

118th Congress }
2nd Session }

COMMITTEE PRINT

FULL COMMITTEE
BUSINESS MEETING:
MARK-UP OF SEVERAL BILLS
AND POSTAL-NAMING
MEASURES

FOR THE
COMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

MAY 15, 2024

Serial No. CP:118-11

Printed for the use of the Committee on Oversight and Accountability



Available on: *govinfo.gov*,
oversight.house.gov or
docs.house.gov

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

55-711 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2024

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

JAMES COMER, Kentucky, Chairman

JIM JORDAN, Ohio	JAMIE RASKIN, Maryland, <i>Ranking Minority Member</i>
MIKE TURNER, Ohio	ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, District of Columbia
PAUL GOSAR, Arizona	STEPHEN F. LYNCH, Massachusetts
VIRGINIA FOXX, North Carolina	GERALD E. CONNOLLY, Virginia
GLENN GROTHMAN, Wisconsin	RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY, Illinois
MICHAEL CLOUD, Texas	RO KHANNA, California
GARY PALMER, Alabama	KWEISI MFUME, Maryland
CLAY HIGGINS, Louisiana	ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, New York
PETE SESSIONS, Texas	KATIE PORTER, California
ANDY BIGGS, Arizona	CORI BUSH, Missouri
NANCY MACE, South Carolina	SHONTEL BROWN, Ohio
JAKE LATURNER, Kansas	MELANIE STANSBURY, New Mexico
PAT FALLON, Texas	ROBERT GARCIA, California
BYRON DONALDS, Florida	MAXWELL FROST, Florida
SCOTT PERRY, Pennsylvania	SUMMER LEE, Pennsylvania
WILLIAM TIMMONS, South Carolina	GREG CASAR, Texas
TIM BURCHETT, Tennessee	JASMINE CROCKETT, Texas
MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE, Georgia	DAN GOLDMAN, New York
LISA McCLAIN, Michigan	JARED MOSKOWITZ, Florida
LAUREN BOEBERT, Colorado	RASHIDA TLAIB, Michigan
RUSSELL FRY, South Carolina	AYANNA PRESSLEY, Massachusetts
ANNA PAULINA LUNA, Florida	
NICK LANGWORTHY, New York	
ERIC BURLISON, Missouri	
MIKE WALTZ, Florida	

MARK MARIN, Staff Director

JESSICA DONLON, Deputy Staff Director and General Counsel

RYAN GIACHETTI, Counsel

CHRISTIAN HOEHNER, Policy Director

LAUREN LOMBARDO, Deputy Policy Director

MALLORY COGAR, Deputy Director of Operations and Chief Clerk

CONTACT NUMBER: 202-225-5074

JULIE TAGEN, Minority Staff Director

CONTACT NUMBER: 202-225-5051

C O N T E N T S

	Page
Meeting held on May 15, 2024	1

BILLS CONSIDERED

* H.R. 8333, THE BIOSECURE ACT Bill Discussed	1
* H.R. 5255, THE FEDERAL CYBERSECURITY VULNERABILITY RE- DUCTION ACT OF 2023 Bill Discussed	5
* H.R. 8276, THE REUSE EXCESS PROPERTY ACT Bill Discussed	8
* H.R. 8335, THE BILLION DOLLAR BOONDOGGLE ACT OF 2024 Bill Discussed	10
* H.R. 8334, THE GRANT INTEGRITY AND BORDER SECURITY ACT Bill Discussed	11
* H.R. 6462, THE RESILIENT EMPLOYMENT AND AUTHORIZATION DETERMINATION TO INCREASE THE NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT OF SERVING SPOUSES (READINESS) ACT Bill Discussed	17
* SEVERAL POSTAL-NAMING MEASURES Measures Discussed	36

INDEX OF DOCUMENTS

- * Statement for the Record; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- * Article, “Nonprofits Are Making Billions Off the Border Crisis - The Free Press”; submitted by Rep. Foxx.

Documents are available at: docs.house.gov.

**FULL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING:
MARK-UP OF SEVERAL BILLS AND
POSTAL-NAMING MEASURES**

Wednesday, May 15, 2024

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY,
Washington, D.C.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:16 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. James Comer [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Comer, Gosar, Foxx, Grothman, Cloud, Palmer, Higgins, Sessions, Biggs, Mace, LaTurner, Fallon, Donalds, Perry, Timmons, Burchett, Greene, Boebert, Fry, Luna, Langworthy, Burlison, Waltz, Raskin, Norton, Lynch, Connolly, Krishnamoorthi, Khanna, Mfume, Ocasio-Cortez, Porter, Bush, Brown, Stansbury, Garcia, Frost, Lee, Casar, Crockett, Goldman, Moskowitz, Tlaib, and Pressley.

Chairman COMER. The Committee will please come to order. A quorum is present.

Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare a recess at any time.

Pursuant to Committee Rule 5(g) and House Rule XI, Clause 2, the Chair may postpone further proceedings today on the question of approving any measure or matter or adopting an amendment on which a recorded vote on the yeas and nays are ordered.

The Committee will continue to use the electronic system for recorded votes on amendments and passage of the bills before the committee. Of course, should any technical issues arise, which I do not anticipate, we will immediately transition to traditional roll call votes. Any procedural or motion related votes during today's markup will be dispensed with by a traditional roll call vote.

Our first item for consideration is **H.R. 8333**, the BIOSECURE Act. The clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 8333, the BIOSECURE Act, a bill to prohibit contracting with certain biotechnology providers, and for other purposes.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill shall be considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Without objection, so ordered.

The Chair recognizes himself to offer an amendment in the nature of a substitute. The clerk will please designate the amendment.

The CLERK. An amendment in the nature of a substitute offered to H.R. 8333, offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read, and the substitute will be considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment.

I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for a statement on the bill and the amendment.

I am happy to support H.R. 8333, the BIOSECURE Act. This bipartisan bicameral bill prevents U.S. taxpayer dollars from flowing to biotechnology companies that are owned, operated, or controlled by China or other foreign adversaries. Specifically, this bill names five genomic companies with direct ties to the Chinese Communist Party as biotechnology companies of concern. The bill prohibits a Federal agency from procuring any biotechnology equipment or service from such companies. The bill also prohibits Federal loan or grant dollars from being used to procure, obtain, or use biotechnology equipment or services from such companies.

The companies named in this legislation create significant risks to U.S. national security. BGI, one of the named entities, is a CCP biotechnology company and is the world's largest collector of genetic data. BGI, alongside its subsidiaries, which are also named in the bill, have been found to conduct research alongside the Chinese military. WuXi, through its two subsidiaries named in the bill, operates genetic testing centers, established in coordination with the CCP; helps carry out research to promote the Chinese military; and has reportedly stolen U.S. firms' intellectual property. This bill addresses these national security risks without disrupting medical supply chains.

Existing contracts are exempt from prohibitions in the bill until January 2032, and the bill includes a targeted waiver and exception process. The bill also exempts biotechnology equipment and services from the bill's prohibitions that were, but are no longer, produced or provided by a company of concern. This bill is a necessary step toward protecting America's sensitive healthcare data from the CCP before these companies become more embedded in the U.S. economy, university systems, and Federal contracting base.

I want to thank the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party Chairman, John Moolenaar; and Ranking Member Raja Krishnamoorthi; Senate Homeland Security Chairman, Gary Peters; and the bill's new House sponsor, Representative Brad Wenstrup, Chairman of the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic; and their staffs for the continued work on this important national security bill. I urge all my House Oversight colleagues to support this necessary legislation.

I now recognize Ranking Member Raskin for his opening statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This bipartisan legislation, introduced by Representatives Wenstrup and Krishnamoorthi, is a response to concerns about certain biotech companies' relationships with the People's Republic of China, and how these relation-

ships might compromise Americans' sensitive health data. The intent is to prevent the PRC from acquiring Americans' sensitive health information, including our personal genomic data and DNA, through its relationship with certain companies that collect, test, and stored genomic data.

According to a February 2021 fact sheet, available on the DNI website, the PRC is investing heavily in biotech, and has prioritized policies that facilitate the collection of large genomic data sets. The DNI reports that Chinese companies have gained greater access to sensitive U.S. healthcare data by developing strategic partnerships with U.S. researchers, hospitals, universities, and firms in providing them extremely low-cost services, like genomic sequencing, subsidized by the PRC. Collecting vast amounts of genetic data from a large pool of diverse patients could allow Chinese companies to develop and control new medical products and services and also poses significant privacy and national security risks for Americans. According to the intelligence community, the PRC's mass collection of DNA in China has helped to carry out human rights abuses against domestic minority groups like the Uyghurs and other Muslim minority groups in Xinjiang. This legislation would prohibit the Federal Government from purchasing biotech equipment and services from five companies of concern and establishes an interagency process for identifying additional companies in the future if it is ever needed. The bill would bar Federal agencies from contracting with or making loans to the companies of concern.

I understand that the Select Committee on Strategic Competition Between the U.S. and the Chinese Communist Party drafted this bill in a bipartisan manner and worked closely with our Committee staffs and our Senate colleagues to carefully craft it. The bill before us includes several provisions that were designed to address concerns raised in the drafting process, particularly about potential supply chain disruptions and drug shortages. The bill includes an extended phase-in period for existing contracts with these companies, which could be extended until 2032. It also provides a process for obtaining a waiver and contains limited exceptions for national security activities and for the provision of necessary healthcare services to Americans overseas.

