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No. 95

## House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS).

### DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,  
June 4, 2024.

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

MIKE JOHNSON,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### PRAYER

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

Holy God, who are we to stand before You? Who among us can appear blameless in Your sight? For there is not one of us who hasn't fallen short of Your perfect righteousness.

With humility, then, we lay before You our faults and flaws, founded in our human obsession with controversy and verbal dispute, asking that You redeem us from our inclination for dissension and slander.

Instead, may we subject ourselves to Your sovereignty. May we turn to Your truth, shunning all that sows discord and division, and pursue righteousness, godliness, love, endurance, and gentleness.

And when we find ourselves caught up in the throes of confusion and conflict, arouse in us a desire to strive instead to pursue Your divine will. When we are aggravated by the multitude of issues assailing our interests, may the fight we choose to engage in prove to be the good fight of faith.

Together we pray, turning our hearts and minds back to You, that You will receive us into Your merciful presence.

In the truth to be found in Your name, we pray.

Amen.

### THE JOURNAL

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

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

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. KENNEDY led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

### RECOGNIZING CHRISTENSEN FARMS

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

Mr. FINSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Christensen Farms, one of the Nation's leading pork producers, and to congratulate them on celebrating 50 years of excellence in the pork industry.

Founded in 1974 in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, Christensen Farms began when Bob and Lynn Christensen were gifted two pigs from a neighbor.

Over the past half-century, Christensen Farms has grown into one of the largest family-owned pork producers in the United States, marketing more than 3.6 million hogs per year and operating facilities in five States.

I am proud to represent so many farm families that partner with Christensen Farms as contract producers to make this happen.

Since their humble beginnings 50 years ago, Christensen Farms now serves as Minnesota's largest producer of pork and ranks in the top 10 producers nationwide.

I am always proud to say that my first job out of college was working at Christensen Farms. I am continually thankful to the Christensen family for the impact they have made in the pork industry and for their many contributions to the Sleepy Eye community and our southern Minnesota region.

I congratulate the entire team at Christensen Farms on celebrating this incredible milestone, and I wish them all continued success for the next 50 years and beyond.

### LEARNING FROM KIDS CONGRESS

(Mrs. BEATTY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BEATTY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address this House to salute Assistant Democratic Leader JOE NEGUSE.

Today was a historic day as we sat on this very floor at 8 a.m. today for Kids Congress. Today, we had children from preschool to high school, and from California to New York to Columbus, Ohio.

My grandchildren were able to sit here and hear about this amazing gallery that we sit in, this Chamber. Leah, 10 years old, and Spencer, 9 years old, sat here with Congressman JOE NEGUSE's daughter, young Natalie.

Speaker Emerita NANCY PELOSI reminded us that the time has found us.

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

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



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She talked about Abraham Lincoln and the jacket that he wore with that pin that she wears that was inscribed and monogrammed in his jacket: "One Country, One Destiny."

Madam Speaker, today, this House Chamber could learn a lot from what Kids Congress did today. They practiced civility, respect, and decorum for this Chamber. So let today be a day that we are proud of, and maybe we too could emulate Kids Congress.

#### RECOGNIZING CORPORAL MIGUEL ANGEL

(Ms. De La CRUZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. De La CRUZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a McAllen, Texas, native who died in service to our Nation. Marine Corporal Miguel Angel Maya died on April 23 during an aviation incident at Camp Pendleton, California.

Corporal Maya was a decorated marine, having been awarded the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal. He died just days before celebrating 4 years of Marine Corps service.

Corporal Maya leaves behind his mother, Guadalupe Maya. I speak for all of Congressional District 15 when I thank Ms. Maya for her son's service and sacrifice. They are in our prayers. God bless them.

#### CELEBRATING 110TH BIRTHDAY OF MRS. BRUNETTE WASHINGTON

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam Speaker, I rise to celebrate the 110th birthday of Mrs. Brunette Washington, a mother of 4, grandmother of 9, great-grandmother of 9, great-great-grandmother of 10, and great-great-great-grandmother of 1.

Mrs. Washington was born on June 6, 1914, in Forkland, Alabama, migrating to Lackawanna, New York, with her husband, James, and two daughters in 1937. She was married to James for 70 years until he passed in 2001.

While she was a homemaker for much of her life, during World War II, she worked as a metal stamper for Michael Electric and made airplane and gun parts for Curtis-Wright.

Mrs. Washington is an inspiration to all lifelong learners. In her sixties, she chose to complete her education, enrolling in eighth grade and continuing until she graduated with a diploma from Bennett High School.

She is a dedicated and active member of Macedonia Baptist Church, living God's lesson of love each and every day.

The entire United States House of Representatives wishes Mrs. Washington a happy 110th birthday with her adoring family, with many more to come.

#### HONORING JAYDEN DANIEL

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

Mr. COLLINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Jayden Daniel, a young man from Eatonton, Georgia, who has earned the esteemed Congressional Award Gold Medal.

Jayden Daniel is the son of Shannon and Mark Daniel and graduated from Gatewood School in 2024. He is an athlete, an Eagle Scout, a student pilot, and an entrepreneur, actually starting his first business at the age of 17.

If he is not helping with the local Easter baskets for foster kids or out there raising money for children with childhood cancer, Jayden is certainly making an impact on others.

That is why, Madam Speaker, I applaud Jayden and congratulate him on being bestowed Congress' Congressional Award Gold Medal.

May God bless Jayden. It is an honor to serve him in Congress.

#### HONORING BIRMINGHAM NATIVE CAPTAIN MALCOLM SMITH

(Ms. SEWELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SEWELL. Madam Speaker, as we prepare to observe the 80th anniversary of D-day, I rise to honor the late Captain Malcolm Smith of Birmingham, Alabama, who selflessly gave his life defending our Nation during World War II in Normandy, France.

An Alabama native, Captain Smith graduated from Birmingham's own Ramsay High School before attending West Point and becoming a pilot for the United States Army Air Forces in 1942.

Captain Smith flew many combat missions in one of the most heavily engaged air groups in Normandy leading up to D-day. He was awarded five Air Medals for his heroic efforts.

Just 2 weeks before D-day, and at the age of 27, Captain Smith was killed in his P-47 Thunderbolt while completing a ground mission. He is buried in the Normandy American Cemetery.

As I will join the congressional delegation traveling to Normandy for the 80th anniversary of D-day, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Birmingham native Captain Malcolm Smith for his courageous service to our Nation.

#### RECOGNIZING PATRICK GOTTSCH OF THE COWBOY CHANNEL

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the remarkable life of Patrick Gottsch, the founder of the Rural Media Group, Inc., the parent company

to RFD-TV and a fixture in rural America. The programs broadcast are an essential tool to all who work in agriculture and live in rural America.

Patrick dedicated his life to building an ever-present rural television network, one that made sure that the countryside was informed and one that could showcase the best of American agriculture.

As a lifelong supporter of cowboys and cowgirls, he brought the sport to households all over the world through The Cowboy Channel.

Reading the memories put forth by Patrick's family, colleagues, and friends shows just how much he was cherished and just how much he loved what he did.

I join all in the agriculture and cowboy community in wishing peace to all who knew Patrick. I am honored to have met him and to have spent time with him at The Cowboy Channel, and I am honored today to spend time talking about him this morning.

May we always remember Patrick and his zest for life. Madam Speaker, please join me in keeping Patrick's family and friends in your prayers.

□ 0915

#### IN RECOGNITION OF THE PUERTO RICAN CULTURAL CENTER

(Mrs. RAMIREZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Madam Speaker, today I rise as the "Congresswoman," "Congresista," of the biggest Puerto Rican community in the Midwest to commend the Puerto Rican Cultural Center.

PRCC is a fixture of the Humboldt Park community, where I grew up. Every year since 1978, through the Puerto Rican People's Day parade, PRCC showcases and celebrates the Puerto Rican community's rich culture and heritage on "Puerto Rico Town," "Paseo Boricua," now known as Barrio Boriken.

The team at PRCC, including executive director and cofounder, Jose Lopez; chief operating officer, Juan Manuel Calderon; and director of Vida/ SIDA Ricardo Jimenez, are visionary leaders with deep roots in our barrio.

On behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, it is my great privilege to honor and commend the Puerto Rican Cultural Center for being a beacon that reminds us of the legacy, the power, and the possibility of the Puerto Rican diaspora in Illinois' Third Congressional District and beyond.

#### HARD CHOICES TO STAY AFLOAT

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

Mr. ROSE. Madam Speaker, prices continue to climb due to the economic

policies of the Biden administration. The latest Consumer Price Index report was up 3.4 percent from last year, keeping interest rates high and making it tough on all Americans to get by. That is Bidenomics.

Today, I rise in support of the hard-working families I represent, who are having to make hard choices to stay afloat. If they are having to tighten their belts, the Federal Government should do the same. We don't have a revenue problem in this country. We have a spending problem.

In fiscal year 2022, the Federal Government collected \$850 billion more in tax revenue than just the year before, yet the Federal Government spent \$1.4 trillion more than we brought in. In fiscal year 2023, the government spent \$1.7 trillion more than it collected.

That is just one of the many reasons why I opposed the President's \$7.3 trillion budget. We cannot continue spending money we don't have.

#### COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF BETH ISRAEL CONGREGATION

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday, in my hometown of Worcester, Massachusetts, I had the incredible honor of joining Congregation Beth Israel, under the leadership of Rabbi Aviva Fellman, to celebrate 100 years of faith, community, and service.

As Worcester's longest continuously operating synagogue, Beth Israel has been a beacon of hope, education, and charity. The congregants have made Beth Israel not just a place of spiritual renewal and worship but a hub of cultural activity and social justice. They represent the best of our community and all that is good.

Across faiths, Scripture teaches us that our values are not just theoretical but are lived through acts of kindness, community, service, and advocacy for justice. Congregation Beth Israel in Worcester exemplifies these values every day.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating Congregation Beth Israel's centennial.

#### TRUMP VERDICT

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

Mr. TIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, the weaponization of our justice system has been the hallmark of the Biden administration, and the verdict handed down against President Trump in New York last Thursday is further evidence that the Democrats will stop at nothing to silence dissent, limit speech, and oppress their political opponents.

The fact of the matter is that these charges would never have been brought

with such vigor against any other individual. It is no coincidence that this trial took place in a district that voted against Donald Trump by nearly 90 percent. It is also no coincidence that this persecution was perpetrated by a judge active in Democratic fundraising and a prosecutor who campaigned on going after President Trump.

From top to bottom, it is clear that this case was politically motivated and was only brought to disparage President Trump, the leading candidate for the Republican nomination.

That is why I call on the Supreme Court to utilize its original jurisdiction in this case and finally bring an end to these sham proceedings.

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NUNN of Iowa) laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable STEVE SCALISE, Republican Leader:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, June 4, 2024.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,  
*Speaker of the House, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 117-263, and jointly with the Senate Republican Leader, I hereby appoint the following individual to serve as Co-Chairperson of the Commission on Reform and Modernization of the Department of State:

The Honorable Bill Hagerty of Tennessee  
Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

STEVE SCALISE,  
*Republican Leader.*

#### PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 8580, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2025 AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 8282, ILLIGITIMATE COURT COUNTERACTION ACT

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1269 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1269

*Resolved*, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 8580) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees. After general debate

the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. An amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 118-35, modified by the amendment printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted in the House and in the Committee of the Whole. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as the original bill for the purpose of further amendment under the five-minute rule and shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived.

SEC. 2. (a) No further amendment to H.R. 8580, as amended, shall be in order except those printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, amendments en bloc described in section 3 of this resolution, and pro forma amendments described in section 4 of this resolution.

(b) Each further amendment printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules shall be considered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment except as provided by section 4 of this resolution, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole.

(c) All points of order against further amendments printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules or against amendments en bloc described in section 3 of this resolution are waived.

SEC. 3. It shall be in order at any time for the chair of the Committee on Appropriations or his designee to offer amendments en bloc consisting of further amendments printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution not earlier disposed of. Amendments en bloc offered pursuant to this section shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees, shall not be subject to amendment except as provided by section 4 of this resolution, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole.

SEC. 4. During consideration of H.R. 8580 for amendment, the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees may offer up to 10 pro forma amendments each at any point for the purpose of debate.

SEC. 5. At the conclusion of consideration of H.R. 8580 for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill, as amended, to the House with such further amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit.

SEC. 6. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 8282) to impose sanctions with respect to the International Criminal Court engaged in any effort to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute any protected person of the United States and its allies. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. An amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 118-37 shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be

considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. McGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this rule and in support of the underlying legislation. Before I talk about the rule, I want to recognize our staff director, Kelly Dixon.

I recognize the staff director of the House Rules Committee, Kelly Dixon Chambers.

I first met Kelly as a freshman Member of Congress. She has been a mentor of mine and, most importantly, she has been a friend. This is before I even joined the Rules Committee. Kelly has been a vital member of the House of Representatives for over 25 years.

From Congressman KEN CALVERT's office, to the House Judiciary Committee, to the New York delegation, to the former offices of Speaker KEVIN McCARTHY when he was whip and leader, to today where she is a staff director of the Rules Committee majority staff under Chairman COLE and Dr. BURGESS, Kelly has always been a leader in the House during some of the most consequential decisions over the past two decades.

Mr. Speaker, the House owes Kelly a debt of gratitude, and I look forward to working with her in the years to come.

Now back to the rule.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 1269 provides for consideration of H.R. 8580, the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2025.

This is under a structured rule with 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees, and it provides for one motion to recommit.

The rule makes 47 amendments in order.

Additionally, the rule provides for consideration of H.R. 8282, the Illegitimate

Court Counteraction Act, under a closed rule, with 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs or their respective designees, and provides for one motion to recommit.

Mr. Speaker, on October 7, 2023, Hamas launched the largest mass killing of Jews that we have seen since the Holocaust. This horrific assault attacked Israel by land, sea, and air, killing over 1,200 innocent civilians, including dozens of Americans. For perspective, this would be the equivalent of over 40,000 American dead and nearly 9,000 Americans being taken hostage.

In the aftermath of that atrocious attack, we have learned that families were burned alive, infants were decapitated, women were sexually assaulted, and other unthinkable acts of violence were committed.

To date, Hamas continues to hold as many as 130 hostages. Since those attacks, we have seen a clear divide in the United States and around the globe between those who stand with our ally, Israel, and those who stand with Hamas.

One of the organizations that stands with Hamas is the international kangaroo court, also known as the ICC. This court is anti-American, anti-Israel, and anti-Semitic. The United States and Israel are not members of the ICC, and the court has absolutely no standing and no jurisdiction over our Nation or the nation of Israel.

Previously, the court has targeted American warfighters for defending our Nation in Afghanistan after the September 11 attacks. They are now targeting our ally and partner, Israel, and drawing a false equivalence and distorted moral equivalency between the leaders of Hamas and the democratically elected Government of Israel.

That is why House Republicans will pass the Illegitimate Court Counteraction Act introduced by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY), my good friend.

This legislation would reimpose the Trump administration's sanctions against the ICC officials that investigate, arrest, detain, and prosecute U.S. citizens or allies, like Israel.

The choice is clear: Do you stand with our ally, Israel, or do you stand with Hamas?

Do you stand with this illegitimate court?

□ 0930

Additionally, as a Navy veteran and a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I am proud to introduce FY25 MILCON-VA bill, which was introduced by Chairman CARTER.

Under Chairman COLE's and Chairman CARTER's leadership, H.R. 8580 will fully fund veterans' healthcare programs and benefits. It provides for an extra \$75 million above the President's budget and \$30 billion above last year's enacted level for veterans.

Further, this legislation also provides for robust funding for the Indo-

Pacific region, invests billions in quality-of-life projects for our servicemembers and their families, and blocks the Biden administration from placing al-Qaida terrorists in our local communities.

This bill provides for an additional \$412 million over the President's budget for military construction so we can invest more in our national security.

As we approach the 80th anniversary of D-day, this week's vote will be an important step in supporting our Nation's veterans.

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

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I begin as well to take a moment to recognize Kelly Dixon Chambers, the staff director for the House Rules Committee Republicans whose last week on the Hill is this week.

There is no doubt that she is an extraordinary, exceptional, incredible public servant. I said last night in the Rules Committee, she is a master legislative strategist. She knows everything about everything about rules and procedures. She spent her time here on Capitol Hill working to improve this institution and to uphold the traditions of the Rules Committee. She has also done a lot to foster an environment of mutual respect and camaraderie behind the scenes, which we all benefit from and appreciate, especially during these very polarizing times.

In short, she is one of the most effective people I have ever worked with on Capitol Hill, and all I have to say is that I love her and I respect her a whole lot. All of us on this side of the aisle will genuinely miss her.

I also said last night that my only problem with Kelly is that she isn't a Democrat, but I don't hold that against her. In fact, she has made me sharper and better at my job because I know she always brings her A-game to everything that she does.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Kelly for all that she has done for Congress and for this country. She has put people over politics. She cares. She has accomplished a whole lot up here. She should be proud of her time serving in the people's House. For the people here who call her a friend and mentor, as I know I do, we wish her all the very best as she steps into a new chapter in her life and her career.

Moving on, let me get to the rule here.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be managing this rule. I am glad that I am allowed to speak on the floor again. As you remember, I was silenced 2 weeks ago for simply speaking the truth.

That is right. I was muzzled from that very rostrum for daring to recite facts, and I can think of at least 34 new facts that could get my words taken

down today, but I won't go there because I want to be allowed to say a few things without being canceled by the Republican majority for the high crime of merely speaking the truth.

This rule contains two bills, both of which I think are lousy.

First, is the House Republicans' Military Construction appropriations proposal for fiscal year 2025. This should be one of the least controversial funding bills Congress passes each year, but, this year, House Republicans are loading their funding bills with more culture war nonsense: the same attacks on abortion access, attacks on the LGBTQ+ community, and attacks on diversity and inclusion efforts.

We are talking about more narrow-minded, hateful MAGA riders that inject partisan politics into what should be a bipartisan bill.

This bill also holds the VA back from protecting struggling veterans who may pose a danger to themselves or others. It would hamper efforts to prevent Veterans from dying by suicide. This bill zeroes out funding for climate change and resilience projects, something that will jeopardize our national security because it means our military installations will not be prepared for the realities of the climate crisis.

At the end of the day, this funding bill is full of poison pills that endanger our national security and threaten the quality of life for veterans, those who serve, and their families.

Again, this should have been easy. This should have been a bipartisan bill where there would be very little debate or little dissension, and they turned it into this horrific culture war bill filled with things that, quite frankly, are very divisive and have no business being in the Military Construction appropriations bill.

Second on the agenda is H.R. 8282, a bill that imposes sanctions on the good people who work for the International Criminal Court and their families.

I know Members have a variety of thoughts on this measure, but, frankly, I think this is a bad, bad bill. The idea that the ICC is some evil institution is totally contrary to fact. The International Criminal Court is an important institution, and it is not in America's moral or strategic interest to attack the court for doing its job.

The U.S. recognizes the jurisdiction and the legitimacy of the ICC and cooperates with the ICC in cases ranging from Sudan to Ukraine and Russia, to the Lord's Resistance Army led by Joseph Kony.

Fundamentally, this bill says that human rights don't matter. In fact, it totally undermines the rules-based international order that America helped build.

Let me be clear: I am already being challenged to explain U.S. double standards every time I meet with representatives of foreign governments. When I meet with human rights advocates from abroad, they are gutted, first, by the brutality and the inhu-

manity of the war in Gaza, and, second, by America's inexplicable abandonment of its commitment of human rights and justice for all.

What better gift to China or Russia, our most significant adversaries, than for us to undermine the international rule of law and gut institutions of accountability that the U.S. helped create and worked to consolidate for more than 75 years.

What better gift than to say: Yes, it is just fine to ignore or redefine human rights and international humanitarian law for reasons of political convenience.

What should our reaction be? First, we should read the evidence contained in the ICC filing. Second, we should wait for the judges to actually rule on the warrant applications. We don't know what their decision will be. When it comes down, if we disagree with it, we can say so.

What is not okay is to attack the court's existence or threaten its personnel and their families.

Republicans are already doing that in New York. It is wrong there and it is wrong here.

Finally, we should insist on credible, independent investigations of the crimes the ICC has alleged, which include, by the way, the unspeakable crimes committed by Hamas on October 7. Surely, I hope everybody here supports the ICC's effort to hold Hamas accountable.

We should also recognize the ICC's action for what it is. It is an urgent attempt at prevention. The ICC is urging Israel to change course and to stop the carnage against Palestinian civilians. It is calling upon the independent Israeli judiciary to investigate these alleged crimes and follow the evidence, no matter where it leads, before the worst unimaginable criminal charges become inevitable.

Should this bill pass, it would completely isolate us internationally, including and especially from our closest allies. It would deepen accusations of hypocrisy that have already caused a mind-boggling level of damage to the reputation of the United States, our diplomacy, and the entire range of our soft power capabilities.

I am just completely astounded by how little my Republican colleagues seem to even care about the massive ramifications of this bill. There was no hearing. There was no hearing at all. There were no witnesses, no markup, no nothing.

The Republican who testified last night in the Rules Committee had no clue what was even in the bill. He told us he wasn't on the committee of jurisdiction but he is. He didn't even know what the text of the bill was because the text kept on changing multiple times.

Is that how you conduct business in the people's House?

My Republican colleagues have turned this place into a joke. They are making a complete and total mockery

of the committee process. On top of it all, we have another closed rule. How pathetic.

I mean, I get that the Republicans may not care about the implications of some of the things that they say or what they bring on the floor, but at least try to go through the motions. Let's at least have a hearing. Let's have witnesses. The Republicans could make believe they care about the facts and that they are serious about legislating.

Again, it is sad that this is the process that brings this bill to the floor.

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

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, good luck hiding behind procedural arguments when talking about defending the ICC. This is a kangaroo court, and to defend it is to defend an institution that is anti-American, anti-Israel, and anti-Semitic, but we shouldn't be shocked that this is coming from the left and the Biden administration.

This administration has been weak. They have been feckless. They have been incompetent on foreign policy from now going back to when Joe Biden was sworn into office.

What are we seeing? The world is absolutely on fire.

In his first year alone, President Joe Biden green lit the Nord Stream 2 pipeline to provide Russian gas to Europe while at the same time blocking the Keystone XL pipeline that would have actually led to energy exportation from this country.

He also issued 94 executive actions on immigration which led to an unprecedented invasion at our southern border. The President and his unelected bureaucrats in the administration are also directly responsible for the failed withdraw of the U.S. from Afghanistan, giving up the Bagram Airbase before we even evacuated, which led directly to the death of 13 American servicemen, it stranded thousands of American citizens abroad, and it brought the Taliban back into power, something that we were there to counter for the last 20 years.

Let's talk about President Biden making the decision to delist the Houthi rebels from the terrorist watch list. What did that do? It led to a crisis in the Red Sea. He also placed an indefinite pause on LNG exports, which benefits—I can't make this up—Russia and Iran, rather than helping ourselves and our allies in Europe and the Indo-Pacific.

That is just the start of the blunders of the Biden administration on Foreign Affairs. He also waived the billions of dollars in sanctions on Iran so their energy sector could grow and they could export energy, which, of course, led to Iran being able to fund Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthi rebels, which has led to all the chaos in the Middle East.

Since October 7 alone, our servicemen in the Middle East have been attacked over 100 times, including the deaths of three Americans in Jordan.

It just doesn't stop there. I just got back from a trip to Turks and Caicos, an official trip, a congressional delegation. There you have a small island nation that has roughly 60,000 citizens, and they are allowed to commit human rights violations on Americans, holding American detainees in a North Korean-style court system and legal system there. All it would take to bring the Americans that are wrongfully detained in Turks and Caicos home would be a do not travel order from Antony Blinken.

Do you think Secretary Blinken has issued an order? Of course he hasn't.

We have seen weakness. We have seen indecisive action from the State Department and that has emboldened these banana republics like Turks and Caicos to have draconian laws on their books that target American citizens.

Biden's weakness has done nothing but embolden our adversaries. It has emboldened Russia. It has emboldened China. It has emboldened Iran, and now you are seeing it embolden banana republics that are holding American hostages in basically the North Korea of the Caribbean, Turks and Caicos.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY), my very good friend and fellow Rules Committee member, to talk more about the ICC.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Pennsylvania for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, before I start, I will join in a bipartisan moment of agreement with my friend from Massachusetts about Kelly Dixon.

I too wish her well. I wish her all the best in her next endeavors. The gentleman is correct about her intellect and her commitment to the institution. We have debated numerous times on the floor. As a former staffer, chief of staff to a senator, it is not always easy to walk the line and intellectually engage and spar with Members of Congress, for those without the election certificate, but to do so with the proper amount of respect in going toe to toe with Members in the right way. Kelly has always done that.

She does very much believe in keeping the traditions of this institution moving forward in the right way. I am deeply appreciative of that and of her service, and we will be wishing her well going forward and will miss her.

□ 0945

Here we are talking about the issues before us in this rule, the MILCON-VA funding and the International Criminal Court.

Just a quick moment on MILCON-VA funding—I note that this legislation that we put forward we have done so in good faith to increase spending for veterans—yes, increase spending for veterans—because it is higher than that which has been put forward by the President in the President's budget. It is also, in aggregate, the total amount of spending that we are spending on veterans when you factor in mandatory

spending and discretionary spending, will be greater under our spending than it would be last year.

Yes, we are trying to figure out how to do this in a fiscally responsible manner. We believe we have done that, and we have put forward the policy initiatives that we believe are important to constrain the administration to ensure that we are not advancing a radical agenda through the executive branch's actions.

The President has been aggressive in disagreeing with the United States Supreme Court and Congress in advancing a radical agenda, whether it is DEI, CRT, or student loans. We believe it is our power of the purse in Congress to be able to constrain that.

The thing I want to most talk about here is the International Criminal Court. This is an issue that really shouldn't be partisan, I agree. I have had numerous conversations with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, and they have been good conversations. They have been healthy conversations with leadership on both sides of the aisle.

At stake right now is the critically important issue of ensuring that we protect America's interests. That is what is at stake right now in the International Criminal Court. It isn't just about Israel. In fact, it is not even specifically about Israel.

This would be a permanent change, a change to the law to ensure that if the International Criminal Court targets Americans or targets our allies, that we would sanction the International Criminal Court.

Now, let's be clear. This is an unprecedented action being taken by the International Criminal Court, seeking arrest warrants for the sitting Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of Israel. Say that out loud. That is what is happening with the International Criminal Court.

Neither Israel nor the United States is a party to this organization, yet this entity, the International Criminal Court, is trying to issue a warrant against the Prime Minister of Israel.

There have been longstanding bipartisan concerns about the ICC's undermining of the United States' sovereignty. Since the founding in 2002, every U.S. administration, both parties, has refused to join the court, fearing its politicization and misuse.

On April 2, 2021, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said: "We maintain our longstanding objection to the Court's efforts to assert jurisdiction over personnel of non-States Parties such as the United States and Israel."

NSC spokesperson John Kirby said, on April 30: "We don't believe the ICC has any jurisdiction here."

Both the Biden and Trump administrations and over 330 Members of Congress from both parties have rejected ICC investigations of the United States and Israel in the past.

Last night in the Rules Committee, talking about the Democratic witness:

Do you believe the ICC should be able to target American servicemen? The answer was no.

The fact here is if you allow this to happen, you are opening the door. We need to make it crystal clear to our men and women in uniform that we will not tolerate the ICC going after them or our allies for simply performing their job.

This is not unprecedented in the sense that the ICC has tried to investigate U.S. servicemembers before, as the gentleman from Pennsylvania noted, but the reality here is this is pretty simple. This bill would sanction the ICC. Yes, it has teeth. Yes, it would cause some concerns and some pain for the members of the ICC. That is intentional.

We want to make them think twice, and we modeled it after existing legislation. We used a model. This is not something new. We believe this is critically important. This country, the United States, should stand united and hold the ICC accountable.

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

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Pennsylvania made a point when he got up that I was somehow trying to hide behind process. It is clear he wasn't listening to my very substantive speech in which I actually talked about the policy implications of what my Republican friends were doing.

Since he brought up process, and I think this is an important point to emphasize here because we are on the Rules Committee, I want to point out that sometimes I call the Rules Committee, under the Republicans, the break the rules committee.

Let's look at some of the rules that are being ignored today. This is from the official Republican Committee Report. Maybe the gentleman doesn't read it, but I do.

Let me quote: This waives "all points of order against provisions in H.R. 8580, as amended," which includes "Clause 2 of rule XXI, which prohibits unauthorized appropriations or legislative provisions in an appropriations bill."

The gentleman who just spoke routinely talks about how he is opposed to unauthorized appropriations and appropriations bills, yet that rule was waived by the Republicans.

"Clause 5(a) of rule XXI, which prohibits a bill or joint resolution carrying a tax or tariff measure from being reported by a committee not having jurisdiction to report tax or tariff measures." That was ruled waived.

Here is the big one: "Clause 12 of rule XXI, which prohibits consideration of a bill or joint resolution pursuant to a special order of business reported by the Committee on Rules that has not been reported by a committee." That is what is known, for my friends on the other side of the aisle, as the McGovern rule.

When I was chairman of the Rules Committee, we actually put this in

place, that bills that come before the Rules Committee ought to have a hearing and a markup by a committee of jurisdiction. We weren't always perfect, but we really tried to be. We really tried to be.

Why did they waive the McGovern rule? The reason why is because they short-circuited the legislative process. There were no hearings and no markup on the ICC bill, none, not at all, and no one can amend it, as well. No amendments are made in order.

Again, what was really puzzling to me was the Republican witness who came before the Rules Committee couldn't even tell us what the accurate text of the bill that we were considering was because it had been changed so many times. It was astonishing to watch this in action.

Rules and process matter because when you ignore the process, you get lousy bills, and nobody even knows what the implications of the ICC bill are.

Again, you didn't have time for a hearing? You could have done an emergency hearing in the committee of jurisdiction. You could have done an emergency markup before it came to the Rules Committee. You bypassed everything and kept on changing the text of the bill.

That is a lousy way to legislate. I will tell you, I can't wait until after November and my friends are no longer in charge because we can then demonstrate not only to my Republican friends but to the American people how a legislative process should work, how to get things done, how to be effective. This is irresponsible legislating.

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

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

You can't make this stuff up. It is amazing. I am being gaslit in real time here, and so are the American people. I often say if it weren't for double standards, the Democrats would have no standards at all. Here we are, talking about process and procedure and totally ignoring the fact that the Democrats ran roughshod over process and procedure last Congress when they were in control.

Don't believe me? Let's look at the facts. Last Congress, the Democratic-controlled Rules Committee considered 30 pieces of legislation that did not go through regular order. That includes 28 McGovern waivers for unreported bills. You might say, oh, 28 out of 30, what about the other 2? Well, the other two were reported but without hearings.

It is amazing and so rich, being attacked for having a bill not going through regular order on a few occasions when the Democrats themselves had it 30 separate times in the last Congress. That is quite amazing.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. ALFORD).

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Pennsylvania for yielding.

I rise today in favor of this Military Construction, Veterans Affairs appropriations bill.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to share my appreciation for Kelly Dixon, who is leaving the Rules Committee. She is one of the first persons we met as freshmen. Mr. Speaker, you remember us going to the Rules Committee office and Kelly running us through how things operate here on the House floor. I had no experience in politics, and it was all new to me. She made the rules clear, and decorum, as well, which is such an important part of this institution. We wish Kelly well.

I want to say a special thank-you to the Appropriations Committee, in particular, Chairman COLE and Defense Subcommittee Chair CALVERT, for the \$144 million in this bill, which is going to go to the advanced individual training barracks for prestigious Fort Leonard Wood in the southeastern part of the Fourth Congressional District of the great State of Missouri, which I represent.

Fort Leonard Wood is a wonderful center of excellence, training the men and women who are tasked with protecting our great Nation. I was down there last year to visit and saw the need for new barracks on this great facility. It was real, Mr. Speaker.

I also thank Secretary Wormuth of the Army for making this a priority in the President's budget because, together, we are working to increase our retention and recruitment for the armed services.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we have issues with recruitment. Only 9 percent of Americans, young people, right now have any interest in joining the military. At Fort Leonard Wood and other areas where we are going to provide military construction through this appropriations process, we are not building the Taj Mahal, but we are building barracks and privatized housing that is going to make living and working on these facilities not necessarily a joy but someplace where they can rest their heads at night and feel comfortable and safe. I thank the chair and subcommittee chair for that addition to this package.

I want to talk now specifically about H.R. 8282, the Illegitimate Court Counteraction Act. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule to provide consideration of this act.

To be honest, I am a little disappointed. I am a little bit disgusted that, once again, we are having to have these discussions about what we stand for as a nation, in particular in protecting the Nation of Israel. It is unfortunate, but it is something that we must do.

Israel is our strongest ally in the Middle East, and it is under attack. It has been since October 7. Israel was living in peace until they were attacked on October 7.

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

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 2 minutes.

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, this time, the attack is coming from the International Criminal Court, which went as far as seeking an arrest warrant against Prime Minister Netanyahu for the rightful act of defending his country against the horrific terrorist attacks of October 7.

Mr. Speaker, this is an unprecedented move, and even President Biden called the arrest warrants "outrageous." The commonsense response to this outrageous action by the ICC is to pass H.R. 8282.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we will see just how much common sense our colleagues on the other side of the aisle actually have.

H.R. 8282 would impose sanctions against ICC officials who investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute a U.S. person or our allies, including Israel, giving Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Israeli people the support they truly deserve.

Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker, as some of my colleagues across the aisle seem to not understand this very simple concept: We must always stand with our ally Israel, and we must always stand against any terrorist organization like Hamas. We must support Israel in their efforts to eradicate Hamas, which could end this war today, Mr. Speaker, by releasing all the remaining hostages and surrendering.

Mr. Speaker, recently, we were in Israel visiting with President Herzog, Prime Minister Netanyahu, and the family of Hersh Goldberg, an American still held hostage by the Hamas butchers in Gaza. What they are dealing with is a frightening scene, Mr. Speaker.

□ 1000

Prime Minister Netanyahu says: We appreciate the help and support of the U.S., but let me make one thing clear—Mr. Speaker, this is what Prime Minister Netanyahu says—we will fight with our fingers if necessary to win this war.

Mr. Speaker, war is not pretty. We stand with Israel. We will always stand with Israel, and that is why I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this rule.

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

Mr. Speaker, let me respond to the gentleman from Pennsylvania who commented on my last comments where I conceded that we weren't perfect in following the McGovern rule, but I thank him for conceding that we followed it the overwhelming majority of the time.

Again, I find it really stunning that on a bill that has implications that my friends can't even respond to, they decided to not only forgo a hearing and a markup, but they kept on changing the text at the last minute.

He also was critical of President Biden and his foreign policy, but I want

to correct the record on that as well. When the other guy was President, I will remind the gentleman, Iran didn't just attack Israeli troops, they attacked U.S. troops. They attacked us.

The gentleman wants to talk about supporting our allies. His side held up aid for Ukraine for 9 months because their side bought into Kremlin propaganda. They were more interested in pleasing Vladimir Putin than they were in standing by our allies in Ukraine.

It was their side, a Republican President, who went to North Korea and tried to get a brutal dictator to like him. He tried to kowtow to Kim Jong-Un. It was their side, a Republican President, who tried to extort our Ukrainian allies by withholding U.S. aid, and then he was impeached over that.

It was his Republican candidate for President who praises Putin, fawns over Xi Jinping, says Viktor Orban is fantastic, and sends love letters to Kim Jong-Un.

It was a Republican President, the previous guy, who stood with America's adversaries. Contrast that with President Joe Biden. President Biden rallied the world to Ukraine's defense. President Biden has defended our ally Israel and their airspace, and President Biden has rebuilt America's image on the world stage by standing up for democracy and human rights. I am happy to compare President Biden's record to the other guy who they seem so in awe of and afraid of every single day of the week.

I would, again, remind my colleagues that the bill on the International Criminal Court had no hearing, no markup, no witnesses, no amendments, closed rule, nothing, and they can't even explain it. They couldn't even explain it in the Rules Committee last night.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ), a distinguished member of the Rules Committee.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania). The Chair would also remind Members to refrain from engaging in personalities toward presumptive nominees for the office of President.

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. McGOVERN for pointing out the importance of choosing our leaders wisely and choosing those who would reject tyrannical tendencies themselves or to ally themselves with tyrants. This reminds me that 250 years ago when the revolutionaries of our American soil decided to fight to escape the tyrannical and authoritarian rule of the king, some pushed back. They were concerned that the people of the beautiful experiment we call America would not be able to choose the right leader.

Samuel Adams believed that virtue was the soul of democracy. He said these beautiful words: A moral people will elect moral leaders. A moral people will elect moral leaders.

I have incredible faith in our American people. I know that they honor and cherish our Constitution. I know that the American people will honor the rule of law. Today, I will not speak of the 34 reasons why I know that the American people are moral people and will elect moral leaders.

Today, instead, I will speak about the manner in which Americans not just cherish virtue, rule of law, and our Constitution, Americans also cherish our veterans and our military. The appropriations bill the Republicans have presented today does not cherish or honor the sacrifices our servicemembers made in battle for this country. Instead, it sacrifices our national security to industries and lobbyists who don't want us to even acknowledge climate change.

The Republican Speaker last night actually recognized that it would be common sense to protect our bases from sea rise and flooding, but this bill strips funding for climate resilience. They would sacrifice our military readiness for climate denialism.

This bill is a kitchen sink of culture wars rather than one that honors our servicemembers and veterans. Instead of focusing on what our military bases need for readiness, Republicans are attacking women's healthcare, promoting discrimination against LGBTQ veterans, and denying climate change. This appropriations bill will prevent women veterans from receiving reproductive healthcare wherever they may live.

If a female veteran's health is at risk during her pregnancy, Republicans don't want her to get VA care in the full array that she may need it. If she lives in Texas, Alabama, or a State that took away her reproductive healthcare, she might find herself waiting in an emergency room parking lot until she is near death.

I have made difficult decisions about life-threatening conditions during my own pregnancies. I enjoyed the right to make decisions about my health with the people I trust and love, my doctors, and my own faith in God. I want every woman to have the same right, to have access to healthcare if her health is at risk during pregnancy, especially if she is a veteran who has served our country.

All veterans deserve our respect wherever they live. That respect is measured by action, actions that protect healthcare access. This bill does not show that respect. I urge my colleagues to oppose the rule.

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

Again, it is amazing that I am hearing my friends across the aisle complain about closed rules and going through regular order. Again, we are being gaslit in real time by the left.

I remind my friends across the aisle that at this point in the 117th Congress—again, when Democrats were in control, this is when Chairman McGov-

ern ran the Rules Committee—Democrats had made 61 percent of their rules closed. In this Congress, the GOP has passed 66 more measures out of the Rules Committee compared with the Democrats at this point in the 117th.

The GOP is legislating in this Congress. We have proportionally fewer closed rules over a much larger pool of bills, and 33 percent of our closed rules were because no amendments were submitted. They were closed because no one even put forward amendments. In the 118th, 81 percent of the Rules measures that have gone to a floor vote have garnered bipartisan support for final passage.

Again, Mr. Speaker, my friends across the aisle like to complain about amendments being made in order and they like to complain about regular order, but facts don't lie. They had 61 percent of their bills with closed rules. I just had a litany of bills that did not go through regular order. You can't hide from the stats.

Let's not fool ourselves. The American people don't care about arcane rules of procedure in the House. No one cares about this. What they do care about are things like foreign policy. It is amazing, like I am being gaslit on procedures in the House, I am being gaslit about the last administration's position on foreign policy.

I am sure if you would ask people around the world if they would rather have President Trump or President Biden, it would be President Trump, and here is why: President Trump actually killed al-Baghdadi, and he dismantled ISIS.

When it comes to Iran, he neutralized Soleimani. He also targeted proxy groups that were controlled by the Iranians in the surrounding area. He put the Quds Force and the Houthis on the terrorist watch list, actions the Biden administration has tried to reverse.

He blocked the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which weakened Russia. He had the Abraham Accords.

We had zero attacks from Russia during the period. Remember, it was under Obama that Russia came into the Crimea, and then Russia didn't do anything for 4 years. Then, magically, when the Democrats came in, showing weakness and vacillation in the face of aggression, then the Russians invaded more parts of Ukraine.

Also, when it comes to China, it was President Trump who put tariffs on China and held China to account. The Biden administration has done very little on that front.

The list goes on and on, but I will leave it at that for the sake of time.

Talking about being gaslit, we are being gaslit on the ICC, this international kangaroo court. There is so much disinformation out there about the ICC, especially regarding their actions on Israel.

Let me just clear some things up. One, the ICC's warrant filings are factually wrong; two, Israel has conducted itself consistently with international

law and its humanitarian obligations; three, the ICC does not have jurisdiction over Israel as the nation is not an ICC member; and, fourth, the ICC warrant applications for Israeli leaders threaten U.S. national security. Let's just get the facts out there. Those are the facts, and you can't hide from them.

It is amazing how many of my friends across the aisle, beholden to the extreme far left, want to talk about these make-believe Israeli transgressions, when they wholeheartedly ignore the transgressions of international law by Hamas. You want to go through a list of all the international law that Hamas has broken? Let's do it.

Let's start with targeting civilians; not wearing a uniform; hiding among civilian populations; storing weapons in places like mosques and schools; having their military headquarters in a hospital; using torture, and rape; and deprivation of food, water, and medical aid for their hostages. This is just a short list, but it is amazing how the left, controlled by radical, dangerous extremists, refused to call out Hamas and their violations while latching on to these false perceived notions that the Israelis are somehow the ones in violation of international law.

I am sick and tired of the gaslighting. The American people know the truth, and we are going to see the results of that in a few months.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell my friends across the aisle that I have no further speakers at this time and I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, we are different. I would just say to the gentleman that is why I am glad the ICC is actually going after Hamas and holding Hamas accountable. That is a good thing. I am sorry the gentleman doesn't agree with that.

