

FULL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING
MARK-UP OF SEVERAL BILLS

for the

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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FULL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING MARK-UP OF SEVERAL BILLS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2025

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

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:06 a.m., in HVC-210, U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, Hon. James Comer [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Comer, Jordan, Turner, Gosar, Foxx, Grothman, Cloud, Palmer, Higgins, Sessions, Biggs, Mace, Fallon, Donalds, Perry, Timmons, Burchett, Boebert, Luna, Langworthy, Burlison, Crane, Jack, McGuire, Gill, Garcia, Norton, Lynch, Krishnamoorthi, Khanna, Mfume, Brown, Stansbury, Frost, Lee, Crockett, Randall, Subramanyam, Ansari, Simon, Min, Walkinshaw, Pressley, and Tlaib.

Chairman COMER. A quorum is present.

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

Pursuant to Committee Rule 5(b) 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 or 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.

Before we get to the first order of business, I understand we have a birthday today. Is that correct?

Mr. GARCIA. That is right.

Chairman COMER. We all want to wish Ranking Member Garcia a happy birthday.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. Happy birthday. All right. Now, the first order of business is ratifying the new Subcommittee roster. The clerks have distributed the roster electronically. I ask unanimous consent that the Committee approve the appointments and assignments as shown on the roster.

Without objection, the Subcommittee roster is approved.

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 151, the Equal Representation Act.

The clerk will please designate the bill.

H.R. 151, THE EQUAL REPRESENTATION ACT

The Clerk. H.R. 151, the Equal Representation Act, a bill to require a citizenship question on the decennial census, to require reporting on certain census statistics, and to modify apportionment of representatives to be based on United States citizens instead of all persons.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill should 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. 151, 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.

H.R. 151, the Equal Representation Act, ensures Federal representation is determined by Americans only. The bill does two simple things. First, the bill requires the U.S. Census Bureau to include a censorship question on the 10-year census questionnaire. Second, the bill directs that this information be used to ensure fair representation by requiring the Census Bureau to only include citizens in the apportionment base. My amendment in the nature of a substitute simplifies the citizenship question to be asked on the census questionnaire, same as what passed in the House last Congress: "Are you a citizen of the United States? Yes or no," and that is it.

By requiring this question, the U.S. Government will be able to collect accurate data on the makeup of our population. The Census Bureau currently estimates the noncitizen population using survey data from the census-administered American Community Survey, but that data is not based on the entire population. It is only an estimate and suffers from large margins of error. In the past, opponents of a citizenship question have raised concerns that such a question will discourage participation in the census, the theory being that some individuals will be reluctant to respond to the census, especially if they do not have lawful immigration status. My amendment in the nature of a substitute does not require respondents to indicate what immigration status they have or any other related demographic information. Plenty of noncitizens enter this country legally, for example, using a green card or a student visa. We just want to know, very simply, are you a citizen or a noncitizen. It is an easy question, it is not confusing, and it does not reveal anything about an individual's specific immigration status.

Although the census will count and enumerate all individuals residing in the United States, this bill would ensure that only citizens are included in the apportionment base from which represen-

tation in Congress is determined. According to American Community Survey estimates, there are over 21 million noncitizens residing in the United States and the District of Columbia. These are not naturalized citizens, and they cannot vote in Federal elections. Noncitizens comprise nearly seven percent of the total population of the United States, but noncitizens are not evenly distributed among the states, and some states end up with greater representation in Congress based on a higher concentration of noncitizens. This dilutes the one person, one vote principle for citizens in states with fewer noncitizens. It is clear that Congress can and should ensure a fair apportionment based on equal representation of citizens.

I thank Representative Edwards, a former Member of this Committee, for his leadership on this issue. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. I recognize the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We, as House Democrats, oppose what we believe is an unconstitutional bill in front of us. The bill attempts to exclude noncitizens from being counted when drawing congressional districts, which clearly violates the Fourteenth Amendment, and the Fourteenth Amendment is clear. It states that seats in the House of Representatives must be based on counting "the whole number of persons in each state," regardless of their citizenship or immigration status. Now, the United States has done this since the amendment was adopted in 1868. Now, during debate on the amendment, Congress talked about using only the number of citizens, but they rejected that idea.

This bill also attempts to add a question about citizenship status to the census. We know this question will destroy the accuracy of the census and devastate numerous communities across the country. Noncitizens will avoid answering the census, leading to undercounts across the country. Now, an undercount means loss of Federal funding for vital programs like schools and healthcare, diminished political representation, and inaccurate data for urban planning and economic development. This bill is unconstitutional, and we should all oppose it, and we yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Ranking Member yields back. Any other Member seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The question is now on the amendment—

Mr. FROST. Mr. Frost.

Chairman COMER. Oh, I am sorry. Mr. Frost from Florida.

Mr. FROST. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to say I oppose this blatantly unconstitutional bill that violates the Fourteenth Amendment. Putting a citizenship question on the census would increase fear in immigrant communities and decrease the number of responses, undermining the entire purpose of the census in the first place. America's democracy values representation, and it is important that we have a census that is actually on point since the population count determines how many U.S. representatives each state gets. Congress is supposed to represent everyone—every human, every person—but this bill dilutes that power for our residents.

This bill would have huge financial consequences as census data guides the allocation of \$2.8 trillion every year. So, I am fighting

for my district, for Central Floridians, and for the State of Florida to get the tools that we need to succeed, not fewer. If enacted, this bill would cause states with large shares of undocumented immigrants, like the State of Florida, to see significant Federal funding cuts. This means all Floridians see our public goods close and fall into disrepair, such as roads and transit systems, schools, hospitals, veterans care, and disaster preparation.

Republicans in Congress claim to respect the Constitution. But to respect it, you got to read it, and like the Ranking Member just said, it states very blatantly in Section 2 of the Fourteenth Amendment that we count the whole number of persons in each state. No matter what this President says, no matter what Republicans in Congress say, a person is a person. Immigrants are people, and they should be counted in the census. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Any other Member seek recognition? The Chair recognizes Mr. Biggs from Arizona.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I support this bill, and I just wanted to say that we are at odds here. Obviously, we have very different takes on this, and I believe that this bill actually is in line with the Fourteenth Amendment, Section 2. Districts with large noncitizen populations overwhelmingly elect Democrats. That is just the way that is. Districts with high citizenship rates overwhelmingly elect Republicans. That is fact and data. Of the 24 congressional districts where at least one in five adults is not an American citizen, only four elected a Republican in 2022, and meanwhile, in the 54 districts where noncitizens make up less than two percent of adults, only five are represented by Democrats. The pattern is not accidental. Noncitizen populations cluster heavily in deep blue urban areas, inflating population totals and giving Democrat districts more representation in Congress than the citizen voting population truly warrants.

Noncitizens cannot vote. Take a look at Section 2: "The basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear and the whole number of male citizens," et cetera. These are things in Section 2 of Fourteen that are, basically, the arguments that were made in that Convention are borne out by the facts I am giving you now. Noncitizens cannot vote, but they are counted the same as voting citizens during apportionment under the current scheme. That means districts with fewer actual voters gain more political power despite having fewer Americans participating in elections.

And let us just consider my home state. After years of litigation, 15 Arizona counties, and we only have 15 counties. Some of our counties are bigger than states, bigger than New Jersey, et cetera, but these counties are verifying and removing up to 50,000 registrants who never provided proof of U.S. citizenship. There are up to 50,000 people in my state alone who have failed to provide proof of citizenship when registering to vote. Imagine that number nationwide. That does not even include the number of people being counted in our census who are here illegally. Asking this question is common sense. These individuals should never have been on the rolls in the first place, and H.R. 151 strengthens and accelerates citizenship verification, ensuring that states like Arizona can clean-up the voter rolls before ballots are cast, not after. If 50,000 poten-

tial noncitizens can be discovered in one state, my state, a state of about 7-and-a-half million people, imagine the scale nationwide. My job is to protect the voting rights of Arizona citizens, not to enhance political power for states that encourage illegal immigration.

This should not be controversial. Only Americans should decide American elections, and that means starting at the apportionment process, and that means starting at the census process. And so, with that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. FROST. Would the gentleman yield for a question?

Mr. BIGGS. Who is asking?

Mr. FROST. Frost.

Mr. BIGGS. Sure. Go ahead and ask a question.

Mr. FROST. Well, you know, because the whole first part of your argument had to do with the fact that somehow this helps Democrats. So, there is a political issue here, but I am just curious what you have to say about the fact that Donald Trump, as we speak, is actually creating more undocumented people in this country by doing things like ripping away Temporary Protected Status (TPS), right, for hundreds of thousands of Haitians in my district and in my state.

Mr. BIGGS. So, here is the response to the question. I do not think he is creating more illegal aliens by taking away TPS. What does the "T" in "TPS" stand for?

Mr. FROST. He is creating more——

Mr. BIGGS. What does the "T"——

Mr. FROST [continuing]. More undocumented people.

Mr. BIGGS. No, no, no, no. I answered your question. Answer mine. What does the "T" stand for?

Mr. FROST. Temporary protective status.

Mr. BIGGS. The "T" stands for temporary protective class, and here is the deal. Temporary parole status, that is what it stands for, and what that means is we are going to parole you in for a period of time. We have people who have been paroled in for their temporary period of time for more than 20 years—more than 20 years—and they will not go home.

Mr. FROST. So, you are saying——

Mr. BIGGS. And I am suggesting they need to go home, and that what President Trump——

Mr. FROST. And you are suggesting that——

Mr. BIGGS. That is what President Trump is suggesting, and I think that is what the American people want, and when we get back to this question of this——

Mr. FROST. None of the polls show that now.

Mr. BIGGS. I am sorry?

Mr. FROST. None of the polls show that now. The American people are overwhelmingly against what this President is doing in immigration, and in fact——

Mr. BIGGS. No. Okay.

Mr. FROST [continuing]. For the first time in history, more people are with us in terms of making sure.

Mr. BIGGS. I will take my time back. I was respectful and let you ask your question. I disagree with you. I disagree with your interpretation of what polling is saying. What I am suggesting to you is this bill corrects an inequity, so let me give you an example. How

many people are in Congress from California that should not be here because you overcounted, including apportionment, of illegal aliens? By some estimates, it is high as seven. Seven. My state has nine representatives. Will we lose some? My guess is we might lose one.

Mr. FROST. The Constitution is clear that we count persons——

Mr. BIGGS. Okay. So, from now on——

Mr. FROST [continuing]. Regardless of status.

Mr. BIGGS. From now on, when you are talking, I will interrupt you, okay? Is that fair? You were that rude, you were that rude, you did not even let me finish my comment. You had to make your point when you can raise your hand, say, hey, I would like my 5 minutes. Now, while you are doing your 5 minutes, should I just interrupt you all the time? No, I will not, because you know what? I have courtesy and respect, something you lack.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman's time has expired. Any further Members? Ms. Randall.

Ms. RANDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am going to start by reiterating the fact that this policy is unconstitutional. It was proven unconstitutional and struck down by the Supreme Court when the Trump Administration attempted to do this exact thing in Trump's first term. They wanted to erase—erase—undocumented people and noncitizens from the census, from our communities, from the requirement that we fund and represent all of our constituents as laid out in the Constitution, and the Supreme Court struck that attempt down.