The bill is an effort to strike a balance between recognizing the very real national security threat posed by efforts to embed the PRC in the U.S. healthcare system while also ensuring the stability and continuity of our healthcare supply chain. The bill seeks to address a truly complex problem in a complex industry. I certainly am in favor of the intent of this legislation, and I am inclined to support the bill today in our Committee. I would like to respectfully ask the Chairman and the bill sponsors to commit to continuing to work in good faith together to resolve any potential technical issues and address any unintended consequences of the bill that might affect the American people or our Nation's drug supply before it goes to the Floor. I thank Chairman Comer and the sponsors of the legislation. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Any Members seek recognition on the bill? The Chair recognizes Mr. Krishnamoorthi.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you, Mr. Chair and thank you, Mr. Ranking Member for the opportunity to mark up the BIOSECURE Act today, H.R. 8333.

Simply put, the BIOSECURE Act prohibits U.S. taxpayer dollars from flowing to foreign adversary-controlled biotech companies engaging in nefarious activities. Mr. Brad Wenstrup and I are proud to have reintroduced this bill last Friday. As the Ranking Member of the Select Committee on the Strategic Competition with the Chinese Communist Party, I cannot overstate the importance of this particular bill. U.S. taxpayer dollars should not be funding PRC biotech companies that are actively working with the CCP and the People's Liberation Army to potentially collect Americans' genomic data and intellectual property, and use that data to further their authoritarian objectives.

Our bill requires the executive branch to develop a list of foreign adversary-controlled biotech companies. It also names five entities of concern. All are part of either the BGI group or the WuXi group. Many of you may be wondering, why are we specifically naming these companies? First, BGI and WuXi had been found by the U.S. Government and others to be involved in the perpetration of human rights abuses, specifically the Uyghur genocide. The Select Committee has found evidence of BGI and WuXi operating the PRC's 27 pregnancy genetic testing centers with the PLA, which allows the CCP to help identify and separate Uyghurs from other residents, a key pillar of the CCP's genocide. Second, BGI not only worked with the PLA to develop its technology, but they also now collect data and send it back to China that is used for continued research with the PLA. In 2021, a Reuters investigation uncovered that BGI took DNA using pregnancy tests from 8 million women from 52 different countries and sent that data back to China to be used in research studies with the PLA. Third, WuXi not only engages in human rights abuses, but there are reports that WuXi AppTec has stolen intellectual property from American companies and sent it back to China to be replicated.

For these reasons and others, these companies and their affiliates should not be receiving U.S. taxpayer dollars, period. We should not be working with these companies as a U.S. Government. This is a bipartisan and a bicameral issue. Our constituents demand that we not continue with these practices. I look forward to working with my colleagues across the aisle and in the Senate to protect Americans' health and their data. I urge all my colleagues here today to vote yes on this critical bill. Thank you and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back, and I just want to publicly thank you for your leadership on this bill and this issue, Mr. Krishnamoorthi.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. Any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The question is now on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response.]

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The amendment is agreed to.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 8333, as amended.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response.]

Ms. MACE. Mr. Chairman, may we have a recorded vote?

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote has been ordered by the lady from South Carolina. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed. Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 5255**, the Federal Cybersecurity Vulnerability Reduction Act of 2023. The clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 5255, the Federal Cybersecurity Vulnerability Reduction Act of 2023, a bill to require covered contractors implement a vulnerability disclosure policy consistent with NIST guidelines, and for other purposes.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill shall be considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Without objection, so ordered.

The Chair recognizes himself to offer an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The clerk will please designate the amendment.

The CLERK. An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5255 as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read, and the substitute will be considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment.

Now I recognize myself to speak on the bill.

I am happy to support H.R. 5255, the Federal Cybersecurity Vulnerability Reduction Act of 2023. The bill will require Federal contractors to have a vulnerability disclosure policy, or a VDP. This would help contractors more quickly alert Federal agencies about vulnerabilities, which could avoid a future cybersecurity breach. Federal agencies must act quickly when dealing with a cyberattack. The sooner a Federal agency knows it may have a problem, the sooner it can take steps to protect systems and data, including the personal data of millions of Americans. It is reasonable to require Federal contractors to play a proactive role in addressing information system vulnerabilities. The bill complements the Committee's ongoing work aimed at helping Federal agencies protect their data and information systems. I thank Subcommittee Chairwoman Mace for introducing this important legislation. I encourage my colleagues to support it.

I now recognize the Ranking Member for his opening statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate today's consideration of the Federal Contractors Cybersecurity Vulnerability Reduction Act, as well as the work of our colleague, Ms. Mace, in leading on this legislation. The bill would ensure that covered Federal contractors implement vulnerability disclosure policies, consistent with the guidelines of NIST, industry best practices, and international standards.

Each year, software developers, security researchers, and others discover tens of thousands of security vulnerabilities in computer software and systems. For example, in 2023, more than 29,000 common vulnerabilities and exposures were logged into NIST's widely used National Vulnerability Data base. If companies establish a process for accepting, assessing, and managing reports of these vulnerabilities, otherwise known as a vulnerability disclosure policy, they can make use of such discoveries to fix problems before they are ever exploited by nefarious actors. Vulnerability disclosure policies are an effective tool for improving cybersecurity. Most agencies already have such policies, as do Federal contractors and subs that provide information systems, and the internet of things, and devices to Federal agencies. By requiring all Federal contractors to follow suit, the bill shores up another front in the never-ending battle to protect the government's information systems and our data. Happy to support the bill today, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Does any other Member seek recognition? The Chair recognizes the sponsor of the bill, Chairwoman MACE.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In 2020, the Office of Management and Budget directed Federal agencies to implement cybersecurity vulnerability disclosure policies. White hat hackers and researchers work with the Federal Government to identify and address vulnerabilities. Ethical hackers are crucial to improving the Nation's cybersecurity posture. These vulnerability policies require these third parties to stop testing and properly notify the Federal Agency of any sensitive data they encounter, like personally identifiable information, financial information, or proprietary information or trade secrets. This allows the vulnerability to be patched and the information to be secured before they are exploited by malicious actors, including our adversaries. This was an important step in Federal cybersecurity. But as we have talked about in this Committee many times, just a fraction of the Federal workforce are Federal employees. The Federal Government awards over 11 million contracts annually, with many of these contractors having access to sensitive information, including personal information of U.S. citizens.

This bill, the Federal Cybersecurity Vulnerability Reduction Act, will require Federal contractors who work with government data or have access to government networks to adopt these vulnerability disclosure policies. This bill specifically requires the Department of Defense to supplement the Federal acquisition regulations to require the same strong cybersecurity vulnerability reduction policies also, safeguarding the personal information of our service members and information vital to our national security. Contractors with access to government data and systems should, at the very least, have the same safeguards and lines of defense in place as our government. Adoption of vulnerability disclosure policies by government and defense contractors will help protect the sensitive data of American citizens and our national security. Until these vulnerability disclosure policies are adopted across the entire Federal digital ecosystem, our Nation is at risk. This bill would close a crucial vulnerability and protect our Nation from malicious actors who seek to steal our data and do us harm.

I would like to thank the Chairman for his support in bringing this critical bill to markup today and look forward to its passage on a bipartisan basis, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. I thank the Chairwoman for this bill. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Biggs from Arizona.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank Ms. Mace for bringing this bill. My question, though, is with regard to the importance of this report. In multiple places, we allow the VDP to be actually waived by the CIO, Chief Information Officer. I guess my question—what I think might make this a little better bill is, is the CIO would never be required to justify the waiver because this thing in here says that they are going to find that there is necessarily the interest of national security or research purposes to go ahead and waive the report. And my question would be, who is reviewing what they are doing? And maybe we as the Oversight Committee or some other committee should receive that as a portion of the report when they choose to waive the report.

I would just suggest that because I do not see anything, accountability to the CIO in here, and maybe there is and I am just missing it, but I would suggest maybe we want the CIO to be accountable rather than to just subjectively make the determination. That is my suggestion. And, Ms. Mace, I do not know if you want to respond or Mr. Comer, or anyone.

Chairman COMER. You do not have to. I can comment on it while Mace is looking at it, but we will certainly take that into consideration as the bill moves forward.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. MACE. We are happy to work on it.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes. Thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Do any other Members seek recognition on the bill? You want to talk on the bill?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The question is now on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

All those opposed by saying no.

[No response.]

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The amendment is agreed to.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 5255, as amended.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair—

Ms. MACE. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Mace.

Ms. MACE. I would like to request a recorded vote, please.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote is ordered by Ms. Mace from South Carolina. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 8276**, the Reuse Excess Property Act.

The clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 8276, the Reuse Excess Property Act, a bill to make data and internal guidance on excess personal property publicly available, and for other purposes.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill shall be considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Without objection, so ordered.

The Chair recognizes himself to offer an amendment in the nature of a substitute. The clerk will please designate the amendment.

The CLERK. An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 8276 as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read, and the substitute will be considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment.

I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for a statement on the bill and amendment.

As the largest single purchaser of goods and services in the world, Federal agencies require billions of dollars of personal property ranging from office supplies to automobiles each year. Unfortunately, agencies routinely and wastefully dispose of excess personal property that could otherwise be repurposed for continued Federal Agency use. Agencies are already required to consider the availability of excess personal property before buying new products. This excess personal property is available to agencies at no cost apart from any necessary transportation expenses. In June 2022, the GAO found that agencies are continuing to acquire new property while not using available excess personal property. GAO's findings indicate that the guidance in the existing Federal Management Regulation alone may not be sufficient. With better direction from Congress, agencies can be more efficient in leveraging excess personal property to meet their needs, saving taxpayer dollars.

