the ones in this bill remain important. Sanctions can help contain the regime's ability to rebuild its terrorist infrastructure, reconstitute its military capabilities, and restart its nuclear ambitions.

Strong enforcement of these sanctions can also ensure that Iran cannot, once again, finance stabilizing activities across the region through oil revenues flowing into Tehran.

At the same time, the future of Iran is highly uncertain. Only time will tell whether the conduct of the administration will, in the long run, cause more harm than good. However, our responsibility is to ensure that the Iranian regime does not have the resources to rebuild the machinery of repression at home or violence abroad.

This legislation strengthens the tools needed to maintain that pressure for those with the sense to use it.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentlewoman from California seek unanimous consent to reclaim her time?

Mrs. KIM. Mr. Speaker, yes, I reclaim my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman reclaims her time and is recognized.

There was no objection.

Mrs. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAWLER), who is the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa and is the author of this important bill.

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, for decades, Presidents and Members of Congress of both parties have talked about peace in the Middle East. Stability in the Middle East and freedoms for all who live there is something that all of us should be able to agree on, and almost everyone also agrees that Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon and that Iran is the greatest state sponsor of terrorism.

Unfortunately, 53 of my colleagues from across the aisle last week chose not to support that belief by voting against a resolution that declared Iran the greatest state sponsor of terrorism.

For the first year of this term, President Trump has prioritized putting in place maximum pressure on the Ira-

nian regime and prioritizing negotiations to stop their uranium enrichment, to stop their nuclear ambitions, to stop their ballistic missiles program, and to stop their financing of terrorism. Unfortunately, the regime refused to negotiate in good faith.

Two weeks ago, President Trump executed Operation Epic Fury to take their ballistic missiles program off the table for them. This offensive also destroyed their air defense system and their naval capabilities.

Look where our partners and allies in the region are. They are opposed to a nuclear Iran. They are opposed to an Iranian regime that possesses dangerous intercontinental ballistic missiles, and they support the United States maximum pressure campaign.

That is because they know this military engagement did not happen in silo. This was not a war of choice. The fact is Iran has been at war with the United States for 47 years. The regime has chanted "death to America" for 47 years. The regime is responsible for the deaths of thousands of Americans, thousands of Israelis, and thousands of Muslims.

Mr. Speaker, you see them lashing out indiscriminately and striking civilian targets in Arab states.

Why?

It is because they are the face of evil, and they are the greatest force for terrorism around the globe.

This comes after the regime funded Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7. It comes after they funded constant Houthi attacks and funded Hezbollah.

Where did they get this financing from?

They get it from the illicit oil trade, the oil trade in which China is the biggest purchaser of Iranian petroleum.

I was proud last Congress working alongside then-Senator and now-Secretary of State Marco Rubio in passing the SHIP Act so that we could actually enforce sanctions against the Iranian regime and their illicit oil trade. It comes on the heels of a regime in Iran that has sought to destroy the United States and Israel and our partners.

Maximum pressure means strength in the face of these egregious and tragic offenses. My bill, the Enhanced Iran Sanctions Act, builds on the Trump administration's existing sanctions regime to give them more tools to cripple the illicit oil trade and to cripple this unholy alliance between China, Russia, Iran, Venezuela, Cuba, North Korea, and other bad actors.

□ 1550

Now, it does so by authorizing the administration to place secondary sanctions on enablers of Iran's illicit oil trade that have financed their proxies, that have financed their missiles program, and that have financed their nuclear ambitions and their uranium enrichment. This includes essentially any company that has engaged in a transaction involving the processing, refining, export, or transfer of Iranian oil.

This includes foreign banks, financial institutions, insurance companies, flagging registries, and more.

If someone is knowingly providing financial support to the Iranian regime's largest influx of cash, we should know about it, and we should stop it. That is what this bill does.

This bill expands the authorities to cripple this oil network, to stop the financing of ballistic missiles, to stop the financing of uranium enrichment, to stop the financing of Iran's nuclear ambitions, and to stop their financing of terrorism. This is a multifaceted approach.

We saw under the Biden administration an administration that not only did not enforce sanctions against Iran, but it also allowed the illicit oil trade to explode to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars.

Those funds are what funded October 7. That is what funded the death and destruction that we have seen across the Middle East.

We saw under the Obama Administration an attempt to appease the Iranian regime, to drop off pallets of cash in the hopes that somehow that would stop them from pursuing nuclear weapons, that that would somehow stop them from possessing enriched uranium, and that that would somehow stop them from financing terrorism.

Peace through strength means understanding that sometimes you must take action and that sometimes you must use military force. After the regime refused to negotiate in good faith and was mass-producing ballistic missiles at such a rate that it would be almost impossible in the future to stop their nuclear ambitions, President Trump took action.

This was not an illegal war. This was not a war of choice. Republicans and Democrats have said ad nauseam that Iran cannot get a nuclear weapon. Sadly, it seems some of my colleagues would be okay if they did so, as long as Donald Trump wasn't President. Some of my colleagues hate Donald Trump so much that they care more about the fact that he is President than they do about the fact that he is stopping the Iranian regime's 47-year reign of terror.

I have listened to some of my colleagues over the last 2 weeks in amazement. They have completely reversed their positions on so many issues, including 53 who just last Congress voted to say that Iran is the greatest state sponsor of terrorism but now no longer believe that. You have candidates running for Congress who are saying that the United States is the terrorist regime. It is insanity.

The fact is that we have a responsibility to stop this regime cold, to cut the head off of the snake. That is precisely what we are doing through military action and through a sanctions regime that has crippled Iran's capabilities.

There is more work to be done, and that is why we are passing this legisla-

tion. I thank Chairman MAST and Ranking Member MEEKS for supporting this through committee. I thank President Trump and the administration for supporting this bill today.

Mr. Speaker, it is a testament that, even if there are disagreements, we can find bipartisan support. We can find a path forward. We should be giving this administration and future administrations every tool necessary to ensure that Iran never gets a nuclear weapon.

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

Mr. Speaker, this bill will be critical for closing loopholes in our existing sanctions infrastructure against Iran, strengthening the President's authorities to limit Tehran's oil trade. I compliment the bill's sponsor, my colleague from New York.

Last year, after an air attack, President Trump announced that we had obliterated Iran's nuclear capacity, but here we are again. Apparently, the job last year wasn't sufficient.

Trump's war of choice with Iran this year has made this bill even more necessary because while the President may want to move on from this war he started at some point in time, war is a two-way street. Just because he may want to claim victory, as he already has, and even though Iran's capabilities will be reduced, Iran may very well pose an even greater threat now that diplomacy has been taken off the table by this President.

To limit the long-term threat posed by Iran, it is critical that we further limit Tehran's ability to circumvent existing sanctions, tighten the screws on its ability to sell oil, and ensure that it does not gain access to the resources it needs to reconstitute either its nuclear program or its weapons capabilities.

This President has put us at considerable risk by starting this war and enabling a regime that is perhaps even more hard-line than the one that preceded it. While we can't close Pandora's box, we can and should take all steps necessary to prevent Tehran from building back the arsenal it now would surely want to use against us.

This bill accomplishes some of that task, and I support it. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTHRIE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1422, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to impose sanctions with respect to persons engaged in significant transactions related or incidental to the processing, refining, ex-

port, transfer or sale of oil, condensates, or other petroleum or petrochemical products in whole or in part from the Islamic Republic of Iran."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SAVE OUR SEQUOIAS ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2709) to improve the health and resiliency of giant sequoias, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2709

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Save Our Sequoias Act".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Definitions.
- Sec. 3. Shared stewardship agreement for giant sequoias.
- Sec. 4. Giant sequoia lands coalition.
- Sec. 5. Giant sequoia health and resiliency assessment.
- Sec. 6. Giant sequoia emergency response.
- Sec. 7. Giant sequoia reforestation and rehabilitation strategy.
- Sec. 8. Giant sequoia strike teams.
- Sec. 9. Giant sequoia collaborative restoration grants.
- Sec. 10. Giant sequoia insect monitoring and technology.
- Sec. 11. Stewardship contracting for giant sequoias.
- Sec. 12. Giant sequoia emergency protection program and fund.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ASSESSMENT.—The term "Assessment" means the Giant Sequoia Health and Resiliency Assessment required by section 5.

(2) COALITION.—The term "Coalition" means the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition codified under section 4(a).

(3) COLLABORATIVE PROCESS.—The term "collaborative process" means a collaborative process as described in section 4003(b)(2) of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (16 U.S.C. 7303(b)(2)).

(4) COVERED NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS.—The term "covered National Forest System lands" means the proclaimed National Forest System lands reserved or withdrawn from the public domain of the United States covering the Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument, Sierra National Forest, and Tahoe National Forest.

(5) COVERED PUBLIC LANDS.—The term "covered public lands" means—

(A) the Case Mountain Extensive Recreation Management Area in California managed by the Bureau of Land Management; and

(B) Kings Canyon National Park, Sequoia National Park, and Yosemite National Park in California managed by the National Park Service.

(6) GIANT SEQUOIA.—The term "giant sequoia" means a tree of the species *Sequoiadendron giganteum*.

(7) PROTECTION PROJECT.—The term "Protection Project" means a Giant Sequoia Protection Project carried out under section 6.

(8) REFORESTATION.—The term "reforestation" means the act of renewing tree cover,

taking into consideration species composition and resilience, by establishing young trees through—

- (A) natural regeneration;
- (B) natural regeneration with site preparation and vegetation competition control; or
- (C) planting or direct seeding.

(9) **REHABILITATION.**—The term “rehabilitation” means any action taken during the 5-year period beginning on the last day of a wildland fire to repair or improve fire-impacted lands which are unlikely to recover to management-approved conditions.

(10) **RELEVANT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.**—The term “relevant Congressional Committees” means—

(A) the Committees on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

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

(11) **RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL.**—The term “responsible official” means an employee of the Department of the Interior or Forest Service who has the authority to make and implement a decision on a proposed action.

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

(13) **SECRETARY CONCERNED.**—The term “Secretary concerned” means—

(A) the Secretary of Agriculture, with respect to covered National Forest System lands, or their designee; and

(B) the Secretary of the Interior, with respect to covered public lands, or their designee.

(14) **STRATEGY.**—The term “Strategy” means the Giant Sequoia Reforestation and Rehabilitation Strategy established under section 7.

(15) **STRIKE TEAM.**—The term “Strike Team” means a Giant Sequoia Strike Team established under section 8.

(16) **TRIBE.**—The term “Tribe” means the Tule River Indian Tribe of the Tule River Reservation, California.

SEC. 3. SHARED STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENT FOR GIANT SEQUOIAS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 90 days after receiving a request from the Governor of the State of California or the Tribe, the Secretary shall enter into or expand an existing shared stewardship agreement or enter into a similar agreement with the Secretary of Agriculture, the Governor of the State of California, and the Tribe to jointly carry out the short-term and long-term management and conservation of giant sequoias.

(b) **PARTICIPATION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—If the Secretary has not received a request from the Governor of the State of California or the Tribe under subsection (a) before the date that is 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall enter into the agreement under subsection (a) and jointly implement such agreement with the Secretary of Agriculture.

(2) **FUTURE PARTICIPATION.**—If the Secretary receives a request from the Governor of the State of California or the Tribe any time after entering into the agreement with the Secretary of Agriculture under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall accept the Governor of the State of California or the Tribe as a party to such agreement.

SEC. 4. GIANT SEQUOIA LANDS COALITION.

(a) **CODIFICATION.**—The Coalition is the entity established under the charter titled “Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition Charter” (or successor charter) signed during the period beginning June 2, 2022 and ending August 2, 2022 by each of the following:

(1) The National Park Service, representing Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

(2) The National Park Service, representing Yosemite National Park.

(3) The Forest Service, representing Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument.

(4) The Forest Service, representing Sierra National Forest.

(5) The Forest Service, representing Tahoe National Forest.

(6) The Bureau of Land Management, representing Case Mountain Extensive Recreation Management Area.

(7) The Tribe, representing the Tule River Indian Reservation.

(8) The State of California, representing Calaveras Big Trees State Park.

(9) The State of California, representing Mountain Home Demonstration State Forest.

(10) The University of California, Berkeley, representing Whitaker’s Research Forest.

(11) The County of Tulare, California, representing Balch Park.

(b) **DUTIES.**—In addition to the duties specified in the charter referenced in subsection (a), the Coalition shall—

(1) produce the Assessment under section 5;

(2) observe implementation, and provide policy recommendations to the Secretary concerned, with respect to—

(A) Protection Projects carried out under section 6; and

(B) the Strategy established under section 7;

(3) facilitate collaboration and coordination on Protection Projects, particularly projects that cross jurisdictional boundaries;

(4) facilitate information sharing, including best available science as described in section 5(d) and mapping resources; and

(5) support the development and dissemination of educational materials and programs that inform the public about the threats to the health and resiliency of giant sequoia groves and actions being taken to reduce the risk to such groves from high-severity wildfire, insects, and drought.

(c) **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, TECHNICAL SERVICES, AND STAFF SUPPORT.**—The Secretary shall make personnel of the Department of the Interior available to the Coalition for administrative support, technical services, development and dissemination of educational materials, and staff support that the Secretary determines necessary to carry out this section.

(d) **PUBLIC MEETING REQUIREMENT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the Coalition shall provide for public observation at no less than one meeting annually.

(2) **CLOSED SESSIONS.**—The Coalition may close portions of a meeting as provided in paragraph (1) to the public only when discussion will involve—

(A) sensitive law enforcement, security, or emergency response matters, the public disclosure of which would compromise public safety; or

(B) confidential commercial information, private property information, or landowner information.

SEC. 5. GIANT SEQUOIA HEALTH AND RESILIENCY ASSESSMENT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Coalition shall submit to the relevant Congressional Committees a Giant Sequoia Health and Resiliency Assessment that, based on the best available science—

(1) identifies—

(A) each giant sequoia grove that has experienced a—

(i) stand-replacing disturbance; or

(ii) disturbance but continues to have living giant sequoias within the grove, including identifying the tree mortality and regeneration of giant sequoias within such grove;

(B) each giant sequoia grove that is at high risk of experiencing a stand-replacing disturbance;

(C) lands—

(i) contiguous or adjacent to giant sequoia groves that are at risk of experiencing high-severity wildfires that could adversely impact such giant sequoia groves; or

(ii) in which the placement of fuel breaks could reduce the risk of high-severity wildfires that could adversely impact giant sequoia groves; and

(D) each giant sequoia grove that has experienced a disturbance and is unlikely to naturally regenerate and is in need of reforestation;

(2) analyzes the resiliency of each giant sequoia grove to threats, such as—

(A) high-severity wildfire;

(B) insects, including beetle kill; and

(C) drought;

(3) examines how historical, Tribal, or current approaches to wildland fire suppression and forest management activities across various jurisdictions have impacted the health and resiliency of giant sequoia groves with respect to—

(A) high-severity wildfires;

(B) insects, including beetle kill; and

(C) drought; and

(4) includes program and policy recommendations that address—

(A) options to enhance communication, coordination, and collaboration, particularly for cross-boundary projects, to improve the health and resiliency of giant sequoias; and

(B) research gaps that should be addressed to improve the best available science on the giant sequoias.

(b) **ANNUAL UPDATES.**—Not later than 1 year after the submission of the Assessment under subsection (a), and annually thereafter, the Coalition shall submit an updated Assessment to the relevant Congressional Committees that—

(1) includes any new data, information, or best available science that has changed or become available since the previous Assessment was submitted;

(2) with respect to Protection Projects—

(A) includes information on the number of Protection Projects initiated the previous year and the estimated timeline for completing those projects;

(B) includes information on the number of Protection Projects planned in the upcoming year and the estimated timeline for completing those projects;

(C) provides status updates and long-term monitoring reports on giant sequoia groves after the completion of Protection Projects; and

(D) if the Secretary concerned failed to reduce hazardous fuels in at least 3 giant sequoia groves in the previous year, a written explanation that includes—

(i) a detailed explanation of what impediments resulted in failing to reduce hazardous fuels in at least 3 giant sequoia groves; and

(ii) a detailed explanation of what actions the Secretary concerned is taking to ensure that hazardous fuels are reduced in at least 3 giant sequoia groves the following year; and

(3) with respect to reforestation and rehabilitation of giant sequoias—

(A) contains updates on the implementation of the Strategy under section 7, including grove-level data on reforestation and rehabilitation activities; and

(B) provides status updates and monitoring reports on giant sequoia groves that have experienced reforestation or rehabilitation as part of the Strategy under section 7.

(c) **DASHBOARD.**—

(1) **REQUIREMENT TO MAINTAIN.**—The Coalition shall create and maintain a website that—

(A) publishes the Assessment, annual updates to the Assessment, and other educational materials developed by the Coalition;

(B) contains searchable information about individual giant sequoia groves, including the—

(i) resiliency of such groves to threats described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a);

(ii) Protection Projects that have been proposed, initiated, or completed in such groves; and

(iii) reforestation and rehabilitation activities that have been proposed, initiated, or completed in such groves; and

(C) maintains a searchable database to track—

(i) the status of Federal environmental reviews and authorizations for specific Protection Projects and reforestation and rehabilitation activities; and

(ii) the projected cost of Protection Projects and reforestation and rehabilitation activities.

(2) **SEARCHABLE DATABASE.**—The Coalition shall include information on the status of Protection Projects in the searchable database created under paragraph (1)(C), including—

(A) a comprehensive permitting timetable;

(B) the status of the compliance of each lead agency, cooperating agency, and participating agency with the permitting timetable;

(C) any modifications of the permitting timetable required under subparagraph (A), including an explanation as to why the permitting timetable was modified; and

(D) information about project-related public meetings, public hearings, and public comment periods, which shall be presented in English and the predominant language of the community or communities most affected by the project, as that information becomes available.

(d) **BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE.**—In utilizing the best available science for the Assessment, the Coalition shall include—

(1) data and peer-reviewed research from academic institutions with a demonstrated history of studying giant sequoias and with experience analyzing distinct management strategies to improve giant sequoia resiliency;

(2) traditional ecological knowledge from the Tribe related to improving the health and resiliency of giant sequoia groves; and

(3) data from Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments or agencies, and other interested stakeholders with a demonstrated history of studying giant sequoias and with experience analyzing distinct management strategies to improve giant sequoia resiliency.

(e) **TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS.**—In carrying out this section, the Secretary may enter into memorandums of understanding or agreements with other Federal agencies or departments, State or local governments, Tribal governments, private entities, or academic institutions to improve, with respect to the Assessment, the use and integration of—

(1) advanced remote sensing and geospatial technologies;

(2) statistical modeling and analysis; or

(3) any other technology the Secretary determines will benefit the quality of information used in the Assessment.

(f) **PLANNING.**—The Coalition shall make information from this Assessment available to the Secretary concerned and State of California to integrate into the—

(1) State of California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan;

(2) Forest Service's 10-year Wildfire Crisis Strategy (or successor plan); and

(3) Department of the Interior's Wildfire Risk Five-Year Monitoring, Maintenance, and Treatment Plan (or successor plan).

(g) **RELATION TO THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT OF 1969.**—The development and submission of the Assessment under subsection (a) shall not be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

SEC. 6. GIANT SEQUOIA EMERGENCY RESPONSE.

(a) **EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO PROTECT GIANT SEQUOIAS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—

(A) **EMERGENCY DETERMINATION.**—Congress determines that—

(i) an emergency exists on covered public lands and covered National Forest System lands that makes it necessary to carry out Protection Projects that take needed actions to respond to the threat of wildfires, insects, and drought to giant sequoias; and

(ii) Protection Projects are necessary to control the immediate impacts of the emergency described in clause (i) and are needed to mitigate harm to life, property, or important natural or cultural resources on covered public lands and covered National Forest System lands.

(B) **APPLICATION.**—The emergency determination established under subparagraph (A) shall apply to all covered public lands and covered National Forest System lands.

(C) **EXPIRATION.**—The emergency determination established under subparagraph (A) shall expire on the date that is 7 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) **IMPLEMENTATION.**—While the emergency determination established under paragraph (1) is in effect, the following shall apply:

(A) The Secretary concerned, acting through a responsible official, shall carry out Protection Projects on covered public lands and covered National Forest System lands in accordance with this section, all applicable land management plans, and the laws (including regulations) applicable to the Secretary concerned.

(B) A responsible official shall carry out Protection Projects in accordance with the following, as applicable:

(i) Section 220.4(b) of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect July 21, 2022), with respect to covered National Forest System lands.

(ii) Section 46.150 of title 43, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect October 12, 2022), with respect to covered public lands.

(iii) Section 402.05 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect July 21, 2022), with respect to covered National Forest System lands and covered public lands.

(iv) Section 800.12 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect July 21, 2022), with respect to covered National Forest System lands and covered public lands.

(C) The rules established under subsections (d) and (e) of section 40807 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C. 6592c(d), (e)) shall apply with respect to Protection Projects by substituting “Protection Projects” for “authorized emergency action under this section” each place it appears in such subsections.

(D) Protection Projects shall be subject to the requirements of section 106 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6516).

(3) **PROTECTION PROJECTS.**—The responsible official shall carry out the following forest management activities as Protection Projects under the emergency determination under this section:

(A) Conducting hazardous fuels management, including mechanical thinning, mastication, and prescribed burning.

(B) Removing hazard trees, dead trees, or dying trees, as determined by the responsible official.

(C) Removing trees to address overstocking or crowding in a forest stand, consistent with the appropriate basal area of the forest stand and the best available science, as determined by the responsible official.

(D) Activities to address insects, disease, invasive species, and vegetative encroachment of a giant sequoia grove.

(E) Any combination of activities described in this paragraph.

(4) **REQUIREMENTS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Protection Projects carried out under paragraph (3) and reforestation and rehabilitation activities carried out under this Act that are described by subparagraph (C) are categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(B) **AVAILABILITY.**—The Secretary concerned shall use the categorical exclusion established under subparagraph (A) in accordance with this section.

(C) **REQUIREMENTS.**—A Protection Project or reforestation or rehabilitation activity is described by this subparagraph if such Protection Project or reforestation or rehabilitation activity—

(i) covers an area of no more than—

(I) 2,000 acres within giant sequoia groves; and

(II) 3,000 acres on lands identified under section 5(a)(1)(C); and

(ii) occurs on Federal land or non-Federal land with the consent of the non-Federal landowner.

(D) **EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES.**—The extraordinary circumstances procedures under provisions (e) through (g) of section 1b.3 of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations, shall apply to a Protection Project or reforestation or rehabilitation activity that is categorically excluded under subparagraph (A).

(E) **USE OF OTHER AUTHORITIES.**—To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary concerned shall use the authorities provided under this section in combination with other authorities to carry out Protection Projects, including—

(i) good neighbor agreements entered into under section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a); and

(ii) stewardship contracting projects entered into under section 604 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c).

(F) **SAVINGS CLAUSE.**—With respect to joint Protection Projects and reforestation and rehabilitation activities involving the Tribe, nothing in this section shall be construed to add any additional regulatory requirements onto the Tribe.

(b) **IMPLEMENTATION.**—To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary concerned shall reduce hazardous fuels in no fewer than 3 giant sequoia groves each year.

(c) **PUBLIC NOTICE.**—The Secretary concerned shall provide notice of each Protection Project on a publicly available website maintained by the Secretary concerned.

SEC. 7. GIANT SEQUOIA REFORESTATION AND REHABILITATION STRATEGY.

(a) **REFORESTATION AND REHABILITATION STRATEGY.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in consultation with the Coalition, shall develop and implement a strategy, to be known as the Giant Sequoia Reforestation and Rehabilitation Strategy, to enhance the reforestation and rehabilitation of giant sequoia groves that—

(A) identifies giant sequoia groves in need of reforestation or rehabilitation, giving highest priority to groves identified under section 5(a)(1)(A)(i);

(B) creates a priority list of reforestation and rehabilitation activities;

(C) identifies and addresses—

(i) barriers to reforestation or rehabilitation, including—

(I) regulatory and funding barriers;

(II) seedling shortages or related nursery infrastructure capacity constraints;

(III) labor and workforce shortages;

(IV) technology and science gaps; and

(V) site preparation challenges;

(ii) potential public-private partnership opportunities to complete high-priority reforestation or rehabilitation projects;

(iii) a timeline for addressing the backlog of reforestation for giant sequoias in the 10-year period after the agreement is entered into under section 3; and

(iv) strategies to ensure genetic diversity across giant sequoia groves; and

(D) includes program and policy recommendations needed to improve the efficiency or effectiveness of the Strategy.

(2) ASSESSMENT.—The Secretary may incorporate the Strategy into the Assessment under section 5.

(b) PRIORITY REFORESTATION PROJECTS AMENDMENT.—Section 3(e)(4)(C)(ii)(I) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1601(e)(4)(C)(ii)(I)) is amended—

(1) in item (bb), by striking “and”;

(2) in item (cc), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(dd) shall include reforestation and rehabilitation activities conducted under section 7 of the Save Our Sequoias Act.”.

SEC. 8. GIANT SEQUOIA STRIKE TEAMS.

(a) GIANT SEQUOIA STRIKE TEAMS.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary concerned shall each establish a Giant Sequoia Strike Team to assist the Secretary concerned with the implementation of—

(A) primarily, section 6; and

(B) secondarily, section 7.

(2) DUTIES.—Each Strike Team shall—

(A) assist the Secretary concerned with any reviews, including analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), consultations under division A of subtitle III of title 54, United States Code (commonly referred to as the National Historic Preservation Act), and consultations under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.);

(B) implement any necessary site preparation work in advance of or as part of a Protection Project or reforestation or rehabilitation activity;

(C) implement Protection Projects under section 6; and

(D) implement reforestation or rehabilitation activities under section 7.

(3) MEMBERS.—The Secretary concerned may appoint no more than 10 individuals each to serve on a Strike Team comprised of—

(A) employees of the Department of the Interior;

(B) employees of the Forest Service;

(C) private contractors from any nonprofit organization, State government, Tribal Government, local government, academic institution, or private organization; and

(D) volunteers from any nonprofit organization, State government, Tribal Government, local government, academic institution, or private organization.

SEC. 9. GIANT SEQUOIA COLLABORATIVE RESTORATION GRANTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the parties to the agreement under section 3, shall establish a program or expand an existing program to award grants to eligible entities to advance, facilitate, or improve giant sequoia health and resiliency.

(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The Secretary may award grants under this section to any nonprofit organization, Tribal Government, local government, academic institution, or private organization to help advance, facilitate, or improve giant sequoia health and resiliency.

(c) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to eligible entities that—

(1) primarily, are likely to have the greatest impact on giant sequoia health and resiliency; and

(2) secondarily—

(A) are small businesses or Tribal entities, particularly in rural areas; and

(B) create or support jobs, particularly in rural areas.

(d) USE OF GRANT FUNDS.—Funds from grants awarded under this section shall be used to—

(1) create, expand, or develop markets for hazardous fuels removed under section 6, including markets for biomass and biochar;

(2) facilitate hazardous fuel removal under section 6, including by reducing the cost of transporting hazardous fuels removed as part of a Protection Project;

(3) expand, enhance, develop, or create facilities or land that can store or process hazardous fuels removed under section 6;

(4) establish, develop, expand, enhance, or improve nursery capacity or infrastructure necessary to facilitate the Strategy established under section 7; or

(5) support Tribal management and conservation of giant sequoias, including funding for Tribal historic preservation officers.

SEC. 10. GIANT SEQUOIA INSECT MONITORING AND TECHNOLOGY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned shall—

(1) develop and implement a strategy for monitoring insects in giant sequoia groves with a high-risk or previous history of insect infestations; and

(2) seek to enter into public-private partnerships to deploy technology to assist in the short-term and long-term monitoring of giant sequoia groves with current or potential insect infestations.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned shall submit a report to the relevant Congressional Committees that contains—

(1) the strategy required under subsection (a)(1);

(2) an update on the effectiveness of the monitoring program in preventing or addressing insect infestations in giant sequoia groves; and

(3) program and policy recommendations to further address—

(A) research gaps regarding giant sequoia resiliency to insects; and

(B) opportunities to improve the resiliency of giant sequoias to insects.

SEC. 11. STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTING FOR GIANT SEQUOIAS.

(a) NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.—Section 604 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c) is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (a)(2) to read as follows:

“(2) DIRECTOR.—The term ‘Director’ means the Director of the Bureau of Land Management with respect to Bureau of Land Management lands and the Director of the National Park Service with respect to lands within Kings Canyon National Park, Sequoia National Park, and Yosemite National Park.”; and

(2) in subsection (b), by striking “national forests and the public lands” and inserting “national forests, public lands, and lands

within Kings Canyon National Park, Sequoia National Park, and Yosemite National Park”.

(b) GIANT SEQUOIA STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTS.—Section 604(c) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(8) Promoting the health and resiliency of giant sequoias.”.

(c) STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTING IN CERTAIN NATIONAL PARKS.—Stewardship contracting projects occurring in Kings Canyon National Park, Sequoia National Park, and Yosemite National Park shall be carried out in accordance with the laws (including regulations) applicable to the National Park Service, including section 100753 of title 54, United States Code.

SEC. 12. GIANT SEQUOIA EMERGENCY PROTECTION PROGRAM AND FUND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 1011 of title 54, United States Code, is amended by inserting at the end the following:

“§ 101123. Giant Sequoia Emergency Protection Program and Fund

“(a) GIANT SEQUOIA EMERGENCY PROTECTION PROGRAM.—The National Park Foundation, in coordination with the National Forest Foundation and the Foundation for America’s Public Lands, shall design and implement a comprehensive program to assist and promote philanthropic programs of support that benefit—

“(1) primarily, the management and conservation of giant sequoias on covered public lands and covered National Forest System lands to promote resiliency to wildfires, insects, and drought; and

“(2) secondarily, the reforestation of giant sequoias on covered public lands and covered National Forest System lands impacted by wildfire.

“(b) GIANT SEQUOIA EMERGENCY PROTECTION FUND.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The National Park Foundation, in coordination with the National Forest Foundation and the Foundation for America’s Public Lands, shall establish a joint special account to be known as the Giant Sequoia Emergency Protection Fund (referred to in this section as ‘the Fund’), to be administered in support of the program established under subsection (a).

“(2) FUNDS FOR GIANT SEQUOIA EMERGENCY PROTECTION.—The Fund shall consist of any gifts, devises, or bequests that are provided to the National Park Foundation, National Forest Foundation, or Foundation for America’s Public Lands for the purpose described in paragraph (1).

“(3) USE OF FUNDS.—Funds shall be available to the National Park Foundation, National Forest Foundation, and Foundation for America’s Public Lands without further appropriation, subject to the provisions in paragraph (4), for projects and activities approved by the Director of the National Park Service, Chief of the Forest Service, or Director of the Bureau of Land Management as appropriate, or their designees, to—

“(A) primarily, support the management and conservation of giant sequoias on covered public lands and covered National Forest System lands to promote resiliency to wildfires, insects, and drought; and

“(B) secondarily, support the reforestation of giant sequoias on covered public lands and covered National Forest System lands impacted by wildfire.

“(4) TRIBAL SUPPORT.—Of the funds provided to the National Park Foundation, National Forest Foundation, and Foundation for America’s Public Lands under paragraph (3), not less than 15 percent of such funds shall be used to support Tribal management and conservation of giant sequoias including

funding for Tribal historic preservation officers.

“(c) SUMMARY.—Beginning 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the National Park Foundation, National Forest Foundation, and Foundation for America’s Public Lands shall include with their annual reports a summary of the status of the program and Fund created under this section that includes—

“(1) a statement of the amounts deposited in the Fund during the fiscal year;

“(2) the amount of the balance remaining in the Fund at the end of the fiscal year; and

“(3) a description of the program and projects funded during the fiscal year.

“(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms ‘covered public lands’ and ‘covered National Forest System lands’ have the meaning given such terms in section 2 of the Save Our Sequoias Act.

“(e) TERMINATION OF EFFECTIVENESS.—The authority provided by this section shall terminate 7 years after the date of enactment of the Save Our Sequoias Act.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 1011 of title 54, United States Code, is amended by inserting at the end the following:

“101123. Giant Sequoia Emergency Protection Program and Fund.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) 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. 2709, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1600

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2709, the bipartisan Save Our Sequoias Act, led by Representatives Fong and Peters of California.

More than 120 years ago, President Teddy Roosevelt camped at the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias in what is today known as Yosemite National Park, and he famously recorded in his diary: “The majestic trunks, beautiful in color and in symmetry, rose around us like the pillars of a mightier cathedral than was ever conceived even by the fervor of the Middle Ages.”