As far as his numbers go on the rules, that was the most roundabout, crazy characterization and reconfiguration of numbers to essentially say and justify the fact that the Republicans are so ineffective and incompetent in the Rules Committee. I mean, they have lost seven rules. That has got to be a record. Seven of their own rules—they are in charge—have gone down. It is amazing when you listen to the gentleman try to rationalize all that is so irrational about the way the Republicans are running this place.

I would also say, Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned now because I was admonished, again, for referring to the former President and mentioning a process that the United States Congress actually put forward. I don't even know what I can say anymore when it comes to the former President because everything is out of order. My friends on the other side of the aisle can say whatever they want about President Biden. They can say whatever they want about anything they want, and

there seems to be no accountability. I am just referring to facts, and I get admonished. I don't understand this.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to make in order an amendment from the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) which is germane and is compliant with the rules. That amendment would strike anti-trans, antigay, and anti-veteran provisions from the MILCON-VA appropriations bill.

Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that over 1 million American veterans are part of the LGBTQ+ community, including 134,000 veterans who are transgender. We know the Republicans have been fighting to kick trans people out of the military. Now it is 2024, and it is Pride Month, and what are House Republicans focused on? They want to deny these veterans, after they have selflessly defended our Nation, from receiving the medical care and support that they need.

□ 1015

They are spending time trying to prevent the VA from flying Pride flags. With all the discrimination members of the LGBTQ community have had to endure, Republicans in this bill protect those who discriminate against same-sex marriages. Of course, this is happening during Pride Month. The cruelty is the point, Mr. Speaker.

My amendment would simply allow a vote in the House to strike these backward policy riders from this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment into the RECORD along with any extraneous material immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, enough with these Republican attacks on the LGBTQ+ community. Enough with the bigotry. Enough with the hate. Enough with the MAGA extremism. We are better than this.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, it is amazing. I continue to get gaslit up here. At the end of the day, facts don't care about your feelings, and numbers don't lie.

I will distill this argument into two facts right now to show you the hypocrisy from the other side. Last Congress, the Democrats had 30 pieces of legislation that came outside of regular order.

At this same point in the 117th Congress compared to this Congress, the 118th, the Democrats had 61 percent of their bills come to the floor under closed rules. Again, numbers don't lie. Don't sit here and try to gaslight me.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I say to the gentleman, again, we are talking about today, and my point was that we have a bill that the witnesses that came before the Rules Committee couldn't even accurately describe what was in the bill.

They had no idea because it changed so many times, couldn't really respond to questions about what the implications of the bill would be, and we are simply pointing out the fact that there was not a single hearing in the committee of jurisdiction on the legislation, not a single markup, no witnesses.

My friends bring this to the floor under a completely closed process so nobody can amend it. Nobody can change anything. Nobody can change a comma.

That is how the Republicans are running this House of Representatives, and it is pathetic, quite frankly. It is not the way the people's House should be run, and it shows disrespect for this institution. They do that day in and day out.

Mr. Speaker, once again, the contrast is very clear for the American people. Democrats stand up for traditional American values like freedom, and Republicans are going all in on authoritarianism.

Democrats want to fight for our democracy. We believe it is worth fighting for and preserving. Republicans want to attack LGBTQ rights, women's rights, civil rights, and voting rights. Now they even want to attack IVF in their quest to control women's bodies. We had a Republican come before the Rules Committee advocating for that last night. It was scary, quite frankly.

Democrats believe in science, and Republicans spent the day yesterday spreading conspiracy theories about COVID and attacking Dr. Fauci.

Democrats stand for our Constitution and the rule of law. Republicans are falling over themselves to get in the good graces of their presumptive nominee, a candidate for President who brags on social media about how he wants a unified Reich. Who says that?

This is a candidate I can't even tell the truth about on the House floor because he is being treated like a king.

Now, we know someone was convicted of 34 felonies, but we aren't even allowed to say who. Republicans are spending so much time circling the wagons around he who must not be named that they are neglecting the job that the American people sent them here to do.

This Republican Party is totally lost. They are totally disconnected from what this country is about, and it is a national embarrassment.

Democrats are putting people first. It is as simple as that. Republicans are putting politics first, and they are running one of the most incompetent, ineffective sessions of Congress, maybe in American history, and certainly since I have been here.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what else to say. I am afraid to say anything more because I am afraid my words will be taken down, and I will be silenced because this place is becoming so controlled, we have to be very, very careful of every single word we say here.

I will just conclude by saying this is an awful process. These bills that are being brought before us are not worthy of all this time and attention.

They are poorly drafted, and the appropriations bill, which should be totally bipartisan, they have loaded up with all kinds of MAGA extremist garbage, and we know it is going nowhere. What a waste of time. What a waste of time.

I urge a “no” vote on the rule, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

In closing, I don't even know where to begin, describing closed rules as threats to the institution, as disrespectful, as shameful.

Again, I remind the gentleman that last Congress, they brought 30 pieces of legislation to the floor that had not gone through committee.

At this same time last Congress, 61 percent of their rules were closed rules. The gaslighting has got to stop.

We are here today to talk about MILCON-VA and the international kangaroo court known as the ICC. This week when it comes to these two bills, Americans will see a stark difference between House Republicans and the dangerous far-left extremists on the other side of the aisle.

Some are saying that the bills are partisan exercises, and they are full of culture war issues. It is the Republicans that are taking the culture war issues out of these bills, at least out of MILCON-VA.

If you don't believe me, look at the actions of the VA. Under President Biden, the VA has gone far left and woke. These include initiatives in the VA like DEI and CRT. They just waste taxpayer-funded resources on these far-left culture wars that are coming from the left.

If you don't believe me, just look at the actions of the VA. The Department backtracked not too long ago after removing the iconic V-J Day picture from Times Square.

The iconic picture of V-J Day, for whatever reason, wasn't woke and had to be removed. That is quite amazing coming from the VA.

The VA also removed from their mission statement a quote from Abraham Lincoln. Why? Because that quote used male pronouns. You can't make this stuff up.

The Department uses a gender gingerbread person that teaches veterans and employees that gender is a spectrum, and it is fluid.

How about the Department's focus on the backlog of thousands of veterans' claims and veterans who can't receive

timely care? Maybe they should focus on that instead of gender-neutral gingerbread men.

That is why House Republicans will pass FY25 MILCON-VA that will focus the Department's mission back to its core mission, which is taking care of veterans; not fighting culture war issues.

We protect veterans' Second Amendment rights. We prohibit DEI. We prevent critical race theory, and we put the Hyde amendment into the bill.

We are making this bill neutral and bipartisan. We are stripping out culture war issues that the far-left extremists have put in it.

Lastly, let's talk about the rule before us bringing up the piece of legislation that will protect U.S. citizens and servicemembers and our allies, including Israel, and that is to make sure we are working against the illegitimate sham court, the kangaroo court known as the ICC.

H.R. 8282 will reimpose the Trump administration sanctions against the ICC and demonstrate to the world that the United States supports our number one ally, Israel, and Israel's right of self-defense.

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

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 1269 OFFERED BY  
MR. McGOVERN OF MASSACHUSETTS

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

SEC. 7. Notwithstanding any other provision of this resolution, the amendment specified in section 8 shall be in order as though printed as the last amendment in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution if offered by Representative Wasserman Schultz of Florida or a designee. That amendment shall be debatable for 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent.

SEC. 8. The amendment referred to in section 7 is as follows:

“Page 77 beginning on line 9, strike section

256.

Page 77 beginning on line 12, strike section

257.

Page 87 beginning on line 12, strike section

416.”

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on the previous question, and I urge them to vote “yes” on the rule. I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

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

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess for a period of less than 15 minutes.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 24 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1030

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BICE) at 10 o'clock and 30 minutes a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER  
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Ordering the previous question on House Resolution 1269; and

Adoption of House Resolution 1269, if ordered.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION  
OF H.R. 8580, MILITARY CON-  
STRUCTION, VETERANS AF-  
FAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES  
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2025; AND  
PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION  
OF H.R. 8282, ILLEGITIMATE  
COURT COUNTERACTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 1269) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 8580) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, and for other purposes; and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 8282) to impose sanctions with respect to the International Criminal Court engaged in any effort to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute any protected person of the United States and its allies, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 205, nays 193, not voting 33, as follows:

[Roll No. 235]  
YEAS—205

Aderholt	Baird	Biggs
Alford	Balderson	Bilirakis
Allen	Banks	Bishop (NC)
Amodei	Barr	Boebert
Armstrong	Bean (FL)	Bost
Arrington	Bentz	Brecheen
Babin	Bergman	Buchanan
Bacon	Bice	Bucshon

Burgess	Hageman	Moran	Lynch	Peters	Soto	Dunn (FL)	Kean (NJ)	Pfluger
Calvert	Harris	Newhouse	Magaziner	Pettersen	Spanberger	Edwards	Kelly (MS)	Posey
Carey	Harshbarger	Norman	Manning	Phillips	Stansbury	Ellzey	Kelly (PA)	Reschenthaler
Carl	Hern	Nunn (IA)	Matsui	Pingree	Stanton	Emmer	Kiggans (VA)	Rodgers (WA)
Carter (GA)	Higgins (LA)	Obernolte	McBath	Pocan	Stevens	Estes	Kiley	Rogers (AL)
Carter (TX)	Hill	Ogles	McCollum	Pressley	Strickland	Ezell	Kim (CA)	Rogers (KY)
Chavez-DeRemer	Hinson	Owens	McGarvey	Quigley	Suzozi	Fallon	Kustoff	Rose
Ciscomani	Houchin	Pence	McGovern	Ramirez	Swalwell	Feeenstra	LaHood	Rosendale
Cline	Hudson	Pfluger	Meeks	Raskin	Sykes	Ferguson	LaLota	Rouzer
Cloud	Huizenga	Posey	Meng	Ross	Takano	Finstad	LaMalfa	Roy
Clyde	Hunt	Reschenthaler	Mfume	Ruiz	Thanedar	Fischbach	Lamborn	Rutherford
Cole	Jackson (TX)	Rodgers (WA)	Moore (WI)	Ruppertsberger	Thompson (CA)	Fitzgerald	Langworthy	Scalise
Collins	James	Rogers (AL)	Morelle	Ryan	Thompson (MS)	Fitzpatrick	Latta	Schweikert
Comer	Johnson (LA)	Rogers (KY)	Moskowitz	Salinas	Tokuda	Fleischmann	LaTurner	Scott, Austin
Crane	Johnson (SD)	Rose	Moulton	Sánchez	Tonko	Flood	Lawler	Self
Crawford	Jordan	Rosendale	Mrvan	Sarbanes	Torres (CA)	Fong	Lee (FL)	Sessions
Crenshaw	Joyce (OH)	Rouzer	Mullin	Scanlon	Torres (NY)	Foxx	Lesko	Simpson
Curtis	Joyce (PA)	Scott, Austin	Nadler	Schakowsky	Franklin, Scott	Franklin, Scott	Letlow	Smith (MO)
D'Esposito	Kean (NJ)	Roy	Napolitano	Schiff	Trahan	Fry	Loudermilk	Smith (NE)
Davidson	Kelly (MS)	Rutherford	Neal	Schneider	Underwood	Fulcher	Lucas	Smith (NJ)
De La Cruz	Kelly (PA)	Salazar	Neguse	Scholten	Vargas	Gaetz	Luettkemeyer	Smucker
DesJarlais	Kiggans (VA)	Scalise	Nickel	Schrirer	Vasquez	Garbarino	Luna	Spartz
Diaz-Balart	Kiley	Self	Norcross	Scott (VA)	Veasey	Garcia, Mike	Luttrell	Stauber
Donalds	Kim (CA)	Self	Ocasio-Cortez	Scott, David	Velázquez	Gimenez	Mace	Stauber
Duarte	Kustoff	Sessions	Omar	Sewell	Wasserman	Gonzales, Tony	Mailiotakis	Steel
Duncan	LaHood	Simpson	Pallone	Sherman	Schultz	Good (VA)	Maloy	Stefanik
Dunn (FL)	LaLota	Smith (MO)	Panetta	Sherrell	Waters	Gooden (TX)	Mann	Steil
Edwards	LaMalfa	Smith (NE)	Pappas	Slotkin	Wexton	Granger	Massie	Steube
Ellzey	Lamborn	Smith (NJ)	Pelosi	Smith (WA)	Wild	Graves (LA)	Mast	Strong
Emmer	Langworthy	Smucker	Perez	Sorensen	Williams (GA)	Graves (MO)	McCaull	Tenney
Estes	Latta	Spartz				Greene (GA)	McClain	Thompson (PA)
Ezell	LaTurner	Stauber				Griffith	McClintock	Tiffany
Fallon	Lawler	Steel	Bowman	Jackson (IL)	Palmer	Grothman	McCormick	Timmons
Feeenstra	Lee (FL)	Stefanik	Boyle (PA)	Jackson Lee	Pascrell	Guest	McHenry	Turner
Ferguson	Lesko	Steil	Burchett	Kim (NJ)	Peltola	Guthrie	Meuser	Valadao
Finstad	Letlow	Steube	Burilson	Leger Fernandez	Perry	Hageman	Miller (IL)	Van Drew
Fischbach	Loudermilk	Strong	Cammack	Lofgren	Porter	Harris	Miller (OH)	Van Duyne
Fitzgerald	Lucas	Tenney	Doggett	Mast	Schweikert	Harshbarger	Miller (WV)	Van Orden
Fitzpatrick	Luettkemeyer	Thompson (PA)	Evans	McClellan	Titus	Hern	Mills	Walberg
Fleischmann	Luna	Tiffany	Green (TN)	Menendez	Tlaib	Higgins (LA)	Molinaro	Wagner
Flood	Luttrell	Timmons	Greene (GA)	Miller-Meeks	Trone	Hill	Moolenaar	Waltz
Fong	Mace	Turner	Grijalva	Murphy	Watson Coleman	Hinson	Mooney	Weber (TX)
Foxx	Malliotakis	Valadao	Issa	Nehls	Wilson (FL)	Houchin	Moore (AL)	Webster (FL)
Franklin, Scott	Maloy	Van Drew				Hudson	Moore (UT)	Wenstrup
Fry	Mann	Van Duyne				Huizinga	Moran	Westerman
Fulcher	Massie	Van Orden				Hunt	Newhouse	
Gaetz	McCaul	Van Orden				Jackson (TX)	Norman	
Garbarino	McClain	Wagner				James	Nunn (IA)	
Garcia, Mike	McClintock	Walberg				Johnson (LA)	Obernolte	
Gimenez	McCormick	Waltz				Johnson (SD)	Ogles	
Gonzales, Tony	McHenry	Weber (TX)				Jordan	Owens	
Good (VA)	Meuser	Webster (FL)				Joyce (OH)	Pence	
Gooden (TX)	Miller (IL)	Wenstrup				Joyce (PA)	Perry	
Gosar	Miller (OH)	Westerman						
Granger	Miller (WV)	Williams (NY)						
Graves (LA)	Mills	Williams (TX)						
Graves (MO)	Molinaro	Wilson (SC)						
Griffith	Moolenaar	Wittman						
Grothman	Mooney	Womack						
Guest	Moore (AL)	Yakym						
Guthrie	Moore (UT)	Zinke						
□ 1102								
Messrs. SCHNEIDER, PANETTA, BEYER, and SUOZZI changed their vote from "yea" to "nay."								
Mr. RUTHERFORD changed his vote from "nay" to "yea."								
So the previous question was ordered.								
The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.								
Stated for:								
Mr. PERRY. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 235.								
NOES—195								
Adams								
Aguilar								
Davids (KS)								
Allred								
Davis (IL)								
Amo								
Davis (NC)								
Auchincloss								
Dean (PA)								
DeVaulx								
Fitzgerald								
Gardner								
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### NOT VOTING—33

Messrs. SCHNEIDER, PANETTA, BEYER, and SUOZZI changed their vote from "yea" to "nay."

Mr. RUTHERFORD changed his vote from "nay" to "yea."

So the previous question was ordered. The result of the vote was announced

as above recorded.  
Stated for:

Mr. PERRY. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I

would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 235. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

NAYS—193

Adams	Cohen	Gonzalez,
Aguilar	Connolly	Vicente
Allred	Correa	Gottheimer
Amo	Costa	Green, Al (TX)
Auchincloss	Courtney	Harder (CA)
Balint	Craig	Hayes
Barragán	Crockett	Himes
Beatty	Crow	Horsford
Bera	Cuellar	Houlahan
Beyer	Davids (KS)	Hoyer
Bishop (GA)	Davis (IL)	Hoyle (OR)
Blumenauer	Davis (NC)	Huffman
Blunt Rochester	Dean (PA)	Ivey
Bonamici	DeGette	Jackson (NC)
Brown	DeLauro	Jacobs
Brownley	DelBene	Jayapal
Budzinski	Deluzio	Jeffries
Bush	DeSaulnier	Johnson (GA)
Caraveo	Dingell	Kamlager-Dove
Carbajal	Escobar	Kaptur
Cárdenas	Eshoo	Keating
Carson	Espaillat	Kelly (IL)
Carter (LA)	Fletcher	Kennedy
Cartwright	Foster	Khanna
Casar	Foushee	Kildee
Case	Frankel, Lois	Kilmer
Casten	Frost	Krishnamoorthi
Castor (FL)	Gallego	Kuster
Castro (TX)	Garamendi	Landsman
Cherifilus-	Garcia (IL)	Larsen (WA)
McCormick	Garcia (TX)	Larson (CT)
Chu	Garcia, Robert	Lee (CA)
Clark (MA)	Golden (ME)	Lee (NV)
Clarke (NY)	Goldman (NY)	Lee (PA)
Cleaver	Gomez	Levin
Clyburn		Lieu

NOES—195

Adams	Cuellar	Johnson (GA)
Aguilar	Davids (KS)	Kamlager-Dove
Allred	Davis (IL)	Kaptur
Amo	Davis (NC)	Keating
Auchincloss	Dean (PA)	Kelly (IL)
Balint	DeGette	Kennedy
Barragán	DeLauro	Khanha
Beatty	DelBene	Kildee
Bera	Deluzio	Kilmers
Beyer	DeSaulnier	Krishnamoorthi
Bishop (GA)	Dingell	Kuster
Blumenauer	Escobar	Landsman
Blunt Rochester	Eshoo	Larsen (WA)
Bonamici	Espaillet	Larson (CT)
Brown	Fletcher	Lee (CA)
Brownley	Foster	Lee (NV)
Budzinski	Foushee	Lee (PA)
Bush	Frankel, Lois	Leger Fernandez
Caraveo	Frost	Levin
Carbajal	Gallego	Lieu
Cárdenas	Garamendi	Lynch
Carson	Garcia (IL)	Magaziner
Carter (LA)	Garcia (TX)	Manning
Cartwright	Garcia, Robert	Matsui
Casar	Golden (ME)	McBath
Case	Goldman (NY)	McCollum
Casten	Gomez	McGarvey
Castor (FL)	Gonzalez.	McGovern
Castro (TX)	Vicente	Meeks
Cherflus-	Gottheimer	Meng
McCormick	Green, Al (TX)	Mfume
Chu	Harder (CA)	Moore (WI)
Clark (MA)	Hayes	Morelle
Clarke (NY)	Himes	Moskowitz
Cleaver	Horsford	Moulton
Clyburn	Houlahan	Mrvan
Cohen	Hoyer	Mullin
Connolly	Hoyle (OR)	Nadler
Correa	Huffman	Napolitano
Costa	Ivey	Neal
Courtney	Jackson (NC)	Neguse
Craig	Jacobs	Nickel
Crockett	Jayapal	Norcross
Crow	Jeffries	Ocasio-Cortez

Omar	Sarbanes
Pallone	Scanlon
Panetta	Schakowsky
Pappas	Schiff
Pelosi	Schneider
Peltola	Scholten
Perez	Schrier
Peters	Scott (VA)
Pettersen	Scott, David
Phillips	Sewell
Pingree	Sherman
Pocan	Sherrill
Pressley	Slotkin
Quigley	Smith (WA)
Ramirez	Sorensen
Raskin	Soto
Ross	Spanberger
Ruiz	Stansbury
Ruppersberger	Stanton
Ryan	Stevens
Salinas	Strickland
Sánchez	Suozzi

## NOT VOTING—28

Bowman	Jackson (IL)
Boyle (PA)	Jackson Lee
Burlison	Kim (NJ)
Cammack	Lofgren
Doggett	McClellan
Evans	Menendez
Gosar	Miller-Meeks
Green (TN)	Murphy
Grijalva	Nehls
Issa	Palmer

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1110

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I was unable to vote during rollcall votes No. 235 and No. 236 on the floor of the House of Representatives. Had I been present, I would have voted NO on rollcall votes No. 235 and No. 236.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I was not present due to a prior engagement. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 236 and NAY on Roll Call No. 235.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. TITUS. Madam Speaker, while tending to a family emergency, I was absent from the floor and the roll call votes for the Motion on Ordering the Previous Question on H. Res. 1269 and the Adoption of H. Res. 1269. Had I been present, I would have voted: NAY on Roll Call 235, Ordering the Previous Question on H. Res. 1269, and NAY on Roll Call 236, Adoption of H. Res. 1269.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I was unable to be present to cast my vote on Roll Call No. 235 and Roll Call No. 236 today. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call 235 and NAY on Roll Call No. 236.

## ILLEGITIMATE COURT COUNTERACTION ACT

Mr. McCaul. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1269, I call up the bill (H.R. 8282) to impose sanctions with respect to the International Criminal Court engaged in any effort to investigate, arrest, detain, or pros-

ecute any protected person of the United States and its allies, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STRONG). Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of the Rules Committee Print 118-37 is adopted, and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 8282

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

## SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

*This Act may be cited as the “Illegitimate Court Counteraction Act”.*

## SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The United States and Israel are not parties to the Rome Statute or members of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and therefore the ICC has no legitimacy or jurisdiction over the United States or Israel.

(2) On May 20, 2024, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan, announced arrest warrant applications for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant and should be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

(3) The bipartisan American Servicemembers' Protection Act was enacted in 2002 to protect United States military personnel, United States officials, and officials and military personnel of certain allied countries against criminal prosecution by an international criminal court to which the United States is not party, stating, “In addition to exposing members of the Armed Forces of the United States to the risk of international criminal prosecution, the Rome Statute creates a risk that the President and other senior elected and appointed officials of the United States Government may be prosecuted by the International Criminal Court.”

(4) The ICC's actions against Israel are illegitimate and baseless, including the preliminary examination and investigation of Israel and applications for arrest warrants against Israeli officials, which create a damaging precedent that threatens the United States, Israel, and all United States partners who have not submitted to the ICC's jurisdiction.

(5) The United States must oppose any action by the ICC against the United States, Israel, or any other ally of the United States that has not consented to ICC jurisdiction or is not a state party to the Rome Statute of the ICC.

## SEC. 3. SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and on an ongoing basis thereafter, if the International Criminal Court is engaging in any attempt to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute any protected person, the President shall impose—

(1) the sanctions described in subsection (b) with respect to any foreign person the President determines—

(A) has directly engaged in or otherwise aided any effort by the International Criminal Court to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute a protected person;

(B) has materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of any effort by the International Criminal Court to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute a protected person; or

(C) is owned or controlled by, or is currently acting or purports to have acted, directly or indirectly, for or on behalf of any person that di-

rectly engages in any effort by the International Criminal Court to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute a protected person; and

(2) the sanctions described in subsection (b)(2) with respect to the immediate family members of each foreign person who is subject to sanctions pursuant to paragraph (1).

(b) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The sanctions described in this subsection with respect to a foreign person described in subsection (a) are the following:

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

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

(A) VISAS, ADMISION, OR PAROLE.—In the case of an alien described in subsection (a), the alien is—

(i) inadmissible to the United States;

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

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

(B) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

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

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

(I) take effect immediately; and

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

(C) IMPLEMENTATION; PENALTIES.—

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

(2) PENALTIES.—A person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of this section or any regulation, license, or order issued to carry out this section shall be subject to the penalties set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) to the same extent as a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of that section.

(d) NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 10 days after any imposition of sanctions pursuant to subsection (a), the President shall brief and provide written notification to the appropriate congressional committees regarding the imposition of sanctions that shall include—

(1) a description of the foreign person or persons subject to the imposition of such sanctions, including the foreign person's role at or relation to the International Criminal Court;

(2) a description of any activity undertaken by such foreign person or persons in support of efforts to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute any protected person; and

(3) the specific sanctions imposed on such foreign person or persons.

(e) WAIVER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President may, on a case-by-case basis and for periods not to exceed 90 days each, waive the application of sanctions imposed or maintained with respect to a foreign person under this section if the President submits to the appropriate congressional committees before the waiver is to take effect a report that contains a determination of the President that the waiver is vital to the national security interests of the United States.

(2) CONTENTS.—Each report required by paragraph (1) with respect to a waiver of the application of sanctions imposed or maintained with respect to a foreign person under this section, or the renewal of such a waiver, shall include—

(A) a specific and detailed rationale for the determination that the waiver is vital to the national security interests of the United States;

(B) a description of the activity that resulted in the foreign person being subject to sanctions;

(C) a detailed description and list of actions the United States has taken to—

(i) stop the International Criminal Court from engaging in any effort to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute all protected persons; and

(ii) permanently close, withdraw, end, or otherwise terminate any preliminary examination, investigation, or any other effort to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute all protected persons.

(3) FORM.—Each report required by paragraph by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may include a classified annex.

(f) SPECIAL RULE.—The President may terminate the sanctions with respect to the foreign persons described in subsection (a) if the President certifies in writing to the appropriate congressional committees that the International Criminal Court—

(1) has ceased engaging in any effort to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute all protected persons; and

(2) has permanently closed, withdrawn, ended, and otherwise terminated any preliminary examination, investigation, or any other effort by the International Criminal Court to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute all protected persons.

#### SEC. 4. RESCISSION OF FUNDS FOR INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Effective on the date of the enactment of this Act, any amounts appropriated for the International Criminal Court and available for obligation as of such date of enactment are hereby rescinded.

(b) PROHIBITION ON FUTURE APPROPRIATIONS.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, no appropriated funds may be used for the International Criminal Court.

#### SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

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

(2) ALLY OF THE UNITED STATES.—The term “ally of the United States” means—

(A) a government of a member country of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; or

(B) a government of a major non-NATO ally, as that term is defined by section 2013(7) of the American Service-Members’ Protection Act (22 U.S.C. 7432(7)).

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

(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Financial Services, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives; and

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

(4) FOREIGN PERSON.—The term “foreign person” means a person that is not a United States person.

(5) IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER.—The term “immediate family member”, with respect to a foreign person, means the spouse, parent, sibling, or adult child of the person.

(6) INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT; ROME STATUTE.—The terms “International Criminal Court” and “Rome Statute” have the meaning given those terms in section 2013 of the American Service-Members’ Protection Act (22 U.S.C. 7432).

(7) PROTECTED PERSON.—The term “protected person” means—

(A) any United States person, unless the United States provides formal consent to International Criminal Court jurisdiction and is a state party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, including—

(i) current or former members of the Armed Forces of the United States;

(ii) current or former elected or appointed officials of the United States Government; and

(iii) any other person currently or formerly employed by or working on behalf of the United States Government;

(B) any foreign person that is a citizen or lawful resident of an ally of the United States that has not consented to International Criminal Court jurisdiction or is not a state party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, including—

(i) current or former members of the Armed Forces of such ally of the United States;

(ii) current or former elected or appointed government officials of such ally of the United States; and

(iii) any other person currently or formerly employed by or working on behalf of such a government.

(8) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term “United States person” means—

(A) an individual who is a United States citizen or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence to the United States;

(B) an entity organized under the laws of the United States or any jurisdiction within the United States, including a foreign branch of such an entity; or

(C) any person in the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill, as amended, shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. McCaul) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) each will control 30 minutes.

The chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. McCaul).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, we are at a moment in history where our long-held fears are being realized.

The International Criminal Court has overstepped its authority and set a dangerous precedent by seeking arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Israel’s Defense Minister Gallant, alongside Hamas terrorists.

I will be clear: The case against Israel is baseless.

Mr. MEEKS and I wanted in good faith to make this a bipartisan bill, and I thank him for that.

Initially, the White House supported this idea; however, on May 28, they did a 180-degree turn. In response, even Democrat Senator CARDIN has criti-

cized the administration saying: “I am disappointed. I thought they were going to try and work on a bipartisan bill. . . .”

I agree with Mr. CARDIN, and I agree with Mr. MEEKS as we tried to make this bipartisan.

The United States and Israel are not members of the ICC. The ICC itself was created as a court of last resort if national governments are unwilling or unable to try cases in their jurisdiction.

The United States and Israel do not fall into this category. Despite this, the ICC prosecutor’s statement on the warrant applications contains several allegations that are directly contradicted by the Biden administration’s recent report pursuant to the National Security Memorandum-20.

I have many problems with National Security Memorandum-20, but this report clearly stated: “We do not currently assess that the Israeli Government is prohibiting or otherwise restricting the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance.”

It also described in significant detail Israel’s own systems for ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law and for investigating possible violations of international and humanitarian law.

Moreover, comparing the legitimate, democratically-elected officials in Israel who were thrust into a war that they didn’t ask for and that they didn’t start to Hamas terrorists only highlights the complete disconnect of this politicized international body.

This is a war Hamas started.

Israel was forced into a war they didn’t want, and now they have no choice but to finish it. Further, Hamas is making it infinitely worse because they use human shields. They hide their control and command centers behind hospitals and schools, and they put civilians in harm’s way.

There are many, many unspeakable tragedies in this war. I have seen videos of Hamas terrorists killing innocent Palestinians simply trying to access humanitarian aid. Hamas does not care about civilian casualties. Their only objective is to remove Israel from the map.

Israel is fighting in what is likely the most difficult urban warfare landscape that has ever existed, and they have done everything in their power to limit casualties and facilitate humanitarian aid, but the same cannot be said of Hamas.

It is absolutely outrageous for the ICC to be pursuing arrest warrants against Israeli officials and announcing it on CNN before a decision has even been made.

Mr. MEEKS and I were prosecutors. We would never announce arrest warrants on national television on CNN. Failing to act here in the Congress would make us complicit with the ICC’s illegitimate actions.

We must not stay silent. We must stand with our allies. If the ICC is advancing a case against an American or

an allied country who is not party to the ICC, this bill will impose sanctions on ICC officials and others supporting that case.

We need to act quickly because this case is already advancing much faster than expected. Even the ICC's own staff did not know the warrant applications would be going ahead at this pace. That is why we are advancing this bill straight to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to stand up to international bullies who seek to undermine international law under the false pretext of justice. What happens if Americans are next as they looked at Americans on the battlefield in Afghanistan.

This sets a dangerous precedent where now it is Israeli officials, but tomorrow it could be Americans. It is a very dangerous precedent.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, too often in our foreign policy, we turn to sanctions as a first choice rather than a tool of last resort. Sanctions should not be our only go-to punishment to express our displeasure because they have real consequences.

That being said, I will say that on the Foreign Affairs Committee, we do try to work together and get a bipartisan bill. I thank the chairman for that. Unfortunately, we could not get to a final conclusion.

As I review the bill that we are about to vote on today, the bill that is on the floor, in this instance, this bill would have a chilling effect on the ICC as an institution and hamper the court's efforts to prosecute serious atrocities that have been perpetrated in many places around the world from Ukraine to Uganda. We can't forget that the ICC is a venue through which we can hold accountable bad actors.

I know many of us celebrated in March of last year when the ICC judges issued arrest warrants for Vladimir Putin and other senior Russian officials for abducting thousands of Ukrainian children.

In fact, in the wake of Putin's renewed war in Ukraine, Congress passed legislation to enable the United States to provide financial support to and share information with the ICC to investigate and prosecute Putin and his regime for their heinous crimes.

Put simply, we leaned in on engagement with the ICC because it was in our interest and because it reinforces the prospect that the justice we want to see will be delivered.

Let me also be clear that President Biden has said from the very start that the ICC prosecutor's application last month for arrest warrants against Israeli leaders is clearly outrageous. In doing so, the ICC prosecutor has attempted to equate the self-defense decisions made by Israel's democratically-elected leaders to those of Hamas' terrorist leaders.

There is no, and I repeat, there is no moral or legal equivalence here. This is

one reason why we try to work together and continue to figure out a way we can get to a bipartisan deal. Chairman McCaul and I will continue to do that.

Furthermore, let me just say that the United States has, since its inception, opposed, and we continue to oppose in the strongest terms, this investigation as an overreach into a matter for which the ICC has no jurisdiction.

That said, if our goal is to change the ICC's actions, sanctions is the wrong tool. They are simply not going to work here. They are not going to convince the ICC to back down and could, in fact, push the ICC to pursue this case with even greater vigor.

This bill will bluntly curtail the United States' ability to engage the court to advance our interests in supporting justice and accountability processes and, critically, to share relevant information that can impact the outcome.

The sanctions will have a chilling effect on States who would otherwise be inclined to align with us in ensuring the court delivers justice and avoids overreach.

Not only that, this particular legislation is overly broad. It would sanction our allies around the globe who support the ICC through resources and personnel.

Per the proposed text, anyone who has offered financial, material, or technological assistance to the court shall be sanctioned.

Let's look at what that means when we break it down. If you wrote a list of the largest funders of the ICC and a list of America's closest allies in Europe and in Asia, they would be virtually identical: the U.K., France, Germany, Italy, and Japan.

□ 1130

As drafted, the leaders of these countries would need to be sanctioned for providing material assistance to the ICC. The legislative bodies of the countries would also need to be sanctioned for appropriating funds to go to the ICC. Interparliamentary travel to Europe could become a sanctionable activity.

Is sanctioning Rishi Sunak, Emmanuel Macron, or Giorgia Meloni smart policy? To me, that is absurd on its face.

This bill would further risk sanctions on the over 900 staff members from approximately 100 countries at the court, from judges and prosecutors to administrative staff, including nationals of close U.S. allies and partners who collectively work to prosecute war criminals around the globe.

The language in this bill is so broad that even a cafeteria worker or janitor, even their families, could be construed as having supported or materially assisted in these prosecutions by providing services to the ICC.

It is almost certain that the ICC relies on American companies for cloud services, productivity software, and

other gold-standard tech products. All of these American companies would be banned from doing such business with the ICC, and their Chinese competitors could rush to fill that gap.

Do we want the ICC reliant on the PRC for its email services, data service, or cloud storage? Do we want to send a message to all other international organizations that America could pull the plug on their business services at any moment? This will undermine America's interests and bolster those of China and Russia.

The broad sanctions language included in this legislation will also affect many innocent Dutch companies and nationals. The same sanction risks would apply to companies from other U.S. allies and partner companies that provide services to the ICC. It is unclear how sanctioning close allies' financial institutions and small businesses will aid our foreign policy interests.

The path that has been chosen—not of leaning in, not of engaging the court and its supporters to ensure just outcomes, but of just punitive action—is dangerous for our national security. Behind-the-scenes diplomacy with the court and our allies and partners that support it is far more likely to yield a result that is better than a blunt-force approach.

I am for sending a message of concern to the ICC for seeking arrest warrants for Israeli officials, but we need to do it in another way. Therefore, I must oppose this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Let me just say to my dear friend, Mr. MEEKS, that he knows we worked on a version of this bill and came to a bipartisan resolution that, ultimately, was rejected by the White House, and I think that is unfortunate.

I also would like to state that the alarms that this bill harms U.S. alliances, I think, are overstated. The bill's sanctions are triggered by Presidential determination that a particular foreign person has supported illicit ICC efforts against protected persons, so that is against American citizens or the citizens of U.S. allies who have not submitted to ICC's jurisdiction.

Furthermore, and this is the most important point, this bill, and we did this at the behest of the Democrats, gives the President the ability to waive these sanctions.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Roy), the author of this bill. I thank him for working so closely not only with me but with the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Texas, the chairman, for yielding, and I thank the ranking member and his staff and the entire staff of the Foreign Affairs Committee for their diligent work on this, for working all last week, for working through the weekend, and for the conversations.

On this one, it is important to note that I do believe that there is significant bipartisan agreement that we need to take action and stand with one voice in this country, the United States of America, to send a strong signal to not just the International Criminal Court but to the international community generally. We cannot stand by and allow the court to do what it is doing.

Let's remember why we are here. We are here because the International Criminal Court is seeking to issue warrants on the Prime Minister of Israel. It merits letting that just sit out there and marinate for a second that that is what we are dealing with. The Prime Minister of Israel is engaged in defending his country after the horrific October 7 attacks, which we have talked about in great detail on this floor—the assaults, the rapes, the beheadings of babies, the killing of innocent civilians. Israel is responding to what occurred and what happened to our Jewish brothers and sisters and others in Israel on October 7, and it is taking the attack to Hamas.

We recognize the difficulty of Hamas being fully intertwined with the civilians in Gaza. Israel is taking steps to send text messages, drop 15 million or more leaflets, leave voice messages, give 2 weeks' advance notice, do what they can to try to make sure that there are protections for civilians, keeping the overall civilian-to-combatant casualty ratio below historic norms by most accounts, including third-party observation.

Looking at Rafah, the international community is saying you can't go into Rafah. You go into Rafah and find 50-plus tunnels—now, I think it is 75 or more tunnels—that we know were being used to carry out attacks on Israel.

Israel is under assault right now, with missiles being fired with regularity by Hamas into Israel. This is Israel. This is not some random entity. This is Israel, our close ally, and you have a body, to which we have no sovereignty, for this country, that is being given to the International Criminal Court because we are not a party to it. We are not undermining our sovereignty. We are not going to do that as America.

That is what this stands for. That is what this says. This says that we should not be allowing the International Criminal Court to not just go after the Israeli Prime Minister but the door that that opens to go after our own servicemembers, to go after our own generals, to go after America's interests.

What happens here is going to be coming at us and our country. That is why it is important to speak with one voice, with authority, with force.

We have been working in good faith, and again, I want to compliment the ranking member and Democratic staff. Again, we were working through the weekend. I do believe there were

amendments that we could have agreed to. There were changes that we could have agreed to that would have had bipartisan support here. I understand that the White House did not agree to that, and I think that is a shame.

I think the White House made the wrong call, plain and simple. I think the White House got this wrong, and I just hope that we will be here today united as a body, putting aside partisan differences, and that we will move this bill forward and send it to the Senate, where the Senate can work its will.

If the Senate wants to modify it and send it back to the House and try to address any of the concerns that have been raised by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle or this side of the aisle, great, the Senate can do that. They can send it back to us, and we can send a product to the President.

We need to address this, and we need to address it quickly. If we allow this to fester, then we undermine our own national security, and importantly, at this moment in time, we give credence and power to an international body to which we are not a party, to which Israel is not a party, and that is being used to flex political muscle by targeting the Prime Minister for defending his own country. That we cannot stand for.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that my colleagues support H.R. 8282.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. RAMIREZ).

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 8282.

I realize the pattern here. When my Republican colleagues can't legislate, they decide they are going to score cheap points using three primary tools: fear-mongering, punishing, and silencing.

I want to break down a little bit of this bill today.

**Fear-mongering:** The bill invokes the protection of United States military personnel. Now, let me clarify. U.S. military personnel are not subject to the ICC because the United States is not a party to the Rome Statute, which I find shameful.

**Punishing:** The bill would impose sanctions against anyone who aids the ICC in investigating, detaining, arresting, or prosecuting anyone who has not consented to the court's jurisdiction. Let me clarify. Let me make a point of clarification here. The bill would weaponize sanctions against major U.S. allies who support the court, allies like Germany, France, the U.K., Japan, and countless others.

**Silencing:** How? If enacted, no funding may be used for the International Criminal Court. Another point of clarification: Those efforts would weaken the ICC, and that makes us all less safe.

It is important we remember why the ICC exists, as defined by the Rome Statute: "Mindful that during this century, millions of children, women, and

men have been victims of unimaginable atrocities that deeply shock the conscience of humanity."

It recognizes that "such grave crimes threaten the peace, security, and well-being of the world," and it is "determined to put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of these crimes and, thus, to contribute to the prevention of such crimes."

I stand in opposition to this resolution because we need the ICC.

In the last 241 days, thousands have been victims of unimaginable atrocities, and Netanyahu's violations of international law have threatened the peace of the world.

I am determined to put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of these crimes, and I urge a "no" vote.

Mr. MCCUAUL. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, the ICC's ruling is outrageous. The organization has dishonored itself. I would have been happy to cosponsor a resolution denouncing and sanctioning. I wanted to cosponsor this bill when I read the title; unfortunately, I read the bill.

Once again, we have a poorly drafted, poorly thought-out messaging bill that hasn't gone through the committee process, that hasn't gone through regular order, that hasn't been thought through. No amendments are allowed on the floor, and the author defends it on the theory that, well, if the bill is poorly drafted, the Senate will save us and correct it.

We cannot vote "yes" on a bill today that is this infirm and count on the Senate to clean it up.

Once again, the Republican Party has decided to hurt Israel for its own benefit. Israel has one friend in the world, the United States—plus Guatemala. Israel has survived because it has had the support of both political parties.

During the first 76 years of Israel's existence, Democrats have had roughly half the power in this city, and Republicans about half of the time have been in control. If Israel is to survive another 76 years, it will need the support of both parties. Yet, the purpose of this bill, which masquerades as pro-Israel, like so many bills brought up as messaging bills, is to drive a wedge between the Democratic Party and Israel for the benefit not of Israel but the Republican Party.

□ 1145

The decision by the International Criminal Court's prosecutor to seek arrest warrants against Israeli leaders is an outrageous perversion of everything anyone who has dedicated themselves to human rights holds dear, as I have for 28 years on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

It is a perversion of the international justice system. It is putrid. It dishonors those who originally thought

that the International Criminal Court would be a good idea. It undermines the rule of law, and it is based on a hatred of Israel and perhaps a hatred of Jews.