Why would we waste our time trying again? Why would we waste our time trying to pass an unconstitutional policy that is clearly unconstitutional, that is clearly trying to erase the existence of people who are simply here in this country? We can argue immigration policy. We can argue whether we should have more robust asylum processes, more paths to citizenship. You know, just yesterday, Secretary Noem suggested a 100-percent travel ban: no one from any other Nation should enter this country.

I think it is clear what this Administration wants to do: to erase people, to deport people to countries they did not even come from, to attack the Constitution, and to use every tool possible to consolidate power, just as my colleague from Arizona said, so that more Republicans can win. We do not just get to play with the Constitution like that, and I am baffled so often in this job because the Republican Party that I grew up with, the role models that I knew in my community—my dad, my faith leaders, folks that I served with in the legislature—Republican Members, believed so strongly in the Constitution, in the amendments as laid out and the importance of this document to guide our country forward. And what I hear every day is an attempt to attack and tear down this document that helped craft and stabilize our country since its beginning.

It is just not true, Mr. Chair, that adding a citizenship question to the census would not scare anyone. We know that folks in mixed-status families where one is a citizen and one is not, where someone has legal status or someone does not have legal status, those families are much less likely to fill out the census because of their fear. And their fear is warranted because every day across

the country we are seeing folks rounded up on the streets, detained for sometimes hundreds of days, deported to not their country of origin, some of these people who are U.S. citizens themselves, many of them who have protective status, many of them who have green cards.

I have visited with detainees in facilities in my district, and Mr. Frost is right. The American people are against this President's Administration policy, this attack on our immigrant community at higher rates than they have ever been before. They believe Democrats care about people, and that is what we are here to do. We are here to fight for every single person who lives in our country to make sure they have fair representation and to make sure that we are funding our states adequately. We are not here to try and rig elections so that more Republicans win. Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Crane from Arizona.

Mr. CRANE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My colleague just said we are not here to rig elections to make sure that Republicans win more elections. That is exactly what you guys are trying to do. You guys are trying to rig elections. You guys, in the last Administration, let in between ten to 15 million illegal aliens. I also want to point out that you guys keep referencing the Constitution. I got some Constitution for you. How about Article IV, Section 4 of the Constitution that requires that the Federal Government protect each state from invasion. That is something clearly you guys did not do while you had the presidency. And now that we have these millions of illegal aliens in this country, we are just simply asking that we put a question on the census: "Are you an American citizen?"

And, of course, you guys do not want to do that because you know that if we do do that and the American people find out exactly how many illegal aliens are in this country and voting, they are going to be as appalled as we see each and every day, and you guys do not want that. And they are not allowed to vote, and you guys try and block every single effort that we make in this House to stop illegal aliens from voting. You guys blocked the SAVE Act as well. That is exactly what this is. You guys are trying to rig elections, and we are trying to stop it, and we are not going to apologize for it. So, I am in full support of this bill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. BIGGS. Would the gentleman yield? Would the gentlemen yield to me?

Mr. CRANE. Yes, I would yield to Mr. Biggs.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, we just heard reference to the Supreme Court and its decision in *Commerce v. New York* that came out in 2019, as if that was conclusive on the matter. If you are okay with that, then I will accept that because what the Supreme Court said is you can ask a citizenship question. They said you can. It is constitutionally appropriate. What is not appropriate is the way that the Commerce Department did not adhere to the APA. That is what they said, said you can ask the citizenship question, but you are going to have to deal with the APA, the Administrative Procedural Act. And if you do what you did then, then you got a problem, because they did not really adhere to it,

they did not have a great reason, they did not follow the rules, they did not follow the timelines, but the majority opinion there said you can ask this question. So, this bill is actually constitutional if you are accepting the rationale of the Supreme Court, and it is affirming in part and reversing in part, which is what happened in 2019. I will yield back to the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. CRANE. I yield, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Any other questions?

[No response.]

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

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[Chorus of noes.]

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

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 151, as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed say no.

[Chorus of noes.]

Mr. GARCIA. I request a recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. Okay. A recorded vote is ordered. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 5750, the Ensuring a Qualified Civil Service Act, or EQUALS Act, of 2025.

Clerk, please designate the bill.

H.R. 5750, THE ENSURING A QUALIFIED CIVIL SERVICE ACT OF 2025

The Clerk. H.R. 5750, the EQUALS Act of 2025, a bill to Amend Title 5, United States Code, to modify probationary periods with respect to positions in the competitive service, to establish trial periods for positions in the accepted service, and for other purposes.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill should 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, offered to H.R. 5750, as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read, and the substitute will be considered 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 original author of the EQUALS Act when it passed the House with bipartisan support in the 115th Congress, it is great to see Mr. Gill renewing that momentum years later in response to

calls to strengthen Federal workforce quality and efficiency. President Trump noted in a recent executive order that Agency approval should be required before probationary employees become tenured Federal employees. This is in line with a February 2015 GAO report which stated that the supervisory probationary period may not be long enough for the supervisor to conduct performance management responsibilities.

Mr. Gill's bill incorporates this basic principle into the EQUALS Act. The bill provides 2-year probationary periods for competitive and excepted service positions, except preference eligibles who would remain subject to a 1-year probationary period. Furthermore, this bill ensures that probationary periods do not automatically lead to permanent Federal appointment. It ensures this by requiring agency supervisors to affirmatively certify their appointment is in the public interest, that the employee is a good fit for the job. To help with this process, the bill provides supervisors and employees with timely and appropriate notices leading into the end of their probationary periods. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. I yield to the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. House Democrats oppose this bill on this Committee. It weakens protections for Federal workers at an incredibly dangerous time. Now, early in the second Trump Administration, tens of thousands of probationary Federal employees, as we know, were fired. Many had many years of service, dedicating their lives to this country, but had recently also moved to new roles, thus making them probationary in their new positions. They were fired not because of poor performance, but just because the President wanted to fire Federal workers, and probationary workers had few protections. This bill would double the time during which Federal employees have limited due process and appeal rights as probationary employees. During this time, they would be fired within 30 days' notice, they have limited rights to an attorney or representative, and they generally cannot appeal their removal.

At a time when Donald Trump is attempting illegal mass firing and purging experts from agencies across our government, this bill is a dangerous step in the wrong direction. I will vote no, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlemen yields back. The Chair now recognizes the sponsor of the bill, Representative Gill from Texas.

Mr. GILL. Thank you, Chairman Comer, for your leadership on this. We appreciate it.

The Biden Administration prioritized sweetheart deals to the American Federation of Government Employees, and the American taxpayer suffered. There are more than two million civilian non-postal employees. These employees were compensated just under \$360 billion in 2023, up 31 percent from 2019. During this time, the Federal workforce grew by more than 140,000 employees, an increase of over seven percent. Spending on Federal employees increased by billions of dollars, while there was little evidence of increases in services provided. The Biden Administration saddled future generations with debt to award union allies. The American people suffered through an inflation crisis while Federal bureaucrats were insulated from its effects and continued receiving pay

increases. This was wrong and contributed to the American people overwhelmingly electing Republicans in 2024.

Since taking office, President Trump has prioritized reining in the Federal bureaucracy to save American taxpayers money and ensure the Federal Government is effectively working for the American people. On April 24, 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order 14284, Strengthening Probationary Periods in the Federal Service. The executive order states that the American people deserve a Federal workforce that is high quality, efficient, dedicated to the public interest, and no larger than necessary. President Trump could not be more right. Probationary periods and trial periods are longstanding, essential tools to ensure newly hired Federal employees are sufficiently performing before their appointments are finalized permanently.

I introduced the EQUALS Act of 2025 to build upon President Trump's executive order. The legislation provides 2-year probationary periods for competitive and excepted service employees instead of the current 1-year period for most employees after their initial appointment. This would allow for better tracking and monitoring of an employee's progress to ensure that they are the right fit for the Federal Government. This provision came directly from a 2015 GAO report entitled, "Improved Supervision and Better Use of Probationary Periods Are Needed to Address Substandard Employee Performance." The report from the GAO stated, "Chief Human Capital officers also told us supervisors often do not have enough time to adequately address an individual's performance before the probationary period ends."

The report also found that individuals on a probationary period often rotate through various offices in the agency, and supervisors have only a limited opportunity to assess their performance. An employee can often work for the Federal Government for over 25 years, and having an extra year probationary status to ensure the right employee becomes career tenured is a commonsense, good government measure. Under current law, if the Agency takes no action, the employee automatically transitions from probationary to full competitive service status. My legislation would terminate employment, except for those who are certified by the agency head to be retained.

I want to be clear that this will not lead to mass termination but, instead, a careful performance review to ensure that each employee is the best use of taxpayer dollars. This reform came from the Merit Systems Protection Board, who recommended in a 2005 report titled, "The Probationary Period: A Critical Assessment Opportunity," "OPM should establish procedures so that a probationer does not automatically become an employee in the absence of agency action. An agency should be required to certify that a probationer's conduct and performance have established that individual will be an asset to the government. In the absence of this certification, the probationer's employment should automatically terminate upon the expiration of the probationary period." Before the employee benefits from being made permanent and becomes much more difficult to remove, they must show the taxpayer why doing so is in the public interest. Full-time status is a major commitment and should require clear excellence and performance.

My legislation will go a long way to ensure that the only the best and brightest work for the American taxpayer, and ensure that the American people have a Federal Government that works for them. I urge support and yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Does any other Member seek recognition on the underlying bill? I know Mr. Lynch has an amendment. Does anybody else seek—

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Mr. Walkinshaw.

Chairman COMER. Yes.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. I think we have already welcomed you to the Committee, but welcome to the Committee.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Thank you again, sir.

Chairman COMER. Yes.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. I am opposed to H.R. 5750. Extending the Federal employee probationary period from one year to two will give the Trump Administration yet another tool to weaponize against Federal employees who they perceive as ideological threats, and to continue their efforts to destroy the nonpartisan civil service. And the gentleman mentioned saving taxpayer dollars. It is important for us all to remember that this Administration has spent \$16 billion, according to a Senate report, paying Federal employees not to work. I think that would be a difficult thing for any of us to explain to our constituents, that their tax dollars have gone to pay Federal employees not to work. Many of those Federal employees were subsequently hired back because the Administration realized that they needed them. They got paid not to work and then got hired back. That sounds wasteful to me.

Probationary employees already have fewer employment protections than non-probationary employees. As such, the Administration has relied on the existing probationary employee structure to indiscriminately purge thousands of probationary employees with little or no justification. Extending the period to two years will allow the Administration to continue this behavior, eliminating especially early career employees based on their perceived political affiliation or other subjective criteria. It is antithetical to the merit-based system, nonpartisan. We have heard a lot of talk about politics and campaigns and elections from the other side already. We have a nonpartisan civil service in this country for a reason.

This bill would also put Federal services at risk, the services that all of our constituents rely on, by allowing the further politicization of the workforce and deterring and eliminating early career talent from working for the Federal Government. As such, I am opposed to the bill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Representative Gill for a unanimous consent request.

Mr. GILL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I ask for unanimous consent to enter into the record the following letter of support: a letter of support from Heritage Action for H.R. 5750, the EQUALS Act.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Okay. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Lynch.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to the Ranking Member. I have an amendment at the desk, I believe.

Chairman COMER. The clerk will distribute the amendment to all Members.

The clerk will designate the amendment.

The Clerk. Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5750, as offered by Mr. Lynch of Massachusetts.

Chairman COMER. Without objection. The amendment is considered as read.