Mr. Speaker, today, the majestic cathedral that inspired one of the Nation’s greatest conservation Presidents is facing an existential threat. In just 2 years, 2020 and 2021, we lost 20 percent of the world’s mature giant sequoias, which grow only in a specific area of California in the Sierra Nevadas in a combined size roughly the area of Washington, D.C., in about 70 distinct groves. That is the only place on Earth

where they grow naturally. Even though there is one planted out on The Mall here in Washington, it hasn’t fared quite as well as those in California.

Saying this is unprecedented is an understatement. The last known death by fire of a giant sequoia before this century dates back to 1297 AD.

Throughout their ancient lives, known to span over three millennia, giant sequoias standing in California today have lived through the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, the birth of Christ, and the founding of our great Nation. These trees withstood thousands of years of fires, earthquakes, floods, and anything that Mother Nature could throw their way, but in the next 25 years, these iconic trees could be extinct in the wild because, quite simply, we have been loving them to death.

For the 1,000-year period from 800 to 1800, giant sequoias experienced an average of 30 fires per century. These low-severity fires cleared out undergrowth and shade-tolerant species, such as white fir, allowing the semi-serotinous sequoia cones to open and begin the regeneration process, but decades of fire suppression and a lack of forest management dropped the number of fires in these groves by a factor of tenfold, down to just three fires per century, with some groves untouched by fire for over a century.

In combination with historic drought conditions, this created a perfect storm of hazardous ladder fuels that carry fire up into the crown of the giant sequoias, creating virtually unstoppable infernos.

In the words of Dr. Christy Brigham, a scientist at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks: “Bureaucracy is slow. Wildfire is fast.”

We are going to need to get a lot faster if we want to save these trees. At its normal pace, it would take the Forest Service 52 years to treat just its 19 highest priority groves. That is time we simply do not have.

That is where the bipartisan Save Our Sequoias Act comes in today. This legislation gives Federal, State, Tribal, local, and private land managers the tools they need to expedite the restoration work necessary to protect giant sequoias.

The Save Our Sequoias Act expedites environmental reviews, formalizes interagency coordination through the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition, and declares a congressional emergency to increase the pace and scale of forest management efforts.

I will briefly clarify the intent of Congress regarding this legislation as it relates to the Wilderness Act. Over the course of several months of bipartisan negotiations involving the Natural Resources Committee, the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Forest Service, and various stakeholders, several improvements were made to the legislation.

During these negotiations, there was clear, universal, and unambiguous

agreement that the Wilderness Act did not preclude the National Park Service from fulfilling its mission under the Organic Act of 1916 to replant giant sequoias in groves that had been essentially clear-cut by wildfire.

Because there was a clear consensus and prior statutory evidence demonstrating the compatibility of the Wilderness Act with these activities, which are fully outlined in the committee’s report, the final legislative text did not include any amendments to the Wilderness Act, which would have been unnecessary.

This bill, again, is a culmination of years of bipartisan work, and I thank the many co-leads of this legislation for their dedication and commitment to putting aside partisan politics and doing what is best for this iconic species.

I also recognize and thank many of the supporters who are instrumental in the crafting of this legislation, including the Tule River Tribe, Tulare County, Save the Redwoods League, CAL FIRE, Sierra Forest Products, Clay Jordan, Teresa Benson, and Garrett Dickman, as well as Drs. Stephen Sillett, Robert Van Pelt, Kristen Shive, and Christy Brigham.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this important bipartisan piece of legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,

Washington, DC, March 9, 2026.

Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,

Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 2709, the “Save Our Sequoias Act.” Thank you for collaborating with the Committee on Agriculture on the matters within our jurisdiction.

The Committee on Agriculture will forego any further consideration of this bill. However, by foregoing consideration at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over any subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. The Committee on Agriculture also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees, should it become necessary, and ask that you support such a request.

We would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 2709 and request a copy of our letters on this matter be published in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD during Floor consideration.

Sincerely,

GLENN “GT” THOMPSON,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,

Washington, DC, March 9, 2026.

Hon. GLENN THOMPSON,

Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: I write regarding H.R. 2709, the “Save Our Sequoias Act,” which was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on March 5, 2026.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture and appreciate your willingness to forgo further consideration of the bill. I acknowledge that the

Committee on Agriculture will not formally consider H.R. 2709 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained therein.

I am pleased to support your request to name members of the Committee on Agriculture to any conference committee to consider such provisions. I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD during floor consideration of the bill and will include such letters in the committee report on H.R. 2709. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,

BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H.R. 2709, the Save Our Sequoias Act, offered by my colleague, Representative FONG from California.

The Save Our Sequoias Act establishes a framework to support the ongoing restoration and recovery of giant sequoias, an iconic keystone species found only in the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada mountains in California.

Sequoias are the largest trees on Earth. Some of them grow to be more than 300 feet tall. They are some of the most fire-resilient species, even evolving to need frequent, low-intensity fires to reproduce and survive, but climate change, drought, and historic fire suppression have led to catastrophic wildfires that are burning hotter and more intensely than ever before. These climate change-driven wildfires are posing an existential threat to giant sequoias, which are struggling to survive.

Over the past decade, nearly 20 percent of the entire population of giant sequoias has died. H.R. 2709 is a targeted bill that would codify existing emergency response efforts by the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and partners to promote reforestation and reduce future wildfire risk in giant sequoia groves.

These efforts are working. The Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition reported that 2024 was a landmark year for conservation work, with restoration and fuels-reduction efforts successfully completed across nearly half of the total sequoia growth acreage.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my Republican colleagues sincerely for their willingness to negotiate in good faith with us on this bill. In our shared commitment to protecting these iconic trees, these national treasures, we came together to address many of our outstanding concerns, ensuring that new authorities provided by the bill prioritize ecological integrity and science-backed decisionmaking without undermining core environmental standards.

The bill was strengthened by that very legislative process. It is a clear, old-fashioned example of how bipartisan negotiations can produce balanced, strategic approaches to forest, wildfire, and public land management. It is an approach I urge the Natural Resources Committee to continue to take.

Looking at the bigger picture here, Mr. Speaker, this bill is just one piece of the puzzle. Our Federal land management agencies, including the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service, require funding and staffing to fulfill their congressionally mandated missions. These agencies cannot protect the giant sequoia without Congress giving them the necessary tools to carry out that work. New authorities alone will not save the sequoia.

The survival of one of America's most extraordinary national icons is at stake, and I urge Congress to take seriously its responsibility to support and steward our national parks, forests, and public lands from coast to coast.

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

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

I echo the remarks from my colleague, Ms. ELFRETH, about how this is the way we should do legislation. We took a field trip out to the sequoias, a bipartisan field trip. There is tons of research from academic institutions on what is happening in these sequoia groves. We looked at it. We worked together to create bipartisan legislation.

Honestly, we are way past time that we should have passed this bill, but I am so thankful that we have been able to get it on the floor today. I look forward to it passing out of the House and then moving on over to the Senate.

This bill sparks something else. We passed a very bipartisan bill in the House called the Fix Our Forests Act based off of the work we did on the Save Our Sequoias Act. That bill is over in the Senate right now waiting for Senate action. As we are moving into spring and will soon be moving into the summer months when wildfires are raging, that is another bill that we can't delay in getting passed.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO), a cosponsor of the bill who was on that field trip that we took when we saw the devastation in the sequoia grove.

□ 1610

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, that was a really good tour. I think it was about 4 years ago. As a dairy farmer, it is always interesting for us to learn the different parts of growing plants and animals and the impact they have.

Mr. WESTERMAN's expertise on this piece of legislation specifically really shown through on those days when we were driving around and spending a lot of time with then-Speaker McCarthy and a bipartisan group of Members. We learned a lot.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge support for the Save Our Sequoias Act. For generations, the giant sequoias have stood as one of the most recognizable symbols of California. These trees

are remarkably resilient to fire and were once considered virtually indestructible.

Today, they face a crisis of our own making. More than a century of fire suppression and forest mismanagement has allowed dangerous levels of fuel to build up around these groves, turning natural fires into catastrophic, high-severity wildfires.

Since 2015, these fires have caused unprecedented destruction. In just the last few years, nearly one-fifth of all giant sequoias have been lost. Without urgent action, we risk losing countless more. That is why I am proud to cosponsor the Save Our Sequoias Act.

This bill provides land managers with the emergency tools and resources they need to protect the remaining groves by strengthening coordination among Federal, State, Tribal, and local partners. It establishes a comprehensive assessment to prioritize wildfire risk reduction. It also streamlines reviews so critical forest management can move forward quickly, while maintaining strong scientific standards.

The Save Our Sequoias Act also encourages private partnerships to support restoration and establishes a comprehensive reforestation strategy to regenerate groves lost to recent wildfires.

Mr. Speaker, protecting the giant sequoias is about safeguarding a natural legacy for future generations. I urge all my colleagues to support this legislation, and I thank the chairman for his efforts on this legislation over the last few years.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, when I was in forestry school, the thing we learned about giant sequoias is they had this really thick layer of bark. At the time we didn't even really think it was possible to kill a giant sequoia with wildfire. That is because, as I mentioned earlier, it was 1297 when the last known death by fire occurred. Trees are like history books because we can count the rings and go back in time. We can see what happened.

These trees have withstood fires for millennia. In the blink of an eye, we could lose them all because the fire doesn't just burn down around the trunks anymore. With these other trees growing up into the crowns, it creates a ladder to take the fuel up into the crowns of the trees.

Henry Ford once said that failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently. The Save Our Sequoias Act is our opportunity to begin managing giant sequoia growth more intelligently.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Save Our Sequoias Act. I urge the Senate to swiftly take up this bill, and send it to the President's desk.

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. 2709, 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.

VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK BOUNDARY MODIFICATION ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4467) to modify the boundary of the Vicksburg National Military Park in the State of Mississippi, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4467

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 "Vicksburg National Military Park Boundary Modification Act".

SEC. 2. VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK CONVEYANCE AND BOUNDARY MODIFICATION.

(a) CONVEYANCE.—

(1) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Secretary of the Interior (referred to in this Act as the "Secretary") shall convey to the State of Mississippi (referred to in this Act as the "State"), by quitclaim deed and without consideration, the Federal land described in paragraph (2) to be used in accordance with subsection (c).*

(2) *DESCRIPTION OF FEDERAL LAND.*—*The Federal land referred to in paragraph (1) is the following:*

(A) *The parcel of approximately 1.69 acres of Federal land within the boundary of Vicksburg National Military Park (referred to in this Act as the "Park"), as depicted on the map entitled "Vicksburg National Military Park Proposed Disposal of a Portion of NPS Tract 01-103", numbered 306/194,908, and dated September 2024.*

(B) *The parcel of approximately 5.74 acres of Federal land within the boundary of the Park, as depicted on the map entitled "Vicksburg National Military Park Proposed Disposal of a Portion of NPS Tracts Near Union Ave", numbered 306/194,907, and dated September 2024.*

(b) *BOUNDARY MODIFICATION.*—*On conveyance of the Federal land described in subsection (a), the Secretary shall modify the boundary of the Park to exclude the Federal land conveyed.*

(c) *USE OF LANDS.*—*The Federal land conveyed to the State under this Act—*

(1) *shall be used to facilitate public access to the Park and to enhance the visitor experience at the Park in a manner consistent with the interpretative mission of the Park, as determined by the Secretary;*

(2) *shall not be used in a manner that adversely impacts Park resources or the Park visitor experience, as determined by the Secretary; and*

(3) *shall be subject to any use restriction the Secretary determines to be appropriate.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) 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 to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4467, 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. 4467, the Vicksburg National Military Park Boundary Modification Act, which was introduced by Representative THOMPSON and is cosponsored by the entire Mississippi congressional delegation.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation conveys two small parcels of National Park Service land to the State of Mississippi to build a new state-of-the-art welcome center for Vicksburg National Military Park.

Vicksburg National Military Park marks the site of the Battle of Vicksburg, one of the true watershed moments of the Civil War. Over the course of 6 weeks in 1863, Union forces under General Ulysses S. Grant encircled the Confederate stronghold of Vicksburg National Military Park, ultimately forcing its surrender on July 4, 1863. The victory gave the Union full control of the Mississippi River and split the Confederacy in half. It is widely recognized by historians as a turning point in the war.

Today, Vicksburg National Military Park contains more than 1,300 monuments and markers; 20 miles of reconstructed trenches; the USS *Cairo* gunboat; and the Vicksburg National Cemetery.

The park serves as a major destination in Mississippi for education, reflection, and historical tourism. In fact, in 2022, more than 400,000 visitors came to Vicksburg, generating approximately \$36 million in economic activity and supporting hundreds of local jobs.

While that economic and educational impact is substantial, it is currently constrained by aging visitor facilities that limit public engagement. To address this, the State of Mississippi is leading an effort to build a new state-of-the-art welcome center, which would be financed with non-Federal dollars.

H.R. 4467 helps support this effort by transferring two small parcels of National Park Service land, totaling approximately 7 acres, to the State so they can build this new facility for visitors.

This legislation is an important and practical step that will enhance the visitor experience without unnecessary expense to the Federal taxpayer. This is a model for future public-private partnerships and a win-win for both the Federal Government and the State of Mississippi.

By improving visitor experiences and enhancing a site integral to American history, this bill also directly advances the goals of President Trump's executive order on celebrating America's 250th birthday.

I thank the entire Mississippi congressional delegation for their work advancing this practical bill that will improve public access and education during America's 250th anniversary year at this hallowed site.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4467, a bill offered by my colleague, Representative THOMPSON of Mississippi.

H.R. 4467 authorizes the National Park Service to convey two small pieces of property within Vicksburg National Military Park to the State of Mississippi. This partnership will enhance the visitor experience at the park by facilitating the construction of a new visitor center, built and eventually staffed by the State of Mississippi.

Strategically partnering with the State will empower our Federal park rangers to provide visitors with a deeper understanding of such a sacred and important place.

The siege of Vicksburg was a crucial moment in the Civil War. Positioned on the Mississippi River in central Mississippi, Confederate President Jefferson Davis called the city of Vicksburg the nailhead that holds the South's two halves together. As President Lincoln saw it, Vicksburg was the key to winning the war.

Eager to capture this important city, Union General Ulysses S. Grant ordered the siege of Vicksburg in 1863. By July 4 of that year, the Union Army finally had full control over the Mississippi River. Coupled with the defeat of the Confederate troops at Gettysburg, the siege of Vicksburg was a turning point in the war, paving the way for Union victory.

As we approach the 250th anniversary of the founding of our Nation, we must reflect on all parts of our history—the good, the bad, and the ugly; the lessons we need to learn; and the mistakes we cannot afford to repeat.

□ 1620

Sites like Vicksburg Military National Park are where Americans can learn about our past, and sanitizing these hallowed sites is a disservice to our Nation's history. H.R. 4467 is an opportunity. My hope is that the new visitor center will convey the full weight of the painful battle and the context of the Civil War to share the uncomfortable truth rather than perpetuate, unfortunately, this administration's erasure of history.

I thank Representative THOMPSON and the entire Mississippi delegation for introducing this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 4467 and to

join me in the preservation of our Nation's past.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, this is a commonsense bill that helps a local community improve a pivotal Civil War-era military park while reducing the Federal estate.

As we celebrate our Nation's 250th anniversary, this bill will allow Mississippians to take the lead in telling the story of Vicksburg for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of 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. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4467, 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.

SMALL CEMETERY CONVEYANCE ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4284) to amend the Small Tract Act of 1983 to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to convey, without consideration, certain cemeteries, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H. R. 4284

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 "Small Cemetery Conveyance Act".

SEC. 2. CONVEYANCES OF CERTAIN CEMETERIES.

(a) AMENDMENTS TO SMALL TRACT ACT OF 1983.—The Small Tract Act of 1983 (16 U.S.C. 521c et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 2(a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking "and" at the end;

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

"(3) to convey, without consideration, certain parcels used, or previously used, as cemeteries in accordance with section 9.,"

(2) in section 3(6), by striking "a cemetery (including a parcel of not more than 1 acre adjacent to the parcel used as a cemetery), a landfill, or" and inserting "a landfill or"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 9. CONVEYANCES OF CERTAIN CEMETERIES.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may convey, without consideration, to a qualified

person any parcel of land used, or previously used, as a cemetery (including a parcel of not more than 1 acre adjacent to the parcel used as a cemetery).

"(b) CONDITION OF CONVEYANCE.—A conveyance under subsection (a) shall be subject to the condition that the property conveyed under that subsection may only be used for the purpose of operating a cemetery.

"(c) REVERSION.—If the Secretary determines that at any time a parcel conveyed under subsection (a) is used for a purpose other than the purpose required under subsection (b), all right, title, and interest in and to the parcel conveyed pursuant to such subsection, including any improvements thereon, shall, at the discretion of the Secretary, revert to the United States.

"(d) WAIVER OF CONVEYANCE COSTS.—

"(1) EXCEPTION AVAILABLE.—The Secretary may waive the application of any requirement under section 4 to a conveyance to a qualified person under this section if the Secretary determines that such a waiver is appropriate based upon the demonstrated need of the qualified person.

"(2) CLARIFICATION OF AUTHORITY.—The waiver authority under paragraph (1) shall be in addition to the authority available to the Secretary pursuant to the last sentence of section 4.

"(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) CEMETERY.—The term 'cemetery' means a natural or prepared physical location (regardless of location below, on, or above the surface of the earth) into which human remains are deposited—

"(A)(i) as part of—

"(I) a death rite or ceremony of a culture; or

"(II) a common burying ground of a community; or

"(ii) that is determined to be a cemetery by an Indian Tribe; and

"(B) that, as determined by the Secretary, is a parcel of land less than or equal to 40 acres.

"(2) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term 'Indian Tribe' means the governing body of any individually identified and federally recognized Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, community, affiliated Tribal group, or component reservation included on the most recent list published pursuant to section 104(a) of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 5131(a)).

"(3) QUALIFIED LAND GRANT-MERCED.—The term 'qualified land grant-merced' means a community land grant issued under the laws or customs of the Government of Spain or Mexico that—

"(A) is recognized under New Mexico Statutes Chapter 49, Articles 1 and 4 (or a successor statute); and

"(B)(i) has a record of historical or traditional use on Federal land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary; or

"(ii) has a patented exterior boundary that is or was previously located on or adjacent to Federal land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary.

"(4) QUALIFIED PERSON.—The term 'qualified person' means, with respect to a cemetery, a State or local government, Indian Tribe, or qualified land grant-merced that has a bona fide interest or historic claim to the cemetery."

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section or an amendment made by this section may be construed to modify, waive, or otherwise affect the application of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) 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 to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4284, the bill 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 Representative LEGER FERNANDEZ' bill, H.R. 4284, the Small Cemetery Conveyance Act.

Mr. Speaker, all across the West, there are small, historic cemeteries in rural communities that sit on or adjacent to Federal land.

These are places where families and communities have laid their loved ones to rest for generations long before jurisdictional boundaries were drawn on a map. Due to the Federal Government's large footprint all around these large cemeteries, basic access for upkeep, ceremonies, or simply paying respects to loved ones can turn into a bureaucratic mess.

H.R. 4284 is a commonsense fix. It gives the U.S. Forest Service, which administers a significant portion of the lands near or under these cemeteries, clear authority under the Small Tract Act to transfer small cemetery parcels to the people who are best positioned to care for them, the local and Tribal Governments with close connections to those laid to rest.

Rather than going through the lengthy process of requiring an act of Congress to convey each individual parcel on a one-off basis, this bill establishes a legal framework for communities to gain possession of historic cemeteries.

The legislation respects local stewardship and reduces the Federal footprint, all while ensuring safeguards are in place to make sure that these hallowed sites are used as cemeteries in perpetuity.

This bill puts locals in charge of the cemeteries they have maintained for centuries, allowing the Forest Service to focus on their core mission: restoring health and resiliency to our Nation's overgrown, fire-prone Federal lands.

This bill removes red tape from the burdensome process of transferring land in these special cases so that local communities can more easily honor their loved ones and be stewards of the places where their ancestors are at peace.

I support this bipartisan piece of legislation. I thank Representative LEGER FERNANDEZ and Representative HURD for their work together on this bill.

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

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
 COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
 Washington, DC, January 13, 2025.
 Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,
 Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
 Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 4284, the "Small Cemetery Conveyance Act." Thank you for collaborating with the Committee on Agriculture on the matters within our jurisdiction.

The Committee on Agriculture will forego any further consideration of this bill. However, by foregoing consideration at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over any subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. The Committee on Agriculture also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees, should it become necessary, and ask that you support such a request.

We would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 4284 and request a copy of our letters on this matter be published in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration.

Sincerely,
 GLENN "GT" THOMPSON,
 Chairman.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
 COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
 Washington, DC, January 13, 2026.
 Hon. GLENN THOMPSON,
 Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
 Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: I write regarding H.R. 4284, the "Small Cemetery Conveyance Act," which was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on December 17, 2025.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture and appreciate your willingness to forgo further consideration of the bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Agriculture will not formally consider H.R. 4284 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained therein.

I am pleased to support your request to name members of the Committee on Agriculture to any conference committee to consider such provisions. I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill and will include such letters in the committee report on H.R. 4284. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,
 BRUCE WESTERMAN,
 Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
 COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
 Washington, DC, June 30, 2025.
 Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,
 Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
 Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 1665, the "DIGITAL Applications Act." Thank you for collaborating with the Committee on Agriculture on the matters within our jurisdiction.

The Committee on Agriculture will forego any further consideration of this bill. However, by foregoing consideration at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over any subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. The Committee on Agriculture also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees, should it become necessary, and ask that you support such a request.

We would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 1665 and request a copy of our letters on this matter be published in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration.

Sincerely,
 GLENN "GT" THOMPSON,
 Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
 COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
 Washington, DC, July 1, 2025.
 Hon. GLENN "GT" THOMPSON,
 Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
 Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write regarding our mutual understanding of H.R. 1665, the DIGITAL Applications Act, which was ordered report by the Committee on Natural Resources.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture and appreciate your willingness to forgo further consideration of the bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Agriculture will not formally consider H.R. 1665 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained therein.

I am pleased to support your request to name members of the Committee on Agriculture to any conference committee to consider such provisions. I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,
 BRUCE WESTERMAN,
 Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

Ms. ELFRETH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4284, the Small Cemetery Conveyance Act, introduced by the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ).

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4284 amends the Small Tract Act of 1983 to allow States, local governments, federally recognized Tribes, and land-grant mercedes to request small conveyances of cemetery land. As the chairman said, this is an important update that sets out to fix a deeply personal problem for many rural communities, particularly in the West.

Land grant and Tribal communities have existed long before the United States of America or the Forest Service were around. Today, many of these communities find their cemeteries located on Forest Service land, and this bill will enhance access and improve stewardship of these important tracts.

While H.R. 4284 waives the need to pay for or exchange land for these sites, this does not signify a giveaway or sell-off of these public lands. This is, rather, about dignity and respect.

Importantly, this bill requires all conveyed lands to be managed as a cemetery in perpetuity, and this ensures an ongoing public purpose and allows communities to take care of their ancestors for generations to come.

I thank the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HURD) for their efforts to return these important burial sites to their constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this is a simple, bipartisan measure that serves the spiritual needs of rural, Tribal, and local communities across the West. It lightens the administrative burden on the Forest Service and reduces the Federal footprint. Above all, it returns the protection and care of local cemeteries to those with the closest connections to them.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues 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. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4284, 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.

DEPLOYING INFRASTRUCTURE WITH GREATER INTERNET TRANSACTIONS AND LEGACY APPLICATIONS ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1665) to require the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture to establish online portals to accept, process, and dispose 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. 1665

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 "Deploying Infrastructure with Greater Internet Transactions and Legacy Applications Act" or the "DIGITAL Applications Act".

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF ONLINE PORTALS TO ACCEPT, PROCESS, AND DISPOSE OF CERTAIN FORM 299s.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF ONLINE PORTALS.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretaries concerned shall each establish, with respect to the relevant covered department, an online portal for the acceptance, processing, and disposal of a Form 299 for communications use authorizations.

(2) NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 3 business days after the date on which an online portal has been established by a Secretary pursuant to paragraph (1), that Secretary shall notify the Assistant Secretary of the establishment of such portal.

(b) AVAILABILITY OF ONLINE PORTALS.—The Assistant Secretary shall publish on the website of the National Telecommunications

and Information Administration a link to each online portal established pursuant to subsection (a)(1).

(C) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term “Assistant Secretary” means the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

(2) 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)).

(3) COMMUNICATIONS USE.—The term “communications use” means the placement and operation of a communications facility.

(4) 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.

(5) COVERED LAND.—The term “covered land” means—

(A) public lands; and

(B) National Forest System land.

(6) 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.

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

(8) PUBLIC LANDS.—The term “public lands” has the meaning given that term in section 103 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702).

(9) RELEVANT COVERED DEPARTMENT.—The term “relevant covered department” means—

(A) with respect to the Secretary of the Interior, the Department of the Interior; and

(B) with respect to the Secretary of Agriculture, the Department of Agriculture.

(10) SECRETARIES CONCERNED.—The term “Secretaries concerned” means—

(A) the Secretary of the Interior; and

(B) the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) 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 to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1665, 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 today in strong support of the DIGITAL Applications Act, a bipartisan bill introduced by Representative CAMMACK.

This important legislation directs the Department of the Interior and De-

partment of Agriculture to establish online portals to accept, process, and track applications to deploy broadband infrastructure on Federal lands.

The United States faces a persistent digital divide, with tens of millions of Americans still lacking access to basic broadband services. Many of these Americans live in rural areas or on Tribal lands near federally managed land.

For these communities, broadband isn't a luxury. It is essential infrastructure. It means students can do their homework at home; small businesses can reach customers and compete in the modern economy; farmers and ranchers can use precision tools; and families can access telehealth, emergency services, and basic information. Without reliable internet, entire communities are left at a disadvantage.

In too many cases, the problem isn't a lack of interest from providers but, rather, the Federal permitting process.

Today, broadband providers face a system that is slow, opaque, and unpredictable. Applications can sit for months with little to no communication. Providers have no idea where their applications stand, whether more information is needed, or when a decision might come.

That uncertainty makes it harder to plan projects and invest resources, ultimately delaying the delivery of internet access to the communities that need it most.

This permitting morass is exactly how the Biden-Harris administration wasted \$42 billion in taxpayer funds to deploy broadband infrastructure across the country and failed to connect a single household.

Throwing money at this problem is not the answer. We need commonsense permitting reform. Representative CAMMACK's legislation offers a real, straightforward solution to a discrete problem.

By creating online portals for broadband application, agencies can bring transparency and accountability to the permitting process. Applicants will be able to track their submissions, see where they are in the review process, and understand exactly what is needed to move forward.

This kind of transparency is a simple fix that can bring more predictability to developers and help speed deployment. H.R. 1665 will help build essential infrastructure faster, smarter, and with more transparency.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bipartisan legislation, and I commend Representative CAMMACK for her leadership on this effort.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY,

Washington, DC, January 30, 2026.

Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN WESTERMAN: I write concerning H.R. 2294, To reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009, which the Committee on Natural Resources ordered reported on July 23, 2025.

H.R. 2294 contains provisions within the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology's Rule X jurisdiction. As a result of your having consulted with the Committee and to expedite this bill for floor consideration, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will forego action on the bill. This is being done based on our mutual understanding that doing so will not diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology with respect to the appointment of conferees, or to any future jurisdictional claim of the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation.

I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding and would request that you include a copy of this letter and your response in the Committee Report and in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of this bill. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

BRIAN BABIN, D.D.S.,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, January 30, 2026.

Hon. BRIAN BABIN,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BABIN: I write regarding H.R. 2294, To reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009, which was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on July 23, 2025.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and appreciate your willingness to forgo further consideration of the bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will not formally consider H.R. 2294 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained therein.

I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill and will include such letters in the committee report on H.R. 2294. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,

BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

□ 1630

Ms. ELFRETH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1665, the DIGITAL Applications Act, sponsored by my colleagues, Representative CAMMACK and Representative MATSUI, which would promote accessibility and transparency in the permitting process for communications use authorizations.

While many agencies are working to modernize their systems, application processes too often continue to rely on

snail mail or email, which can lead to delays and challenges in submitting and processing.

H.R. 1665 complements ongoing agency efforts to modernize the Federal permitting system by requiring the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service to establish online portals for processing applications to locate or modify communications or broadband equipment and infrastructure on Federal lands.

This is a bipartisan solution to address delays in the permitting process appropriately, while also supporting expanded digital connectivity across our public lands in the year 2026.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Representatives for bringing this commonsense solution. It is about time we bring internet access to every corner of our country. I also thank the bill's sponsor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of H.R. 1665, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. CAMMACK), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his support.

Today, I rise in support of H.R. 1665, the DIGITAL Applications Act, legislation that I introduced to modernize how our Federal agencies process applications for communications infrastructure on Federal lands.

At its core, this bill is about something very simple: bringing outdated government processes into the digital age.

Today, companies seeking to deploy broadband infrastructure on Federal lands must often submit a form 299 to the Department of the Interior or the Department of Agriculture to obtain authorization for communication facilities, such as towers or related equipment. These authorizations can take the form of easements, right-of-ways, leases, or licenses.

Despite the importance of these projects, particularly when connectivity is needed more than ever, and public safety is a priority, the application process itself is far too paper-based, fragmented, and slow. In 2026, that just doesn't make sense.

The DIGITAL Applications Act fixes that by requiring the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture to establish online portals to accept, process, and manage these forms. These portals will allow applicants to submit materials electronically, track the progress, and improve coordination across agencies. It is a straightforward reform, but one with real impact.

For communities across the country, especially rural communities like the ones I represent in Florida, delays in permitting infrastructure can mean delays in access, weaker wireless coverage, and slower deployment of technologies that are critical to support economic growth and public safety.

When we talk about closing the digital divide, it is not just about funding

new networks. It is also about removing unnecessary red tape and bureaucratic barriers that slow down this progress.

This bill does exactly that. By digitizing the application process, we can reduce these administrative delays, increase transparency, and provide applicants with a clear path forward when seeking a path to build infrastructure on these lands.

The DIGITAL Applications Act also reflects strong bipartisan cooperation, and I thank my colleague, Representative MATSUI, for working so hard with me on this to advance a commonsense solution.

At a time when Americans expect government to operate with the same efficiency they experience in the private sector, modernizing outdated systems should be something that we can all agree on.

This bill improves government operations, supports broadband, and helps ensure that our communications infrastructure keeps pace with the needs of the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support the DIGITAL Applications Act.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I once again thank Representative CAMMACK for her leadership on the DIGITAL Applications Act. This legislation will help get rural America online to support students, small businesses, farmers, ranchers, and families. It will help constituents in my home State of Arkansas, as well as Americans across the country, who live in remote areas near Federal lands.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1665, 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. 1665.

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.

REAUTHORIZATION OF INTEGRATED COASTAL AND OCEAN OBSERVATION SYSTEM ACT OF 2009

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2294) to reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2294

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

SECTION 1. REAUTHORIZATION OF INTEGRATED COASTAL AND OCEAN OBSERVATION SYSTEM ACT OF 2009.

The Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 (33 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by striking “Council” each place it appears and inserting “Committee”;

(2) in section 12303 (33 U.S.C. 3602)—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in the heading, by striking “COUNCIL” and inserting “COMMITTEE”; and

(ii) by striking “National Ocean Research Leadership Council” and inserting “Ocean Policy Committee”; and

(B) in paragraph (6), by inserting “conduct operational oceanography measurements and” after “in order to”;

(3) in section 12304 (33 U.S.C. 3603)—

(A) by inserting “and ocean” after “weather” each place it appears; and

(B) in subsection (c)—

(i) in the heading of paragraph (1), by striking “COUNCIL” and inserting “COMMITTEE”; and

(ii) in paragraph (2)(B)—

(I) by redesignating clauses (vi) through (x) as clauses (vii) through (xi), respectively; and

(II) by inserting after clause (v) the following:

“(vi) develop requirements and processes for regional offices and federally funded projects of the agencies of the Interagency Ocean Observation Committee to collaborate with the regional coastal observing systems for data sharing at regional levels;”;

(4) in section 12311 (33 U.S.C. 3610)—

(A) in paragraph (4), by striking “and” at the end;

(B) in paragraph (5), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(6) \$47,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 2294, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2294, to reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009, sponsored by Representative EZELL from Mississippi.

The Integrated Ocean Observing System, or IOOS, is a public-private partnership of coastal observation systems that provide local decisionmakers with the latest science to prepare for and protect coastal communities from disasters, while also supporting numerous industries that operate in our marine waters.