I would like to vote for this bill, but unfortunately I read it. Now, the ranking member has pointed out a number of problems. I will point out a couple as well. You cannot vote for this until you read section 2(a)(1)(A), which imposes sanctions on anyone who assists an effort to investigate, assists an effort to investigate.

What does that mean? It includes those who provide exculpatory information. Israel was subject to investigation. I am sure many patriotic Israelis and well-meaning Americans provided information to the ICC, as CHIP ROY did when he gave his speech, detailing why that action is wrongful on the law and the facts; but you assist an investigation when you provide exculpatory information, and anyone who does that is subject to sanction. Mr. ROY won't be sanctioned because he is a U.S. citizen, but anyone else who contacted the court and said here is what you are doing is wrong will be subject to these sanctions.

Second, this bill punishes the spouses and family members, even estranged family members. You may feel that your son has gone wrong. By involvement with the ICC, you get sanctioned for what that son does. Particularly, I want to focus on spouses. As I said, the bill punishes spouses and family members, even those spouses and family members who oppose the ruling.

You are going to wonder why I have this poster up here. All last week, the Republican Party told us that the decision of the Alitos to fly an insurrectionist flag at their two houses should not be imparted to the Justice because it was done by his spouse. Today, one week later, they come back and say that when a judge does something wrong, we are going to impart it to the spouse. Which is it? Are Justices and their spouses responsible for each other's actions or not? Some Republican is going to have to explain this to me.

Now, of course, this is even different and more extreme. Justice Alito lived in the houses, Justice Alito did not disclaim the message of these flags, and Justice Alito is not estranged from his wife, yet someone who is totally apart from anyone at the ICC but happens to be related will be subject to sanctions. Again, how can you defend an appeal to Heaven under those circumstances?

The attention of the world should be on the incredible hypocrisy on the International Criminal Court, which failed to issue rulings about driving the Rohingya from their home, about the complete depopulation of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, of the Republic of Artsakh where the entire country was driven into exile in ethnic cleansing. It failed to issue a ruling dealing with northern Ethiopia, where 600,000 people died. This illegitimate court failed to issue a ruling on the Yazidis,

who were subjected to a genocide, as the world watched thousands of Yazidis being butchered and burned alive and subjected to sexual slavery.

Instead of focusing our attention on the hypocrisy of the court, we are focused on this poorly drafted resolution. I tried making suggestions to the author. Every suggestion I made was rejected. This was not an attempt to pass a pro-Israel bill.

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

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, this was not a pro-Israel bill. Instead it was a poorly drafted, rush-to-the-floor, strictly partisan messaging bill that distracts the world from the hypocrisy of the ICC and focuses us instead on a supposedly pro-Israel, performatively pro-Israel Republican bill.

We will have to vote "no," and then we will have to work later to demonstrate how wrong and how putrid the action of the ICC is.

Mr. McCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

I think it is important for me to say, Mr. Speaker, at the outset that I really do appreciate the efforts that were made to make this legislation bipartisan. Trying to get to good in a bipartisan way is always my goal on the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Chairman McCARTHY has, indeed, been a partner in that effort. I thank him for his partnership.

That said, the bill as it is on the floor, I can't support because I believe it will be counterproductive to our interests, harm our relations with allies, and undermine American global leadership. Unfortunately, I believe the bill on the floor will do exactly that. Sanctioning the court and all those who support it will backfire badly on us, and I must oppose this legislation and urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

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

Let me say first, I am extremely troubled by how the ICC has acted, and I think everybody in this body should be, both Republican and Democrat. Americans should be concerned.

More than 20 years ago, our predecessors had the foresight to know full well that the ICC would one day try to target democratic countries that had their own robust judicial systems over which the ICC has no legitimate jurisdiction.

In 2020, the ICC decided to authorize a formal investigation into alleged war crimes in Afghanistan. A large bipartisan group of House Members wrote to the Secretary of State at that time in response with a strong concern stating: "Both Democratic and Republican ad-

ministrations have refused to join the court in part because they feared its politicization and misuse."

That is exactly what has happened here today. They have no basis for these actions, and by seeking warrants for Israel's Prime Minister and Defense Minister, they have cheapened this court's reputation and exposed it for what it really is—an illegitimate court that puts politics over justice.

Today it is Israel, Mr. Speaker, but tomorrow it could be the United States. We must sanction those who deliberately abuse their power for political gain. Their actions seek to undermine Israel and its people, who are in a fight for their very existence. We must act not only to protect Israel, but ourselves, from these unelected international bureaucrats.

If they willingly seek to imprison our allies or the United States, we must send a clear message—you are neither welcome nor wanted on American soil. America always stands behind our allies and their legitimate governments.

If I could just say to my dear friend, Mr. MEEKS, and to our colleagues in the House, we did work very hard to get to a bipartisan agreement, a bipartisan bill that the Speaker approved and Mr. JEFFRIES approved, but when it went to the White House, it was rejected.

I always think—and I think Mr. MEEKS agrees—that we are always strongest, particularly this committee, when we speak with one voice as one nation, in this case to the ICC and to the judges. A partisan messaging bill was not my intention here, nor do I believe it was Mr. MEEKS' intention, but that is where we are right now.

I remain forever hopeful and optimistic, however, that during the process and during the course of this legislation that we can still get back to that bipartisan bill that we talked about, whether it is reached when this goes over to the Senate or perhaps Mr. MEEKS and I can mark up that bipartisan bill on our committee, on the Foreign Affairs Committee, and then get it to the House floor where we can then proceed with regular order in a bipartisan fashion that I believe would be best for this Nation, best for Israel, and best to send deterrents to the International Criminal Court.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on passage of the bill.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

□ 1200

**MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2025**

**GENERAL LEAVE**

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 8580, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 8580.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROSE) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1204

**IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 8580) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, and for other purposes, with Mr. ROSE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CLINE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased today to speak in support of this year's Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Under current leadership, the Veterans Health Administration has been distracted from its core mission, using official resources for political purposes such as lobbying Congress, pushing for DEI policies, and even going so far as to process medical care claims for illegal aliens.

Our veterans deserve better. Therefore, House Republicans are moving forward with a bill that refocuses the VA back to its core mission by fully funding veterans' healthcare programs and benefits while cutting out radical prerogatives that divert resources away from critical veteran care.

In addition to supporting those who have served, this bill would bolster our national security interests in the Indo-Pacific region to counter China by improving our defense posture in the region.

The funding allocated in this bill would equip our Active-Duty servicemembers by constructing the facilities they so desperately need and honor our commitment to the veterans who have so dutifully served us here at home.

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 8580, the fiscal year 2025 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies bill.

While I unfortunately cannot support the bill on the floor today, I am grateful to Chairman CARTER for the work that we have been able to accomplish together over the years on this subcommittee.

I know we both prioritize quality of life for our servicemembers and their families and caring for our veterans, but, sadly, the bill before us today is built on a framework that once again walks away from the bipartisan Fiscal Responsibility Act agreement, which is law, which was the basis for the bills that we passed just a couple of months ago.

While the FY25 MILCON-VA bill doesn't face cuts nearly as dramatic as the other bills, veterans, servicemembers, and their families rely on programs throughout the Federal Government.

These funding levels only move us further from a bipartisan agreement on all of the funding bills that those who served our Nation rely on.

On the military construction side, this bill cuts funding for servicemembers and their families by \$718 million, compared to last year's bill. This cut will slow crucial progress to modernize and improve DOD's infrastructure.

In fiscal year '24, we provided DOD with \$30 million in dedicated funding for resiliency, a comparatively small sum of funding now, which will pay huge dividends in the future and ensure our national security in the face of our changing climate.

By eliminating the dedicated resiliency funding this year, this bill will threaten future military readiness because we are not making sure we invest in hardening facilities to make sure that they can withstand the impact of natural disasters.

Cutting military construction now slows our historically bipartisan efforts to reduce the infrastructure back-

log to strengthen our national security and to improve the quality of life of our servicemembers and their families.

Perhaps the most egregious part of the bill is all the partisan riders it includes. This bill is usually first up on the floor, like we are this fiscal year, because we have a bipartisan process.

Unfortunately, partisan culture war riders have distracted from our ability to accomplish that. We have riders that include preventing the VA from implementing its interim final rule on abortion care, which is now final, by the way, to provide abortion services under limited circumstances, abortion counseling, and to ensure that veterans have equal access to healthcare regardless of what State they live in, especially in a time when reproductive rights are under attack around the country.

A woman's decision whether or not to have an abortion should be made between her and her doctor and her family. It should not be made by politicians in this Chamber.

This bill includes riders that do everything from prohibiting VA from implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, as well as training, to a petty, bigoted prohibition from flying the Pride flag over VA facilities during Pride Month, to add insult to injury, from protecting people who speak or act under the guise of religious freedom, essentially authorizing the arbitrary discrimination against LGBTQI+ people and to prohibiting access to gender-affirming care, just to name a few, all aimed to disenfranchise veterans from the VA.

Let me just note: The United States did not make exceptions to the promises that we made our servicemembers in exchange for their service and sacrifice. We made promises to everyone.

This bill undermines VA's ability to report a beneficiary to the National Instant Criminal Background Check system to keep guns out of the hands of people who are prohibited under Federal law from purchasing or possessing firearms. It is prohibiting VA from following the law that is intended to protect veterans and those around them.

We have a dramatic suicide problem among our veteran population, and allowing people who are prohibited by law to possess a gun makes that suicide more likely, not less, and puts other people around them in their care circle at risk. That is unacceptable, irresponsible, and unnecessary.

This bill prioritizes guns over protecting veterans. It is truly a shame that this bill includes these poison pill riders.

They create division between us when we all should have a shared goal of providing healthcare and benefits to our veterans.

These culture war riders were rejected in conference negotiations last year, and we know that they will be rejected again this year in order to reach a final agreement. This bill can't pass with all of these poison pill riders attached to it.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Chair, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I am honored to present the FY25 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bill to the House today.

This bill supports our troops, their families, and the Nation's veterans. The bill makes good on the Republican commitment to bring bills to the floor that comply with the Fiscal Responsibility Act while honoring our commitment to our Nation's veterans and our troops.

To honor that commitment, the bill provides full funding for healthcare and benefits for veterans. They have earned these benefits, and we are making good on our promises to them.

To provide for those who wear the uniform now, the bill includes \$412 million over the budget request to support crucial investments in barracks and family housing. We must keep our word to our servicemembers and their families.

In addition, we provide robust funding to build upon last year's work to enable the Department of Defense to meet the challenges in the Indo-Pacific.

We also have multiple provisions in our bill to protect Americans' core values; namely, freedom, equality, and justice, from being trampled on by unaccountable bureaucrats.

I thank Ranking Member WASSERMAN SCHULTZ for her work on this bill. Though we have our policy differences, I am glad we are at this step in the process and hope we can continue to work together in support of our troops and our veterans.

This bill cares for our veterans, and it supports our troops and their families, and it stands up for American values.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 8580, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1215

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), the distinguished ranking member of the Appropriations Committee.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I thank the ranking member for yielding.

I rise in opposition to this bill that shortchanges our servicemembers and endangers military families.

Before I begin, I thank the majority and minority subcommittee staff, particularly Farouk Ophaso and Tyler Coe. After nearly 10 years on the committee, Jennifer Neuscheler departed at the end of May. In her place, Farouk is now the minority clerk for the Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies. I congratulate Farouk and wel-

come him to his first House floor debate as a subcommittee clerk.

Now, to the bill.

This bill would hurt our veterans and military readiness and would worsen the quality of life for servicemembers and their families. It leaves military installations, servicemembers, veterans, and their families vulnerable to natural disasters. It harms women and moves us closer to a national abortion ban.

This bill disarms our military in the face of the climate crisis by failing to include dedicated funding for resilience projects to help protect our bases and installations from rising sea levels and extreme weather. The bill walks back investments in natural disaster recovery that help our military rebuild after disasters strike, and it includes harmful policy riders preventing the implementation of executive orders on climate change and clean energy. Impeding our military's efforts to confront climate change puts servicemembers in harm's way and hurts America's readiness and national security.

Military leaders, including under former President Trump, have cautioned of the dangers climate change poses to our military. Former Secretary Mattis warned that climate change threatens American interests and our military assets around the world and said: "Climate change is a challenge that requires a broader, whole-of-government response."

This bill endangers veterans by recklessly undermining the ability to keep guns out of the hands of those prohibited under Federal law from purchasing or possessing firearms who could be a harm to themselves or others.

This bill attacks the rights of women veterans by limiting abortion access and prohibiting abortion counseling.

The women who volunteer to serve and defend this Nation should not come home to find their medical and family planning decisions being made by anyone other than themselves, their families, and their doctors. We will defeat all of the majority's anti-choice riders, as we did last year, but I am dismayed this body is being forced to waste time with this charade yet again.

House Republicans are taking us down an already well-trodden path toward chaos, division, and shutdown threats. Like last year, we are beginning this process with top-line funding levels that fall short of the American people's needs and short of what both parties just agreed to in March, when 80 percent of the Appropriations Committee voted to pass the final 2024 appropriations acts. The majority is pursuing harmful policies that needlessly divide the country, divide the Congress, and harm Americans.

Like last year, the final 2025 spending bills will be the product of negotiations between Democrats and Republicans in the House and Senate. We can begin that process now, or we can squander yet another summer on bills that will never become law.

Our starting point for 2025 must provide, at a minimum, a 1 percent increase in defense and nondefense funding, consistent with the framework set in the Fiscal Responsibility Act that House Republicans demanded as the price for averting a catastrophic default last year.

Let me reiterate: Democrats will accept nothing less than a 1 percent increase over 2024 in nondefense and defense funding.

Last month, we received a letter from dozens of stakeholder organizations already frustrated by the House majority's stance, and it reads: "We ask that you take the opportunity in FY25 to restore some normalcy by rejecting these extreme and polarizing provisions and cuts, which are as damaging as they are unrealistic."

The majority may want to suggest they are supporting veterans, but this bill does not contain all of the programs the most vulnerable veterans depend on. At least 1.2 million veterans rely on food stamps. Tens of thousands of veterans rely on housing vouchers. Thousands of veterans utilize job training programs to reenter civilian life. All of these programs and many others face severe cuts under the majority's funding levels across all appropriations bills.

I cannot support this bill. I hope Republicans will abandon their partisan strategy and join Democrats at the table to support veterans, servicemembers, and military families. It is time to govern.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER).

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Chair, I thank the chairman for his courtesy in yielding to me.

I rise in support of my bipartisan amendment, which supports critical relief for certain defense contractors who faced crippling cost overruns due to inflation.

As so many of us have heard from our families across our districts, the administration's harmful inflation is cutting deep into constituents' pocketbooks. Many American businesses working on projects, which are critical to U.S. national security, are facing the same staggering price increases.

Because of the importance of their work to our safety and security, local employers, like those working on the National Geospatial Agency project in St. Louis, were forced to pay steep, unanticipated price increases in order to meet the projects' original deadlines.

I am proud of the St. Louis area companies and workers who made tough sacrifices while doing their part to safeguard our national security and keep construction of the new NGA West headquarters on track. These economic disruptions and runaway price increases threaten to trigger a crisis that could significantly weaken our defense industrial base.

Twice, on a bipartisan basis, Congress has narrowly authorized the Department of Defense to provide extraordinary relief for these companies in order to preserve a healthy and competitive defense industrial base, but that funding has never been appropriated.

I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on my amendment supporting necessary and carefully tailored relief that will stabilize our defense industrial base.

**Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.** Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), the current distinguished ranking member of the Agriculture-Rural Development Subcommittee and the former ranking member of the MILCON-VA Subcommittee.

**Mr. BISHOP** of Georgia. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I rise today to voice strong opposition to the FY25 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bill that is being presented by our colleagues from across the aisle.

This bill should reflect our Nation’s values, priorities, and commitments. It should reflect who we are and should help move us toward who we aim to be. Though we have the difficult task of balancing financial figures, we cannot sacrifice our potential or jeopardize the well-being of our military families, veterans, and our national security.

While I believe in principle as professed supporters of our national security, my colleagues would want to prioritize caring for veterans, supporting our servicemembers and their families, and bolstering our national defense in theory. The bill they have presented today, however, fails to acknowledge the diverse individuals who make up our armed forces and it falls short of addressing their needs.

I echo the concerns of many Americans who recognize that embracing the diversity of our Nation and empowering those who seek to serve strengthens our military force. This inclusive approach not only fosters a deeper sense of patriotism and service among all Americans but encourages more individuals to consider military service when they see themselves represented within it. Leveraging our Nation’s full potential enhances our military’s ability to effectively respond to the global challenges we confront.

My additional concern lies in the proposed \$718 million cut in military construction funding compared to last year, along with partisan riders that undermine our commitment to all of our servicemembers, our veterans, and their families. This bill would jeopardize the well-being and safety of our servicemembers and their loved ones.

Additionally, cutting vital funding for education, job opportunities, housing, and food assistance undermines the crucial support systems relied upon by veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

Such actions compromise the ability of our servicemembers to focus on their duties abroad when they are concerned about the well-being of their families back home.

This bill, in its current form, does not align with the principles of our democracy and denies equal opportunity for all Americans to patriotically serve their country.

We must reevaluate its provisions and make necessary adjustments to ensure it genuinely serves our national interests and does not compromise military readiness. Our Nation and those who serve it deserve nothing less.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill. Let’s make it better.

**Mr. CARTER** of Texas. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

**Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.** Madam Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DELUZIO), a veteran of our Armed Forces.

**Mr. DELUZIO.** Madam Chair, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for yielding.

I rise in opposition to the bill. I think that at this moment, my fellow veterans and the VA are at a critical point in time. We are seeing folks come in, because of the PACT Act, who served in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, who were exposed to burn pits. We need to meet that moment by investing in the VA.

Unfortunately, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have decided to use this bill to attack abortion rights and to attack reproductive freedom. I think every veteran who raised their right hand was writing a blank check to this country, and my fellow veterans who are women ought to have the full reproductive care they have earned from the VA. This bill, which would ban abortions, even where there are health risks to a veteran, is unacceptable to me and is unacceptable to so many in this country and so many who have served.

I urge my Republican colleagues to meet this moment by working with us and getting these toxic attacks on people’s freedom out of these spending bills. Let’s get a bill that we can pass together.

**Mr. CARTER** of Texas. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

**Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.** Madam Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. STANSBURY).

**Ms. STANSBURY.** Madam Chair, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 8580. I was just home, like many of you, honoring our military and our veterans who paid the ultimate sacrifice on Memorial Day. That is why it is so unimaginable and shameful that we are here today on the House floor as House Republicans are proposing to cut the military and VA budget.

We are talking about \$6 billion in cuts to medical care for our veterans, \$718 million in cuts to military con-

struction that would impact our readiness and affect the quality of lives and safety of American servicemembers and their families, and \$30 million in cuts to climate resilience programs that would affect the military readiness of our bases and servicemembers across the world. It is shameful.

In a time when Democrats fought to pass the PACT Act and our veterans literally stood on the steps outside of this building to make sure that we got it done, it is inconceivable that they would be here today proposing to cut programs and services.

In New Mexico, we have an incredible history of service from our Navajo Code Talkers to our heroes of Bataan, and we will not sit silently by while you try to underfund and disenfranchise our veterans. It is shameful.

**Mr. CARTER** of Texas. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

**Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.** Madam Chair, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

**Mr. CARTER** of Texas. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This is a good bill. I hear about all these cuts, but what I see is that we have done our duty to both our veterans and our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines around the world. We have gone out of our way to fund the area where we have our biggest fear of combat, which is the Indo-Pacific.

I traveled over there, as did Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ at a different time. We both saw that we have an awful lot of projects that have to be dealt with over there. We did our part to do that, and I am sure DOD will do their part to do that, too. We have to be ready in case and until the flag goes up, if it should, with the Chinese.

□ 1230

The issues on those islands is that the wind and dampness destroy buildings, so we are going to have lots of building projects that are going to go on over that way. We have provided the appropriate amount of funding as we had it available for those projects. We also had a bunch of barracks issues around the country, and we provided to fully fund a certain number of those barracks and to give guidance funding for the rest because we intend to fund them all.

In my opinion, we are always underfunded in military construction. I think Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ will agree with me on that. We have more than we can say grace over when it comes to funding projects relative to our military.

For that reason, I think that we have done the best we can for them. I don’t see the cuts that are being talked about. I am curious about that, but then I am curious about a lot of things around here.

I am blessed to have a ranking member who I can work with. She is a kind person. We get along just great except

we don't agree on any policies, but other than that, we get along just great. I guess that is a blessing, that I can plan to keep going after this.

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO), who is the distinguished ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee who goes to bat for our Nation's veterans every single day on the authorizing committee.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague from Florida for yielding time.

Here we go again. Another year, another Military Construction-Veterans Affairs appropriations bill full of partisan riders.

When someone takes the oath and joins the military, they are making a selfless commitment to protect our country. As Members of Congress, we must be ready to pay for all costs of war and to help every veteran, regardless of their gender, faith, race, or sexual orientation.

That is why I am disturbed that my Republican colleagues have included many of the same partisan riders in this year's bill that were in this bill last year. These radical riders aim to restrict access to abortion and attack LGBTQ+ rights, attacks that are occurring during Pride Month no less.

There is, once again, an amendment to this bill that will make it easier for the most vulnerable veterans to access guns and more difficult for VA to help them. The inclusion of this rider spreads the lie that if a veteran seeks mental health care at the VA, then their guns will be taken away. This could not be further from the truth. VA will not take your guns if you come to VA for mental health care.

We want to encourage veterans to get the mental health care they have earned and often very much need. This fear-mongering of VA overreach could lead to more veterans not seeking life-saving assistance. Veterans have a higher rate of suicide than the general population, and they are more likely to use a gun. Knowing this, how could we, in good conscience, vote for this bill with the risks it poses to our veterans?

There is another harmful amendment that would lead to greater privatization of veterans' healthcare. Specifically, it would require the VA to apply new access standards for non-VA care. As written, this amendment would cost VA billions of dollars per year to implement and result in tens of thousands of veterans being sent to private providers for lower quality, higher cost care than they would otherwise receive at VA. This is a significant policy change that has not been considered by the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Republicans are attaching it to this appropriations bill because they know it would never pass as a standalone bill. The appropriations process should not be used to legislate such a sweep-

ing change. This is deeply concerning to me and should give every Member voting in this Chamber great pause.

Poison pill riders have turned what should be a nonpartisan issue of helping our veterans into a political game. Stop the political games, and let's get serious about helping every veteran. Until then, I cannot support this bill in good faith.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting "no" and opposing this legislation.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE), who is the chairman of the full committee.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chair, I thank my good friend from Texas, the distinguished chairman of the subcommittee, for yielding.

Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of this important piece of legislation.

There are many things that set our Nation apart from others. One of our greatest differentiators is the sustained call to service Americans have met generation after generation. Those who have worn the uniform past and present took an oath to defend our country, our ideals, and our people. Just as our veterans and troops answered the call of duty, so must this Chamber in meeting our constitutional obligations.

That is why it is deeply fitting that the first fiscal year of 2025 appropriations bill we take up covers military construction and Veterans Affairs, two of the highest priorities for our Nation.

This bill provides robust funding for military construction projects with a particular focus on the Pacific region and military family housing. These projects ensure that we can meet our national defense needs both at home and abroad. They also support housing at bases across the country and around the world, allowing members of our Armed Forces to serve their country without being separated from their loved ones.

Even more importantly, this legislation provides full funding for healthcare and benefits for our Nation's veterans. Through devotion to duty and great personal sacrifice, our veterans have served this country and served it well, defending not only our homeland but our families and our way of life. The services the VA provides have been truly earned and represent the thanks of a grateful nation to our men and women who have served in uniform.

Critically, today's bill fulfills these priorities while remaining true to the budgetary levels outlined in the Fiscal Responsibility Act, but in a reflection of the deep importance of this topic to America, this bill actually appropriates \$400 million more than the President's budget request. We can and must direct our taxpayer dollars to our most important priorities, and today's bill succeeds in that important objective.

Mr. Chair, I thank Chairman CARTER for his hard work on this measure, and

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting it on final passage.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I am prepared to close.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, it is with a heavy heart that we—unnecessarily—oppose this legislation on our side of the aisle because this bill was drafted in a way that it never should have been and doesn't have to be.

The stark reality, by any definition, is that this bill cuts military construction by \$718 million from last fiscal year to this one, and it cuts funding for our veterans by \$6 billion from last year to this one.

There is no way around that. That is actually what we are doing. That is the math.

It is also pretty unprecedented. We generally increase funding in this bill. That is why it is so bipartisan. It is why our committee goes first, because we have a bill that, as Judge Carter said, we are really able to work very closely together on the nuts and bolts of taking care of our veterans and our servicemembers.

Unfortunately, because the Republicans refused to adhere to the law—that is, the Fiscal Responsibility Act—and refused to make sure that we, in that agreement, adhere to the agreement where we increased nondefense discretionary and defense discretionary by 1 percent, as a result, the allocations given to our committee were paltry. Republicans decided to make cuts to individuals who have signed up to defend our country, whom our committee is responsible for going to bat for improving our veterans' and servicemembers' quality of life, who are promised that protection no matter who they are, no matter whom they love, and no matter what gender they are.

It is wrong to cut funding for veterans and servicemembers, and it is also wrong to load this bill up with partisan political culture war riders that deny women access to reproductive healthcare.

Let's be clear. What the Republicans have done here is they are eliminating the ability of the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that no matter where a woman veteran lives in this country, she is able to access an abortion in conjunction with the recommendation of her medical provider in the cases of rape or incest and in the cases of the life and health of the mother.

What the Republicans do in this bill is that a woman veteran has to be dying in order to be able to get access to abortion care. That is wrong because no one who has signed up and who has served our country, committed to laying their life on the line in defense of our country, should have politicians, judges, or the government making the

most deeply difficult personal healthcare decisions for them.

That is what Republicans do in this bill.

In addition to eliminating our ability to ensure that we can have seamless communication and support for our veterans, they are eliminating the DEI programming.

We have a very large agency. It is an agency in which we need to make sure that it can run seamlessly, but they are discriminating against LGBTQ+ people, and they are loading up this bill with unrelated, controversial, and unnecessary amendments that are going to prevent us from being able to make sure this bill can become law.

In fact, all those poison pill culture war riders are not going to survive conference, just like they didn't last year. We are wasting time here when we should be devoted to making sure we care for our servicemembers and our veterans, which is what this committee has always committed to.

I am sad I cannot support this bill. It doesn't have to be this way. I have tremendous respect for my friend, Judge Carter. He is right. We do work very well together.

Mr. Chair, I also thank our incredible staff for the work that they have done. Both of our staffs have changed over a little bit, so we have some newbies managing this. We appreciate all the effort that they have put in.

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

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chairman, this is a good bill. We are above the President's numbers both in MILCON and in veterans, and it just a matter of how you look at things as to whether the social things that we talk about have concern or don't have concern among our various people. We are speaking about the things that concern us that are causing people not to want to join the military because of the added on governmental interference in their lives by these various things that they have set out in regulations, and we are trying to correct that.

Whatever happens, every bill we have, somebody doesn't like something about it, but the reality is we worked hard. I thank my staff. I thank all the staffs for working together on this to come up with a good bill. It deserves a positive vote on the bill, and I hope all my colleagues will seriously consider voting for the bill.

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

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. ROUZER). All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

An amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 118-35, modified by the amendment printed in part A of House Report 118-535, shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of further amend-

ment under the 5-minute rule and shall be considered as read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 8580

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

**TITLE I**

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

**MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY**

*For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and real property for the Army as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Army Corps of Engineers and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, and for construction and operation of facilities in support of the functions of the Commander in Chief, \$2,217,757,000, to remain available until September 30, 2029: Provided, That, of this amount, not to exceed \$334,738,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, architect and engineer services, and host nation support, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Army determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor: Provided further, That of the amount made available under this heading, \$87,100,000 shall be for the projects and activities, and in the amounts, specified in the table under the heading "Military Construction, Army" in the report accompanying this Act, in addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes.*

**MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)**

*For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, installations, facilities, and real property for activities and agencies of the Department of Defense (other than the military departments), as currently authorized by law, \$3,500,083,000, to remain available until September 30, 2029: Provided, That such amounts of this appropriation as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to such appropriations of the Department of Defense available for military construction or family housing as the Secretary may designate, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes, and for the same time period, as the appropriation or fund to which transferred: Provided further, That, of the amount, not to exceed \$395,131,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Defense determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor: Provided further, That of the amount made available under this heading, \$47,920,000 shall be for the projects and activities, and in the amounts, specified in the table under the heading "Military Construction, Defense-Wide" in the report accompanying this Act, in addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes.*

**MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**

*For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Army National Guard, and contributions therefor, as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$367,129,000, to remain available until September 30, 2029: Provided, That, of the amount, not to exceed \$30,529,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Director of the Army National Guard determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.*

**MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR NATIONAL GUARD**

*For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Air National Guard, and contributions therefor, as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$195,792,000, to remain available until September 30, 2029: Provided, That, of the amount, not to exceed \$15,792,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Director of the Air National Guard determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.*

**MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY RESERVE**

*For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Army Reserve as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$265,032,000, to remain available until September 30, 2029: Provided, That, of the amount, not to exceed \$41,508,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Chief of the Army Reserve determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons*

therefor: Provided further, That of the amount made available under this heading, \$5,000,000 shall be for the projects and activities, and in the amounts, specified in the table under the heading "Military Construction, Army Reserve" in the report accompanying this Act, in addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes.

#### MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the reserve components of the Navy and Marine Corps as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$67,329,000, to remain available until September 30, 2029: Provided, That, of the amount, not to exceed \$3,219,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Navy determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor: Provided further, That, of the amount made available under this heading, \$37,500,000 shall be for the projects and activities, and in the amounts, specified in the table under the heading "Military Construction, Navy Reserve" in the report accompanying this Act, in addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes.

#### MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Air Force Reserve as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$50,499,000, to remain available until September 30, 2029: Provided, That, of the amount, not to exceed \$3,798,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Chief of the Air Force Reserve determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

#### NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

##### SECURITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

For the United States share of the cost of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program for the acquisition and construction of military facilities and installations (including international military headquarters) and for related expenses for the collective defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Area as authorized by section 2806 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$433,864,000, to remain available until expended.

#### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE ACCOUNT

For deposit into the Department of Defense Base Closure Account, established by section 2906(a) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), \$547,961,000, to remain available until expended.

#### FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

For expenses of family housing for the Army for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, \$276,647,000, to remain available until September 30, 2029.

#### FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, ARMY

For expenses of family housing for the Army for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, \$485,611,000.

#### FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, \$245,742,000, to remain available until September 30, 2029.

#### FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, \$387,217,000.

#### FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

For expenses of family housing for the Air Force for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, \$221,549,000, to remain available until September 30, 2029.

#### FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, AIR FORCE

For expenses of family housing for the Air Force for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, \$336,250,000.

#### FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, DEFENSE-WIDE

For expenses of family housing for the activities and agencies of the Department of Defense (other than the military departments) for operation and maintenance, leasing, and minor construction, as authorized by law, \$52,156,000.

#### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

##### FAMILY HOUSING IMPROVEMENT FUND

For the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund, \$8,195,000, to remain available until expended, for family housing initiatives undertaken pursuant to section 2883 of title 10, United States Code, providing alternative means of acquiring and improving military family housing and supporting facilities.

#### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

##### MILITARY UNACCOMPANIED HOUSING IMPROVEMENT FUND

For the Department of Defense Military Unaccompanied Housing Improvement Fund, \$497,000, to remain available until expended, for unaccompanied housing initiatives undertaken pursuant to section 2883 of title 10, United States Code, providing alternative means of acquiring and improving military unaccompanied housing and supporting facilities.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

SEC. 101. None of the funds made available in this title shall be expended for payments under a cost-plus-a-fixed-fee contract for construction, where cost estimates exceed \$25,000, to be performed within the United States, except Alaska, without the specific approval in writing of the Secretary of Defense setting forth the reasons therefor.

SEC. 102. Funds made available in this title for construction shall be available for hire of passenger motor vehicles.

SEC. 103. Funds made available in this title for construction may be used for advances to the Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, for the construction of access roads as authorized by section 210 of title 23, United States Code, when projects authorized therein are certified as important to the national defense by the Secretary of Defense.

SEC. 104. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to begin construction of new bases in the United States for which specific appropriations have not been made.

SEC. 105. None of the funds made available in this title shall be used for purchase of land or

land easements in excess of 100 percent of the value as determined by the Army Corps of Engineers or the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, except: (1) where there is a determination of value by a Federal court; (2) purchases negotiated by the Attorney General or the designee of the Attorney General; (3) where the estimated value is less than \$25,000; or (4) as otherwise determined by the Secretary of Defense to be in the public interest.

SEC. 106. None of the funds made available in this title shall be used to: (1) acquire land; (2) provide for site preparation; or (3) install utilities for any family housing, except housing for which funds have been made available in annual Acts making appropriations for military construction.

SEC. 107. None of the funds made available in this title for minor construction may be used to transfer or relocate any activity from one base or installation to another, without prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 108. None of the funds made available in this title may be used for the procurement of steel for any construction project or activity for which American steel producers, fabricators, and manufacturers have been denied the opportunity to compete for such steel procurement.

SEC. 109. None of the funds available to the Department of Defense for military construction or family housing during the current fiscal year may be used to pay real property taxes in any foreign nation.

SEC. 110. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to initiate a new installation overseas without prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 111. None of the funds made available in this title may be obligated for architect and engineer contracts estimated by the Government to exceed \$500,000 for projects to be accomplished in Japan, in any North Atlantic Treaty Organization member country, or in countries bordering the Arabian Gulf, unless such contracts are awarded to United States firms or United States firms in joint venture with host nation firms.

SEC. 112. None of the funds made available in this title for military construction in the United States territories and possessions in the Pacific and on Kwajalein Atoll, or in countries bordering the Arabian Gulf, may be used to award any contract estimated by the Government to exceed \$1,000,000 to a foreign contractor: Provided, That this section shall not be applicable to contract awards for which the lowest responsive and responsible bid of a United States contractor exceeds the lowest responsive and responsible bid of a foreign contractor by greater than 20 percent: Provided further, That this section shall not apply to contract awards for military construction on Kwajalein Atoll for which the lowest responsive and responsible bid is submitted by a Marshallese contractor.

SEC. 113. The Secretary of Defense shall inform the appropriate committees of both Houses of Congress, including the Committees on Appropriations, of plans and scope of any proposed military exercise involving United States personnel 30 days prior to its occurring, if amounts expended for construction, either temporary or permanent, are anticipated to exceed \$100,000.

SEC. 114. Funds appropriated to the Department of Defense for construction in prior years shall be available for construction authorized for each such military department by the authorizations enacted into law during the current session of Congress.

SEC. 115. For military construction or family housing projects that are being completed with funds otherwise expired or lapsed for obligation, expired or lapsed funds may be used to pay the cost of associated supervision, inspection, overhead, engineering and design on those projects and on subsequent claims, if any.

**SEC. 116.** Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any funds made available to a military department or defense agency for the construction of military projects may be obligated for a military construction project or contract, or for any portion of such a project or contract, at any time before the end of the fourth fiscal year after the fiscal year for which funds for such project were made available, if the funds obligated for such project: (1) are obligated from funds available for military construction projects; and (2) do not exceed the amount appropriated for such project, plus any amount by which the cost of such project is increased pursuant to law.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

**SEC. 117.** Subject to 30 days prior notification, or 14 days for a notification provided in an electronic medium pursuant to sections 480 and 2883 of title 10, United States Code, to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, such additional amounts as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to: (1) the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction in "Family Housing" accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time as amounts appropriated directly to the Fund; or (2) the Department of Defense Military Unaccompanied Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction of military unaccompanied housing in "Military Construction" accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time as amounts appropriated directly to the Fund: Provided, That appropriations made available to the Funds shall be available to cover the costs, as defined in section 502(5) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, of direct loans or loan guarantees issued by the Department of Defense pursuant to the provisions of subchapter IV of chapter 169 of title 10, United States Code, pertaining to alternative means of acquiring and improving military family housing, military unaccompanied housing, and supporting facilities.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

**SEC. 118.** In addition to any other transfer authority available to the Department of Defense, amounts may be transferred from the Department of Defense Base Closure Account to the fund established by section 1013(d) of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 3374) to pay for expenses associated with the Homeowners Assistance Program incurred under 42 U.S.C. 3374(a)(1)(A). Any amounts transferred shall be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same time period as the fund to which transferred.

**SEC. 119.** Notwithstanding any other provision of law, funds made available in this title for operation and maintenance of family housing shall be the exclusive source of funds for repair and maintenance of all family housing units, including general or flag officer quarters: Provided, That not more than \$20,000 per unit may be spent annually for the maintenance and repair of any general or flag officer quarters within 30 days prior notification, or 14 days for a notification provided in an electronic medium pursuant to sections 480 and 2883 of title 10, United States Code, to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, except that an after-the-fact notification shall be submitted if the limitation is exceeded solely due to costs associated with environmental remediation that could not be reasonably anticipated at the time of the budget submission: Provided further, That the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) is to report annually to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress all operation and maintenance expenditures for each individual general or flag officer quarters for the prior fiscal year.

**SEC. 120.** Amounts contained in the Ford Island Improvement Account established by subsection (h) of section 2814 of title 10, United States Code, are appropriated and shall be available until expended for the purposes specified in subsection (i)(1) of such section or until transferred pursuant to subsection (i)(3) of such section.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

**SEC. 121.** During the 5-year period after appropriations available in this Act to the Department of Defense for military construction and family housing operation and maintenance and construction have expired for obligation, upon a determination that such appropriations will not be necessary for the liquidation of obligations or for making authorized adjustments to such appropriations for obligations incurred during the period of availability of such appropriations, unobligated balances of such appropriations may be transferred into the appropriation "Foreign Currency Fluctuations, Construction, Defense", to be merged with and to be available for the same time period and for the same purposes as the appropriation to which transferred.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

**SEC. 122.** Amounts appropriated or otherwise made available in an account funded under the headings in this title may be transferred among projects and activities within the account in accordance with the reprogramming guidelines for military construction and family housing construction contained in Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation 7000.14-R, Volume 3, Chapter 7, of March 2021, as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

**SEC. 123.** None of the funds made available in this title may be obligated or expended for planning and design and construction of projects at Arlington National Cemetery.

**SEC. 124.** For an additional amount for the accounts and in the amounts specified, to remain available until September 30, 2029:

"Military Construction, Army", \$167,000,000;  
"Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps", \$45,000,000;  
"Military Construction, Air Force", \$68,000,000;

"Military Construction, Army National Guard", \$44,000,000; and

"Military Construction, Air National Guard", \$33,000,000.

Provided, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction and cost to complete projects identified in the respective military department's unfunded priority list for fiscal year 2025 submitted to Congress: Provided further, That such projects are subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds to carry out construction: Provided further, That not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the military department concerned, or their designee, shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

**SEC. 125.** All amounts appropriated to the "Department of Defense—Military Construction, Army", "Department of Defense—Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps", "Department of Defense—Military Construction, Air Force", and "Department of Defense—Military Construction, Defense-Wide" accounts pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in a National Defense Authorization Act specified for fiscal year 2025 in the funding table in section 4601 of that Act shall be immediately available and allotted to contract for the full scope of authorized projects.

**SEC. 126.** Notwithstanding section 116 of this Act, funds made available in this Act or any available unobligated balances from prior appropriations Acts may be obligated before October 1, 2026, for fiscal year 2018, 2019, and 2020 military construction projects for which project authorization has not lapsed or for which authorization is extended for fiscal year 2025 by a

National Defense Authorization Act: Provided, That no amounts may be obligated pursuant to this section from amounts that were designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to a concurrent resolution on the budget or the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

**SEC. 127.** For the purposes of this Act, the term "congressional defense committees" means the Committees on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, and the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

**SEC. 128.** For an additional amount for the accounts and in the amounts specified for planning and design and for construction improvements to Department of Defense laboratory facilities, to remain available until September 30, 2029:

"Military Construction, Army", \$15,000,000;  
"Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps", \$15,000,000; and

"Military Construction, Air Force", \$15,000,000:

Provided, That not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the military department concerned, or their designee, shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section: Provided further, That the Secretary of the military department concerned may not obligate or expend any funds prior to approval by the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the expenditure plan required by this section.

**SEC. 129.** For an additional amount for "Military Construction, Air Force", \$100,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2029, for expenses incurred as a result of natural disasters: Provided, That not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Air Force, or their designee, shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both House of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

**SEC. 130.** For an additional amount for the accounts and in the amounts specified for planning and design, for child development centers, to remain available until September 30, 2029:

"Military Construction, Army", \$25,000,000;  
"Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps", \$25,000,000; and

"Military Construction, Air Force", \$25,000,000:

Provided, That not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the military department concerned, or their designee, shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

**SEC. 131.** For an additional amount for the accounts and amounts specified for planning and design, for barracks, to remain available until September 30, 2029:

"Military Construction Army", \$25,000,000;  
"Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps", \$25,000,000; and

"Military Construction, Air Force", \$25,000,000:

Provided, That not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the military department concerned, or their designee, shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

**SEC. 132.** For an additional amount for the accounts and in the amounts specified for unspecified minor construction for demolition, to remain available until September 30, 2029:

"Military Construction, Army", \$15,000,000;  
"Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps", \$15,000,000;

"Military Construction, Air Force", \$15,000,000;

Provided, That not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the military department concerned, or their designee, shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section: Provided further, That the Secretary of the military department concerned may not obligate or expend any funds prior to approval by the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the expenditure plan required by this section.