The Reuse Excess Property Act would hold agencies more accountable toward efficiently using and reusing personal property by introducing transparency and accountability mechanisms. This bill would reform existing statutory reporting requirements to the General Services Administration on excess personal property and require GSA to make this information publicly available. This will help decisionmakers and taxpayers better understand the extent to which agencies are working to cut wasteful spending through the use of excess property, informing future policy. Because GAO found that agencies have varied guidance on the use of excess personal property that often neglects essential FMR components, H.R. 8276 would require agencies to publicly report their guidance. Such guidance must include essential FMR components outlined by GAO. Agencies must also designate employees responsible for searching through available excess personal property for items that meet agency needs.

In response to GAO's report, in February 2023, GSO convened the first meeting of an interagency working group to assess how agencies acquire personal property, uncover obstacles, and recommend improvements to policies for acquisition professionals. The

bill would require GSA to make the findings of the working group, including a general summary, publicly available to provide full transparency into efforts to promote the maximum use of excess personal property. This bill shines a light on agency practices and could incentivize more efficient use of excess personal property, saving untold taxpayer dollars in the future.

I want to thank Representative McClain for her leadership on this issue, and I think most people have heard that Representative McClain has had to have emergency appendix surgery and she will be out for a few days. I want to urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation. I recognize the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I strongly support the Reuse Excess Property Act, which would increase transparency across the government by strengthening reporting requirements around excess personal property. I commend Chairwoman McClain, and I wish her well, and Ranking Member Porter for introducing the House version of the act, which has already passed in the Senate unanimously.

As of 2022, the government amassed roughly \$2 trillion in personal property, including furniture, like chairs and desks; vehicles; office supplies; even medical equipment. The agencies are required to survey and index their inventories of personal property on an annual basis and identify items that they no longer need so that agencies can better account for their assets and get a better understanding of excess items that could be considered for use in other agencies. The GAO identified \$3.9 billion in excess personal property between fiscal years 2016 and 2020, and found an additional \$28.9 billion in excess personal property items that were reported but not obtained by the agencies. These excess items could be transferred to another agency, distributed to state or local governments that need it, or even sold to the public.

This act would increase Federal reporting requirements and provide greater transparency to the public of acquisition, monitoring, reuse, and disposal of personal property across the terrain of Federal Government. It directs the GSA and agencies to annually report data it collects related to excess personal property and would also make the data available to the whole public. With greater transparency in Federal uses of personal property, agencies can better optimize the use of these items, reducing the need for Federal expenditures in the future. I support this commonsense, good government legislation. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The question is now on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response.]

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The amendment is agreed to.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 8276, as amended.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair—

Ms. MACE. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Mace.

Ms. MACE. I request a recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote is ordered by the gentlelady from South Carolina. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 8335**, the Billion Dollar Boondoggle Act. The clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 8335, the Billion Dollar Boondoggle Act, a bill to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to submit to Congress an annual report on projects that are over budget and behind schedule, and for other purposes.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill shall be considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Without objection, so ordered.

The Chair recognizes himself to offer an amendment in the nature of substitute. The clerk will please designate the amendment.

The CLERK. An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 8335 as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read, and the substitute will be considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment.

Congress must ensure that every taxpayer dollar is spent efficiently. Every year, the Government Accountability Office reports government projects that are above cost projections or behind schedule, from Federal IT programs to projects at the National Nuclear Security Administration. However, there are likely additional government projects that fly under the radar, falling years behind schedule or are billions of dollars over budget. The Billion Dollar Boondoggle Act would address this by informing policymakers of government-funded projects that are behind schedule or above initial cost projection. The bill directs the Office of Management and Budget to issue guidance requiring Federal agencies to report annually to Congress regarding certain federally funded projects. Under the bill, agencies must report on projects that are more than 5 years behind schedule or have expenditures that are at least \$1 billion more than the original cost estimate for the project. Agencies must provide an explanation if there is a delay in completion or an increase of cost for the project.

Congress has a duty to oversee the Federal Government for inefficiency and waste. This bill informs policymakers and allows Congress to address failing government projects before further taxpayer dollars are misused. The identical S. 1258 passed the Senate on March 23, 2024, sponsored by Senator Joni Ernst and Senator Hassan. I want to thank Representative Miller-Meeke for introducing the House companion bill. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I recognize the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. The legislation would require additional reporting on certain Federal projects over budget by a billion dollars or 5 years behind schedule. Congress has a duty

to make sure that the taxpayers' dollars are well spent, and additional oversight of projects that are vastly over budget or behind schedule makes perfect sense. I support this bill. I appreciate the fact that this version takes into consideration some technical comments that were offered by OMB, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Any other Members wish to speak? The Chair recognizes Mr. Biggs from Arizona.

Mr. BIGGS. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. This is a good bill, but good grief. We are not going to report until you are 5 years behind schedule? I mean, that seems to me—

Chairman COMER. We got projects in Kentucky on the Mississippi and Ohio River with the Corps of Engineers that are 10 years behind.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes. I mean, I think we should have known. Yes, if they are 10 years behind, we should have known when they were 6 months behind so we could get a handle on it and encourage them to get caught up or something. That is my only problem with this. It seems a little loosey-goosey, and I think we should be having a little bit more oomph in our oversight, Mr. Chairman. But with that, I am going to support this bill, obviously, but I am hoping that maybe we can tighten this up as we go forward.

Chairman COMER. Well said.

Mr. BIGGS. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, the question is now on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response.]

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The amendment is agreed to.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 8335, as amended.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

All those opposed say no.

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair—the Chair recognizes Mr. Biggs.

Mr. BIGGS. I request a recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote has been ordered by Mr. Biggs of Arizona. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 8334**, the Grant Integrity and Border Security Act. The clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 8334, the Grant Integrity and Border Security Act, a bill to require any applicant for a Federal grant to submit a certification that such applicant is not in violation of Section 274(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and for other purposes.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill shall be considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Without objection, so ordered.

The Chair recognizes himself to offer an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The clerk will please designate the amendment.

The CLERK. An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 8334 as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read, and the substitute will be considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment.

I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for a statement on the bill and the amendment. congressional Republicans are committed to securing our Southern border. It has been brought to this Committee's attention that some nongovernmental organizations, also known as NGO's, are using taxpayer dollars to subvert immigration law. NGO's receive hundreds of billions of dollars in Federal financial assistance to reimburse travel, shelter, and food provided to illegal aliens after they are released from the Department of Homeland Security custody. While these grant funds are lawfully provided for such purposes, some grant recipients may be engaging in inappropriate and potentially criminal conduct.

The DHS Inspector General found last year that NGO's had received reimbursements through FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program for services provided to illegal aliens who had evaded detection and apprehension by DHS personnel. This means that DHS had no record that these individuals had been released from custody and were, therefore, ineligible to receive services under the law. This is unacceptable. Groups that criminally aid illegal aliens should not be eligible to receive Federal grants.

The bill requires applicants for Federal grants to certify that they will not violate Section 274(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which prohibits alien smuggling, domestic transportation of unauthorized aliens, encouraging unauthorized aliens to enter the United States, and engaging in a conspiracy to take any of these actions. Applicants must certify that they and their employees have not violated in the last 10 years, are not in violation of, and will not violate the Act. Under the bill, the Office of Management and Budget is then authorized to withhold funds from any grantee in violation of this requirement. Additionally, if a grant recipient agrees not to violate the requirement and is later found to have criminally aided illegal immigrants, they can be held accountable to a civil suit. Such civil suits can be filed under the False Claims Act, which provides any person who knowingly submits or causes to submit false claims to the government is liable for three times the government damages.

Congress expects NGO's to abide by Federal law, including immigration law, when providing charitable assistance to immigrants. Congress must ensure that NGO's that break immigration law by criminally aiding illegal immigrants are not funding their activities with taxpayer dollars.

I want to thank Representative Foxx for introducing this very necessary bill. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. I now recognize the Ranking Member for his opening statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Alas, time and again, Republicans have walked away from meaningful bipartisan efforts

to improve our immigration system and strengthen border security. A few months ago, at the behest of Donald Trump, Republicans rejected a bipartisan Senate border bill that Mitch McConnell called the most substantial border security policy in 30 years. In 2021, all but six current House Republicans voted against the Bipartisan Infrastructure deal, which provided additional funding to combat smuggling of people and drugs into our country, and all but two of them voted against robust funding for border security operations in the Fiscal Year 2023 appropriations package.

Now, instead of engaging in meaningful robust bipartisan action, our colleagues have brought forth the H.R. 8334, a bill that would ask Federal grant applicants to certify that they are not in violation of one provision of one Federal immigration law that they are already legally obligated to follow. Mr. Chairman, in the absence of any real or serious policy solution that would actually repair the country's decades-long broken immigration system, H.R. 8334 is just one more frivolous attempt by Republicans to further demonize immigrants and stoke fears about migrants without actually doing anything.

The bill would require applicants for Federal grants to certify that they are not in violation of Section 274(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which imposes criminal penalties for knowingly taking a number of actions related to an immigrant, who is in the United States in violation of law. In targeting one specific section of one specific Federal law for an additional bureaucratic check-the-box step, this bill suggests it would somehow be less troubling for Federal grantees to violate any other Federal law. To be clear, Federal grantees are already expected and obligated to follow all Federal laws, and they are subject to penalties and consequences when they do not follow Federal laws. This bill is not necessary, and it is a painfully obvious attempt to score political points in the ceaseless crusade to demonize immigrants and try to claim that the Biden Administration is not already upholding the Nation's existing immigration laws.