I reserve a point of order.

The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 5 minutes to explain his amendment.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Given that H.R. 5750 would arbitrarily and without any meaningful study extend the standard probationary period for most new Federal employees from two to one years, this amendment would strike this misguided legislation in its entirety. My amendment would also replace the text of the underlying bill with a commonsense requirement that the independent Government Accountability Office, which is the main watchdog of the Federal Government, must first review the impact of prior extensions of probationary periods at the Department of Defense.

We have done this before, not only at DOD, but also the United States Postal Service, and both of those experiences have been cautionary in terms of our ability to compete with the private sector and the consequences of losing so many good employees. We have also seen this at other Federal agencies on agency mission and operations. Employee performance and the recruitment and retention of highly qualified Federal workers is affected. While I firmly believe that there are Members on both sides of the aisle who are committed to strengthening our Federal workforce and the delivery of critical services that Federal employees provide to the American people, the wholesale and arbitrary extension of the statutory probationary period for the majority of civil service employees will severely undermine both of these goals. The American Federation of Government Employees, and the National Treasury Employees Union, and other employee organizations representing more than two million Federal employees have repeatedly warned that this proposal would be detrimental to the Federal workforce morale, recruitment, and retention.

Importantly, Federal probationary employees do not receive the full due process protections, including appeal rights, that are afforded to permanent Federal workers, and, therefore, are limited in their ability to challenge unfair disciplinary actions and unlawful job terminations. They also do not enjoy full collective bargaining rights and are expressly excluded from standard labor agreements that protect Federal workers against adverse employment actions. It is in view of these limitations and their impact on Federal workforce morale that Congress on a bipartisan basis in 2021 repealed the pilot 2-year probationary period for new employees at the Department of Defense. It was not working. It was hurting our ability to attract good employees. We are in a competition here against the private sector, and we have done this before and it did not work. Hello?

This attempt to extend the period during which Federal employees do not have full due process and other labor rights also comes

amid a reduction of force of the Federal workforce by targeting and firing probationary employees en masse. President Trump recently fired 200,000 Federal employees. Did not ask which ones were doing a good job, did not ask which ones needed to be fired, just fired everybody. In April, President Trump issued an executive order significantly expanding the reasons allowing the removal of probationary employees, including firings based on an agency's supervisory board's determination that continued employment would not "advance organizational goals or serve agency needs of interest."

Since taking office, President Trump has, in fact, as I said, fired more than 25,000 probationary Federal employees across the Federal Government. From 2,400 probationary employees at the Department of Veterans Affairs, including the workers at the Veterans Suicide Hotline in the middle of a suicide crisis, to more than 3,000 probationary employees at the Department of Health and Human Services. These unlawful firings are still the subject of litigation filed by Federal employee unions and pro-democracy advocates with the support of the Democratic House Litigation Task Force, of which I am a member. As reported by the nonpartisan Partnership for Public Service and its Federal Harms Tracker, these and other attacks against our Federal employees, to date, resulted in more than 211,000 Federal civil servants leaving the Federal Government, including nearly 13,000 employees at the VA, 15,000 employees at HHS, and over 60,000 employees at the Department of Defense.

According to the Partnership, which is dedicated to making government more efficient, "This campaign to weaken the Federal civil service has targeted the very people who keep our government running and provide essential services that we all rely on every day." Regrettably, the legislation before us does the same, and I urge my colleagues to support my amendment and oppose the underlying bill. I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I recognize myself to speak on the Lynch Amendment.

I want to thank Mr. Lynch for offering this amendment aimed at replacing the bill with a provision directing GAO to study the impact of lengthening probationary periods. However, I oppose this amendment which would gut the underlying bill and deny its improvements to the Federal workforce. The simple truth is that the underlying proposal extending Federal employee probationary periods and affirmative certification of employees' value to the Federal Government and American taxpayer is not new, with the GAO itself having already studied this issue via a February 2015 report calling for these reforms. It is for these reasons that I oppose this amendment and urge my colleagues to do the same. The Chair now recognizes the Ranking Member.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to thank Representative Lynch for offering this important amendment. Any organization, of course, needs to hire and fire the best people, but the legislation we are considering today is rushed and potentially, as we know, harmful. I support this amendment. Committee Democrats support this amendment which would require the GAO to study how the bill would actually work before rushing through the

changes that would allow the President to fire more Federal workers. I urge my colleagues to support the amendment, and with that, we yield back.

Mr. LYNCH. Would the gentleman yield to me?

Mr. GARCIA. Yes, and I would like to yield Mr. Lynch some time.

Mr. LYNCH. Yes.

Chairman COMER. Mr. Lynch.

Mr. LYNCH. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I just want to point out, so at the United States Postal Service, they had a very long probationary period, and when Postmaster General DeJoy came in, appointed by President Trump, he got rid of that. He got rid of that because we needed to bring on new employees, and it was such a drag and it created such dissension among the workforce. And remember, the United States Postal Service has 100,000 less people today than it did 20 years ago. So, they have been bringing in automation. They have been working with the unions there. It is not an adversarial relationship all the time, but I think, you know, Postmaster General DeJoy knew his business. You know, he knew operations, he knew efficiency, and he got rid of that voluntarily and said this is hurting the organization, this is hurting our efficiency, so I am going to do away with it. So, now when folks come on, they do not have "casual employees" like they used to do years ago. They bring people in and they train them, and they impress upon them they are in a career, and it is a good vibe and a good way to treat your employees with respect.

So, you know, I just advise Members, take a look at what happened at DOD when we did this. We lost a lot of good employees, and we are in a daily competition. I see what is going on at the VA. We got nurses that can walk across the street at a private hospital and basically double their pay. So, how do we get VA nurses to stay on the job? How do we get therapists? You know, we got a lot of veterans that need care desperately, and, you know, President Trump just laid off 13,000, and we got a backlog of cases now. We are not taking care of our veterans, and this is going to make it worse because, you know, a new nurse probably with student loans is going to look at going on to the Federal, you know, workforce and saying, okay, I am going to have no rights for a couple of years, and if I go to a private hospital, the pay is better, the hours are probably a lot better, the benefits are better. How do we get that person to come to work at the VA?

So, there are real managerial problems with the underlying bill, and I am trying to get at that, and, you know, this is not new. Some of us have been here a while. We have seen this before and it did not work out well, and this is not going to work out well either, so. But with that, I yield back my time to the Ranking Member.

Chairman COMER. Yield back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Biggs from Arizona.

Mr. BIGGS. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I would have sworn that I had heard earlier in this debate on this bill of the nonpartisan nature of the Federal workforce. Now, there are about 2.4 million people—excuse me—2.3 million people in the Federal workforce, according to the Office of Personnel Management, and I thought, well, it would be interesting, you know, if it is really nonpartisan,

then we should see something pretty similar. I am just going to take this as my variable. I am going to look at donations to political campaigns just to see how that worked out.

So, of that Federal workforce, 30 percent of donations went to Republicans and 70 percent went to Democrats, and that is interesting because it is by a two to one margin, better than two to one margin. It is not nonpartisan. It is very partisan. Two agencies did not have any donations to Republicans at all, and, not surprisingly, it is the Department of Education and the Office of Personnel Management. They did not have any. And then, so, I thought, well, what did they give in the vice presidential race or the Presidential race when you had Vice President Kamala Harris running? Eighty-four percent of Federal employees gave money to Kamala Harris, and about 15, 16 percent gave to President Trump. The ratio was \$3.5 million to \$675,000.

Then somebody mentioned recently in the debate here about the unions, about the Federal unions, and I thought that was interesting because let us see what they did. Well, AFGE, the American Federation of Government Employees, 96 percent of donations in the last cycle went to Democrats. That is interesting. And then it was—it did not perform as well for Democrats as the National Treasury Employees Union, which had 98 percent going to Democrats. And so, the point being is, if you are arguing that somehow this bill is going to make us less partisan, I am trying to conceive of how we could possibly be less partisan than we—excuse me, we are so partisan now, I am not sure that anything will actually shrink the partisanship that is there, and that is just why this is important. This bill is important because it actually gets to shrinking the Federal Government.

And the fundamental difference that you see here is the arguments being made by my colleagues on the other side is that they do not want to shrink the Federal Government and I want to shrink the Federal Government. I think the Federal Government is bloated and over big: 2.4 million employees. That is a lot of folks working that could be doing something different, and we should probably shrink the footprint. We had an overwhelming vote yesterday to actually take down and reduce, and it was a bipartisan vote, to reduce the number of crimes created by regulation or statute. As I pointed out yesterday, there is somewhere in the neighborhood of 400,000 crimes created by regulation. Well, as long as you have fiefdoms created and you have people saying, “Well, I need to work here and this is where I am going to work,” you are going to protect those.

So, everybody who voted yesterday to shrink or at least study, at least count, because we do not even know what the real number is, count the number of criminal violations in the regulations and statutes to vote here today and say, well, we do not want to do this because it might reduce the size and scope of the Federal Government, and I think those are disingenuous or at least, certainly, incongruent arguments and positions. And so, Mr. Chairman, I have to regretfully oppose Mr. Lynch’s proposed amendment as well as support Mr. Gill’s underlying bill, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Any other Members seek recognition? The Chair recognizes Mr. Gill from Texas.

Mr. GILL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, oppose this amendment and urge my colleagues to support the underlying bill.

Listen, this is a very commonsense piece of legislation that simply says that we are going to have a 2-year probationary period for Federal workers, during which time we can evaluate them, and their managers can determine whether their employment for the Federal Government makes sense for American taxpayers. We hear that unions are opposed to this, and that is no surprise to anybody. But the reality is that we represent the American people whose tax dollars we are stewarding, not union bosses who are engaged in collective bargaining against the American taxpayer. Once Federal workers are outside of this probationary period, they receive virtual tenure. They are incredibly difficult to fire or to get rid of, and the purpose of their employment is to serve the American people, to make Federal services better. Our Federal programs are not intended to be jobs programs for substandard government workers.

So, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense bill to ensure that Federal workers are, in fact, meeting basic standards of competency, giving more discretion to managers to ensure that we are stewarding tax dollars appropriately, and, as Mr. Biggs said, rightsizing the Federal Government. And with that, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Any other Members wish to speak on the Lynch Amendment? Oh, Representative Crane, Arizona?

Mr. CRANE. Yes, I oppose this amendment, and I just want to offer my full support for Mr. Gill's bill here, which would just increase the probationary period for Federal employees from one year to two years. I think that is completely rational, and I think it does protect the American taxpayers. I joined a community in the Navy called Naval Special Warfare. I was on probation for two years. I knew that if I screwed up or did not do my job or live up to the standards, I would be let go, and I had no problem with it because I wanted to be a part of a community that actually did its job and had standards. And so, I commend Mr. Gill on his bill. I think it will be good for the American people. The American people do feel like Washington, D.C. is extremely bloated. They know how difficult it is for us to get rid of bureaucrats who are not doing their job, and I think this bill helps a lot. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Well said. Any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The question is now on the amendment offered by Mr. Lynch from Massachusetts.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[Chorus of noes.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the noes have it, and the amendment is not agreed to.

Mr. GARCIA. Recorded vote, Mr. Chair.

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

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 5749, the Official Time Reporting Act.

The clerk will please designate the bill.