SEC. 133. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to carry out the closure or realignment of the United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

## TITLE II

### DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the payment of compensation benefits to or on behalf of veterans and a pilot program for disability examinations as authorized by section 107 and chapters 11, 13, 18, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code; pension benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by chapters 15, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code; and burial benefits, the Reinstated Entitlement Program for Survivors, emergency and other officers' retirement pay, adjusted-service credits and certificates, payment of premiums due on commercial life insurance policies guaranteed under the provisions of title IV of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 541 et seq.) and for other benefits as authorized by sections 107, 1312, 1977, and 2106, and chapters 23, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code, \$9,820,699,000, which shall be in addition to funds previously appropriated under this heading that become available on October 1, 2024, to remain available until expended; and, in addition, \$204,481,753,000, which shall become available on October 1, 2025, to remain available until expended: Provided, That not to exceed \$22,816,224 of the amount made available for fiscal year 2026 under this heading shall be reimbursed to "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration", and "Information Technology Systems", for necessary expenses in implementing the provisions of chapters 51, 53, and 55 of title 38, United States Code, the funding source for which is specifically provided as the "Compensation and Pensions" appropriation: Provided further, That such sums as may be earned on an actual qualifying patient basis, shall be reimbursed to "Medical Care Collections Fund" to augment the funding of individual medical facilities for nursing home care provided to pensioners as authorized.

#### READJUSTMENT BENEFITS

For the payment of readjustment and rehabilitation benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by chapters 21, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 41, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code, \$2,657,656,000, which shall be in addition to funds previously appropriated under this heading that became available on October 1, 2024, to remain available until expended; and in addition, \$17,614,235,000, which shall become available on October 1, 2025, to remain available until expended: Provided, That expenses for rehabilitation program services and assistance which the Secretary is authorized to provide under subsection (a) of section 3104 of title 38, United States Code, other than under paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (11) of that subsection, shall be charged to this account.

#### VETERANS INSURANCE AND INDEMNITIES

For military and naval insurance, national service life insurance, servicemen's indemnities, service-disabled veterans insurance, and veterans mortgage life insurance as authorized by chapters 19 and 21 of title 38, United States

Code, \$131,518,000, which shall become available on October 1, 2025, to remain available until expended.

#### VETERANS HOUSING BENEFIT PROGRAM FUND

For the cost of direct and guaranteed loans, such sums as may be necessary to carry out the program, as authorized by subchapters I through III of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code: Provided, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: Provided further, That, during fiscal year 2025, within the resources available, not to exceed \$500,000 in gross obligations for direct loans are authorized for specially adapted housing loans.

In addition, for administrative expenses to carry out the direct and guaranteed loan programs, \$319,596,460.

#### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For the cost of direct loans, \$64,431, as authorized by chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code: Provided, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: Provided further, That funds made available under this heading are available to subsidize gross obligations for the principal amount of direct loans not to exceed \$1,563,660.

In addition, for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct loan program, \$493,868, which may be paid to the appropriation for "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration".

#### NATIVE AMERICAN VETERAN HOUSING LOAN PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For the principal amount of direct loans as authorized by subchapter V of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code, \$75,000,000, to remain available until expended.

In addition for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct loan program, \$5,845,241.

#### GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES, VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

For necessary operating expenses of the Veterans Benefits Administration, not otherwise provided for, including hire of passenger motor vehicles, reimbursement of the General Services Administration for security guard services, and reimbursement of the Department of Defense for the cost of overseas employee mail, \$4,035,000,000: Provided, That expenses for services and assistance authorized under paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (11) of section 3104(a) of title 38, United States Code, that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines are necessary to enable entitled veterans: (1) to the maximum extent feasible, to become employable and to obtain and maintain suitable employment; or (2) to achieve maximum independence in daily living, shall be charged to this account: Provided further, That, of the funds made available under this heading, not to exceed 10 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2026.

#### VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

##### MEDICAL SERVICES

For necessary expenses for furnishing, as authorized by law, inpatient and outpatient care and treatment to beneficiaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs and veterans described in section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, including care and treatment in facilities not under the jurisdiction of the Department, and including medical supplies and equipment, bio-engineering services, food services, and salaries and expenses of healthcare employees hired under title 38, United States Code, assistance and support services for caregivers as authorized by section 1720G of title 38, United States Code, loan repayments authorized by section 604 of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-163; 124 Stat. 1174; 38 U.S.C. 7681 note), monthly assist-

ance allowances authorized by section 322(d) of title 38, United States Code, grants authorized by section 521A of title 38, United States Code, and administrative expenses necessary to carry out sections 322(d) and 521A of title 38, United States Code, and hospital care and medical services authorized by section 1787 of title 38, United States Code; \$75,039,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2025, and shall remain available until September 30, 2026: Provided, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2025, under this heading, \$2,000,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2027: Provided further, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a priority for the provision of medical treatment for veterans who have service-connected disabilities, lower income, or have special needs: Provided further, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may authorize the dispensing of prescription drugs from Veterans Health Administration facilities to enrolled veterans with privately written prescriptions based on requirements established by the Secretary: Provided further, That the implementation of the program described in the previous proviso shall incur no additional cost to the Department of Veterans Affairs: Provided further, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that sufficient amounts appropriated under this heading for medical supplies and equipment are available for the acquisition of prosthetics designed specifically for female veterans: Provided further, That nothing in section 2044(e)(1) of title 38, United States Code, may be construed as limiting amounts that may be made available under this heading for fiscal years 2024 and 2025 in this or prior Acts.

#### MEDICAL COMMUNITY CARE

For necessary expenses for furnishing health care to individuals pursuant to chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, at non-Department facilities, \$34,000,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2025, and shall remain available until September 30, 2026: Provided, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2025, under this heading, \$2,000,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2027.

#### MEDICAL SUPPORT AND COMPLIANCE

For necessary expenses in the administration of the medical, hospital, nursing home, domiciliary, construction, supply, and research activities, as authorized by law; administrative expenses in support of capital policy activities; and administrative and legal expenses of the Department for collecting and recovering amounts owed the Department as authorized under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, and the Federal Medical Care Recovery Act (42 U.S.C. 2651 et seq.), \$12,700,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2025, and shall remain available until September 30, 2026: Provided, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2025, under this heading, \$350,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2027.

#### MEDICAL FACILITIES

For necessary expenses for the maintenance and operation of hospitals, nursing homes, domiciliary facilities, and other necessary facilities of the Veterans Health Administration; for administrative expenses in support of planning, design, project management, real property acquisition and disposition, construction, and renovation of any facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department; for oversight, engineering, and architectural activities not charged to project costs; for repairing, altering,

improving, or providing facilities in the several hospitals and homes under the jurisdiction of the Department, not otherwise provided for, either by contract or by the hire of temporary employees and purchase of materials; for leases of facilities; and for laundry services; \$9,700,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2025, and shall remain available until September 30, 2026: Provided, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2025, under this heading, \$500,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2027.

#### MEDICAL AND PROSTHETIC RESEARCH

For necessary expenses in carrying out programs of medical and prosthetic research and development as authorized by chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, \$923,514,000, plus reimbursements, shall remain available until September 30, 2026: Provided, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that sufficient amounts appropriated under this heading are available for prosthetic research specifically for female veterans, and for toxic exposure research.

#### NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

For necessary expenses of the National Cemetery Administration for operations and maintenance, not otherwise provided for, including uniforms or allowances therefor; cemeterial expenses as authorized by law; purchase of one passenger motor vehicle for use in cemeterial operations; hire of passenger motor vehicles; and repair, alteration or improvement of facilities under the jurisdiction of the National Cemetery Administration, \$495,000,000, of which not to exceed 10 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2026.

#### DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

##### GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

###### (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary operating expenses of the Department of Veterans Affairs, not otherwise provided for, including administrative expenses in support of Department-wide capital planning, management and policy activities, uniforms, or allowances therefor; not to exceed \$25,000 for official reception and representation expenses; hire of passenger motor vehicles; and reimbursement of the General Services Administration for security guard services, \$457,000,000, of which not to exceed 10 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2026: Provided, That funds provided under this heading may be transferred to "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration".

#### BOARD OF VETERANS APPEALS

For necessary operating expenses of the Board of Veterans Appeals, \$267,000,000 of which not to exceed 10 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2026.

#### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS

###### (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses for information technology systems and telecommunications support, including developmental information systems and operational information systems; for pay and associated costs; and for the capital asset acquisition of information technology systems, including management and related contractual costs of said acquisitions, including contractual costs associated with operations authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, \$6,231,680,000, plus reimbursements: Provided, That \$1,686,245,270 shall be for pay and associated costs, of which not to exceed 3 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2026: Provided further, That \$4,544,475,000 shall be for operations and maintenance, of which not to exceed 5 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2026, and of which \$118,900,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2028, for the purpose of facility activations related to projects funded by the "Construction, Major Projects", "Construction, Minor Projects",

"Medical Facilities", "National Cemetery Administration", "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefit Administration", and "General Administration" accounts: Provided further, That \$960,000 shall be for information technology systems development, and shall remain available until September 30, 2026: Provided further, That amounts made available for salaries and expenses, operations and maintenance, and information technology systems development may be transferred among the three subaccounts after the Secretary of Veterans Affairs requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued: Provided further, That amounts made available for the "Information Technology Systems" account for development may be transferred among projects or to newly defined projects: Provided further, That no project may be increased or decreased by more than \$3,000,000 of cost prior to submitting a request to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress to make the transfer and an approval is issued, or absent a response, a period of 30 days has elapsed: Provided further, That the funds made available under this heading for information technology systems development shall be for the projects, and in the amounts, specified in the table entitled "Information Technology Development Projects" under this heading in the report accompanying this Act.

#### VETERANS ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD

For activities related to implementation, preparation, development, interface, management, rollout, and maintenance of a Veterans Electronic Health Record system, including contractual costs associated with operations authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, and salaries and expenses of employees hired under titles 5 and 38, United States Code, \$894,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2026: Provided, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress quarterly reports detailing obligations, expenditures, and deployment implementation by facility, including any changes from the deployment plan or schedule: Provided further, That the funds provided in this account shall only be available to the Office of the Deputy Secretary, to be administered by that Office: Provided further, That 25 percent of the funds made available under this heading shall not be available until July 1, 2025, and are contingent upon the Secretary of Veterans Affairs

(1) providing the Committees on Appropriations a report detailing the status of outstanding issues impacting the stability and usability of the new electronic health record system, including those that contributed to the October 13, 2022, deployment delay, along with a timeline and measurable metrics to resolve issues, no later than 60 days after enactment of this Act;

(2) certifying and detailing any changes to the full deployment schedule, no later than 60 days prior to July 1, 2025; and

(3) certifying in writing no later than 30 days prior to July 1, 2025, the following—

(A) the status of issues included in the report referenced in paragraph (1), including issues that have not been closed but have been suitably resolved or mitigated in a manner that will enhance provider productivity and minimize the potential for patient harm; and

(B) whether the system is stable, ready, and optimized for further deployment at VA sites.

#### OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

For necessary expenses of the Office of Inspector General, to include information technology, in carrying out the provisions of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), \$296,000,000, of which not to exceed 10 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2026.

#### CONSTRUCTION, MAJOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities, including parking projects, under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or for any of the purposes set forth in sections 316, 2404, 2406 and chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, not otherwise provided for, including planning, architectural and engineering services, construction management services, maintenance or guarantee period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, where the estimated cost of a project is more than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, or where funds for a project were made available in a previous major project appropriation, \$2,069,000,000, of which \$1,265,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2029, and of which \$803,700,000 shall remain available until expended: Provided, That except for advance planning activities, including needs assessments which may or may not lead to capital investments, and other capital asset management related activities, including portfolio development and management activities, and planning, cost estimating, and design for major medical facility projects and major medical facility leases and investment strategy studies funded through the advance planning fund and the planning and design activities funded through the design fund, staffing expenses, and funds provided for the purchase, security, and maintenance of land for the National Cemetery Administration and the Veterans Health Administration through the land acquisition line item, none of the funds made available under this heading shall be used for any project that has not been notified to Congress through the budgetary process or that has not been approved by the Congress through statute, joint resolution, or in the explanatory statement accompanying such Act and presented to the President at the time of enrollment: Provided further, That funds provided for the Veterans Health Administration through the land acquisition line item shall only be for projects included on the five year development plan notified to Congress through the budgetary process: Provided further, That such sums as may be necessary shall be available to reimburse the "General Administration" account for payment of salaries and expenses of all Office of Construction and Facilities Management employees to support the full range of capital infrastructure services provided, including minor construction and leasing services: Provided further, That funds made available under this heading for fiscal year 2025, for each approved project shall be obligated: (1) by the awarding of a construction documents contract by September 30, 2025; and (2) by the awarding of a construction contract by September 30, 2026: Provided further, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall promptly submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a written report on any approved major construction project for which obligations are not incurred within the time limitations established above.

#### CONSTRUCTION, MINOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities, including parking projects, under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including planning and assessments of needs which may lead to capital investments, architectural and engineering services, maintenance or guarantee period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, or for any of the purposes set forth in sections 316, 2404, 2406 and chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, not otherwise provided for, where the estimated cost of a project is equal to

or less than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, \$380,453,000, of which \$342,408,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2029, and of which \$38,045,000 shall remain available until expended, along with unobligated balances of previous "Construction, Minor Projects" appropriations which are hereby made available for any project where the estimated cost is equal to or less than the amount set forth in such section: Provided, That funds made available under this heading shall be for: (1) repairs to any of the nonmedical facilities under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department which are necessary because of loss or damage caused by any natural disaster or catastrophe; and (2) temporary measures necessary to prevent or to minimize further loss by such causes.

**GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF STATE EXTENDED CARE FACILITIES**

For grants to assist States to acquire or construct State nursing home and domiciliary facilities and to remodel, modify, or alter existing hospital, nursing home, and domiciliary facilities in State homes, for furnishing care to veterans as authorized by sections 8131 through 8137 of title 38, United States Code, \$156,000,000, to remain available until expended.

**GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF VETERANS CEMETERIES**

For grants to assist States and tribal organizations in establishing, expanding, or improving veterans cemeteries as authorized by section 2408 of title 38, United States Code, \$60,000,000, to remain available until expended.

**COST OF WAR TOXIC EXPOSURES FUND**

For investment in the delivery of veterans' health care associated with exposure to environmental hazards, the expenses incident to the delivery of veterans' health care and benefits associated with exposure to environmental hazards, and medical and other research relating to exposure to environmental hazards, as authorized by section 324 of title 38, United States Code, and in addition to the amounts otherwise available for such purposes in the appropriations provided in this or prior Acts, \$22,800,000,000, which shall become available on October 1, 2025, and shall remain available until expended.

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS**  
(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

**SEC. 201.** Any appropriation for fiscal year 2025 for "Compensation and Pensions", "Readjustment Benefits", and "Veterans Insurance and Indemnities" may be transferred as necessary to any other of the mentioned appropriations: Provided, That, before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and such Committees issue an approval, or absent a response, a period of 30 days has elapsed.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

**SEC. 202.** Amounts made available for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2025, in this or any other Act, under the "Medical Services", "Medical Community Care", "Medical Support and Compliance", and "Medical Facilities" accounts may be transferred among the accounts: Provided, That any transfers among the "Medical Services", "Medical Community Care", and "Medical Support and Compliance" accounts of 1 percent or less of the total amount appropriated to the account in this or any other Act may take place subject to notification from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the amount and purpose of the transfer: Provided further, That any transfers among the "Medical Services", "Medical Community Care", and "Medical Support and Compliance" accounts in excess of 1 percent, or exceeding the cumulative 1 percent for the fiscal year, may take place only after the

Secretary requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued: Provided further, That any transfers to or from the "Medical Facilities" account may take place only after the Secretary requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued.

**SEC. 203.** Appropriations available in this title for salaries and expenses shall be available for services authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code; hire of passenger motor vehicles; lease of a facility or land or both; and uniforms or allowances therefore, as authorized by sections 5901 through 5902 of title 5, United States Code.

**SEC. 204.** No appropriations in this title (except the appropriations for "Construction, Major Projects", and "Construction, Minor Projects") shall be available for the purchase of any site for or toward the construction of any new hospital or home.

**SEC. 205.** No appropriations in this title shall be available for hospitalization or examination of any persons (except beneficiaries entitled to such hospitalization or examination under the laws providing such benefits to veterans, and persons receiving such treatment under sections 7901 through 7904 of title 5, United States Code, or the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.)), unless reimbursement of the cost of such hospitalization or examination is made to the "Medical Services" account at such rates as may be fixed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

**SEC. 206.** Appropriations available in this title for "Compensation and Pensions", "Readjustment Benefits", and "Veterans Insurance and Indemnities" shall be available for payment of prior year accrued obligations required to be recorded by law against the corresponding prior year accounts within the last quarter of fiscal year 2024.

**SEC. 207.** Appropriations available in this title shall be available to pay prior year obligations of corresponding prior year appropriations accounts resulting from sections 3328(a), 3334, and 3712(a) of title 31, United States Code, except that if such obligations are from trust fund accounts they shall be payable only from "Compensation and Pensions".

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

**SEC. 208.** Notwithstanding any other provision of law, during fiscal year 2025, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, from the National Service Life Insurance Fund under section 1920 of title 38, United States Code, the Veterans' Special Life Insurance Fund under section 1923 of title 38, United States Code, and the United States Government Life Insurance Fund under section 1955 of title 38, United States Code, reimburse the "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration" and "Information Technology Systems" accounts for the cost of administration of the insurance programs financed through those accounts: Provided, That reimbursement shall be made only from the surplus earnings accumulated in such an insurance program during fiscal year 2025 that are available for dividends in that program after claims have been paid and actuarially determined reserves have been set aside: Provided further, That if the cost of administration of such an insurance program exceeds the amount of surplus earnings accumulated in that program, reimbursement shall be made only to the extent of such surplus earnings: Provided further, That the Secretary shall determine the cost of administration for fiscal year 2025 which is properly allocable to the provision of each such insurance program and to the provision of any total disability income insurance included in that insurance program.

**SEC. 209.** Amounts deducted from enhanced-use lease proceeds to reimburse an account for

expenses incurred by that account during a prior fiscal year for providing enhanced-use lease services shall be available until expended.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

**SEC. 210.** Funds available in this title or funds for salaries and other administrative expenses shall also be available to reimburse the Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion, the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication, and the Alternative Dispute Resolution function within the Office of Human Resources and Administration for all services provided at rates which will recover actual costs but not to exceed \$133,363,000 for the Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion, \$9,606,581 for the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication, and \$7,686,000 for the Alternative Dispute Resolution function within the Office of Human Resources and Administration: Provided, That payments may be made in advance for services to be furnished based on estimated costs: Provided further, That amounts received shall be credited to the "General Administration" and "Information Technology Systems" accounts for use by the office that provided the service.

**SEC. 211.** No funds of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be available for hospital care, nursing home care, or medical services provided to any person under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, for a non-service-connected disability described in section 1729(a)(2) of such title, unless that person has disclosed to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in such form as the Secretary may require, current, accurate third-party reimbursement information for purposes of section 1729 of such title: Provided, That the Secretary may recover, in the same manner as any other debt due the United States, the reasonable charges for such care or services from any person who does not make such disclosure as required: Provided further, That any amounts so recovered for care or services provided in a prior fiscal year may be obligated by the Secretary during the fiscal year in which amounts are received.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

**SEC. 212.** Notwithstanding any other provision of law, proceeds or revenues derived from enhanced-use leasing activities (including disposal) may be deposited into the "Construction, Major Projects" and "Construction, Minor Projects" accounts and be used for construction (including site acquisition and disposition), alterations, and improvements of any medical facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Such sums as realized are in addition to the amount provided for in "Construction, Major Projects" and "Construction, Minor Projects".

**SEC. 213.** Amounts made available under "Medical Services" are available—

(1) for furnishing recreational facilities, supplies, and equipment; and  
(2) for funeral expenses, burial expenses, and other expenses incidental to funerals and burials for beneficiaries receiving care in the Department.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

**SEC. 214.** Such sums as may be deposited into the Medical Care Collections Fund pursuant to section 1729A of title 38, United States Code, may be transferred to the "Medical Services" and "Medical Community Care" accounts to remain available until expended for the purposes of these accounts.

**SEC. 215.** The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may enter into agreements with Federally Qualified Health Centers in the State of Alaska and Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations which are party to the Alaska Native Health Compact with the Indian Health Service, to provide healthcare, including behavioral health and dental care, to veterans in rural Alaska. The Secretary shall require participating veterans and facilities to comply with all appropriate rules and regulations, as established by

the Secretary. The term “rural Alaska” shall mean those lands which are not within the boundaries of the municipality of Anchorage or the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 216. Such sums as may be deposited into the Department of Veterans Affairs Capital Asset Fund pursuant to section 8118 of title 38, United States Code, may be transferred to the “Construction, Major Projects” and “Construction, Minor Projects” accounts, to remain available until expended for the purposes of these accounts.

SEC. 217. Not later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal quarter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a report on the financial status of the Department of Veterans Affairs for the preceding quarter: Provided, That, at a minimum, the report shall include the direction contained in the paragraph entitled “Quarterly reporting”, under the heading “General Administration” in the joint explanatory statement accompanying Public Law 114–223.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 218. Amounts made available under the “Medical Services”, “Medical Community Care”, “Medical Support and Compliance”, “Medical Facilities”, “General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration”, “Board of Veterans Appeals”, “General Administration”, and “National Cemetery Administration” accounts for fiscal year 2025 may be transferred to or from the “Information Technology Systems” account: Provided, That such transfers may not result in a more than 10 percent aggregate increase in the total amount made available by this Act for the “Information Technology Systems” account: Provided further, That, before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 219. Of the amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2025 for “Medical Services”, “Medical Community Care”, “Medical Support and Compliance”, “Medical Facilities”, “Construction, Minor Projects”, and “Information Technology Systems”, up to \$594,828,000, plus reimbursements, may be transferred to the Joint Department of Defense—Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111–84; 123 Stat. 2571) and may be used for operation of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500): Provided, That additional funds may be transferred from accounts designated in this section to the Joint Department of Defense—Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund upon written notification by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress: Provided further, That section 220 of title II of division A of Public Law 118–42 is repealed.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 220. Of the amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs which become available on October 1, 2025, for “Medical Services”, “Medical Community Care”, “Medical Support and Compliance”, and “Medical Facilities”, up to \$664,625,000, plus reimbursements, may be transferred to the Joint Department of Defense—Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111–84; 123 Stat. 2571) and may be used for oper-

ation of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500): Provided, That additional funds may be transferred from accounts designated in this section to the Joint Department of Defense—Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund upon written notification by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 221. Such sums as may be deposited into the Medical Care Collections Fund pursuant to section 1729A of title 38, United States Code, for healthcare provided at facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500) shall also be available: (1) for transfer to the Joint Department of Defense—Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111–84; 123 Stat. 2571); and (2) for operations of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500): Provided, That, notwithstanding section 1704(b)(3) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111–84; 123 Stat. 2573), amounts transferred to the Joint Department of Defense—Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund shall remain available until expended.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 222. Of the amounts available in this title for “Medical Services”, “Medical Community Care”, “Medical Support and Compliance”, and “Medical Facilities”, a minimum of \$15,000,000 shall be transferred to the DOD-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund, as authorized by section 8111(d) of title 38, United States Code, to remain available until expended, for any purpose authorized by section 8111 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 223. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of all bid savings in a major construction project that total at least \$5,000,000, or 5 percent of the programmed amount of the project, whichever is less: Provided, That such notification shall occur within 14 days of a contract identifying the programmed amount: Provided further, That the Secretary shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress 14 days prior to the obligation of such bid savings and shall describe the anticipated use of such savings.

SEC. 224. None of the funds made available for “Construction, Major Projects” may be used for a project in excess of the scope specified for that project in the original justification data provided to the Congress as part of the request for appropriations unless the Secretary of Veterans Affairs receives approval from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 225. Not later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal quarter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a quarterly report containing performance measures and data from each Veterans Benefits Administration Regional Office: Provided, That, at a minimum, the report shall include the direction contained in the section entitled “Disability claims backlog”, under the heading “General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration” in the joint explanatory statement accompanying Public Law 114–223: Provided further, That the report shall also include information on the number of appeals pending at the

Veterans Benefits Administration as well as the Board of Veterans Appeals on a quarterly basis.

SEC. 226. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide written notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress 15 days prior to organizational changes which result in the transfer of 25 or more full-time equivalents from one organizational unit of the Department of Veterans Affairs to another.

SEC. 227. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide on a quarterly basis to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress notification of any single national outreach and awareness marketing campaign in which obligations exceed \$1,000,000.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 228. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, upon determination that such action is necessary to address needs of the Veterans Health Administration, may transfer to the “Medical Services” account any discretionary appropriations made available for fiscal year 2025 in this title (except appropriations made to the “General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration” account) or any discretionary unobligated balances within the Department of Veterans Affairs, including those appropriated for fiscal year 2025, that were provided in advance by appropriations Acts: Provided, That transfers shall be made only with the approval of the Office of Management and Budget: Provided further, That the transfer authority provided in this section is in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law: Provided further, That no amounts may be transferred from amounts that were designated by Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to a concurrent resolution on the budget or the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: Provided further, That such authority to transfer may not be used unless for higher priority items, based on emergent healthcare requirements, than those for which originally appropriated and in no case where the item for which funds are requested has been denied by Congress: Provided further, That, upon determination that all or part of the funds transferred from an appropriation are not necessary, such amounts may be transferred back to that appropriation and shall be available for the same purposes as originally appropriated: Provided further, That before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and receive approval of that request.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 229. Amounts made available for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2025, under the “Board of Veterans Appeals” and the “General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration” accounts may be transferred between such accounts: Provided, That before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and receive approval of that request.

SEC. 230. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may not reprogram funds among major construction projects or programs if such instance of reprogramming will exceed \$7,000,000, unless such reprogramming is approved by the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 231. (a) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the toll-free suicide hotline under section 1720F(h) of title 38, United States Code—

(1) provides to individuals who contact the hotline immediate assistance from a trained professional; and

(2) adheres to all requirements of the American Association of Suicidology.

(b) None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enforce or otherwise

carry out any Executive action that prohibits the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from appointing an individual to occupy a vacant civil service position, or establishing a new civil service position, at the Department of Veterans Affairs with respect to such a position relating to the hotline specified in subsection (a).

(2) In this subsection—

(A) the term “civil service” has the meaning given such term in section 2101(1) of title 5, United States Code; and

(B) the term “Executive action” includes—

(i) any Executive order, Presidential memorandum, or other action by the President; and

(ii) any agency policy, order, or other directive.

(c)(1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a study on the effectiveness of the hotline specified in subsection (a) during the 5-year period beginning on January 1, 2016, based on an analysis of national suicide data and data collected from such hotline.

(2) At a minimum, the study required by paragraph (1) shall—

(A) determine the number of veterans who contact the hotline specified in subsection (a) and who receive follow up services from the hotline or mental health services from the Department of Veterans Affairs thereafter;

(B) determine the number of veterans who contact the hotline who are not referred to, or do not continue receiving, mental health care who commit suicide; and

(C) determine the number of veterans described in subparagraph (A) who commit or attempt suicide.

SEC. 232. Effective during the period beginning on October 1, 2018, and ending on January 1, 2026, none of the funds made available to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs by this or any other Act may be obligated or expended in contravention of the “Veterans Health Administration Clinical Preventive Services Guidance Statement on the Veterans Health Administration’s Screening for Breast Cancer Guidance”, published on May 10, 2017, as issued by the Veterans Health Administration National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention.

SEC. 233. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the “Medical Services” account may be used to provide—

(1) fertility counseling and treatment using assisted reproductive technology to a covered veteran or the spouse of a covered veteran; or

(2) adoption reimbursement to a covered veteran.

(b) In this section:

(1) The term “service-connected” has the meaning given such term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term “covered veteran” means a veteran, as such term is defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code, who has a service-connected disability that results in the inability of the veteran to procreate without the use of fertility treatment.

(3) The term “assisted reproductive technology” means benefits relating to reproductive assistance provided to a member of the Armed Forces who incurs a serious injury or illness on active duty pursuant to section 1074(c)(4)(A) of title 10, United States Code, as described in the memorandum on the subject of “Policy for Assisted Reproductive Services for the Benefit of Seriously or Severely Ill/Injured (Category II or III) Active Duty Service Members” issued by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs on April 3, 2012, and the guidance issued to implement such policy, including any limitations on the amount of such benefits available to such a member except that—

(A) the time periods regarding embryo cryopreservation and storage set forth in part III(G) and in part IV(H) of such memorandum shall not apply; and

(B) such term includes embryo cryopreservation and storage without limitation

on the duration of such cryopreservation and storage.

(4) The term “adoption reimbursement” means reimbursement for the adoption-related expenses for an adoption that is finalized after the date of the enactment of this Act under the same terms as apply under the adoption reimbursement program of the Department of Defense, as authorized in Department of Defense Instruction 1341.09, including the reimbursement limits and requirements set forth in such instruction.

(c) Amounts made available for the purposes specified in subsection (a) of this section are subject to the requirements for funds contained in section 508 of division H of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115-141).

SEC. 234. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act or any other Act for the Department of Veterans Affairs may be used in a manner that is inconsistent with: (1) section 842 of the Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, the District of Columbia, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2006 (Public Law 109-115; 119 Stat. 2506); or (2) section 8110(a)(5) of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 235. Section 842 of Public Law 109-115 shall not apply to conversion of an activity or function of the Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, or National Cemetery Administration to contractor performance by a business concern that is at least 51 percent owned by one or more Indian Tribes as defined in section 5304(e) of title 25, United States Code, or one or more Native Hawaiian Organizations as defined in section 637(a)(15) of title 15, United States Code.

SEC. 236. (a) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Labor, shall discontinue using Social Security account numbers to authenticate individuals in all information systems of the Department of Veterans Affairs for all individuals not later than September 30, 2024:

(b) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may collect and use a Social Security account number to identify an individual, in accordance with section 552a of title 5, United States Code, in an information system of the Department of Veterans Affairs if and only if the use of such number is necessary to:

(1) obtain or provide information the Secretary requires from an information system that is not under the jurisdiction of the Secretary;

(2) comply with a law, regulation, or court order;

(3) perform anti-fraud activities; or

(4) identify a specific individual where no adequate substitute is available.

(c) The matter in subsections (a) and (b) shall supersede section 237 of division J of Public Law 117-328.

SEC. 237. For funds provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs for each of fiscal year 2025 and 2026 for “Medical Services”, section 239 of division A of Public Law 114-223 shall apply.

SEC. 238. None of the funds appropriated in this or prior appropriations Acts or otherwise made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs may be used to transfer any amounts from the Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund to any other account within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 239. Of the funds provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs for each of fiscal year 2025 and fiscal year 2026 for “Medical Services”, funds may be used in each year to carry out and expand the child care program authorized by section 205 of Public Law 111-163, notwithstanding subsection (e) of such section.

SEC. 240. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this title may be used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into an agreement related to resolving a dispute or claim with an individual that would restrict in any way the individual from speaking to members of Congress or their staff on any

topic not otherwise prohibited from disclosure by Federal law or required by Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or the conduct of foreign affairs.

SEC. 241. For funds provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs for each of fiscal year 2025 and 2026, section 258 of division A of Public Law 114-223 shall apply.

SEC. 242. (a) None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to deny an Inspector General funded under this Act timely access to any records, documents, or other materials available to the department or agency over which that Inspector General has responsibilities under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), or to prevent or impede the access of the Inspector General to such records, documents, or other materials, under any provision of law, except a provision of law that expressly refers to such Inspector General and expressly limits the right of access.

(b) A department or agency covered by this section shall provide its Inspector General access to all records, documents, and other materials in a timely manner.

(c) Each Inspector General shall ensure compliance with statutory limitations on disclosure relevant to the information provided by the establishment over which that Inspector General has responsibilities under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(d) Each Inspector General covered by this section shall report to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives within 5 calendar days of any failure by any department or agency covered by this section to comply with this requirement.

SEC. 243. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used in a manner that would increase wait times for veterans who seek care at medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 244. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act to the Veterans Health Administration may be used in fiscal year 2025 to convert any program which received specific purpose funds in fiscal year 2024 to a general purpose funded program unless the Secretary of Veterans Affairs submits written notification of any such proposal to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress at least 30 days prior to any such action and an approval is issued by the Committees.

SEC. 245. For funds provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs for each of fiscal year 2025 and 2026, section 248 of division A of Public Law 114-223 shall apply.

SEC. 246. (a) None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to conduct research commencing on or after March 9, 2024, that uses any canine, feline, or non-human primate unless the Secretary of Veterans Affairs approves such research specifically and in writing pursuant to subsection (b).

(b) (1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may approve the conduct of research commencing on or after March 9, 2024, using canines, felines, or non-human primates if the Secretary certifies that—

(A) the scientific objectives of the research can only be met by using such canines, felines, or non-human primates and cannot be met using other animal models, in vitro models, computational models, human clinical studies, or other research alternatives;

(B) such scientific objectives are necessary to advance research benefiting veterans and are directly related to an illness or injury that is combat-related as defined by 10 U.S.C. 1413(e);

(C) the research is consistent with the revised Department of Veterans Affairs canine research policy document dated December 15, 2017, including any subsequent revisions to such document; and

(D) ethical considerations regarding minimizing the harm experienced by canines, felines,

or non-human primates are included in evaluating the scientific necessity of the research.

(2) The Secretary may not delegate the authority under this subsection.

(c) If the Secretary approves any new research pursuant to subsection (b), not later than 30 days before the commencement of such research, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of the Senate and House of Representatives a report describing—

(1) the nature of the research to be conducted using canines, felines, or non-human primates;

(2) the date on which the Secretary approved the research;

(3) the USDA pain category on the approved use;

(4) the justification for the determination of the Secretary that the scientific objectives of such research could only be met using canines, felines, or non-human primates, and methods used to make such determination;

(5) the frequency and duration of such research; and

(6) the protocols in place to ensure the necessity, safety, and efficacy of the research, and animal welfare.

(d) Not later than September 9, 2024, and bi-annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to such Committees a report describing—

(1) any research being conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs using canines, felines, or non-human primates as of the date of the submittal of the report;

(2) the circumstances under which such research was conducted using canines, felines, or non-human primates;

(3) the justification for using canines, felines, or non-human primates to conduct such research;

(4) the protocols in place to ensure the necessity, safety, and efficacy of such research; and

(5) the development and adoption of alternatives to canines, felines, or non-human primates research.

(e) Not later than September 9, 2024, and annually thereafter, the Department of Veterans Affairs must submit to voluntary U.S. Department of Agriculture inspections of canine, feline, and non-human primate research facilities.

(f) Not later than September 9, 2024, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to such Committees a report describing—

(1) any violations of the Animal Welfare Act, the Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, or other Department of Veterans Affairs policies related to oversight of animal research found during that quarter in VA research facilities;

(2) immediate corrective actions taken; and

(3) specific actions taken to prevent their recurrence.

(g) The Department shall implement a plan under which the Secretary will eliminate the research conducted using canines, felines, or non-human primates by not later than March 9, 2026.

SEC. 247. (a) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may use amounts appropriated or otherwise made available in this title to ensure that the ratio of veterans to full-time employment equivalents within any program of rehabilitation conducted under chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code, does not exceed 125 veterans to one full-time employment equivalent.

(b) Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the programs of rehabilitation conducted under chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code, including—

(1) an assessment of the veteran-to-staff ratio for each such program; and

(2) recommendations for such action as the Secretary considers necessary to reduce the veteran-to-staff ratio for each such program.

SEC. 248. Amounts made available for the “Veterans Health Administration, Medical Community Care” account in this or any other Act for fiscal years 2025 and 2026 may be used for

expenses that would otherwise be payable from the Veterans Choice Fund established by section 802 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act, as amended (38 U.S.C. 1701 note).

SEC. 249. Obligations and expenditures applicable to the “Medical Services” account in fiscal years 2017 through 2019 for aid to state homes (as authorized by section 1741 of title 38, United States Code) shall remain in the “Medical Community Care” account for such fiscal years.

SEC. 250. Of the amounts made available for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2025, in this or any other Act, under the “Veterans Health Administration—Medical Services”, “Veterans Health Administration—Medical Community Care”, “Veterans Health Administration—Medical Support and Compliance”, and “Veterans Health Administration—Medical Facilities” accounts, \$1,323,444,000 shall be made available for gender-specific care and programmatic efforts to deliver care for women veterans.

SEC. 251. Notwithstanding any other law, unless prevented by an order issued by a federal or state court, by no later than September 30, 2025, the Secretary shall commence construction of the Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Bakersfield, California authorized in section 1(a)(3) of Public Law 111-82 and in accordance with Lease No.36C10F20L0008 or successor lease.

SEC. 252. Not later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal quarter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a quarterly report on the status of the “Veterans Medical Care and Health Fund”, established to execute section 8002 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law 117-2): Provided, That, at a minimum, the report shall include an update on obligations by program, project or activity and a plan for expending the remaining funds.

SEC. 253. Any amounts transferred to the Secretary and administered by a corporation referred to in section 7364(b) of title 38, United States Code, between October 1, 2018 and September 30, 2019 for purposes of carrying out an order placed with the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to section 1535 of title 31, United States Code, that are available for obligation pursuant to section 7364(b)(1) of title 38, United States Code, are to remain available for the liquidation of valid obligations incurred by such corporation during the period of performance of such order, provided that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines that such amounts need to remain available for such liquidation.

SEC. 254. Unobligated balances available under the headings “Construction, Major Projects” and “Construction, Minor Projects” may be obligated by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for a facility pursuant to section 2(e)(1) of the Communities Helping Invest through Property and Improvements Needed for Veterans Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-294; 38 U.S.C. 8103 note), as amended, to provide additional funds or to fund an escalation clause under such section of such Act: Provided, That before such unobligated balances are obligated pursuant to this section, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to obligate such unobligated balances and such Committees issue an approval, or absent a response, a period of 30 days has elapsed: Provided further, That the request to obligate such unobligated balances must provide Congress notice that the entity described in section 2(a)(2) of Public Law 114-294, as amended, has exhausted available cost containment approaches as set forth in the agreement under section 2(c) of such Public Law.

SEC. 255. (a) None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to implement, administer, or otherwise carry out the Department of Veterans Affairs interim final rule published on September 9, 2022, or any successor to such rule, or to propose, promulgate, or implement any substantially similar rule or policy.

(b) None of the funds appropriated in this Act shall be expended for any abortion, including through a medical benefits package or health benefits program that includes coverage of abortion.

(c) The limitations established in subsection (b) shall not apply to an abortion—

(1) if the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest; or

(2) in the case where a woman suffers from a physical disorder, physical injury, or physical illness, including a life-endangering physical condition caused by or arising from the pregnancy itself, that would, as certified by a physician, place the woman in danger of death unless an abortion is performed.

SEC. 256. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for surgical procedures or hormone therapies for the purposes of gender affirming care.

SEC. 257. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to fly or display a flag over a facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs or a national cemetery other than the flag of the United States, the flag of a State, Territory, or District of Columbia, the flag of an Indian Tribal government, the flag of the Department, the flag of an Armed Force, or the POW/MIA flag.

SEC. 258. During the period beginning on October 1, 2024 and ending on September 30, 2025, none of the funds made available by this Act may be used to administer, implement, or enforce the final rule issued by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to “Change in Rates VA Pays for Special Modes of Transportation” (88 Fed. Reg. 10032) and published on February 16, 2023.

SEC. 259. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to carry out VHA Directive 1193.01, “Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination Program for Veterans Health Administration Health Care Personnel”.

SEC. 260. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to provide any services to any individual unlawfully present in the United States who is not eligible for health care under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 261. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section 5502 of title 38, United States Code, in any case arising out of the administration by the Secretary of laws and benefits under such title, to report a person who is deemed mentally incapacitated, mentally incompetent, or to be experiencing an extended loss of consciousness as a person who has been adjudicated as a mental defective under subsection (d)(4) or (g)(4) of section 922 of title 18, United States Code, without the order or finding a judge, magistrate, or other judicial authority of competent jurisdiction that such person is a danger to himself or herself or others.

### TITLE III RELATED AGENCIES AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses, not otherwise provided for, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, including the acquisition of land or interest in land in foreign countries; purchases and repair of uniforms for caretakers of national cemeteries and monuments outside of the United States and its territories and possessions; rent of office and garage space in foreign countries; purchase (one-for-one replacement basis only) and hire of passenger motor vehicles; not to exceed \$15,000 for official reception and representation expenses; and insurance of official motor vehicles in foreign countries, when required by law of such countries, \$90,020,000, to remain available until expended.

## FOREIGN CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS ACCOUNT

For necessary expenses, not otherwise provided for, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, such sums as may be necessary, to remain available until expended, for purposes authorized by section 2109 of title 36, United States Code.

## UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS

## SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses for the operation of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims as authorized by sections 7251 through 7298 of title 38, United States Code, \$47,200,000: Provided, That \$3,800,000 shall be available for the purpose of providing financial assistance as described and in accordance with the process and reporting procedures set forth under this heading in Public Law 102-229.

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE—CIVIL

## CEMETERIAL EXPENSES, ARMY

## SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses for maintenance, operation, and improvement of Arlington National Cemetery and Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery, including the purchase or lease of passenger motor vehicles for replacement on a one-for-one basis only, and not to exceed \$2,000 for official reception and representation expenses, \$105,514,000, of which not to exceed \$15,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2027. In addition, such sums as may be necessary for parking maintenance, repairs and replacement, to be derived from the "Lease of Department of Defense Real Property for Defense Agencies" account.

## CONSTRUCTION

For necessary expenses for planning and design and construction at Arlington National Cemetery and Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery, \$42,000,000, to remain available until expended for planning and design and construction associated with the Southern Expansion project at Arlington National Cemetery.

## ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME

## TRUST FUND

For expenses necessary for the Armed Forces Retirement Home to operate and maintain the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington, District of Columbia, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport, Mississippi, to be paid from funds available in the Armed Forces Retirement Home Trust Fund, \$69,520,000, to remain available until September 30, 2026, of which \$1,000,000 shall remain available until expended for construction and renovation of the physical plants at the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington, District of Columbia, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport, Mississippi: Provided, That of the amounts made available under this heading from funds available in the Armed Forces Retirement Home Trust Fund, \$25,000,000 shall be paid from the general fund of the Treasury to the Trust Fund.

## MAJOR CONSTRUCTION

For expenses necessary to support efforts to complete the renovation of the Sheridan Building at the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington, District of Columbia, \$31,000,000, to remain available until expended, shall be paid from the general fund of the Treasury to the Armed Forces Retirement Home Trust Fund.

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISION

SEC. 301. Amounts deposited into the special account established under 10 U.S.C. 7727 are appropriated and shall be available until expended to support activities at the Army National Military Cemeteries.

## TITLE IV

## GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 401. No part of any appropriation contained in this Act shall remain available for obligation beyond the current fiscal year unless expressly so provided herein.

SEC. 402. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used for any program, project, or activity, when it is made known to the Federal entity or official to which the funds are made available that the program, project, or activity is not in compliance with any Federal law relating to risk assessment, the protection of private property rights, or unfunded mandates.

SEC. 403. All departments and agencies funded under this Act are encouraged, within the limits of the existing statutory authorities and funding, to expand their use of "E-Commerce" technologies and procedures in the conduct of their business practices and public service activities.

SEC. 404. Unless stated otherwise, all reports and notifications required by this Act shall be submitted to the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

SEC. 405. None of the funds made available in this Act may be transferred to any department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States Government except pursuant to a transfer made by, or transfer authority provided in, this or any other appropriations Act.

SEC. 406. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used for a project or program named for an individual serving as a Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner of the United States House of Representatives.

SEC. 407. (a) Any agency receiving funds made available in this Act, shall, subject to subsections (b) and (c), post on the public Web site of that agency any report required to be submitted by the Congress in this or any other Act, upon the determination by the head of the agency that it shall serve the national interest.

(b) Subsection (a) shall not apply to a report if—

(1) the public posting of the report compromises national security; or

(2) the report contains confidential or proprietary information.

(c) The head of the agency posting such report shall do so only after such report has been made available to the requesting Committee or Committees of Congress for no less than 30 days.

SEC. 408. (a) None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to maintain or establish a computer network unless such network blocks the viewing, downloading, and exchanging of pornography.

(b) Nothing in subsection (a) shall limit the use of funds necessary for any Federal, State, tribal, or local law enforcement agency or any other entity carrying out criminal investigations, prosecution, or adjudication activities.

SEC. 409. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used by an agency of the executive branch to pay for first-class travel by an employee of the agency in contravention of sections 301-10.122 through 301-10.124 of title 41, Code of Federal Regulations.

SEC. 410. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to execute a contract for goods or services, including construction services, where the contractor has not complied with Executive Order No. 12989.

SEC. 411. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used in contravention of section 101(e)(8) of title 10, United States Code.

SEC. 412. (a) IN GENERAL.—None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Defense in this Act may be used to construct, renovate, or expand any facility in the United States, its territories, or possessions to house any individual detained at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, for the purposes of detention or imprisonment in the custody or under the control of the Department of Defense.

(b) The prohibition in subsection (a) shall not apply to any modification of facilities at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

(c) An individual described in this subsection is any individual who, as of June 24, 2009, is located at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and who—

(1) is not a citizen of the United States or a member of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

(2) is—

(A) in the custody or under the effective control of the Department of Defense; or

(B) otherwise under detention at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

SEC. 413. None of the funds appropriated by this Act may be used in any way, directly or indirectly, to influence congressional action on any legislation or appropriation matter pending before Congress, other than to communicate to Members of Congress as described in 18 U.S.C. 1913.

SEC. 414. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be made available to implement, administer, apply, enforce, or carry out Executive Order 13985 of January 20, 2021 (86 Fed. Reg. 7009), Executive Order 14035 of June 25, 2021 (86 Fed. Reg. 34593), or Executive Order 14091 of February 16, 2023 (88 Fed. Reg. 10825).

SEC. 415. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to carry out any program, project, or activity that promotes or advances Critical Race Theory or any concept associated with Critical Race Theory.

SEC. 416. (a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 7 of title 1, United States Code, section 1738C of title 28, United States Code, or any other provision of law, none of the funds provided by this Act, or previous appropriations Acts, shall be used in whole or in part to take any discriminatory action against a person, wholly or partially, on the basis that such person speaks, or acts, in accordance with a sincerely held religious belief, or moral conviction, that marriage is, or should be recognized as, a union of one man and one woman.

(b) Discriminatory action defined.—As used in subsection (a), a discriminatory action means any action taken by the Federal Government to—

(1) alter in any way the Federal tax treatment of, or cause any tax, penalty, or payment to be assessed against, or deny, delay, or revoke an exemption from taxation under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 of, any person referred to in subsection (a);

(2) disallow a deduction for Federal tax purposes of any charitable contribution made to or by such person;

(3) withhold, reduce, the amount or funding for, exclude, terminate, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, any Federal grant, contract, subcontract, cooperative agreement, guarantee, loan, scholarship, license, certification, accreditation, employment, or other similar position or status from or to such person;

(4) withhold, reduce, exclude, terminate, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, any entitlement or benefit under a Federal benefit program, including admission to, equal treatment in, or eligibility for a degree from an educational program, from or to such person; or

(5) withhold, reduce, exclude, terminate, or otherwise make unavailable or deny access or an entitlement to Federal property, facilities, educational institutions, speech fora (including traditional, limited, and nonpublic fora), or charitable fundraising campaigns from or to such person.

(c) Accreditation; Licensure; Certification.—The Federal Government shall consider accredited, licensed, or certified for purposes of Federal law any person that would be accredited, licensed, or certified, respectively, for such purposes but for a determination against such person wholly or partially on the basis that the person speaks, or acts, in accordance with a sincerely held religious belief or moral conviction described in subsection (a).

SEC. 417. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for any office, programs,

or activity for the purposes of diversity, equity, and inclusion training or implementation.

SEC. 418. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enforce COVID-19 mask mandates.

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to administer, implement, or enforce Executive Order No. 14057 of December 8, 2021.

SEC. 420. None of the funds appropriated by this Act may be used to implement any of the following executive orders:

(1) Executive Order No. 13990, relating to Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science To Tackle the Climate Crisis.

(2) Executive Order No. 14008, relating to Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad.

(3) Section 6 of Executive Order No. 14013, relating to Rebuilding and Enhancing Programs To Resettle Refugees and Planning for the Impact of Climate Change on Migration.

(4) Executive Order No. 14030, relating to Climate-Related Financial Risk.

(5) Executive Order No. 14057, relating to Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability.

(6) Executive Order No. 14082, relating to Implementation of the Energy and Infrastructure Provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.

(7) Executive Order No. 14096, relating to Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All.

SEC. 421. (a) IN GENERAL.—None of the funds appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for Fiscal Year 2025 for the Department of Veterans Affairs may be obligated or expended to procure or purchase computers, printers, software, or hardware needed for an office environment in which the manufacturer, bidder, or offeror, or any subsidy or parent company of an entity—

(1) in which the People's Republic of China has any ownership stake; or

(2) that contributes to the defense industry of the Chinese Communist Party.

(b) APPLICABILITY TO THIRD PARTIES.—The prohibition in subsection (a) also applies in cases in which the Secretary has contracted with a third party for the procurement, purchase, or expenditure of funds on any of the equipment and software described in such subsection.

#### SPENDING REDUCTION ACCOUNT

SEC. 422. \$0.

This Act may be cited as the "Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2025".

The Acting CHAIR. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived.

No further amendment to the bill, as amended, shall be in order except those printed in part B of House Report 118-535, amendments en bloc described in section 3 of House Resolution 1269, and pro forma amendments described in section 4 of that resolution.

Each further amendment printed in part B of the report shall be considered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment except as provided by section 4 of House Resolution 1269, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. It shall be in order at any time for the chair of the Committee on Appropriations or his

designee to offer amendments en bloc consisting of amendments printed in part B of the report not earlier disposed of. Amendments en bloc shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their designees, shall not be subject to amendment, except as provided by section 4 of House Resolution 1269, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

During consideration of the bill for amendment, the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees may offer up to 10 pro forma amendments each at any point for the purpose of debate.

□ 1245

AMENDMENTS EN BLOC OFFERED BY MR. CARTER OF TEXAS

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, pursuant to House Resolution 1269, I offer amendments en bloc.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendments en bloc.

Amendments en bloc consisting of amendment Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30, and 47 printed in part B of House Report 118-535, offered by Mr. CARTER of Texas:

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT OF COLORADO

Page 34, line 19, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$2,000,000)".

Page 35, line 23, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$2,000,000)".

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT OF COLORADO

Page 35, line 23, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$3,000,000)".

Page 40, line 2, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$2,000,000)".

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT OF COLORADO

Page 35, line 23, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$2,000,000)".

Page 44, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$2,000,000)".

AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT OF COLORADO

Page 35, line 23, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$3,500,000)".

Page 43, line 24, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$2,000,000)".

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT OF COLORADO

Page 35, line 23, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$3,500,000)".

Page 36, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$2,000,000)".

AMENDMENT NO. 11 OFFERED BY MS. PEREZ OF WASHINGTON

Page 31, line 13, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)".

AMENDMENT NO. 12 OFFERED BY MS. PEREZ OF WASHINGTON

Page 31, line 13, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$10,000,000) (increased by \$10,000,000)".

AMENDMENT NO. 13 OFFERED BY MR. VICENTE GONZALEZ OF TEXAS

Page 36, line 18, after the dollar amount, insert "(decreased by \$2,000,000)".

Page 36, line 19, after the dollar amount, insert "(decreased by \$2,000,000)".

Page 44, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$2,000,000)".

AMENDMENT NO. 14 OFFERED BY MR. VICENTE GONZALEZ OF TEXAS

Page 44, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)".

AMENDMENT NO. 15 OFFERED BY MR. GOTTHEIMER OF NEW JERSEY

Page 30, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)".

AMENDMENT NO. 23 OFFERED BY MR. LALOTA OF NEW YORK

Page 43, line 24, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$15,000,000) (increased by \$15,000,000)".

AMENDMENT NO. 24 OFFERED BY MR. LALOTA OF NEW YORK

Page 9, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$10,000,000) (increased by \$10,000,000)".

AMENDMENT NO. 25 OFFERED BY MR. LALOTA OF NEW YORK

Page 31, line 13, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$5,000,000) (increased by \$5,000,000)".

AMENDMENT NO. 26 OFFERED BY MR. LALOTA OF NEW YORK

Page 34, line 19, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$5,000,000) (increased by \$5,000,000)".

AMENDMENT NO. 27 OFFERED BY MR. LALOTA OF NEW YORK

Page 34, line 9, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$10,000,000) (increased by \$10,000,000)".

AMENDMENT NO. 30 OFFERED BY MS. NORTON OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Page 30, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)".

AMENDMENT NO. 47 OFFERED BY MRS. WAGNER OF MISSOURI

Page 4, line 8, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$200,000,000) (reduced by \$200,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I rise to support this amendment. It contains a number of non-controversial amendments from both sides of the aisle. I encourage its adoption, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I support this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

The en bloc amendments were agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. BERGMAN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 34, line 19, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$20,000,000) (increased by \$20,000,000)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Chairman, last year, the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA), my close friend and colleague, and I offered an amendment urging the Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct a large-scale study into psychedelic-assisted therapies to treat PTSD. I am happy to say that amendment was approved unanimously.

It was 6 months after this show of congressional support that the Veterans Administration announced that it would be funding significant research into psychedelic therapies for the first time in more than four decades.

While it is extremely promising that these treatments are coming, with FDA final approval expected sometime in August, one of the largest barriers to the initial implementation and future success is the availability of qualified and well-trained mental health professionals within VA.

Psychedelic-assisted therapies generally involve multiple therapists at a time and several multi-hour sessions to complete.

My amendment is simple. It expresses support for the recently announced VA-led research and encourages VA to prioritize the proactive training of therapists to successfully administer these new therapies.

As we saw last year, demonstrating clear congressional approval for these innovative efforts can motivate real action within the Federal bureaucracy. We owe it to our veterans to do everything we can in support of these breakthrough therapies.

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

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, even though I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, the amendment has no budgetary effect, but highlights an important issue for our veterans. I support the efforts for the new treatment of PTSD so long as they are safe and approved for use by the FDA. I am willing to accept the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to

the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA).

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this amendment, and I thank my fellow co-chair of the Psychedelics Advancing Therapies Caucus, Mr. BERGMAN, for his good work on this measure.

We have seen our Nation's veterans continue to needlessly suffer suicides, mental health, and opioid overdoses. It is crucial that the VA do everything in its power to ensure that they have safe and scientifically sound and potentially lifesaving therapies as soon as they are available and approved in the United States.

Today, Mr. Chairman, these veterans go to other countries to receive these therapies. They are cured, and then they come back. Why in God's name do we not provide these therapies here in the United States? It doesn't make sense.

These amendments will give the Department of Veterans Affairs the opportunity to continue research they have been conducting and the potential to be able to offer MDMA-assisted therapies to our veterans should they receive FDA approval.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment. Our veterans fought for this country and sacrificed much for this country, and it is our duty to give them the best therapies available for the healing of those invisible wounds.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Chair, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Michigan has 2 minutes remaining.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Chairman, psychedelic-assisted therapies have the potential to be the first genuine advancement in the treatment of veterans' mental health in decades. It is essential that the VA continue their efforts to research these compounds and do everything they can to ensure that they have trained therapists and that those trained therapists are ready to meet the need to provide these new breakthrough treatments once they receive FDA approval.

Mr. Chair, again, I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. BERGMAN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 31, line 13, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$20,000,000) (increased by \$20,000,000)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Chair, this amendment would urge the Veterans Administration to make a decision on incorporating MDMA-assisted therapy into their formulary within 180 days of FDA approval. This is based on legislation by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. VAN ORDEN), which the Committee on Veterans' Affairs approved last month.

As we speak, the FDA's Scientific Advisory Committee is meeting to evaluate the phase 3 studies into this therapy, and full approval will likely come in early August.

I have had the opportunity to personally meet with many of the researchers involved in this study and the veterans whose lives have been forever changed by these therapies. That experience made the potential of this treatment clear to me, and many of the veterans told me that they would not be alive today if it were not for this therapy.

Any bureaucratic red tape that delays potential formulary inclusion could cost the lives of veterans currently suffering from PTSD. This amendment does not push VA to make a decision one way or another. It merely calls for them to act quickly in making a formulary decision.

Mr. Chair, I strongly urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Mr. Chair, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA).

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. BERGMAN) has laid it out. We have veterans with invisible wounds that they have brought back from the battlefield.

One suicide is too many. We have MDMA therapy that is now being proven to be sometimes 90 percent effective in curing these invisible wounds. We owe it to our veterans, to our society, and to our friends and neighbors who have served to bring these therapies to them as quickly as possible.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Chairman, I close by expressing my disappointment and frustration with the language that was included—or rather was not included in the committee's report accompanying this bill.

Despite strong support for useful and proactive language related to psychedelic therapies, including from members within the Appropriations Committee, the report only includes an indirect reference and encourages VA to monitor the results of privately funded research. It does not recognize the fact that VA is already pursuing their own research, and it takes no steps to prepare the VA for FDA approval, which may come in a couple of months.

Those who risk their lives in defense of our country deserve happy and fulfilling lives, and we have the responsibility to ensure that the VA is ready and able to assist them in this endeavor.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MR. BOST

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 8 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title) insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to enforce the provision included in Chapter 1.8 of the VHA Office of Community Care, "Field Guidebook: Specialty Programs" to make wait time and drive time access standards only applicable to primary care, specialty care, and non-institutional extended care services.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of my amendment to the fiscal year 2025 MILCON-VA appropriations bill.

My amendment would rightfully prevent any VA funds from being used to enforce a provision that excludes mental health residential rehabilitation treatment programs from the wait time and drive time access standards as authorized by the MISSION Act.

The VA's Mental Health Residential Rehab Treatment Program is a crucial program that provides lifesaving treatment to veterans with mental health and substance use disorders.

□ 1300

Right now, veterans are restricted by where they can get their treatment due to the Biden administration's misguided view of the MISSION Act access standards.

As a result, veterans are being forced to wait months to receive this care.

We are losing 17 veterans a day to suicide.

For VA to not do everything possible to ensure veterans are getting into these treatment programs as quickly as possible is dangerous and wrong.

Madam Chair, this administration knows that there are not enough available beds in VA facilities to meet veterans' demand for them and that is when the community providers step in, in partnership with the VA. Getting veterans the help and support they need is the VA's top clinical priority, as well as ensuring the mental health

needs of veterans are met without any delays.

It goes without saying that a veteran in crisis who needs treatment should be eligible for community care without proof that they live far from a VA, or their local facility is overbooked.

This is what the MISSION Act was designed to help with, but under the administration they want proof.

I am proud to have introduced my amendment to prohibit VA from excluding these vitally important treatment programs from wait time and drive time access standards for VA community care programs.

There should be no closed door when it comes to lifesaving care for veterans in crisis.

Madam Chair, I encourage all of my colleagues to support this, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR (Ms. MALLIOTAKIS). The gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I will be clear that the gentleman who is offering this amendment has been committed to driving the VA toward privatization. That is what this is really all about.

Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition to this amendment because what his amendment would do is greatly expand the MISSION Act, which is designated access standards to all categories of care and would seek to greatly increase the privatization of the VA.

The MISSION Act was not envisioned to replace all care at all facilities within VA with private care. It was intended to supplement care at VA facilities, particularly, and specifically, when a veteran was too far away from a VA facility that could provide the service or when there was a prolonged period of time in which a veteran could get that service.

Let's be clear: Where we are now in terms of the care in the community and for veterans getting access to appointments, in many cases, all across the country is that it actually takes longer for a veteran to get an appointment when they try to get one in the community than it does to get one at the VA. The overwhelming majority of veterans, when they are surveyed, make very clear that they prefer their care at the VA.

Implementing this amendment could have far-reaching ramifications and would cost hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars a year based on past CBO scores for similar legislation. It is interesting given that the majority is cutting the funding at the VA by \$6 billion in this bill, so how we would ever be able to pay for this proposal is incomprehensible to me. This amendment is a controversial authorizing issue which should be considered in the appropriate authorizing committee, which the sponsor of the amendment is chairman of that committee.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Chair, I want to make sure that the people understand that this amendment is not an act to try to privatize our VA. It is an act to try to make sure that our veterans actually receive the services that they need.

As a veteran, and as the many veterans that actually serve in this body, it is vitally important that that issue is taken care of; not to protect the bureaucracy at VA, but that we protect and serve the veterans that we were sent here to serve.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, as I said, the gentleman from Illinois can put all the bows and ribbons and wrapping paper that he would like on what his amendment does, but it doesn't change the fact that it would move VA not only further toward privatization, but flies in the face of the original goal and the law that the MISSION Act is intended to implement, which is to ensure that veterans who are not able to get quick and timely access to care when they don't live close enough to a VA facility that can provide that care or when the length of time is unreasonable for them to get that care, that is not the case in the situation in which this amendment would apply.

Plus, this amendment would cost an extraordinary amount of money, millions and, likely, billions of dollars which has been previously scored by CBO, and this bill cuts the VA by \$6 billion.

Again, the mathing on the other side of the aisle is really not working so well.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Illinois will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 9 OFFERED BY MR. BURCHETT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 9 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

Mr. BURCHETT. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title) insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Secretary of

Veterans Affairs to ban or remove the photograph "V-J Day in Times Square".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. BURCHETT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. BURCHETT. Madam Chair, in light of all these other amendments, my amendment seems a little light compared to other things going on, but I bring it in all sincerity because I have had some constituents contact me about this.

This basically just prohibits the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from banning or removing the iconic photograph "V-J Day in Times Square," otherwise known as The Kiss.

A few months ago, an Assistant Secretary at the VA sent a memo directing regional offices to remove the photo, alleging it depicts a nonconsensual act.

Secretary McDonough later reversed the decision, and I think it is probably because his boss realized it is an election year.

This illustrates a larger problem within this administration, Madam Chair.

This administration constantly removes or changes history because they don't like the view from their rose-tinted glasses.

Madam Chair, World War II cost the lives of 330,000 American soldiers, including my uncle. My father fought in that war, fought valiantly in the Pacific.

World War II tore sons from their mothers and husbands from their wives. It impacted every part of American society. The actions in this photo are not really romantic as the woman said herself, the actual woman in the photo. The actions in this photo are simply two people rejoicing at the end of a terrible war and the defeat of terrible enemies. More importantly, this photo represents the victory and peace felt around the country and the world.

Madam Chair, I urge the Members to vote in favor of the amendment to prevent the administration from removing this photo in the future, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. BURCHETT).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 10 OFFERED BY MR. CRANE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 10 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

Mr. CRANE. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title) insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Secretary of

Veterans Affairs to report a determination under section 5502 of title 38, United States Code, and section 3.353 of title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations, to the Department of Justice National Instant Criminal Background Check System established pursuant to section 103 of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (34 U.S.C. 40901).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CRANE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. CRANE. Madam Chair, today, I rise in support of my amendment, which clarifies that any veteran who is reported to NICS by a VA fiduciary was done so incorrectly in violation of their constitutional rights.

It also forces the VA Secretary to instruct the Attorney General to remove these veterans from the NICS list.

Congress should not turn a blind eye to the 260,000 veterans who have been wrongfully submitted to the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

Earlier this year, Congress passed appropriations which prohibited this. In fact, last year, this exact language passed with 221 Republicans and 9 Democrats supporting it when it was considered by the House.

Since then, a majority of House Democrats have come out against this policy and are working with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to blatantly misuse VA funds, in conflict with congressional intent and the will of the people, to continue disarming veterans; create an unauthorized process for dragging veterans before judges for red flag disarmament proceedings; and using unconstitutional State-level gun confiscation laws against veterans, even outside the fiduciary program.

These lawless suggestions by my Democrat colleagues are the nightmares of veterans that I represent and veterans across America.

President Biden will have no problem plowing ahead and stripping veterans of their Second Amendment rights, and if this administration can do this to veterans, they can do it to the rest of Americans.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, not only is this amendment bad policy, but the underlying bill includes a prohibition on ensuring that people who have been prohibited by law from getting access to a gun because they have had a fiduciary appointed to take care of their finances, meaning that they have had a determination that they are not competent to manage their finances, this amendment would go even further and elimi-

nate the exception in the underlying bill that says if a court has judicially determined that a veteran is incompetent and appoints a fiduciary, even in that case, this amendment says that a veteran would be able to keep their guns.

Under Federal law, when someone is deemed mentally incompetent by a judge, which is a similar ruling that would occur in this case, the gentleman offering this amendment would allow a veteran to keep their firearms, even if a court had decided that they were not competent to handle their finances.

That is unacceptable. This provision not only prevents the VA from following the law that is intended to protect veterans and those around them, but it prioritizes firearms over the safety of veterans.

The existing program has a full due process system, and veterans have access to an appeals process.

This is an example of generating controversy where there is none.

The process of applying for disability benefits is separate from the processes by which veterans receive VA healthcare. The Veterans Health Administration does not take away veterans' firearms, but this amendment by implying that VA bureaucrats are going to take guns away from veterans, the provision not only does nothing to increase access to care, it seeks to dissuade veterans from even seeking the healthcare they have earned in the first place.

This is about whether we are going to keep veterans and those around them safe.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly emphasized that the core of the Second Amendment right is self-defense. Assigning a fiduciary to handle financial benefits does not interfere with self-defense, but rather, it is seeking to protect and avoid injuries and deaths from suicide and accidents, which are rising when a veteran who is not competent to handle much of their own personal business and a court has determined that, we know there is a greater risk when they are handling a firearm.

We know that suicide is more likely. We know that killings take place, and this amendment would make that more likely.

Madam Chair, I underscore my strong opposition to this amendment and urge Members to vote against it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1315

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CRANE).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by

the gentleman from Arizona will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 16 OFFERED BY MS. GREENE OF GEORGIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 16 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

Ms. GREENE of Georgia. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 8, strike lines 15 through 25.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. GREENE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Georgia.

Ms. GREENE of Georgia. Madam Chair, my amendment strikes funding for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program.

My amendment would strike over \$433 million in NATO funding from the bill. America should not be doling out hundreds of millions of dollars to international organizations to help them fight their enemies, especially when they are unwilling to fight for themselves.

As of 2023, a majority of NATO countries do not meet their pledge to spend a minimum of 2 percent of their GDP on defense. The United States has been financing and promising to defend NATO countries for decades and paying more than its fair share, all while countries like Germany fail to fulfill their NATO obligations.

European countries could and should be stepping up their financial contributions to ensure the security of NATO. Instead, they prefer the U.S. taxpayer to foot the bill and, if the time comes, for American servicemembers to die for them.

Our continued involvement in NATO only undermines the security of our Nation because it embroils the United States in other countries' military entanglements even if the United States has no direct interests.

This is exactly what has happened in Ukraine, which could become a part of NATO. Billions of American taxpayer dollars go to the corruption capital of the world, and the sanctions placed on Russia end up actually hurting Americans.

As long as we remain a member of NATO, the United States will continue to function as the military ATM of European countries at the expense of our own citizens, putting our own national security and our economy at risk.

If the United States further involves itself in NATO, it may be another 20 years of Afghanistan all over again, except the outcome may end up being much, much worse.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, this amendment would completely eliminate funding in this bill for the NATO Security Investment Program during a time when we should be investing in much-needed infrastructure projects.

I point out to my colleagues that worldwide in U.S. military infrastructure, 30 percent of our military infrastructure is in fair or poor condition. We should be investing in these much-needed infrastructure projects. Cutting funding for the NATO Security Investment Program is not only bad policy from a national security perspective, but it is also not sound long-term fiscal policy.

The deterrence that NATO provides now is a small cost to avoid future conflict. As I stated last year during debate on this issue, regardless of your stance on overall defense spending levels of various NATO countries, it is simply not true that the United States is paying more than its share of this direct contribution program.

This amendment does not recognize the cost-effective benefit the NATO Security Investment Program provides to the United States. The U.S. contributes less than 16 percent of the funding for the NATO Security Investment Program, but 44 percent of the locations for which projects are selected benefit U.S. posture locations.

If the U.S. contributed at the same cost share relative to national wealth that our allies do, our cost share would be 47 percent, rather than the under 16 percent that we actually pay.

The United States' contributions to NATO represent only a small portion of our defense spending, but the strength of the NATO alliance is an outsized and irreplaceable part of American national security. This amendment would not even reinvest the funding into other priorities. It simply cuts \$434 million.

As I stated in my opening statement, this bill is already a cut of \$718 million for military construction compared to the enacted level from last year. This amendment would take the bill further in the wrong direction and, if enacted, would leave military construction funded over a billion dollars less than in fiscal year 2024.

Madam Chair, I strongly urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. GREENE of Georgia. Madam Chair, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Georgia has 3 minutes remaining.

Ms. GREENE of Georgia. Madam Chair, the American people are very fed up with their hard-earned tax dollars being sent overseas to countries all around the world, especially when our own border is being completely invaded every single day.

We don't have an idea of how many millions of people are in this country.

We know that it is upward of 12 million, while some estimates go as high as 20 million. Our country is being invaded by people from over 160 countries around the world.

We are talking about criminals, gang members, cartels, rapists, murderers. All kinds of convicted criminals have come into our country and are committing crimes against Americans.

Just recently, there was an illegal alien monster that was arrested in the State of New York by NYPD that was released. When he was released, because the justice system of New York did not prosecute him, this monster then came to Georgia and murdered Laken Riley. These are the types of crimes that are happening all over our country.

Just recently, Madam Chair, as I heard you speak earlier today about two police officers who were killed in New York, these are the types of things that Americans care about, the crimes that are being committed against Americans. We are not interested in seeing our hard-earned dollars go to countries that don't even meet their commitments.

Over half of the NATO countries have not met their pledge to spend at least over 2 percent. We are talking about countries like France. We are talking about countries like Denmark, Germany, Italy, Canada, Turkiye, Spain, and many others that are not even paying and meeting their pledge of spending at least 2 percent in NATO.

Yet, America is beyond our pledge. We are spending, in 2023, 3.5 percent of our GDP, yet we don't do anything to defend our own country and our own borders.

This is why Americans would love to see Congress take action, action to defund NATO and stop spending hundreds of millions of their hard-earned money to defend these foreign countries while we don't defend our own country and our own people.

Madam Chair, I urge Congress to vote for this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Florida has 3 minutes remaining.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I think the sponsor of the amendment has shown pretty clear evidence that she has no idea what the NATO Security Investment Program is actually funding.

We are talking about funding that is provided to build infrastructure that takes care of our troops who are overseas so that we can make sure that we invest properly in infrastructure for a vast array of training facilities, of national security facilities, of hangars that contain our airplanes, military aircraft that costs billions of dollars.

Everything about what the amendment does actually makes our own servicemembers, who are fighting overseas to defend our national security interests and to defend our country, less safe.

I am not sure if the sponsor of the amendment has traveled to see our military infrastructure around the world. I have.

Oftentimes, when we go as MILCON-VA Subcommittee, I have traveled with Judge Carter to see some of our infrastructure. The appalling conditions in which much of this infrastructure exists make it so that our service-members are less safe.

I have been in hangars in which the doors don't close because they are rusted, and the jury-rigging that our servicemembers have to do to close the doors of some hangars to protect our very expensive equipment that protects our national security interests would straighten my hair, and that is not easy, Madam Chair.

We have a responsibility to make sure that the infrastructure that we fund is in pristine, well-kept condition. What the sponsor of the amendment would do is decimate our ability to do that. That is irresponsible. It is unpatriotic.

We should not support this amendment. Members should vote against it.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. GREENE).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Georgia will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 17 OFFERED BY MS. HAGEMAN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 17 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Department of Veterans Affairs to decommission mileage reimbursement kiosks.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. HAGEMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wyoming.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Madam Chair, I rise in support of my amendment No. 17 to H.R. 8580, which would prohibit the VA from continuing to decommission mileage reimbursement kiosks in its facilities nationwide.

As the age-old saying goes, if it is not broke, don't fix it. Unfortunately, this basic premise was disregarded when the VA decided to quickly do away with

mileage reimbursement kiosks at its facilities nationwide, which had previously provided veterans with an easy-to-use system to file their beneficiary travel reimbursement claims, among other key functions.

These changes were made as part of the November 2020 rollout of the VA's new online beneficiary travel self-service system, which sought to reform the way in which these claims are submitted and processed.

Since its introduction, the VA's new system has been plagued with countless issues and has ultimately disadvantaged a large segment of America's veterans, such as those who live in rural areas, including Wyoming, where access to the internet can be limited, and our elderly veterans are not as familiar with this type of technology.

An OIG report from May 2023 highlighted that from February 2021 through July 2022, the new system fell short of all four of the VA system performance goals. Initial feedback from veterans outside the VA and veteran service organizations was never taken into account during system development. The VA did not provide proper training to veterans on how to enter claims in the new system until almost 5 months after the system's launch.

Madam Chair, these mistakes are simply not acceptable. Combined with the removal of the mileage reimbursement kiosks, these foundational flaws have resulted in missed reimbursements and increased difficulties for America's veterans.

While I certainly understand the need to streamline and improve upon existing systems and processes, modernization should never come at a negative cost to any of our veterans who have devoted their lives to serving our Nation and safeguarding the freedoms that we hold dear.

It is our responsibility, and should remain our priority, to do everything in our power to ensure our veterans can easily access the benefits and care that they have rightfully earned.

Madam Chair, I urge all of my colleagues to support my amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1330

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to this amendment. CBO has reviewed this amendment and has indicated that it would have significant budget authority and outlay effects in this year. Translate that into English. It means that it would cost a lot of money.

The bill already cuts \$6 billion from the VA over the last fiscal year. Furthermore, veterans can still receive their travel reimbursements online, which simplifies the current process

and the need for hard-copy and in-person submissions, which is cumbersome and unnecessary.

I believe we should let the VA manage this process in a way that is efficient and cost-effective. This amendment micromanages the VA on something that is really not appropriate for us to be doing in this bill, and so I would urge its opposition. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Madam Chair, I will repeat, this is for the benefit of our veterans. This is a program that was not properly rolled out, and our veterans are the ones who have suffered as a consequence. They are the ones who have given their lives and their dedication to protecting our freedoms.

It is critically important that we make sure that we make it as easy as possible, as streamlined as possible for them to be able to seek the reimbursement that they are entitled to. These kiosks have been effective in doing that. Until there is an alternative that can replace the kiosks, we should not be decommissioning them.

Madam Chair, I urge adoption of this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. LOIS FRANKEL), my neighbor slightly to the north and a member of the Appropriations Committee.

Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida. Madam Chair, I thank my colleague, DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, for her fine work.

Madam Chair, I am the proud mother of a United States war veteran, so I understand the risks that our brave men and women in uniform take for our freedom.

It saddens me to say: My, my, my, here we go again. Republicans are interfering with a woman's freedom to decide whether or when to start or grow a family. This time they are going after the women who have served our country in uniform.

This bill includes provisions that not only cruelly restrict access to abortion but eliminate abortion counseling at the VA altogether, impacting nearly 1 million veterans of childbearing age.

Madam Chair, I hope we can all agree that we owe our veterans nothing less than our full support to help them maintain their health and well-being. These proposed changes in this bill are not just a rollback of medical rights; they are a profound failure to stand by our veterans and a betrayal to honor our commitment to them.

I cannot support this bill because of some of these provisions, including this one, and I urge my colleagues to vote against it.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Madam Chair, I don't think that there is anything that epitomizes more the Democrats' obsession with abortion than bringing that issue in relation to an amendment as to whether the VA should be allowed to decommission kiosks for mileage reimbursement for our veterans.

The fact that that is the only issue that they are able to address when trying to find a way to make sure that our veterans are able to be properly reimbursed for the expenses that they incur just, I think, is a reflection on the Democratic Party as a whole right now. They are not even capable of discussing anything other than abortion, even when the amendment has nothing to do with that particular topic.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

**Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.** Madam Chair, as I said, I rise in opposition to this amendment, particularly because CBO says that the cost of actually implementing this would be astronomical, and the majority is already cutting \$6 billion out of this bill, so I don't understand how they would expect VA to pay for what this proposal would require. We are micromanaging the VA when we should be allowing them to manage this process in a way that they think is most efficient and cost-effective. I oppose the amendment and yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. HAGEMAN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 18 OFFERED BY MR. JAMES

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 18 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

**Mr. JAMES.** Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 34, line 9, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$3,250,000) (reduced by \$3,250,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. JAMES) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

**Mr. JAMES.** Madam Chair, I rise in support of my amendment, an effort to bring a mobile medical unit and/or community-based outpatient clinic to my district, Michigan's 10th Congressional District.

There was a recent announcement from the VA that mobile medical units are coming to Arizona and Texas. I believe there is also a very high demand for them in Michigan. Many veterans, particularly those who served in Korea and Vietnam in my district have come to me directly, whether at the VFW Post 6691 in Fraser, Michigan, where I am now a member, or just recently at the Memorial Day parade in Sterling Heights about the need to have greater access to healthcare facilities for those who may be declining in their mobility as they age.

Currently, many veterans in Macomb County have to travel too far and too long to get the services they deserve. It is for this reason that we need to bring

one closer to home, directly where they are needed most.

While the Dingell VA has made some strides to improve healthcare for veterans in the metro Detroit area, there is still a great deal of work to be done. I heard from women veterans, in particular, in my district office about the need to have more choice and better quality of services but also about staff turnover rate that is affecting their quality of care. Community-based outpatient clinics and mobile medical units are a path toward allowing veterans to get more specialized, local-based care in a manner that they have very much earned.

As we commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day this week, we honor the brave American soldiers who fought our Nation's wars abroad so we may enjoy the privileges of freedom at home. As someone who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom myself, I believe that their sacrifices should be honored through our work here in Congress.

I know firsthand about the transition from military life to civilian life. It is not easy. The least we can do is make VA healthcare more available and accessible to our veterans. My amendment will further these aims through funding for facilities like mobile medical units and community-based outpatient clinics. I implore my colleagues to support my amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

**Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.** Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

**Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.** Madam Chair, this amendment is non-controversial. I do not oppose it. It supports community-based outpatient clinics and mobile medical units. I yield back the balance of my time.

**Mr. JAMES.** Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. JAMES).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 19 OFFERED BY MRS. KIGGANS OF VIRGINIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 19 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

**Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia.** Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 9, line 18, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The gentlewoman is recognized for 5 minutes.

**Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia.** Madam Chair, I represent a district that over 90,000 Active-Duty military members and their families call home. As a former Navy helicopter pilot, military spouse, and now mom to children who serve, I am proud to be a voice for our military community here in Congress.

One of the aspects I am most passionate about advocating for is improving their quality of life, particularly their living conditions. To put it plainly, housing for our single, unaccompanied servicemembers is abysmal, and it is completely unacceptable.

In September 2023, the United States Government Accountability Office found a variety of living conditions were negatively affecting servicemembers' quality of life, such as sewage overflow, mold and mildew, broken windows and locks. I have seen it for myself and so has my staff.

The week I was sworn into office, I took my entire team to Virginia Beach and drove them around Naval Air Station Oceana to show them the conditions we ask our unaccompanied sailors to live in. We visited condemned barracks and other barracks that were decades old and had very little maintenance and upkeep. We saw rusted bathrooms, moldy ceilings, and dirty carpets.

To think of the conditions that we ask these often young, unaccompanied sailors to live in, I think of college dorms. I am also a mom to four children who are college aged, and we have done many college tours recently and visiting dormitories on campuses. Seeing the differences in where we are housing college-aged students and knowing what those kids do a lot of nights a week, and looking at where we are housing our unaccompanied servicemembers, knowing what we ask of those young people, it was a stark contrast and stark difference.

Our young men and women in uniform put their lives on the line for our country. It is only right to provide them with the quality of life deserving of their service and sacrifice. It is infuriating to me that we have not provided better for them.

Given the overall success of the military housing privatization initiative for military family housing and our current budgetary constraints, we need to think outside the box about housing solutions for our unaccompanied servicemembers.

That is why I am offering this amendment to encourage the approval and development of privatized housing for unaccompanied servicemembers, like the ones we have right now in Hampton Roads and San Diego. We cannot allow bureaucratic delays and fragmented approaches by the different services to hamper our efforts to fix problems plaguing our barracks on bases across the country.

We can and must work together to create better living conditions and housing options for those who serve. I want my children and their peers to be

proud of their Navy just like I was when I served.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the gentlewoman's amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, the gentlewoman's amendment is bewildering to me. I understand and agree with the frustration toward the deficiencies in housing for our servicemembers, including unaccompanied housing, but a GAO report last year highlighted the horrible conditions of some military unaccompanied housing and inadequate oversight from the military services.

While the services are taking some steps to address these deficiencies, our subcommittee has remained focused on a bipartisan basis of addressing this issue. Privatization of unaccompanied housing is not a universal answer to these problems, and it should not be a first option. While the services are exploring pilot projects for unaccompanied barracks, the feedback that our subcommittee has heard in hearings this year is that the services do not view privatization as an answer to this problem in all or even most cases.

We don't have to look far to see how privatization can go horribly wrong. Privatized family housing has resulted in persistent, unacceptable conditions for many military families, including houses with mold, improperly addressed lead paint, untimely maintenance, and companies which have not been responsive to their concerns.

Why? Because even the fines that are levied once these private companies are held accountable are just a rounding error for these multinational corporations who really don't have to worry about whether they can afford the accountability that is meted out from their neglect.

Oversight of privatized family housing remains a major issue to this day. Even when privatization may result in better housing conditions now, it is not a solution if companies don't properly maintain these facilities for the full life cycle like they have neglected to do for family housing.

Sure, if you have a private company build a private barracks now, it is pristine and new, and has nothing wrong with it, but with the neglect that is the track record of these private companies, down the road we are going to end up potentially in the same boat.

□ 1345

We cannot repeat the mistakes of the past. There may be specific instances where privatized unaccompanied housing can be part of a holistic plan by the services to address the deficiencies of unaccompanied housing, but it is not

and should not be the whole solution. That is where this amendment takes us.

We should not repeat the privatized housing horror stories of the past or waste untold millions more in critical taxpayer dollars on privatized housing schemes.

I strongly urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Madam Chair, I disagree with my colleague. Privatization is one solution, and privatization of family housing has come a long way.

Is it perfect, no, but it is a step in the right direction, and it is certainly a lot better than what we used to have, which was simply the defense budget and the government running all of family housing.

Family housing has come a long way since we have privatized it. There is a lot of oversight needed, and Congress needs to continue to provide the oversight so that we have the best family housing available for our military families who serve right along with our Active-Duty servicemen and -women.

Privatization is one way that we can think outside the box. The defense budget is always inadequate. We just don't have the amount of money that it takes to refurbish and redo all of the unaccompanied housing, all of the barracks that we have seen and that were listed in that scathing GAO report that came out. It is one solution.

Right now, we just have two. We have one in Norfolk and one in San Diego. We have two models of privatization.

Having visited the one in Norfolk, it is amazing to see the quality-of-life differences. They have private bedrooms. They have a communal kitchen that has actual spaces for them to make nutritious meals.

We have things like a gym. There is a pool and even a Jacuzzi and basketball courts. There is a theater room. There is a library.

There is plenty that offers the good quality of life that we know our servicemen and -women need, especially when they come home after a long deployment or after a long working day.

Those are the things that we can provide in privatized housing. Is it a perfect solution, no, but it is a way to augment what we have right now, and it is certainly a step in the right direction.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, the difference between the gentlewoman's approach and ours is that we believe that the services should continue to be able to take a measured approach to whether or not using privatized unaccompanied housing is appropriate and whether or not, as the gentlewoman's amendment would do, encourage the services to go to privatization for unaccompanied housing.