H.R. 8334 is further evidence that when it comes to immigration and border security, our colleagues are offering no solutions, but rather gimmicks. They would rather stoke fear and cause chaos for political gain rather than work with us to pass bipartisan solutions. I oppose H.R. 8334. I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Biggs from Arizona.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I support this common-sense bill, introduced by Chairwoman Foxx. So, let us think about this. My colleagues across the aisle always say, oh man, the Republicans do not want to solve the border crisis. Over a year ago, we passed out the best border security bill that has come out in a generation, but the Senate refuses to take it up. The Democrats refused to take it up because it actually would secure the border. But let us consider the plan that they put forward that they always tout and say, oh man, this is a great plan.

It guaranteed 1,500 people could illegally enter the country every day. Even if the 7,500 limit mandatory-close-the-border was actually triggered, 1,500 a day. Well, you could do the math yourself. It is over 500,000 people a year, which, by the way, until the Biden

Administration, that would have been a record number of illegal aliens coming across. They were cool with that, but you did not even trigger an option to actually secure the border until you hit the number of 5,000 illegal aliens coming across the border in a day, 5,000 a day. Do the math. That is about 1.8 million.

It did not become mandatory for the executive to actually close the border for security purposes, in that legislation that the Democrats support, until when? Seventy-five hundred a day came in. That is about 2.5 million people. And here is the other kicker. They could not get that bill out of the Senate. So, it is not a demonization. Because we have over a million legal immigrants every year. We support that. What we do not support is mass illegal migration.

So, I will give you an example of NGO's. In Yuma, there is only one NGO. I served in the state legislature with the lady who runs it, Amanda Aguirre. She is great, does a great job, but she herself is overwhelmed because Yuma, which actually averaged fewer than 25 per day illegal aliens apprehended, in this Administration, they are happy to be down to 350 day because there have been times that they have had 2,000 a day. So, this is a good bill.

Let me tell you about the Tucson Sector. You know, it cracks me up, folks who live far from the border say there is no border crisis. Well, so, I was down in the Tucson Sector again last week. We actually had a hearing down there. You need to understand, and I just want to put this in a big picture perspective for you: 2018, 2019, and 2020, average was 60,000 apprehensions or encounters per year in the Tucson Sector. When President Biden came in and he emasculated it within 24 hours, something like 70-plus executive orders dealing with border security, the number rose to more than 3 times that in the first year, 2021. And then it was over 250,000 in 2022. In 2023, last year, it was about 360,000. And this year, they are on pace already to exceed 700,000 encounters in the Tucson Sector, which also is the corridor for something like 50 percent of all fentanyl and drug trafficking and human trafficking.

So, this is a bill that is actually necessary because one thing that we have found is that NGO's are actually facilitating illegal immigration, both south of the border and on our side of the border. So, let us have them declare that they are in compliance specifically with this immigration law. That will help, I think. I hope it does. And so, with that, Mr. Chairman, I support Ms. Foxx's bill, and I yield back.

Ms. FOXX. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BIGGS. Yes, I will.

Chairman COMER. Make sure your mic is on.

Ms. FOXX. I am not sure if the gentleman has seen this, but I was just given to me yesterday, it came out. It is today's paper, the *Free Press*, has put out an article called, "Nonprofits are Making Billions Off the Border Crisis." And, Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter this into the record.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes the sponsor of the bill, Dr. Foxx.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before I make my prepared remarks, I would like to say to the Ranking Member, he

knows I do not do frivolous things. I do not spend my time doing frivolous things. And he said that we are implying that the Biden Administration is not upholding the law. No, Mr. Chairman. We know the Biden Administration is not upholding the law. My bill, H.R. 8334, the Grant Integrity and Border Security Act, would prohibit Federal grant recipients from engaging in unlawful acts related to the smuggling and transportation of illegal aliens into the United States. We just hold lawbreakers accountable to secure our border and stop the abuse of taxpayer funds.

President Biden and Department of Homeland Security, DHS, Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, have overseen the most chaotic, lawless, and open border in recent memory. Taxpayers have been bearing the brunt of the massive wave of illegal aliens that have entered the United States, and the Biden Administration has seemingly declared hardworking taxpayers collateral damage in their pursuit to subvert the meaning of “citizenship.”

Agents of Customs and Border Patrol have been outspoken in their opposition to both Biden Administration policies and the assistance illegal immigrants receive from nongovernmental organizations, NGO’s, that work to aid in subversion of law and order. When asked if NGO’s are working at cross purposes to the mission of border control agents, Chief of the National Border Control Council said, “Most definitely, and they should not be allowed, but our government allows it.”

NGO’s receiving taxpayer funding through grants pay for everything from food, shelter, and transportation, to legal services that help the migrants traverse Mexico. According to the Office of Management and Budget, each year, the taxpayers provide more than \$1.2 trillion in funding for thousands of programs through grants and other forms of financial assistance. \$1.2 trillion dollars was 4.8 percent of our country’s GDP in 2022. For such a large sum, taxpayers need assurance that their money is not being spent to undermine law and order. However, today, taxpayers have no such assurance.

In 2023, DHS Office of Inspector General published a report on the failure of the Administration to provide adequate oversight of Federal grant funding. Organizations that receive funding are required to maintain documents related to cost, migrants served each day, expenses incurred, and proof of payment for purchases. In one sample of NGO books, the Inspector General report states that 58 percent of the reviewed amount was missing documentation. Additionally, the report determined a shocking number of migrants who received assistance from these NGO’s were missing documentation and did not have a DHS encounter record. Of the 824 names that were tested as a sample, 197 were ineligible to receive humanitarian services, and 154 did not have an encounter record. Despite this, President Biden and DHS have made no effort to hold NGO’s who received millions in taxpayer dollars accountable.

H.R. 8334 will finally do so. My bill requires that all applicants certify when filling out their applications that they have not violated, will not violate, and are not currently in violation of Section 274(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. This section of Federal law imposes criminal penalties on any person who assist aliens in illegally crossing in the United States. Accountability is ulti-

mately guaranteed by requiring Federal agencies to withhold any funds from a grantee determined by the head of an agency to be in violation of their application certification.

It is time to rein in lax enforcement of our immigration laws, implement integrity in the Federal grant process, and finally secure the southern border. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. Do any other Members seek recognition? The Chair recognizes Ms. Crockett.

Ms. CROCKETT. I would yield to the Ranking Leader.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much, Ms. Crockett, and I wanted to apologize to Ms. Foxx, if she thought that I was calling her frivolous and that nothing could be less frivolous than you. I know how seriously you undertake your responsibilities. I find it frivolous that our colleagues across the aisle rejected the best bipartisan package we ever had, at least since I have been in Congress, on immigration. It was backed by Senator Lankford, by Senator McConnell. It was flying through the Senate, hundreds of new Border Patrol agents, hundreds of new border judges, new fentanyl detection, technology, all of it. And as I understand it, at least as the press reported it, Donald Trump did not want a border solution. He wanted a border crisis to run on. And so, you know, whatever the merits of this legislation is, it pales by comparison to what might actually have been done with that multibillion dollar investment in strengthening the border.

Just on this question, if my friend from North Carolina would yield for a second, but I am curious about the structure of this legislation. It seems like what it says is that there is a criminal law that already applies to everybody. And this then says we want people to sign something saying they are not violating the criminal law. And I am not familiar with that structure of legislation before, and I wonder are there any other examples of that existing in Federal grant compliance. I mean, I want Federal grantees to be complying with every Federal criminal and civil law there is. And this almost seems to imply you have got to comply with this particular law, but we do not care if you are violating the other ones. If you could just explain that to me.

Ms. FOXX. I am not familiar, obviously, with every granting agency and how they are structured. But I think it is important that we have received reports on what these NGO's are doing and that it appears they are not abiding by the law, and this is a sort of a backstop or a double-check to make sure that they will be doing that. And as I said earlier, we know that these NGO's are making billions off of the border crisis in terms of how they are handling this.

Mr. RASKIN. And I guess I would just say I am afraid that this sends a message of weak enforcement of our laws. If I knew, for example, that we had Federal grantees that were assaulting people, sexually abusing people, committing surgery against them against their will, I would not ask for a certification that they are not committing crimes. I would call the police, or I would try to have the law enforced against them rather than, you know, picking out one provision in law and say please give me an annual certification that you are not in violation of the criminal law. But I can see there have been honest difference of opinion about doing this,

and I want to thank the gentlelady for yielding. I yield back to Ms. Crockett.

Ms. CROCKETT. With that, Mr. Chair, I will yield.

Chairman COMER. All right. Any further Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, the question is now on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

All those opposed signify by saying no.

[Chorus of noes.]

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The amendment is agreed to.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 8334, as amended.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

All those opposed signify by saying no.

[Chorus of noes.]

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Chairman, I request a roll call.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote has been ordered by Mr. Biggs from Arizona. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 6462**, the Resilient Employment and Authorization Determination to Increase the National Employment of Serving Spouses Act, or the READINESS Act. The clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 6462, the Resilient Employment and Authorization Determination to Increase the National Employment of Serving Spouses Act, a bill to retain Federal employees who are spouses of a member of the armed forces or the foreign service when relocating due to an involuntary transfer, and for other purposes.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill shall be considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Without objection, so ordered.

The Chair recognizes himself to offer an amendment in the nature of a substitute. The clerk will please designate the amendment.

The CLERK. An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6462 as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read, and the substitute will be considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment.

I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for a statement on the bill and the amendment.