H.R. 5749, THE OFFICIAL TIME REPORTING ACT

The Clerk. H.R. 5749, the Official Time Reporting Act, a bill to amend Title 5, United States Code, to require that the Office of Personnel Management submit an annual report to Congress relating to the use of official time by Federal employees.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill should 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. 5749, 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 average American is likely unaware of the concept of official time. Official time is the amount of time taxpayers pay for Federal employees to work on behalf of labor unions rather than their official duty of serving the American public. The simple truth is that while official time may be beneficial to Federal employees and union bosses, it comes at the expense of hardworking taxpayers. While it is an open question whether or not taxpayer-funded official time is valuable for the American taxpayer, we should all agree that transparency is necessary for Congress to conduct proper oversight on this issue.

President Trump issued an executive order and first-of-its-kind report in 2019 providing this very information. Unfortunately, President Biden issued an executive order repealing that same policy as one of his first acts as President. Following his reelection, President Trump's Office of Personnel Management directed the release of a study on union time in the Federal workforce, which was released in August. This report revealed the tremendous amount of taxpayer resources spent funding union activities rather than serving the American people. Dr. Foxx's bill would codify reporting requirements necessary to ensure that the transparency and accountability provided by such reports transcends changes in executive branch leadership. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and yield to the Ranking Member for his remarks.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I oppose this bill, which represents an attack on Federal employees and on union worker rights. Official time is work time that employees are allowed to use for making the workplace safe, protecting workers from discrimination or harassment. We all know that union representatives cannot use official time for union-only activities, like signing up new members, collecting dues, choosing union leaders, or holding internal union meetings. Official time is important because it helps the Federal workforce run smoothly. It can lower employee turnover, improve customer service, prevent expensive legal problems, and help

agencies implement new programs and rules more quickly, and, importantly, it is only available to a few workers.

This bill is designed to enable future attacks on official time and restrictions on Federal workers' rights to organize. This bill is opposed by AFGE, other Federal employee unions, and the AFL-CIO. I oppose it, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the sponsor of the bill, Dr. Foxx from North Carolina.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me begin by asking unanimous consent to enter into the record the following letter of support: a letter of support from the National Taxpayers Union for H.R. 5749, the Official Time Reporting Act.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chairman, we have talked a lot this year about how the Federal Government can and should operate in a more efficient, transparent, and accountable way. Today, with consideration of my bill, H.R. 5749, the Official Time Reporting Act, we have an opportunity to advance legislation to do just that.

The Official Time Reporting Act will let the American people know exactly how much of their hard-earned money is spent not providing valuable services, but on Federal employee union activities. This bill simply requires all agencies to report on the cost of taxpayer-funded union time and to justify any aggregate annual increases. Frankly, many Americans may be surprised to hear that Federal employees can use official time to perform duties related to government employee unions. This includes activities such as negotiating new union contracts, handling disputes, or "general labor-management relations." In fact, in Fiscal Year 2024, nearly \$208 million was spent across the Federal Government on taxpayer-funded official time. This is a staggering amount of money.

In 2018, President Trump issued an executive order requiring Federal agencies to report on exactly how much taxpayer-funded official time was used for union duties. However, in 2021, the Biden Administration, sadly, reversed this policy and opted to obscure the true cost of union time to taxpayers. Nevertheless, at the start of the new Trump Administration, agencies were once again required to report on the use of taxpayer-funded union time.

Transparency must be durable and not subject to the whims of an administration. H.R. 5749, the Official Time Reporting Act, would make transparency and accountability the law of the land and ensure that no future administration can undo the taxpayer-funded union time reporting requirements. We owe it to taxpayers to make sure that every tax dollar is used well to provide high-quality services. This starts by providing a full accounting for every tax dollar spent on union activities. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5749, the Official Time Reporting Act, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Frost from Florida.

Mr. FROST. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I oppose this bill which builds upon the Trump Administration's all-out assault on people's right to a dignified job. This year, under the Trump Administration, Federal employees have faced job insecurity, financial strain, and the loss of collective bargaining agreements. This bill will make mat-

ters worse. We all benefit when unions and their members are empowered to prevent and address retaliation, discrimination, and sexual harassment. It helps Federal employees do their job well. The return on investment for letting Federal employees use official time to make government more efficient and productive is very high. This harmful bill would crack down on union rights and collective bargaining, it aims to exclude thousands of Federal workers from exercising their First Amendment rights, and it further degrades the important work of unions and union members.

And I also have to say, you know, in the debate on the last bill, one of my colleagues brought up the fact that he is concerned or annoyed or was whining about the fact that many Federal employees do not support their party, and then they put forth bills like this. And then you have a President like Donald Trump who is slashing away their collective bargaining, making it so they have job insecurity, financial strain, and the loss of their right to bargain collectively and together. That might be one of the reasons why many Federal workers are not super jazzed about this Administration. Maybe it is that someone like Russell Vought literally said that he wants Federal workers to be traumatized. So, it is not confusing to me why a group of mostly working-class people are not jazzed about what this Administration is doing to their own lives and to their own livelihood.

I also have to say if this is about government efficiency, it is about making sure that people are doing their jobs well. I think we have to look at some of the political appointees at the highest levels of this Administration. I would say it is not doing your job well to, say, put a reporter in a Signal chain that has war plans, but I do not hear anything from the other side about cracking down on that. You want to crack down on working-class people who are trying to do a very important job for our country with barely any resources and take away their collective bargaining? I mean, it is ridiculous.

Hardworking Central Floridians want their government to make their job safer and better, more fulfilling, not less. And my district and myself, we oppose these ill-conceived efforts to rip away collective bargaining for Federal workers. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Any other Members? Mr. Walkinshaw.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am also opposed to the bill and just want to note it has been said Office of Personnel Management (OPM) already tracks and issues a report on official time. Both the Trump Administration and Dr. Foxx used the phrase "taxpayer-funded union time." Under the law, official time cannot be used for political activity, for personal business, for union recruitment, for any work disruption activity, or any work that is not related to representing employees and improving the function of that Agency.

Among the flaws in the bill is the fact that it does not ask OPM to look at or report on the many benefits of official time. And the Merit System Protection Board, the Government Accountability Office, and other independent organizations have demonstrated that official time reduces costly legal disputes, improves morale in agencies, helps agencies resolve problems earlier before they become bigger problems that are more expensive, and cost just a fraction

of the arbitration or litigation that could result from official time not existing. So, for those reasons, Mr. Chairman, I am opposed to the bill, and 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.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[Chorus of noes.]

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

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 5749, as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, say no.

[Chorus of noes.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported, as amended.

Mr. GARCIA. Recorded vote, please.

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

The next item for consideration is H.R. 6329, the Information Quality Assurance Act of 2025.

The clerk will please designate the bill.

H.R. 6329, INFORMATION QUALITY ASSURANCE ACT OF 2025

The Clerk. H.R. 6329, the Information Quality Assurance Act of 2025, a bill to ensure that Federal agencies rely on the best, reasonably available scientific, technical, demographic, economical, and statistical information, and evidence to develop, issue, or inform the public of the nature and basis of Federal Agency rules and guidance, and for other purposes.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill should 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. 6329, 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.

I am pleased to support this bill, the Information Quality Assurance Act of 2025. Historically, thousands of Federal regulations have been imposed each year as an added burden on the American public. The Code of Federal Regulations in which these rules are housed spans 243 volumes that contain over 180,000 single-spaced pages. Agency guidance explaining these regulations to the public likely spans millions more pages. If we must have rules imposed

by Federal regulatory agencies, we should, at the very least, ensure that regulatory agencies rely on the best available information.

Unfortunately, agencies frequently do not rely on the best available information to create the regulations. Year after year, the Federal courts are clogged with litigation brought by regulated parties who point out that Federal agencies have acted based on flawed information. Over the years, Congress has tried to improve the situation. In 2000, Congress enacted the Information Quality Act, which charged the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and each Federal agency to adopt guidelines to assure agencies relied on high-quality information. In 2015, Congress enacted the Foundations of Evidence-Based Policymaking Act, expanding on the Information Quality Act to further ensure agencies use high-quality information in their program administration. Still, year after year, disputes arise over whether regulators are basing their decisions on the best quality information available. Every year, courts strike down agency rules that do not rely on adequate information.

The Information Quality Assurance Act takes several major but straightforward steps to solve that problem. For the first time, it requires that the information on which agencies use to form their rules and guidance be the best reasonably available information. It also includes several additional terms to make sure agencies are finally held to that standard. This legislation will improve the quality of agency decisionmaking, improve the acceptability of new rules and guidance, and avoid the need for many disputes over agencies' use of information to go to court.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I thank Representative Lisa McClain, a former Member of this Committee, for her reintroduction of this important legislation. I now yield to the Ranking Member.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and we have, I know, a series of bipartisan bills in front of us. So, I just want to thank the sponsor of this bill, Congresswoman McClain. This bill is about improving the quality and transparency of information at our Federal agencies and what they use to make the rules. This bill would change Federal law to require the Director of OMB to update its guidance on the Information Quality Act. This bill also contains the ability for the public to give feedback on the information agencies use, and it requires OMB to report to Congress about any complaints. This bill passed the House overwhelmingly last Congress, and we support it again this Congress, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Ranking Member yields back. Any other Members wish to be heard?

[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.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed by saying no.

[No response.]

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

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 6329, as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it and the bill is—the Chair recognizes Mr. Palmer.

Mr. PALMER. Request a recorded vote.

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

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 3766, a bill to prohibit the District of Columbia from requiring tribunals in court or administrative proceedings in the District of Columbia to defer to the Mayor of the District of Columbia's interpretation of statutes and regulations, and for other purposes.

The clerk will please designate the bill.

**H.R. 3766, TO PROHIBIT THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FROM
REQUIRING TRIBUNALS IN COURT OR ADMINISTRATIVE
PROCEEDINGS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA TO DEFER
TO THE MAYOR OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S
INTERPRETATION OF STATUTES AND REGULATIONS**

The Clerk. H.R. 3766, a bill to prohibit the District of Columbia from requiring tribunals in court or administrative proceedings in the District of Columbia to defer to the Mayor of the District of Columbia's interpretation of statutes and regulations, and for other purposes.

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

Without objection, so ordered.

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

The clerk will designate the amendment.

The Clerk. An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3766, 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 a statement on the bill and the amendment.

I support H.R. 3766, which makes sure District of Columbia residents receive impartial justice from the D.C. courts in their disputes with the D.C. Mayor and D.C. agencies. The D.C. Council would like something different. Twice since the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark 2024 decision in *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*, the Council has passed legislation to put a thumb on the scale in favor of the Mayor and D.C. agencies when they are sued over their action. The Council's legislation did that by requiring D.C. courts to defer to the Mayor and the agencies' interpretations of D.C. laws and regulations. This kind of deference is inherently unfair to citizens who challenge overreaching government action in court.

For decades, after the Supreme Court's decision in the 1984 case of *Chevron v. Natural Resources Defense Council*, Federal courts granted the so-called *Chevron* deference to Federal agencies when

regulated entities fought back in Federal court against agency overreach. Over the years, *Chevron's* efforts fueled power grab after power grab by Federal agencies as courts stood aside, deferring to agency interpretations of the law. Thankfully, in its decision, the Supreme Court finally recognized the error of its ways and overruled *Chevron*, but the D.C. Council wants to ignore that wisdom and insist that *Chevron* deference live on in the D.C. courts, denying justice to D.C. residents. Congress should intervene by prohibiting the use of *Chevron* deference in the court, which is precisely what this bill does. It makes no sense that people in D.C. courts still have to deal with *Chevron* deference while people in Federal courts just down the street get the full benefit of the Supreme Court's *Loper Bright* decision.