The legislation before us would authorize the program through fiscal year 2030, ensuring continued support for fisheries, maritime industries, and coastal communities.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Representative EZELL for his leadership, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2294. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to support H.R. 2294, bipartisan legislation to reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act, or IOOS, a commonsense, science-based solution that brings together my colleagues on both sides of the aisle around our shared commitment to protecting our coastal communities.

I am proud to work with my colleague, Representative EZELL, as one of the bipartisan group of 25 cosponsors on this critical issue.

Timely ocean and coastal data is essential to keeping our coastal economies, like the one I represent, running and to protecting our communities.

H.R. 2294 reauthorizes the IOOS program that delivers that invaluable data and that helps us with everything from our emergency preparedness to our fisheries management programs in the States that we represent. IOOS helps to track changing ocean temperatures, measure wave activity, predict harmful algal blooms, monitor sea level rise, and improve storm surge forecasts that help emergency managers make life-saving evacuation decisions.

IOOS provides data to States, ports, the Coast Guard, FEMA, and any other business or agency that needs real-time access to ocean conditions.

With natural disasters causing an estimated \$12 billion in average annual damages, sustained investment in IOOS remains essential to ensure accurate weather and climate forecasts that protect our infrastructure, public safety, and economic resilience.

This bipartisan bill extends IOOS through 2030, strengthening partnerships with regional ocean observation systems and ensuring that critical ocean data continues to flow to Federal, State, and local decisionmakers who depend on it.

From the Gulf Coast to the golden coast of the Chesapeake Bay, when Republicans and Democrats work together on science-based solutions, we can protect both our natural resources and the communities that depend on them.

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

□ 1640

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. EZELL), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Mr. EZELL. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of my bill H.R. 2294, the Reauthorization of Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009.

This bill ensures the continued operation of the Integrated Ocean Observing System, which is a nationwide network of buoys, radars, underwater glid-

ers, and forecasting models that collect critical ocean and coastal data. These tools help provide real-time information on ocean conditions, weather patterns, coastal hazards, and marine ecosystems.

This information is essential for a wide range of Americans who rely on our oceans and coastlines every single day. It supports commercial fishermen, shipping and maritime operations, offshore energy development, hurricane forecasting, and coastal disaster preparedness. It also helps Federal, State, and local officials make informed decisions to protect both lives and livelihoods along our coasts.

For coastal States like mine, Mississippi, and many others across the country, accurate and timely ocean data is not a luxury. It is a necessity. When hurricanes threaten our shores, when fishermen head out to work, or when communities are preparing for coastal flooding, the data collected through the Integrated Ocean Observing System helps ensure they have the best information available to stay safe and make informed decisions.

My bill simply reauthorizes this important program and strengthens coordination between Federal agencies and regional observing systems so that the data being collected is more accessible and more reliable and more useful for the communities that depend on it.

This is a bipartisan commonsense measure that supports science, strengthens coastal resilience, and ensures we continue to have the tools necessary to understand and respond to changing ocean conditions.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues and Chairman WESTERMAN for helping get this bill on the floor. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

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

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FONG).

Mr. FONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, the Save Our Sequoias Act. I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for his leadership and collaboration.

I introduced this legislation with my California colleague Representative SCOTT PETERS to safeguard our remaining giant Sequoia groves, the most in my district, by cutting red tape and restoring resilience to our forests.

Giant sequoias, the world's largest trees, are only naturally found in 70 groves across 37,000 acres in California.

Unfortunately, over the last century, fire suppression practices and forest mismanagement have led to a dangerous buildup of fuels, which, in combination with increasingly intense wildfires, has caused the unparalleled destruction of these iconic trees.

In the last 5 years alone, there has been a nearly 20 percent loss of our giant sequoias. That is not to mention that at its current pace it would take

the U.S. Forest Service 52 years to treat just the 19 most at-risk giant sequoia groves.

Our giant sequoias are a true national treasure. We cannot afford to let burdensome regulations prevent us from safeguarding them.

My bipartisan bill would enhance interagency coordination between State, Federal, and Tribal partners, accelerate forest restoration efforts, and provide important science-based resources to land managers to protect these ancient trees from further destruction.

The world's only giant sequoia groves provide critical economic, scientific, and cultural benefits for our local Tribes, researchers, and our communities. Speeding up fuels reductions and wildfire mitigation practices in these remaining groves will boost the resilience of our forests and protect these giants for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the 29 Members from both sides of the aisle who cosponsored this bill, as well as the staff on the House Committee on Natural Resources for helping to pass this important bipartisan bill, which would ensure California's remaining sequoias endure for generations to come.

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

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

This bill provides communities with real-time data and information about the ocean and coastal areas and the Great Lakes. This helps them remain strong and resilient even in the face of natural disasters.

Once again, I thank Mr. EZELL for his diligent work and attention to this issue. It is incredibly important to coastal communities and incredibly important to those who rely on the data and scientific information that comes from our great waterways.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of H.R. 2294, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2294, 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.

SHIVWITS BAND OF PAIUTES JURISDICTIONAL CLARITY ACT

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3073) to confer jurisdiction on the State of Utah with respect to civil causes of action arising on or within the Indian lands of the Shivwits Band of Paiutes, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3073

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 “Shivwits Band of Paiutes Jurisdictional Clarity Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **INDIAN LANDS.**—The term “Indian lands” means lands of the Shivwits Band of Paiutes that are—

(A) held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Shivwits Band of Paiutes; or

(B) subject to a restriction against alienation imposed by the United States.

(2) **SHIVWITS BAND OF PAIUTES.**—The term “Shivwits Band of Paiutes” means—

(A) the Shivwits Band of Paiutes, a federally recognized Indian Tribe restored by Congress pursuant to the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah Restoration Act (Public Law 96-227; 94 Stat. 317);

(B) the recognized governing body of the Shivwits Band of Paiutes;

(C) any Shivwits Tribal enterprise, including any commercial activity, business, or entity managed, controlled, or operated by the Shivwits Band of Paiutes, and any subsidiaries thereto; and

(D) any corporation chartered by the Shivwits Band of Paiutes under section 17 of the Act of June 18, 1934 (commonly known as the “Indian Reorganization Act”) (48 Stat. 988, chapter 576; 25 U.S.C. 5124), and any subsidiaries thereto.

SEC. 3. STATE CIVIL JURISDICTION.

The State of Utah shall have jurisdiction over any civil cause of action—

(1) to which the Shivwits Band of Paiutes is a party; and

(2) that arises on or within the Indian lands.

SEC. 4. FEDERAL COURT JURISDICTION.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Any contract or agreement, including a lease, affecting or arising on the Indian lands, or to which the Shivwits Band of Paiutes is a party, shall be considered within the meaning of “commerce” as defined in section 1 of title 9, United States Code.

(b) **CAUSES OF ACTION.**—Any cause of action arising from any contract or agreement, including a lease, affecting or arising on the Indian lands, or to which the Shivwits Band of Paiutes is a party, shall be deemed to be a civil cause of action arising under the Constitution, laws, or treaties of the United States within the meaning of section 1331 of title 28, United States Code.

SEC. 5. SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY NOT ABROGATED.

Nothing in this Act abrogates—

(1) the sovereign immunity of the Shivwits Band of Paiutes from unconsented suit; or

(2) the authority of the Shivwits Band of Paiutes to waive that sovereign immunity.

SEC. 6. SHIVWITS BAND OF PAIUTES LEASING AUTHORITY.

Subsection (a) of the first section of the Act of August 9, 1955 (69 Stat. 539, chapter 615; 25 U.S.C. 415(a)), is amended, in the second sentence, by inserting “, land held in trust for the Shivwits Band of Paiutes” after “land held in trust for the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. KIM). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam 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. 3073, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, in 2022, a 10th Circuit Court of Appeals case studied the Shivwits Band of Paiutes accordingly due to the opportunity for economic development when the court ruled that Utah State courts lacked the jurisdiction to hear cases involving on-reservation conduct. If an issue were to arise between the Tribe and an outside investor, there would be no guarantee that a State court could intervene. As a result, outside groups have grown hesitant to work with the Shivwits Band.

H.R. 3073, the Shivwits Band of Paiutes Jurisdictional Clarity Act introduced by Ms. MALOY of Utah would clarify in statute that the Utah State courts hold jurisdiction over civil cases involving members of the Shivwits Band on their Tribal land. In addition, this legislation would follow congressional precedent by amending the Long-Term Leasing Act to allow the Shivwits Band to lease land held in trust for up to 99 years.

I commend Ms. MALOY for her work on behalf of her constituency. I support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 3073, offered by my friend from Utah Representative MALOY.

H.R. 3073 would confer civil jurisdiction to the State of Utah over actions arising on or within the lands of the Shivwits Band of Paiutes. Under this legislation, these civil causes of action could be heard in Utah State courts, providing both the Tribe and outside partners with a clear forum to resolve disputes.

The bill also amends the Long-Term Leasing Act to allow the Shivwits Band to lease their lands for up to 99 years. Similar amendments have been enacted for a number of other Tribes, and this bill provides the Shivwits Band with that same authority.

Madam Speaker, I urge support for the bill to help address challenges the Shivwits Band has faced in pursuing economic development opportunities, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Utah (Ms. MALOY), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Ms. MALOY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 3073, the Shivwits Band of Paiutes Jurisdictional Clarity Act.

This narrow bill gives a Tribal neighbor a fair opportunity to pursue economic development and build a stronger future for their people.

My office has worked closely with leaders from the Shivwits Band of Paiutes to understand the challenges they are facing. This legislation is the result of those conversations and reflects the solutions the Tribe believes will help them move forward while serving their members.

The Shivwits Band wants to pursue economic opportunities on their lands, but the recent decision from the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals that has already been mentioned placed new barriers in the way, complicating, maybe even threatening, their economic plans.

The court held that even when a Tribe clearly waives sovereign immunity in a contract and consents to State court jurisdiction, State courts may still lack authority to hear disputes unless a series of additional requirements are met.

□ 1650

These requirements are not easy to meet.

Those hurdles created uncertainty for the Shivwits Band in attracting potential business partners. Without clarity for business partners, opportunities for the Band would be lost. Leaders from the Shivwits Band have spoken clearly on the need for a better path forward.

This is what they said in their own words:

“The Shivwits Tribe and local community leaders have found a new way forward: collaboration instead of conflict, and cooperation instead of contention. This bill allows the Tribe to align interests with potential business partners that can help drive economic development on Reservations.”

H.R. 3073 provides that path forward. It clarifies that Utah State courts can resolve certain civil disputes involving the Shivwits Band when those disputes arise from agreements where the Band has clearly and voluntarily waived sovereign immunity.

At the same time, the bill fully preserves Tribal sovereignty. Nothing in this legislation forces the Tribe to waive immunity. The choice remains entirely theirs.

Madam Speaker, for those reasons, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3073.

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

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, in closing, I, again, commend my colleague from Utah. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, H.R. 3073 ensures that the Shivwits Band of Paiutes' sovereignty remains intact, while offering legal certainty in economic development with outside investors. Additionally, the Tribe would

be able to lease its land for up to 99 years, as Congress has previously done for many other Tribes, creating new economic opportunities for the Tribe, which are well-deserved.

Madam Speaker, I thank Ms. MALOY for her work. I urge the passage of H.R. 3073, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3073.

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.

MITIGATION ACTION AND WATERMEN SUPPORT ACT OF 2026

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4294) to direct the Secretary of Commerce to establish a pilot program with respect to the sale of blue catfish caught within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4294

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 "Mitigation Action and Watermen Support Act of 2026" or the "MAWS Act of 2026".

SEC. 2. BLUE CATFISH PILOT PROGRAM.

Section 307 of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Authorization Act of 1992 (15 U.S.C. 1511d) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (f); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (d) the following:

“(e) BLUE CATFISH PILOT PROGRAM.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, utilizing and coordinating with applicable programs and activities described in subsection (b)(3), shall carry out a pilot program to enter into cooperative agreements with covered entities for such covered entities to purchase, in accordance with paragraph (3)—

“(A) from watermen, blue catfish caught within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed by such watermen; and

“(B) from seafood processors, such blue catfish purchased by seafood processors from such watermen.

“(2) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to enter into a cooperative agreement under the pilot program, a covered entity shall submit to the Secretary an application in such form, at such time, and containing such information as the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(3) USE OF AMOUNTS.—A covered entity that enters into a cooperative agreement under the pilot program—

“(A) shall use any amounts awarded under such cooperative agreement to purchase blue catfish from watermen or seafood processors for at least the amount determined by the Secretary under paragraph (5); and

“(B) may use not more than 15 percent of such amounts to offset the cost to transport such blue catfish to manufacturing or processing facilities.

“(4) WATERMAN AND SEAFOOD PROCESSOR ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to sell a blue catfish

under the pilot program to a covered entity that enters into a cooperative agreement under the pilot program—

“(A) a waterman shall certify to such covered entity that the waterman caught the blue catfish within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed; and

“(B) a seafood processor shall certify to such covered entity that the seafood processor purchased the blue catfish from a waterman who caught the blue catfish within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

“(5) DETERMINATION OF MINIMUM PURCHASE AMOUNT.—With respect to blue catfish sold by watermen or seafood processors under the pilot program, the Secretary shall determine the minimum price per pound, taking into consideration—

“(A) market factors;

“(B) feedback from watermen, seafood processors, and covered entities that participate in the pilot program, if available; and

“(C) differentiation of price points for fillet and byproduct.

“(6) ABUNDANCE BASELINE.—

“(A) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Secretary shall seek to enter into a memorandum of understanding with eligible non-Federal partners—

“(i) to compile existing non-Federal data necessary for the Secretary—

“(I) to develop under subparagraph (B) an estimate of the abundance of blue catfish in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed; and

“(II) to provide the information described in subparagraphs (A) through (D) of paragraph (7) in the report required under that paragraph; and

“(ii) to adjust the collection by such eligible non-Federal partners of relevant data such that such data can be used as described in subclauses (I) and (II) of clause (i).

“(B) ABUNDANCE ESTIMATES.—Not later than September 30, 2027, and annually thereafter through fiscal year 2032, the Secretary shall develop, pursuant to the memorandum of understanding described in subparagraph (A), and make publicly available on the website of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration an estimate of the abundance of blue catfish in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

“(7) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date on which the pilot program terminates in accordance with paragraph (9), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report regarding the pilot program, including the following information:

“(A) A summary of available information regarding the size and spawning stock biomass of the blue catfish population in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed prior to and at the conclusion of the pilot program, using the most recent data available.

“(B) A summary of available data regarding the size distribution and diet of the blue catfish population in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed during and at the conclusion of the pilot program.

“(C) The number of blue catfish and the amount of blue catfish (measured in pounds) caught by watermen who participate in the pilot program during the pilot program.

“(D) The effects of the pilot program on species other than the blue catfish in and the environment of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, to the extent known.

“(E) The economic effect of the pilot program on watermen who participate in the pilot program, including—

“(i) the revenue generated by each such waterman by selling blue catfish under the pilot program; and

“(ii) catch data with respect to and revenue generated from other species fished by such watermen during the pilot program.

“(F) The market response to the pilot program, including—

“(i) the total amount awarded under the pilot program to covered entities that enter into cooperative agreements under the pilot program; and

“(ii) trends in the types of such covered entities.

“(G) With respect to the manufacturing or processing practices of each covered entity that enters into a cooperative agreement under the pilot program, information regarding whether each such covered entity—

“(i) uses internal or third-party manufacturers or processors;

“(ii) uses, for each type of food product produced by the covered entity, whole fish, fillet, or byproduct; and

“(iii) if the covered entity uses only part of the fish, sells the remainder to third parties.

“(H) How each covered entity that enters into a cooperative agreement under the pilot program transports blue catfish purchased by the covered entity, including—

“(i) whether the covered entity freezes such blue catfish;

“(ii) how often the covered entity picks up such blue catfish; and

“(iii) whether the covered entity uses a seafood transport company that is local to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

“(I) Policy recommendations regarding—

“(i) the continuation of the pilot program in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed; and

“(ii) the expansion of the pilot program to other watersheds, including—

“(I) best practices;

“(II) specific recommendations regarding invasive species of carp in the Mississippi rivershed;

“(III) with respect to other aquatic species and watersheds that may benefit from the pilot program; and

“(IV) other strategies with respect to the mitigation of aquatic invasive species for Congress to consider piloting.

“(J) Additional data necessary for Congress to shape related policy, including—

“(i) data—

“(I) the Secretary was unable to collect; or

“(II) is not collected by eligible non-Federal partners; and

“(ii) recommendations for congressional action to support the collection of relevant data sets.

“(8) BRIEFINGS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this subsection and quarterly thereafter until the date on which the pilot program terminates in accordance with paragraph (9), the Secretary shall provide to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate briefings on the status of the implementation of this subsection.

“(9) DURATION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program during the 2-year period that begins on the first day of the fiscal year immediately following the later of the fiscal year in which the Secretary—

“(i) first makes publicly available the first abundance estimate under paragraph (6); and

“(ii) issues guidance under subparagraph (B).

“(B) CRITERIA.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Secretary, in consultation with the Chesapeake Bay Program Invasive Catfish Workgroup and the heads of relevant Federal agencies with experience administering similar programs, shall issue guidance for the pilot program.

“(10) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

“(A) ANIMAL FEED.—The term ‘animal feed’—

“(i) means an article that is intended for use—

“(I) for food for an animal other than man; and

“(II) as a substantial source of nutrients in the diet of such an animal; and

“(ii) is not limited to a mixture intended to be the sole ration of such an animal.

“(B) AQUACULTURE FEED.—The term ‘aquaculture feed’—

“(i) means an article that is intended for use—

“(I) for food for an aquacultural species, including any species of finfish, mollusk, crustacean (or other aquatic invertebrate), amphibian, reptile, ornamental fish, or aquatic plant that is propagated and reared in a controlled or selected environment; and

“(II) as a substantial source of nutrients in the diet of such an aquacultural species; and

“(iii) is not limited to a mixture intended to be the sole ration of such an aquacultural species.

“(C) *BLUE CATFISH*.—The term ‘blue catfish’ means the species *Ictalurus furcatus*.

“(D) *CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED*.—The term ‘Chesapeake Bay Watershed’ means the region that covers—

“(i) the Chesapeake Bay;

“(ii) the portions of the States of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia that drain into the Chesapeake Bay; and

“(iii) the District of Columbia.

“(E) *COVERED ENTITY*.—The term ‘covered entity’ means a person engaged in the business of manufacturing or processing—

“(i) pet food;

“(ii) animal feed; or

“(iii) aquaculture feed.

“(F) *ELIGIBLE NON-FEDERAL PARTNER*.—The term ‘eligible non-Federal partner’ means—

“(i) Maryland;

“(ii) Virginia; and

“(iii) research institutions, including research institutions with expertise in—

“(I) blue catfish research in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed; or

“(II) acting in coordination with the Invasive Catfish Workgroup of the Chesapeake Bay Program.

“(G) *PILOT PROGRAM*.—The term ‘pilot program’ means the pilot program established under paragraph (1).

“(H) *SEAFOOD PROCESSOR*.—The term ‘seafood processor’ means a person engaged in the business of preparing or packaging fish or fish products (including fish harvested by the processor) for sale.

“(I) *SECRETARY*.—The term ‘Secretary’ means the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4294, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4294, the Mitigation Action and Watermen Support Act, also known as the MAWS Act of 2026, the legislation I was proud to cosponsor with Congresswoman ELFRETH.

Having grown up on the Chesapeake Bay, I understand firsthand how important it is to protect our marine wildlife and restore the bay’s ecosystem. In fact, I worked in the commercial fishing realm and recreational fishing

realm for a number of years there, and my son today is also a commercial fisherman, knows the bay well, and knows how problematic the blue catfish is to the Chesapeake Bay.

Unfortunately, the blue catfish has become an invasive species that poses a growing threat to the biodiversity of the Chesapeake Bay’s waters and the seafood industries that depend on a healthy bay. These fish are aggressive predators that consume many of the species that define the Chesapeake Bay, things like blue crabs, striped bass, and other native fish that are vital to the Chesapeake Bay’s ecological balance and to the watermen whose lives depend on them.

I hear daily from watermen across the spectrum saying how harmful the blue catfish are to the Chesapeake Bay. When I have had a chance to go out there and see the number of blue catfish in the bay watershed, it is astounding the biomass that is there. It is a wonder anything in the bay can survive based upon the volume of the blue catfish that are there.

This does have an impact on watermen up and down the bay, not just in Virginia, but also there in Maryland.

While positive steps we know have been taken to address this issue, more has to be done. The MAWS Act establishes a pilot program within the Chesapeake Bay office aimed at tackling the growing threat that these invasive blue catfish pose to the Chesapeake Bay and the fisheries that sustain our coastal communities. It is key to our economics to make sure we have crabs that people go to restaurants to enjoy and that we have striped bass that people go to restaurants to enjoy. If not, then these blue catfish will be the only thing left in the Chesapeake Bay.

By supporting increased harvesting of blue catfish and studying its impact on the bay’s biodiversity, this program will help protect valuable native species like blue crabs and striped bass and the watermen who depend on them.

The legislation also explores practical uses of these harvested fish, including in the pet and animal food industry. This will help ensure their removal while making sure that we have sustainable commercial fishing industries there in the Chesapeake Bay.

We know we want to do all we can to support the hardworking men and women who make their living on the bay.

This is a bipartisan, commonsense approach that supports our watermen while helping to restore the balance to one of America’s most important ecosystems. The Chesapeake Bay, by far, is the most diverse and productive water system on the face of the Earth. This imbalance is causing big problems in the bay. This will go a long way to make sure we create those opportunities for our watermen and also open up more economic opportunities for the commercial fishing industry.

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

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am grateful that H.R. 4294, the MAWS Act, is included in today’s suspension package, a piece of legislation I was so proud to work in partnership in crafting with the gentleman from Virginia.

The Chesapeake Bay, the largest estuary in the Nation that is responsible for \$100 billion in annual economic value, is facing a critical, albeit delicious threat, the invasive blue catfish. These blue catfish were introduced into tidal areas of the bay in the 1970s for recreational purposes under the assumption that they would stay in the freshwater and not venture into the brackish water of the larger bay. That assumption has turned out to be catastrophically wrong. Blue catfish are now not only in every tidal area of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, but they are the most abundant biomass in many of them, and the threat is real.

Blue catfish can live up to 20 years. They can weigh up to 100 pounds. They eat approximately 10 percent of their body weight every day and have an extremely fast metabolism. The imbalance my colleague from Virginia just spoke about in our ecosystem has created a situation where because they eat so much, their meals frequently consist of staples of our seafood industry and staples of Maryland and Virginia’s culture: baby blue crabs, rockfish, even oysters, causing significant economic damage to our seafood industry at large, which is a central part of our economies in the bay region.

Making matters worse, these blue catfish, because they are invasive, have no natural predators in the bay to control that population growth. Because of this, they now estimate there are tens of millions of these fish throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay region, and that is growing rapidly.

The good news, Madam Speaker, is that blue catfish are nutritious and delicious, and they are high in protein and omega-3s. According to a new report from bay scientists, these catfish do not retain PFAS like other fish.

The market for human consumption has grown significantly across the region, due to a concerted marketing campaign, processors who make bold investments, chefs who are willing to take a risk with blue catfish dishes popping up in restaurant menus, and fillets on sale at your local market.

However, that market has a few critical limitations that are inhibiting our ability to control this catastrophe. First, blue catfish are the only fish inspected by the USDA. All other fish are under the jurisdiction of the FDA, and this adds significant hurdles for seafood processors and watermen who want to sell blue catfish for human consumption.

I would be remiss, Madam Speaker, if I didn’t highlight that this very red

tape, this bureaucracy, is a limitation placed on the industry by the Congress itself.

Second, State health regulations indicate that blue catfish filet is safe for human consumption in fish no larger than 25 pounds. This means there are tens of millions of fish over 25 pounds or up to 85 pounds actually, that watermen struggle to sell because they cannot be processed for human consumption, and the market is not there.

Fortunately, they are completely safe for inclusion in the pet food industry.

Third, on the other end of the spectrum, there are millions of more than 1- to 2-pound blue catfish that are not big enough to filet and consequently aren't sold for processing for people. The smallest fish are among the most aggressive predators of the species that our industry relies on, stealthily eating eggs in otherwise hard-to-access habitats.

We have made significant critical progress like the USDA grant program which provides financial support to processors and food banks, but there remains the problem that only the very narrow window of 2- to 25-pound fish can be sold for human consumption.

We are left without a solution to the question: What are watermen supposed to do with every other size?

They can't just throw them back.

We can do our part, everybody here, and everybody watching at home, including my mother, can do their part in ordering the blue catfish when we see it on a menu. Again, it is delicious and nutritious. This is not a problem we are capable of eating our way out of.

□ 1700

That is why I introduced the bipartisan MAWS Act, alongside House Natural Resources Vice Chairman WITTMAN, to invest funds to address invasive blue catfish and strengthen our local seafood economy, while also providing a new source of protein to pets nationwide.

The MAWS Act establishes this pilot program within the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office to facilitate a market for Chesapeake Bay blue catfish in the pet and animal food industry.

This program will complement the growing market for human consumption by forging new partnerships with pet and animal food manufacturers nationwide that otherwise do not have a footprint in the Chesapeake Bay, and it would establish a sustainable outlet for fish that are outside the window for human consumption by giving watermen and processors more opportunities to sell the smallest and largest blue catfish.

NOAA will enter into cooperative agreements with pet and animal food manufacturers to ensure watermen and processors are properly incentivized to catch blue catfish in the bay, and establish transportation, processing, and manufacturing structures for that long-term market need.

By having a customer base with consistent and reliable price points, watermen can feel confident that it is worth their while to catch blue catfish of all shapes and sizes, knowing there will be somebody at the end of the dock to buy it for a fair price.

Price points for this pilot program will be established in a collaborative effort between watermen, processors, manufacturers, scientists, and economists.

We spent a year crafting this bill, compromising to make sure that everybody's voices were heard and everybody had a seat at the table, ensuring every corner of the industry has a seat and a voice in the decision of what the baseline market price for fillet, by-product, and whole fish will be for this program.

Additionally, in the many months of engagement on this bill with watermen, processors, and manufacturers, we learned that transportation mechanisms are a complex web of coordinated pickups, often with processors going right to the front door of the homes of watermen to pick up their daily catch.

In order to make participation in this program feasible and promote the establishment of long-term transportation processes, 15 percent of the total grant funding can be used by grantees to establish these new routes across the Chesapeake Bay in partnership with established routes led by processors.

Throughout this 2-year pilot program, NOAA will collect data on the ecological and economic impacts of the program. NOAA will report back to Congress on best practices, lessons learned, and recommendations for additional species in other watersheds that may benefit from this program.

Our seafood industry across the Chesapeake Bay is the heart of our economy, but many factors far outside the control of watermen and processors have left the industry in a dire situation. Extreme weather, deep freezes, unexpected waterway discharge, and a national affordability crisis are threatening the livelihoods of our watermen, not to mention the ever-increasing blue catfish population.

The MAWS Act, again, is the result of intensive collaboration and creativity of stakeholders across the watershed as we sought to address the ecological and economic damage of the invasive species in a way that complements—again, complements—and strengthens the growing market for human consumption.

This is not an either/or approach. This is a yes/and, all-hands-on-deck approach.

If this innovative approach is successful, it is our hope that a similar tool can be utilized to combat invasive aquatic species in other waterways across the Nation. Think carp that are wreaking havoc in the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes. Think snakeheads that are invading North

Carolina, Missouri, Arkansas, and more.

I am proud to lead the effort of this one-of-a-kind legislation in partnership with my colleagues from Virginia, Representative WITTMAN and Representative KIGGANS, as well as Representative HOYER.

I thank the chair and his staff for providing such technical assistance to this bill, and I thank my colleagues for supporting this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SELF).

Mr. SELF. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4294, and I am here to represent the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HARRIS) in his opposition to H.R. 4294.

I include a letter titled "Coalition Letter from Maryland Blue Catfish Processors Opposing the MAWS Act."

MARCH 12, 2026.

COALITION LETTER FROM MARYLAND BLUE CATFISH PROCESSORS OPPOSING THE MAWS ACT

We write as a coalition of small, family-owned seafood processing businesses, which are among the only facilities in Maryland actively processing blue catfish for human consumption, to express our serious concerns with the proposed MAWS Act introduced by Representative Sarah K. Elfreth and co-led by Representative Robert J. Wittman.

For several years, our businesses have worked alongside the Maryland Department of Agriculture and other state and federal partners to invest significant time and financial resources into building a viable commercial market for wild-caught blue catfish. This effort has required overcoming longstanding public stigma and educating consumers that blue catfish is not only safe, but a high-quality and desirable protein-rich seafood product. Progress has been hard-won.

The MAWS Act, however well-intentioned, risks undermining this progress by shifting public messaging toward the use of blue catfish primarily for pet food or similar byproducts. Headlines suggesting that blue catfish is destined for pet food damage consumer perception and directly threaten the emerging market for human consumption—the very market that sustains Maryland watermen, processors, and our Bay communities. Our shared goal has always been to add value to this fishery, increase demand, and raise dockside prices so that watermen are incentivized to harvest more invasive blue catfish from Maryland waters.

It is also important to note that the utilization of processing byproducts for rendering or pet food is already occurring through existing private-sector relationships that we have worked hard to establish, typically at prices between \$0.10 and \$0.20 per pound. Government subsidies directed toward a new, bureaucratically-selected recipient would therefore not create innovation, but instead introduce market distortion and unfair competitive advantage—jeopardizing long-standing partnerships and destabilizing an industry that is only beginning to succeed.

Currently, many processors struggle to secure sufficient supply to meet growing consumer demand. Introducing a government-funded competitor capable of paying above-market prices for whole fish would further strain supply chains and place small Maryland processors at significant risk. Fish in

the one- to two-pound range, as well as larger specimens, are already valuable components of our processing operations and product lines, despite misleading claims made by entities like the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

We are equally troubled by the legislative process that produced this proposal without meaningful consultation from the processors who have pioneered Maryland's on-the-ground response to the blue catfish invasion. Members of our coalition attempted outreach to Representative Elfreth's office but were unfortunately met with a resistance to engage in substantive dialogue regarding the bill's impacts on private industry.

Ultimately, we share the goal of addressing the ecological challenges posed by invasive blue catfish and strengthening Maryland's seafood economy. However, we believe public funds would be far more effective if directed toward initiatives that can help the watermen, the processors, and the people in our working waterfront communities. For example, USDA grant funding secured by Congressman Andy Harris has helped several Maryland processors to make investments into costly new facilities upgrades that we otherwise would not have been able to make. New programs should build upon, not undercut, investments that have already been made by taxpayers.

Without a strong processing sector, Maryland cannot sustain a viable blue catfish industry. We remain ready and willing to work collaboratively with Representative Elfreth, Representative Wittman, and other sponsors of this legislation to identify policies that genuinely support watermen, processors, and working waterfront communities while continuing to remove invasive blue catfish from the Chesapeake Bay.

Sincerely,

NICK HARGROVE,
Tilghman Island Sea-
food, Tilghman, MD.
STEPHANIE PAZZAGLIA,
J.J. McDonnell Sea-
food, Elkridge, MD.
AMANDA WILLIAMS,
BSA Seafood,
Grasonville, MD.
PATRICK WELSH JR.,
Reliant Fish Company,
Jessup, MD.

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Madam Speaker, again, I reiterate my appreciation to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN), the committee staff, and all the stakeholders who spent the last year crafting this creative solution to a problem that threatens the economy and ecology of the greatest natural resource we have in Maryland and Virginia, the Chesapeake Bay.

This is an innovative solution. When you visit with other folks who are policymakers, what we hate to hear is, "We have always done it this way," or, "We have never done it that way."

This moment, this crisis that we are experiencing in the Chesapeake Bay, requires innovation, creativity, partnerships, and collaboration. That is exactly what the MAWS Act represents, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

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

Madam Speaker, as we have heard, this bill does quite a bit to open up free markets for fishermen who want to be able to use this very abundant resource. Blue catfish are incredibly abundant—in fact, to the detriment of other species that everybody loves.

Opening up free markets and opening up opportunities for those fishermen is incredibly important. What this also does is to take down bureaucratic impediments.

We know, right now, because of the structure that USDA has to inspect these plants that process catfish, it creates an inordinate stress on that industry. For many of them, because they don't predominate in processing blue catfish, they can't afford to have a full-time USDA inspector in their plant.