The commitment demonstrated by American military and Foreign Service members who volunteer to serve our country is often accompanied by challenges for their own spouses maintaining gainful employment. Some of the burdens are shouldered by the service members' families who must relocate along with their family member when duty calls for redeployment. That is why it is important for Congress to accommodate these families who sacrificed so much supporting their loved ones and help ease these transitions.

The READINESS Act presents an opportunity for this Committee to provide reasonable accommodations for service members' spouses who are current Federal employees to continue their Federal employment during these redeployments. The bill directs employing agencies to provide service members' spouses with remote work accommodations, transfer them into another position near the new duty location, or into another remote work position altogether. For instance, if it is determined that none of these options are feasible, agencies can place the spouse into leave without pay status, specially designated as separate due to covered relocation. Additionally, the bill provides for annual reports to OPM and Congress detailing agencies' use of these authorities.

I want to thank Ms. Crockett and Mr. Bacon for their bipartisan work on this bill and urge my colleagues to support this important measure to better support the families of those who sacrificed so much in service to our country. I now recognize the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Resilient Employment and Authorization Determination to Increase the National Employment of Serving Spouses, or READINESS Act, sponsored by my colleague from Texas, Representative Crockett, would require Federal agencies to offer, when possible, employment flexibilities like telework, remote work, or leave-without-pay status to Federal employees who are the spouses of a military or Foreign Service member who undergo a permanent change of duty station. I am a proud co-sponsor.

Military-connected families face unique demands. For example, active-duty military families face permanent change-of-station moves every 2 to 3 years on average, often with little or no control over their assignments. Each move may require the spouse to leave their job, which limits their own professional growth and development and makes it difficult to maintain steady work. The military spouse population, 90 percent of which are women, has a 21 percent unemployment rate, which is nearly 6 times the national average. As a result, nearly 1 in 5 military families point to spousal employment as a reason for leaving military service and for struggling to make ends meet.

The READINESS Act, a bipartisan bill, would ensure that all Federal employees who are married to a service member or a Foreign Service employee who relocates because of a permanent change of station, has access to certain workforce flexibilities that allow them to continue their Federal careers. The following groups have endorsed the Act: the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Military Officers Association of America, With Honor Action, Military Family Advisory Network, National Military Family Association, American Federation of Government Employees, American Foreign Service Association, Blue Star Families, and American Legion.

Congress must prioritize the needs of our military families, and this bill will do that. I commend Ms. Crockett and her staff for their great hard work in getting this bill to markup today, as well as our Majority counterparts who worked tirelessly with Ms. Crockett and her staff to get feedback from the Office of Personnel Management and OMB to ensure that this legislation works to actually

help our military and foreign service families in our districts. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Do any Members wish to speak on the bill?

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Cloud.

Mr. CLOUD. I have some concerns about this particular bill.

Chairman COMER. OK. You are going to offer an amendment or—

Mr. CLOUD. I will, but right now I am speaking to the bill.

Chairman COMER. You are what?

Mr. CLOUD. Speaking to the bill.

Chairman COMER. OK.

Mr. CLOUD. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. Proceed.

Mr. CLOUD. I have learned in my time here that anytime there is a bill that basically is apple pie and puppy dogs and everything that we should really look into what is going on into this bill. Now, we all want our service members paid well. They should be paid more. We honor our military. We want them taken care of while they are in their service. When we send them overseas, they should go only with a clear mission. They should go with everything and every tool they need for clear and quick victory, and then we should bring them home, and then we should take care of them following their service. That is something I think we all agree with.

When I began to look at this bill, I noticed a couple things began to bother me right off the bat, and that is that it begins to make this false equivalency. And indeed, the Chairman and Ranking Members comments focused on our military, but this bill gives the same benefits to our Foreign Service, our State Department, as our military. I think that is a false equivalency that we should not assume. And indeed, when you begin to look at the numbers of who would actually be affected by this bill, it is less than one percent of our military people serving in military that have a spouse serving in the Federal bureaucracy.

On the other hand, when you look at our State Department, it is estimated, best numbers available, that 15 percent of our State Department has a spouse serving in the State Department. That does not account for the other agencies, so we could guess maybe it is 20 percent or more. So, this is really—when we talk about it being about the military, this is really more about our State Department having guaranteed work wherever they go.

I think it is important that in everything that we are doing, we remember that every public service job exists to serve the American people. And I think we are going down a dangerous precedent when we begin to say that Federal bureaucrats' jobs are guaranteed for life, and it kind of flips the coin to where the American people then exist to serve and create jobs for the bureaucrats. I do not think that is where we want to go. We do want to make sure, and I am going to reiterate, if this is really about our military, which this claims to be, this is called the READINESS Act. And so, we are talking about having military ready, having an equipped force. We all know that there are major recruiting problems that are going on right now, but again, this addresses less than 1 percent of our military. It is 0.8 percent of our military. If this is really

about readiness, we have major recruiting problems that we can deal with and that we should address, but I do not believe—this is a very roundabout way of addressing those issues. One of the biggest issues that has led to our recruitment goals not being met is the woke turn our military has taken, the DEI initiatives that we have put in, all the things that we are trying to do in our military to make it a social engineering experiment instead of the world's elite, premier fighting force that is ready to go blow things up when necessary.

This is a well-intended act, but it does not accomplish the goals it seeks out to accomplish, and for that, I have some serious concerns about it. And I would recommend that we withhold this bill and bring it up at a later date when we have had a chance to really address these issues.

Mr. RASKIN. But will the gentleman yield for a question?

Mr. CLOUD. Sure.

Mr. RASKIN. I just was not familiar with the statistics you were citing. You said that 15 percent of State Department spouses work in the Federal Government?

Mr. CLOUD. That is not available. The State Department does not track it. The best numbers available we could find since this came—

Mr. RASKIN. OK. And then you said 1 percent of military spouses working in the Federal—

Mr. CLOUD. It is 0.8 percent of military spouses.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. And can you just share that information?

Mr. CLOUD. Sixteen thousand of 2 million.

Mr. RASKIN. So, 16,000 spouses are working in the Federal Government?

Mr. CLOUD. Of the 2 million.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes. And so, even though—

Mr. CLOUD. And by the way, it is not usually your infantryman whose spouse is working somewhere in the State Department or somewhere else in another agency. It is usually a higher level. And I am not saying that we should not give attention to that, but the greatest benefactors in this bill, that we are calling a READINESS Act for our military, are State Department employees, and I have a concern with us placing that on equal footing.

Mr. RASKIN. If I can just pursue the question for 1 second since I have not seen the statistics. In hard numbers, are there more military spouses or more State Department spouses who are affected? There are obviously a lot more people in the military.

Mr. CLOUD. Well, I have an amendment to remove the State Department aspects of it and—

Mr. RASKIN. Right. I was just interested in the statistics. You said there were 16,000 spouses of people in the Army or the Marines or the Navy, you know, but do you know how many spouses are in the State Department who would be affected by it?

Mr. CLOUD. It is a lesser number.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. So, it is a smaller number, but a bigger percentage. OK. All right. So, we are talking about thousands of people.

Mr. CLOUD. Which is why I am not saying can the bill, I am saying I think we should readdress it.

Mr. RASKIN. OK.

Mr. CLOUD. And then bring it back.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you for yielding.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Crockett, the sponsor of the bill.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you, Mr. Chair. While we are calling this the READINESS Act, I do want to remind my colleagues that what this essentially does is it keeps families connected. And thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for your support of this bipartisan bill to support the retention of some of the most patriotic Federal employees, spouses of our armed forces members and the Foreign Service personnel. These dedicated men and women are not only an asset to our workforce, but to our country as well. Given all they do, Congress should be doing everything in our power to retain these military and foreign service spouses in our Federal workforce.

Unfortunately, as I have stated before in this Committee, too often these outstanding Federal employees are not retained when their spouses get a change of duty station order. As a result, a military spouse is facing unemployment rate several times higher than the national average. Not only does this hurt their career development, but it needlessly deprives the government of well-qualified workers. It is also a threat to our national security and military readiness. We all have seen various military branches have struggled to meet their target recruitment goals. That is why retaining the current members of our armed forces is more important than ever. Unfortunately, over 20 percent of military families who leave active duty cite issues finding spousal employment as a factor for their separation. That is why Congressman Don Bacon and I built this bipartisan consensus on the need to use every tool available to support these Federal employees through the READINESS Act.

This bill gives due process assurance to military and Foreign Service spouses, no matter what agency they are in. If their spouse is serving in the military and Foreign Service gets a permanent change of station order, the spouse working in Federal Government will also get an individual determination about the agency's ability to retain them, either through remote work, reassignment, or a combination of the two. Right now, while there is significant positive movement from the executive branch on retaining military spouses overseas, thanks to First Lady Jill Biden's Joining Forces Initiative, more still needs to be done to ensure every federally employed military and Foreign Service spouse, regardless of agency, knows that the Federal Government values their contribution and wants to continue to retain them. In the event that retention is not a viable option, based on the family's permanent change of station, my bill will provide spouses time to find a new job within the government by providing up to 6 months of leave without pay.

We also know that moving across the country and around the world in service to our country is not an easy task. That is why my READINESS Act gives military and Foreign Service spouses additional tools to help them reenter the Federal Government. Once we pass this bill, spouses will no longer have to worry about their security clearances expiring for the duration of the permanent change of station. This bill also ensures that these spouses do not lose reinstatement eligibility just because they were on a long series of permanent change of station.