I want to thank Representative Hageman for her leadership on this issue. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I recognize the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. House Democrats certainly oppose this bill on this Committee. It is another attack on the over 700,000 D.C. residents and on democratic principles. This year, the Republican House has passed nine bills to repeal or amend local D.C. laws, and we know these bills are pending on the Floor calendar. As a reminder, again, D.C. has more residents than two states, pays more in Federal taxes than 26 states, and D.C.'s locally elected officials are accountable to D.C. residents. Local leaders should be empowered to address local matters without Congress interfering, and we have said this many times.

The bill in front of us, which we did not hold a hearing on, we know cancels a recent D.C. law that required D.C. courts to defer to the D.C.'s Government interpretation of laws or rules. The bill would result in more lawsuits, not less, and increased legal uncertainty. I urge my colleagues to oppose H.R. 3766. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Does any other Member wish to be heard?

Ms. Norton. The Chair recognizes Ms. Norton from Washington, D.C.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Chairman, I strongly oppose this undemocratic and paternalistic bill. This bill would repeal the District of Columbia's Review of Agency Action Clarification Amendment Act of 2025 and prohibit D.C. from enacting such a law in the future. This bill would further restrict D.C.'s authority to enact and carry out local laws and policies. The D.C. local government is under unprecedented attack by Republicans in Congress and President Trump. This Congress, Republicans have introduced nearly 90 bills, amendments, and riders to repeal, block, or amend local D.C. laws and policies.

The over 700,000 D.C. residents, the majority of whom are Black and Brown, are capable and worthy of governing themselves. If residents do not like how the members of the D.C. Council vote, residents can vote them out of office or pass a ballot measure. This is democracy. If D.C. residents do not like how the Members of Congress vote on local D.C. matters, residents cannot vote them out of office. That is the antithesis of democracy.

I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a joint letter opposing this bill from the D.C. Mayor, the D.C. Council Chairman,

and the D.C. Attorney General, all of whom were elected by D.C. residents.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. NORTON. The substance of this bill should be irrelevant since there is never justification for Congress to legislate on local D.C. matters, but I will discuss it. This bill could radically change how local D.C. laws and regulations are interpreted. For decades, the local D.C. courts have deferred to the D.C. Executive branch's reasonable interpretation of ambiguous statutes and regulations. However, after the U.S. Supreme Court's *Loper Bright* decision last year which overruled *Chevron*, a question arose about whether the local D.C. courts would overrule their own longstanding deference precedent, which was similar to *Chevron* deference. In response, the D.C. Council enacted the Review of Agency Action Clarification Amendment Act, which codified that longstanding local precedent.

D.C. residents have all the obligations of American citizenship, including paying Federal taxes, serving on juries, and registering within the Selective Service, yet Congress denies them full local self-government and voting representation in Congress. The only solution to this undemocratic treatment is to grant D.C. statehood. The D.C. statehood bill, H.R. 51, grants D.C. residents full local self-government and voting representation in Congress. H.R. 51 reduces the size of the Federal district from 68 square miles to two square miles, consisting of the White House, the Capitol, the Supreme Court, and the National Mall. The residential and commercial areas of D.C. would be a new state.

I urge Members to vote no on H.R. 3766. Free D.C. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back.

Mr. JACK. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Representative Jack.

Mr. JACK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the following letters of support: a letter of support from the National Taxpayers Union for H.R. 6329, the Information Quality Assurance Act; and a statement of support from the Data Foundation for H.R. 6329, the Information Quality Assurance Act.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

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.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[Chorus of noes.]

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

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 3766, as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[Chorus of noes.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported, as amended.

Mr. GARCIA. A recorded vote, Mr. Chair.

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

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 5810, the Federal Supervisor Education Act of 2025.

The clerk will please designate the bill.

**H.R. 5810, THE FEDERAL SUPERVISOR
EDUCATION ACT OF 2025**

The Clerk. H.R. 5810, the Federal Supervisor Education Act of 2025, a bill to provide for mandatory training for Federal Government supervisors in the assessment of management competencies, and for other purposes.

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

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. 5810, 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 will now recognize myself for 5 minutes for a statement on the bill and the amendment.

The American public relies on Federal supervisors to lead a workforce to provide high-quality customer service and faithful execution of the law. These expectations and standards require a level of professionalism that can be improved by strengthening relevant education offerings available to Federal supervisors. Mr. Timmons from South Carolina's bill would do just that by bolstering existing requirements in Federal law governing Federal workforce training.

Various reports and memos from agencies, such as the Government Accountability Office, Office of Personnel Management, and the Merit Systems Protection Board, indicate a need to improve relevant educational opportunities for Federal supervisors. The Federal Supervisor Education Act, a bipartisan bill dating back to the 114th Congress, articulates and executes best practices in relation to Federal supervisory training, including how to effectively manage employees with unacceptable performance. And in relation to the EQUALS Act, which is included in today's markup, the bill also improves supervisor focus on effectively using the probationary period to examine whether an employee has demonstrated successful performance to continue past the probationary period.

These are basic, nonpartisan concepts that are generally available to private sector business supervisors, and, if implemented, would advance the interest of good government, strengthening the Federal workforce on behalf of the American taxpayers. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield to the Ranking Member.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Chairman Comer, also to Congressman Timmons for this bill. There is going to be an amendment which I am going to separately support, so I am going to reserve my remarks till after the amendment is made. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes the sponsor of the bill, Mr. Timmons from South Carolina.

Mr. TIMMONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For years, Oversight Republicans have been pushing for restoring accountability and performance in the Federal workforce. When taxpayer dollars pay the salaries of millions of Federal employees, the public has every right to expect competent management, clear standards, and real consequences when those standards are not met. Right now, too many Federal supervisors step into leadership roles without the training needed to manage people, set clear expectations, or correct poor performance. Agencies promote strong technical employees into supervisory jobs and then send them in blind. That leads to low productivity, uneven standards, and a system where good employees feel unsupported and bad employees rarely face consequences. Taxpayers deserve better, and so do the Federal workers who come in every day ready to do their jobs well.

This bill takes a practical approach to fixing that. It requires agencies to provide real, meaningful training to new supervisors within their first year, not just a slideshow or a checkbox exercise. That training has to cover the basics of good management, setting clear goals, giving honest and timely feedback, motivating teams, addressing poor performance, and making sure workplaces remain professional. Supervisors must then refresh this training every three years so the standards the American people expect continue to be met.

H.R. 5810 also requires agencies to build a pipeline of future leaders. It directs them to identify and prepare employees who may become supervisors down the road instead of scrambling to fill vacancies without a plan. And the bill requires agencies to create mentoring programs so experienced supervisors can coach new ones, share lessons learned, and help them develop into strong leaders. The bill also directs the Office of Personnel Management to lay out clear expectations for what good supervision looks like. Agencies will then evaluate the supervisors based on those standards. This ensures consistency, clarity, and accountability, three things the Federal workforce too often lacks.

At the end of the day, this is a commonsense reform. It does not grow government, it strengthens it. It ensures supervisors can lead effectively, hold employees accountable, and deliver results for the American people. When supervisors are better trained, employees perform better and agencies serve taxpayers better. I encourage my colleagues to support this bill. It is a practical step toward improving the Federal workforce and restoring confidence in government performance. And I appreciate the work from my colleagues across the aisle to help improve this bill, and I look forward to working with them to get it signed into law. With that, I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Does any other Member seek to speak on the underlying bill? For what purpose does Mr. Walkinshaw seek recognition?

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

Chairman COMER. Will the clerk please report?

The Clerk. An amendment to the amendment of the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5810, as offered by Mr. Walkinshaw of Virginia.

Chairman COMER. 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. WALKINSHAW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Timmons, for his great work on this bill.

My amendment strikes a provision from H.R. 5810, the Federal Supervisor Education Act, and provides agencies with the necessary autonomy to implement the act in a manner that maximizes its effectiveness. I am a strong supporter of the goal of this legislation, and almost all of the language which, as Mr. Timmons noted, will provide supervisors within the Federal workforce the appropriate training and resources to ensure they are strong leaders within their respective agencies.

Right now, training for new supervisors varies widely. Some agencies have four hours. Some agencies have 80 hours. Some agencies have structured mentorship programs. Some agencies just assign a guy who knows a few things to mentor new supervisors. And the support outlined in this bill for supervisors will ensure a stronger workplace, higher employee satisfaction, and productivity across both supervisory employees and their direct reports and, most importantly, lead to improved outcomes for the American people.

To ensure that this is the case, my amendment removes language that would require training programs to include guidance on "assessing the needs and interests of the agency with respect to a probationary employee's final appointment." This language is, in my view, subjective and outside the scope of the legislation. The bill already requires supervisors be trained on how to "effectively use the probationary period to examine whether an employee has demonstrated successful performance or conduct to continue their employment." This analysis should be enough to objectively determine, on merit, whether a probationary employee should continue their employment. Requirements that instruct supervisors to determine employment eligibility based on agency interests open the door to a subjective analysis that I said I think is outside the scope of this good piece of legislation.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to vote yes on the amendment to ensure that the bill delivers on its full potential to both Federal supervisors and, most importantly, to the American public. With that, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I want to thank Mr. Walkinshaw for offering this amendment aimed at striking one reference in the underlying bill. My understanding is that by our accepting this amendment, the bill will receive broader bipartisan support, and it is for that reason that I support this amendment and urge my colleagues to do the same with the Walkinshaw Amendment.

Does any other Member seek recognition on the amendment? The Chair recognize the Ranking Member.

Mr. GARCIA. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also want to thank Representative Walkinshaw for this amendment and, of course, the author. This would make a good bill even stronger. This amendment would make it clear that supervisors may not negatively review or remove an employee for political reasons, and I think we all should support this amendment, and I want to yield back.

Chairman COMER. Any other Member seek recognition on the Walkinshaw Amendment?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The question is now on the amendment offered by Mr. Walkinshaw.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, no.

[No response.]

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

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

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

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

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 5810, as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The Chair recognizes Mr. Biggs.

Mr. BIGGS. I would request a recorded vote.

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

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 6330, the Federal Relocation Payment Improvement Act.

The clerk will please designate the bill.

H.R. 6330, THE FEDERAL RELOCATION PAYMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT

The Clerk. H.R. 6330, the Federal relocation Payment Improvement Act, a bill to amend Title 5, United States Code, to provide for lump sum relocation payments for Federal employees relocated in the interest of the government, 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.

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

Relocating Federal employees who receive assignments to change official duty stations is a costly and bureaucratic process. According to the GSA, which is responsible for managing such relocations, in Fiscal Year 2024, the cost for employee relocation across agencies ranges from \$11,000 to a staggering \$143,000 per employee. The high-cost contrasts with their private sector counterparts, whose relocation costs are considerably less. In fact, current law and regulations require seven categories of mandatory relocation entitlement and another six discretionary. This complexity diverts Federal agency resources that could otherwise be available for other mission-focused priorities. It also comes at the expense of Federal employee satisfaction as those relocating are forced to navigate a prolonged bureaucratic maze of document filings and payment processing.