What this will do is to say: Let's look at other ways to be able to utilize it. This is a great source of protein. As the world today looks for protein—remember, there is a protein deficit around the world, and we have an overabundance of protein here in the Chesapeake Bay with these blue catfish—we ought to be looking at other ways to do that, not just for human consumption.

As Ms. ELFRETH talked about, there is a place for human consumption of these fish, but there is also a place outside of that that commercial fishermen could fill if we allow them to be used for other purposes, especially for pet food.

If you look at one of the industries today that is the fastest growing industry in the United States, it is the pet industry. Why wouldn't we look at these opportunities that will help our watermen, help the environment, and help other populations like crabs and striped bass? We want to do that. We want to make sure we are doing those things that will help our economy and that will alleviate some of the bureaucratic impediments for these individuals to work hard and make a living on the water.

As I said, my son is a waterman. He goes out every day with no assurance about what he will catch. He is one of the true last independent businesspeople left in the United States. When you go out today, you are not sure if you are going to catch anything.

If you have something that creates undue pressure on what you are relying on to make a living, then you want to try to alleviate that and create that balance there. This does that.

This takes some of the pressure off the blue crab population that, for the last decade, has been under tremendous pressure in the Chesapeake Bay. It takes pressure off the striped bass populations that right now are in decline.

Watermen in Virginia and Maryland rely on the striped bass. It is a heavily managed fishery, but when you have these other pressures on there, we want to make sure that we have the right balance.

What this does is to open up the door to make sure that those things happen,

that we look to enhance coastal economies that right now are under significant duress. Watermen struggle and have to fish multiple species in order to make a living. This would be a great enhancement for them.

If we can do this, it helps the area economically. It also takes away some of the burdens on seafood processors that have those burdens. Sometimes, they can't get into this industry because of the regulatory burdens. This is a great way for us to do that.

The economic impact is going to be significant, I would argue, not just for the Chesapeake Bay but also for the surrounding areas that rely upon the bounty that comes out of the Chesapeake Bay.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4294, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4294, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. SELF. Madam 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 motion will be postponed.

□ 1710

GATEWAY PARTNERSHIP ACT

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5254) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the Gateway Arch Park Foundation to host private events in Gateway Arch National Park buildings, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5254

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 "Gateway Partnership Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **FOUNDATION.**—The term "Foundation" means the Gateway Arch Park Foundation, a nonprofit organization that serves as the official philanthropic partner of the Park.

(2) **PARK.**—The term "Park" means Gateway Arch National Park.

(3) **PARK BUILDING.**—The term "Park building" means—

(A) the Arch Visitor Center;

(B) the Old Courthouse; and

(C) any other building administered or managed by the Secretary as part of the Park that is open to the public.

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

SEC. 3. GATEWAY ARCH NATIONAL PARK PARTNER AGREEMENT PILOT PROJECT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary, in accordance with subsection (b), may enter into a one-

time agreement for a period not to exceed five years with the Foundation to host private events at the Park, which may include the use of Park buildings.

(b) **TERMS AND CONDITIONS.**—An agreement entered into under subsection (a) shall include terms and conditions to protect the resources and values of the Park, including—

(1) dates and times during which the Foundation may be the exclusive organization that holds a special event in specified Park buildings;

(2)(A) the maximum number of events that can be held per month; and

(B) appropriate National Park Service staffing levels necessary to ensure public safety and resource protection during such events;

(3) liability insurance in an amount sufficient to protect the interests of the United States that lists the United States as additionally insured;

(4) a provision stating that the Federal Government and agents and employees of the Federal Government will not be held liable for claims for damages or suits for any injuries or deaths from any cause resulting from the occupancy and use of specified Park buildings by the Foundation;

(5) a provision allowing for the modification or cancellation of the terms and conditions of the agreement, except that any modified agreement shall still comply with the terms and conditions described in subparagraphs (1) through (4); and

(6) any other terms and conditions as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(c) **USE.**—Private events hosted at the Park or in Park buildings through an agreement entered into under subsection (a)—

(1) shall be limited to activities—

(A) consistent with the purposes of the Park; and

(B) compatible with National Park Service programs;

(2) shall not include activities that degrade the integrity, appearance, or purposes of the Park; and

(3) shall not take place during times or in locations that prevent or disrupt public use or access to the Park or Park buildings.

(d) **RECOVERY OF COSTS.**—In entering into an agreement under subsection (a), the Secretary—

(1) shall charge a fee to cover the cost of maintaining the Park and Park buildings with respect to wear and tear resulting from the private events; and

(2) notwithstanding any other provision of law, may recover all costs incurred as a result of the private events and use of the Park and Park buildings, including maintenance, utilities, administrative expenses, security, and personnel costs.

(e) **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE-SPONSORED EVENTS.**—Nothing in this Act prevents the National Park Service from hosting events or issuing permits to other individuals or entities for special events or otherwise, as appropriate, in the Park or Park buildings.

(f) **SUNSET.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The authority to enter into and carry out an agreement with the Foundation pursuant to this Act shall sunset on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) **EFFECT ON EXISTING AGREEMENT.**—Any existing agreement entered into under this section shall terminate, notwithstanding any terms within such agreement, on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(g) **SAVING CLAUSE.**—Nothing in this Act affects any other authority of the Secretary to issue special use permits or agreements.

(h) Not later than 4 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report evaluating the implementation of this Act, including the—

(1) operational impacts of the agreement on visitor access, security, staffing, and facilities management; and

(2) financial implications of the agreement, including fees collected and costs recovered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5254, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5254, the Gateway Partnership Act. This is bipartisan legislation sponsored by Representatives Bell and Wagner of Missouri. This bill creates an innovative new model for public-private partnerships at our national parks by authorizing the National Park Service to enter into an agreement with the Gateway Arch Park Foundation to host events and community programming at Gateway Arch National Park.

Gateway Arch towers over the city of St. Louis, Missouri, and welcomes millions of visitors each year to the first city built across the Mississippi River. With its silver curve soaring over 600-foot high across the riverbank, Gateway Arch serves as a reminder of the grit and bravery our Nation's early pioneers showed when they left all that they had and all that they knew behind to venture out toward the American West. The arch also links America's original pioneer spirit of the past with the drive to forge new futures today.

Recently, the park's main philanthropic partnership, the Gateway Arch Park Foundation, completed a trailblazing, multimillion-dollar public-private partnership that reconnected the city and waterfront area and created a new visitor center and green spaces. It also revitalized historic buildings around Gateway Arch.

H.R. 5254 helps ensure that these newly renovated facilities, such as the Old Courthouse and Arch Visitor Center, are used to their full potential by allowing the foundation to host events in these spaces.

Allowing the foundation to fully utilize these facilities would not only create new jobs but also generate an estimated \$780,000 in additional revenue for the park. H.R. 5254 does this while maintaining strict guardrails around the usage of the park to ensure public access is not impeded and no park resources are damaged during these events.

The bill is narrow, limited, and bipartisan. It is a commonsense way to le-

verage private expertise and local investment to strengthen a signature national park and generate new revenue to support its operation.

Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 5254, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5254, offered by my colleagues Representative BELL and Representative WAGNER of Missouri, which will support the relationship between Gateway Arch National Park and the Gateway Arch Park Foundation.

The Gateway Arch Park Foundation was formed in 2009 to help fund and coordinate the CityArchRiver project, a transformational revamp of the Mississippi Riverfront and Kiener Plaza, right under the iconic arch, that greatly improved public safety and the overall visitor experience.

Since then, the foundation's partnership with the National Park Service has thrived. This is exactly the type of public-private partnership we need across all of our national parks.

As the official philanthropic partner of the park, the foundation hosts several popular events, including Blues at the Arch and Winterfest, both of which draw thousands of visitors and generate significant revenue that is reinvested back into supporting the park.

The bill we are considering today establishes a new pilot program that would allow the foundation to host private events at Gateway Arch National Park.

This will allow the foundation to host more events and potentially generate even more resources to support the ongoing management of the park.

The authority granted by the bill is a powerful tool when used appropriately, but it cannot become an excuse or rationale to supplant or cut funding from the National Park Service or its staff, especially now when the agency is being pushed to the limit by this administration.

Public-private partnerships like this one managed by the Gateway Arch Foundation are essential. They provide critical support through the National Park System, but we must remember that the agency has lost nearly 25 percent of its full-time staff since the beginning of last year. That figure is neither sustainable nor rational.

Expanding partnership tools should not be an excuse to replace the expertise and experience of the dedicated professionals at the National Park Service.

With that context in mind, this bill requires careful guardrails. Thanks to the cooperation of my colleagues across the aisle, H.R. 5254 will allow managers of the Gateway Arch to test out a time-limited authority. The bill includes significant safeguards for National Park Service-sponsored events, cost recovery authority, and robust reporting requirements so we can understand the full scope and impact of this new pilot project.

Allowing a philanthropic partner to have exclusive after-hours access to park facilities will be a unique arrangement within the National Park System. I thank the majority for working with us to ensure it includes the right checks and balances.

Madam Speaker, I also thank my colleague and friend Representative BELL from Missouri for introducing this legislation and advocating for his hometown national park, hopefully creating a blueprint that could be utilized across this country.

While most Americans know about the iconic St. Louis Arch, famously known as the Gateway to the West, not everyone knows about the full history of the site. The park is also home to the Old Courthouse, the site where Dred Scott first tried and unsuccessfully sued for his freedom from slavery.

This is a transformational American story. While President Trump is doing his worst to sanitize American history and remove signs at national parks across the country, boosting its visibility is more important now than ever.

Celebrating 250 years of this great Nation means honoring and acknowledging the progress we have made since the days of the Dred Scott decision, not burying the truth or the full telling of our shared history.

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

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

Madam Speaker, by creating a time-limited pilot program allowing private philanthropic partners to host events at park facilities, H.R. 5254 creates an innovative new model for improved public access, better visitor experience, and new revenue streams to support park operations.

This bill will create jobs, boost the local economy, and provide new opportunities to celebrate America's 250th birthday at one of the most iconic national park destinations in the Midwest.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5254, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5254, 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.

NORTH RIM RESTORATION ACT

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5729) to authorize direct emergency acquisition flexibilities for the National Park Service for the purpose of retaining, vetting, approving,

and expediting contractor approval for the clearing, rebuilding, maintenance, and improvement of the Grand Canyon grounds that have been impacted by the Dragon Bravo Fire, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5729

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 "North Rim Restoration Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **COVERED AREA.**—The term "covered area" means the areas within Grand Canyon National Park impacted by the Dragon Bravo Fire.

(2) **SECRETARY.**—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service.

SEC. 3. EMERGENCY CONTRACTING AUTHORITY.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Notwithstanding any requirement for a Presidential emergency or disaster declaration, the Secretary is authorized to use the emergency acquisition flexibilities under part 18 of title 48, Code of Federal Regulations (and any successor regulations), including the increased micro-purchase thresholds, simplified acquisition thresholds, and other higher-level emergency flexibilities, in contracting for the following services within the covered area:

(1) Forest management or restoration activities carried out in response to the Dragon Bravo Fire.

(2) Rebuilding, planning, development, and design of structures affected by the Dragon Bravo Fire.

(3) Improvements to the grounds and structures.

(4) Recovery efforts.

(5) Any activity listed in section 4(a).

(b) **PROCESS FOR OTHER SERVICES.**—Unless otherwise provided by law or regulation, the authority granted under subsection (a) does not apply to contracts for services other than those described in paragraphs (1) through (4) of subsection (a).

(c) **REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the Secretary begins to use the authorization under subsection (a), and every 180 days thereafter until the date that is 180 days after the date described in subsection (e), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Natural Resources and Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Energy and Natural Resources and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on all expenditures related to the recovery efforts for the Dragon Bravo Fire, including the following:

(1) The expected cost of recovery efforts.

(2) Cost expenditures.

(3) Cost overruns.

(4) Identification of contractors performing the work associated with the recovery from the Dragon Bravo Fire.

(5) Any affiliations or conflicts of interest between the contractor and the contracting office at the Grand Canyon National Park or the National Park Service.

(6) Any waste, fraud, or abuse detected during the recovery efforts.

(7) Any contracts that came in under expected expenses.

(8) An estimated time of completion for all projects and full recovery efforts related to the Dragon Bravo Fire.

(9) If an extension is needed for this authority to complete projects associated with the Dragon Bravo Fire.

(d) **EXTENSION.**—If, after the date of the enactment of this Act, a new wildfire ignites within the covered area and impacts recovery efforts

related to the Dragon Bravo Fire, the Secretary may request a 12-month extension of the authority granted under subsection (a), subject to congressional approval.

(e) **EXPIRATION.**—The authority granted under subsection (a) shall expire on the date that is the earlier of the following:

(1) 7 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) The date on which projects and recovery efforts within the covered area are completed, as determined by the Secretary.

SEC. 4. LIMITED SOLE-SOURCE PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Notwithstanding chapter 33 of title 41, United States Code, or any other provision of law relating to the use of competitive procedures for the procurement of services, supplies, or construction materials and services, subject to a determination made by the Secretary under subsection (b), the Secretary may enter into one or more contracts, on a non-competitive basis, for the planning, design, repair, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, stabilization, replacement, or operation of assets supporting the recovery and reopening of the Grand Canyon National Park North Rim, including—

(1) employee housing and related facilities;

(2) water, wastewater, power, communications, and other utility systems;

(3) visitor-facing facilities and infrastructure, including lodging, food service, retail, transportation, and associated public-use facilities; and

(4) maintenance, administration, and other back-of-house assets necessary for safe and continuous operation of North Rim services.

(b) **DETERMINATION REQUIRED.**—The Secretary may utilize the authority provided in subsection (a) if the Secretary determines, in writing, that—

(1) the concessioner currently holding a valid concession contract for operations at the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park on the date of enactment of this Act is uniquely positioned to execute one or more procurement contracts identified under subsection (a) due to the concessioner's current operational responsibilities, site access, integration with existing concession infrastructure, or continuity needs essential to expedited North Rim recovery; and

(2) use of noncompetitive procedures under subsection (a) with this concessioner is necessary to ensure public health and safety, protection of park resources, or continuity of essential services.

(c) **EXPIRATION.**—The authority granted under subsection (a) shall expire on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(d) **RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING CONCESSION CONTRACT.**—Any procurement action conducted or contract awarded under this section shall be considered separate from, and shall not modify, amend, or extend the duration of, or provide any leasehold surrender interest or other benefit, under a concession contract issued under section 101913 of title 54, United States Code, or related authorities.

(e) **RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**—Nothing in this section shall be construed to—

(1) authorize the award of any concession contract or lease without full compliance with applicable concession contracting law; or

(2) prevent the Secretary from using competitive procedures if the Secretary determines such procedures to be in the best interest of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) and the gentleman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5729, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5729, the North Rim Restoration Act, introduced by my friend and colleague Representative CRANE of Arizona.

□ 1720

Madam Speaker, this vital legislation gives the National Park Service the streamlined authorities necessary to rebuild and restore one of the natural wonders of the world and iconic historic structures.

Last year, the Dragon Bravo fire tore through the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park, one of the true crown jewels of the National Park System. The fire burned nearly 150,000 acres of land. It left a deep mark on the once-peaceful landscape, severely damaging pristine evergreen forests, decimating wildlife habitat, and destroying more than 100 buildings and structures.

Among these structures destroyed was the iconic Grand Canyon Lodge, which millions of visitors had enjoyed visiting for nearly a century. Since the fire was contained, the North Rim has been partially closed to visitors.

The year before the fire, over 11 million visitors to Arizona's national parks contributed \$42.2 billion to the State's economy. As visitor numbers declined after the fire, the ripple effects have been felt well beyond the North Rim, especially by small businesses and gateway communities in northern Arizona.

These communities depend on tourism and recreation. Without quick action, visitor numbers may never rebound, harming small businesses in rural Arizona for years, even for decades. Representative CRANE's bill offers a bold and decisive solution to this problem. His legislation provides streamlined, practical recovery tools that will allow the National Park Service to quickly begin infrastructure rebuilding and forestry recovery efforts in the areas affected by the Dragon Bravo fire.

This bill will allow the National Park Service to use temporary emergency contracting authorities for up to 7 years to quickly hire highly qualified contractors, allowing them to move at the pace and scale necessary to repair fire damage, rebuild burned structures, and conduct essential forest management activities necessary to restore full access to one of the most visited landscapes in America.

The Grand Canyon is not only a national treasure but also an engine for

local jobs and the outdoor recreation economy. H.R. 5729 is the right solution at the right time that will ensure the North Rim's much-needed recovery from the Dragon Bravo fire is not slowed down by avoidable red tape.

Representative CRANE's bill ensures the North Rim can recover to its full glory. It restores access for millions of American families. It will support our local communities that rely on park access and a strong outdoor recreation economy.

I thank Representatives CRANE and TIFFANY as well as Chairman GOSAR for their collective work on this important effort. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5729.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I rise in support of H.R. 5729, the North Rim Restoration Act, offered by my colleague Representative CRANE of Arizona.

Last summer's devastating Dragon Bravo fire burned nearly 150,000 acres of the Grand Canyon's North Rim, causing irreparable damage to crucial water infrastructure, well-loved trails, and 106 buildings, including the historic Grand Canyon Lodge.

After the fire, safety concerns forced the Park Service and the nearby Kaibab National Forest to restrict visitor access, effectively closing the North Rim overnight. The loss of tourism has been devastating for communities and businesses. The loss for this Nation cannot be overstated.

Arizona's \$29.3 billion tourism economy is fueled by visitors to the Grand Canyon National Park, with nearly 5 million people visiting this crown jewel each and every year. Restoring and rebuilding at the North Rim is a serious priority.

It will take an all-hands-on-deck approach to rebuild the iconic North Rim lodge to get visitors back to this wonderful landscape.

H.R. 5729 will allow the National Park Service to use expedited contracting authority to efficiently move projects along as quickly as possible. However, the single best action we can take is to ensure our Federal land management agencies have the sustained resources and staff required to fulfill their mission of wildfire mitigation and ecosystem restoration, along with the tools necessary.

To recover from tragedies like the Dragon Bravo fire, the seventh largest fire in Arizona's history, we must fully fund our national parks, forests, and public land management agencies.

I would be remiss if I didn't point out that most of the emergency authorities in this bill could have been granted with the stroke of the President's pen if he had approved an emergency or disaster declaration. That likely hasn't happened because disaster recovery at FEMA has been deeply politicized and delayed by this administration.

We can never and should never play politics with rebuilding and recovery

efforts. While I appreciate what this bill will do for the North Rim rebuild, I urge my colleagues to work with us and collaborate on the larger issues of staffing, funding, cutting of red tape, and disaster recovery we are seeing in communities across this country.

Madam Speaker, I urge support for H.R. 5729, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CRANE), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mr. CRANE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the North Rim Restoration Act of 2025. Last July, a lightning strike ignited the Dragon Bravo fire, which grew into the seventh largest wildfire in Arizona's history.

It burned more than 145,000 acres. It destroyed over 100 structures, including the historic Grand Canyon Lodge. It also forced the closure of the North Rim. The result was great uncertainty for gateway communities whose livelihoods depend on a steady flow of visitors.

In the days and months during and after the fire, I traveled to the region to meet with park staff, local employers, and community leaders. Each conversation revealed different consequences of the disaster, but one concern came up repeatedly: the layers of bureaucracy threatening to slow recovery and prolong economic hardship.

Families and workers cannot wait years for the infrastructure and housing needed to bring the North Rim back to life. That is why I worked closely with local stakeholders to draft the North Rim Restoration Act of 2025. This bill gives the Department of the Interior emergency contracting authority for all recovery efforts from the Dragon Bravo fire.

This is a bipartisan approach that would minimize unnecessary delays. At the same time, it preserves community input, environmental standards, and mandatory reporting every 180 days to ensure transparency, accountability, and responsible use of taxpayer dollars.

Although last year's July 4 lightning strike brought months of hardship to the region, we now have a chance to restore this iconic destination as we honor America's 250th anniversary.

Passage of this bill sends a clear message to every visitor, worker, and family who cherishes the North Rim. This place will not fade into memory. It will endure as a living legacy.

As I prepare to close, I thank the Coconino County Board of Supervisors, Chairman WESTERMAN, and everyone who has played a role in advancing this legislation. As a result of their dedication and persistence, we are on the verge of securing House passage just 5 months since introduction.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this effort and help ensure a full and timely recovery.

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this critical and timely piece of legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. CRANE for his thoughtful and aggressive efforts to make sure we can restore the Grand Canyon National Park to its former glory and for his work in highlighting the incredible stress that this places on the communities there.

I thank him, too, for offering this legislation at a key point to make sure that the right things happen so that people in his district can indeed get back to what they know is highlighting a great, great national treasure.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 5729 gives the National Park Service limited accountable authorities to expedite the restoration and rebuilding process following last year's Dragon Bravo fire so that the treasured North Rim of the Grand Canyon can fully reopen and do so safely.

I thank Representative CRANE once again for his leadership on this effort and for his insightfulness. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5729, 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.

□ 1730

NATIONAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES MEMORIAL EXTENSION ACT

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2196) to provide for an extension of the legislative authority of the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2196

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 "National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Extension Act".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY FOR MEMORIAL ESTABLISHMENT.

Section 1(b) of Public Law 115-275 is amended by striking the period at the end and inserting " , except that any reference in section 8903(e) of that chapter to the expiration at the end of or extension beyond a seven-year period shall be considered to be a reference to an expiration on or extension beyond the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of the National

Emergency Medical Services Memorial Extension Act."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2196, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2196, the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Extension Act, which is sponsored by Representative HUDSON.

Emergency medical service providers are often the first people on the scene in a moment of crisis. They respond to accidents, natural disasters, public health emergencies, and everyday calls for help. More than 1 million Americans serve as EMS providers across the country under one shared mission: to save lives and protect the public.

Despite that service, there is still no permanent memorial in our Nation's Capital dedicated to EMS professionals who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

In 2018, Congress authorized the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish such a memorial. Since then, the foundation has moved through the Federal approval process and is now working on site selection and environmental review. Like many memorial projects, progress has been steady but slow due to design approvals and the need to raise private funds.

Unfortunately, the authorization for this important memorial expired last year, and the foundation needs this authorization extended to finally complete its mission.

Representative HUDSON's bill provides a straightforward solution. His legislation extends the foundation's legislative authority for an additional 7 years, allowing their work to continue so that this memorial can finally be completed.

Importantly, this memorial will remain funded entirely through private contributions, with no cost to the taxpayers. This legislation also does not expand the project or change its purpose. It simply ensures that the effort to honor fallen EMS providers can be finished.

Madam Speaker, I thank Representative HUDSON for his leadership on this bill. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2196, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2196, offered by my colleague, Representative HUDSON of North Carolina, which provides the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation with a straightforward extension to establish the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial right here in Washington, D.C.

This is a deeply meaningful and important project that deserves our full support. Congress first authorized the establishment of this memorial in 2018, and the foundation's work to finalize its design and construction is almost complete.

Unfortunately, the initial 7-year authorization recently expired. Today, this bill allows us to take the simple step and let the foundation continue its work to honor the service and sacrifice of the medical emergency service community for generations to come.

Every year, EMS providers around the Nation respond to millions of calls, ranging from health emergencies to mass shootings. Whether they serve at the Federal, State, local, private, volunteer, military, or Tribal level, these brave men and women are dedicated to commitment and service.

The memorial will be a small token of our appreciation for those who help others when they need it most. It is the least we can do to give to these heroes, who serve our communities around the Nation and across the globe, a place of honor in our Nation's Capital.

I look forward to the completion of this meaningful memorial, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this critical and timely piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Extension Act provides the time needed to complete a project that honors the service and sacrifice of EMS providers without imposing a cost on taxpayers.

Representative HUDSON's legislation keeps the memorial on track and ensures that EMS professionals are recognized alongside other public safety heroes in our Nation's Capital.

Once again, I thank Representative HUDSON for his leadership on this effort and for his dedication to those who serve this Nation humbly and selflessly.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2196, 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.

POST-DISASTER REFORESTATION AND RESTORATION ACT OF 2025

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 528) to require the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a program for Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 528

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 "Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Act".

SEC. 2. POST-DISASTER REFORESTATION AND RESTORATION PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act and annually thereafter, the Secretary, in coordination with the heads of the covered agencies, shall identify covered lands requiring reforestation and restoration following unplanned disturbances that are unlikely to experience natural regeneration without assistance.

(b) PRIORITY PROJECTS.—In consultation with the heads of covered agencies, the Secretary—

(1) shall propose a list of priority projects for reforestation and restoration for each fiscal year;

(2) may carry out priority projects through—

(A) competitively awarded grants;

(B) contracts;

(C) contracts established under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.); and

(D) cooperative agreements, to be awarded in accordance with applicable requirements established by the Secretary; and

(3) may support any grant contract or cooperative agreement that may be necessary to ensure adequate and appropriate seed and seedling availability to further the objectives of priority projects.

(c) OUTREACH.—To fulfill requirements of this section the heads of covered agencies shall conduct outreach to—

(1) Indian Tribes;

(2) States;

(3) territories;

(4) units of local government;

(5) Alaska Native organizations;

(6) Native Hawaiian organizations;

(7) institutions of higher education;

(8) Federal agencies with jurisdiction over Federal land adjoining or proximal to priority projects; and

(9) other stakeholders as determined by the Secretary.

(d) REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the relevant Congressional Committees a report that includes the following:

(1) An accounting of all covered lands requiring reforestation and restoration.

(2) A list of priority projects and implementation progress to address reforestation and restoration objectives identified.

(3) An accounting of grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements established in furtherance of priority projects.

(4) Outreach efforts by covered agencies to advance priority projects.

(5) Assessments of, and recommendations relating to seed, seedling, and implementation gaps to advance priority projects and opportunities to establish dedicated funding necessary to address any backlog of reforestation and restoration needs.

(e) SUNSET.—The authority provided under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED AGENCY.—The term "covered agency" means the National Park Service, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

(2) COVERED LANDS.—The term "covered lands" means—

(A) any Federal land or interest in land administered by a covered agency; or

(B) Indian Forest Land or Rangeland.

(3) INDIAN FOREST LAND OR RANGELAND.—The term "Indian Forest Land or Rangeland" means land that—

(A) is held in trust by, or with a restriction against alienation by, the United States for an Indian Tribe or a member of an Indian Tribe; and

(B)(i)(I) is Indian forest land (as defined in section 304 of the National Indian Forest Resources Management Act (25 U.S.C. 3103)); or

(ii) has a cover of grasses, brush, or any similar vegetation; or

(ii) formerly had a forest cover or vegetative cover that is capable of restoration.

(4) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term "Indian Tribe" means any Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, or community individually identified (including parenthetically) in the list published most recently as of the date of enactment of this Act pursuant to section 104 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 5131).

(5) NATURAL REGENERATION.—The term "natural regeneration" has the meaning given the term in section (e)(4) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (U.S.C. 36 1601).

(6) REFORESTATION.—The term "reforestation" has the meaning given the term in section (e)(4) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (U.S.C. 36 1601).

(7) RESTORATION.—The term "restoration" means assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed, including the reestablishment of appropriate plant species composition and community structure.

(8) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(9) UNPLANNED DISTURBANCE.—The term "unplanned disturbance" means any unplanned disturbance that disrupts ecosystem structure or composition and may include a wildfire, an infestation of insects or disease, or a weather event.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) and the gentleman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Mem-

bers may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 528, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 528, the Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Act, sponsored by Representative PETERSEN.

Madam Speaker, this bipartisan legislation, which is also part of the Fix Our Forests Act, would create a post-disaster reforestation and restoration program at the Department of the Interior.

Across the country, catastrophic wildfires are burning hotter and more severely, turning once-pristine landscapes into charred moonscapes. Hurricanes, windstorms, mudslides, and other natural disasters can also leave behind millions of acres of land in need of reforestation.

In many cases, if Federal land managers don't move quickly to replant and restore scorched or uprooted lands, once-lush forests can permanently decay into low-lying scrublands that are unproductive and vulnerable to future fire and erosion.

When these forests disappear, they take with them clean water, wildlife habitat, and the livelihoods of communities that depend on them for recreation and employment. With millions of acres of forests lost to catastrophic wildfires and other disasters, our Federal agencies are bearing the strain of an enormous backlog of replanting and restoration work.

In 2021, Congress passed legislation to partially address the Forest Service's priority reforestation needs, although no similar authority was included for the Department of the Interior. H.R. 528 offers a straightforward solution to tackle the crisis and provides consistency across all Federal land management agencies.

This bill directs agencies within the Department of the Interior to identify priority landscapes most in need of reforestation and to proactively partner with States, Tribes, local communities, and institutions of higher learning to advance high-priority restoration projects.

This bill is a practical, bipartisan way to prioritize vital restoration work that requires immediate action. By allowing Federal agencies to work with trusted partners, we can clear the way for reforestation, get to faster restoration, and serve the communities that rely on healthy, resilient forests.

I thank Representative PETERSEN for her work on this bill, as well as for her work on Fix Our Forests Act.

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

H.R. 6380

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, September 5, 2025.
Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 528, the “Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Act of 2025.” Thank you for collaborating with the Committee on Agriculture on the matters within our jurisdiction.

The Committee on Agriculture will forego any further consideration of this bill. However, by foregoing consideration at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over any subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. The Committee on Agriculture also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees, should it become necessary, and ask that you support such a request.

We would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 528 and request a copy of our letters on this matter be published in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration

Sincerely,

GLENN “GT” THOMPSON,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, September 8, 2025.
Hon. GLENN THOMPSON,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: I write regarding H.R. 528, the “Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Act of 2025,” which was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on July 23, 2025.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture and appreciate your willingness to forgo further consideration of the bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Agriculture will not formally consider H.R. 528 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained therein.

I am pleased to support your request to name members of the Committee on Agriculture to any conference committee to consider such provisions. I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill and will include such letters in the committee report on H.R. 528. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,

BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of Representative PETTERSEN’s H.R. 528, the Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Act.

Madam Speaker, this legislation would establish a program at the Department of the Interior to address ecological damage caused by unforeseen events, including wildfires and weather events, and support efforts to restore ecosystems, particularly those where disruption has hindered the natural recovery.

As the impacts of climate change cause more frequent and intense natural disasters, we must take a whole-

of-government approach to respond to these crises and rebuild. This includes critical investments in predisaster mitigation measures, like strengthening infrastructure and housing, enhancing early detection, supporting our country’s wildland firefighters, and focusing on post-disaster resilience.

These kinds of upfront investments will ensure communities impacted by wildfire can rebuild and recover in a way that makes them more resilient against future natural disasters. This bill is a commonsense step toward better land management and stronger community resilience in the face of climate-driven wildfires and extreme weather.

□ 1740

Recovery after a wildfire is a lengthy and challenging process, and this bill will help build stronger, more resilient communities that can stand up against the threat of wildfires for generations to come.

Madam Speaker, I urge support of H.R. 528, and I urge my colleagues to support this critical piece of legislation. I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, this bill is a bipartisan, commonsense step to help land managers within the Department of the Interior tackle forest reforestation after wildfires, storms, and floods by working with capable non-Federal partners in the areas that need help the most. This legislation will help restore desolate landscapes to thriving forests.

As I mentioned before, the legislation previously passed the House as part of the bipartisan Fix Our Forests Act. I hope to see that legislation sent to the President’s desk soon so that land managers have every tool they need to restore forest health, prevent wildfires, and protect communities.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues 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 Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 528, 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.

CHIRICAHUA NATIONAL PARK ACT

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6380) to establish the Chiricahua National Park in the State of Arizona as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

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 “Chiricahua National Park Act”.

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION OF CHIRICAHUA NATIONAL PARK, ARIZONA.

(a) DESIGNATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chiricahua National Monument in the State of Arizona established by Presidential Proclamation 1692 (54 U.S.C. 320301 note; 43 Stat. 1946) shall be known and designated as “Chiricahua National Park” (referred to in this Act as the “National Park”).

(2) BOUNDARIES.—The boundaries of the National Park shall be the boundaries of the Chiricahua National Monument as of the date of enactment of this Act, as generally depicted on the map entitled “Chiricahua National Park Proposed Boundary”, numbered 145/156,356, and dated March 2021.

(3) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, or other record of the United States to the Chiricahua National Monument shall be considered to be a reference to the “Chiricahua National Park”.

(4) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Any funds available for the Chiricahua National Monument shall be available for the National Park.