Now, we know in this Committee, we have had our fair share of fireworks, and that is putting it gently. But, I must say that I genuinely want to say thank you to Chairman Comer for putting my bill on the agenda today and for working with my staff on this ANS. I want to thank Ranking Member Raskin, not just for co-sponsoring the bill, but all the work that his amazing team has done with ours on this ANS. Thank you, Congressman Bacon, who has not only co-led this bill with me, but is also currently working with me and another co-sponsor, Congresswoman Houlihan, to address issues for military and Foreign Service spouses in the upcoming NDAA as well. And finally, I want to extend a special thanks to the individual military and Foreign Service spouses who reached out to my team to raise these issues over a year ago, and who have worked tirelessly to come up with commonsense solutions.

As a freshman, I will be honest that, from what I have seen, it often takes big names and deep pockets to make things move around here, but this is a story of individuals seeking redress from their government and Congress actually taking action. I am proud to have authored the READINESS Act and look forward to working with everyone in this building and getting this to the President's desk. With that, I will yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Perry from Pennsylvania for 5 minutes.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I, like the gentleman from Texas, have some concerns about this piece of legislation, and so I am going to be looking very keenly at the amendments. But in a general sense, I think there are ways, and I appreciate the gentlelady's effort to try to address the concerns that military and State Department spouses may have when PCS moves occur regarding their security clearances or regarding further employment during that dwell time.

But I also am concerned about this. We just recently had what we call Academy Night in the district that I am proud and privileged to represent where we have aspiring young people, young citizens that want to attend a military academy. They come in and receive information about the process and about the force they think that they might be interested in joining. And as a person who was honored to wear the military uniform of the United States for over 3 decades, I have a conversation with them where I tell them, you are agreeing to serve, you are asking to serve. There is no draft, and no one is requiring you to do this. You are doing this because you want to, and so you have to decide if you want to serve. And you might want to be an F-35 pilot, or you might want to be a submarine commander, or fly F-18s off of an aircraft carrier. And it is great when your requirements, when your wishes, when your demands, when your hopes meet with the Federal Government's requirements, with the needs of the U.S. military, in this case, or in the case of this bill, the State Department. When the needs of the individual marry up perfectly with the needs of the United States of America, that is a great circumstance, but sometimes and oftentimes, they do not, but you wanted to serve. That is why you are here. You want to serve.

And so, the question is, are you going to serve or not? And if you are going to serve, service is about sacrifice. That is what service

is, and the sacrifice that comes along with that is probably a PCS move. It is likely. You are going to have to move, and you might not get what we call an MOS, the skillset that you desire. You might not be the infantry person that is out there, the infantryman that is out there, you know, low crawling through the jungle and eating snakes. Maybe that is what you want to do, but maybe the U.S. Army thinks that you need to be a chemical officer because that is what we need at the time. Well, you said you wanted to serve, so you are going to serve.

And so, my point is this. There are people that I represent, and I imagine the sponsor of the bill represents, that have to make decisions every day. They work in the private sector, and they get a job opportunity. I just happened to know one of my constituents is leaving the area that I represent to go to Atlanta. He has got a job opportunity. He is going to take his family and leave, and his wife is employed, and she is going to have to get a job, or if she wants to continue work, I guess she is either going to have to decide to stay in Pennsylvania or she is going to have to decide to go to Atlanta. I guess the point is, is that we all make decisions. And I am concerned when there is a circumstance where the Federal Government is saying we are going to guarantee, the taxpayer and the United States is going to guarantee, you a job if you work for the Federal Government. That is not the way it works in the rest of the marketplace anywhere.

We all make decisions. If you want to have a family, and being in the military or in the State Department no longer works for you as a person who wants to start a family or have a family, you have a family and your PCS move does not work for you, I get it.

Ms. CROCKETT. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PERRY. We all get it. Hold on, ma'am. I want to complete my thought here. We all get it, but that is a decision that you have to make. Life changes. Things change. It is not the job or the role, nor should it be, of the Federal Government to make sure that decisions it needs to make on behalf of the American people, on behalf of national security, on behalf of international or foreign affairs, to make sure that it works for you. That is a decision that we cannot be making. We need to make the decision that is best for America, whether it is in uniform or whether it is at the State Department, and if that works out for you, that is awesome. But if it does not work out for you, then you have got a decision that you have got to make.

We cannot fashion our decisions on national security based on the individual needs of people that signed up of their own volition for a job that they wanted to pursue, and God bless them. We are happy they want to do it. We are happy that they want to serve. We are happy that they want to sacrifice, but that is what comes with the territory. If that is not for you, we need insurance salesmen and we need people to clean pools, and we need all kinds of things in America. That is OK. With that my time has expired.

Mr. BIGGS. [Presiding.] The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from California, Ms. Porter.

Ms. PORTER. Thank you very much. My brother was in the Navy and went to the Naval Academy, and one of the reasons that he left after his years of service was his concern about being able to

have a family and for his spouse to be able to have a career. And the military spent lots of money trying to entice him to stay, and so it is not a choice between doing nothing and doing something. The question is, what do we want to do. That said, I take Mr. Cloud's point about needing to do more to help the spouses and partners of younger and newer servicemembers who maybe are not qualified yet to work for the Federal Government, and how can we educate and train them so that they are able to get Federal jobs, and I would be happy to partner with you on that.

I want to speak briefly about my bill that was considered earlier. We have all seen kids do big school projects, you know, the ones that require every possible kind of glue, tape, paper, scissors to even get close to meeting the class requirements. And every parent who has helped their kid with one of these projects knows the feeling of rummaging through closets and drawers to try to see how many of the required supplies can you find before deciding whether you really have to go to Target at 8 p.m. I mean, how many sets of colored pencils, markers, and crayons ended up flying around? Like sure, it is easier to find the red crayon in a new box, but it would also be easy to find if you organize your existing crayons by color because sure enough, there will be three red ones there. Whether it is to save money or to save a trip out of the house, I cannot think of any parent who would not at least see what their kid can make of the supplies they have before agreeing to buy more.

We need to know what the Federal Government has, that they are taking the same commonsense approach as parents to their own projects. What do we already have before we go and buy more? After all, the government is the biggest purchaser of goods in the world. And it is almost inconceivable that there is not a closet, drawer, warehouse, room full of supplies somewhere in the Federal Government that meets at least some of the needs of any project that any agency could want to do. Just like a parent, the Federal Government should have to assess how it can use the supplies it has, look for that red crayon, before it goes to the store to get more. And that is exactly what the bipartisan bill I introduced with my friend Congresswoman McClain would accomplish.

Our Reuse Access Property Act would require agencies to issue public reports about their excess property, like supplies, furniture, or machinery and report how they tell their employees to use that excess property. The bill would then task an agency employee with searching through existing property for supplies that meet Agency needs before we buy more. By making agencies better use their existing supplies and tell the public how they are doing it, we can save taxpayers' money, and we can use our resources more efficiently.

As a mom, I know kids always want new colored pencils rather than sharpening the ones that they have. I will tell the same thing to Federal agencies that I will tell my kids. I am not saying you cannot buy new supplies, but you better be sure, first, that you do not have those supplies lying around. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I also just want to speak briefly on the Billion Dollar Boondoggle Act. I have been replacing a few appliances in my house, and

whenever I get a new appliance, I have a basic expectation—the installation will be done as promised and I will not have to pay more than the quote—and I have been lucky so far, that is the case. But the installers have been lucky, too, because if they did not meet those basic conditions, I demand a full accounting of what went wrong. Nobody would want a boondoggle for their home repair project, paying extra and waiting longer. And homeowners certainly would not keep writing checks and keep paying bills on a boondoggle unless they were getting answers and improvements. We should not tolerate boondoggles as consumers, but we also should not tolerate them as taxpayers. Like an appliance in the home, government-funded projects are designed to serve the real needs of the people. If those projects run behind schedule and over budget, taxpayers deserve an accounting of why we are not getting what we paid for as promised.

I introduced the bipartisan Billion Dollar Boondoggle Act with Congresswoman Miller-Meeke to make that happen. Our bill would require Federal agencies to disclose to Congress the reasons for delays and excess costs when a government-funded project runs more than 5 years behind schedule or costs more than \$1 billion than its budget. It would also identify the contractors responsible for that boondoggle. That is the information we can use to conduct oversight and determine how to get projects back on track or when it might be necessary to pull the plug. By shining an example on some of the worst examples of waste in government funded projects, this bill would give taxpayers that chance.

Mr. BIGGS. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. BIGGS. For what purpose does the gentleman from Louisiana?

Mr. HIGGINS. To speak on Ms. Crockett's bill.

Mr. BIGGS. The gentleman is recognized.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and it is a unique moment in Congress when there is a joining of the minds that are this far apart, and so let us embrace them all.

I support the bill from a conservative perspective. Let me say that I believe, and most conservatives across the country believe, that the disintegration of the very fabric of our Nation began as we stepped away from the traditional American family. And the core principles that served our country so well for 200 years has been gradually eroded over the last 5 decades, as we have lost that traditional American family structure. So, I see this as a family unity bill. Yes, there are not that many military members that would fall in this category, but it is thousands and thousands of military members, and I think that those thousands and thousands of American families are important.

And if there is an involuntary, you know, transfer, then yes, that is part of service. I am an Army veteran. You know, you swear your oath. You follow the orders: "yes, sir," "yes, ma'am." However, the family impact is real, and if we can mitigate against it without spending a bunch of money, I think that the bill should be considered across the spectrum politically, as to whether or not it is a benefit to our republic. And maintaining families, I would argue from a conservative perspective is most certainly a benefit to our

republic. The expense of hiring and training up a replacement employee is far greater than maintaining an experienced employee.