Fortunately, there is a tested alternative to the current system as demonstrated by agencies, such as the Fish and Wildlife Services and Customs and Border Protection in a recent pilot program. Those agencies have utilized an existing authority to provide negotiated lump sum payments to relocating employees, who are then responsible for completing their moves without having to navigate the existing processes. Their simplified lump sum payments and processes have reduced agency costs while boosting employee satisfaction. This bill would expand the currently limited statutory authorities for all agencies to provide such lump sum payments to relocating employees when such alternative is the most cost-effective option.

I want to thank Mr. Jack for offering this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it, and I yield to the Ranking Member for his remarks.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you as well and the sponsor of this bill, Congressman Jack. This bill would allow Federal agencies to pay for employee relocation costs by giving a simple lump sum payment instead of reimbursing every individual expense. This is one of a series of bipartisan bills that we have in front of this Committee today, and I want to thank the House Majority for their work on this and for partnering with us.

This bill would let GSA set up rules and make it easier for agencies to manage their relocation budgets. GSA has already tested this idea in a multiyear pilot program. The bill also requires GSA to create rules for an appeals process. I will vote yes, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Does any—oh, the Chair recognizes the sponsor of the legislation, Mr. Jack from Georgia.

Mr. JACK. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am honored to introduce a bill that is a win for taxpayers and Federal employees alike. Tens of thousands of Federal workers move to new duty stations each year. These moves can be cumbersome for the relocating employees and those managing the move. This bill will streamline and simplify a key part of that process while reducing the cost to taxpayers. This is an opportunity to save money and increase employee satisfaction in a manner that should garner bipartisan support. It is the type of government efficiency reform our constituents demand from us.

I am proud to introduce the Federal Relocation Payment Improvement Act before the Oversight Committee for consideration today. As noted before, H.R. 6330 provides Federal agencies the opportunity to optimize a process that could take up to two years and over \$140,000 to complete. Under the current system, relocating employees often struggle with cash-flow issues as they wait as long as a year or more for their receipts to be reimbursed for their moving expenses. This bill will permit agencies to issue a one-time, up-front lump sum payment to relocating employees. It is more employee friendly, less complex, and easier to manage, which is why it is commonly used by the private sector, and we have proof it works in the Federal Government. A limited number of agencies have already been utilizing this alternate payment method, which has produced many, many savings and improved employee satisfaction for all who have used it.

So, let us favorably report this bill today, and I encourage all of my colleagues to join me in support of this government efficiency reform. And I would also like to thank the Oversight Committee staff for working tirelessly on this bill, and I yield back to our distinguished Chairman, Mr. Comer.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Any other Members seek recognition on the Jack bill? The Chair recognizes Mr. Biggs from Arizona.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I support the Jack bill. Making relocation easier supports the larger effort to move agencies and staff into the real American communities. The lump sum option saves taxpayer money, and the current reimbursement system is slow and wasteful. The lump sum approach is simple, predictable, and prevents inflated expense claims. This is a lean government reform. Private companies use lump sum relocation because it cuts red tape and controls costs. Government should follow that model instead of clinging to a bloated process. Easier relocations push decisionmaking closer to the people, and why is it important to make that easier? Because we do want to move people out of Washington, D.C. Why? Because Washington is wealthy, insulated, and out of touch with the rest of the country.

Two hundred and eighty thousand Federal workers are in the D.C. Metropolitan Area, and they enjoy a 13-percent higher salary and benefit than comparable private sector workers. Relocating 100,000 Federal jobs, say, from the Washington Metropolitan Area to the rest of the United States would save taxpayers \$1.4 billion per year in Federal employee locality pay adjustments. It was done in the first Trump Administration to much success.

And, Mr. Chairman, I offer into the record an article entitled, "Move Federal Agencies and Decision-Making Closer to the People."

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Does any other Member seek recognition?

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. Did you have other UCs, Mr. Biggs?

Mr. BIGGS. No, that was it.

Chairman COMER. Okay. Thank you. Any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 6330, as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. For what purpose—the Chair recognizes Mr. Biggs.

Mr. BIGGS. I request a recorded vote.

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

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 5457, the Strengthening Agency Management and Oversight of Software Assets Act.

The clerk will please designate the bill.

H.R. 5457, THE STRENGTHENING AGENCY MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT OF SOFTWARE ASSETS ACT

The Clerk. H.R. 5457, the Strengthening Agency Management and Oversight of Software Assets Act, a bill to improve the visibility, accountability, and oversight of agency software asset management practices, 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. 5457, 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 purpose of further amendment.

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

Federal agencies spend billions of dollars a year on software licenses without a full understanding of what they are purchasing and how it compares to what they are already paying for. The result is wasteful spending on duplicative or unnecessary software licenses. H.R. 5457 will provide Congress better insight into how our Federal agencies purchase and use software. The text we are considering today is identical to the text we passed out of the House by voice vote last Congress. This bill improves government software purchasing without unduly limiting the procurement options of Federal agencies. It requires each agency to better manage its software and develop a plan for addressing any costly, unnecessary licenses. This will reduce wasteful spending and improve government efficiency.

I thank Ms. Brown for bringing this important legislation back to the Committee this Congress. I also thank Mr. Fallon and Ms. Mace for their early support of this legislation. I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation. I now recognize the Ranking Member.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also want to strongly support this bipartisan reform bill, and I want to thank Ranking Member Shontel Brown, Subcommittee Chairwoman Mace, and Representatives Fallon and McClain Delaney for their work.

Within 18 months of becoming law, this bill will require Federal agency chief information officers to do a full review of all software the agency buys, uses, or deploys. This bill also requires agencies to send these software reviews to the General Services Administration, the OMB, and the Government Accountability Office, and, of course, Congress. This will help lawmakers and agencies keep a closer eye on software contracts and spending. Agencies will then use the reviews to improve planning for software management, address problems, train staff, and meet other needs. I want to thank Committee staff who worked closely with this and the private sector for developing H.R. 5457, a good bipartisan bill, and I urge all Members to vote yes, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlemen yields back. The Chair now recognizes the Chairwoman of the Cyber Subcommittee, Ms. Mace, for 5 minutes.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Government Innovation, eliminating waste and improving efficiency in government IT has been a top priority. It has been long recognized the Federal Government's system of software licensing and inventory management is woefully insufficient, leading to costly, non-necessary, and duplicative licenses. Federal agencies spend billions of dollars each year to purchase and license software. However, they do so without a detailed knowledge of the software they already paid for, what purchases are duplicative or wasteful, and what overlaps exist. This would be like someone paying for two Netflix or Spotify accounts, and it makes no sense.

This year, President Trump and Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) identified and terminated thousands of Federal software licenses costing taxpayers millions of dollars, of which were even being used, but this is just the start. This bill would require agencies to create a comprehensive inventory of software and undergo an independent assessment of software license management practices and contracts. The bill would also require the Chief Information Officer of agencies to develop a plan to adopt enterprise licensing agreements to reduce costs of the government, and OMB to publish a governmentwide strategy for software modernization. This bill would not prescribe what software agencies should buy, but, rather, what agencies and ways agencies procure and keep track of the software they procure. This is intentional. We understand as technology continues to develop, the software needs of agencies change and we need to allow them to remain agile, but agencies can remain agile in a way that is fiscally responsible where taxpayers are not on the hook for duplicative, unnecessary software.

I want to thank Ranking Member Brown for her leadership on this bill and partnering with me on many initiatives to modernize technology and eliminate waste in the Federal Government, and I urge all Members to support the bill.

Mr. Chairman, I urge unanimous consent, in support of H.R. 5457, and enter this into the record: a letter of support from the Alliance for Digital Innovation and Coalition for Fair Software Licensing, etc.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

The gentlelady yields back. The Chair recognizes the sponsor of the bill, Ms. Brown.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank my colleagues, Representative Mace, Fallon, and McClain Delaney, for joining me in introducing the Strengthening Agency Management and Oversight of Software Assets Act. The SAMOSA Act may sound complicated, but it is a simple, bipartisan bill that is urgently needed.

Agencies across the Federal Government spend around \$33 billion in taxpayer money on software every year, but right now, many agencies do not actually have a list of what they own, what they are fully using, or whether they are buying the same thing twice. Our bill creates a straightforward solution. It streamlines how agencies track, manage, and report their software assets by requiring complete assessments on the software paid for, used, or deployed at each agency. This will ensure agencies know exactly what they have, what they need, and where they are overspending.

The bill requires agencies to submit these assessments to the Office of Management and Budget, General Services Administration, and Congress so we can provide accountability and confirm agencies are using consistent, modern, and efficient software management practices. In other words, this bill will cut waste, allow agencies to negotiate better contracts, and spot vulnerabilities quickly. That means fewer headaches, better security, and real savings for taxpayers, nearly \$5 billion every year, according to one Senate Committee. This is the kind of commonsense work people sent us here to do. It is not flashy and it is not partisan, but it is good government and it is real government efficiency. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this commonsense bill.

But before I yield back, I also want to speak briefly in support of a postal-naming measure that will be considered later on in the markup. My bill would rename the Collinwood Neighborhood Post Office in Cleveland in honor of Tech Sergeant Alma Gladys Mintor, a longtime Cleveland resident and a member of the 6888, the first and only all-Black women's Army Corps unit to serve overseas in World War II. In 1945, Ms. Minter and more than 800 women were deployed to clear a backlog of 17 million pieces of mail for American troops in Europe. They finished the job in under 90 days. It is hard to think of anything more fitting than naming a post office after Tech Sergeant Mintor. When no one else could, she delivered the mail, and she did it ahead of schedule. Her work kept service members connected to home and lifted morale at a critical moment in the war. I am thrilled to shine a light, a long overdue light, on Ms. Minter, and I look forward to supporting both these measures later in the markup. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. Any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

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

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

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

The question is now favorably reporting H.R. 5457, as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair—

Ms. MACE. Mr. Chairman, request a recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Mace.

Ms. MACE. Request a recorded vote.

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

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 5235, the Skills-Based Federal Contracting Act.

The clerk will please designate the bill.

H.R. 5235, THE SKILLS-BASED FEDERAL CONTRACTING ACT

The Clerk. H.R. 5235, the Skills-Based Federal Contracting Act, a bill to amend Title 41, United States Code, to prohibit minimum educational requirements for proposed contractor personnel in certain contract solicitations, 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. 5235, 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, as amended.

The Federal Government relies heavily on contract employees. Unfortunately, Federal solicitations sometimes include unnecessary degree requirements mandating that individuals who perform the work hold certain education credentials. Training for many jobs in fields, like IT and building construction, is available through non-degree pathways, such as apprenticeships and boot camps. This is why private sector employers have pared back degree requirements in hiring in recent years. We should not prohibit those with the right technical skills from performing Federal contract work just because they lack a traditional degree. And the companies who employ them, those that offer apprenticeships and engage in skills-

based hiring, should be encouraged to compete for government contracts, not be excluded from competition.

This bill helps ensure that Federal contractors are able to hire qualified professionals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and drive, even if they lack a traditional 4-year degree. The bill does this by prohibiting contract officers from stipulating education and experience requirements for contract employees unless the contracting officer can justify in writing that they are necessary to meet the needs of the agency. I urge my colleagues to support this timely, necessary, and bipartisan bill, and I want to thank Ms. Mace, Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Government Innovation, for her work on this important reform.

I now recognize the Ranking Member for his opening statement.