(b) ADMINISTRATION.—The Secretary of the Interior shall administer the National Park in accordance with—

(1) Presidential Proclamation 1692 (54 U.S.C. 320301 note; 43 Stat. 1946);

(2) Presidential Proclamation 2288 (54 U.S.C. 320301 note; 52 Stat. 1551); and

(3) the laws generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including—

(A) section 100101(a), chapter 1003, and sections 100751(a), 100752, 100753, and 102101 of title 54, United States Code; and

(B) chapter 3201 of title 54, United States Code.

SEC. 3. TRADITIONAL CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS SITES.

(a) PROTECTION OF SITES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall ensure the protection of traditional cultural and religious sites in the National Park in accordance with the laws (including regulations) applicable to the Secretary.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consult with Indian Tribes in accordance with laws applicable to the protection of cultural and religious sites.

(b) ACCESS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in accordance with Public Law 95–341 (42 U.S.C. 1996 et seq.)—

(A) shall provide access to the sites described in subsection (a)(1) by members of Indian Tribes for traditional cultural and customary uses; and

(B) may, on request of an Indian Tribe, temporarily close to general public use one or more specific areas of the National Park to protect traditional cultural and customary uses in the area by members of the Indian Tribe.

(2) LIMITATION.—In closing a portion of a designated area under paragraph (1)(B), the Secretary shall limit the closure to the smallest practicable area for the minimum period necessary for the traditional cultural and religious activities.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian Tribe” has the meaning given such term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) and the gentleman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 6380, the bill before us for consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6380, the Chiricahua National Park Act, introduced by Representative CISCOMANI of Arizona. This simple, bipartisan bill redesignates the Chiricahua National Monument as Chiricahua National Park.

Located in southeast Arizona, Chiricahua is a remarkable place that is known as the Land of Standing-Up Rocks. It is a home to unique volcanic formations, miles of scenic trails, and a landscape shaped by both natural forces and human history. From its ancient volcanic hoodoos and pinnacles to historic sites conserving the history of prehistoric and indigenous people, early pioneers, and ranchers, there is truly no place in the country like Chiricahua.

Every year, visitors to this area enjoy unique outdoor recreational activities, including hiking, stargazing, camping, bird-watching, and horseback riding. Across the country, outdoor recreation contributes \$1.3 trillion to the U.S. economy. Last year, Arizona saw the second highest growth rate in its outdoor recreation activity amongst all States.

By creating the Nation's 64th national park and Arizona's fourth national park, Representative CISCOMANI's legislation would further boost Arizona's outdoor recreation economy, create jobs, and support small businesses in rural gateway communities.

Importantly, this bipartisan bill does not expand the site's boundaries or change its management. It simply recognizes the national significance of Chiricahua by elevating it to full national park status. The change would place Chiricahua alongside other flagship parks and help raise its profile and support increased tourism.

The bill has significant local support. Representative CISCOMANI has worked hard with all affected stakeholders to address any potential concerns. Representative CISCOMANI added new language to the bill this Congress to ensure continued access for traditional uses for Tribes in a way that respects cultural heritage while maintaining public access to the park without creating new precedents.

In short, this bill honors a place of exceptional natural, historical, and cultural value without changing its footprints or management framework.

I commend Representative CISCOMANI for the years of hard work that he has put in to make the dream of Arizona's fourth national park a reality.

I cannot think of a better time than during America's 250th anniversary to send this meaningful legislation to the President's desk, and I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6380, offered by my colleague, Representative CISCOMANI of Arizona, which would redesignate the Chiricahua National Monument as the Chiricahua National Park.

Located in the unique Sky Island ecosystem of southeastern Arizona, Chiricahua National Monument is known as the Wonderland of Rocks, which sounds magical. This unique and stunning landscape is filled with pinnacles, spires, and balancing rocks that inspire a sense of awe and wonder.

Chiricahua's rock formations are also a biodiversity hotspot that supports a variety of wildlife amid the flowering desert environment. This includes Apache foxes, javelinas, black bears, mountain lions, white-tailed deer, and over 200 bird species.

The monument is truly a special place that protects beautiful and important ecosystems, but that is only a part of its story. Tribal communities have deep ties and connections to the landscape.

Justine Jimmie, the deputy attorney general of the San Carlos Apache Tribe, testified on this proposal during the 2024 hearing before the House Committee on Natural Resources. Her written statement noted: "The land that is now Chiricahua National Monument has been our homeland since time immemorial—long before the formation of the United States and before the U.S. Cavalry took our land to give to settlers, pioneers, and miners."

This history is a history that cannot be ignored, which is why Tribal engagement has been such a critical component in building support for this bill, and I thank the bill sponsor for doing that.

The bill ensures Tribes can continue to access important and sacred sites, even permitting temporary closure of areas of the park for Tribal ceremonies. That is a key part of upholding our trust obligations and ensuring Tribal support for this redesignation.

The National Park Service itself has noted that the wealth of cultural and natural resources across Chiricahua's landscape makes it a strong candidate for national park status.

I am excited about the prospect of designating our Nation's next national park, but I also want to be very clear about what comes next. Our parks and public lands have been short-staffed and underresourced by the current administration, with nearly a quarter of the National Park Service staff departing the agency, some voluntarily and

many others involuntarily, since the beginning of last year.

Madam Speaker, after approving the designation of this new national park, I urge for full resources and full staffing so that it can meet its mission.

As Congress continues to come together to create new national parks to protect our Nation's most special places, we must continue to do everything in our power to make sure our national parks have the staffing and resources they need for the next 250 years and beyond.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CISCOMANI), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mr. CISCOMANI. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman WESTERMAN and my colleague, Representative WITTMAN, for this time.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my bill, the Chiricahua National Park Act.

I also thank my colleague from Maryland because these were not easy words to pronounce: Chiricahua, javelinas, and so on. Arizona threw her a curveball on this one, but she did very well with all of that.

For more than a century, the remarkable landscape of Chiricahua National Monument in southeastern Arizona has inspired visitors from across the country. Known as the Wonderland of Rocks, this extraordinary area protects towering volcanic rock formations, deep canyons, and one of the most biologically diverse mountain ranges in the entire Southwest.

For the people of Cochise County and southeastern Arizona, Chiricahua is more than a beautiful landscape. It is a source of pride, a place where families enjoy the outdoors, and a very important part of the region's identity.

This legislation simply redesignates the monument as a national park, recognizing its national significance without expanding its footprint or changing existing land management.

Just as important, this bill supports economic opportunity in rural Arizona. The redesignation would help raise Chiricahua's national profile, attract more visitors, and strengthen tourism across southeastern Arizona. That is why this effort is widely supported by the local business community, along with local leaders and stakeholders who see the potential for responsible economic growth tied to outdoor recreation and conservation.

□ 1750

Arizona is already home to world-renowned parks like Grand Canyon National Park, Saguaro National Park, and Petrified Forest National Park. With this legislation, we would add another extraordinary landscape to this list.

Madam Speaker, this is a common-sense, bipartisan step that protects a national treasure in my district while supporting rural communities.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Chiricahua National Park Act.

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, I thank the sponsor of the bill, and I urge my colleagues to support this exciting legislation to create America's next national park.

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

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, H.R. 6380 recognizes the national significance of the Chiricahua in southeastern Arizona while helping unlock more tourism and investment for surrounding communities.

Elevating this site to national park status will raise its profile, attract more visitors, and support local jobs without expanding its boundaries or changing its management.

I thank Representative CISCOMANI once again for his strong leadership, his dedication, and his passion for this effort.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6380, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to redesignate the Chiricahua National Monument in the State of Arizona as Chiricahua National Park, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LOWER COLORADO RIVER MULTI-SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM AMENDMENT ACT OF 2025

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 831) to establish an interest-bearing account for the non-Federal contributions to the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 831

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 "Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Amendment Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. INTEREST-BEARING FUND.

Section 9402 of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-11; 123 Stat. 1328) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(c) INTEREST-BEARING ACCOUNT FOR NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS.—

"(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

"(A) AGREEMENT.—The term 'Agreement' means the agreement entitled the 'Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation

Program Funding and Management Agreement' and dated April 4, 2005.

"(B) FUND.—The term 'Fund' means the Non-Federal Funding Account for the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program established by paragraph (2).

"(C) NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTION.—The term 'non-Federal contribution' means an amount contributed by a State Party for the non-Federal cost share described in section 8 of the Agreement.

"(D) STATE PARTY.—The term 'State Party' has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the Agreement.

"(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Treasury of the United States a fund, to be known as the 'Non-Federal Funding Account for the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program', consisting of—

"(A) any amounts deposited in the Fund under paragraph (3); and

"(B) any interest earned on investment of amounts in the Fund under paragraph (4).

"(3) DEPOSITS TO FUND.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Pursuant to section 8.4 of the Agreement, the Secretary of the Treasury shall deposit in the Fund—

"(i) any unexpended non-Federal contributions provided before the date of enactment of this subsection; and

"(ii) any non-Federal contributions provided on or after the date of enactment of this subsection.

"(B) AVAILABILITY OF AMOUNTS.—

"(i) EXPENDITURE.—Amounts deposited in the Fund under subparagraph (A) shall be made available to the Secretary, without further appropriation, for expenditure—

"(I) as provided in the Program Documents; and

"(II) in accordance with this section.

"(ii) INTEREST.—Amounts derived from interest earned on amounts in the Fund under subparagraph (A) shall be made available, subject to appropriation of amounts derived from such interest, to the Secretary for expenditure—

"(I) as provided in the Program Documents; and

"(II) in accordance with this section.

"(4) INVESTMENT OF AMOUNTS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury may invest any portion of the Fund that is not, as determined by the Secretary, required to meet the current needs of the Fund.

"(B) REQUIREMENT.—Investments under subparagraph (A) may be made only in interest-bearing obligations of the United States.

"(5) TRANSFERS OF AMOUNTS.—

"(A) TRANSFER OF PREVIOUSLY CONTRIBUTED FUNDS.—The amounts required to be deposited in the Fund under paragraph (3)(A)(i) shall be transferred from the general fund of the Treasury to the Fund not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this subsection.

"(B) TRANSFER OF FUTURE CONTRIBUTED FUNDS.—As soon as practicable after the date on which amounts described in paragraph (3)(A)(ii) are contributed, those amounts shall be transferred to the Fund.

"(C) RESPONSIBILITY OF STATE PARTIES.—In accordance with the Agreement, on deposit of amounts in the Fund under paragraph (3), the State Parties shall not be responsible for any losses due to investment of those amounts the Fund."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) and the gentleman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 831, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 831, the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Amendment Act of 2025, sponsored by Representative CALVERT from California.

The Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program aims to conserve native fish populations, increase habitat for migratory birds in the Lower Colorado River Basin, and allow for continued water and power deliveries.

The Federal Government contributes 50 percent of its funding, and three Lower Basin States provide the remainder. In recent years, however, the pace of funding has outpaced the pace of work, leaving available funds idle.

This legislation would authorize the Bureau of Reclamation to place the program's non-Federal funds in an interest-bearing account, providing approximately \$2 million annually that would otherwise be borne by the Lower Basin States.

I commend Representative CALVERT for his continued leadership, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 831.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, if I could, this is the last of a marathon of bills. I think the breadth of the bills we saw today are a testament to this committee, from protecting sequoias in California to addressing invasive blue catfish in the Chesapeake to supporting national parks in Mississippi, Missouri, and Arizona to the bill before us now. I am just in awe of this committee's work product.

I thank the chair, the ranking member, and the committee staff. This is what Americans sent us to do, and I am grateful to be a part of it. I thank my colleague from Virginia for his professionalism, as well.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 831, offered by my colleague Representative CALVERT of California.

As we stand here today, the seven basin States are continuing negotiations on an agreement that will shape the future of the Colorado River, which has ramifications across the region.

The post-2026 operations are critical to managing the already overallocated river in a changing climate which has led to unprecedented drought conditions and declining water levels at key reservoirs.

I appreciate the work the States have already done to move toward a solution

and urge them and the Department of the Interior to continue working together to reach an agreement.

The Department of the Interior must also ensure that the 30 Tribal nations in the basin are part of a long-term solution, as part of the long history of collaboration in the basin, to accomplish the shared goal of continued delivery of water and power while protecting ecosystems.

Lower water levels have accelerated the spread of invasive, nonnative species and the reduction of critical habitat for native fish and wildlife.

H.R. 831 authorizes an interest-bearing account for non-Federal contributions to the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, allowing these funds to accrue interest that can be reinvested back into the program.

This program brings together Federal, State, and local partners to protect endangered species while also ensuring the continued water operations and maintenance activities of the Lower Basin. It is funded through a 50/50 cost-sharing agreement between the Federal Government and the three Lower Basin States.

Currently no non-Federal contributions to the program are held in a non-interest-bearing account. By authorizing an interest-bearing account, H.R. 831 will help provide additional funding to further support the stability of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program and help balance water operations and ecosystem health in the Lower Basin. I urge support of H.R. 831.

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STANTON).

Mr. STANTON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Act, a bipartisan bill that is absolutely critical to the future of my home State of Arizona and the American West.

The Colorado River is the lifeblood of our region. More than 40 million people across the seven basin States depend on it for drinking water, agriculture, and economic vitality. In Arizona alone, it supports our cities, our farmers, our Tribal communities, and our economy, including our critical semiconductor industry.

But this river is under enormous pressure from a drought now entering its 25th year, from overuse, and from a changing climate that is reshaping the West as we know it. At the same time, dozens of native fish, migratory birds, and plant species that depend on this river are fighting for survival.

The Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program is an incredibly successful collaboration between the Federal Government, the States, and key stakeholders. It has been doing the hard work on the ground for over two decades to manage habitats and protect native species.

This program has successfully established thousands of acres of native ri-

parian and aquatic habitat, stocked the river with native fish, and increased the numbers of breeding migratory birds over more than 5,000 acres.

The program also provides a measure of reliability and certainty for future river operations. States like Arizona have a responsibility under the Endangered Species Act to protect these vulnerable habitats while balancing the need to deliver Colorado River water to users across the State and region.

This fund gives the Lower Basin an essential tool to protect the health of the river, and it is one less thing to fight over at a time when tensions over the river's future are exceptionally high.

The Lower Basin States of Arizona, California, and Nevada are continuing to put our money where our mouth is, contributing millions to the conservation of this critical resource.

This bill simply ensures that the money we contribute to the program can accrue interest as it sits in the Treasury's coffers. Dollars that our States put in will go a lot further at no additional cost to the taxpayers of this country.

I thank my colleagues for their partnership in getting this bill to the House floor, especially Congressman KEN CALVERT of California and Congresswoman SUSIE LEE of Nevada.

Madam Speaker, I urge colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this commonsense, bipartisan legislation.

□ 1800

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this critical piece of legislation. I thank the gentleman from Arizona for helping out today and using the word "riparian" on the House floor. That is always one of my favorite things.

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

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

I also want to reflect on Representative ELFRETH's words, and that is the incredible work by the Natural Resources Committee, the leadership there with Chairman WESTERMAN and Ranking Member HUFFMAN, and an incredible staff. They do a lot to bring these bills to the floor to make sure, too, that they work through to make sure they can receive bipartisan support. Truly, what Congress needs to do is get bills through that have impacts on these districts.

Madam Speaker, you heard from Members today about the incredible impact these bills have on people's lives and on their districts. That is what makes legislating important. We should never forget that. People send us here to get things done, to get bills like this done. While they may be somewhat parochial in how they affect certain regions, it is critical to the Nation that we understand that all of us benefit when these great national treasures and natural resources are enhanced and conserved. That is really what makes it great.

I appreciate Representative ELFRETH's work and her cooperation on H.R. 4294 in making sure we find a way to productively use a resource that is now in overabundance and making sure that we do everything we can within that realm.

It is key to us as members of the Natural Resources Committee to make sure we get these things done. We are entrusted not only as legislators, but we are entrusted by the people who elect us to be the stewards of what they own: the great lands, treasures, and natural resources of this Nation. That is what makes us great.

There is no other place on the planet that has this great abundance of resources that have such great impact on communities. We are all honored to be here today as advocates for that, along with our fellow Members, to make sure these pieces of legislation see their way to being signed into law.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I thank the incredible staff on the Natural Resources Committee for what has culminated today in a number of fantastic pieces of legislation that will make a difference in people's lives. We will continue to preserve what we hold great in this Nation, and that is our true national treasure, our natural resources.

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

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to approve my bipartisan legislation, H.R. 831, the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Amendment Act of 2025. My bill is simple and straightforward: it would establish an interest-bearing account for the nonfederal contributions for the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, a cooperative effort between federal and nonfederal entities in Arizona, California, and Nevada to recover endangered species.

At a time when Congress and the Administration are looking to streamline government processes and make the taxpayer dollar go further, this bill is a perfect example of this effort. Funds deposited in the account can be accessed as needed and provide expanded opportunities for longterm investments in critical habitat restoration projects. This is especially important because over time, the pace of funding has exceeded the work expenditures, and Reclamation has accumulated over \$60 million in contributed funds for future costs.

There are multiple examples of funds established by congressional action in the U.S. Treasury that are directed to be invested or to earn interest, such as the Social Security Trust Fund. It's simply common sense that we provide this same mechanism to an oversubscribed program that can deliver more benefits, more quickly.

I want to thank the Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, my friend BRUCE WESTERMAN, for steering this bill through his Committee.

I urge all of my colleagues to approve this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the

rules and pass the bill, H.R. 831, 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.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-3009. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Freedom of Information Act Implementing Regulations [NRC-2024-0044] (RIN: 3150-AL14) received March 6, 2026, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

EC-3010. A letter from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — West Virginia Regulatory Program [SATS No. WV-120-FOR; Docket ID: OSM-2014-0006; S1D1S SS08011000 SX064A000 256S180110; S2D2S SS08011000 SX064A000 25XS501520] received March 4, 2026, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-3011. A letter from the Senior Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Removing an Obsolete, One-Time Reporting Requirement From the Regulations Governing the Use of Supplies in Emergency Relief Work (RIN: 0625-AB31) received February 9, 2026, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. GRAVES: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. House Concurrent Resolution 73. Resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the National Peace Officers' Memorial Service and the National Honor Guard and Pipe Band Exhibition (Rept. 119-544). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. GRAVES: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 6480. A bill to direct the Administrator of General Services to submit a report to Congress on the state of the real estate portfolio of the Public Building Service, and for other purposes

(Rept. 119-545). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GRAVES: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 6267. A bill to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on the impediments to digital documentation and verification in the aviation supply chain, and for other purposes (Rept. 119-546). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GRAVES: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 5663. A bill to modify the termination of the aviation consumer protection advisory committee, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 119-547). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GRAVES: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 6618. A bill to require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to conduct a study on drone incursions on wildfire suppression, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 119-548). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GRAVES: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 6460. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to clarify exceptions for limited recreational operations of unmanned aircraft, and for other purposes (Rept. 119-549). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GRAVES: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 3410. A bill to allow for the operation of civil supersonic flight in the national airspace system under certain conditions, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 119-550). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GRAVES: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 2247. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize the use of physical or digital copies of certain certificates for certain Federal Aviation Administration inspections, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 119-551). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GRAVES: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 6427. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to permit the use of State highway standards for airfield pavement construction and improvement under certain circumstances, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 119-552). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GRAVES: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 6481. A bill to direct the Administrator of General Services and the Director of the Federal Protective Service to establish guidance relating to emergency communication protocols for public buildings, and for other purposes (Rept. 119-553). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Ms. FOXX: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 1115. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 556) to prohibit the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture from prohibiting the use of lead ammunition or tackle on certain Federal land or water under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1958) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify that aliens who have been convicted of defrauding the United States Government or the unlawful receipt of public benefits are inadmissible and deportable; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4638) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide that an alien who has been convicted of harming ani-

mals used in law enforcement is inadmissible and deportable, and for other purposes; and relating to consideration of motions to suspend the rules (Rept. 119-554). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. PALMER (for himself and Mr. MFUME):

H.R. 7934. A bill to amend chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code, to require the publication of settlement agreements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. MCGUIRE:

H.R. 7935. A bill to provide for a cause of action enabling recovery of any person harmed by the limitation on ability to carry a firearm in a different jurisdiction; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BAIRD (for himself, Ms. HOULAHAN, Mrs. BICE, and Mr. KHANNA):

H.R. 7936. A bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to support the development, demonstration, and commercial application of biotechnology products to increase energy resiliency, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. BEYER (for himself, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Ms. MCBRIDE, Mr. THANEDAR, Ms. RANDALL, and Mr. DELUZZIO):

H.R. 7937. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make certain modifications in relation to the taxation of income required to fund basic living expenses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. BUDZINSKI:

H.R. 7938. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a grocery, farm, and food worker stabilization grant program; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas:

H.R. 7939. A bill to ensure rights under the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution are protected during immigration enforcement actions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GROTHMAN (for himself, Mr. POCAN, and Mr. WIED):

H.R. 7940. A bill to amend the Federal Power Act to require the consideration of invasive species when prescribing fishways, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. LANGWORTHY (for himself, Mr. LAWLER, and Ms. MALLIOTAKIS):

H.R. 7941. A bill to ensure the passenger security fee paid by airline passengers is used exclusively for aviation security, establish a Transportation Security Trust Fund to support the operations and personnel of the Transportation Security Administration, and ensure continuity of aviation security operations during a lapse in appropriations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. LEVIN:

H.R. 7942. A bill to amend the Commodity Exchange Act to prohibit the listing of contracts relating to war, death, and similar activities; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. BARRAGÁN, and Mr. CARTER of Louisiana):

H.R. 7943. A bill to establish within the Federal Communications Commission the

Communications Equity and Diversity Council, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MOORE of Utah (for himself and Mrs. TORRES of California):

H.R. 7944. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to apply the floor plan financing interest rules to semitrailers; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. MULLIN:

H.R. 7945. A bill to ban the sale of nitrous oxide consumer products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 7946. A bill to exempt breastfeeding individuals from jury duty, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. PINGREE:

H.R. 7947. A bill to amend the Federal Crop Insurance Act to improve education and risk management assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mrs. RAMIREZ:

H.R. 7948. A bill to deem certain individuals as parents of Department of Veterans Affairs employees for purposes of determining entitlement to certain family and medical leave for such employees; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. RILEY of New York (for himself and Mr. BAIRD):

H.R. 7949. A bill to amend the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 to provide for grants to support plant and microbial biology research with potential relevance to agriculture, food, or biotechnology, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. SELF:

H.R. 7950. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs in the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. VALADAO (for himself and Mr. PANETTA):

H.R. 7951. A bill to amend the Agricultural Act of 2014 and the EXPLORE Act to provide for long-term Good Neighbor Authority, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WALKINSHAW (for himself and Mr. MOYLAN):

H.R. 7952. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to prohibit a reduction in the number of personnel assigned to duty with a service review agency, to direct the Secretary of Defense to submit a report regarding consideration of reviews and appeals of discharges or dismissals, based on matters relating to post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to post a summary of such report online, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. MENG (for herself, Ms. CHU, Mrs. MCBATH, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Ms. NORTON, Mr.

KRISHNAMOORTHY, Ms. SEWELL, Mr. MIN, Mr. THANEDAR, and Mr. TAKANO):

H. Res. 1116. A resolution commemorating the 5-year remembrance of the March 16, 2021, shootings in the Atlanta, Georgia, region and denouncing continuing anti-Asian hate, including the resurgence of xenophobic and anti-immigrant rhetoric; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MULLIN:

H. Res. 1117. A resolution expressing support for the designation of March as "Multiple System Atrophy Awareness Month" to strengthen public awareness of this neurodegenerative disorder; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. PALMER:

H.R. 7934.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8

By Mr. MCGUIRE:

H.R. 7935.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8

By Mr. BAIRD:

H.R. 7936.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 (Commerce Clause)

By Mr. BEYER:

H.R. 7937.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Ms. BUDZINSKI:

H.R. 7938.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8

By Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas:

H.R. 7939.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. GROTHMAN:

H.R. 7940.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. LANGWORTHY:

H.R. 7941.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article 1 of the Constitution

By Mr. LEVIN:

H.R. 7942.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

H.R. 7943.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises,

to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

By Mr. MOORE of Utah:

H.R. 7944.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. MULLIN:

H.R. 7945.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18 of section 8 of article 1 of the Constitution

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 7946.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18 of section 8 of Article I of the Constitution.

By Ms. PINGREE:

H.R. 7947.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I

By Mrs. RAMIREZ:

H.R. 7948.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. RILEY of New York:

H.R. 7949.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section VIII

By Mr. SELF:

H.R. 7950.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. VALADAO:

H.R. 7951.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. WALKINSHAW:

H.R. 7952.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 40: Ms. DEXTER and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.

H.R. 116: Mr. VAN EPPS.

H.R. 138: Mr. WITTMAN and Ms. TENNEY.

H.R. 161: Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 710: Mr. SCHMIDT.

H.R. 879: Mr. SHERMAN.

H.R. 887: Mr. SORENSON.

H.R. 925: Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 1046: Mr. KELLY of Mississippi and Mr. FEENSTRA.

H.R. 1189: Ms. KELLY of Illinois.

H.R. 1227: Mr. CARBAJAL.

H.R. 1285: Ms. MORRISON.

H.R. 1464: Ms. ANSARI.

H.R. 1707: Mr. CORREA.

H.R. 1732: Mr. CARBAJAL and Mr. KENNEDY of New York.

H.R. 1775: Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia.

H.R. 1778: Mr. MORAN.

H.R. 1845: Ms. MCBRIDE.

H.R. 1954: Ms. MCBRIDE.

H.R. 1970: Mr. BRESNAHAN.

H.R. 1993: Ms. RIVAS, Mr. FROST, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. EZELL, Mr. HORSFORD, and Mr. GOLDEN of Maine.

H.R. 2028: Mr. ONDER and Mr. DELUZIO.
 H.R. 2048: Mr. AGUILAR.
 H.R. 2075: Mr. SCHMIDT.
 H.R. 2086: Ms. RIVAS, Mr. HUFFMAN, and Mr. GOMEZ.
 H.R. 2459: Ms. MCBRIDE.
 H.R. 2484: Mr. HUDSON.
 H.R. 2487: Ms. SCANLON and Ms. MCBRIDE.
 H.R. 2540: Mr. COHEN and Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
 H.R. 2585: Mr. MCGOVERN.
 H.R. 2586: Mr. DUNN of Florida.
 H.R. 2623: Mrs. RADEWAGEN.
 H.R. 2767: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Mr. BACON.
 H.R. 2848: Ms. SALINAS.
 H.R. 2849: Ms. SALINAS.
 H.R. 3028: Mr. JOYCE of Ohio.
 H.R. 3067: Ms. SIMON and Ms. BYNUM.
 H.R. 3105: Mr. LAHOOD.
 H.R. 3132: Mr. WESTERMAN.
 H.R. 3226: Mr. BARR.
 H.R. 3243: Ms. MCBRIDE.
 H.R. 3415: Mrs. GRIJALVA, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. SIMON, and Mr. FROST.
 H.R. 3443: Mr. MACKENZIE.
 H.R. 3491: Mr. WITTMAN.
 H.R. 3512: Mr. PATRONIS.
 H.R. 3585: Ms. MCBRIDE and Mr. KELLY of Mississippi.
 H.R. 3708: Mrs. RAMIREZ.
 H.R. 3762: Mr. MACKENZIE, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, and Mr. WITTMAN.
 H.R. 4074: Mr. MACKENZIE.
 H.R. 4100: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
 H.R. 4101: Mr. SCHMIDT.
 H.R. 4145: Mr. KUSTOFF.
 H.R. 4166: Ms. SCHOLTEN.
 H.R. 4197: Ms. MCBRIDE.
 H.R. 4318: Mrs. RADEWAGEN.
 H.R. 4382: Mr. LAWLER and Mr. RUIZ.
 H.R. 4531: Mr. FINE.
 H.R. 4588: Mr. STEIL.
 H.R. 4669: Ms. SCHOLTEN.
 H.R. 4695: Mr. SMITH of Washington.
 H.R. 4710: Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY.
 H.R. 4763: Mr. HUFFMAN.
 H.R. 4831: Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina.
 H.R. 5199: Mr. BACON.
 H.R. 5267: Mr. VEASEY and Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina.
 H.R. 5269: Ms. JAYAPAL.
 H.R. 5343: Mr. MEUSER and Ms. CRAIG.
 H.R. 5357: Mr. LATIMER.
 H.R. 5408: Mr. BERGMAN and Ms. SCHOLTEN.
 H.R. 5434: Mr. CORREA.
 H.R. 5441: Mr. WITTMAN.
 H.R. 5475: Mr. SCHMIDT and Mr. LEVIN.
 H.R. 5525: Mr. BURLISON.
 H.R. 5605: Ms. ROSS.
 H.R. 5688: Mr. MOORE of Alabama, Mr. MEUSER, Mr. MAST, Mr. BRESNAHAN, Mr.

YAKYM, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, and Mr. TAYLOR.
 H.R. 5710: Mr. DUNN of Florida.
 H.R. 5732: Ms. MCBRIDE.
 H.R. 6028: Mr. LOUDERMILK and Mr. MURPHY.
 H.R. 6130: Mr. MCDOWELL, Mr. NORCROSS, Ms. MCBRIDE, and Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia.
 H.R. 6190: Mr. LANGWORTHY.
 H.R. 6199: Ms. DEXTER.
 H.R. 6214: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.
 H.R. 6256: Mr. VASQUEZ and Mr. WIED.
 H.R. 6303: Mr. TONKO.
 H.R. 6319: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
 H.R. 6444: Mrs. RADEWAGEN and Ms. MCBRIDE.
 H.R. 6467: Mr. IVEY and Mr. HOYER.
 H.R. 6469: Mr. LALOTA and Mr. MOSKOWITZ.
 H.R. 6574: Ms. STRICKLAND and Mr. MAGAZINER.
 H.R. 6597: Mr. AMO.
 H.R. 6625: Ms. BROWNLEY.
 H.R. 6677: Mr. FIGURES.
 H.R. 6806: Mr. LICCARDO.
 H.R. 6832: Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS.
 H.R. 6858: Mr. HARDER of California, Ms. MCBRIDE, and Mrs. RADEWAGEN.
 H.R. 6875: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
 H.R. 6951: Mr. POCAN and Ms. SIMON.
 H.R. 6993: Mr. LALOTA.
 H.R. 7004: Mr. VASQUEZ.
 H.R. 7058: Mr. FINE.
 H.R. 7156: Mrs. BIGGS of South Carolina, Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, and Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia.
 H.R. 7230: Mr. STANTON.
 H.R. 7253: Ms. MCBRIDE and Mr. FEENSTRA.
 H.R. 7300: Mr. BOST.
 H.R. 7346: Mr. DOGGETT.
 H.R. 7354: Ms. MCBRIDE.
 H.R. 7363: Mr. SMITH of Washington.
 H.R. 7398: Ms. BROWNLEY, Mr. PFLUGER, and Ms. MCBRIDE.
 H.R. 7421: Mr. ALLEN.
 H.R. 7438: Mr. LAWLER, Mr. HARDER of California, Ms. LEE of Nevada, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Ms. JAYAPAL, and Ms. MCBRIDE.
 H.R. 7452: Mr. RUTHERFORD.
 H.R. 7481: Mr. BERA, Ms. BROWN, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. GOODLANDER, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. VINDMAN, Ms. POU, Mr. MULLIN, Mrs. HAYES, Ms. TOKUDA, Mrs. FOUSHEE, and Mr. MAGAZINER.
 H.R. 7539: Mr. TAYLOR.
 H.R. 7548: Mr. LAWLER.
 H.R. 7591: Mr. CARBAJAL.
 H.R. 7617: Mr. LIEU.
 H.R. 7651: Ms. HAGEMAN, Mr. MCCORMICK, Mrs. HOUCHIN, Mr. STAUBER, and Mr. FINSTAD.

H.R. 7661: Mr. MCGUIRE.
 H.R. 7678: Mr. SCHMIDT.
 H.R. 7679: Mr. MACKENZIE.
 H.R. 7710: Ms. ESCOBAR.
 H.R. 7733: Mr. FROST.
 H.R. 7747: Mr. BRESNAHAN.
 H.R. 7802: Mr. MFUME.
 H.R. 7839: Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, and Mr. BUCHANAN.
 H.R. 7844: Mr. LIEU, Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE, Mr. MIN, Mr. LICCARDO, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. BERA.
 H.R. 7845: Mr. PANETTA.
 H.R. 7877: Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
 H.R. 7898: Mr. ALLEN.
 H.R. 7920: Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania.
 H.R. 7932: Mr. HURD of Colorado, Mr. MACKENZIE, Mr. BARRETT, Ms. KING-HINDS, and Mrs. HINSON.
 H.J. Res. 12: Mr. JAMES and Mr. FEENSTRA.
 H.J. Res. 54: Mr. LEVIN.
 H.J. Res. 122: Mr. TONKO.
 H. Con. Res. 12: Mr. HERN of Oklahoma.
 H. Res. 1073: Ms. MCBRIDE.
 H. Res. 1088: Mr. MFUME.
 H. Res. 1107: Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. CROW, and Mr. STANTON.

PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII, petitions and papers were laid on the clerk's desk and referred as follows:

PT-5. The SPEAKER presented a petition of Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners, relative to Resolution No. R-65-26, urging President Donald J. Trump to direct all relevant federal agencies to immediately suspend all applicable Cuba-related authorizations, general licenses, specific licenses, license exceptions, and other approvals for exports, re-exports, financial transactions, services, or business activities to or involving Cuba, except as statutorily required for food and medicine; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

PT-6. Also, a petition of Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners, relative to Resolution No. R-64-26, expressing support for President Donald J. Trump's actions to order and effectuate the arrest of wanted fugitive Nicolas Maduro; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

PT-7. Also, a petition of Office of the San Diego City Attorney, relative to Opposition to H.R. 38, the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act; to the Committee on the Judiciary.



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 172

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2026

No. 47

Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TED BUDD, a Senator from the State of North Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by Rev. Lisa Wink Schultz. She is the staff resident in the Chaplain's office.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Gracious and merciful God, we praise You that none of Your purposes can be thwarted. You have been our shelter from one generation to another.

Continue to guide our lawmakers along right paths. May they find fullness of joy in Your presence and pleasure forevermore.

Today, equip them with what they need to do Your will, working in them that which is pleasing in Your sight. Help them to live with the sense of accountability to You, understanding that their thoughts, words, and actions are open to Your review.

And, Lord, bring peace to our Nation and world.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The senior assistant executive clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 16, 2026.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable TED BUDD, a Senator from the State of North Carolina, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BUDD thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Anna St. John, of Louisiana, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the previously scheduled rollcall vote on the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 673, Anna St. John, now occur at 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 17.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BARRASSO. I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, Americans are watching in horror as Donald Trump bumbles this country into war. The latest job numbers show our economy is even weaker than we thought. But what are MAGA Republicans prioritizing in the Senate this week? They are conspiring with Donald Trump to undermine democracy and disenfranchise millions of Americans by pushing the SAVE Act.

MAGA Republicans want to drag this Chamber down and waste time on a bill that not too long ago was considered fringe but now is part of the Republican mainstream. Not a single Democrat will support the SAVE Act. It is a radical bill, and if Republicans try to burn time on this legislation here on the floor, we will oppose them for as long as it takes.

Donald Trump and Senate Republicans know their numbers are sinking badly. They know the American people are souring on their agenda. They know that with each passing day, their prospects for November get worse. So what do they do? Do they change course? Do they try to work with Democrats to lower grocery costs, stop the Iran war, help lower people's energy bills? No. Instead, MAGA Republicans try to rig democracy and disenfranchise American citizens. That is exactly what the SAVE Act is all about.

Remember, all the election laws that govern how the 2026 midterms will operate were in place during the 2024 election—the election of Donald Trump again. The laws that will be in effect in 2026 were the same laws during the 2024 election. That was the election that Donald Trump won. You don't hear Donald Trump and Republicans complain that the 2024 election was rigged.

But now the main difference is that Donald Trump and Republicans are horribly unpopular. So, suddenly, they want to change the rules. Donald Trump said it himself. He said if Republicans pass the SAVE Act, "it'll

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S1053

guarantee the midterms." He is saying: Fix the election so that we can win.

This isn't the first time he has tried to do that, albeit in a different way this time.

Think about that. The President of the United States is saying out loud that making it harder to vote will help his party win. That is how an autocrat talks. That is how a thug talks. That is how someone who knows they are about to lose talks.

Now, MAGA Republicans keep calling this voter ID, but the SAVE Act is not a voter ID bill; it is a voter suppression bill. The SAVE Act would make it easier to buy an AR-15 than to register to vote. Republicans won't tell Americans, for example, that under the SAVE Act, States would be required to hand over voter records to be screened through a DHS system rebuilt by Elon Musk's DOGE squad. Do you think that is on the level? No way.

This is not about protecting democracy; this is about giving Trump and his allies more power to decide who gets to vote and who does not. If, God forbid, this bill passed and your State turned over its election rolls and it went through the system that DOGE has imposed at DHS, you could be very easily purged from the rolls through no fault of your own and nothing you have done. But once you are purged, you may not even know that you were purged until you show up to cast your ballot on election day.

Republicans won't tell Americans that their bill would wipe out the most common ways Americans register to vote. No more registering by mail. No more voter registration drives at churches or on college campuses. No more registration when you get a driver's license.

Under the SAVE Act, Americans would be forced to register in person even though only 6 percent of Americans registered in person to vote in 2022, and Republicans want to make this the only option. They won't tell Americans that a driver's license or State-issued ID would no longer be enough to register.

Indeed, many Americans would need additional paperwork like a passport or a birth certificate. Fewer than half of Americans even have a passport. Millions of Americans do not have easy access to a birth certificate. If you changed your name after marriage, you could run into problems too.

And now, Donald Trump says he doesn't even want vote by mail. Tell that to seniors, tell that to disabled Americans, tell that to Americans who live in rural communities far from an election office. Put simply, the SAVE Act is designed to make it harder to vote and easier to steal an election.

Once again, let me just repeat: You can be purged from the rolls. There is no requirement that you be notified that you were purged. You did nothing wrong. You were the same person who voted that way 2 years earlier.

And guess what. You show up at the polling place, and they say: Sorry, Mr.

Jones, sorry Ms. Smith, you are not on the rolls anymore. You had no way of knowing, and then you can't vote because you are just finding out when you show up to the polls to vote on election day. It is outrageous. It is cynical. It is un-American. It is autocratic.

Donald Trump knows that if the election is fair, he could lose. So instead of changing his policies, he and the MAGA Republicans—now, all we see are so many Republicans, too many, seem to be going along, want to make it harder for Americans to vote.

That is who Donald Trump is. He is a bully. He does not know how to persuade. He threatens. He coerces. And now he is trying to do that to American democracy itself.

Senate Democrats will not let Donald Trump ram this bill through the Senate, not this week, not next week, not ever.

IRAN

Mr. President, the Senate's prayers are with the families of the six servicemembers killed in a plane crash late last week in Iraq. Thirteen U.S. servicemembers have now been killed.

We hold them in our hearts, as well as everyone killed and injured in the Middle East, as well as their families.

The war Donald Trump promised would be over quickly is now entering its third week, and no end is in sight. Iran is fully exerting its leverage over the Strait of Hormuz, sending oil prices surging across the globe. Brent crude is once again above \$100 a barrel. Right now, gas is \$3.70 at the pump. Oil executives told the White House last week: No matter what happens next, prices are likely to rise even higher in the weeks ahead.

So what is Donald Trump's plan to bring this economic pain to an end? Sadly, America, he doesn't have one. It is something different every day. No plan. No followthrough.

If you listen to his press conference earlier today, it was obvious: Donald Trump is flailing. Donald Trump claimed he predicted long ago that the Strait of Hormuz would be used as a weapon.

Well, if that is true, then he has done a terrible job planning in advance for how to stop it from being used as a weapon, and he continues to do a terrible job containing the damage that is now occurring.

Trump also claimed today:

They want to make a deal. They are talking to our people.

And then moments later he said:

All their leaders are dead. We don't even know who we are dealing with.

Which one is it? The leaders want to make a deal or we don't know who the leaders are? If you can say those two contradictory things within the same few minutes, something is dramatically wrong, and it is with Donald Trump.

Does Donald Trump know whom he is talking to or not? Are talks even hap-

pening? The Commander in Chief seems totally lost and in over his depth.

Donald Trump now claims that other countries are going to help the United States clear the Strait of Hormuz and bashed our own allies for voicing hesitation about putting troops in harm's way. And so far, no country has publicly said it would step up.

Now, Donald Trump even says his administration has been asking China to help us out in the Strait of Hormuz. China. Are you kidding me? China—relying on China to get us out of a mess that Donald Trump created. They are not going to do that. Fat chance they will do that.

Donald Trump created a mess in the Middle East, and he clearly has no plan for how to end it. That is a huge problem for our country. War—unnecessary, unnecessary, endless war.

ENERGY

Mr. President, lower costs and agenda on energy prices is the next thing I want to address. The war with Iran has only made the cost-of-living crisis worse for American families.

Does Donald Trump care? Of course not.

He says, if prices rise, he says, they rise. Republicans say that people paying more for gas is just a price they should be willing to pay. That is an outrageous thing to say as families struggle to keep their heads above water financially.

Instead of wasting billions on a foreign war, he should be working with Congress to lower energy costs here at home. That is exactly what Democrats are focused on—lowering costs for American families. And one of our focuses is energy costs.

So tomorrow, the Democrats will release a new report laying out Donald Trump's many broken promises on energy costs. Trump promised he would cut people's electricity bills in half by the end of his first year in office. But electricity bills have risen at almost triple—triple—the rate of inflation.

Even as his war with Iran sends gas prices higher, Donald Trump is simultaneously undermining any energy production here at home by killing hundreds of clean energy projects across the country.

Those projects would have provided enough energy to power 14 million homes. When you cut out clean energy—which he did in a vicious, nasty, vindictive way—you raise prices because the cheapest way to get new electrons on the grid is solar, and wind is not too far behind.

He cut them out. He cut them out because of a pet peeve. He didn't like clean energy because windmills were built off the coast near his golf course in Scotland.

Since then, there has been a war on clean energy, not to mention the corruption that the oil and gas industry, under the leadership of Harold Hamm—at least if you read the papers—promised him \$1 billion if he killed clean energy. Well, he has killed clean energy,

and the odds are pretty high he got a lot of that money.

I want to thank my colleagues MARTIN HEINRICH and SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, whom I am co-releasing this report with. This report helps lay the foundation for how the Democratic Senate majority would lower energy costs for the American people, and it is part of our broader, yearlong effort to lay out a Democratic vision to lower the cost of living across the board.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The majority whip.

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor having just heard the minority leader address this body in talking about a fringe position. It has to do with voting in America in our elections.

And, essentially, what the minority leader said—he said it is fringe to have to prove that you are a citizen in order to vote. Apparently, the Democrats view that as a fringe position that you have to prove you are a citizen in order to vote in elections in the United States of America in a national election.

The minority leader additionally said it was basically fringe to have to show a photo ID when you cast a vote in an election. Those are mainstream, commonsense ideas.

The Democrats and Joe Biden let 10 million—if not more—illegal immigrants flood into this country over the 4 years of the Biden administration; and now, what do the Democrats want to do? They want to make it easier for illegal immigrants to go to the polls and to influence and have an impact on the elections in the United States of America.

To me, that is a fringe idea to allow illegal immigrants to vote, but that is what the Democrats are here promoting. I believe you should prove you are a citizen if you want to vote in the United States. I believe you need to show a photo ID when you need to vote.

That is what we have to do in my home State of Wyoming. Many States require it. But not the Democrat States that have been swamped with illegal immigrants and the sanctuary cities to allow anyone to come in, abuse the laws of the land, abuse the privileges of citizens.

That, to me, is a fringe idea, but that is what Democrats are going to stand for this week on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

You need to show an ID if you board a plane. You have got to show an ID if you go to a sporting event and buy a beer.

Why would you not have to show an ID to vote in an election in the United States? And then to hear the minority leader—I mean, it is astonishing. I wrote it down. He said: No more voter registration when you get a driver's license, as if there is something wrong with that.

Nineteen States give driver's licenses to people who are in this country illegally. So, of course, I don't want those people to be able to be registering to vote when they get a driver's license. I don't want them to even get a driver's license.

The minority leader thinks that is business as usual—give the illegal immigrants a driver's license and sign them up to vote, one step after another. We don't care if they are here legally or illegally. Sign them up. Maybe they will vote for us. That is the Democrat position in all of this.

The bill that we are going to be addressing this week on the floor, the SAVE America Act, that is the way we can have safe, secure elections that reflect the viewpoints of the American people.

So when I hear what is fringe, what I think is fringe is the Democrats in this body—and I think every one of them is going to stand with the extreme wing of their party—who want to allow illegal immigrants to vote and have an influence in the elections in this country. It is absolutely wrong.

This week, we are going to put every one of them on the record, and by the time this is over, every American is going to know that the Democrats are the party—that they are the party of illegal immigrants, open borders, and illegal voters.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOTICE TO SUSPEND RULES

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, in accordance with rule V of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby provide notice that I intend to move to suspend the operation of rule XXV, paragraph

(n)(1) to permit the Committee on Rules and Administration to consider the following motion with respect to the message to accompany S. 1383:

Motion to refer with instructions: That the Message to accompany S. 1383 be referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration with instruction that the Committee consider legislation that fully funds the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) through fiscal year 2026.

NOTICE TO SUSPEND RULES

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, in accordance with rule V of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby provide notice that I intend to move to suspend the operation of rule XXV, paragraph (n)(1) to permit the Committee on Rules and Administration to consider the following motion with respect to the message to accompany S. 1383:

Motion to refer with instructions: That the Message to accompany S. 1383 be referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration with instruction that the Committee consider legislation that restricts a current President of the United States of America from receiving payments from the Department of Justice.

NOTICE TO SUSPEND RULES

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, in accordance with rule V of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby provide notice that I intend to move to suspend the operation of rule XXV, paragraph (n)(1) to permit the Committee on Rules and Administration to consider the following motion with respect to the message to accompany S. 1383:

Motion to refer with instructions: That the Message to accompany S. 1383 be referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration with instruction that the Committee review the compliance of the Department of Justice with the requirements of P.L. 119-38, the Epstein Files Transparency Act.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. REED, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 4097. A bill to establish that a State-based education loan program is excluded from certain requirements relating to a preferred lender arrangement; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BUDD (for himself and Mr. KIM):

S. 4098. A bill to establish standards and guidelines to make open Government data assets artificial intelligence-ready, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. GRASSLEY:

S. 4099. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to ensure that Federal employees are fully informed of their whistleblower rights; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 4100. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to clarify whistleblower protections for duty speech disclosures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LUJÁN:

S. 4101. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a grocery, farm, and food worker stabilization grant program; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER (for herself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. KIM, Mr. COONS, Mr. FETTERMAN, Ms. ALSOBROOKS, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 4102. A bill to amend the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act to reauthorize Delaware River Basin conservation programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself and Mr. CURTIS):

S. 4103. A bill to improve the health and resiliency of giant sequoias, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 4104. A bill to direct the Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics to establish a database with respect to corporate offenses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

S. Res. 643. A resolution designating March 12, 2026, as "Detransition Awareness Day"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself, Mr. COONS, and Mr. BANKS):

S. Res. 644. A resolution honoring the life and legacy of Coach Louis Leo "Lou" Holtz; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 142

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 142, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to wildland firefighters in recognition of their strength, resiliency, sacrifice, and service to protect the forests, grasslands, and communities of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 437

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. KIM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 437, a bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 and title 5, United States Code, to permit leave to care for a domestic partner, parent-in-law, or adult child, or another related individual, who has a serious health condition, and to allow employees to take, as additional leave, parental involvement and family wellness leave to participate in or attend their children's and grand children's educational and extracurricular activities or meet family care needs.

S. 525

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 525, a bill to transfer the functions, duties, responsibilities, assets, liabilities, orders, determinations, rules, regulations, permits, grants, loans, contracts, agreements, certificates, licenses, and privileges of the United States Agency for International Development relating to implementing and administering the Food for Peace Act to the Department of Agriculture.

S. 567

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) were added as cosponsors of S. 567, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Rhode Island Regiment, in recognition of their dedicated service during the Revolutionary War.

S. 1144

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. MCCORMICK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1144, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat certain amounts paid for physical activity, fitness, and exercise as amounts paid for medical care.

S. 1284

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1284, a bill to permanently extend the exemption from the engine compartment portion of the pre-trip vehicle inspection skills testing requirement for school bus drivers, and for other purposes.

S. 3133

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3133, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to update the juvenile transfer for criminal prosecution process, and for other purposes.

S. 3597

At the request of Mr. YOUNG, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) were added as cosponsors of S. 3597, a bill to reauthorize the National Quantum Initiative Act, and for other purposes.

S. 3965

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3965, a bill to require the establishment and use of short form applications for rural communities applying for economic development grant programs, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself and Mr. CURTIS):

S. 4103. A bill to improve the health and resiliency of giant sequoias, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise today to reintroduce the bipartisan and bicameral Save Our Sequoias Act. This bill would enhance interagency coordination, accelerate forest restoration efforts, and provide important resources to land managers to guard, sequoia trees from further destruction.

Specifically this legislation, would, one, codify the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition; two, require the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to work with the coalition and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement a strategy to enhance the reforestation and rehabilitation of giant sequoia groves; three, provide congressional support for the use of existing emergency authorities to expedite sequoia wildfire resiliency projects; four, allow the Forest Service and National Park Service to partner with States, Tribes, local governments, or private entities to conduct resiliency projects in and around giant sequoia groves; and five, establish a philanthropic fund through the National Park Foundation to promote the resiliency of giant sequoias.

Giant sequoias, the world's largest trees, are found in roughly 70 groves across 37,000 acres in California. Over the last century, giant sequoia groves have experienced a dangerous buildup of fuels, which, in combination with increasingly intense wildfires, has caused unparalleled destruction. In the last 2 years alone, there has been a nearly 20 percent loss of these iconic trees.

For millennia, giant sequoia trees have been a hallmark of California's rich natural heritage. We must work collaboratively to protect these California icons from the threat of climate change and make sure they are preserved for generations to come.

I want to thank the late Senator Feinstein for leading this effort during her time in the Senate. As a public lands champion and lover of California's natural landscape, she understood the need to protect our environment, and I am honored to continue this vital work.

I also went to thank my colleague and friend Senator CURTIS for co-leading this effort with me in the Senate. Finally, I want to thank my California colleagues Representatives FONG and PETERS, for leading this legislation in the House. I look forward to working with my colleagues to advance the Save Our Sequoias Act as quickly as possible.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 4104. A bill to direct the Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics to establish a database with respect to corporate offenses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 4104

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 “Corporate Crime Database Act of 2025”.

SEC. 2. CORPORATE CRIME DATABASE AT THE BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Part C of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10131 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 305. CORPORATE CRIME DATABASE.

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) BUSINESS ENTITY.—The term ‘business entity’ means a corporation, association, partnership, limited liability company, limited liability partnership, or other legal entity.

“(2) CORPORATE OFFENSE.—The term ‘corporate offense’ means—

“(A) a violation or alleged violation of Federal law committed by—

“(i) a business entity; or

“(ii) an individual employed by a business entity within the conduct of the individual’s occupational role; and

“(B) any other violation determined by the Director to be a corporate offense.

“(3) DIRECTOR.—The term ‘Director’ means the Director of the Bureau.

“(4) ENFORCEMENT ACTION.—The term ‘enforcement action’ includes any concluded administrative, civil, or criminal enforcement action or any declination, settlement, deferred prosecution agreement, or non-prosecution agreement entered into by a Federal agency to enforce a law or regulation.

“(5) FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term ‘Federal agency’ has the meaning given the term ‘agency’ in section 551 of title 5, United States Code.

“(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—Beginning not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Corporate Crime Database Act of 2025, the Director shall—

“(1) collect, aggregate, and analyze information regarding enforcement actions taken with respect to corporate offenses; and

“(2) publish on the internet website of the Bureau a database of the enforcement actions described in paragraph (1).

“(c) INFORMATION INCLUDED.—The database established under subsection (b) shall include the following information on an enforcement action with respect to corporate offenses:

“(1) Each business entity or individual identified by the enforcement action.

“(2) The employer of an individual identified under paragraph (1), as determined relevant by the Director.

“(3) The parent company of a business entity identified under paragraph (1) or the parent company of any employer identified under paragraph (2), as determined relevant by the Director.

“(4) The type of offense or alleged offense committed by the business entity or individual.

“(5) Any relevant statute or regulation violated by the business entity or individual.

“(6) Each Federal agency bringing the enforcement action.

“(7) The outcome of the enforcement action, if any, including all documentation relevant to the outcome.

“(8) An unique identifier for each business entity, individual, employer, or parent company identified by the enforcement action.

“(9) Any additional information the Director determines necessary to carry out the purposes of this section.

“(d) INFORMATION COLLECTION BY DIRECTOR.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the Corporate Crime Database Act of 2025, the Director shall establish guidance for the collection of information from each Federal agency that carries out an enforcement action with respect to corporate offenses, including identification of each Federal agency that shall submit information to the Director and the manner in which, time at which, and frequency with which the information shall be submitted.

“(2) COOPERATION BY FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Each Federal agency identified in the guidance established under paragraph (1) shall submit to the Director the information specified by the Director, in accordance with that guidance.

“(3) TIMING OF INFORMATION INCLUDED.—To the extent to which information is available, the database established under subsection (b) shall include the information described in subsection (c) on each enforcement action with respect to corporate offenses taken by a Federal agency before, on, or after the date of enactment of the Corporate Crime Database Act of 2025.

“(e) PUBLICATION DETAILS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Corporate Crime Database Act of 2025, the Director shall publish on the internet website of the Bureau the database established under subsection (b) in a format that is searchable, downloadable, and accessible to the public.

“(2) UPDATE OF INFORMATION.—The Director shall update the information included in the database established under subsection (b) each time the information is collected under subsection (d).

“(f) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 1 year after the publication of the database established under subsection (b), and annually thereafter, the Director shall submit to Congress a report including—

“(1) a description of the data collected and analyzed under this section related to corporate offenses, including an analysis of recidivism, offenses and alleged offenses, and enforcement actions;

“(2) an estimate of the impact of corporate offenses on victims and the public; and

“(3) recommendations, developed in consultation with the Attorney General, for legislative or administrative actions to improve the ability of Federal agencies to monitor, respond to, and deter instances of corporate offenses.”.

(b) CHIEF DATA OFFICER COUNCIL.—Section 3520A(b) of title 44, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (4), by striking “; and” and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (5), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(6) identify ways in which a Federal agency (as defined in section 305 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968) that carries out an enforcement action (as defined in that section) with respect to a corporate offense (as defined in that section) can improve the collection, digitalization, tabulation, sharing, and publishing of information under that section, and the standardization of those processes, in order to carry out that section.”.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 643—DESIGNATING MARCH 12, 2026, AS “DETRANSITION AWARENESS DAY”

Mrs. BLACKBURN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 643

Whereas gender ideology has resulted in irreparable harm to individuals, especially minors;

Whereas no child should be pushed into irreversible chemical and surgical procedures, sex change interventions, or receiving hormones or puberty blockers;

Whereas the influence of social media and other online platforms has perpetuated harms that gender ideology poses to children;

Whereas medical interventions by healthcare professionals, under the guise of “gender affirming care”, have damaged the healthy bodily and hormonal development of children;

Whereas many minors seeking to transition have a history of 1 or more mental health disorders, including gender dysphoria, anxiety, depression, body dysmorphia, eating disorders, and suicidal thoughts;

Whereas, according to the Department of Health and Human Services, “Sex-rejecting procedures on children—which include puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and surgical operations—expose them to irreversible damage, including infertility, impaired sexual function, diminished bone density, altered brain development, and other irreversible physiological effects”;

Whereas, since 2013, the rate of gender dysphoria in children has dramatically increased;

Whereas about 42,000 children and teens across the United States received a gender dysphoria diagnosis in 2021, which is nearly triple the number of gender dysphoria diagnoses that occurred in 2017, according to Reuters;

Whereas at least 121,882 children ages 6 to 17 were diagnosed with gender dysphoria from 2017 through 2021, with similar data from diagnoses covered by Medicaid, according to Reuters;

Whereas at least 14,726 of minors with gender dysphoria diagnoses started hormone intervention from 2017 through 2021, according to Reuters;

Whereas over 5,700 of the 13,994 minors across the United States who received medical intervention for gender dysphoria over the course of 4 years were operated on, according to Do No Harm’s “Does My Hospital Transition Kids?” database;

Whereas approximately 225 children’s hospitals in the United States provide some version of “gender affirming care”;

Whereas many of the individuals who underwent these transition procedures, like detransitioner and activist Chloe Cole, ultimately pursue the process of detransitioning; and

Whereas Detransition Awareness Day has been nationally recognized since 2021: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 12, 2026, as “Detransition Awareness Day”; and

(2) celebrates and commits to fostering the biological reality of young men and women.

SENATE RESOLUTION 644—HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF COACH LOUIS LEO “LOU” HOLTZ

Mr. YOUNG (for himself, Mr. COONS, and Mr. BANKS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 644

Whereas Louis Leo “Lou” Holtz was born on January 6, 1937, in Follansbee, West Virginia, to Andrew and Anne Holtz, and grew up in East Liverpool, Ohio;

Whereas Lou Holtz earned his undergraduate degree in history from Kent State University, where he played football for 2 seasons until an injury led him to assist the coaching staff, and he later completed his master’s degree at the University of Iowa, laying the foundation for a life devoted to teaching, coaching, and inspiring others;

Whereas Lou Holtz married Beth Barcus on July 22, 1961, and their marriage endured more than 5 decades, with 4 children, 9 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren;

Whereas Lou Holtz had a legendary career as a college football head coach at William and Mary, North Carolina State University, the University of Arkansas, the University of Minnesota, the University of Notre Dame, and the University of South Carolina, finishing with a collegiate record of 249 wins, 132 losses, and 7 ties;

Whereas, at each institution Lou Holtz served, he inherited a program with a losing record and transformed it into a winning team, earning the distinction of being the only coach in college football history to lead 6 different programs to bowl games and to guide 4 of them to final top-20 national rankings;

Whereas Lou Holtz was inducted into the National Football Foundation College Football Hall of Fame in 2008 in recognition of his contributions to college football;

Whereas Lou Holtz instituted several traditions at the University of Notre Dame, including the “Play Like A Champion Today” sign in the locker room and the removal of names from the back of the football jerseys to emphasize the team dynamic;

Whereas Lou Holtz taught 3 essential rules: do what is right, do it to the best of your ability, and show people you care—principles that not only shaped the teams he built but, more importantly, shaped character, instilled purpose, and helped young men become the best versions of themselves on the field and in life;

Whereas Lou Holtz became a trusted analyst for CBS Sports and ESPN’s College GameDay broadcasts from 2005 to 2015, a New York Times bestselling author, and one of America’s most sought-after motivational speakers;

Whereas Lou Holtz received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States, from President Donald J. Trump on December 3, 2020, in recognition of his extraordinary impact as one of America’s greatest football coaches and a lifelong teacher of character and leadership;

Whereas Lou Holtz and his wife, Beth, demonstrated generosity throughout their lives, including through the Lou and Beth Holtz Family Scholarship and the Rockne Heritage Fund for student-athlete financial aid; and

Whereas Lou Holtz, a devoted husband, father, faithful Catholic, and one of college

football’s most legendary figures, leaves behind a legacy defined by faith, family, perseverance, and an unwavering belief in the potential of others: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the life and legacy of Louis Leo “Lou” Holtz, including his dedication to the game of college football and the promotion of excellence, character, and teamwork in student-athletes;

(2) remembers the drive, faith, and character of Coach Holtz and all that he did to educate and mentor hundreds of players over his more than 3 decades as a college football head coach; and

(3) extends a heartfelt thank you to Coach Holtz for his service to the game of college football and continues to honor his enduring legacy of faith, family, and the relentless pursuit of excellence.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF REVEREND JESSE LOUIS JACKSON, SR., AND COMMENDING HIM FOR HIS SIGNIFICANT LEADERSHIP DURING THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND HIS DECADES OF ADVOCACY IN PURSUIT OF JUSTICE, EQUALITY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 629.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 629) honoring the life and legacy of Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson, Sr., and commending him for his significant leadership during the Civil Rights Movement and his decades of advocacy in pursuit of justice, equality, and human rights.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 629) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 9, 2026, under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF COACH LOUIS LEO “LOU” HOLTZ

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 644, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 644) honoring the life and legacy of Coach Louis Leo “Lou” Holtz.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BARRASSO. I know of no further debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing no further debate, the question is on adoption of the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 644) was agreed to.

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2026

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, March 17; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed, and the Senate resume consideration of Executive Calendar No. 673, Anna St. John, and at 11:30 a.m. execute the order of March 13 in relation to the nomination; further, that if cloture is invoked, the Senate recess from 12:30 to 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly conference meetings and at 2:15 p.m., the Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Tuesday’s session of the Senate, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 4:53 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 10 a.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING ARBOR CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. BETH VAN DUYNÉ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Ms. VAN DUYNÉ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the students and faculty of Arbor Creek Elementary School in Euless, Texas for their participation in our 2026 Valentines for Veterans program.

Through this initiative, students created more than 50 Valentine's Day cards for veterans in our North Texas community, sharing encouragement, appreciation, and heartfelt support with those who have served. Their commitment to honoring our heroes helped make this project a tremendous success, contributing to over 1,800 Valentine's Day cards received by our office.

This outpouring of kindness reflects the deep gratitude for our veterans that remains strong throughout North Texas.

The creativity and compassion demonstrated by these students are a testament to the caring spirit present throughout their school. I commend them for their generosity and community involvement and thank them for helping make this year's Valentines for Veterans program so meaningful. It is an honor to represent them in Texas' 24th District.

HONORING BARBARA FEINGOLD

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Barbara Feingold for her steadfast leadership, devoted public service, and unwavering commitment to the Jewish community and the enduring alliance between the United States and the State of Israel.

Barbara Feingold currently serves as a Presidential Appointee to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, having been appointed in May 2025. In this role, she contributes to the mission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to preserve the memory of the Holocaust and ensure that future generations remember the lessons of history so that such atrocities are never repeated.

A respected national leader, Barbara serves as a National Board Member and Florida Chair of the Republican Jewish Coalition, where she works tirelessly to strengthen the voice of Jewish conservatives and advance the values of faith, freedom, and democratic partnership. She is also a National Board Member of the Combat Antisemitism Movement, where she actively works alongside elected officials and community leaders to combat antisemitism and promote unwavering support for Israel and Jewish causes. In

March 2026, she was awarded the highest honor from the Zionist Organization of America, the Justice Louis D. Brandeis Exemplary Defender of Israel Award.

Barbara has long been a passionate advocate for the principle of "Never Again." In 2025, she participated in the March of the Living, commemorating the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps. Following this solemn journey of remembrance, she traveled to Israel on a fact-finding mission to further deepen her understanding and strengthen her advocacy for the Jewish state and its people.

An engaging public speaker and dedicated philanthropist, Barbara has spent decades advancing causes that strengthen the Jewish community both in the United States and abroad. Her philanthropic work includes longstanding involvement with Friends of the Israel Defense Forces, where she and her family sponsor an Israel Defense Forces battalion and built the Feingold Family Synagogue on an IDF base in the Negev, an enduring symbol of faith and support for those who defend Israel's security.

Barbara's commitment to public service extends to education. She served on the Florida State Board of Education, helping guide education policy for the state, and later served as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees at Florida Atlantic University, contributing to the advancement of higher education and academic opportunity.

Her professional journey began in the field of education as a speech and language pathologist. Alongside her late husband, Jeffrey, Barbara co-founded MCNA Dental, building it into the largest privately held dental insurance company in the United States before its sale in 2020. Through hard work, vision, and dedication, she helped create a company that served millions of families across our Nation.

Above all, Barbara Feingold is a devoted mother and grandmother. She takes her greatest pride in her three children and seven grandchildren, all of whom live near her in South Florida and remain the center of her life and inspiration for her continued service.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Barbara Feingold for her distinguished service, her tireless advocacy against antisemitism, and her enduring commitment to the security of Israel, the strength of the Jewish community, and the preservation of freedom and memory for generations to come.

HONORING MARY CAMPBELL-CRUZ

HON. DONALD NORCROSS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and commend Mary Campbell-Cruz for her outstanding service to the 1st Congressional District of New Jersey. On Friday, March 6, 2026, friends and colleagues gath-

ered in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, to reflect on the distinguished public service of Mary Campbell-Cruz and celebrated her appointment to serve in Governor Mikie Sherrill's Cabinet as Chair and Chief Executive Officer of the Civil Service Commission. Today, we recognize her years of dedication to public service and her commitment to strengthening communities across our state.