And let me say that I would oppose this bill had it been written in a manner that guaranteed pay for a spouse that was maintained,—and you are maintaining their position so that this family has a solid choice, man, to say, OK, we are going to accept this transfer and I am not going to be able to work remotely. However, I have a window where I can maintain my security clearance and maintain my status, and I can seek other employ on a lateral level. So, I just think it is a family friendly bill. And it is a moment where—you know, I consider myself one of the most conservative Members of Congress, and I join some of the most liberal Members of Congress in support of this bill.

Ms. CROCKETT. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HIGGINS. I did. I yield to the young lady and briefly, ma'am, so that I can recognize—

Ms. CROCKETT. Absolutely.

Mr. HIGGINS [continuing]. Mr. Cloud as well.

Ms. CROCKETT. I just want to say that that was the response that I expected. I expected that the one thing that we could agree on in this particular Committee, or in this Congress, was the idea of supporting families, especially military families. And it is absolutely right, we are not at a 100-percent capacity for any Federal agency right now. We are down 30 percent when it comes to air traffic control and so many others. We do not have the workforce that we need, and this solves two issues. No. 1, we are lacking in recruitment when it comes to military service, and No. 2, this makes sure that we do not have to go out and get somebody else to come back in to replace these spouses, and hopefully, this will allow us to maintain our armed forces. So, thank you so much, and I will yield back.

Mr. HIGGINS. Reclaiming my time right now to Mr. Cloud.

Mr. CLOUD. Thank you, gentleman, and you know my fondness for you, and you are certainly a conservative stalwart on the Hill. I would ask, and one of the concerns I had, was that it creates a disparity between, what about the service members whose spouses are in the private sector? What about those who are, you know, a law enforcement officer in their community, or a teacher, or those kind of things—

Mr. HIGGINS. We do not have jurisdictional authority.

Mr. CLOUD. No, I understand that, but it troubles me. And then the idea that our Federal workforce is down 30 percent is largely because of the massive expanse of our Federal Government over the last 3 years.

Mr. BIGGS. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. HIGGINS. My time has expired. Mr. Chairman, I yield.

Mr. CLOUD. I am sorry. I yield back.

Mr. BIGGS. Are you going to offer your amendment, Mr. Cloud?

Mr. CLOUD. Are we done debating this?

Mr. BIGGS. Yes. Well, I do not think there is anybody else that wants to be recognized. I think everybody has—

Mr. CLOUD. Yes, I have an amendment.

Mr. BIGGS. Looks like almost everybody in the room has spoken, doggone it.

Mr. CLOUD. Burchett.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Burchett? Oh yes, sure. You seek recognition, Mr. Burchett?

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, I do not.

Mr. BIGGS. OK. So, Mr. Cloud?

Mr. CLOUD. Most popular speech in Congress.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes. But, Mr. Cloud, what purpose do you seek recognition?

Mr. CLOUD. I have an amendment at the desk.

Mr. BIGGS. The clerk will distribute the amendment to all Members, and the clerk will designate the amendment.

The CLERK. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6462 as offered by Mr. Cloud of Texas.

Mr. BIGGS. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read.

I reserve a point of order? You reserve a point? Mr. Cloud reserves a point of order. I do? OK. I am reserving a point of order. OK. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes to explain his amendment.

Mr. CLOUD. My amendment is pretty simple. This would exempt from the bill any employees in a DEI office capacity, I think over the G-5. And so, you know, we talked about a workforce that is understaffed, and this is an area where DEI implementation into our military has hurt recruiting dramatically. And I do not think we need to be transporting these jobs certainly across different agencies, and so it would exempt DEI from this bill. And I yield back.

Mr. BIGGS. Do any other Members wish to speak on this amendment? The Chair recognizes the Ranking Member.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman, but we would oppose, respectfully, the gentleman's amendment. The people working in DEI, and obviously it is a tiny fraction of people in the Federal workforce, are conducting a legitimate and essential function. The military actually has really led the way in American history in terms of overcoming segregation, and Jim Crow, and the barriers to integration and diversity. And so, I understand that this amendment seems to be mostly symbolic, but to the extent that it would actually affect anybody, I just do not see the logic of it. And it undercuts the general principle that the gentlelady from Texas is trying to advance, and I do not know if she has got any thoughts on it, but I will yield back at this point.

Mr. BIGGS. Who seeks recognition? The gentlelady from Texas.

Ms. CROCKETT. Yes. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair, briefly. So long as a position exists in our government and until the law changes, if it changes, then I think that then we are starting to impart disparities and say you can have your job so long as your job does not do this, even though you have that job and that job was authorized, and it still means that that job will still have to be filled. Not to mention, I honestly do not do things to message and go home. I will be clear that I have essentially won my reelection. Anything that I am doing has nothing to do with politicking. I actually want to get something done for the American people.

And I was at a signing ceremony at the White House, and I did speak to women who have been communicating with our office for

months. And the reality is that we know that we have had poison pills that have come through this Congress, and every time there is a poison pill, it literally kills the bill. And I just do not think that is worth it to kill the bill when there is so many people that are absolutely seeking to stay. All they want to do is stay with their families or allow their spouses to stay in their military service. And this is one of those things that takes it from being a bipartisan bill and takes it down to partisan messaging. And I honestly just want to make sure that of the few things that we do get accomplish this cycle, that we make sure that we do something that will address our military readiness as we have seen unrest throughout this world. And I am so concerned about what may happen if what is going on overseas continues to escalate. It may mean that we are going to call servicemembers up.

Right now, this may not be affecting too many folks, but I am telling you right now, if things continue to explode in this world, we are going to have a problem, and we are looked at as the model of the world. We need to do everything that we can for the best military that we have, and that means supporting them in whatever capacity we can, and it starts with this bill. With that, I will yield.

Mr. BIGGS. The gentlelady yields back. Who seeks recognition?

[No response.]

Mr. BIGGS. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas.

All those in favor, say aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Opposed, no.

[Chorus of noes.]

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it.

Mr. RASKIN. I would like to request a recorded vote.

Mr. BIGGS. A recorded vote is recorded, excuse me, is ordered. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Cloud.

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

Mr. BIGGS. The clerk will distribute the amendment to all Members, and the clerk will designate the amendment.

The CLERK. The second amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6462 as offered by Mr. Cloud of Texas.

Mr. BIGGS. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read.

I reserve a point of order. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes to explain his amendment.

Mr. CLOUD. Thank you, Chairman. I do not know that I will need 5 minutes. We have covered a lot of this. But we keep referring to this as a military readiness bill, and as has already been discussed, this affects less than 1 percent of our military. There are a whole lot of things we can do that would better help our military and certainly our recruiting. For example, I have been trying to get barracks built at the Naval Air Station in Corpus Christi so that we can have our incoming pilots have a place to stay. Their barracks have been condemned, but I cannot, because of HASC rules, get that done because of our House Armed Services Committee.

So, you know, there are a lot of ways that we can address recruiting. This affects 1 percent, and certainly not those who are entering the military as much as those who have been in for quite some time. And so, furthermore, while this affects 1 percent of our military, it is estimated 15 to 20 percent of our State Department is the true beneficiary of this bill. And so, I am concerned with the sense that we need to put on parity our State Department with those serving in harm's way in our military. And so, my amendment would simply exclude the Foreign Services from this bill, and I will yield back to the Chairman.

Chairman COMER. [Presiding.] The gentleman yields back. Do you want to speak?

Mr. RASKIN. Yes, please.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes the Ranking Member.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to make a couple of points in opposition to the distinguished gentleman's amendment. The first is, this legislation would actually affect a hundred percent of the people in the military and a hundred percent of people in Foreign Service. Just because you are not using a particular benefit at a particular time does not mean that the benefit is not available to you, right? So, most of the people in this room are not on Social Security, but Social Security affects all of us because at some point, presumably, it would be activated for us, and that is true in general for any program that works like this.

So, I have not seen those exact statistics yet, and the fact that it may apply to a small number of people in the military and an even smaller number of people by the gentleman's representation in the Foreign Service, to me is an argument for it. It is not really going to be affecting that many people, but it is an important statement of principle that we want to make military service and Foreign Service function for our people in this time of labor shortages. And in general, I will just say, everybody knows from at least the memory of the Iran hostage crisis, if you were around then—I think I was in 4th or 5th grade—but the Foreign Service officers are putting their lives and bodies on the line when they go into dangerous countries, dangerous stations, and deployments. I just pulled up an article saying that the State Department added recently 71 historical names to a plaque honoring people who lost their lives in Foreign Service.

But of course, this is not just about physical risk. We are talking about people who engage in a lot of family and personal life disruption in order to serve the government. And, you know, I will let Ms. Crockett defend the inclusion of people in the Foreign Service who are deployed all over the world, but it seems to me that the logic of the legislation is airtight. It is for people who are being suddenly and often involuntarily deployed or redeployed around the world who, you know, make the decision to serve the country in this way, to allow their spouses to continue to pursue their employment, their livelihood, and support their families. And with that, I will yield back to Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Do any other Members seek recognition?

Ms. CROCKETT. I was just going to echo the sentiments.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Crockett.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. The sentiments raised by the Ranking Member, this is about people that are serving our government and the fact that we are debating whether or not we will support people that are supporting and serving the United States and told that they need to go overseas. It is kind of bewildering to me right now. I just do not know why.

I see why we have recruitment issues. If this is what you get when you sign up to serve the greatest Nation in this world, we should be respecting and supporting people that are in service to us. Not everybody gets the ability to sit at home and serve the Federal Government. Sometimes they have to leave. In fact, if I could expand it more, I would actually talk about our Border Patrol agents because unfortunately, they have complained to me as well about having to go to the border and leave their families. But at least when they are going—I am just being real, like literally. See, I know you want to talk about it.