Mr. GARCIA. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, another great bipartisan effort here and bill. I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for bringing it to the Committee for consideration today. H.R. 5235 makes it easier for Americans with significant skills but without college degrees to be hired as Federal contractors. And I, of course, want to thank Representative Krishnamoorthi and Mace for their bipartisan work, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes the sponsor of this legislation, Chairwoman Mace from South Carolina.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On top of the approximately 2.3 million Federal employees in this country, the Federal Government outsources work to millions of contractors to perform the functions of government. Many Federal solicitations include unnecessary degree requirements, mandating individuals who perform various tasks hold specific education credentials, such as a 4-year college degree. At a hearing I held last year in the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Government Innovation, an IBM witness testified Federal contractors are rarely able to place an individual without a 4-year degree on a technology services contract, regardless of their qualifications. With less than 40 percent of Americans holding a 4-year college degree and many of the skills needed to do these jobs obtainable through alternative educational pathways, this makes no sense, and this is where my bill, the Skills-Based Federal Contracting Act, was born.

The Skills-Based Federal Contracting Act would prohibit the Federal Government from including a minimum educational requirement for proposed contractor personnel in a Federal contract solicitation, unless the contracting officer provides a written justification for why the needs of the agency cannot be met without such requirements. Many of our Nation's largest employers have begun to dramatically curtail college degree requirements, instead hiring based on skills and competency, and it is far past time we do the same in Federal contracting. In some cases, required education credentials are fully justifiable. We expect a doctor to have a medical degree, for instance, but only a fraction of Federal contract work falls into this explicit category. It is not too much to ask for a brief written justification from a contracting officer to exclude over 60 percent of the American people who do not have a 4-year

degree from an opportunity to contract with the Federal Government. The Federal Government should not be barring skilled individuals who did not read Shakespeare and ivory towers from being considered for Federal contracting jobs. They deserve a chance to compete.

To be clear, this bill in no way tells contractors how to hire or who to hire. Rather, it removes unnecessary Federal restrictions on their ability to hire qualified, talented Americans who acquired their skills through alternative training. Supporting skills-based hiring is truly a bipartisan cause, and I thank the lead Democrat co-sponsor of this bill, Representative Krishnamoorthi, for joining me in this effort. And I urge all Members to support this much-needed bill, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The sponsor yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Krishnamoorthi from Illinois.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to strongly support H.R. 5235, the Skills-Based Federal Contracting Act, that I introduced along with our colleague, Nancy Mace. This legislation makes important changes that will help tear down the paper ceiling, the outdated barrier that denies qualified workers a fair shot simply because they lack a 4-year degree. If an individual has the skills, experience, and proven ability to do the job, they are STARS, skilled through alternative routes. Our STARS deserve full and fair consideration.

As the Nation's largest employer, the Federal Government must lead by example and ensure that talent and skills, not educational background, drives opportunity. This legislation has a broad and diverse coalition supporting it, including labor unions, employers, and stakeholders across the political spectrum. This widespread, bipartisan backing underscores a simple truth: skills-based hiring is good for workers, good for employers, and good for the American economy. It is long past time we break down barriers that hold our Nation back. I want to thank Representative Mace, the Chairman, and Ranking Member, for all their hard work to get the bill to this point. I urge my colleagues to vote yes, and I look forward to the day when we will pass this bill on the House Floor.

I would also like to address one other bill that is coming up for markup today, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to urge my colleagues in support of H.R. 5773, a bill to name the Palatine, Illinois Post Office in honor of Bernie Bluestein. As one of the last surviving members of the World War II American secret unit known as the Ghost Army, Bernie served as a Private First Class, helping to employ inflatable tanks, fake radio signals, and sound deception to mislead Nazi forces, saving thousands of lives and helping to turn the tide in Europe, but Bernie's impact did not end with his service. He embraced being a community leader in Palatine, and at Harper College. He became a beloved artist, mentor, and lifelong learner, and he enriched the community for decades, inspiring generations of students with his creativity, humility, and his humor. Honoring him with this designation ensures that his extraordinary contributions to our Nation and community are never forgotten. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on H.R. 5773, and I look forward to the day when we will pass this bill on the House Floor. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. 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.]

Chairman COMER. All those in opposed, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

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

The question is now on favorably of reporting H.R. 5235.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair—for what purpose does Mr. Biggs seek recognition?

Mr. BIGGS. I request a recorded vote.

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

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 143, the Unauthorized Spending Accountability Act.

The clerk will please designate the bill.

H.R. 143, THE UNAUTHORIZED SPENDING ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The Clerk. H.R. 143, the Unauthorized Spending Accountability Act, a bill to establish a budgetary level reduction schedule, and for other purposes.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill should 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. 143, 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 ensuring that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely on Federal Government programs. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the Federal Government spent \$500 billion on programs with expired authorizations in Fiscal Year 2024. About half of these programs expired more than a decade ago. This is unacceptable. Congress needs to pay closer attention to the many Federal programs left on autopilot. Many of these programs are operating without regular, diligent congressional oversight and timely legislative authorizations to keep them relevant to the changes of today.

The Unauthorized Spending Accountability Act, or USA Act, addresses this problem by requiring Congress to review unauthorized programs on a recurring basis. It also creates a clear process for terminating programs that are no longer needed or which do not have the legislative support within Congress for their reauthorization. The bill would implement a gradual reduction in the overall appropriated funding levels over a 3-year period for the total amount of unauthorized programs. This gives Congress time and appropriate incentives to consider each program and pass necessary reauthorization legislation.

It is not too much to ask that Congress provide the appropriate level of scrutiny over the Federal programs it has established and find the time every three years to ensure that Federal funds are being used responsibly and effectively. The timeframe under the USA Act forces that to happen. Ensuring that every Federal program is properly authorized gives Congress the oversight and budgetary tools to increase government efficiency, improve the effectiveness of Federal agency programs and missions, and help reduce government spending. The purpose of this act is not to threaten Federal programs or to question the legality of congressional appropriations. The purpose of this act is to empower Congress to conduct the appropriate oversight and legislative attention to individual agencies and programs. Determining the impact of programs on affected populations is part of the authorization process, and this legislation will ensure that this happens on a continual basis. I call upon my colleagues to support this necessary legislation.

I now recognize the Ranking Member.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I strongly oppose H.R. 143. The USA Act would slash the budget of Federal programs funded through the appropriations process but not authorized by a separate act of Congress. This bill is a way to force through unpopular spending cuts by weaponizing Republicans' agenda in the House. If you want to cut spending, get the votes and cut spending, but the Majority cannot justify their extreme cuts to the public, so, instead, they are pushing this workaround to slash programs that serve the American public.

The impacts of this bill would be severe. In addition to adding to congressional gridlock and dysfunction, according to the CBO, it would threaten cuts for huge priorities, including veterans benefits, funding for community policing, cancer medical research, K-12 education, housing programs, and much more. We should reject it completely. I will be voting no on this bill, and I urge my colleagues to do the same, and I yield back.

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

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the support of the Taxpayer Protection Alliance for H.R. 143, the Unauthorized Spending Accountability Act, and also ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the following letter of support from the National Taxpayers Union for H.R. 143, the Unauthorized Spending Accountability Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

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.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

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

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 143, as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, say no.

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported.

Mr. GARCIA. I request a recorded vote, Mr. Chair.

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

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 5578, the Expanding Whistleblower Protections for Contractors Act of 2025.

The clerk will please designate the bill.

H.R. 5578, THE EXPANDING WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS FOR CONTRACTORS ACT OF 2025

The Clerk. H.R. 5578, the Expanding Whistleblower Protections for Contractors Act of 2025, a bill to ensure that whistleblowers, including contractors, are protected from retaliation when a Federal employee orders a reprisal, and for other purposes.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill should be considered read and open for amendment 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. Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5578, 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 on the statement on the bill and amendment.

Every person employed by the Federal Government should have adequate protection if he or she reports instances of fraud, waste, or abuse of taxpayer dollars. However, contractors with the Federal Government have different whistleblower protections than typical government employees. The Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Inspector General found that a lack of whistleblower protections for contractors discouraged them from coming forward. This is not surprising. It is a difficult decision for someone to come forward and risk their job and livelihood.

The Expanding Whistleblower Protections for Contractors Act would address this by strengthening whistleblower protections for

Federal contractors by prohibiting reprisal for certain actions. Such actions include disclosure of information the protected individual believes is evidence of mismanagement, waste, abuse, or substantial and significant danger to public health and safety related to a contract or grant. I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill. I now recognize the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you. I would like to thank Chairman Comer for the partnership on this important bill to strengthen whistleblower protections for Federal contractors. The last bill in front of us today, of course, is also bipartisan.

Whistleblowers are crucial to our ability to fulfill our constitutionally mandated congressional oversight. These workers currently do not have the same whistleblower protections as Federal civil servants. Contractors are less likely to report wrongdoing if they fear retaliation or mistreatment. This bill will help us do our job, hold the executive branch accountable, and help us provide better, more efficient government services. I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Does any other Member seek recognition on the underlying bill?

Ms. PRESSLEY. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

Chairman COMER. Oh, Ms. Pressley. Well, Mr. Perry wishes to speak on the underlying bill, then we will get to Ms. Pressley's amendment. The Chair recognizes Mr. Perry.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I ask unanimous consent to enter into the records the support of the Taxpayer Protection Alliance for H.R. 5578, the Expanding Whistleblower Protections for Contractors Act. I also ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the following letter of support: a letter of support from the National Taxpayers Foundation for H.R. 5578, the Expanding Whistleblower Protections for Contractors Act.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Do any other Members seek recognition on the underlying bill before we get to the amendment?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Pressley from Massachusetts, or, actually, Ms. Pressley, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

Ms. PRESSLEY. I have an amendment at the desk.

Chairman COMER. The clerk will distribute the amendment to all Members.

The clerk will designate the amendment.

The Clerk. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5578, as offered by Ms. Pressley of Massachusetts.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read.

I reserve a point of order.

The gentlewoman from Massachusetts is recognized for 5 minutes to explain her amendment.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is the first time that the House Oversight Committee has convened since the end of the longest government shutdown in history, and during that shutdown, millions of people across our country felt the con-

sequences of Republican dysfunction, and Federal workers were amongst the hardest hit. But unlike Federal employees, the thousands of Federal contract workers who keep this government running, including janitorial, food, and security service workers, had no assurances that they would ever see a single dollar of the wages that they lost.

When the government reopened, their back pay did not come, and, again, these are some of the hardest-working, lowest-paid Federal contracted workers. And these are workers who are overwhelmingly women, immigrants, and people of color, and their bills did not stop. Rent was still due, childcare was still needed, prescriptions still had to be filled, and groceries put on the table. We should not have a two-tiered system wherein some workers are deemed worthy of back pay while others are left behind. That is why during the shutdown, I reintroduced, with bipartisan support, the Fair Pay for Federal Contractors Act, legislation to guarantee that contract workers receive back pay after a lapse in appropriations, just as Federal employees do. My amendment today would incorporate this bill into the Expanding Whistleblower Protections for Contractors Act, which Ranking Member Garcia and Chairman Comer are leading.