Mary Campbell-Cruz has built a career defined by leadership, service, and a steadfast commitment to improving the lives of residents throughout New Jersey. She has held numerous roles in public service such as Political Director for the largest healthcare union in the country, Director of the New Jersey Healthcare Workers Alliance for Quality in Long-Term Care, and early in her career, District Director for Congressman John Adler and Campaign Manager for Shelley Adler. At a young age Mary worked to ensure that residents received representation and support. Throughout these roles, she has worked to strengthen community engagement, develop policy initiatives, and support elected officials in advancing initiatives that benefit working families and local communities.

Mary Campbell-Cruz earned her bachelor's degree in international relations and affairs, and economics from Washington College. Throughout her career she has applied her knowledge and expertise in government relations and strategic planning to support public institutions and strengthen the connection between government and the communities it serves.

Today, Mary continues her distinguished career in public service through her leadership in New Jersey government, where she brings years of experience working alongside community leaders and elected officials, including her service as District Director and Chief of Staff to Congressman Donald Norcross. She now steps into a new role within the Governor's Cabinet, where she will continue advancing policies that support opportunity, strengthen communities, and improve the quality of life for residents throughout the Garden State. Alongside her professional achievements, she is also a devoted mother to her two children, Maddie and Braden, demonstrating her exceptional commitment to both public service and family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me to honor and commend, Mary Campbell-Cruz, a citizen dedicated to both her state and community, and who has thoroughly served them to the best of her ability.

HONORING JUDGE JAIME E. CARRILLO

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

the distinguished career and dedicated public service of the Honorable Jaime E. Carrillo, Kleberg County Court at Law Judge in Texas.

A graduate of Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State University), where he earned his Bachelor of Political Science, he later received his Juris Doctor from Texas Southern University's Thurgood Marshall School of Law. His academic achievements laid the foundation for a career rooted in integrity and professionalism.

Judge Carrillo has devoted more than three decades to the legal profession, including over twenty years in private practice and nearly a decade serving on the bench since his election in 2016.

In addition to his judicial and legal service, Judge Carrillo is a published author of legal articles, training materials and has served as an instructor and lecturer on a variety of legal topics.

Beyond the courtroom, Judge Carrillo has remained deeply engaged in his community. He has served as President of the Kleberg County Bar Association, held leadership roles within the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association and the Texas Defense Lawyers Project. Judge Carrillo also participated in organizations including the Kingsville Noon Lions Club and the Knights of Columbus. His commitment to membership, legal education and community outreach reflects his dedication not only to the profession, but also to the people he serves.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Texas's 34th Congressional District, I commend Judge Jaime E. Carrillo for his years of service, his leadership in the legal community, and his commitment to justice.

RECOGNIZING THE U.S. FIGURE
SKATING COMMUNITY AND
AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 5342

HON. JEFF CRANK

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 67 lives that were lost on the tragic flight last year on American Airlines Flight 5342. Amongst the 67 lives lost, 28 of them were members of the U.S. Figure skating community, many of them calling my district of Colorado Springs their training ground. These skaters were some of the brightest in their sport, returning from the U.S. Championships and National Development Team Camp in Wichita, Kansas.

They had spent nearly a week with their training mates on the National Development Team, training mates who had built a bond, many over several years, a bond that was extremely close due to the nature of their training. When they said goodbye, they said goodbye knowing that they would soon all meet again in Colorado Springs for another training opportunity.

The United States and the international skating community had suffered a great loss, and the surviving members of the United States skating community had suffered a great trauma.

When the news of Flight 5342 broke, the skaters on the National Development Team knew exactly who was on that flight. They sent

countless group messages begging for responses, but all their responses went unanswered. A tertiary trauma to that of the incident and the survivor's guilt many of them hold.

On that flight were Alydia Livingston, Olivia Eve Ter, Everly Livingston, Brielle Beyer, Jinna Han, Cory Haynos, Edward Zhou, Angela Yang, Lily Li, Sean Kay, Spencer Lane, Alexandr Kirsanov, Vadim Naumov, Evgenia Shiskova, Inna Volyanskaya, Peter and Donna Livingston, Luciano Aparicio, Franco Aparicio, Justyna Magdalena Beyer, Jin Hee Han, Roger Haynos, Stephanie Haynos, Julia Kay, Christine Lane, Olesya Taylor, Kaiyan Mao, and Yu Zhou, all members of the U.S. Figure Skating community.

They were the United States' world-class coaches, dedicated loving parents, and the next generation of elite Olympian athletes, who we will never forget. I thank Candence Floyd for being a shining light in a moment of tragedy and for helping honor her lost teammates.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in praying for the families and friends of all these lives lost during this tragic flight.

RECOGNIZING BERKNER HIGH
SCHOOL

HON. BETH VAN DUYN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Ms. VAN DUYN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the students and faculty of Berkner High School and STEM Academy in Richardson, Texas for their participation in our 2026 Valentines for Veterans Program.

Through this initiative, students created more than 20 Valentine's Day cards for veterans in our North Texas community, sharing encouragement, appreciation, and heartfelt support with those who have served. Their commitment to honoring our heroes helped make this project a tremendous success, contributing to over 1,800 Valentine's Day cards received by our office.

This outpouring of kindness reflects the deep gratitude for our veterans that remains strong throughout North Texas.

The creativity and compassion demonstrated by these students are a testament to the caring spirit present throughout their school. I commend them for their generosity and community involvement and thank them for helping make this year's Valentines for Veterans program so meaningful. It is an honor to represent them in Texas' 24th District.

RECOGNIZING RAFAEL CABRERA
AND THE LATIN BUILDERS AS-
SOCIATION

HON. CARLOS A. GIMENEZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Mr. GIMENEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Latin Builders Association and to congratulate Rafael Cabrera on his installation as the 26th President of the LBA.

For more than five decades, the Latin Builders Association has played a critical role in shaping the construction and development industry across South Florida, promoting high standards of professionalism while helping drive economic growth and opportunity throughout the region.

The LBA has been instrumental in empowering local and minority-owned businesses, strengthening the construction workforce, and fostering productive partnerships among industry professionals, community leaders, and government at every level. These efforts have helped expand economic opportunities and strengthen South Florida's diverse business community.

As President of the Latin Builders Association, Rafael Cabrera brings a strong commitment to collaboration, innovation, and responsible development. His leadership reflects the organization's longstanding mission of advancing the construction industry while supporting the communities it serves.

I commend the Latin Builders Association for its enduring contributions to South Florida and congratulate President Cabrera on this important milestone. I wish him and the entire organization continued success in their efforts to build opportunities and strengthen our community for years to come.

HONORING THE LIFE, LEGACY,
AND BRIGHT LIGHT OF MR.
ALGER B. BIZOR

HON. JASMINE CROCKETT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Ms. CROCKETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life, legacy, and bright light of Mr. Alger B. Bizor—a man whose faith was steady, whose heart was generous, and whose presence left a lasting mark on his family, his community, and all who were blessed to know him.

Mr. Bizor was born on June 27, 1944, in Crockett, Texas, to the late Terry Bizor, Sr., and Annie B. Bizor. He was raised in Tyler, the Rose Capital of Texas, in the Jones Valley community, where his foundation of faith and family first took root. At an early age, he accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior after his family joined Sandflat Baptist Church, later baptized at Liberty Baptist Church in Tyler. His faith remained a steady guide throughout his life, and he was a devoted member of Denley Drive Baptist Church in Dallas.

Mr. Bizor attended T.J. Austin Elementary School and Emmett Scott Junior High before graduating from Emmett Scott High School with the Class of 1964. He built a life defined by honest work and quiet determination, working for companies including Sterling Faucet, General Electric, and Piggly Wiggly, later known as Minyard's Grocery Stores. Even after retirement, service remained part of who he was. As a school crossing guard, he watched over the children of his community with pride and care, greeting them day after day with a steady presence that parents trusted and children adored.

More than anything, Mr. Bizor was a family man. A devoted husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, he poured his love into

the people who meant the most to him. His grandchildren and great-grandchildren were truly the joy of his heart. And if you knew him, you knew that his door—and his table—were always open. He believed in lending a hand, sharing what he had, and making sure nobody around him felt alone. That was simply the kind of man he was.

Scripture reminds us in Psalm 30:5, “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” While we mourn his passing, we also give thanks for a life well lived and for the many memories that will continue to bring comfort and strength to those who loved him. Mr. Bizer leaves to cherish his memory his beloved wife, Renee Bizer; his daughters, Sonya Renee Bizer, Wanda LaGail Wilson, and Kimberly Bizer Tolbert; his stepsons, Marvin Castle and Patrick McDonald; and his stepdaughter, Tawana Castle. He is also survived by his brothers, Charlie Bizer (Valencia) and Terry Bizer, Jr. (Emma), and his sisters, Marilyn Rainey and Evelyn Embry. He was preceded in death by his son, Martin Cokes, as well as his brother, Freddie Bizer, and sister, Sallie Mae Gossett. He also leaves behind a host of grandchildren, great-grandchildren, extended family members, and friends whose lives are better because he was part of them.

Mr. Bizer’s legacy lives on not only in the family he raised but also in the community he helped shape through kindness, humility, and faith. His life reminds us that greatness is not always measured in titles or accolades, but in the love he gave to the people he lifted up, and the faith he carried along the way.

RECOGNIZING DEBORAH P. BROWN

HON. CHRISSE HOULAHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Deborah P. Brown for more than forty-four years of extraordinary service to the American Lung Association and for a lifetime of visionary leadership dedicated to saving lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease.

As Chief Mission Officer of the American Lung Association, and previously as President and CEO of the Lung Association of the Mid-Atlantic, Deb Brown has been a transformative leader whose steadfast advocacy, innovative leadership, and unwavering commitment to public health have strengthened programs, advanced research, expanded advocacy, and forged impactful partnerships across the Nation. Her work has helped improve lung health and strengthen public health protections for Pennsylvanians and communities nationwide.

Deb’s commitment to lung health is deeply personal. After losing loved ones to pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH), she dedicated her life to ensuring that no family faces lung disease without access to support, education, and hope. That experience strengthened her resolve to raise awareness, advance research, and champion policies that improve quality of life for those living with lung disease.

In Pennsylvania, Deb was instrumental in advancing landmark public health achievements, including tobacco prevention initiatives, asthma control efforts, expanded healthcare access, clean air protections and anti-idling

legislation that strengthened safeguards for residents across the Commonwealth. Her leadership also extended to Delaware, where she played a pivotal role in the passage of the state’s Clean Indoor Air Act—then the second comprehensive law of its kind in the Nation. As Chair of the Delaware Cancer Consortium, she led statewide efforts to improve cancer prevention, detection, and treatment.

Over the past eight years, under her national leadership, Deb advanced the American Lung Association’s work in research, advocacy, and public education. Under her direction, the organization successfully advocated for stronger car and truck emission standards, cleaner power plants, and critical methane emission controls from oil and gas operations—policies that continue to deliver lasting health benefits. She also served on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean Air Act Advisory Committee. During her tenure, the organization supported approximately \$178.6 million in research investments to advance initiatives that improve lung health and accelerate innovation.

Deb’s leadership was particularly critical during the COVID-19 pandemic, when she helped advance science-based public health efforts to protect people living with lung disease. She also played an important role in advancing Tobacco 21 policies, protecting children from predatory marketing of e-cigarettes, and supporting state-level successes, including increased tobacco taxes. She strengthened advocacy efforts that bring lung disease patients and caregivers to Washington, D.C. each year to advocate for protecting access to affordable healthcare and securing sustained federal funding for the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

With degrees in Public Health and Health Education and as a Certified Health Education Specialist, Deb has dedicated her career to empowering communities through education, prevention, and advocacy. She has authored curricula, contributed to research publications, and trained advocates and educators across the country. Just as importantly, she is widely respected for her mentorship and compassion, helping cultivate the next generation of public health leaders.

Through her visionary leadership, deeply personal commitment, and tireless dedication to lung health, Deb has improved the lives of countless individuals and families and helped create healthier communities across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States. Her legacy will endure in cleaner air, stronger public health protections, groundbreaking research, expanded access to care, and the many lives saved and leaders inspired by her example.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in celebrating the career and retirement of Deborah P. Brown.

INTRODUCTION OF THE JURY DUTY EXEMPTION FOR BREASTFEEDING ACT OF 2026

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the Jury Duty Exemption for

Breastfeeding Act of 2026, which would allow breastfeeding individuals summoned for jury service in the federal courts or the Superior Court of the District of Columbia to be excused from service upon the individual’s request. The benefits of breastfeeding are well-documented, and individuals should not be deterred from breastfeeding by jury service.

This bill would apply to the D.C. Superior Court because Congress is the only legislative body that can mandate this exemption for the D.C. Superior Court. The D.C. Home Rule Act prohibits the D.C. Council from enacting any law relating to Title 11 of the D.C. Code, which governs jury service in the D.C. Superior Court.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

CONGRATULATING RABBI JOSEPH R. BLACK

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleague, Representative JASON CROW, to congratulate our friend, Rabbi Joseph R. Black on his retirement and elevation to Rabbi Emeritus of the Temple Emanuel congregation in Denver.

Over his 43-year rabbinical career, crossing the country from Minneapolis to Albuquerque to Denver, where he served for 14 years as Senior Rabbi, Rabbi Black has exemplified what he calls the sacred work of “connecting tissue”—bringing people, text, tradition, and time into focus for his community. This same spirit of connection has made him a vital bridge between faith and public service in Colorado.

An award-winning songwriter and nationally recognized musician, Rabbi Black has recorded seven albums of original music and published two songbooks, becoming one of the most popular Jewish contemporary artists in the United States. Music has always been central to Jewish spiritual life, transmitted through voice, rhythm, and song long before prayer was fixed on the page. Rabbi Black brought this tradition to life with a thoughtful blend of music, storytelling, creativity, and Jewish learning that made ancient wisdom accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds.

His musical ministry transcends entertainment—it is activism set to melody. As he sang in the title track of his most recent album, *Praying with Our Feet*: “we will not stand idly by, and watch our values die. When we heed the call for justice, we are praying with our feet.” These words embody the essence of civic engagement—that faith without action rings hollow, and that true spiritual leadership requires translating values into public service.

Rabbi Black’s commitment to civic engagement reaches far beyond the recording studio or the synagogue walls. For 14 years, Rabbi Black has delivered opening prayers at the Colorado House of Representatives, offering lawmakers spiritual grounding as they undertake the “holy” and consequential work of governance. His message to legislators was to see beyond partisanship, remember their duty to all constituents, and find the divine spark in every person they serve.

Even in retirement, Rabbi Black continues to provide moral leadership on issues of justice and human dignity. His voice has been a beacon of moral clarity, calling out the forces of intolerance and defending the vulnerable against collective punishment.

As Rabbi Black has shown us through four decades of service, the work of repairing our world's "connecting tissue" is never finished—it passes from generation to generation, from community to community, and from those who sing justice into being to those who carry the melody forward.

RECOGNIZING RISD ACADEMY

HON. BETH VAN DUYNÉ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Ms. VAN DUYNÉ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the students and faculty of RISD Academy in Dallas, Texas for their participation in our 2026 Valentines for Veterans program.

Through this initiative, students created more than 290 Valentine's Day cards for veterans in our North Texas community, sharing encouragement, appreciation, and heartfelt support with those who have served. Their commitment to honoring our heroes helped make this project a tremendous success, contributing to over 1,800 Valentine's Day cards received by our office.

This outpouring of kindness reflects the deep gratitude for our veterans that remains strong throughout North Texas.

The creativity and compassion demonstrated by these students are a testament to the caring spirit present throughout their school. I commend them for their generosity and community involvement and thank them for helping make this year's Valentines for Veterans program so meaningful. It is an honor to represent them in Texas' 24th District.

HONORING THE GREENWOOD
VOTERS LEAGUE

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the historic legacy of the Greenwood Voters League, an organization whose courage, persistence, and commitment to democracy transformed political participation in Greenwood, Mississippi, and helped advance voting rights throughout the Mississippi Delta.

Founded in the years following the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Greenwood Voters League emerged at a time when African American citizens in Leflore County—despite being a majority of the population—were systematically excluded from meaningful political representation. Through grassroots organizing, voter education, and unwavering advocacy, the League worked to ensure that Black citizens could fully exercise their constitutional right to vote and participate in local governance.

Building upon earlier civil rights efforts in Greenwood led by local leaders and national organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Greenwood Voters League focused on converting voter registration gains into political power. The League played a pivotal role in mobilizing voters, endorsing candidates, and challenging discriminatory electoral systems that diluted the voting strength of African American citizens.

One of the League's most significant contributions came through its leadership in litigation challenging Greenwood's at-large election system. In 1977, members of the Greenwood Voters League became plaintiffs in a landmark Voting Rights Act lawsuit against the City of Greenwood, asserting that the city's form of government denied Black voters an equal opportunity to elect candidates of their choice. This legal action was part of a broader national struggle to enforce the promise of the Voting Rights Act and dismantle entrenched barriers to fair representation.

The long-term impact of the Greenwood Voters League is undeniable. Its work helped open the doors of local government to African American leadership and laid the foundation for greater political inclusion in Greenwood and throughout the Delta. Among those shaped by this movement was David Lee Jordan, an educator and civil rights advocate who went on to serve on the Greenwood City Council and later in the Mississippi State Senate, continuing the fight for voting rights, education, and equality.

The Greenwood Voters League stands as a powerful reminder that democracy is strengthened when ordinary citizens organize, persist, and demand accountability. Its legacy continues to inspire new generations to protect the right to vote and to participate fully in civic life.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the Greenwood Voters League for its historic contributions and enduring role in advancing justice, representation, and democratic participation in Mississippi and our Nation.

HONORING ABRAHAM SUAREZ

HON. MICHAEL CLOUD

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Abraham Z. Suarez, a World War II Veteran and Victoria Resident, as he celebrates his 100th birthday. His life reflects courage, sacrifice, and a deep commitment to family and country.

Abraham was born on March 16, 1926, in Tynan, Texas, and grew up on a farm near Seguin, Texas. The son of a hardworking sharecropper, Abraham learned the values of dedication and perseverance. He attended a one-room schoolhouse, walking two miles each day with his siblings.

Just weeks after turning 18, Abraham answered the call to serve our Nation during World War II. He was inducted into the Army Air Corps, and after training across the United States, he deployed to Okinawa. There, he served with the 1940th Ordnance Ammunition Company, helping distribute vital supplies to U.S. forces. For his service, he received the

World War II Victory Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, and a Good Conduct Medal.

After the war, Abraham continued serving, first in Germany, then at Foster and Aloe Field Army Bases in Victoria, and later, Matagorda Island. During this time, he met his future wife, Josephine, at a movie theater in Victoria, and went on to build a loving family, raising ten children. His legacy continues on with 31 grandchildren, 71 great-grandchildren, and more than 30 great-great grandchildren. Today, we honor his extraordinary life and service, an example of the Texas spirit and the best of what the Coastal Bend has to offer. I wish a happy birthday to Mr. Suarez.

RECOGNIZING THE IRISH-BORN
SIGNATORIES OF THE DECLARATION
OF INDEPENDENCE

HON. BRENDAN F. BOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the three Irish-born signatories of the Declaration of Independence. They were Matthew Thornton, James Smith, and George Taylor.

These individuals played a crucial role in freeing the colonies from the rule of the British monarchy and establishing the United States of America. Signed in Philadelphia in what was known at the time as the Pennsylvania State House, now Independence Hall, the Declaration of Independence stands as a testament to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

As the United States celebrates its semiquincentennial this year, we recognize those who found the courage to establish a more perfect union 250 years ago. The Irish-born signatories of the Declaration of Independence knew well the struggles of living under the colonial rule of the British Empire and understood the potential for America to thrive as a free and independent Nation. Irish identity includes a strong solidarity against oppression in all forms, and these signatories undoubtedly had this in mind during their participation in the Second Continental Congress.

St. Patrick's Day is an important reminder that we are a Nation of immigrants and that Irish Americans have a rich history in the United States. The deep community that has been fostered here since its founding remains strong to this day. Philadelphia, the birthplace of American democracy, stands proudly with its Irish American community in celebrating the Irish signatories of the Declaration of Independence.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of their contribution to the founding of the United States, we honor the Irish-born signatories of the Declaration of Independence.

HONORING THE LIFE OF FRANK C.
ORRICO

HON. THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Mr. KEAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the passing of Frank C. Orrico at the

age 101, on February 21, 2026, in Gillette, New Jersey.

Frank Orrico was born on October 24, 1924, in South Plainfield, New Jersey. Frank was the eldest of three sons born to Sabbito and Josephine Orrico, who emigrated from Italy in the early 1900s. Growing up on Pleasant Avenue in Fanwood, in a close-knit family, he earned the affectionate nickname “Friendly Frank Formerly of Fanwood,” a tribute to his outgoing personality and genuine love of people.

Frank graduated from Scotch Plains Public High School before enlisting in the U.S. Army at 18 years old. He entered active service on March 3, 1943, at Fort Dix and was deployed overseas as a Private First Class with the 12th Infantry Regiment. He served with courage in the European African-Middle Eastern Campaign during World War II. For his bravery and sacrifice, he was awarded the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star, along with the European African-Middle Eastern Campaign Ribbon and four bronze stars.

After the war, Frank utilized the GI Bill and earned a Bachelor of Arts in Accounting from Pace University. He began his career in the Western Electric mail room and rose to management where he met his wife, Helen. They became married on May 4, 1958, and had three children.

A faithful parishioner of Christ the King Catholic church for nearly 45 years, Frank rarely missed Sunday 7:00 a.m. Mass. His deep sense of faith was a guiding force throughout his life, sustaining him through war, work, family life, and the many joys and sorrows of a century well lived.

Frank will be remembered for his courage, generosity, humor, and unwavering devotion to his faith, his family, and his country.

HONORING SPRINGS RESCUE MISSION OF COLORADO SPRINGS

HON. JEFF CRANK

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and celebrate thirty years of ministry and community impact of Springs Rescue Mission in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Springs Rescue Mission has become a pillar of the Pike’s Peak region, not only by caring for the homeless but as a model of local business, government, healthcare, and faith-based collaboration, for the good of the community.

In a short thirty years, Springs Rescue Mission has become an expansive homeless resource campus—a Community of Hope for the most vulnerable men and women of Colorado Springs. With 450 beds, the Mission is now the largest homeless shelter in the region. The Resource Center offers case management and other essential services to help those in need to regain their health, return to work, and find permanent housing. Every day, hundreds of neighbors in need come to the Mission for a filling meal, a hot shower, a warm bed, and compassionate care. Just next door, 65 chronically homeless people have found a home at Greenway Flats. And in the middle of it all, a new 200-seat Samaritan’s Kitchen recently opened its doors to our community.

Jesus’ words in Matthew 25:34–40 have been the underlying inspiration for the staff,

volunteers, board, and donors to the Springs Rescue Mission,

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’ Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, in as much as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’

Springs Rescue Mission has been champions for those trapped in homelessness, addiction, and poverty, and they have been models of collaboration and partnership across every walk of life to ensure people receive the care they need. For the many friends and neighbors of Colorado Springs, receiving support from Springs Rescue Mission is far more than shelter or food; it is about belonging in a place that accepts everyone and anyone, thanks to the leadership of Travis Williams, all the team members, and the many volunteers who dedicate their time and effort simply to giving back.

Today, I stand to honor and thank all of those associated with the Springs Rescue Mission for blessing Colorado’s 5th Congressional District.

RECOGNIZING BEDFORD HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. BETH VAN DUYN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Ms. VAN DUYN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the students and faculty of Bedford Heights Elementary School in Bedford, Texas for their participation in our 2026 Valentines for Veterans program.

Through this initiative, students created more than 30 Valentine’s Day cards for veterans in our North Texas community, sharing encouragement, appreciation, and heartfelt support with those who have served. Their commitment to honoring our heroes helped make this project a tremendous success, contributing to over 1,800 Valentine’s Day cards received by our office.

This outpouring of kindness reflects the deep gratitude for our veterans that remains strong throughout North Texas.

The creativity and compassion demonstrated by these students are a testament to the caring spirit present throughout their school. I commend them for their generosity and community involvement and thank them for helping make this year’s Valentines for Veterans program so meaningful. It is an honor to represent them in Texas’ 24th District.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF RENE VASQUEZ

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of the late Rene Vasquez of Robstown, Texas.

Known throughout our community as the “Voice of Robstown,” Mr. Vasquez was a beloved broadcaster whose voice became synonymous with local sports and community pride. He began his broadcasting career in the 1980s as a baseball color commentator and later spent nearly forty years at Magic 104.9 Radio.

Mr. Vasquez’s became a trusted voice in our community as he covered Robstown sports, broadcasting championships, playoffs, and state title contests. He is now being nominated for induction into the Texas Sports Broadcasting Hall of Fame.

Throughout much of his career, Mr. Vasquez faced serious health challenges, including diabetes and kidney disease. He persevered through these complications, often re-scheduling his dialysis so he could still be on air for Friday night football broadcasts. He always remained deeply committed to his work and the community he proudly represented. He will be remembered for his dedication, community spirit, and unwavering love of sports.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Texas’s 34th Congressional District, I honor Mr. Rene Vasquez’s remarkable life and commend his service, commitment to Robstown, and the amazing legacy he leaves behind.

HONORING MASTER SERGEANT SANDRA “SANDY” MCHUGH

HON. DONALD NORCROSS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker. I rise today to honor and commend Master Sergeant Sandra “Sandy” McHugh, hometown hero of Collingswood. On Thursday, March 12, 2026, family, friends, and members of the community gathered at the Collingswood Senior Community Center in Collingswood, New Jersey, to honor and recognize Master Sergeant Sandy McHugh for her service to both her community and the United States of America.

Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and raised in the Baldwin neighborhood, Master Sergeant Sandy McHugh went on to attend Carnegie Mellon University for Graphic Design. She transferred to Temple University’s Tyler School of Art where she earned a bachelor’s in fine arts and master’s in film production. After graduating she began teaching art in Cherry Hill from first to sixth grade at Johnson Elementary.

While teaching art, Master Sergeant Sandy McHugh served in the Air National Guard and went back to school, attending Glassboro State to earn her master’s degree in education. Sandy taught at Johnson Elementary school for 30 years and simultaneously served

for 29 years as a member of the 108th Air Refueling Wing of the Air Force National Guard. Stationed at McGuire Air Force Base, she achieved the rank of Master Sergeant by the time she was honorably discharged. Sandy served in the office of public relations for 21 years and spent the remaining years as the head non-commissioned officer in the Chaplain's Office. Throughout her career she travelled the country educating fellow members on services of the Chaplain's Office, contributed photographic work on behalf of the Air National Guard, protected the chaplain, and organized drives to help both soldiers and their families before and after deployment.

Today, Master Sergeant Sandra "Sandy" McHugh is a 50-year resident of the Borough of Collingswood. She has played a role in the education of many students for whom her garden was a stop for class field trips. Throughout the years, she has also donated her personal art supplies to Collingswood Schools. Sandy is also the owner of the Seacoast Art Gallery in Topsail, North Carolina, that she opens and operates each summer. The walls are covered with her artwork and spaces filled with ceramic and pottery artwork from local artists.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in honoring and commending Master Sergeant Sandra "Sandy" McHugh a citizen dedicated to both her country and community, and who has thoroughly served them both to the best of their ability.

RECOGNIZING UNITED STATES AIR FORCE SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT CHARLES M. NITZ

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Senior Master Sergeant Charles M. Nitz for his distinguished service to our Nation and community and to honor him as our March 2026 Veteran of the Month. His decades of service reflect a steadfast dedication to duty, leadership, and service to others.

A native of Detroit, Michigan, Senior Master Sergeant Nitz entered Air Force basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, in 1984. He completed technical training and was assigned to the 81st Component Repair Squadron in the United Kingdom, where he earned the John L. Levitow Honor Graduate Award, demonstrating his commitment to excellence early in his career.

In 1988, Mr. Nitz was assigned to K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base, Michigan, serving as a Flightline Maintenance Technician and supported the Advanced Cruise Missile test flight program. He was recognized as a Distinguished Graduate of the Noncommissioned Officer Leadership School at Grissom Air Force Base, Indiana, and earned the title of Strategic Air Command Master Technician.

Throughout his career, Senior Master Sergeant Nitz held key leadership and operational roles in Germany, Maryland, Korea, and California. He oversaw maintenance and support for mission-critical intelligence systems, implemented protective modifications for aircrews during operations in Bosnia, and ensured successful unmanned aerial vehicle missions in

support of Air Intelligence Agency and NATO operations, reflecting his commitment to mission success and the safety of others.

After his promotion to Senior Master Sergeant in 2002, Mr. Nitz served as Maintenance Operations Flight Chief at the 352d Maintenance Squadron in the United Kingdom. His leadership contributed to the unit earning an overall "Excellent" rating during the 2005 Operational Readiness Inspection. His decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Air Force Commendation Medal, and the Air Force Achievement Medal.

Following his retirement from the Air Force in 2006, Mr. Nitz returned to Michigan and continued serving his community as an instructor with the Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps in Melvindale. He currently serves as Supervisor of Operations at the U.S. Secret Service Detroit Field Office.

Mr. Nitz lives in Macomb Township with his wife of 41 years, Lisa. They are proud parents of two daughters and grandparents to six grandchildren. Together, they enjoy traveling, biking, and spending time with their family.

Mr. Speaker, Senior Master Sergeant Charles M. Nitz's decades of dedicated service, both in uniform and in his community, exemplify honor, leadership, and commitment to our Nation. It is my great privilege to recognize him and to honor his service as our March 2026 Veteran of the Month.

RECOGNIZING MOSS HAVEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. BETH VAN DUYNÉ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Ms. VAN DUYNÉ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the students and faculty of Moss Haven Elementary School in Dallas, Texas for their participation in our 2026 Valentines for Veterans program.

Through this initiative, students created more than 20 Valentine's Day cards for veterans in our North Texas community, sharing encouragement, appreciation, and heartfelt support with those who have served. Their commitment to honoring our heroes helped make this project a tremendous success, contributing to over 1,800 Valentine's Day cards received by our office.

This outpouring of kindness reflects the deep gratitude for our veterans that remains strong throughout North Texas.

The creativity and compassion demonstrated by these students are a testament to the caring spirit present throughout their school. I commend them for their generosity and community involvement and thank them for helping make this year's Valentines for Veterans program so meaningful. It is an honor to represent them in Texas' 24th District.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint commit-

tees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 2026 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 18

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Markwayne Mullin, of Oklahoma, to be Secretary of Homeland Security.

SD-342

10 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine platform power as section 230 turns 30.

SR-253

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, and Water

To hold hearings to examine challenges and opportunities with implementing the Endangered Species Act.

SD-562

Committee on Foreign Relations

To receive a closed briefing on the current situation in the Middle East.

SVC-217

Select Committee on Intelligence

To hold hearings to examine worldwide threats; to be immediately followed by a closed session in SH-219.

SH-216

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

To hold hearings to examine sunshine week, focusing on bringing secret government spending to light.

SR-428A

Joint Economic Committee

To hold hearings to examine keeping promises, focusing on labor inflows, maintaining competitiveness, and supporting an aging population.

SH-216

4 p.m.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Business meeting to consider S. 342, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize an individual who is awarded the Purple Heart for service in the Armed Forces to transfer unused Post-9/11 Educational Assistance to a family member, S. 410, to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to improve benefits and services for surviving spouses, S. 649, to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for Post-9/11 Educational Assistance to members of the National Guard who perform certain full-time duty, S. 1116, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the provision of certain additional

burial benefits for individuals for whom an urn or plaque is furnished, S. 1657, to amend title 38, United States Code, to limit the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to deny the claim of a veteran for benefits under the laws administered by such Secretary on the sole basis that such veteran failed to appear for a medical examination associated with such claim, S. 1665, to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure veterans of secrecy oath programs receive the full benefits they have earned, S. 1726, to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify that the Department of Veterans Affairs definition of "medical services" includes medically necessary automobile adaptations, S. 1868, to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand access by veterans to critical access hospitals and affiliated clinics under the Veterans Community Care Program, S. 2061, to require the Interagency Working Group on Toxic Exposure to conduct research on the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions of descendants of individuals exposed to toxic substances while serving as members of the Armed Forces, S. 2220, to expand presumptions of exposure by members of the Armed Forces to toxic substances, S. 2264, to improve the emergency management capabilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, S. 2309, to direct a physician or nurse practitioner employed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certify the death of a veteran not later than 48 hours after such physician or nurse practitioner learns of such death, S. 2328, to authorize the use of veterans educational assistance for examinations and assessments to receive credit toward degrees awarded by institutions of higher learning, S. 2333, to require the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to permit supplementation of health records of deceased veterans, S. 2397, to require implementation by the Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs of certain recommendations relating to the provi-

sion of health care through community care providers, S. 2683, to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Veterans Scam and Fraud Evasion Officer, S. 2807, to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify the applicability of the authority to reconsider decisions of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Secretary of the Army to inter remains or honor the memory of a person in a national cemetery, S. 2981, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of prosthetic and rehabilitative items and services by the Department of Veterans Affairs, S. 3033, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish partnerships between medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs and medical facilities in rural areas, S. 3119, to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make temporary lodging facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs available for members of the Armed Forces, other individuals on active duty, and family members of such individuals on a space-available basis, S. 3138, to amend title 38, United States Code, to include adaptive prostheses and terminal devices for sports and other recreational activities in the medical services furnished to eligible veterans by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, S. 3303, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to establish or enhance a community integration platform for services for veterans, to require the collection from veterans of information related to social determinants of health, S. 3758, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make opioid overdose rescue medications available to veterans and their caregivers, and a committee resolution.