But I am being real when I tell you that I am not doing this to be partisan. I am doing this because it really needs to be done, and I am hoping that you can understand that this is something that we need to get done in service to all people that are serving. And the only reason I did not include them, since you hit your button, is because we are talking about people that are sent overseas because they are not necessarily leaving their home and going a hundred miles. They are going so much further for a longer amount of time, and with that, I will yield.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Biggs.

Mr. BIGGS. I was not going to say anything, but you know, the gentlelady from Texas has imputed political motives in her last two speeches. I get it. We work in an environment where politics is always on the line, and so you might view people with dubious intent and motive. You are trying to demean Mr. Cloud's motives, which I think is really unfortunate. If you want to know what drives partisanship, that is what drives partisanship. He has made two motions in good faith, and yet you have imputed bad faith. That is what you did. When you started talking about partisanship, that is what you did.

Because the reality is, I am not going to talk partisanship. I am going to talk about the logic of the argument you just made. The logic of the argument you just made was, OK, we are going to go to military because they provide a service to the country. We are going to go to State Department because they provide service to the country. I would do it for the Border Patrol because they provide service to the country. Capitol Police, they provide service to the country. Virtually, every bureaucrat, they provide service to the country. We ostensibly assume we would make that argument, right? So, what Federal Government employee then would be excluded from the benefits that you are posting here? That is what I would suggest.

And I am not saying that this is not necessarily a good bill. I am just saying I have a real trouble with people taking the self-imposed high road saying I am above politics. I am above it. Doggone it, I wish you were. Your amendment is not pure. My bill is pure.

Your amendment is not. That is what drives the approach of politics here, which makes it unworkable, and that leads to the disputes.

By the way, I sit on Judiciary, and Mr. Raskin has sat on Judiciary with us before. I happen to sit on the two most probably contentious committees in Congress, so I see it. But I am just suggesting that sometimes people are actually trying to get to certain place where they can support a bill, and their motives are just as pure as anybody else's motives. They think they can make the bill better. They have an objection, and we start talking past each other by imputing motives. That is how we have so much difficulty. That is my own opinion on that.

And that is why I said, logically, you could make a slippery slope argument here. That is all I am saying. And I am not saying that the bill is not good, the underlying bill is not good. I am just saying maybe some people have legitimate questions and they want to resolve it, but when motives are impugned, it stultifies debate. It really does.

Mr. RASKIN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BIGGS. Yes, I yield.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you for those thoughtful comments, and I think your point demonstrates why partisanship is such a difficult issue because I listened carefully to our colleague from Texas, and I did not hear the impugning of motives. I heard her disclaiming partisan motives, which may have been an implicit confession that sometimes she has partisan motives in legislation as I assume we all do.

Mr. BIGGS. I reclaim just for a second, sir.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Mr. BIGGS. I did not take it that that she was saying that. I took it the other way, so.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. Well, in any event, as to the substantive point you make, which I think is an excellent one, the point about the slippery slope, the gentlelady could be offering a far more sweeping proposition here, which is that anytime anyone in the Federal Government is relocated for service out of the country or in the country, then they would get the benefits of this. And obviously, she has made the judgment, which seems commonsensical to me, that the two forms of service where people are most often and most extremely deployed to places where maybe their family was not expecting to go, are in the military service and in the State Department in the foreign service. And we could see how this looks out. I do not know how I feel about extending it to lots of other—

Mr. BIGGS. If I can just reclaim, because I just—

Mr. RASKIN. Please.

Mr. BIGGS [continuing]. I am almost out of time, I just want to make sure I can address that. I look at a place like CIA—a lot of transfers out of CIA. ATF, DEA, foreign transfers implicit with what they do. So, I am suggesting that there are so many other things, and that is where I say the logic lead to a slippery slope and let you pass this year. Somebody said, well, gee, you know, CIA next year, that is the point, and sometimes these things take a little bit of time to get to the bottom of the slippery slope. So,

with that, Mr. Chairman, thanks for the time. Thanks, Mr. Raskin. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Do any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, the question is on the amendment offered by Mr. Cloud.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[Chorus of noes.]

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to.

Mr. RASKIN. I would like to request a recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote has been requested by Mr. Raskin. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

Pursuant to the previous order, the Chair declares the Committee in recess subject to the call of the Chair. We plan to reconvene 10 minutes after Floor votes.

The Committee stands in recess.

[Recess.]

Chairman COMER. The Committee will reconvene.

The question is on favorably reporting H.R. 8333, The BIO-SECURE Act. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 8333.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members—

Mr. GOLDMAN. One more.

Chairman COMER. Yes. Go ahead.

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote? OK, we have one in route.

I think we are ready to go now. OK. The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

Chairman COMER. OK. I will make the exception. Let Ms. Pressley get recorded.

OK. I apologize, Ms. Pressley. We have already closed the vote. I apologize. I am sorry, we cannot. I apologize.

Mr. RASKIN. We can make a statement publicly.

Chairman COMER. If you want to publicly say your vote, and we will get—

Ms. PRESSLEY. Yes.

Chairman COMER. Let the record note she voted “yes.”

Will the clerk now report the vote total? I am sorry. What now?

I am sorry. I know. Look, I want the vote. Sorry. We cannot reopen it.

We had a Member miss the first vote, too. We had a Member miss the first vote, and we are not trying to do anything to you.

Mr. RASKIN. Can we do a one-time deal where she can manually record it for Burchett and Pressley?

Chairman COMER. OK. We are going to make an exception here and manually add a couple of votes. So, Ms. Pressley, you wish to be recorded?

Ms. PRESSLEY. As a "yes."

Chairman COMER. Ms. Pressley is "yes." Mr. Mfume?

Mr. MFUME. Aye.

Chairman COMER. He says, "yes." Glenn?

Mr. GROTHMAN. Yes.

Chairman COMER. Glenn says "yes." Does any other Member wish to be recorded?

Who?

Ms. Bush?

Ms. Bush would like to change her vote from "no" to "yes."

This is it. We are not going to do this again, if everybody is OK with that. I am trying to be fair here. Everybody good?

Mr. RASKIN. Everybody is good.

Chairman COMER. OK. All right. Mr. LaTurner?

Mr. LATURNER. Yes.

Chairman COMER. Mr. LaTurner votes yes. Is everybody happy?

This is the Oversight Committee. Everybody is supposed to be happy in here. Are you happy, Mr. Perry? All right.

Mr. RASKIN. What about Mr. Burchett? Did he show up?

Chairman COMER. All right. That is it. Now, will the clerk please tally the vote?

OK. All right. Wait a minute. We got Connolly and Burchett. We are going to get two more. How you want to vote? Mr. Connolly, do you wish to be recorded, despite your excessive tardiness?

Mr. CONNOLLY. I vote yes.

Chairman COMER. Mr. Burchett, would you like to be recorded?

The CLERK. Mr. Connolly votes yes.

Chairman COMER. Mr. Burchett and Mr. Connolly, both vote yes. And guys, we are not doing this again. I do not care who else walks in.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, can the record reflect that I held it open for Mr. Burchett because I want to make sure we got his votes?

Mrs. LUNA. Chairman? Mr. Chairman? Since we are all green, can we do something on Boeing now?

Chairman COMER. I am sorry?

Mrs. LUNA. On Boeing.

Chairman COMER. Boeing?

Mrs. LUNA. Yes, you know, Boeing.

Chairman COMER. Yes.

Mrs. LUNA. Can we do a hearing on Boeing since we are all green?

Chairman COMER. We will talk about that after this. Will the clerk please report the tally?

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 40. The nays are 1.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it, and the bill is reported favorably.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table. All right. Everybody set and ready to go now?

The question is on favorably reporting H.R. 5255, the Federal Cybersecurity Vulnerability Reduction Act of 2023. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 5255.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 42. The nays are zero.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 8334, the Grant Integrity and Border Security Act. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 8334.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 23. The nays are 20.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 8276, the Reuse Excess Property Act. Members will record the vote using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 8276.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 44. The nays are zero.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 8335, the Billion Dollar Boondoggle Act. Members will record the vote using the

electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 8335.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 44. The nays are zero.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

The Committee will now resume consideration of **H.R. 6462**, the READINESS Act. The question is now on the previously postponed amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute, offered by the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Cloud. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on the amendment to the amendment of H.R. 6462. This is the Cloud Amendment Number 1.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 23. The nays are 21.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to.

The question is now on the previously postponed amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute, offered by the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Cloud. Members will record the vote using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on the Cloud Amendment Number 2 to the amendment of H.R. 6462.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members voted who wish to vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will now close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 20. The nays are 24.

Chairman COMER. The noes have it, and the amendment is not agreed to.

The question is now on the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6462, as amended.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response.]

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6462, is agreed to.

The question is on favorably reporting H.R. 6462, as amended. Members will record their vote using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 6462.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 30, the nays are 13.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

Pursuant to notice, I now call up the following en bloc postal naming bills, which were distributed in advance on this markup: H.R.s 5985, 6810, and 7893.

Without objection, the bills are considered read.

If any Member would like to speak on any of the measures, they may do so now. Any Member wish to speak?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, the question is now on favorably reporting the en bloc package.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response.]

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The en bloc measures are favorably reported. The motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

Pursuant to House Rule XI, Clause 2, I ask that Committee Members have the right to file with the clerk of the Committee supplemental, additional, Minority, and dissenting views without objection.

Additionally, the staff is authorized to make necessary technical and conforming changes to the bills ordered reported today, subject to the approval of the Minority.

Without objection, so ordered.

If there is no further business before the Committee, without objection, the Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:51 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