Whistleblower protections are important, and paycheck protections are important. We cannot say we value workers if we do not protect workers, all workers, both their physical safety and their economic security. Contract workers are a critical part of the Federal workforce. They serve the people with the same dedication and professionalism as any Federal employee, and they deserve the same respect. During the shutdown, I met with contract workers who drained their savings and took on debt just to make it through: the contract worker in my district that was already living paycheck to paycheck and then one of those paychecks never came; the custodian who has to choose between paying rent and paying medical bills; the cafeteria worker in Longworth who prepares food for Members of Congress and staff but did not have income to feed herself.

A responsible government treats its workers with respect and pays them their back pay because fair pay is not just a matter of fairness. It is about stability. It is about dignity. It is about justice. When we stabilize workers—all workers—when we destabilize them, we destabilize the agencies and services that rely on them. I know what it is to be part of an invisible workforce doing thankless work where people see right through you. As a former hospitality worker and unpaid congressional intern who worked three jobs, I know what it means to live paycheck to paycheck and the struggle to make ends meet. So, this is deeply personal to me.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and stand with workers and the people they serve, and to the Federal contract workers who are still recovering from the harms of this shutdown, know this: I see you, I hear you, and I am still fighting for you. Thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Biggs.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Chairman, I insist upon the point of order as the amendment is not germane to the underlying bill.

Chairman COMER. We will pause while I consult with the Parliamentarian.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. I am prepared to rule. After consultation with the Parliamentarian, the amendment is not germane to the bill. Therefore, the amendment is not in order.

Do any other Members seek recognition on the underlying bill? The Chair recognizes Mr. Garcia.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to just ask your unanimous consent to enter the following letters into the record: a letter from the Coalition for Fair Software Licensing, a letter from the Population Association of America, a letter from the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a letter from the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, a letter from the National Treasury Employees Union, a letter from the AFGE, and a letter from the National Postal Mail Handlers.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

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.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

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

The question is now on favorably reporting—

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman? Requesting a roll—

Chairman COMER. The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 5578, as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. 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 roll call.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote is ordered. 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 immediately after the vote series. The vote series is at 3:00. Oh, it is at 1:30.

Oh, I am sorry. They moved it. The vote series is at 1:30. Immediately after the conclusion of the vote series, we will come in here and hopefully have a pretty quick markup.

So, the Committee stands in recess until immediately after the first vote series.

[Recess.]

Chairman COMER. The question is on favorably reporting H.R. 151. Members will record their vote using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R.

151, and we will leave this one open a little longer to make sure everybody's system is working and everybody is settled in. We are voting on H.R. 151.

[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 20. The nays are 19.

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

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

The Committee will now resume consideration of H.R. 5750, the Ensuring a Qualified Civil Service Act, or EQUALS Act, of 2025.

The question is now on the previously postponed amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute, offered by Mr. Lynch from Massachusetts. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on the Lynch Amendment to the amendment of H.R. 5750.

[Voting.]

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

Voice. No.

Voice. We are voting, no.

Chairman COMER. Okay. We will wait.

[Voting.]

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 19. The nays are 23.

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

The question is now on the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5750.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5750 is agreed to.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 5750. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 5750.

[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 24. The nays are 19.

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. 5749. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 5749.

[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 24. The nays are 19.

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. 6329. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 6329.

[Voting.]

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

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change?

[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 43. The nays are zero.

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

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

The question is now favorably reporting H.R. 3766. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 3766.

[Voting.]

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

Ms. FOXX. No, sir.

Chairman COMER. Okay. 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 24. The nays are 19.

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

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

The question is now on favorably of reporting H.R. 5810. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 5810.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote? The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

The Clerk. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 43. The nays are zero.

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

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

The question is on favorably reporting H.R. 6330. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 6330.

[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. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[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 37. The nays are 6.

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

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

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 5457. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 5457.

[Voting.]

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 43. 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. 5235. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 5235.

[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 reconsider is laid on the table.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 143. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 143.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Is that good? Does any Member wish 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 25. The nays are 19.

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. 5578. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 5578.

[No response.]

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.

H.R.S 5831, 5773, 5058, 4707, 4635, 3393, 2466, 2175, 1706, 1461, 1431, 6310, 6317, AND 6332, POSTAL NAMING MEASURES

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 5831, 5773, 5058, 4707, 4635, 3393, 2466, 2175, 1706, 1461, 1431, 6310, 6317, and 6332.

Without objection, the bills are considered read.

If any Member would like to speak on any of those measures, they may do so now. The Chair recognizes Ms. Norton from Washington, D.C.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker [sic]. I am deeply disappointed that Republicans removed from the agenda my bill to

name a post office in the District of Columbia after Chuck Brown because he was convicted of a crime. The hypocrisy is shocking, but not surprising. Republicans on this Committee cheered the pardons issued by President Trump, who was himself convicted of crimes, to the violent insurrectionists who attacked the Capitol on January 6.

Chuck Brown, known as the Godfather of Go-Go, was a D.C. resident most of his life. He is credited with creating Go-Go music, which is the official music of D.C. His musical catalog spanned 22 studio albums over three decades. He earned a Grammy nomination and was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship. D.C. named a park and street after him. D.C. loves Chuck Brown, and he loved D.C. He had a significant impact on D.C.'s history and culture as well as music. I regret that Republicans on this Committee refuse to honor this legend.

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

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Officer Zane Coolidge was everything we hoped for in a police officer. He was born and raised in Phoenix. He chose to serve the very community that raised him and lived out that commitment with honor and courage. He represented the best of law enforcement. From serving as a field training officer to mentoring younger recruits, Officer Coolidge helped shape the next generation of Phoenix police officers. His death was a tragic reminder of the dangers all our officers face every day.

Officer Coolidge was shot in the line of duty by a convicted felon who had many, many felony convictions, and yet he was released. Officer Coolidge and his partner were chasing this individual down. The man jumped a fence and fired at them, and after three days, Officer Coolidge succumbed. He leaves behind a wife, a young daughter, and a grieving community. He was a brand-new husband and father. His loss is felt deeply, not only by his family, but the entire Phoenix PD and the people of Arizona. So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I encourage everyone to vote for this bill.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Subramanyam.

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to speak in favor of H.R. 5058, which would rename a post office in Loudoun County after firefighter, Trevor Brown. Trevor Brown lost his life in the line of duty on February 16, 2024, while responding to an emergency gas leak. The Brown family are longtime Northern Virginia residents, and Trevor himself was a husband, a stay-at-home father of three, a youth soccer and baseball coach, and, really, a beloved member of our community. So, we hope by renaming this post office the Firefighter Trevor Brown Post Office Building, that it will inspire others to serve as Trevor did and keep his memory and his courage alive. So, thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Mrs. Luna.

Mrs. LUNA. I would just like the support of every Republican on this Committee, real quick. So, for those who are new Members of Congress—frankly, I would like the support of the Democrats, too. So, in the 118th Congress, we had a post office cold war because certain Members of the Florida delegation would not sign on to a

post office that I had to name a post office after Ryan Christian Knauss, who was one of the 13 killed in Afghanistan, and because we were able to stick together, we actually won the post office cold war, and then everyone got their post offices.

But now we seem to have another post office cold war aside from that case. I cannot get people to name another post office. I do not know, it must be because I am trying to ban insider trading or something. But anyways, I am not going to be voting for any post offices, and I would like to avoid the post office cold war across all 50 states, but I just promise you that we will probably win the post office cold war. So, until I get my post office, I am not doing any post offices. So, I would appreciate your support in unionizing, one of the few unions I support, on this topic specifically, and I yield back, Chairman.

Chairman COMER. All right. The gentlelady yields back. Any other Members?

Mr. GARCIA. Mr. Walkinshaw.

Chairman COMER. Oh, yes, Mr. Walkinshaw.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to speak in support of H.R. 6330, a measure to rename the post office on Page Avenue in Fairfax, Virginia as the Congressman Gerald E. Connolly Post Office Building, and I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for including this bill on today's markup at the last minute and for co-sponsoring it.

Congressman Connolly, well-known to the Members of this Committee. He was a local leader, 14 years on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, including five years as Chairman, where he made tremendous contributions that you can see across our community in Fairfax. He was a national leader here in Congress for nearly 17 years, including on this Committee, ultimately serving as Ranking Member. He was a global leader as a President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, somebody who fought hard and passionately for the things he believed in, but also worked across the aisle on a lot of bipartisan legislation on this Committee. He was deeply rooted in our community in Fairfax, survived by his incredible wife, Smitty, and daughter, Caitlin. And this post office sits in the heart of Fairfax, not far from his home, not far from the cemetery where he is buried, not far from the district office where I continue on his work in the 11th District.

So, I just want to encourage all of my colleagues to support this legislation, and thank you for your support, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. The Chair recognizes Mr. Jordan.

Mr. JORDAN. I thank the Chairman for this bill and all the namings that are in it, but I particularly want to thank the gentleman from Virginia for recognizing our colleague. Gerry Connolly was a good man, a good Member of Congress, and a worthy opponent, and I treasure the debates we had. Mr. Turner and I were just talking about the debates we had in this Committee, and so I appreciate you bringing that forward and for the Chairman including it. With that, if I could, Mr. Chairman, I will yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Chairman COMER. Yes.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you. I just want to say thank you for doing this. We all miss him.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back, and I agree 100 percent. Mr. Connolly was a good man. We did not always agree, but I think his heart was in the right place. He always tried to file good legislation and represented his district well, and he was a great, quality Member of Congress. So, we are happy to support in the naming of the post office in his hometown.

Any other Members seek recognition? Mr. Burchett.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was told that I had a post office naming in this. Is it in there? I cannot find it on the list. I received a message from Leader Scalise this week.

Chairman COMER. Hold on one second.

Mr. BURCHETT. It is for my——

Chairman COMER. We will suspend for one moment.

Mr. BURCHETT. Can I give you the name, or do you need the name of it?

Chairman COMER. And his town.

Mr. BURCHETT. The man's name is Harold Middlebrook. He was a civil rights leader in our community, marched with Dr. King.

Chairman COMER. In Knoxville.

Mr. BURCHETT. Yes, he lives in Knoxville. I mean, he marched with Dr. King in Memphis.

Voice. It is under suspension in the House Floor, not in Committee.

Voice. It has already been marked up.

Mr. BURCHETT. Okay. Never mind. I think it is there.

Chairman COMER. Yes.

Mr. BURCHETT. It is already there, so anyway.

Chairman COMER. We always take care of you.

Mr. BURCHETT. I was prepared to give a really good speech for him.

[Laughter.]

Mr. BURCHETT. Interesting thing about Dr. Middlebrook is I do not think he had ever voted for me in his life, but we were dear friends.

Chairman COMER. All right.

Mr. BURCHETT. So, it was a pretty good relationship.

Chairman COMER. Good deal. Any other Members seek recognition on the postal bills?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. All right. The question is now on favorably reporting the en bloc package.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. Any opposed, say no.

[Chorus of noes.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The en bloc measures are favorably reported.

Mrs. LUNA. Recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. Recorded vote? Okay.

Mrs. LUNA. [Inaudible.]

Chairman COMER. Really? Okay. A recorded vote is ordered. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting the en bloc package.

[Voting.]

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

Does any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

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

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. Report the vote total.

The Clerk. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 38. The nays are 2.

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

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

Pursuant to House Rule 11, Clause 2, I ask that the Committee Members have the right to file with the clerk of the Committee supplemental, Minority, additional, or dissenting views.

Without objection.

Additionally, the staff is authorized to make necessary technical and conforming changes to the Committee print, 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 2:49 p.m. the Committee was adjourned.]