We see the track record that is unfettered. Going forward on privatizing

housing has not gone well, and it has been expensive, costly, and it has also contributed to the problem that we are having with retention of our servicemembers.

We have heard testimony over the last few years from servicemembers who have been in neglected privatized family housing, and it has caused many of the servicemembers to throw the towel in and just say: You know what? I wanted to make a career out of being in the military, but obviously the services don't care about me and don't care about my family or exposing my children to lead paint, mold, and other really serious problems.

We are not at a point where we should be encouraging privatization of housing. We should allow the services to take a measured approach to pursue privatized unaccompanied housing when they think it is appropriate and make sure that there is appropriate accountability in place, which this amendment doesn't ensure.

I would urge Members to vote against it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Madam Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST).

Mr. MAST. Madam Chair, the argument here against privatized housing for people in the military is if you allow somebody to put their private dollars into it, then down the road it may turn into what the government has allowed the housing to turn into, which would be terrible. We shouldn't let a private entity oversee the housing because it may turn into what the government has allowed housing to be for our servicemembers.

That argument holds no water, makes absolutely no sense, and I would put my money on the private entities taking better care of their investment than how the government takes care of an investment that is paid for by the ambiguous tax dollars of people across the country any day of the week.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 20 OFFERED BY MRS. KIGGANS OF VIRGINIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 20 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 31, line 13, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS)

and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Madam Chair, as a daughter of a veteran, the wife of a veteran, as a veteran myself, it is particularly important to me that our country keeps its promises to those who served.

Virginia's Second District is home to one of the highest populations of veterans in the country. An estimated 90,000 veterans live not within our borders but across the ocean in U.S. territories and Freely Associated States such as Puerto Rico, Guam, and other islands across the Pacific.

We are responsible for providing care to all veterans, including those that reside within U.S. territories and Freely Associated States.

However, there is evidence that VA's estimate of the number of veterans living in these areas is far too low, and the Government Accountability Office has consistently criticized the model used by the VA to make these estimates.

This prevents the VA from allocating sufficient resources to serve those veterans, leading to gaps in care.

In addition, the VA does not have community care network providers in the Freely Associated States and limited local options for medical care, and healthcare is often only available after traveling by plane.

Most veterans who live in one of the Freely Associated States do not qualify for the VA travel benefits program, even though the closest VA clinic is sometimes thousands of miles away on another island.

VA care in these areas does not live up to its promise. I urge the VA to maintain and expand services available to these veterans, and I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I will address the tail end of the previous colleague's comments that represented a fundamental misunderstanding of the way privatized military housing works.

The privatized companies aren't taking over housing that the government built. They actually enter into a contract with the military, and they build the housing brand new themselves.

The problem is that for decades, they have neglected it. They have neglected the housing. They are terrible about follow-up on maintenance and making sure that the housing is well cared for. They are leaving people in mold, filth, vermin, and lead paint, and it is unacceptable.

Let's just be clear that the gentleman's reference to privatized companies coming and rescuing government housing that has declined is not correct.

The privatized family housing program and the barracks are new construction that the privatized companies build, and then they neglect taking care of it and neglect taking care of our servicemembers, which is why we need to be careful about our approach in the future to privatized family housing and privatized housing for unaccompanied servicemembers.

This amendment is not controversial, and I am not opposed to it. It supports medical care for veterans who reside in U.S. territories and Freely Associated States, which both Mr. CARTER and I have gone together to see and to communicate about.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Madam Chair, just to close, again, about the privatization of housing. To look at and to compare and to enter both facilities, those that are privatized, and those that are purely funded by the Department of Defense, is it perfect, no, but it is a heck of a lot better than the current conditions that we have our unaccompanied servicemembers living in right now.

There are stark differences in those two pathways of life. I cannot speak more favorably to the privatized model. Again, is it perfect, no. Is there a lot of accountability and oversight that needs to happen, yes.

That contract process could probably be perfected and worked on. That is something that I think is in the responsibility of Congress.

We need to make sure that we have a contract with those privatized companies who also have reputations on the line so they are not just building and forgetting about those housing situations. They have reputations too, and they want to take care of our servicemembers.

In reality, what is happening in the two models we currently have in San Diego and Norfolk is a stark contrast to the DOD-funded, DOD-built, and DOD-supervised housing that we currently see on base, and I can't think of a better direction for our servicemembers.

As far as the VA carrying U.S. territories and Freely Associated States, I again encourage my colleagues to support this amendment.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. MOLINARO). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 21 OFFERED BY MRS. KIGGANS OF VIRGINIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 21 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 31, line 13, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Chair, I had the honor of growing up in a family with a strong history of service to our country.

My grandfather served in the Navy in World War II. My father served as a United States Army Green Beret in Vietnam and later served in the Army Reserves.

I spent some of the best years of my life in the Navy as a helicopter pilot with many members who became like family to me.

As a third-generation veteran, the wife of a veteran, and a mother of future veterans, I know how important it is to take care of our men and women in uniform after they return home from service.

Unfortunately, these issues surrounding mental health are a complex and unfortunate challenge for many of our Nation's heroes.

Since 9/11, it is estimated that over 30,000 Active-Duty servicemembers and veterans have died by suicide. Most statistics average approximately 20 a day.

This is four times more than the number of servicemembers killed in combat during the global war on terror.

We have the responsibility to provide those who have served our country with the medical care, including the mental health care and support that they deserve.

While the VA has expanded their suicide outreach and mental health initiatives, there is more work to be done. We cannot allow the men and women who have served our country to slip through the cracks. We can and we must do better.

That is why I have offered this amendment, to ensure the VA fully funds and effectively executes mental health care programs with a special emphasis on suicide prevention and outreach.

Returning home from combat and transitioning to civilian life is often extremely difficult for our servicemembers.

Access to programs and resources for suicide prevention can help those who are struggling and ultimately save lives. We must protect our veterans, just as they have protected us. I urge my colleagues to stand up for veterans and vote in favor of my amendment.

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I really would invite the gentlewoman from Virginia to take a tour of some of our privatized military family housing where she would have an opportunity to see that it is not better.

We have established some layer of oversight at the military service level, but we have really decrepit conditions that still exist.

There are some beginning improvements, but there are millions of dollars in fines that privatized military family housing companies have had to pay because of their neglect.

Like I said, encouraging more privatized housing for our unaccompanied servicemembers should be done in a selective, choiceful way, not just encouraging it to occur across all of our services.

This amendment is noncontroversial, and I am not opposed to it. It supports mental health care programs with an emphasis on suicide prevention.

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

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, just to clarify, there is a stark difference between family privatized housing and unaccompanied privatized housing for our single servicemembers.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. EDWARDS). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS).

The amendment was agreed to.

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AMENDMENT NO. 22 OFFERED BY MRS. KIGGANS OF VIRGINIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 22 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 24, line 22, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I represent a military-heavy district with five bases, and all of those installations have buildings that are in disrepair or condemned. I am shocked at some of the conditions I see on the

military bases in my district. I drive around, and it is disheartening to see the buildings that are in disrepair, that are falling apart, and that are eyesores.

I have driven in family housing where right across the street will be an empty, old BOQ building that will have the doors swinging open and the curtains blowing in the breeze from windows that are broken and refrigerators sitting with their doors ajar out in the hallways. These are buildings that are awaiting demolition that sit literally for years and are eyesores. We haven't prioritized demolition projects on these bases.

When I think about recruitment and retention for our all-volunteer force, I worry about those impressions that we are leaving with other families, with our military families and Active-Duty servicemen and -women that are driving through bases.

Not prioritizing military demolition projects has created safety issues directly affecting the quality of life and quality of service of our military personnel, their families, and surrounding communities. Poor conditions on military bases can hamper operational efficiency and readiness. Condemned buildings may restrict space for training, maintenance, and equipment storage. Lack of suitable facilities can delay operations, hinder training exercises, and impact the overall effectiveness of military units stationed on the base.

My amendment would ensure the Department of Defense allocates additional funding specifically for the demolition of condemned buildings on military installations. If we recognize the importance of maintaining and improving our installation infrastructure, we can ensure that we don't deter potential recruits and impact retention rates.

Servicemembers and their families may be reluctant to stay in such environments, affecting the overall strength and morale of the military community. My amendment would ensure the necessary resources are available to carry out the demolition projects efficiently and safely by reducing bureaucratic red tape and expediting the review and approval of demolition plans. It is crucial to address and improve these poor conditions to ensure the well-being of military personnel.

I can't overstate that when we are so focused on recruitment, retention, and quality of life, when I get in my minivan and I drive around bases and see buildings that are falling apart, that are dilapidated, that have broken glass, broken doors, those are eyesores. I think of what kind of impression that leaves on a person who is a new recruit right out of boot camp who shows up on a base and drives through a series of these buildings that are due to be demolished, but we can't get that done. When we call, when we pick up the phone and ask base leadership, they say it is going to be several years from

now. I have to look at that building or other members of the service and their families have to look at those buildings on their drive to and from work, on their drives to and from commissaries or to and from their jobs. We have to do better for our servicemen and -women.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to help make our military installations more appealing and safer for members of our armed services and to vote in favor of my amendment. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, this amendment is non-controversial, and I am not opposed to it. It encourages the Navy and Marine Corps to effectively use its demolition funding. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS).

The amendment was agreed to.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I rise as the designee of the gentlewoman from Connecticut, and I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I rise to oppose the various harmful policy riders included in this bill.

Specifically, there are two sets of riders that I believe are the most poisonous. First, section 255 would prohibit the VA from implementing a rule on abortions, essentially making it the law that a woman veteran has to be dying in order to have access to an abortion. Never mind if an abortion is in the best medical interest of the veteran, this rider ignores that harsh but brutal reality that some veterans will face. It further limits women's access to reproductive care by prohibiting the VA from offering abortion counseling and making it more difficult for women veterans to access abortion services.

Many of our Republican colleagues are obsessed with adopting a national abortion ban, and their fanatic compulsion to control women's bodies will apparently spare no one, even if it means stealing away reproductive freedoms of the brave veterans who served to protect every last one of our freedoms.

This radical agenda is so out of sync with Americans' political mainstream, most self-described Republicans across

the country don't support it. It certainly should not be poisoning this historically bipartisan bill that our veterans and servicemembers desperately count on.

Further, sections 256, 257, and 416 are discriminatory riders against our LGBTQI+ community. The riders block gender-affirming care, limit the ability to fly the Pride flag at VA facilities, and create a license to discriminate against the LGBTQI+ community under the guise of religious freedom.

I was proud to sponsor amendments, joined by some of my Democratic colleagues, that would have stricken these provisions, but the majority blocked those amendments from receiving a vote.

Like the assaults on women's bodies, these extremist attacks undermine the basic tenets of equality and inclusivity at the very heart of our democratic values.

The VA should be welcoming and inclusive for everyone who volunteers to sacrifice and serve our Nation, not just some of them.

I single out these two particularly odious sets of riders, because unlike many of the genuine policy differences that we will have today, these are both especially cruel, discriminatory, and destined to shrivel under the unforgetting light of time and history.

We should all be uniting to ensure that veterans can find jobs, feed their families, keep roofs over their heads, and get the care they deserve, not dividing and politicizing their personal and medical decisions.

For these reasons, at the appropriate time, I will offer a motion to recommit this bill back to committee. If the House rules permitted, I would have offered the motion with an important amendment to this bill. My amendment would strike the harmful provisions I just described for you.

Mr. Chair, I include in the RECORD the text of my amendment.

Ms. Wasserman Schultz moves to recommit the bill H.R. 8580 to the Committee on Appropriations with the following amendment:

Strike sections 255, 256, 257, and 416.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I hope my colleagues will join me in voting for the motion to recommit, and I yield back the balance of my time.

AMENDMENT NO. 28 OFFERED BY MR. MAST

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 28 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title) insert the following:

SEC. 419. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs in this Act may be used to enforce Veterans Health Directive 1315 as it relates to—

(1) the policy stating that "VHA providers are prohibited from completing forms or registering Veterans for participation in a State-approved marijuana program";

(2) the directive for the "Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management" to ensure that "medical facility Directors are aware that it is VHA policy for providers to assess Veteran use of marijuana but providers are prohibited from recommending, making referrals to or completing paperwork for Veteran participation in State marijuana programs"; and

(3) the directive for the "VA Medical Facility Director" to ensure that "VA facility staff are aware of the following" "[t]he prohibition on recommending, making referrals to or completing forms and registering Veterans for participation in State-approved marijuana programs".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Chair, I rise today to discuss this bipartisan amendment to ensure that veterans have access to every tool possible when it comes to healing from both the visible and the invisible wounds of war and service. That could be trouble sleeping. It could be physical pain. It could be some disease that you get from something you were exposed to in war, a cancer that you contracted. It could be an addiction. It could just be finding peace in your life. That tool that we are specifically speaking about today is cannabis.

My proposed amendment, I believe, is common sense. It allows doctors in the VA, those who deal with veterans, to give advice to their veteran patients. That seems simple enough, but under the status quo, VA doctors are limited in essential treatment options that they can offer to their patients, treatments that patients who are not veterans can readily access in many States.

This amendment would allow doctors to discuss cannabis as a treatment option with their patients. It would allow doctors to help those patients fill out paperwork that authorizes medical use of cannabis. It would allow those doctors to help weigh cannabis when choosing whether other medical options may be the best fit for that individual veteran.

When I woke up in Walter Reed Army Medical Center after being injured in Afghanistan, I was on a laundry list of medications. It was a shock to me. I was on sleep sedatives, antidepressants, anti-inflammatories, and probably half a dozen different, very serious narcotic painkillers. When I woke up and became aware of all of this, I quit those things cold turkey. I was lucky that I was able to do that. Most veterans that I have encountered were not able to do that. Many, unfortunately, suffered addiction afterwards.

A few years ago, I met a former member of Navy SEAL Team 6. He was in a helicopter crash that resulted in catastrophic injuries. After countless sur-

geries, he found himself addicted to opioids that he was prescribed for sleep and pain management. He was never given an alternative to those drugs, and, ultimately, it was cannabis for him that allowed him to break free of that addiction and manage his pain without opioids. However, he has never been able to discuss cannabis with his doctor at the VA for fear of repercussions. He couldn't talk to his doctor about it.

His story isn't unique. There are tens of thousands of veterans for whom cannabis may be a better alternative if they could discuss it.

According to a survey in the American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, 50 percent of veterans who use cannabis said that they used it in place of prescription medication, but they are forced to hide their use and self-medicate because VA physicians are hamstrung from discussing it as a viable option.

Beyond the veteran population, the Nation is turning the page on how we think about cannabis. It has become a key part of the medical system in more than 30 States. It offers law-abiding Americans a low-cost and safe option.

I say we should not keep those who fought for our country from accessing what is proven to be a critical tool for pain management. It is time for change. Veterans deserve to have access to every possible tool and the best medical options available and the best possible medical advice by their doctors.

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chair, I seek the time in opposition to the amendment, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Oregon is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chair, I deeply appreciate the opportunity to join my friends Representatives MAST, LEE, and JOYCE in supporting this amendment.

Mr. MAST talked about the necessity of providing our veterans with the best possible treatment. I have heard from veterans across the country how medical cannabis fills a critical need. There is less long-term harm and more opportunities to be able to meet, as he said, the wounds of war, seen and unseen.

This is ironic. The rest of the Federal Government is moving toward the recognition of the long overdue need to reschedule cannabis. The Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice are soon going to reschedule cannabis to schedule III, recognizing that it has medicinal value and recognizing the opportunities for more research activities. At the same time, the Department of Veterans Affairs is stuck in the past. As my friend mentioned, this poses problems for veterans who cannot seek help from their

own physicians to get guidance and counseling for things where medical cannabis would make a difference for them.

The rest of America has recognized the value of medical cannabis. Thirty-eight States have approved it. As I said, where the rest of the Federal Government is moving toward rescheduling, it is unfortunate that the Department of Veterans Affairs is trapped in time, not giving veterans the full benefit of medical cannabis. It is ironic because for a time they were handing out opioids like Tic Tacs and have erred on the side of overcaution dealing with medical cannabis.

Mr. Chair, I urge strongly the approval of this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Chair, I will add a little bit to what he just said.

He is absolutely correct, my colleague, in saying that there was a time when veterans were handed opioids in bags. They were given recurring prescriptions. There was a time that I had drawers full of OxyContin just because the prescription kept getting refilled. I literally never used one, but they kept giving me more and more. At the same time, you are not allowed to discuss cannabis with your doctor, not do the paperwork with your doctor, not be able to find out if it is the best option or the worst option but really not be able to be benefited by your doctor and the advice they could offer on this. As we both said, it is definitely time to turn the page on this issue. I thank my colleague for his work on this issue, as well.

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

□ 1415

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chair, I deeply appreciate the leadership of my friend from Florida, and his personal experience adds particular impact to his leadership on this.

Another tireless champion for rational cannabis reform is Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, with whom I have been pleased to partner for years now with the Congressional Cannabis Caucus in moving on a series of reform proposals. She is a tireless champion. She will be missed in Congress in the future, but luckily, we have her here now.

Mr. Chair, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) to share her insights and her wisdom.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman from Oregon for his gracious comments and for his friendship, his support, and his tremendous leadership. I look forward to working with the gentleman also in the next chapter of our lives to make sure that all of our efforts around cannabis are passed and signed into law.

I thank Mr. MAST, Mr. JOYCE, and all who have allowed us to work, again, in a bipartisan way to make it easier for veterans to access medical cannabis in States where it is legal.

Mr. Chair, this amendment would authorize VA physicians to provide recommendations and opinions regarding the use of medical cannabis to veterans who live in States with existing medical programs.

Millions of American veterans suffer from, for example, mental health conditions stemming from their service. Moreover, of the nearly 1 million veterans who receive opioids to treat painful conditions, more than one-half continue to consume beyond 90 days, contributing massively to the disproportionate overdose and suicide rates impacting veterans.

As we continue experiencing the throes of the opioid crisis ravaging communities across the country, from urban centers to rural areas, the hands of VA physicians should not be tied when it comes to advising around medical treatments that are scientifically proven to be less harmful and less addictive, like State-legal medical marijuana.

I am the daughter of a veteran of two wars. He would have been helped tremendously with many of his health issues had he been able to explore medical cannabis options with his VA physicians. I saw him go through wanting to explore all of these options, but he could not.

In his memory, Garvin A. Tutt, who was part of the 92nd Battalion in Italy supporting the Normandy invasion, I am proud to co-lead this amendment.

I thank all the co-chairs of the Congressional Cannabis Caucus. I thank Ranking Member DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and, of course, Mr. JOYCE for their leadership and partnership on this.

Mr. Chair, I urge our colleagues to support this bipartisan amendment that would benefit our armed services members.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 29 OFFERED BY MR. MOLINARO

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 29 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 31, line 13, after the dollar amount, insert “(increased by \$10,000,000) (reduced by \$10,000,000)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman

from New York (Mr. MOLINARO) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Chairman, without question, this Nation owes enormous gratitude to the men and women who served and returned home. So many of them carry with them both physical and mental health injuries as they return home. We are compelled to do more to provide for mental health treatment.

My amendment, amendment No. 29, highlights the importance of the Veterans Health Administration Office of Mental Health's role in assisting veterans across America, those living with intellectual and developmental disability and those living with mental health and substance use disorder challenges.

In August 2023 alone, 5.3 million veterans had a service-related disability, and that number, as we know, continues to grow. They are susceptible to debilitating illnesses, including PTSD, depression, and traumatic brain injuries. They also remain at high risk of opioid use disorder.

Veterans, without question, need our support. Their quality of life depends on access to effective and high-quality medical treatment services, and we must all come together to bolster the VHA's ability to care for our veterans' physical and mental health needs. Whether in rural centers or urban communities, it is necessary to broaden the capacity and response to those veterans living with intellectual, physical, or developmental disabilities and those addressing mental health and substance use disorders.

Mr. Chairman, I certainly thank my colleagues for bringing forth the amendment today. I ask my colleagues to support this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, even though I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, this amendment is non-controversial, and I am not opposed to it. It assists veterans with disabilities and mental health and substance abuse challenges. We support it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleagues for their support, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. MOLINARO).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 31 OFFERED BY MR. OGLES

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 31 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 28, line 25, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. OGLE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. OGLE. Mr. Chairman, our veterans deserve the very best. It is our job to make sure they get it.

That is why we are here during amendment debate to ensure that their needs continue to be met after their honorable and heroic service to the Nation.

The underlying bill appropriates \$320 million to the VA Housing Benefit Program Fund for administrative expenses to carry out the direct and guaranteed loan programs.

As many of my colleagues know, the VA loan program guarantees loans made to servicemembers, veterans, reservists, and single surviving spouses for the purchase of homes.

As veterans navigate the often cumbersome process of buying a home, they should have access to as much information as possible that will enable them to make the best financial decisions for their families. That is all this amendment does.

If the VA accepted this recommendation, this amendment would ensure that \$1 million of the total administrative expenses funds appropriated for the home loan program can be used for the development of improved information materials regarding the relative benefits of a VA home loan versus other types of housing loans for prospective buyers.

This is simply a reflection of the fact that while a VA home loan is often the right choice for veterans who are trying to buy a home, the benefits may not be as clearly presented as they go through the process. If a VA loan would be better, then the veteran should know it.

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR (Ms. FOXX). Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, this amendment is non-controversial, and I am not opposed to it. It supports the VA home loan program, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OGLE. Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for her support.

Again, all we are trying to do here is make sure that our veterans who have

committed their lives and sacrificed for our country have information as they are trying to provide for their families. We have made promises, so this is promise made, promise kept.

Madam Chair, I urge adoption of my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. OGLE).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 32 OFFERED BY MR. OGLE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 32 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

Mr. OGLE. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 31, line 13, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. OGLE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. OGLE. Madam Chair, I rise in strong support of my amendment to prioritize increased support for our veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

The numbers don't lie and bear repeating: Over 20 percent of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans have received a diagnosis of PTSD. Our older veterans are also impacted. Over 10 percent of Gulf war veterans and 15 percent of Vietnam veterans are similarly impacted by this cruel diagnosis.

Unfortunately, current treatments do not always meet the needs of our veterans suffering from PTSD. Therefore, it is vital that the Department of Veterans Affairs invests more of its resources into any treatment that can improve the daily lives of our veterans. One of those treatments, SGB therapy, has been a cause championed by my colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY).

Madam Chair, I urge adoption of his amendment, as well.

Caring for our soldiers is the top priority of this Congress, whether Democrat or Republican. This bill proudly carries the legacy of the great promise from President Lincoln that the United States would “care for him who shall have borne the battle.”

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to the gentleman's amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, this amendment is non-

controversial, and I am not opposed to it. It supports funding for medical services for the treatment of PTSD, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OGLE. Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for her support.

PTSD is real. We have veterans suffering from it every single day. “Promises Made, Promises Kept,” that is our oath.

Madam Chair, I urge adoption of the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. OGLE).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 33 OFFERED BY MR. OGLE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 33 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

Mr. OGLE. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 32, line 23, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. OGLE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. OGLE. Madam Chair, with many veterans in my family, this is something that is near and dear to my heart as I have seen members of my family having to drive long distances to receive care that otherwise could have been provided at home.

I think of my Uncle Keith, who suffered and languished in the hospital when he could have passed peacefully with his family in his own home.

VA's Medical Community Care Program allows veterans to get the care they need from community providers when the VA cannot do so. To complement the VA's efforts to provide medical services to chronically ill or disabled veterans through the community care program, this amendment ensures additional funding specifically for in-home healthcare.

If a disabled veteran would like to receive medical services from a specific VA-approved community provider, and it would better facilitate that veteran's care than other medical services, it should be a top priority for the VA.

□ 1430

This is plain and simple, common sense, providing the best healthcare for those who have sacrificed so much for this country, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to

this amendment because this is yet another attempt at trying to privatize veterans' healthcare.

Veterans have consistently made it clear that they prefer to get their healthcare at the VA. That is where they are the most comfortable. That is where they are served by people who have served in the military, as well. It is a culture and an environment that ensures that veterans are seen and treated by people who understand what they have been through.

Multiple studies, in fact, have shown that non-VA care generally is of lower quality and higher cost. In fact, since the enactment of the MISSION Act, which was designed to shift patients from the Veterans Health Administration to the private sector, costs have exploded. Between fiscal year 2019 and fiscal year 2024, costs for medical community care have grown by over \$21 billion, or almost 140 percent.

My colleagues across the aisle often lament that government spending is out of control. I agree that we shouldn't balance our budget on the backs of our veterans, but we can take reasonable measures to ensure that the care that we provide our veterans is not only of high quality but is cost effective.

We should not be kicking into overdrive to privatize the healthcare that our veterans receive. They wish and prefer to have their healthcare provided for them at the VA.

This amendment would lead to an expansion of privatization. For that reason, I oppose the amendment.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OGLES. Madam Chair, when I think about my home State of Tennessee, and particularly Maury County, where I reside, we have Maury Regional Hospital, which is a community-owned nonprofit hospital. The VA is over an hour away if veterans live where I live. If they live further south, then the VA would be 1½ hours to 2 hours away. You have a locally owned, community-owned hospital that is a nonprofit that could provide these same services for our veterans, in our community, at their homes, where they are not having to travel 1 hour or 1½ hours to get services.

This isn't about privatization. This is about prioritizing our veterans as they seek medical care for the service that they gave to their country.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, what the gentleman's amendment does is it encourages the privatization of in-home healthcare that we provide to our veterans.

The difference between providing care to our veterans from the VA and providing privatized home healthcare is one can ensure that, within the VA system, the veteran is cared for, oftentimes by another veteran or by someone who is accustomed to treating veterans and understands the unique and specific needs that they have.

Moving toward more and more privatization makes it so that veterans are less likely to be treated soon, more likely to be treated with care that is more expensive, and more likely to be treated by someone who really doesn't have experience in caring for a veteran.

Madam Chair, none of those things are positive, so I urge opposition to that amendment for that reason, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OGLES. Madam Chair, I appreciate my colleague's comments, but I would disagree. This is simply about prioritizing our veterans.

Again, I speak of my community. From where I live, the VA is over 1 hour away. Veterans can be served by their regional hospital, their community hospital. In rural Tennessee, most of the hospitals are community owned.

This is about allowing veterans, who otherwise would be 1 hour to 3 hours away from care, to be served and serviced in their community. They are our veterans. They served the country. They have sacrificed, and they deserve the best.

Madam Chair, I urge adoption of the amendment. Promises made, promises kept.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. OGLES).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 34 OFFERED BY MR. OGLES

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 34 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

Mr. OGLES. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 36, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. OGLES) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. OGLES. Madam Chair, the underlying legislation provides similar funding to the Board of Veterans' Appeals as the fiscal year 2024 levels, approximately \$267 million. This amendment recommends that the Board of Veterans' Appeals invest a very small portion of its appropriated funds to expedite and eliminate the casework backlog many of our veteran constituents have raised with a variety of Members of Congress.

Again, this is simply to get rid of the backlog, to expedite those cases, as has been discussed here previously, so that our veterans can get care in a quick, expeditious manner.

The committee report highlights sustained Member concerns regarding the ongoing delays veterans and their families face. Claims can currently take years to resolve.

I am grateful to see that the committee, under Chairman CARTER's leadership, has prioritized hiring needed staff to expedite processing. This amendment stands in support of the committee's work.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment, even though I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. OGLES), had a better idea on this one. It is noncontroversial, and I do not oppose it because it supports the reduction in the backlog of veteran casework, which we are all committed to doing.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OGLES. Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for her kind words.

This is a report ordered by this legislation that directs the VA Secretary to produce a plan within 90 days that would eliminate the veteran case backlog within 3 years. It is a simple, commonsense approach of promises made, promises kept. Let's do that.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. OGLES).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 35 OFFERED BY MR. OGLES

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 35 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

Mr. OGLES. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 43, line 24, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. OGLES) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. OGLES. Madam Chair, coming from a family who has had family members serve in World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War, and the current war on terror, I have a near and dear place for all of our veterans in my heart.

Specifically, I think about our World War II veterans and the veterans of the Korea and Vietnam conflicts. We owe it to those who risked life and limb to fight our Nation's battles, not only to have our deepest gratitude and sympathy, but to have their service recognized. They should know that we will stand with them through disability, illness, and old age.

Again, to our veterans of World War II—there are not many of them left—Korea, and Vietnam, we need to make sure that they have access to excellent extended care. State extended-care facilities play a critical role in living up to that promise.

State governments can place these facilities where they can best serve veteran communities. They allow our veterans to find high-quality nursing home care in their home States and near their communities so they can enjoy the camaraderie of being surrounded by other residents who know what it is to have served our country.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment, even though I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, this amendment is non-controversial. I am not opposed to it because it supports the construction of State extended-care facilities, particularly for those who served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. We need to take care of those valiant soldiers.

Madam Chair, for that reason, I do not oppose the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OGLES. Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for her comments.

Again, this encourages the VA to redouble its efforts in supporting States in constructing and maintaining excellent facilities to serve all veterans, especially the veterans of our foreign wars.

Promises made, Madam Chair, promises kept. That is what we must do.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. OGLES).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 36 OFFERED BY MR. PERRY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 36 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

Mr. PERRY. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 31, line 17, after the dollar amount, insert “(increased by \$1,000,000) (reduced by \$1,000,000)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. PERRY. Madam Chairman, I thank the chairman for his hard work on the bill. None of this is easy.

This amendment addresses a potential solution for our Nation's veterans

and servicemembers suffering with PTSD and PTSI. Estimates from the VA paint a harsh picture that 7 percent of veterans will have PTSD, with about 29 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans having PTSD at some point in their lives.

Unfortunately, far too few of these brave men and women find relief from currently available treatment in the VA, and failure here can mean suicide. The average number of veteran suicides per day was 17.5 in 2021. I shudder to think that, every single day, 17 to 20 of our fellow brothers and sisters in arms take their lives.

These numbers, quite honestly, are unacceptable. They are unacceptable to this side of the aisle. I think they are unacceptable to the other side of the aisle, and they are unacceptable to America.

That is why I am offering this amendment, which would increase and decrease Veterans Health Administration funding by \$1 million for the purpose of furnishing stellate ganglion blocker, or SGB, treatment therapy to veterans suffering from PTSD.

Already approved by the VA as a safe and effective alternative, the stellate ganglion block procedure injects anesthetic agent into or onto a collection of nerves in the neck, and it is proven to alleviate common PTSD symptoms.

In PTSD and some other anxiety conditions, the fight-or-flight nervous system gets stuck in the on position. By precisely placing anesthetic around the stellate ganglion, the unproductive and chronic fight-or-flight response is turned off. This allows neurotransmitters in the brain to reset back to a nonanxiety state and results in long-term relief of the anxiety itself and the PTSD symptoms.

This procedure has already improved many lives while showing up to 85 percent efficacy at a fraction of the cost of other treatments that are far less effective. Madam Chair, that is 85 percent.

Having this life-changing option for our veterans would give them a chance to live more free from the effects of PTSD and its symptoms. Our Nation's veterans should be the top priority, and they deserve to have this treatment and this therapy when they need it.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, it is not the place of Congress to be pushing for increased use of specific experimental treatments. The VA is currently in the midst of a multiyear clinical trial to collect data on this treatment for potential use in treating post-traumatic stress disorder, but they do not yet

have sufficient data one way or the other regarding this treatment.

If this treatment is safe, effective, and appropriate for expanded use, then the healthcare experts at the VA should be the ones to expand the treatment for wider use. There is a deliberative process for expanding the use of emerging healthcare treatments, and we should let that process play out.

This specific treatment actually involves insertion into the neck of an individual and could be potentially dangerous. We should make sure that we are waiting out the results of the studies that are being done before trying to impose a decision from the House floor.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PERRY. Madam Chair, the treatment is not dangerous at all. As a matter of fact, it is offered in at least 11 VA facilities, but only that many, and not all of the VA facilities. It has been around since the 1920s. It is not dangerous at all.

As a matter of fact, there are no known side-effects. There aren't any known side-effects. The people that get the treatment walk away 85 percent of the time without suffering the effects of PTSD.

As I sat there and watched the treatment being given, Madam Chair, the patients have told me that they feel like a weight is lifted off of them while the treatment is occurring. Those are specious claims.

The bureaucracy at the VA wants to conduct another study. Meanwhile, it is allowed in some of their facilities, but not all of their facilities. Meanwhile, while they are conducting another study, 17 to 22 of our veterans take their lives every day while they are conducting another study. While offering this at some places but not other places, servicemembers in Alabama are scraping up their last dollars to get on a van with some of their other buddies to drive up here to get the treatment because they can't get it down at the VA in Alabama.

□ 1445

It is absurd. It is ridiculous. While they are conducting studies, our servicemembers are taking their lives needlessly.

What I am asking is, instead of the current protocol, which says that members of the military services who have earned this treatment, who have earned the care, don't have to fail every single other thing that the VA gives them before they can get this and, in the meantime, take their lives because that is what happens, Madam Chair.

The VA requires, except in those other facilities, that the veteran do all these other things, take all these other treatments that don't work and have to fail every single one of them before they can say, oh, please, VA, can you give me something that works, the stellate ganglion block, the SGB,

which is done in the private sector, which is done at the VA.

I am just saying, instead of making veterans suffer and take their lives before they can get the treatment, let them have the treatment like the veterans in those 11 facilities that do offer it.

Why can't we do that? You can keep studying it. If you find some side effect, well, God bless you, but right now, there aren't any and right now, veterans are killing themselves.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, the leadership of this committee has been committed consistently to making sure that safe and effective treatments are able to be provided to the VA, to our veterans who get their care from the VA. It is just important to make sure that the care that they are receiving is efficacious and that it is safe.

It would be helpful if the sponsor of the amendment understood the sites that are offering this treatment are part of the study that is being done. There is not a new study being proposed. We are not adding time to this, but there is a process for expanding the use of emergency healthcare treatments, and that is the responsibility of the VA to manage.

Let's let them complete that process and then you could go fully forward assuming that it proves to be efficacious and safe. I realize that we have a horrific problem with PTSD, and we certainly are dedicating vast resources to make sure that we can address suicide prevention. Unfortunately, the Republican bill cuts the VA by \$6 billion, so that commitment is not quite the same. Making sure that we are providing safe, efficacious treatments for our veterans and that we do not impose those decisions from the House floor is important.

That is why I oppose the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. CRAWFORD). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 37 OFFERED BY MR. PETERS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 37 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 31, line 13, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Chair, all veterans deserve a roof over their heads. Far too many vets in San Diego remain homeless. We have to do more to ensure our veterans and their families have access to quality, affordable housing. The Housing and Urban Development-Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing, known as HUD-VASH program, is a critical tool to address this issue.

Earlier this year, local news in San Diego reported that nearly 35 percent of HUD-VASH vouchers, which San Diego received, went unused. That is not acceptable. We have to do everything we can to ensure veterans are receiving this assistance.

This bipartisan amendment simply encourages local VA systems and public housing authorities to work together to streamline the voucher application process for HUD-VASH vouchers to reduce barriers for veterans seeking housing assistance.

VA San Diego is now taking the initiative by partnering with local housing authorities to better align voucher applications across public housing authority jurisdiction. This partnership provides a critical pathway to connect veterans to housing.

The HUD-VASH program is critical for addressing veteran homelessness in San Diego and throughout the country, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes" on this commonsense amendment.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 38 OFFERED BY MR. PETERS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 38 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 31, line 13, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Chair, VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families program and Shallow Subsidy service provides low-income veterans direct assistance to prevent the imminent loss of a veteran's home or to identify a new, more suitable housing situation for them and their families.

Funding for this program goes to every community across the country, and in fiscal year 2024 alone, San Diego organizations received over \$17 million to provide these services.

My bipartisan amendment recognizes the important role this program plays

in preventing housing insecure veterans from falling into homelessness. It is essential that we preserve this program and we show strong support for this program for those who put on the uniform in defense of our country. Keeping these veterans in their homes not only preserves their safety and security, it also preserves their dignity.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bipartisan amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 39 OFFERED BY MR. PFLUGER

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 39 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 34, line 19, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PFLUGER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Chair, I rise today to present an amendment that seeks to improve our understanding of the link between military service and cancer risks, specifically among our aviators.

The amendment I am proposing to the fiscal year 2025 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bill underscores our commitment to protecting and supporting our men and women in uniform during their service and long after that, as well.

Specifically, my amendment calls for the Secretary of the VA to allocate funds for collaboration with the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to study the prevalence and mortality of cancer among individuals who served as Active-Duty aircrew in the Armed Forces.

Tragically, military aviators and crewmembers are being diagnosed with various forms of cancer at alarming rates. A 2021 study conducted by the Air Force Research Laboratory's 711th Human Performance Wing found that pilots and aircrew have higher risks of developing prostate cancer and melanoma with possible links to Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and testicular cancer.

Additionally, a study from the DOD found elevated rates of cancer among military aviators and aviation ground personnel.

The existing evidence demonstrates a link between cancer and military aviation service. However, we must gather more comprehensive data to understand this correlation better and to properly care for our servicemembers.

After putting their lives on the line for their country, our airmen and -women deserve assurances that they will be cared for and not exposed to unknown dangers. The U.S. military must understand any potential health risks threatening our military heroes in the cockpit or those serving as crew-members.

As a former U.S. Air Force fighter pilot myself, who has lost many colleagues to cancer, this issue is personal to me.

My amendment ensures that cancer incidence rates are adequately studied, that they are adequately understood, and that the military and the Department of Defense has the tools that it needs to properly care for our military heroes.

I think this is a commonsense amendment. It is building upon work and studies that have already been done, and I would urge all of my colleagues to support this as we support those who are serving and protecting our country.

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, even though I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, this amendment is non-controversial, and I am not opposed to it, particularly as a cancer survivor myself. It supports the study of various cancers in military aviators, and it is an important amendment.

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

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Chair, just to clarify, I am not sure what the opposition is. I didn't hear what the opposition was.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, would the gentleman yield for the purpose of a colloquy?

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida for the purpose of a colloquy.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. There wasn't opposition. Procedurally, we rise to claim time in opposition and then say we are not opposed to the amendment. It is just procedural.

Mr. PFLUGER. Very good.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. That way I have an opportunity to speak.

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

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of this study.

My brother-in-law Kurt Brown died of the brain cancer known as the ghost cancer, and he was both an Air Force pilot and a Delta pilot. I always thought that the exposure to the high levels and the exposure to the Sun had something to do with it. I personally support this and will vote for it.

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PFLUGER).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 40 OFFERED BY MRS. RODGERS OF WASHINGTON

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 40 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 32, line 23, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000)(increased by \$1,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. RODGERS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington.

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of my amendment, which originated after a veteran from Spokane asked for my help.

She had recently retired from service and was days away from her first VA appointment when she had a heart attack. She was rushed to the ER where she made a full recovery, but the VA refused to pay for her care. Why? Because she hadn't seen a VA doctor in the last 24 months.

It didn't matter that she had just enrolled or that many VA facilities have 30- to 60-day delays.

They denied her the coverage she needed, and her bills were piling up.

That is why I introduced the RELIEVE Act to waive the 24-month rule for 60 days following a veteran's enrollment in the VA healthcare system.

My amendment today highlights the importance of helping veterans establish care to ensure they qualify for outside emergency coverage. It is time for Congress to eliminate the emergency coverage gap, and I urge my colleagues to join me in making sure every veteran has access to the treatment they have earned.

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition, even though I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, this amendment is non-controversial, and I am not opposed to it. It encourages the VA to address emergency care coverage for veterans. I thank the gentlewoman for introducing it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gen-

tlewoman from Washington (Mrs. RODGERS).

The amendment was agreed to.

□ 1500

AMENDMENT NO. 41 OFFERED BY MRS. RODGERS OF WASHINGTON

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 41 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 10, line 20, after dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. RODGERS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington.

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of my amendment to address the troubling state of housing for servicemembers and their families at Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane.

According to the Air Force, roughly 85 percent of the 650 privatized homes at Fairchild were constructed in the 1950s. They are aging rapidly and approaching a point where they will not be fit for families living on base.

Reports of mold, cracks in the foundation, siding falling off, chipping paint, and roofs in need of repair are just a few of the many issues with the housing on base. Needless to say, this is unacceptable.

Our servicemembers and their families sacrifice so much for our country. They deserve a comfortable, dependable home that isn't falling apart around them, and it is our job to make sure they have one.

This amendment is critical for ensuring Congress has the ability to conduct the oversight of the conditions of Air Force housing as we work together to make the necessary and long-overdue renovations and repairs.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and join me in making quality housing for servicemembers and their families a top priority.

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, even though I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, the amendment is noncontroversial, and I am not opposed to it.

The gentlewoman should know that Mr. CARTER and I, and our entire subcommittee, have worked for years to

help address the issues that we share your concerns on, particularly privatized military housing. The conditions under which our servicemen and -women and their families live have to be pristine. The response time for those who are responsible for taking care of it needs to be dramatically improved.

We have added funding in this bill at the DOD level to make sure that DOD doesn't have a hands-off policy and just leaves all the decisionmaking to the privatized companies. The DOD has a layer of accountability now, as well.

I thank the gentlewoman for raising the issue because this is important for us to provide good housing and safe roofs over the heads of our service-members and their families.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. RODGERS).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 42 OFFERED BY MR. SELF

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 42 printed in part B of House Report 118-535.

Mr. SELF. Mr. Chair, I rise as the designee of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Roy), and I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title) insert the following:

SEC. 423. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to modify or remove any display of the Department of Veterans Affairs that bears the mission statement 'To fulfill President Lincoln's promise 'to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan' by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's veterans.'

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SELF) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. SELF. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of this amendment by Mr. Roy.

This amendment prohibits any of the funding appropriated from being used to modify or remove any VA display of the original mission statement.