SR-418

MARCH 19

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the posture of United States Northern Command

and United States Southern Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2027 and the Future Years Defense Program; to be immediately followed by a closed session in SVC-217.

SD-G50

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine Department of Energy's implementation of President Trump's May 2025 nuclear energy executive orders.

SD-366

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Business meeting to consider the nomination of Markwayne Mullin, of Oklahoma, to be Secretary of Homeland Security.

SD-342

10 a.m.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold Member Day to examine legislative priorities.

SD-430

10:15 a.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

Business meeting to consider S. 545, to prohibit certain uses of xylazine, H.R. 2159, to direct the Attorney General of the United States to submit to the Congress a report on Federal criminal offenses, S. 2934, to limit the availability of civil actions affected by United States sanctions, and the nominations of Colin McDonald, of California, to be an Assistant Attorney General, James Bishop, to be United States Attorney for the Middle District of North Carolina, Brian Barber, to be United States Marshal for the Western District of Louisiana, Steven Lewis, to be United States Marshal for the Eastern District of Missouri, Priscilla Lopez, to be United States Marshal for the Southern District of Florida, Brian Gootkin, to be United States Marshal for the District of Montana, and James Stuart, to be United States Marshal for the District of Minnesota, all of the Department of Justice.

SH-216

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1053–S1058

Measures Introduced: Eight bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 4097–4104, and S. Res. 643–644. **Pages S1055–56**

Measures Passed:

Honoring the life and legacy of Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson, Sr.: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 629, honoring the life and legacy of Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson, Sr., and commending him for his significant leadership during the Civil Rights Movement and his decades of advocacy in pursuit of justice, equality, and human rights, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S1058**

Honoring the life and legacy of Coach Louis Leo “Lou” Holtz: Senate agreed to S. Res. 644, honoring the life and legacy of Coach Louis Leo “Lou” Holtz. **Page S1058**

ST. JOHN NOMINATION—AGREEMENT: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Anna St. John, of Louisiana, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana. **Pages S1053–55**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the previously scheduled vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination now occur at 11:30 a.m., on Tuesday, March 17, 2026. **Page S1053**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination at approximately 10 a.m., on Tuesday, March 17, 2026; and at 11:30 a.m., Senate execute the order of Monday, March 16, 2026, in relation to the nomination; and that if cloture is invoked, at 2:15 p.m. Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination. **Page S1058**

Additional Cosponsors:

Page S1056

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions:

Pages S1056–57

Adjournment: Senate convened at 3 p.m. and adjourned at 4:53 p.m., until 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 17, 2026. (For Senate’s program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today’s Record on page S1058.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

No committee meetings were held.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 19 public bills, H.R. 7934–7952; and 2 resolutions, H. Res. 1116–1117 were introduced. **Pages H2529–30**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H2530–31**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows: H. Con. Res. 73, authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the National Peace Officers Memo-

rial Service and the National Honor Guard and Pipe Band Exhibition (H. Rept. 119–544);

H.R. 6480, to direct the Administrator of General Services to submit a report to Congress on the state of the real estate portfolio of the Public Building Service, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 119–545);

H.R. 6267, to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on the impediments to digital documentation and verification in the aviation supply chain, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 119–546);

H.R. 5663, to modify the termination of the aviation consumer protection advisory committee, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 119–547);

H.R. 6618, to require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to conduct a study on drone incursions on wildfire suppression, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 119–548);

H.R. 6460, to amend title 49, United States Code, to clarify exceptions for limited recreational operations of unmanned aircraft, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 119–549);

H.R. 3410, to allow for the operation of civil supersonic flight in the national airspace system under certain conditions, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 119–550);

H.R. 2247, to amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize the use of physical or digital copies of certain certificates for certain Federal Aviation Administration inspections, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 119–551);

H.R. 6427, to amend title 49, United States Code, to permit the use of State highway standards for airfield pavement construction and improvement under certain circumstances, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 119–552);

H.R. 6481, to direct the Administrator of General Services and the Director of the Federal Protective Service to establish guidance relating to emergency communication protocols for public buildings, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 119–553); and

H. Res. 1115, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 556) to prohibit the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture from prohibiting the use of lead ammunition or tackle on certain Federal land or water under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1958) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify that aliens who have been convicted of defrauding the United States Government or the unlawful receipt of public benefits are inadmissible and deportable; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4638) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide that an alien who has been convicted of harming animals used in law enforcement is inadmissible and deportable, and for other purposes; and relating to consideration of motions to suspend the rules (H. Rept. 119–554). **Page H2529**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Collins to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H2487**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:30 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H2490**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:04 p.m. and reconvened at 3 p.m. **Page H2491**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures: Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act: S. 1884, to clarify the Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act of 2016, to appropriately limit the application of defenses based on the passage of time and other non-merits defenses to claims under that Act; **Pages H2497–H2500**

Enhanced Iran Sanctions Act: H.R. 1422, amended, to impose sanctions with respect to persons engaged in logistical transactions and sanctions evasion relating to oil, gas, liquefied natural gas, and related petrochemical products from the Islamic Republic of Iran; **Pages H2500–03**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: “To impose sanctions with respect to persons engaged in significant transactions related or incidental to the processing, refining, export, transfer or sale of oil, condensates, or other petroleum or petrochemical products in whole or in part from the Islamic Republic of Iran”; **Page H2501**

Save Our Sequoias Act: H.R. 2709, amended, to improve the health and resiliency of giant sequoias; **Pages H2503–09**

Vicksburg National Military Park Boundary Modification Act: H.R. 4467, amended, to modify the boundary of the Vicksburg National Military Park in the State of Mississippi; **Pages H2509–10**

Small Cemetery Conveyance Act: H.R. 4284, amended, to amend the Small Tract Act of 1983 to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to convey, without consideration, certain cemeteries; **Pages H2510–11**

Deploying Infrastructure with Greater Internet Transactions And Legacy Applications Act: H.R. 1665, to require the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture to establish online portals to accept, process, and dispose of certain Form 299s; **Pages H2511–13**

Reauthorizing the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009: H.R. 2294, amended, to reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009; **Pages H2513–14**

Shivwits Band of Paiutes Jurisdictional Clarity Act: H.R. 3073, to confer jurisdiction on the State of Utah with respect to civil causes of action arising on or within the Indian lands of the Shivwits Band of Paiutes; **Pages H2514–16**

Gateway Partnership Act: H.R. 5254, amended, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the Gateway Arch Park Foundation to host private events in Gateway Arch National Park buildings; **Pages H2519–21**

North Rim Restoration Act: H.R. 5729, amended, to authorize direct emergency acquisition flexibilities for the National Park Service for the purpose of retaining, vetting, approving, and expediting contractor approval for the clearing, rebuilding, maintenance, and improvement of the Grand Canyon grounds that have been impacted by the Dragon Bravo Fire; **Pages H2521–23**

National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Extension Act: H.R. 2196, amended, to provide for an extension of the legislative authority of the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs; **Pages H2523–24**

Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Act: H.R. 528, amended, to require the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a program for Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Program; **Pages H2524–25**

Chiricahua National Park Act: H.R. 6380, amended, to establish the Chiricahua National Park in the State of Arizona as a unit of the National Park System; **Pages H2525–27**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: “To redesignate the Chiricahua National Park in the State of Arizona as Chiricahua National Park, and for other purposes”; and **Page H2527**

Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Amendment Act: H.R. 831, amended, to establish an interest-bearing account for the non-Federal contributions to the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program. **Pages H2527–29**

Suspensions—Proceedings Postponed: The House debated the following measures under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed.

Small Business Innovation and Economic Security Act: S. 3971, to extend the SBIR and STTR programs; and **Pages H2491–97**

Mitigation Action and Watermen Support Act of 2026: H.R. 4294, amended, to direct the Secretary of Commerce to establish a pilot program with respect to the sale of blue catfish caught within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. **Pages H2516–19**

Senate Referrals: S. 327 was held at the desk. S. 836 was held at the desk. S. 2074 was held at the desk. **Page H2491**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate appears on page H2491.

Quorum Calls—Votes: There were no Yea and Nay votes, and there were no Recorded votes. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 p.m. and adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Committee Meetings

PROTECTING ACCESS FOR HUNTERS AND ANGLERS ACT; DEPORTING FRAUDSTERS ACT OF 2026; BOWOW ACT OF 2025

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 556, the “Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act”; H.R. 1958, the “Deporting Fraudsters Act of 2026”; and H.R. 4638, the “BOWOW Act of 2025”. The Committee granted, by a record vote of 6–2, a rule providing for consideration of H.R. 556, the “Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act”, H.R. 1958, the “Deporting Fraudsters Act of 2026”, and H.R. 4638, the “BOWOW Act of 2025”. The rule provides for consideration of H.R. 556, the “Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act”, under a closed rule. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources or their respective designees. The rule provides one motion to recommit. The rule further provides for consideration of H.R. 1958, the “Deporting Fraudsters Act of 2026”, under a closed rule. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary or their respective designees. The rule provides one motion to recommit. The rule further provides for consideration of H.R. 4638, the “BOWOW Act of 2025”, under a closed rule. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill, modified by the amendment printed in the Rules Committee report,

shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary or their respective designees. The rule provides one motion to recommit. Finally, the rule provides that debate on motions that the House suspend the rules, under clause 1 of rule 15, relating to H.J. Res. 139, shall be extended to one hour. Testimony was heard from Chairman Westerman, and Representatives Schmidt, Raskin, and Randall.

Joint Meetings

NUCLEAR POWER

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Commission received a briefing on nuclear power and nuclear powers, focusing on lessons from Ukraine, from James Acton, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Mariana Budjeryn, MIT Security Studies Program Center for Nuclear Security Policy; and Robert Wagner, Naval Postgraduate School.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2026

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Media, to hold hearings to examine the World Radiocommunication Conference 2027, focusing on strategy and challenges ahead of Shanghai, 10 a.m., SR-253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Water and Power, to hold hearings to examine S. 1034, to establish the Southwestern Power Administration Fund, S. 1242, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to carry out watershed pilots, S. 2437 and H.R. 3857, bills to amend the Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program Authorization Act, S. 2753, to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to authorize certain extraordinary operation and maintenance work for urban canals of concern, S. 3409, to reaffirm that the Bureau of Reclamation retains exclusive ownership, operational control, and financial responsibility for the Lower Yellowstone Fish Bypass Channel, ensuring long-term conservation of the endangered pallid sturgeon and other native aquatic species in the Yellowstone River while protecting the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project and District from undue financial and operational burdens, S. 3500, to amend the Federal Power Act to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to annually submit to Congress a report on the status of ongoing hydro-power relicensing applications, S. 3518, to amend the

Federal Power Act to address certain alterations in, and the maintenance and repair of, project works, to provide for the licensing of micro hydrokinetic energy projects, S. 3635, to reauthorize the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System Act of 2000, S. 3684, to amend the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to reauthorize water power research, development, demonstration, and commercial application activities, S. 3693, to extend the authorization for a large-scale water recycling and reuse grant program, S. 3723, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of constructing a project to supply municipal, rural, and industrial water from the Missouri River to the Western Dakota Regional Water System, S. 3725, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of constructing a project to supply municipal, rural, and industrial water to expand the capacity and reach of the Lewis and Clark Rural Water System, Inc. (doing business as “Lewis & Clark Regional Water System”), in the States of Iowa, Minnesota, and South Dakota, S. 3732, to amend the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act to authorize assistance under the storage program, S. 3736, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of constructing a project to supply municipal, rural, and industrial water to the Dakota Mainstem Regional Water System service area in the States of South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, and Minnesota, S. 3737, to amend the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991 to provide financial and technical assistance to eligible entities for the conduct of innovative approaches to voluntary water partnership agreements among multiple water users and projects conducted by individual agricultural entities, S. 3738, to amend the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to reauthorize the large-scale water recycling and reuse program, to establish a Water Conveyance Improvement Program, S. 3743, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a feasibility study on a selective water withdrawal system at Glen Canyon Dam, S. 3792, to provide for the establishment of a Water Project Navigators Program, S. 4040, to amend Public Law 89-108 to modify the authorization of appropriations for State and Tribal, municipal, rural, and industrial water supplies, and S. 4041, to reauthorize the Cooperative Watershed Management Program, 10 a.m., SD-366.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine China’s theft of U.S. innovation, 10:15 a.m., SH-216.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, hearing entitled “American Indian and Alaska Native Public Witness Day (Day 1, Morning Session)”, 9 a.m., 2008 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, budget hearing on the U.S. Capitol Police, 10:15 a.m., 2362-B Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, hearing entitled “Member Day”, 10:15 a.m., 2362-B Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, oversight hearing on

the National Institutes of Health, 10:30 a.m., 2358–C Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, hearing entitled “Hearing—American Indian and Alaska Native Public Witness (Day 1, Afternoon Session)”, 1 p.m., 2008 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, budget hearing on the U.S. House of Representatives, 2 p.m., H-140 Capitol.

Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled “U.S. Military Posture and National Security Challenges in North and South America”, 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, hearing entitled “FY27 Strategic Forces Posture Hearing”, 3:30 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and Workforce, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 7894, the “Truman Scholarship Clean House Act”; H.R. 7661, the “Stop the Sexualization of Children Act”; H.R. 7890, the “Science of Reading Act of 2026”; H.R. 7892, the “No Aid for Ghost Students Act of 2026”; H.R. 7891, the “Student Aid Fraud Oversight and Accountability Act of 2026”; H.R. 7893, the “FAFSA Verification Efficiency Act”; and H.R. 6084, the “ERISA Litigation Reform Act”, 10:15 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Energy, hearing entitled “Winter Storm Fern Lessons: Supplying Reliable Power to Meet Peak Demand”, 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled “Protecting Patients and Safeguarding Taxpayer Dollars: The Role of CMS in Combatting Medicare and Medicaid Fraud”, 2 p.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Updating America’s Financial Privacy Framework for the 21st Century”, 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Reforming America’s Defense Sales”, 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Oversight and Intelligence Subcommittee, hearing entitled “Waste, Fraud, and Abuse in Foreign Assistance: Lessons Learned and Charting a Path Forward”, 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Protection, hearing entitled “DeepSeek and Unitree Robotics: Examining the National Security Risks of PRC Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, and Autonomous Technologies and Building a Secure U.S. Technology Base”, 2 p.m., 310 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Administrative State, Regulatory Reform, and Antitrust, hearing entitled “Pier Pressure: Regulation and Competition in Maritime Shipping”, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Government Operations, hearing entitled “Oversight of the U.S. Postal Service: The Financial Future Under Postmaster General Steiner”, 2 p.m., HVC-210.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation,

hearing entitled “Force Design or Force in Decline: Reviewing Readiness”, 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Trade, hearing entitled “Advancing America’s Interests at the World Trade Organization’s 14th Ministerial Conference”, 10 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM AHEAD

Week of March 17 through March 20, 2026

Senate Chamber

On *Tuesday*, Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Anna St. John, of Louisiana, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana, and vote on the motion to invoke cloture thereon at 11:30 a.m. If cloture is invoked on the nomination, Senate will vote on confirmation of the nomination at 2:15 p.m.

During the balance of the week, Senate may consider any cleared legislative and executive business.

Senate Committees

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Committee on Armed Services: March 19, to hold hearings to examine the posture of United States Northern Command and United States Southern Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2027 and the Future Years Defense Program; to be immediately followed by a closed session in SVC-217, 9:30 a.m., SD-G50.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: March 17, Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Media, to hold hearings to examine the World Radiocommunication Conference 2027, focusing on strategy and challenges ahead of Shanghai, 10 a.m., SR-253.

March 18, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine platform power as section 230 turns 30, 10 a.m., SR-253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: March 17, Subcommittee on Water and Power, to hold hearings to examine S. 1034, to establish the Southwestern Power Administration Fund, S. 1242, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to carry out watershed pilots, S. 2437 and H.R. 3857, bills to amend the Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program Authorization Act, S. 2753, to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to authorize certain extraordinary operation and maintenance work for urban canals of concern, S. 3409, to reaffirm that the Bureau of Reclamation retains exclusive ownership, operational control, and financial responsibility for the Lower Yellowstone Fish Bypass Channel, ensuring long-term conservation of the endangered pallid sturgeon and other native aquatic species in the Yellowstone River while protecting the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project and District from undue financial and operational burdens, S. 3500, to amend the Federal Power Act to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to annually

submit to Congress a report on the status of ongoing hydropower relicensing applications, S. 3518, to amend the Federal Power Act to address certain alterations in, and the maintenance and repair of, project works, to provide for the licensing of micro hydrokinetic energy projects, S. 3635, to reauthorize the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System Act of 2000, S. 3684, to amend the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to reauthorize water power research, development, demonstration, and commercial application activities, S. 3693, to extend the authorization for a large-scale water recycling and reuse grant program, S. 3723, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of constructing a project to supply municipal, rural, and industrial water from the Missouri River to the Western Dakota Regional Water System, S. 3725, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of constructing a project to supply municipal, rural, and industrial water to expand the capacity and reach of the Lewis and Clark Rural Water System, Inc. (doing business as “Lewis & Clark Regional Water System”), in the States of Iowa, Minnesota, and South Dakota, S. 3732, to amend the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act to authorize assistance under the storage program, S. 3736, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of constructing a project to supply municipal, rural, and industrial water to the Dakota Mainstem Regional Water System service area in the States of South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, and Minnesota, S. 3737, to amend the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991 to provide financial and technical assistance to eligible entities for the conduct of innovative approaches to voluntary water partnership agreements among multiple water users and projects conducted by individual agricultural entities, S. 3738, to amend the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to reauthorize the large-scale water recycling and reuse program, to establish a Water Conveyance Improvement Program, S. 3743, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a feasibility study on a selective water withdrawal system at Glen Canyon Dam, S. 3792, to provide for the establishment of a Water Project Navigators Program, S. 4040, to amend Public Law 89–108 to modify the authorization of appropriations for State and Tribal, municipal, rural, and industrial water supplies, and S. 4041, to reauthorize the Cooperative Watershed Management Program, 10 a.m., SD–366.

March 19, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine Department of Energy’s implementation of President Trump’s May 2025 nuclear energy executive orders, 9:30 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: March 18, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, and Water, to hold hearings to examine challenges and opportunities with implementing the Endangered Species Act, 10 a.m., SD–562.

Committee on Foreign Relations: March 18, to receive a closed briefing on the current situation in the Middle East, 10 a.m., SVC–217.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: March 19, to hold Member Day to examine legislative priorities, 10 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: March 18, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Markwayne Mullin, of Oklahoma, to be Secretary of Homeland Security, 9:30 a.m., SD–342.

March 19, Full Committee, business meeting to consider the nomination of Markwayne Mullin, of Oklahoma, to be Secretary of Homeland Security, 9:30 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: March 17, to hold hearings to examine China’s theft of U.S. innovation, 10:15 a.m., SH–216.

March 19, Full Committee, business meeting to consider S. 545, to prohibit certain uses of xylazine, H.R. 2159, to direct the Attorney General of the United States to submit to the Congress a report on Federal criminal offenses, S. 2934, to limit the availability of civil actions affected by United States sanctions, and the nominations of Colin McDonald, of California, to be an Assistant Attorney General, James Bishop, to be United States Attorney for the Middle District of North Carolina, Brian Barber, to be United States Marshal for the Western District of Louisiana, Steven Lewis, to be United States Marshal for the Eastern District of Missouri, Priscilla Lopez, to be United States Marshal for the Southern District of Florida, Brian Gootkin, to be United States Marshal for the District of Montana, and James Stuart, to be United States Marshal for the District of Minnesota, all of the Department of Justice, 10:15 a.m., SH–216.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: March 18, to hold hearings to examine sunshine week, focusing on bringing secret government spending to light, 2:30 p.m., SR–428A.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs: March 18, business meeting to consider S. 342, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize an individual who is awarded the Purple Heart for service in the Armed Forces to transfer unused Post-9/11 Educational Assistance to a family member, S. 410, to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to improve benefits and services for surviving spouses, S. 649, to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for Post-9/11 Educational Assistance to members of the National Guard who perform certain full-time duty, S. 1116, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the provision of certain additional burial benefits for individuals for whom an urn or plaque is furnished, S. 1657, to amend title 38, United States Code, to limit the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to deny the claim of a veteran for benefits under the laws administered by such Secretary on the sole basis that such veteran failed to appear for a medical examination associated with such claim, S. 1665, to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure veterans of secrecy oath programs receive the full benefits they have earned, S. 1726, to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify that the Department of Veterans Affairs definition of “medical services” includes medically necessary automobile adaptations, S. 1868, to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand access by veterans to critical access

hospitals and affiliated clinics under the Veterans Community Care Program, S. 2061, to require the Interagency Working Group on Toxic Exposure to conduct research on the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions of descendants of individuals exposed to toxic substances while serving as members of the Armed Forces, S. 2220, to expand presumptions of exposure by members of the Armed Forces to toxic substances, S. 2264, to improve the emergency management capabilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, S. 2309, to direct a physician or nurse practitioner employed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certify the death of a veteran not later than 48 hours after such physician or nurse practitioner learns of such death, S. 2328, to authorize the use of veterans educational assistance for examinations and assessments to receive credit toward degrees awarded by institutions of higher learning, S. 2333, to require the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to permit supplementation of health records of deceased veterans, S. 2397, to require implementation by the Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs of certain recommendations relating to the provision of health care through community care providers, S. 2683, to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Veterans Scam and Fraud Evasion Officer, S. 2807, to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify the applicability of the authority to reconsider decisions of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Secretary of the Army to inter remains or honor the memory of a person in a national cemetery, S. 2981, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of prosthetic and rehabilitative items and services by the Department of Veterans Affairs, S. 3033, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish partnerships between medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs and medical facilities in rural areas, S. 3119, to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make temporary lodging facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs available for members of the Armed Forces, other individuals on active duty, and family members of such individuals on a space-available basis, S. 3138, to amend title 38, United States Code, to include adaptive prostheses and terminal devices for sports and other recreational activities in the medical services furnished to eligible veterans by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, S. 3303, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to establish or enhance a community integration platform for services for veterans, to require the collection from veterans of information related to social determinants of health, S. 3758, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make opioid overdose rescue medications available to veterans and their caregivers, and a committee resolution, 4 p.m., SR-418.

Select Committee on Intelligence: March 18, to hold hearings to examine worldwide threats; to be immediately followed by a closed session in SH-219, 10 a.m., SH-216.

House Committees

Committee on Appropriations, March 18, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, hearing entitled “American Indian and Alaska Native Public Witness (Day 2, Morning Session)”, 9 a.m., 2008 Rayburn.

March 18, Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, budget hearing on the Government Accountability Office and Congressional Budget Office, 9 a.m., 2362-B Rayburn.

March 18, Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, budget hearing on the Architect of the Capitol, 11 a.m., 2362-B Rayburn.

March 18, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, hearing entitled “American Indian and Alaska Native Public Witness (Day 2, Afternoon Session)”, 1 p.m., 2008 Rayburn.

March 19, Subcommittee on Defense, hearing entitled “Member Day”, 9:30 a.m., H-140 Capitol.

Committee on Armed Services, March 18, Full Committee, hearing entitled “U.S. Military Posture and National Security Challenges in Europe”, 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

March 18, Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces; and Subcommittee on Readiness, joint hearing entitled “Posture and Readiness of the Mobility Enterprise”, 3 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

March 18, Subcommittee on Intelligence and Special Operations, hearing entitled “U.S. Special Operations Forces and Command—Challenges and Resource Priorities for Fiscal Year 2027”, 3:30 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and Workforce, March 18, Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, hearing entitled “Strengthening Federal Workers’ Compensation Programs: Ensuring Integrity, Efficiency, and Access”, 10:15 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, March 18, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled “Lowering Health Care Costs for All Americans: An Examination of the U.S. Provider Landscape”, 10:15 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

March 18, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, hearing entitled “Securing U.S. Leadership of Communications Technology”, 2 p.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, March 18, Subcommittee on National Security, Illicit Finance and International Financial Institutions, hearing entitled “Oversight of the Export-Import Bank”, 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

March 18, Task Force on Monetary Policy, Treasury Market Resilience, and Economic Prosperity, hearing entitled “Revisiting the Treasury-Fed Accord”, 2 p.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, March 18, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Restoring Mission Focus at the State Department: Authority, Accountability, and the Role of the Foreign Service”, 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on House Administration, March 18, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 6028, the “Legislative Branch Agencies Clarification Act”; and H.R. 5891, the “Withhold Member Pay During Shutdowns Act”, 10 a.m., 1310 Longworth.

Committee on the Judiciary, March 18, Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Government, hearing entitled “Immigration Policy by Court Order: The Adverse Effects of *Plyler v. Doe*”, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

March 18, Subcommittee on Oversight, hearing entitled “The Legal Basis for Action Against Venezuelan Drug Traffickers”, 2 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, March 18, Subcommittee on Federal Lands, hearing on H.R. 3286, the “Mammoth Cave National Boundary Adjustment Act of 2025”; H.R. 4290, the “Downwinder Commemoration Act of 2025”; H.R. 4716, to transfer administrative jurisdiction of certain Federal land in Saratoga Springs, Utah, from the Secretary of the Interior to the United States Postal Service for construction of a post office, and for other purposes; H.R. 5555, the “Monterey Bay National Heritage Area Study Act”; H.R. 6062, to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain parcels of federal land in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, and for other purposes; and H.R. 7031, the “Making National Parks Safer Act”, 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, March 18, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 6916, the “Federal Program Integrity and Fraud Prevention Act of 2025”; H.R. 428, the “Bonuses for Cost-Cutters Act of 2025”; H.R. 1722, the “Billion Dollar Boondoggle Act of 2025”; H.R. 4642, the “Fiscal Contingency Preparedness Act”; H.R. 2069, the “Stop Secret Spending Act of 2025”; legislation on the Settlement Agreement Information Database Act of 2026; H.R. 2766, the “Special District Fairness and Accessibility Act”; H.R. 5525, Stop DC Capital Authoritarian Motorvehicle Enforcement and Restoration of Autonomy Act”; H.R. 6399, to direct the United States Postal Service to designate a single, unique ZIP Code for Highland City, Utah; and H.R. 6247, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 13355 North Lon Adams Road in Marana, Arizona, as the “Mayor Ed Honea Memorial Post Office”, 10 a.m., HVC–210.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, March 18, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 7813, the “NOAA Weather Radio Modernization Act”, 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, March 18, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Connecting SBA to Main Street: Examining the SBA Office of Field Operations”, 10 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, March 18, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 5688, the “Dalilah’s Law”, 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, March 18, Full Committee, hearing on H.R. 6733, the “VISN Reform Act of 2025”; H.R. 6580, the “VA National Formulary Act of 2025”; H.R. 6755, the “Accountable Leadership for Veterans Act of 2025”; H.R. 6599, the “Leasing and Infra-

structure Act of 2025”; H.R. 6583, the “Research Reform Act of 2025”; H.R. 6549, the “VA Contracting and Procurement Act”; H.R. 6740, the “VA TRUST Act”; H.R. 6764, the “Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee Oversight Act of 2025”; H.R. 6904, the “Veterans Readiness and Employment Improvement and Accountability Act of 2025”; H.R. 6843, the “Establishing the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration Act of 2025”; H.R. 6861, the “Consolidating Veteran Employment Services for Improved Performance Act”; H.R. 6833, the “Acquisition Reform and Cost Assessment Act of 2025”; H.R. 2303, the “Board of Veterans’ Appeals Attorney Retention and Backlog Reduction Act”; H.R. 10, the “Dental Care for Veterans Act”; H.R. 3183, the “SAFE STEPS for Veterans Act of 2025”; H.R. 5203, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to update directives of the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding the management of acute sexual assault, and for other purposes; H.R. 4114, the “EVEST Act”; H.R. 3869, the “Every Veteran Housed Act”; H.R. 1732, the “GUARD VA Benefits Act”; H.R. 2722, the “VA Funding and Workforce Protection Act”; H.R. 1391, the “Student Veteran Benefit Restoration Act of 2025”; H.R. 4876, the “Reproductive Freedom for Veterans Act”; legislation on the Get Justice-Involved Veterans BACK HOME Act; legislation on the Toxic Exposure Advisory Committee Establishment Act; legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the Advisory Committee on Toxic Exposure of the Department of Veterans Affairs; legislation on the Honor Vets Act; legislation to provide for the modernization of the electronic health record system and other health information technology activities and systems of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, 10:15 a.m., 360 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, March 18, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled “Improving Kidney Health Through Better Prevention and Innovative Treatment”, 2 p.m., 1100 Longworth.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, March 19, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Worldwide Threats”, 8:30 a.m., HVC–210.

March 19, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Worldwide Threats”, 11:30 a.m., HVC–304 Hearing Room. This hearing is closed.

Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party, March 18, Full Committee, hearing entitled “From the Science Lab to the Medicine Cabinet: How China Is Cornering the Market on Our Medicines”, 10 a.m., 390 Cannon.

Joint Meeting

Joint Economic Committee: March 18, to hold hearings to examine keeping promises, focusing on labor inflows, maintaining competitiveness, and supporting an aging population, 2:30 p.m., SH–216.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Tuesday, March 17

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Tuesday, March 17

Senate Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Anna St. John, of Louisiana, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana, and vote on the motion to invoke cloture thereon at 11:30 a.m. If cloture is invoked on the nomination, Senate will vote on confirmation of the nomination at 2:15 p.m.

Additional roll call votes are expected during Tuesday's session of the Senate.

(Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. for their respective party conferences.)

House Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Consideration of H. Res. 1115—Providing for consideration of H.R. 556, Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act, H.R. 1958, Deporting Fraudsters Act of 2026, and H.R. 4368, Federal Working Animal Protection Act.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Boyle, Brendan F., Pa., E218
 Cloud, Michael, Tex., E218
 Crank, Jeff, Colo., E216, E219
 Crockett, Jasmine, Tex., E216

DeGette, Diana, Colo., E217
 Gimenez, Carlos A., Fla., E216
 Gonzalez, Vicente, Tex., E215, E219
 Houlahan, Chrissy, Pa., E217
 Kean, Thomas H., Jr., N.J., E218
 McClain, Lisa C., Mich., E215, E220

Norcross, Donald, N.J., E215, E219
 Norton, Eleanor Holmes, The District of Columbia, E217
 Thompson, Bennie G., Miss., E218
 Van Duyne, Beth, Tex., E215, E216, E218, E219, E220



Congressional Record

printed pursuant to directions of the Joint Committee on Printing as authorized by appropriate provisions of Title 44, United States Code, and published for each day that one or both Houses are in session, excepting very infrequent instances when two or more unusually small consecutive issues are printed one time. ¶Public access to the *Congressional Record* is available online through the U.S. Government Publishing Office, at www.govinfo.gov, free of charge to the user. The information is updated online each day the *Congressional Record* is published. For more information, contact the GPO Customer Contact Center, U.S. Government Publishing Office. Phone 202-512-1800, or 866-512-1800 (toll-free). E-Mail, contactcenter@gpo.gov. ¶To place an order for any of these products, visit the U.S. Government Online Bookstore at: bookstore.gpo.gov. Mail orders to: Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 979050, St. Louis, MO 63197-9000, or phone orders to 866-512-1800 (toll-free), 202-512-1800 (D.C. area), or fax to 202-512-2104. Remit check or money order, made payable to the Superintendent of Documents, or use VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, or GPO Deposit Account. ¶Following each session of Congress, the daily *Congressional Record* is revised, printed, permanently bound and sold by the Superintendent of Documents in individual parts or by sets. ¶With the exception of copyrighted articles, there are no restrictions on the republication of material from the *Congressional Record*.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Superintendent of Documents, *Congressional Record*, U.S. Government Publishing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, along with the entire mailing label from the last issue received.