As you may know, the original mission statement came from President Lincoln's promise: "To fulfill President Lincoln's promise 'to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan' by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's veterans." They want to change it to a gender-neutral version: "To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those who have served in our Nation's military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors."

We believe that that is a bridge too far, that we have changed the original mission statement too much. The original mission statement is posted in roughly 50 percent of all VA facilities,

and now the VA has been replacing them over the last couple of months. It is unclear which displays have been changed and which have been replaced.

The Trump administration resisted calls to change the motto and put an additional 140 plaques in national cemeteries bearing Lincoln's quote.

Legislation changing the motto passed by voice in committee and on the House floor in the 116th Congress.

We should not use tax dollars to allow the administration to unilaterally change the VA's historic motto and to erase the words of President Lincoln in order to appease the radical left. This is part of our mission to claw back Article I authority from the executive branch.

The VA's mission statement, established in 1959, used approximately the same words. This speech was part of the VA's creation of their mission, and the Department wants to use hard-earned tax dollars now to erase the 16th President's words said during the midst of the most traumatic time in our Nation's history, the Civil War.

In one attempt, they want to erase Lincoln's words and earn woke brownie points.

I am thankful for the millions of men and women who have served valiantly in our Armed Forces, but changing the VA's motto is just virtue signaling. We should be focused on providing the quality care and benefits veterans have earned in a timely manner.

We just had a hearing with the Secretary of the VA this morning in the Veterans' Affairs Committee. We are trying to keep them focused on quality healthcare as opposed to other issues. There are still far too many veterans who fail to get quality care at the VA, or if they do not get an appointment, it takes months to schedule through community care.

Mr. Chair, we had a long discussion this morning about the failure of the VA to get a handle on veteran suicide. That is where our focus ought to be, as opposed to changing plaques on the wall to some sort of woke motto.

We have the power of the purse to hold the administration accountable, to stop the implementation of the VA's decision, and to save the few remaining displays of Lincoln's work. This is a worthy and noble goal, and I urge support for this amendment.

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, the gentleman's debate on this amendment was spoken like a man who is refusing to acknowledge that the fastest growing group of veterans served by the VA is women.

In March of last year, the VA announced it was updating its 1959 mission statement to read: "To fulfill

President Lincoln's promise to care for those who have served in our Nation's military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors."

That was a way to make the VA a more inclusive and inviting place and to acknowledge that it is not only men who have served in our military, nor is it only men who are served at the VA.

The VA's previous mission statement read: "To fulfill President Lincoln's promise 'to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan,' by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's veterans."

The VA is a place where all veterans should feel welcome, included, and cared for. The previous mission statement did not adequately reflect the modern-day veteran population by only honoring men's service.

As I said, today, women are the fastest growing group of veterans. It is about time that they are reflected in the VA's mission statement, and I am pleased that the VA made this important and meaningful change.

What we are doing here now is, again, wasting time debating a poison pill, culture war amendment that was put to bed and excluded in the FY24 conference report. This was language that was removed last year. We are going to have it removed again.

Essentially, what we are doing here is distracting from the fact that the Republican majority has proposed a bill that cuts \$6 billion from the VA.

Forgive me if I really think it is disingenuous for the gentleman to suggest that they care more about caring for our veterans when they are cutting \$6 billion out of our bill and, instead, focusing on the adaptation of the VA's motto to be more inclusive of the fastest growing group of veterans that are treated at the VA, which is women.

We should be focusing on that funding, actually meeting the Fiscal Responsibility Act targets, and increasing nondefense discretionary and defense discretionary by 1 percent, which the Republican majority reneges on in this bill, not debating petty partisan riders.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SELF. Mr. Chair, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. SELF. Mr. Chair, I agree with the gentlewoman about one thing: This is the modern-day erasing of America's traditional history, which is one of three things that they are trying to erase along with our nuclear families and our Judeo-Christian faith.

It is only one of three things that they are trying to erase. That is what they are trying to erase. That is why we need to stand by this amendment because our families, our faith, and our history reflect what has made America strong.

It does not leave anyone out. We are going to care for every veteran. In fact,

she is right, the Veterans' Affairs Committee is focused on our lady veterans in many ways. So this is a distraction from this bill. Let's keep our history where it is. Let's keep our nuclear families and our Judeo-Christian faith.

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, for the fastest growing group of veterans, our women, who walk into a VA facility and see the VA mission statement displayed on the wall that only refers to men who served is outrageous. That is not inclusive, and that does not reflect or recognize that we have thousands and thousands of women serving in our military.

The VA is supposed to take care of all of those veterans. So I will close, Mr. Chairman, by saying that if people show you who they are, you should believe them. That is why I am opposed to this amendment.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SELF).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas will be postponed.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SELF) having assumed the chair, Mr. CRAWFORD, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 8580) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

## RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 14 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1530

## AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CURTIS) at 3 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

## MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2025

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1269 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 8580.

Will the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEUBE) kindly take the chair.

□ 1530

### IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 8580) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, and for other purposes, with Mr. STEUBE (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, a request for a recorded vote on amendment No. 42 printed in part B of House Report 118-535 offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SELF) had been postponed.

### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments printed in part B of House Report 118-535 on which further proceedings were postponed, in the following order:

Amendment No. 8 by Mr. BOST of Illinois.

Amendment No. 10 by Mr. CRANE of Arizona.

Amendment No. 16 by Ms. GREENE of Georgia.

Amendment No. 28 by Mr. MAST of Florida.

Amendment No. 42 by Mr. SELF of Texas.

The Chair will reduce to 2 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote after the first vote in this series.

### AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MR. BOST

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on amendment No. 8, printed in part B of House Report 118-535, offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST), on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

### RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 207, noes 195, not voting 34, as follows:

[Roll No. 237]

AYES—207

Aderholt	Fulcher	Miller (WV)
Alford	Gaetz	Miller-Meeks
Allen	Garbarino	Mills
Amodei	Garcia, Mike	Molinaro
Armstrong	Gimenez	Moolenaar
Arrington	Golden (ME)	Mooney
Babin	Gonzales, Tony	Moore (AL)
Bacon	Good (VA)	Moore (UT)
Baird	Gooden (TX)	Moran
Balderson	Gosar	Newhouse
Banks	Granger	Norman
Barr	Graves (MO)	Nunn (IA)
Bean (FL)	Greene (GA)	Obernolte
Bentz	Griffith	Ogles
Bergman	Grothman	Owens
Bice	Guest	Peltola
Biggs	Guthrie	Pence
Bilirakis	Hageman	Perez
Bishop (NC)	Harris	Perry
Boehrt	Harshbarger	Pfluger
Bost	Hern	Posey
Brecheen	Higgins (LA)	Reschenthaler
Buchanan	Hill	Rodgers (WA)
Bucshon	Hinson	Rogers (AL)
Burchett	Houchin	Rogers (KY)
Burgess	Hudson	Rose
Calvert	Huizenga	Rosendale
Carabajal	Hunt	Rouzer
Carey	Jackson (TX)	Roy
Carl	James	Rutherford
Carter (GA)	Johnson (SD)	Salazar
Carter (TX)	Jordan	Scalise
Ciscomani	Joyce (PA)	Schweikert
Cline	Kean (NJ)	Scott, Austin
Cloud	Kelly (MS)	Self
Clyde	Kelly (PA)	Sessions
Cole	Kiggans (VA)	Simpson
Collins	Kiley	Smith (MO)
Comer	Kim (CA)	Smith (NE)
Crane	Kustoff	Smith (NJ)
Crawford	LaHood	Smucker
Crenshaw	LaLota	Spartz
Curtis	LaMalfa	Steel
D'Esposito	Lamborn	Stefanik
Davidson	Langworthy	Steil
De La Cruz	Latta	Steube
DesJarlais	LaTurner	Strong
Donalds	Lawler	Tenney
Duarte	Lee (FL)	Thompson (PA)
Duncan	Lesko	Tiffany
Dunn (FL)	Letlow	Timmons
Edwards	Loudermilk	Turner
Ellzey	Lucas	Valadao
Emmer	Luetkemeyer	Van Drew
Estes	Luna	Van Duyne
Ezell	Luttrell	Vasquez
Fallon	Mace	Wagner
Feeenstra	Malliotakis	Walberg
Ferguson	Maloy	Waltz
Finstad	Mann	Weber (TX)
Fischbach	Massie	Webster (FL)
Fitzgerald	Mast	Wenstrup
Fitzpatrick	McCaull	Westerman
Fleischmann	McClain	Williams (NY)
Flood	McClintock	Williams (TX)
Fong	McHenry	Wilson (SC)
Foxx	Meuser	Wittman
Franklin, Scott	Miller (IL)	Womack
Fry	Miller (OH)	Yakym

NOES—195

Adams	Case	DeGette
Aguilar	Casten	DeLauro
Allred	Castor (FL)	DelBene
Amo	Castro (TX)	Deluzio
Auchincloss	Chavez-DeRemer	DeSaulnier
Balint	Cherifius-	Dingell
Barragan	McCormick	Escobar
Beatty	Chu	Eshoo
Bera	Clark (MA)	Espaillat
Beyer	Clarke (NY)	Fletcher
Bishop (GA)	Cleaver	Foster
Blumenauer	Clyburn	Foushee
Blunt Rochester	Cohen	Frankel, Lois
Bonamici	Connolly	Frost
Boyle (PA)	Correa	Gallego
Brown	Costa	Garamendi
Brownley	Courtney	Garcia (IL)
Budzinski	Craig	Garcia (TX)
Bush	Crockett	Garcia, Robert
Caraveo	Crow	Goldman (NY)
Cardenas	Cuellar	Gomez
Carson	Davids (KS)	Gonzalez,
Carter (LA)	Davis (IL)	Vicente
Cartwright	Davis (NC)	Gottheimer
Casar	Dean (PA)	Green, Al (TX)

Harder (CA)	McGovern	Schakowsky		[Roll No. 238]	Goldman (NY)	McBath	Sarbanes
Hayes	Meeks	Schiff		AYES—211	Gomez	McCullum	Scanlon
Himes	Meng	Schneider			Gottheimer	McGarvey	Schakowsky
Horsford	Mfume	Scholten	Aderholt	Garbarino	Green, Al (TX)	McGovern	Schiff
Houlihan	Moore (WI)	Schrader	Alford	Garcia, Mike	Harder (CA)	Meeks	Schneider
Hoyer	Morelle	Scott (VA)	Allen	Gimenez	Mills	Hayes	Meng
Hoyle (OR)	Moskowitz	Scott, David	Amodei	Golden (ME)	Molinaro	Himes	Mfume
Huffman	Moulton	Sewell	Armstrong	Gonzales, Tony	Moolenaar	Horsford	Moore (WI)
Ivey	Mrvan	Sherman	Arrington	Gonzalez,	Mooney	Houlihan	Morelle
Jackson (IL)	Mullin	Sherrill	Babin	Vicente	Moore (AL)	Hoyer	Scott (VA)
Jackson (NC)	Nadler	Slotkin	Bacon	Good (VA)	Moore (UT)	Hoyle (OR)	Moulton
Jacobs	Napolitano	Smith (WA)	Baird	Gooden (TX)	Moran	Huffman	Mrvan
Jayapal	Neal	Sorenson	Balderson	Gosar	Newhouse	Ivey	Sherrill
Jeffries	Neguse	Soto	Banks	Granger	Norman	Jackson (IL)	Slotkin
Johnson (GA)	Nickel	Spanberger	Barr	Graves (LA)	Nunn (IA)	Jackson (NC)	Smith (WA)
Kamlager-Dove	Norcross	Stansbury	Bean (FL)	Graves (MO)	Obernolte	Jacobs	Sorensen
Kaptur	Norton	Stanton	Bentz	Greene (GA)	Ogles	Jayapal	Soto
Keating	Ocasio-Cortez	Stevens	Bergman	Griffith	Owens	Jeffries	Spanberger
Kelly (IL)	Omar	Strickland	Bice	Grothman	Posey	Knight (GA)	Stansbury
Kennedy	Pallone	Suozzi	Biggs	Guest	Peltola	Kamlager-Dove	Stanton
Khanna	Panetta	Swalwell	Bilirakis	Pence	Kaptur	Norton	Stevens
Kildee	Pappas	Sykes	Bishop (NC)	Guthrie	Perez	Omar	Strickland
Kilmer	Peters	Takano	Bost	Hageman	Perry	Pallone	Suozzi
Krishnamoorthi	Pettersen	Thanedar	Brecheen	Harris	Pfluger	Swalwell	Sykes
Kuster	Phillips	Thompson (CA)	Harshbarger	Harshbarger	Kennedy	Pappas	Takano
Landsman	Pingree	Thompson (MS)	Buchanan	Hern	Johnson (GA)	Pelosi	Thanedar
Larsen (WA)	Plaskett	Tokuda	Buchson	Higgins (LA)	Reschenthaler	Kildee	Peters
Larson (CT)	Pocan	Tonko	Burchett	Hill	Rodgers (WA)	Kilmer	Pettersen
Lee (CA)	Pressley	Torres (CA)	Burgess	Hinson	Rogers (AL)	Krishnamoorthi	Thompson (CA)
Lee (NV)	Quigley	Torres (NY)	Calvert	Houchin	Rogers (KY)	Kuster	Thompson (MS)
Lee (PA)	Ramirez	Trahan	Carey	Hudson	Rose	Landsman	Tokuda
Leger Fernandez	Raskin	Underwood	Carl	Huizenga	Rosendale	Larsen (WA)	Plaskett
Levin	Ross	Vargas	Carter (GA)	Hunt	Rouzer	Larson (CT)	Pocan
Lieu	Ruiz	Veasey	Carter (TX)	Jackson (TX)	Roy	Pressley	Torres (CA)
Lynch	Ruppersberger	Velázquez	Chavez-DeRemer	James	Rutherford	Lee (CA)	Quigley
Magaziner	Ryan	Wasserman	Ciscomani	Johnson (SD)	Salazar	Lee (NV)	Trahan
Manning	Sablan	Schultz	Cline	Jordan	Scalise	Lee (PA)	Underwood
Matsui	Salinas	Waters	Cloud	Joyce (OH)	Schweikert	Leger Fernandez	Vargas
McBath	Sánchez	Wexton	Clyde	Joyce (PA)	Scott, Austin	Ross	Velázquez
McCullum	Barbanes	Wild	Cole	Kean (NJ)	Self	Rui	Wasserman
McGarvey	Scanlon	Williams (GA)	Collins	Kelly (MS)	Sessions	Ruppersberger	Schultz

## NOT VOTING—34

Bowman	Joyce (OH)	Porter	Crawford	Kiley	Smith (NE)		
Burlison	Kim (NJ)	Radewagen	Crenshaw	Kim (CA)	Smith (NJ)		
Cammack	Lofgren	Stauber	Cuellar	Kustoff	Smucker		
Diaz-Balart	McClellan	Titus	Curtis	LaHood	Spartz		
Doggett	McCormick	Tlaib	D'Esposito	LaLota	Stauber		
Evans	Menendez	Trone	Davidson	LaMalfa	Steel		
González-Colón	Moylan	Van Orden	De La Cruz	Lamborn	Stefanik		
Graves (LA)	Murphy	Watson Coleman	DesJarlais	Langworthy	Steil		
Green (TN)	Nehls	Wilson (FL)	Diaz-Balart	Latta	Steube		
Grijalva	Palmer	Zinke	Donalds	LaTurner	Strong		
Issa	Pascarell		Duarte	Lawler	Tenney		
Jackson Lee	Pelosi		Duncan	Lee (FL)	Thompson (PA)		

## □ 1605

Mr. MRVAN changed his vote from “aye” to “no.”

Messrs. WITTMAN and ROSENDALE changed their vote from “no” to “aye.” So the amendment was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Chair, had I been present, I would have voted AYE on Roll Call No. 237.

AMENDMENT NO. 10 OFFERED BY MR. CRANE

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on amendment No. 10, printed in part B of House Report 118-535, offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CRANE), on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

## RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 211, noes 193, not voting 32, as follows:

					NOES—193		
Adams	Carter (LA)			Davis (IL)			
Aguilar	Cartwright			Davis (NC)			
Allred	Casar			Dean (PA)			
Amo	Case			DeGette			
Auchincloss	Casten			DeLauro			
Balint	Castor (FL)			DelBene			
Barragán	Castro (TX)			Deluzio			
Beatty	Cherifius			DeSaulnier			
Bera	McCormick			Dingell			
Beyer	Chu			Escobar			
Bishop (GA)	Clark (MA)			Eshoo			
Blumenauer	Clarke (NY)			Espaillat			
Blunt Rochester	Cleaver			Fitzpatrick			
Bonamici	Clyburn			Fletcher			
Boyle (PA)	Cohen			Foster			
Brown	Connolly			Foushee			
Brownley	Correa			Frankel, Lois			
Budzinski	Costa			Frost			
Bush	Courtney			Gallego			
Caraveo	Craig			Garamendi			
Carbajal	Crockett			Garcia (IL)			
Cárdenas	Crow			Garcia (TX)			
Carson	Davids (KS)			Garcia, Robert			

## NOT VOTING—32

Boebert	Kim (NJ)	Porter					
Bowman	Lofgren	Radewagen					
Cammack	McClellan	Titus					
Diaz-Balart	McCormick	Tlaib					
Doggett	Menendez	Trone					
Evans	Moylan	Van Orden					
González-Colón	Murphy	Watson Coleman					
Green (TN)	Nehls	Webster (FL)					
Grijalva	Ocasio-Cortez	Wilson (FL)					
Issa	Palmer	Zinke					
Jackson Lee	Pascarel						

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

## □ 1609

So the amendment was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

## AMENDMENT NO. 16 OFFERED BY MS. GREENE OF GEORGIA

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on amendment No. 16, printed in part B of House Report 118-535, offered by the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. GREENE), on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

## RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 46, noes 354, not voting 36, as follows:

[Roll No. 239]

AYES—46

Bean (FL)	Good (VA)
Biggs	Gosar
Bishop (NC)	Greene (GA)
Boebert	Hageman
Bost	Harris
Brecheen	Harshbarger
Burchett	Hern
Cline	Hill
Cloud	Hunt
Collins	Joyce (PA)
Comer	Lesko
Crane	Luna
Donalds	Massie
Fischbach	Mast
Fry	Miller (IL)
Gaetz	Mills

NOES—354

Adams	Davis (NC)	Jackson (NC)
Aderholt	De La Cruz	Jackson (TX)
Aguilar	Dean (PA)	Jacobs
Alford	DeGette	James
Allen	DeLauro	Jayapal
Allred	DelBene	Jeffries
Amo	Deluzio	Johnson (GA)
Amodei	DeSaulnier	Johnson (SD)
Armstrong	DesJarlais	Jordan
Auchincloss	Diaz-Balart	Joyce (OH)
Babin	Dingell	Kamlager-Dove
Bacon	Duarte	Kaptur
Baird	Duncan	Kean (NJ)
Balderson	Dunn (FL)	Keating
Balint	Edwards	Kelly (IL)
Banks	Ellzey	Kelly (MS)
Barr	Emmer	Kelly (PA)
Barragán	Escobar	Kennedy
Beatty	Eshoo	Khanna
Bentz	Espauillat	Kiggans (VA)
Bergman	Estes	Kiley
Beyer	Ezell	Kilmer
Bice	Fallon	Kim (CA)
Bilirakis	Feenstra	Krishnamoorthi
Bishop (GA)	Ferguson	Kuster
Blumenauer	Finstad	Kustoff
Blunt Rochester	Fitzgerald	LaHood
Bonamici	Fitzpatrick	LaLota
Boyle (PA)	Fleischmann	LaMalfa
Brown	Fletcher	Lamborn
Brownley	Flood	Landsman
Buchanan	Fong	Langworthy
Buchson	Foster	Larsen (WA)
Budzinski	Foushee	Larson (CT)
Burgess	Fox	Latta
Bush	Frankel, Lois	LaTurner
Calvert	Franklin, Scott	Lawler
Caraveo	Frost	Lee (CA)
Carbajal	Fulcher	Lee (FL)
Cárdenas	Gallego	Lee (NV)
Carey	Garamendi	Lee (PA)
Carl	Garbarino	Leger Fernande
Carson	Garcia (IL)	Letlow
Carter (GA)	Garcia (TX)	Levin
Carter (LA)	Garcia, Mike	Lieu
Carter (TX)	Garcia, Robert	Loudermilk
Cartwright	Gimenez	Lucas
Casar	Golden (ME)	Luetkemeyer
Case	Goldman (NY)	Luttrell
Casten	Gomez	Lynch
Castor (FL)	Gonzales, Tony	Mace
Castro (TX)	Gonzalez,	Magaziner
Chavez-DeRemer	Vicente	Malliotakis
Cherifius-	Gooden (TX)	Maloy
McCormick	Gottheimer	Mann
Chu	Granger	Manning
Ciscomani	Graves (LA)	Matsui
Clark (MA)	Graves (MO)	McBath
Clarke (NY)	Green, Al (TX)	McCaul
Cleaver	Griffith	McClain
Clyburn	Grothman	McClintock
Clyde	Guest	McCollum
Cohen	Guthrie	McGarvey
Cole	Harder (CA)	McGovern
Connolly	Hayes	McHenry
Correa	Higgins (LA)	Meeks
Costa	Himes	Meng
Courtney	Hinson	Meuser
Craig	Horsford	Mfume
Crawford	Houchin	Miller (OH)
Crenshaw	Houlahan	Miller (WV)
Crockett	Hoyer	Miller-Meeks
Crow	Hoyle (OR)	Molinaro
Cuellar	Hudson	Moolenaar
Curtis	Huffman	Moore (UT)
D'Esposito	Huizenga	Moore (WI)
Davids (KS)	Ivey	Moran
Davis (IL)	Jackson (IL)	Morelle

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ANNOUNCEMENT  
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Slotkin  
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NOT VOTED

Jackson  
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Kim (NJ)  
Lofgren  
McClellan  
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Menendez  
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ACTING CHAIRMAN  
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RED BY MR. BROWN  
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The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 290, noes 116, not voting 30, as follows:

[Roll No. 240]

AYES—290

AYES—290	
Foushee	Mfume
Frankel, Lois	Miller (OH)
Frost	Miller-Meeks
Fry	Mills
Gaetz	Molinaro
Gallego	Moore (UT)
Garbarino	Moore (WI)
Garcia (IL)	Morelle
Garcia (TX)	Moskowitz
Garcia, Mike	Moulton
Garcia, Robert	Mrvan
Gimenez	Mullin
Golden (ME)	Nadler
Goldman (NY)	Napolitano
Gomez	Neal
Gonzales, Tony	Neguse
Gonzalez,	Newhouse
Vicente	Nickel
Gooden (TX)	Norcross
Gottheimer	Norton
Graves (MO)	Nunn (IA)
Green, Al (TX)	Obernolte
Greene (GA)	Ocasio-Cortez
Griffith	Omar
Grothman	Owens
Harder (CA)	Pallone
Hayes	Panetta
Higgins (LA)	Pappas
Himes	Pelosi
Hinson	Peltola
Horsford	Perez
Houlahan	Perry
Hoyer	Peters
Hoyle (OR)	Pettersen
Huizenga	Pfluger
Hunt	Phillips
Ivey	Pingree
Jackson (IL)	Plaskett
Jackson (NC)	Pocan
Jacobs	Pressley
James	Quigley
Jayapal	Ramirez
Jeffries	Raskin
Johnson (GA)	Reschenthaler
Johnson (SD)	Rogers (AL)
Joyce (OH)	Ross
Kamlager-Dove	Roy
Kaptur	Ruiz
Kean (NJ)	Ruppertsberger
Keating	Rutherford
Kelly (IL)	Ryan
Kelly (PA)	Sablan
Kennedy	Salazar
Khanna	Salinas
Kiggans (VA)	Sánchez
Kildee	Sarbanes
Kiley	Scanlon
Kilmer	Schakowsky
Kim (CA)	Schiff
Krishnamoorthi	Schneider
Kuster	Scholten
LaLota	Schrier
Landsman	Schweikert
Langworthy	Scott (VA)
Larsen (WA)	Sewell
Larson (CT)	Sherman
Lawler	Sherrill
Lee (CA)	Slotkin
Lee (FL)	Smith (NJ)
Lee (NV)	Smith (WA)
Lee (PA)	Smucker
Leger Fernandez	Sorensen
Levin	Soto
Lieu	Spanberger
Luna	Spartz
Lynch	Stansbury
Mace	Stanton
Magaziner	Steube
Malliotakis	Stevens
Maloy	Strickland
Manning	Suozzi
Massie	Swalwell
Mast	Sykes
Matsui	Takano
McBath	Tenney
McClintock	Thanedar
McCollum	Thompson (CA)
McGarvey	Thompson (MA)
McGovern	Thompson (PA)
Meeks	Tokuda
Meng	Tonko
Meuser	Torres (CA)

Trahan	Vasquez	Wild
Underwood	Veasey	Williams (GA)
Valadao	Velázquez	Williams (NY)
Van Drew	Waltz	Wittman
Van Duyne	Waters	
Vargas	Wexton	

## NOES—116

Aderholt	Good (VA)	Moran
Allen	Gosar	Norman
Amo	Granger	Ogles
Arrington	Graves (LA)	Pence
Babin	Guest	Armstrong
Bacon	Guthrie	Arrington
Baird	Hageman	Rodgers (KY)
Balderson	Harris	Rose
Banks	Harshbarger	Rosendale
Biggs	Hern	Rouzer
Bilirakis	Hill	Scalise
Boebert	Houchin	Scott, Austin
Bost	Hudson	Scott, David
Brecheen	Huffman	Self
Buchanan	Jackson (TX)	Sessions
Bucshon	Jordan	Simpson
Calvert	Joyce (PA)	Smith (MO)
Carl	Kelly (MS)	Smith (NE)
Carter (TX)	Kustoff	Stauber
Cloud	LaHood	Boebert
Clyde	LaMalfa	Steel
Collins	Lamborn	Stefanik
Crawford	Latta	Steil
Davis (NC)	LaTurner	Strong
Edwards	Lesko	Tiffany
Ellzey	Letlow	Timmons
Estes	Loudermilk	Torres (NY)
Ezell	Lucas	Turner
Fallon	Luetkemeyer	Carey
Finstad	Luttrell	Johnson (LA)
Fischbach	Mann	Carter (GA)
Fitzgerald	McCaull	Johnson (SD)
Fleischmann	McClain	Johnson (TX)
Flood	McHenry	Jordan
Fong	Miller (IL)	Scalise
Foxx	Miller (WV)	Shultz
Franklin, Scott	Moolenaar	Chavez-DeRemer
Fulcher	Mooney	Ciscomani
Garamendi	Moore (AL)	Webster (FL)

## NOT VOTING—30

Bowman	Jackson Lee	Pascarella
Burlison	Kim (NJ)	Porter
Cammack	Lofgren	Radewagen
Diaz-Balart	McClellan	Titus
Doggett	McCormick	Tlaib
Evans	Menendez	Trone
González-Colón	Moylan	Van Orden
Green (TN)	Murphy	Watson Coleman
Grijalva	Nehls	Wilson (FL)
Issa	Palmer	Zinke

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote).  
There is 1 minute remaining.

## □ 1617

Ms. BARRAGÁN and Messrs. GREEN of Texas and CARTER of Georgia changed their vote from “no” to “aye.”

So the amendment was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

## AMENDMENT NO. 42 OFFERED BY MR. SELF

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on amendment No. 42, printed in part B of House Report 118-535, offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SELF), on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

## RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 206, noes 200, not voting 31, as follows:

[Roll No. 241]

## AYES—206

Aderholt	Gaetz	Miller (WV)	Frankel, Lois	Lieu	Salinas
Allen	Alford	Miller-Meeks	Frost	Lynch	Sánchez
Amo	Garbarino	Mills	Gallego	Magaziner	Barbanes
Arrington	Garcia, Mike	Gonzalez,	Garamendi	Manning	Scanlon
Babin	Amodei	Molinaro	García (IL)	Matsui	Schakowsky
Bacon	Gimenez	Moolenaar	García (TX)	McBath	Schiff
Baird	Gonzales, Tony	Gottheimer	Garcia, Robert	McCullom	Schneider
Balderson	Good (VA)	Mooney	Golden (ME)	McGarvey	Scholten
Banks	Gooden (TX)	Green, Al (TX)	Goldman (NY)	McGovern	Schrirer
Biggs	Bacon	Moore (UT)	Gomez	Meeks	Scott (VA)
Bilirakis	Granger	Hader (CA)	Meng	Scott, David	
Boebert	Balderson	Hayes	Mifune	Sewell	
Bost	Graves (LA)	Moulton	Moore (WI)	Sherman	
Brecheen	Newhouse	Horsford	Morelle	Sherrill	
Buchanan	Horn	Houlahan	Nader	Slotkin	
Bucshon	Harris	Hoyer	Napolitano	Smith (WA)	
Calvert	Harris	Hoyle (OR)	Stansbury	Sorensen	
Carl	Harrington	Ogles	Stanton	Soto	
Carter (TX)	Harrishbarger	Huffman	Strickland	Spanberger	
Cloud	Harrishbarger	Ivey	Jackson (IL)	Suozzi	
Clyde	Horn	Jackson (NC)	Norcross	Takano	
Collins	Horn	Norton	Ocasio-Cortez	Swalwell	
Crawford	Houchin	Jacobs	Neal	Sykes	
Davis (NC)	Hudson	Jayapal	Pallone	Thanedar	
Edwards	Hudson	Jeffries	Panetta	Pappas	
Ellzey	Hudson	Rodgers (WA)	Kamlager-Dove	Thompson (CA)	
Estes	Hudson	Rogers (AL)	Kaptur	Thompson (MS)	
Ezell	Hudson	Rodgers (PA)	Pelosi	Tokuda	
Fallon	Hudson	Rutherford	Keating	Tonko	
Finstad	Hudson	Salazar	Kelly (IL)	Peters	
Fischbach	Hudson	Scalise	Kuster	Pressley	
Fitzgerald	Hudson	Shweikert	Landsman	Vasquez	
Fleischmann	Hudson	Johnson (GA)	Quiigley	Veasey	
Flood	Hudson	Johnson (TX)	Larsen (WA)	Velázquez	
Fong	Hudson	Kilmer	Ramirez	Wasserman	
Foxx	Hudson	Kilmer	Raskin	Schultz	
Franklin, Scott	Hudson	Kilmer	Ross	Waters	
Fulcher	Hudson	Kilmer	Ruiz	Wexton	
Garamendi	Hudson	Kilmer	Ruppersberger	Wild	
	Hudson	Kilmer	Leger Fernandez	Ryan	Williams (GA)
	Hudson	Kilmer	Levin	Sablan	

## NOT VOTING—31

Bowman	Jackson Lee	Porter
Burlison	Kim (NJ)	Radewagen
Cammack	Lofgren	Titus
Diaz-Balart	McClellan	Tlaib
Doggett	McCormick	Trone
Evans	Menendez	Van Orden
González-Colón	Moylan	Watson Coleman
Green (TN)	Murphy	Wilson (FL)
Grijalva	Nehls	Zinke
Issa	Palmer	
	Pascarella	

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote).  
There is 1 minute remaining.

## □ 1622

Messrs. DAVIS of North Carolina and SUOZZI changed their vote from “aye” to “no.”

So the amendment was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

## Stated for:

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Chair, I was busy in an important meeting. Had I been present, I would have voted AYE on Roll Call No. 241.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. STEUBE) having assumed the chair, Mr. STAUBER, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 8580) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, and for other

Adams	Cárdenas	Craig
Aguilar	Carson	Crockett
Allred	Carter (LA)	Crow
Amo	Cartwright	Cuellar
Auchincloss	Casar	Davids (KS)
Balint	Case	Davis (IL)
Barragán	Casten	Davis (NC)
Beatty	Castor (FL)	Dean (PA)
Bera	Castro (TX)	DeGette
Beyer	Cherif	DeLauro
Bishop (GA)	McCormick	DelBene
Blumenauer	Chu	Deluzio
Blunt Rochester	Clark (MA)	DeSaulnier
Bonamici	Clarke (NY)	Dingell
Boyle (PA)	Cleaver	Escobar
Brown	Clyburn	Eshoo
Brownley	Cohen	Espallat
Budzinski	Connolly	Fitzpatrick
Bush	Correa	Fletcher
Caraveo	Costa	Foster
Carbajal	Courtney	Foushee

purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

#### HONORING KELLY DIXON

(Mr. SCALISE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I know from time to time we pause here in this Chamber to pay respect to some of the people that actually make this great institution work. The House staff, many times behind the scenes, do incredible work, some for an entire career, year after year, helping all of us do the things that we came here to do.

Today, unfortunately, is one of the days where we are marking the end of the 26-year career of Kelly Dixon.

Mr. Speaker, Kelly started her career in 1998 here in the Capitol working for KEN CALVERT and, over the years, worked for a number of Members, worked for leadership, and now is the staff director for the Rules Committee. We all know how easy it is to work for the Rules Committee, the incredibly, incredibly difficult work they do, late at night oftentimes, getting the rules prepared so that this House can conduct its business.

Kelly has been in that role since 2019. We are going to have Mr. COLE talk about that in a moment, but I first yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), my friend.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. We won't have a colloquy, however.

Mr. SCALISE. We miss those days, though.

Mr. HOYER. Which we had so many times.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about a person who has made a great difference in this institution for the Republican Party and for the Democratic Party, a person who brought great judgment, great skill, a love for this institution and its Members, and a love for her country.

Unfortunately, the public does not get to see the extraordinary contributions that our staff make, whether they are on the floor, as Kelly has been for many years, or in committees, or in our offices.

□ 1630

Kelly Dixon is one of the best of a very, very distinguished group of people.

Kelly Dixon ran the floor with Shuwanza Goff of my staff, who now, as you probably know, is the Director of Legislative Affairs for the President and with Alexis Covey-Brandt, who was my floor director and then my chief of staff, who is now senior counselor to our Governor.

Kelly will now go on to greener pastures. I use that word advisedly. They are very fortunate to have her services. She is smart. She is engaging. She is personable. She is experienced. She always tries to do the right thing.

As all of us know, this floor gets pretty hot at times. The two parties

differ greatly. Sometimes the parties disagree with each other greatly. Sometimes we disagree with the Chair. Sometimes we even disagree with the Parliamentarian.

Kelly was a calming voice, a voice of reason, a voice for a democracy that worked civilly. We will miss Kelly Dixon.

She is not leaving town, so hopefully we are going to see you, Kelly, from time to time, day to day, month to month, and we will have the opportunity to continue to learn from your experience, to have the pleasure of your company.

JIM MCGOVERN in his statement said: "I love Kelly." I join Mr. MCGOVERN in that sentiment. I love you, Kelly. You have made our work in this place better, and you have made our lives in this place better. We thank you.

Godspeed.

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland for those wonderful comments.

For the last few years, Kelly served as the staff director for the Rules Committee and most of that time working with our now-Appropriations chair, but then Rules chair.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE).

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank very much, Leader SCALISE, for yielding. I also thank my friend from Maryland for those incredibly kind and gracious remarks.

Mr. Speaker, in the history of my State, there is a great political figure, former Governor, former Congressman, his son was later a Governor, he was once asked what makes a great public servant, and he said to look for three qualities: First, look for somebody too honest to be bought. If you think you could buy Kelly Dixon whether it was with money or flattery or kindness, because she is not susceptible to kindness, or any other way, you can't. You were always going to get an honest answer, a straight opinion, and a straight call on any issue. The second thing he said is to look for somebody too wise to be fooled. If you think you can fool Kelly Dixon, you are the fool because she sees clearly and sharply. She judges people wisely and well. She judges the institution and the motives well. I don't think I have ever seen her fooled or flustered in her life. Finally, he said to look for somebody too courageous to be intimidated.

Now, who the hell here thinks they can intimidate Kelly Dixon? She intimidates you, but she does it for a wise and a good purpose. I did have the great fortune to have followed her most of her career and then obviously got to work with her very closely at Rules, and I can tell you several things about her.

Number one, there is nobody in this institution that has a better friend than Kelly Dixon. It doesn't matter which side of the aisle you are on. It is the way she treats you, the way she responds to you. She is your friend.

There is nobody in this Chamber that has a better staffer than Kelly Dixon.

She started with my friend, KEN CALVERT. She has held some of the most senior and responsible positions in our Conference and she has had the respect of her peers and colleagues and the Members on the other side of the aisle. That is a hard thing to do to command that kind of respect in this Chamber.

The other thing I will tell you about her is, she is also the ultimate institutionalist. Everybody has in a long career a finest hour, a moment of supreme effectiveness in a worthy cause. I think Kelly Dixon's finest hour was in the 3 weeks of turmoil that we had when we lost a Speaker. She was a pre-eminent staffer for the Speaker pro tempore. She helped us through a difficult period and kept us together and kept us focused, and we ended up where we needed to be in an orderly way.

I think it was absolutely an heroic moment, not one that most people had an opportunity to witness, but I bet you if PATRICK MCHENRY was speaking, he would get up and tell you exactly the same thing.

I would say that, too, for the way in which she has performed to help our Speaker, Speaker JOHNSON, get set up, get established, and move forward.

This is a complex institution with great traditions, and nobody knows those traditions and knows this institution better than Kelly Dixon.

Kelly, we are all going to miss you, but nobody is going to miss you more than me and, frankly, nobody is going to ever replace you. Thank you for what you have done for this institution.

Mr. SCALISE. Kelly, after 26 years, you have earned everything that is ahead of you. We will miss you here, but even better things are ahead. Thank you for all you did for this institution, this United States House of Representatives. God bless you in the future.

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

#### ILLEGITIMATE COURT COUNTERACTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEUBE). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on passage of the bill (H.R. 8282) to impose sanctions with respect to the International Criminal Court engaged in any effort to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute any protected person of the United States and its allies, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 247, nays 155, answered "present" 2, not voting 27, as follows:

[Roll No. 242]

YEAS—247

Aderholt Goldman (NY) Moran  
 Alford Gonzales, Tony Moskowitz  
 Allen Gonzalez, Newhouse  
 Amodei Vicente Nickel  
 Armstrong Good (VA) Norcross  
 Arrington Gooden (TX) Norman  
 Babin Gosar Nunn (IA)  
 Bacon Gottheimer Obernolte  
 Baird Granger Ogles  
 Balderson Graves (LA) Owens  
 Banks Graves (MO) Pallone  
 Barr Greene (GA) Panetta  
 Bean (FL) Griffith Pappas  
 Bentz Grothman Peiltola  
 Bergman Guest Pence  
 Bice Guthrie Perez  
 Biggs Hageman Perry  
 Bilirakis Harris Peters  
 Bishop (NC) Harshbarger Pfluger  
 Boebert Hern Phillips  
 Bost Higgins (LA) Posey  
 Boyle (PA) Hill Reschenthaler  
 Brecheen Hinson Rodgers (WA)  
 Buchanan Horsford Rogers (AL)  
 Bucshon Houchin Rogers (KY)  
 Burchett Hudson Rose  
 Burgess Huizinga Rosendale  
 Calvert Hunt Rouzer  
 Caraveo Jackson (TX) Roy  
 Carey James Rutherford  
 Carl Johnson (LA) Ryan  
 Carter (GA) Johnson (SD) Salazar  
 Carter (TX) Jordan Scalise  
 Cartwright Joyce (OH) Schneider  
 Chavez-DeRemer Joyce (PA) Schrier  
 Ciscomani Kean (NJ) Schweikert  
 Cline Kelly (MS) Scott, Austin  
 Cloud Kelly (PA) Scott, David  
 Clyde Kiggans (VA) Self  
 Cole Kiley Sessions  
 Collins Kim (CA) Simpson  
 Comer Kustoff Slotkin  
 Craig LaHood Smith (MO)  
 Crane LaLota Smith (NE)  
 Crawford LaMalfa Smith (NJ)  
 Crenshaw Lamborn Smucker  
 Cuellar Landsman Soto  
 Curtis Langworthy Spartz  
 D'Esposito Latta Stanton  
 Davis (NC) Lawler Stauber  
 De La Cruz Lee (FL) Steel  
 DesJarlais Lee (NV) Stefanik  
 Diaz-Balart Lesko Steil  
 Donalds Letlow Steube  
 Duarte Levin Strong  
 Duncan Loudermilk Suozzi  
 Dunn (FL) Lucas Tenney  
 Edwards Luetkemeyer Thanedar  
 Ellzey Luna Thompson (PA)  
 Emmer Luttrell Tiffany  
 Estes Mace Timmons  
 Ezell Malliotakis Torres (NY)  
 Fallon Maloy Turner  
 Feenstra Mann Valadao  
 Ferguson Manning Van Drew  
 Finstad Mast Van Duyne  
 Fischbach McBath Vargas  
 Fitzgerald McCaul Veasey  
 Fitzpatrick McClain Wagner  
 Fleischmann McClinton Waltz  
 Flood McHenry  
 Fong Meng Wasserman  
 Foxx Meuser Schultz  
 Frankel, Lois Miller (IL) Weber (TX)  
 Franklin, Scott Miller (OH) Webster (FL)  
 Fry Miller (WV) Wenstrup  
 Fulcher Miller-Meeks Westerman  
 Gaetz Mills Williams (NY)  
 Gallego Molinaro Williams (TX)  
 Garbarino Moolenaar Wilson (SC)  
 Garcia, Mike Mooney Wittman  
 Gimenez Moore (AL) Womack  
 Golden (ME) Moore (UT) Yakym

NAYS—155

Adams Blumenauer Casar  
 Aguilar Blunt Rochester Case  
 Allred Bonamici Casten  
 Amo Brown Castor (FL)  
 Auchincloss Brownley Castro (TX)  
 Balint Budzinski Cherfilus-  
 Barragán Bush McCormick  
 Beatty Carbalaj Chu  
 Bera Cárdenas Clark (MA)  
 Beyer Carson Clarke (NY)  
 Bishop (GA) Carter (LA) Cleaver

Clyburn Cohen Jayapal Pocan  
 Connolly Johnson (GA) Pressley  
 Correa Costa Kaptur Ramirez  
 Courtney Keating Ross Ruiz  
 Crockett Kelly (IL) Ruppersberger  
 Crow Davids (KS) Kennedy Salinas  
 Davis (IL) Kildee Sánchez  
 Dean (PA) Kilmer Sarbanes  
 DeGette Krishnamoorthi Scanlon  
 DeLauro Kuster Schakowsky  
 DelBene Larsen (WA) Schiff  
 Deluzio Larson (CT) Scholten  
 DeSaulnier Pappas Lee (CA) Scott (VA)  
 Dingell Escobar Lee (PA) Sewell  
 Foster Frost Leger Fernandez Sherman  
 Matsui McGarvey Stevens Sherrill  
 Phillips Eshoo Lieu Smith (WA)  
 Posey Garamendi Lynch Sorenson  
 Hill Reschenthaler Fletcher Spanberger  
 Hinson Rodgers (WA) Garcia (TX) Stansbury  
 Horsford Rogers (AL) Garcia, Robert Moore (WI)  
 Houchin Rogers (KY) Gomez Morelle Thompson (CA)  
 Hudson Rose Green, Al (TX) Moulton Thompson (MS)  
 Huizinga Rosendale Harder (CA) Mrvan Tokuda  
 Hunt Rouzer Hayes Mullin Tonko  
 Jackson (TX) Roy Himes Nadler Torres (CA)  
 James Rutherford Houlahan Napolitano Trahan  
 Johnson (LA) Ryan Hoyer Neal Underwood  
 Johnson (SD) Salazar Scalise Hoyle (OR) Neguse Vasquez  
 Jordan Jordan Schneider Huffmann Ocasio-Cortez Velázquez  
 Joyce (OH) Joyce (PA) Schrier Ivey Omar Waters  
 Kean (NJ) Schweikert Jackson (IL) Pelosi Wexton  
 Kelly (MS) Scott, Austin Jackson (NC) Pettersen Wild  
 Cloud Kelly (PA) Scott, David Jacobs Pingree Williams (GA)

ANSWERED “PRESENT”—2

NOT VOTING—27

Bowman Kim (NJ) Pascrell  
 Burlison LaTurner Porter  
 Cammack Lofgren Titus  
 Doggett McClellan Tlaib  
 Evans McCormick Trone  
 Green (TN) Menendez Van Orden  
 Grijalva Murphy Watson Coleman  
 Issa Nehls Wilson (FL)  
 Jackson Lee Palmer Zinke

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1640

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present to cast my vote on Roll Call No. 237, Roll Call No. 238, Roll Call No. 239, Roll Call No. 240, Roll Call No. 241 and Roll Call No. 242. Had I been present I would have voted No on Roll Call No. 237, No on Roll Call No. 238, No on Roll Call No. 239, AYE on Roll Call No. 240, No on Roll Call No. 241 and NAY on Roll Call No. 242.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, while tending to a family emergency, I was absent from the floor and the roll call votes. Had I been present, I would have voted:

NO on Roll Call No. 237 on agreeing to Amendment 8 to H.R. 8580,

NO on Roll Call No. 238 on agreeing to Amendment 10 to H.R. 8580,

NO on Roll Call No. 239 on agreeing to Amendment 16 to H.R. 8580,

AYE on Roll Call No. 240 on agreeing to Amendment 28 to H.R. 8580,

NO on Roll Call No. 241 on agreeing to Amendment 42 to H.R. 8580, and  
 NAY on Roll Call No. 242 on passage of H.R. 8282.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I missed 8 roll call votes today. Had I been present, I would have voted:

Roll Call 235, Ordering the Previous Question for H. Res. 1269, NO;

Roll Call 236, Passage of H. Res. 1269, NO;

Roll Call 237, Bost Amendment No. 8, NO;

Roll Call 238, Crane Amendment No. 10, NO;

Roll Call 239, Greene of Georgia Amendment No. 16, NO;

Roll Call 240, Mast Amendment No. 28, YES;

Roll Call 241, Self Amendment No. 42, NO; and

Roll Call 242, Illegitimate Court Counteraction Act, NO.

#### RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
 Washington, DC, June 3, 2024.

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

DEAR SPEAKER JOHNSON, I hereby resign from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, effective immediately.

Very respectfully,

CHRIS DELUZIO,  
*Member of Congress.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. HOUCHEIN). Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

#### RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Small Business:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
 Washington, DC, June 4, 2024.

Re Resignation from U.S. House Committee on Small Business.

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

DEAR SPEAKER JOHNSON: It has been an honor to serve on the U.S. House Committee on Small Business (“Small Business Committee”) in the 116th, 117th, and 118th Congresses. With this letter, I respectfully resign from the Small Business Committee.

Small businesses are the heartbeat of the American economy, and throughout my time on the Small Business Committee, I have cherished the opportunity to serve the enterprising small business owners from across America. The work done through the Small Business Committee was integral to successfully navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, and we continued fighting for more opportunities for all thereafter. While I am stepping away

from my formal membership on the Small Business Committee, I will never stop being a champion for American small businesses.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

KWEISI MFUME,  
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

#### RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE AND TECHNOLOGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Science, Space and Technology:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, June 4, 2024.

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

DEAR SPEAKER JOHNSON, I write to inform you that effective immediately I resign from my position on the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology. I have enjoyed my time on the Committee under the leadership of Chairman FRANK LUCAS and wish all my colleagues the best carrying out the People's agenda.

For God and Country,

RYAN ZINKE,  
Congressman, MT-01,  
52nd U.S. Secretary  
of the Interior, Com-  
mander, U.S. Navy  
SEALS (ret).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

□ 1645

#### ELECTING MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Republican Conference, I send to the desk a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1275

Resolved, That the following named Members be, and are hereby, elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES: Mr. Higgins of Louisiana.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS: Mr. Zinke and Mr. Moylean.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY: Mr. Fong.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Mr. Fong.

Mrs. MCCLAIN (during the reading). Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read.

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

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

#### ELECTING MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. AGUILAR. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1276

Resolved, That the following named Members be, and are hereby, elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET: Mr. Suozzi.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS: Mr. Mfume (to rank immediately after Mr. Amo).

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Mr. Deluzio.

Mr. AGUILAR (during the reading). Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read.

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

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### HONORING ROBERT J. CASTELLI

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

Mr. LAWLER. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to honor the memory of Robert J. Castelli, a dedicated public servant who passed away at the age of 74.

Robert's remarkable life journey began at 17 when he left high school to serve in the Vietnam war. As a member of the 7th Cavalry Regiment, he displayed extraordinary bravery during major battles, earning multiple commendations, including the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

Following his military service, Robert embarked on a 21-year career with the New York State Police and later distinguished himself in academia, teaching at institutions like the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. His commitment to public service continued in the New York State Assembly, where he was a staunch advocate for veterans' affairs.

Beyond his professional life, Robert was a passionate outdoorsman and a member of the Camp Fire Club of America.

Robert is remembered as a soldier, scholar, and statesman. His legacy is cherished by all who knew him.

Robert leaves behind his wife, Jeannette; children, Christian and Paul; and grandchildren. His life of service and leadership will not be forgotten. I cherished the friendship that he and I had over the past many years.

#### HONORING KIM VAN WIE

(Ms. OMAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. OMAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Kim Van Wie, who retires after 28 years of being the executive director of STARBASE Minnesota.

The Department of Defense's STARBASE program spans across 80 bases, providing world-class STEM programming to underserved fifth graders. Under Kim's outstanding leadership, STARBASE Minnesota grew from 2 classrooms to 11 and from 900 students per year to almost 7,000.

I met Kim in 2019 at the STARBASE in St. Paul, where I had the opportunity to witness her inspiration to young scientists and engineers. It is no surprise that two previous graduates served on my constituent staff.

Kim's commitment extends beyond title I students. During COVID, she propelled funding to provide 120,000 STEM kits for students across the region. Kim's selfless service and excellence will forever be celebrated.

It is my privilege and honor to thank Ms. Kim Van Wie for her distinguished career and celebrate her well-deserved retirement.

#### HONORING PATRICIA "TRICIA" BENNETT ARMSTRONG

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Tricia Armstrong, who passed away on May 26 at the age of 75 years old.

Tricia was a photographer for over 40 years, capturing special moments for people with her smile and boundless energy. She was a member of the Professional Photographers Association of Georgia and would travel the country taking photos and teaching seminars on camera methods.

Tricia was also very involved in bettering her community. She served as president of the Wayne County Chamber of Commerce, and she was a trailblazer in the Jesup Kiwanis Club and a founding member of the board of directors for Wayne National Bank, all while serving her church.

Beloved by her community, Tricia will always be cherished the most by her family, whom she loved dearly.

Madam Speaker, I offer my heartfelt condolences to her family. Her positive influence will be felt for generations to come.

## CLOSURE OF MARTIN GENERAL HOSPITAL

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

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise to reiterate my unwavering commitment to the people of eastern North Carolina, where healthcare is a pressing concern.

Unfortunately, our region faces notable healthcare disparities, and the closure of Martin General Hospital in Martin County has only amplified these challenges.

We recently convened a listening session to hear the community's thoughts on the future of healthcare in Martin County. I expressed my sincere gratitude to all who participated and shared their experiences. The stories shared at the listening session truly underscored the profound impact of the hospital closure.

I want to assure Martin County that I am fully committed to working alongside the county and local residents to establish a new, sustainable healthcare system for this resilient community.

## BIDEN ADMINISTRATION BORDER POLICY

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

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, we finally have it. The Biden administration today finally said they have a border policy. I hope the press does a good job of explaining what is going on here.

First of all, it is apparent when you put together the 2,500 illegals a day threshold, then 1,500 migrants a day entering the U.S. via the CBP One app, and the 30,000 migrants per month arriving through a mass parole program for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans, we are already up to about 150,000 people a month.

What I am going to focus on here is there used to be some concern about keeping families together. Under this program, we will continue to have 5,000 to 10,000 unaccompanied minors enter this country every month, and nothing will be done to turn them around.

In other words, we are going to continue the Biden policy of weak families, continue the policy of not requiring the parents to be here. I hope the press pays attention to this horrific policy.

## DOJ CONDEMNING INSULAR CASES

(Ms. PLASKETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PLASKETT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on the decision by the U.S. Department of Justice to condemn the use of the Insular Cases.

Last month, I co-led a bipartisan, bicameral letter signed by 43 Members of Congress, from both the House and the Senate, urging the U.S. Department of Justice to condemn and cease relying on the racist rulings of the Insular Cases that continue to negatively impact Americans living in U.S. territories.

The Department of Justice has finally agreed that the language is, in fact, racist and that the logic of the Insular Cases deserves no place in the law of the United States.

Residents of U.S. territories deserve fair treatment and the opportunity to determine their own political future. I am proud to see that our efforts have come to some fruition and have the Department of Justice clarify and denounce their position on those cases.

We are one step closer. We still have so much work to go to be equitable, to be treated fairly. I am asking all Virgin Islanders and all members of U.S. territories to continue the fight.

I will also continue to advocate for the reversal of the Insular Cases at the Supreme Court level and ensure the fair treatment of all residents living in U.S. territories.

## CONGRATULATING TEACHER OF THE YEAR KELLY ACKERMAN

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

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ms. Kelly Ackerman for being named the 2023–2024 Teacher of the Year for Seaside Elementary School in Horry County.

I am a little bit biased. While her colleagues chose her amongst dozens at this particular school, she is also the teacher of my first grade son, James.

Ms. Ackerman has taught various ages, including kindergarten, first grade, second grade, and third grade. She has 16 total years of teaching, including 11 in Horry County Schools.

Horry County Schools is massive. There are 3,000 teachers, and they teach nearly 50,000 students. At Seaside Elementary, they are lucky to have somebody like Ms. Ackerman who is so passionate about teaching the next generation of American students.

I thank Ms. Ackerman for her role in fostering a culture of learning. My son certainly appreciates it. From a grateful family in the Fry household, we appreciate Ms. Ackerman engaging with our son.

I asked my son last night on FaceTime what he was going to remember most or miss most about Ms. Ackerman. He said: "She is beautiful. I will miss everything about her. She helped me learn 3D shapes. She appreciates me. She makes me feel special. She makes us do performances in class."

On behalf of my colleagues in the House and on behalf of the Fry family, I thank Ms. Ackerman for her selfless

dedication to the students of Seaside Elementary.

## CELEBRATING IMMIGRANT HERITAGE MONTH

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

Mr. GOMEZ. Madam Speaker, during Immigrant Heritage Month, I rise to honor my constituent Maria Barahona, a shining example of the resilience and contributions of our immigrant community.

Maria, a home-care provider and TPS recipient from El Salvador, embodies the American spirit through her unwavering commitment to serving others. TPS gives Maria the ability to work and care for her community.

Her story is not just one of personal triumph but a testament to the invaluable impact of immigrants to our Nation. Foreign-born workers drove a staggering 50 percent of the U.S. labor market growth last year.

Maria's story is a call to action. We must support and uplift our immigrant community and expand TPS.

□ 1700

## ONE BARRIER TO PEACE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LANDSMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. LANDSMAN. Madam Speaker, I am one of only a few Jewish Members of the House, and I am leading this Special Order hour to help provide some clarity in this time of challenge and confusion. It has been said that there are four barriers to peace in the Middle East, but we are here tonight because there is only one barrier to peace, and that is the Government of Iran.

This war in the Middle East has impacted two historically traumatized people who share a history. They share land, and unfortunately, they share this reality that no one in the world wants either one of them.

Watching this trauma and this history unfold has had a deep impact on caring people all over the world. We want this war to end. We want the hostages returned, and we want a future peace for Israelis and Palestinians. We may be nearing a cease-fire, and I pray Hamas agrees to the proposal that is on the table now. That won't resolve the larger issue of Iran.

Before October 7, we were nearing peace in the region. In fact, over the past several decades there have been major efforts to bring peace between Israel and Arab nations. Historically, Arab nations were united against Israel, launching frequent attacks with the intent of destroying the Jewish state, but things slowly changed, one

realignment at a time achieved through American leadership and American partnership.

However, there is one glaring exception toward this progress, the totalitarian regime in Iran, which remains intent on Israel's destruction and disrupting the path to peace. It creates chaos in the region.

President Carter worked with Egypt and Israel to bring those two states to a sustainable peace. President Clinton worked with Jordan and Israel to normalize relations between those two nations. Four years ago, the United States formed the Abraham Accords, where the UAE and Bahrain recognized Israel's sovereignty. Sudan and Morocco would later join.

Then just days before October 7, Saudi Arabia and Israel were near a deal. It would have brought the region closer to peace. At that point, Iran had seen enough. Hamas, an Iranian-backed army, had seen enough, too, and they attacked, massacred, raped, and took Israeli and American hostages.

People have looked at this war as a David and Goliath story, and in some ways it is. We all know the story; the Philistines were attacking the Israelites in the Valley of Elah. Every morning, Goliath, this giant, challenged the Israelites to fight. One day, David, a young shepherd boy, did what no one else would do: He defeated the giant with just a sling, against all odds.

It is a story about the imbalance of power and strength but also courage and ingenuity. Israel in the last 8 months has been painted as this Goliath in the war today, and if you looked at a map and you zoomed in, you may think that, too. There is Israel, and there is Gaza, very small. However, if you zoom out, you would see the reality of what is going on, and that the Goliath isn't Israel, but it is Iran.

Iran has funded over 20 terrorist organizations all surrounding Israel. They have funded groups that were responsible for killing three U.S. service-members earlier this year, funding the Houthi rebels in Yemen responsible for attacking U.S. ships in the Red Sea, and most recently they funded Swedish gangs to carry out terror attacks against Israelis in their embassy.

Today, just like the story, 8 million Jews are in the Valley of Elah surrounded by the Goliath, Iran, and its terrorist-backed armies. Iran is not alone in this effort. It is supported by global chaos agents like Russia. What is happening in the Middle East and what is happening in Ukraine are not isolated events. Putin attacked Ukraine because he believes it is a fictional state, just as Iran and Hamas and Hezbollah believe Israel is a fictional state.

This partnership between Iran and Russia has sowed conflict, chaos. Russian-made weapons have found their way to Hamas for years, and the same Iranian drones that were fired into Israel weeks ago have been used in Russia's offensive against Ukraine.

There are those who seek to put us on a path to a peaceful future and those who seek to disrupt it and sow chaos and destruction. Russia, Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, Houthi, they are all part of this group.

Following October 7, Israel was suddenly up against Goliath and confronted with an impossible choice:

What was Israel to do after October 7 when their enemy, Hamas, went underground, taking Israeli and American hostages with them?

What was Israel to do when they hid in tunnels and shielded themselves by leaving innocent Palestinians above ground?

What was Israel to do when Hamas vowed to end Israel if they were to survive?

Hamas could cease their actions at any moment to save innocent lives, but they choose not to. If Israel stops now, they would not only abandon their people and Americans, but they would also relinquish the hard-earned stability in the Middle East, opening the door for further chaos.

The truth is, we aren't seeing the forest for the trees. We aren't zooming out to see the Goliath here—the Iranians, the Russians, the terrorists that they support against the global community. They have done this by abandoning innocent people, hiding behind civilians, and stealing aid from Palestinians. Unfortunately, their plan has succeeded.

Recently, Canadian protesters gathered and declared:

What happened on October 7 was the beginning of the great intifada.

It has spread in the minds of people of the free world.

When you scream with a loud voice, Long Live October 7, you will understand that these people decided to end their miseries and this nightmare called Israel.

In response to calls like these, the Iranian Ayatollah has said it is working. That is right. He sees all of these protests against Israel, and the Ayatollah has said, it is working.

Just last week, in reaction to U.S. protests, the Ayatollah praised American protesters in a letter that also contained anti-Semitic tropes and accused Israel of being a terrorist state.

Iran and Russia's goal of terror isn't limited to the Middle East. It is spreading globally. If we want this war to end, which I desperately do, if we want the hostages returned, which I desperately do, and a new future for Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, which I desperately do, then we have to firmly stand against the ongoing Iranian aggression.

The path forward requires bold, ethical leadership from Israel to urgently end the deepening humanitarian crisis, defeat the terror groups once and for all, and rally global diplomatic support. It is also a requirement that the leaders of the international community and these Arab nations be all in for peace and be willing to stand up to Iran once and for all.

Crucially, the work ahead requires all of us to work together to reject the tactics of terror and chaos and choosing to build a brighter future.

Iranian aggression has pitted two groups with a deep history of trauma into further trauma and pain. Yet, in this shared trauma lies the potential for profound peace. This conflict can be the foundation upon which we build lasting and sustainable stability, where both Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace.

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

#### UPCOMING CHANGES IN THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Forgive me, Madam Speaker, as we get our boards all lined up.

Madam Speaker, I am going to try something a little different than starting with the debt pie. We are going to actually sort of walk through some of the chaos that is coming next year. For those of you who always hear the saying, hey, the next election is the most important election ever, what I am going to walk you through is going to show, yeah, it probably is, but let's walk through why.

How many of you understand that in December 2017 there was a tax reform bill? It was the first time in 30-plus years that the United States had updated its tax code. Now, within that, one of the basic principles is what could you do to maximize economic growth and what could you do to make the United States competitive again?

Do you remember before 2017 the number of organizations, corporations that were chartered in the United States that were saying, bye, we are going to Ireland, we are going to other parts of the world because the way we taxed international business and those things. We found a way to make ourselves competitive, and I believe since then we haven't had a major organization, major corporation leave the United States.

Could you imagine having gone into the pandemic if we hadn't done the tax reform in December 2017? Also, I have tried in previous presentations to come here and talk about the morality of 2018, 2019, even 2020. We had the biggest movement of closing income inequality in America. It was actually some of the fastest in modern history of wages going up without inflation.

If you love and care for people, particularly working people, particularly those who, as is common, have the lowest quartiles of income, go back to 2018, go back to 2019, go back to the beginning of 2020, and understand the morality of having a revised tax code work.

Here we are. There is something coming next year we need to understand.

Parts of the tax code changes will expire. The reason is the way the tax reform had to be done because our brothers and sisters on the left were not going to help us, and you had this 1974 Budget Control Act that said, hey, you can go around the Senate 60-vote rule if it reduces spending within a certain set of rules.

It is called reconciliation. It is a little bit geeky. Even people here, we all have to sit down with the Parliamentarians and work out the rules. What that meant is there was a budget box built in 2017, and we filled into that box, but to make that box work, because it is a 10-year number, we had some things that would expire.

Guess what happens next year? A whole number of those provisions begin to expire.

Let's actually start to work on what is actually coming for us next year. These are the expiring tax provisions next year. This is going to make sense in a little bit. Let's say right now you make \$20,550 to \$83,000, today your current income tax rate—not your social security, not your FICA tax, those things, your current tax rate is 12 percent of your income. It is going up to 15 percent. The next bracket goes from 22 percent to 25 percent, then 24 percent to 28 percent, 32 percent to 33 percent. We are going back to the personal income tax rates from 2017 and earlier. The crazy thing is these rates actually are less progressive than the current updated tax reform.

Most people don't realize, when the Republicans did tax reform, we lowered rates, we broadened the base, we did all these sorts of things, but it actually was slightly more progressive than the old tax code—which our Democrat friends, it drives them insane when you mention that, so I always enjoy doing that.

□ 1715

This is coming. This is current law. This isn't a proposal. This isn't some sort of magic bait-and-switch discussion.

This is the current law. This is going to be part of the great battle next year doing policy here. I am going to show you three or four boards of what is changing in the tax code for all of us next year.

Understand, that math over 10 years is about 4.2 trillion. The first year it is, like, 380 billion. Let's just call it \$400 billion because that makes the math easy to do in our head.

Let's walk through some other things that are changing next year. Expiring 2025 tax provisions. The child tax credit.

Yes. In 2017, Republicans, without a single Democrat vote, doubled the child tax credit to \$2,000. In 2026 when you get ready to pay your taxes, that provision will have expired. Instead of getting \$2,000 per child, it goes back to \$1,000.

Here is one of the big differences when you can think about the inflation

we have had since President Biden took office.

If you live in the Scottsdale/Phoenix area that I represent, if you don't make more than 26 percent more today than you did the day Biden became President, you are poorer. Think about that.

These provisions aren't adjusted for that inflation. Right now, it phases out at 400,000. You lose this child tax credit doubling.

Next year, when this starts to expire, if you make over \$110,000, it begins to expire and phase out on you. Just be prepared.

The other thing is under current law, you get a \$500 deduction per dependent. Next year, when you pay your 2026 taxes, it is gone.

Understand these are taxes on working people. This is already the current law. This is coming at you.

Let's do a little more here. Expiring 2025 tax provisions. Current status. If you are single, you get a standard deduction.

One of the ways the tax code works, the way you create sort of this progressivity is you say, hey, the first block of your income functionally has no tax, and then the rates go up as you get higher in the income bracket.

Right now, if you are single, the first \$14,600, you functionally have almost no tax. If you are single when the provisions expire, that number gets functionally cut in half. It becomes \$8,300.

If you are married today, it is \$29,200. This is the standard deduction. It will go back down to \$16,600 so no inflation adjustments. Your taxes are going up next year.

Understand, this is the law. Understand, what we are starting to discuss here is what does Congress look like next year? What does the Presidency look like next year? What is the need of the economy? What is the need of the debt and deficits? This actually becomes really interesting debate at the same time you are borrowing.

We are going to walk through, actually in a little bit, some good news on the economy, some stabilizing news in the debt and deficits, but for a lot of Americans, they are already just stressed out of their mind.

Once again, there has been 26 percent inflation for my community in functionally the last 3, 3½ years. What happens in that same environment when your taxes go up?

Let's walk through a little bit more here. I know talking about tax provisions is so exciting, but when you pay them, you understand why we wanted to get ahead of the curve and explain to our brothers and sisters in America this is the current law. This isn't a proposal. This is the law as it is.

Another 2025 expiring tax provision. Currently, 100 percent of first-year bonus depreciation. Now, this has been starting to phase down.

You have a small business. You buy a piece of equipment. I have done entire presentations on this. When we talk

about research and development or expensing, you buy that piece of equipment so you can be better, faster, cheaper, and become more productive.

What are the two ways you pay workers more in America? Actually, in all economics? Inflation? I raise your salary because of inflation. That bought you what? Nothing. Productivity. You are making more stuff better, faster, cheaper. Your wages go up. That is real gain.

The idea behind the depreciation on both research and development and expensing was if I can get that business to buy a piece of equipment where they are more productive, they can pay their workers more.

In the coming weeks, I am going to come here and show some of the tax cuts that were given to businesses after 2017, the vast majority of that actually went to wages. It was wage growth. When you raise those taxes, you have to accept you will flatten out wage growth over the coming decade.

This is one of our biggest frustrations right now because this has been phasing down 20 percent each year for 5 years.

What is depreciation? You bought that piece of equipment. The government gets what in tax receipts? If you depreciate it over 7 years, 5 years, you get to depreciate it off your taxes, right? If you depreciate it in 1 year, you get to depreciate it off your taxes. It is a timing effect.

The government still gets functionally the same taxes. The difference is when you have to do it over time.

You, the business owner, had to find a way to finance that piece of equipment over those years until you got the tax benefit, and you could use that tax benefit.

That is one of the reasons productivity has become stale in America. It is because this isn't really a tax cut. I would argue it is timing.

There is also some really interesting economic data that the expensing and the research and development expensing may have represented almost half of the economic growth after the tax reform.

Think about that, because it created a productivity capital cycle. In a world right now where we are 7 years later after TCJA, the tax reform, where you now have AI, now you have robotics, other things, there is an argument that that productivity cycle by being able to invest in capital equipment could even be steeper, meaning your wages go up.

We actually passed a short-term, couple-year extension of this. We got it through the House. It was even bipartisan. It has been sitting in the Senate for months.

It shows you how perverse this thing is around here when even the things that grow the economy and grow your wages and functionally have almost no cost to tax receipts we can't even get through here.

Let's actually walk through what these tax provisions expiring mean to

the people of my community. Let's do some math.

Here is the first one. Sorry. Some of the phrasing over here is a little awkward. It should almost reverse. Expiring tax provisions in 2025.

Right now, per child, when you get the tax credit per child, that is about \$753. That is going away. Remember, it is getting cut in half, so you are going to lose that.

Let's do the next one. Expiring 2025 tax provisions. What does this mean to someone that lives in my Congressional District?

Before we do this, I think I need to have a moment of honesty. I represent a fairly prosperous district. I represent an incredibly well-educated district.

I represent Phoenix, Scottsdale, Fountain Hills, Carefree, Cave Creek, town of Paradise Valley, north central Phoenix.

If you live in my district, you likely have a college degree or you work your heart out. It is an aspirational district.

I have to accept I am going to have higher numbers than a lot of the other districts in the Southwest.

Think about this, just the income tax provision.

We are not talking about all the other credits that are expiring, just the income tax increase for the average family, and, typically, we model this as a family of four. Your taxes are going up \$2,541.

If you live in the Phoenix/Scottsdale Congressional District 1 in Arizona, are you ready for \$2,541? The punch line even gets uglier. That is just on the income tax portion, not the tax credit portion.

We added it up and figured out if we remove all the tax credits and everything else that are expiring in the 2025 year, here is our grand total.

The average tax increase in Arizona's Congressional District 1—once again, I need to admit mine may be almost double some districts around the United States because it is a more prosperous district—is \$5,921.

Congratulations. This is what is coming at you next year. Top this on the 26 percent inflation that has been in my community.

You are getting your head kicked in next year. Start thinking about that is what this election is just in prosperity, just in opportunity, just in your ability to save for your retirement.

Someone like myself, I have young kids. Don't laugh at me. My wife is the same age as I am. We are incredibly blessed, and we have done okay in life.

We freak out on just trying to figure out how we set aside money for my retirement and their education. This isn't going to help. This is the current law. This is what is coming at you. Understand what is at stake.

I need you to see here is almost \$400 billion just after the expirations in new taxes coming in, over \$4.2 trillion over the 10 years.

In the same time, I have a society that is getting older very fast. I have a

government that is basically buying love from what the Democrats did here in the first 2 years of the Biden administration where they bought and were subsidizing businesses and all those things to a couple trillion dollars.

You stack that on top of each other, and you start to understand: How do we do this? What do we have to do policy wise so your taxes do not go up?

You keep the economy growing, and you don't grow the debt anymore. You see the puzzle that I am throwing at you?

We are going to make an argument, and I have been doing this slowly on the floor, trying to roll out this concept.

If you are going to think about the tax cut expirations, if you are going to think about it as binary, just think, well, just extend them.

Well, that is about a \$400 billion hit on projected borrowing. Come over here. Do you raise corporate taxes, because C corporations, their tax cuts are locked into the code. Well, you just slowed down the economy.

How about we do some other things? Instead of making it sort of binary about the tax code, why not change government? Why not make government dramatically less expensive?

We have done multiple presentations. I am going to do more in the coming weeks on revolutions you could have by adopting technology to reduce the cost of healthcare.

In the Joint Economic Committee, our economists on the Republican side are going to issue a report in the next couple weeks.

I am probably going to get my head kicked in, but we are going to walk through a series of things you can do to dramatically reduce the cost of healthcare.

Be prepared to see a number. We are not done with the final vetting on it. These are the things that are uncomfortable to talk about.

If diabetes is 33 percent of all healthcare spend and 31 percent of all Medicare spend, we have a country where our brothers and sisters are dying. This may be the fifth year in a row where prime age males have a shorter life.

Maybe the solution here is not only looking at the tax code but changing government, adopting technology so that government is smaller, changing healthcare where healthcare becomes about being healthy and dramatically reducing its cost substantially by legalizing technology. Then think about the tax code in a much more productive way.

□ 1730

How do you design a tax code? Do we have to do base broadening? Do we have to lower certain rates? Do we have to spread it out so you maximize economic growth? It is sort of the old Laffer Curve concept, but I need you to think about it on a grand scale.

Instead of this just being binary about taxes, I want you to demand that

the Members of Congress think about this in a fashion of what policies are you willing to do to lower the cost of government, so we have the ability to extend these tax cuts without raising the debt and deficits. That is the great puzzle that is coming. You have got to decide when you go vote how your vote is going to manage that.

Let's actually talk through some things that are worrisome right now. You have these tax expirations already coming. It is the law. Remember how the Biden administration has been touting: Look at this great economy. We spent all this money. We bought prosperity. They basically bought corporate America by handing out cash. Let's be honest.

It turns out we got the math wrong. It turns out when you look at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, we got another revision. I think it was yesterday or the day before. Turns out that real GDP growth for Nowcast wasn't 3 percent. It is down to 1.8. We are seeing a crashing back to where our expectation was of 1.8, 1.7 GDP growth.

You have got to understand that when the debt grows dramatically faster than the growth of your economy, that ratio of debt to the size of the economy starts to spread and it makes buying U.S. debt riskier, meaning we have to pay a premium. The United States is now number 14 on the credit stack, meaning there are 13 countries that have better credit. When they go sell a 10-year bond, their bonds are sold cheaper than ours. Greece today has a better credit stack than the United States. Part of that is governance. Part of it is all the other things that go into how the Moody's and the S&P's and those do.

Understand, until we can also demonstrate to the bond markets—you ask: Why is he talking about the bond markets? I think we borrowed like \$57 billion last week.

There is some good news. Our estimate that we would borrow \$2.8 trillion this fiscal year may be down to \$2.5 trillion. That is still almost double what we were predicting a year ago or a year-and-a-half ago.

Now, when you see the size of the economy starting to flatten out, is anyone other than myself getting nervous?

Let's dive into this. I would suggest to anyone who wants to geek out with me, there is an app. Go grab your phone. The Atlanta Fed has something called GDPNow. Others have Nowcast. They all model it differently. One looks at expected; one looks at actual data.

This is from the Atlanta Fed. I want you to notice something. The Atlanta Fed was way up here at 4 percent. You had the White House and you had the Democrats saying: Keynesian economics works. You can buy prosperity by borrowing stunning amounts of money.

Boom. That number is falling off the cliff. It turns out, at a certain point, the sugar high of spending—this is just

because I care about this, even if no one wants to hear it.

There is sort of this allocation theory. This is one of the splits between Republicans and Democrats. Every once in a while, you will hear Democrats say: Well, they believe in supply side. Understand what that means. If you give someone a tax break, the benefits of that go to where it gets the highest yield, the most productivity.

If you engage in the arrogance of saying: We are really smart. We are going to choose businesses which we are going to invest in, so we are going to invest in this solar technology even though 3 weeks later there is another breakthrough that doesn't get financed. The arrogance—oh, by the way, because we hand out checks, these people become friends with us politically. They even show up at the White House for nice cocktail parties and fundraisers.

This is what the Democrats did. They had the arrogance of deciding who would get the money on their Inflation Reduction Act, the most Orwellian-named bill in modern history, to things like the CHIPS and Science Act. It was sort of a designation of where the cash goes.

If you wake up the next day and there is a technology breakthrough, with that allocation theory—if you had done some of those same dollars in tax reform, the money goes to where it maximizes productivity, wage growth, and it becomes part of the base of the economy where it is the new cornerstone of the next generation of economic growth. This one buys you lots of political power. This one actually buys you the morality of prosperity.

You are starting to see it. Mark my word, watch the data coming in on GDP and the size of the economy. I am not terrified yet. I am not that worried yet, but the fact of the matter is, when you start to see numbers predicting—we went from 4 to almost 1.8 in a matter of weeks. Something's wrong out there.

What happens to that debt and deficit when we roll over economically? What would happen if we hit even a short-term recession?

This is one of the other great frauds around here. In my time here, I have never seen revisions in the economic data like we have been seeing these last several months, revisions where you get this great headline and everybody applauds: Keynesian economics managed the economy. Industrial planning, it works, you see here.

Then they don't mention that 6 weeks later those numbers are being revised way down because you have got your political pop already.

Some of the revisions of the fourth-quarter wage and salaries, we had to revise down again another \$73 billion. Some of this is from sampling errors, actually some there were complications. This isn't a conspiracy. It just turns out the economy is different today than it was before the pandemic,

a number of people work at home, this and that, the way we sample. We have to modernize our data.

It turns out, this may explain why tax receipts aren't where the size of the economy should be. At the same time, we are trying to figure out the growth of the debt and deficits when we keep being told how great the economy is. Now that it starts to roll over on us, we start to understand.

Just a couple of other geeky things. Over the past four quarters, the total public debt has grown by more than twice the growth of GDP. This is a weird slide. Let me explain.

Do not get it in your head that you can borrow at the rate of the growth of your economy. It doesn't work that way. If the economy grew \$1, you only get about 17 to 18 cents in tax receipts. This is historic. When we have had high marginal tax rates or low marginal tax rates, the United States gets about 17 to 18 percent of the economy. The secret is to grow the economy, grow the economy, grow the economy.

What happens when you know you are only going to get about 17 to 18 percent of that GDP growth in tax receipts when the debt grows twice as fast as size of the economy?

You hear the discussions of what happens when you are at 100 percent of debt to GDP. Understand, the way the Europeans do their calculations, it is all debt. The United States, if you do our gross debt, the borrowing from our trust funds, which we have to pay interest on and we have to pay it back, we are over 120 percent of debt to GDP. In one calculation, we are at 140 percent of debt to GDP.

If you do just borrowing from the public, which subjects you to the bond market being in charge of your government, we are just shy of 100 percent of debt to GDP. This number tells you it is moving away from us fast.

A bit of trivia. Mr. PERRY, you want to play?

You can just yell from there. I know it is a break of decorum, but we will have some fun.

If I came to you and said: What is the second biggest spend in government, what is it? The second biggest spend this fiscal year?

Mr. PERRY said the military. He is a general. Of course he is going to say that.

Turns out it is interest.

Remember, it is unfair to use Social Security, because Social Security operates on its own trust fund. It has its own tax stream and trust fund. As we saw in the Social Security actuary report, in about 9 or 10 years, the trust fund is empty and everyone gets a 21 percent cut, depending on if the economy is good or maybe larger.

Now, they have interest at \$1.144 trillion this fiscal year. My math is a little higher. I come in just around \$1.2 trillion.

Defense and Medicare are moving back and forth between who gets to be number three and who gets to be number four.

My friend from Texas, tell me you like this number. Isn't this terrifying?

Mr. ROY. Will the gentleman yield? Just making the Parliamentarian happy.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY) for the purposes of a colloquy.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, for everybody watching at home, Social Security is predominantly on autopilot, mandatory accounts.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Correct. You and I don't get to vote on it.

Mr. ROY. Interest is effectively on autopilot.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. You pay your obligations.

Mr. ROY. You don't want to default.

Now, you put defense over here as discretionary, although there are some issues in there in terms of some social spending. Call that discretionary. You have got Medicare, which is effectively mandatory. What you don't have on that chart is that obviously Medicare is growing and exploding, correct?

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Medicare spending, when I checked about 6 weeks ago, was already up 10 percent in spending this fiscal year.

Mr. ROY. Right, and it is going up in perpetuity.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Part of that is demographics.

Mr. ROY. We have got a bubble that is going to—

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Yes.

Mr. ROY. Also not on there are significant other mandatory things. For example, we have veteran spending. We just voted on MILCON-VA. We have veteran spending based on burn pits and stuff that is about a \$500 million or \$600 million mandatory account.

We have what we do with food stamps on the farm bill and other things that we categorize as mandatory but are a little bit more discretionary.

My point is—and I don't want to take the gentleman's time; I will yield back—that you are putting up there stuff that we pretty much have to pay.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back to the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Texas is my buddy. In some ways he is much more elegant with language. He has the misfortune of being a lawyer.

I show up at townhalls and things like that and they say it is defense spending. Then they don't believe you when you say, no, defense is either third or fourth. Actually, defense spending is what is in the Constitution.

We have to deal with the reality. This coming fiscal year, I calculate Social Security will be at \$1.480 trillion. The shortfall, just this fiscal year, is about \$340 billion in the Social Security tax that comes in and the spending is out the door. That is why you see them every month having to cash in their special Social Security Treasury bills. Let's just call it that.

Now, they get paid interest. Believe it or not, about 6 percent of the Social

Security budget is actually interest paid by the general fund. In some ways, over here we are borrowing money to pay back the interest on the borrowed money. You have got to see this weird washing machine that is going on.

Mr. ROY. Will the gentleman yield for one quick question?

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Roy) for the purposes of a colloquy.

Mr. ROY. Do our revenues for this year, FY24, cover what is on that chart?

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. No.

Now, it is a little more complicated than that because Social Security is on the FICA side. Interest is general fund. Defense is general fund. Medicare is a little tricky, because it is about—I have a chart here I wasn't going to use. Most people think Medicare is off the FICA tax. Only about a third of it is. That is the Medicare part A. That is the hospital portion. The other part comes out of some fees, and then the majority of it is right out of the general fund.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, my main point for the average user is that the revenues we bring in from general taxes, corporate taxes, FICA taxes, the chart that the gentleman was just showing, does not cover even all of what the gentleman just put forward, much less the remainder of the government, the remainder of the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI.

□ 1745

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. You said this, and I actually stole it from you months ago, Mr. ROY. Every dime we as Members of Congress vote on is borrowed money.

Every dime we vote on is borrowed money, and if you actually sort of work it out on the annual, all defense is borrowed, all nondefense discretionary is borrowed, and about one-third of Medicare is on borrowed money.

Most people can't get their heads around the fact that everything we vote on is borrowed money, and over here, it is on autopilot.

I have been trying to make the moral argument of what is doable. I believe we could crash the price of healthcare. I believe we could dramatically shrink government.

We had a hearing on artificial intelligence over in the Senate with the Joint Economic Committee. We had a couple of experts saying: You realize you could get rid of all these employees and do all this stuff with crowdsourcing and this and that. You could revolutionize the size and cost of this government tomorrow if we would legalize the technology and use it.

You have to deal with the army of lobbyists and the army of people from bureaucracies who will knife us for just actually saying that.

Mr. ROY. I don't want to take up the gentleman's time, although I have time

on the back end, and we are happy to bleed them together, but I would just add to the gentleman's point.

We have to address the drivers that the gentleman comes down and talks about every week for the most part and comes down with regularity that get to the heart of those numbers.

We look at it like some monolithic amount that we can't address when, in fact, if you drive the price of healthcare down through the innovations the gentleman talks about, through cures, competition, and the things that we know we could do, you could massively reduce that Medicare burden, reduce interest, and deal with a lot of the expenses. Then, as we grow our economy, we get ourselves into a good place.

Does the gentleman agree?

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. The running joke in our office, and this is one of our tests for the interns—you are going to be tested on this later: What is your government? In one sentence, describe it. It is an insurance company with an army.

Mr. ROY. Correct.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. It really is the vast majority of the money.

Now, it is earned benefits. You earned it. We just don't have the money for it. I am going to light myself on fire. I am going to go out of order.

Mr. PERRY. If the gentleman would yield?

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. The gentleman may want to leave before I do this chart because this chart really upsets people.

Mr. PERRY. I don't know if you talked about disability, where we have gotten the money for the increase in disability, how we are making up for that, what the growth of that number looks like, and what the plan for the future is.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. It is more complicated, and I have to do about a half-hour presentation to talk about it because it is more than just the disability payments that are part of Social Security and SSI.

Mr. PERRY. Where do we get that money?

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. That is coming out of part of the FICA tax, but it is the labor force participation. When you create incentives in society not to be part of society, then you lose all sorts of things.

Let's do this slightly out of order. I was going to do this slide to talk about the scale of what you and I have to deal with.

What happens in society when you functionally finance people being sick?

Let's be brutal. We should do some fairly revolutionary things in the farm bill because we give people money to buy onion rings. I would say that is immoral when obesity is almost one-half of healthcare costs.

I have a slide that shows the Milken Institute study from a couple of years ago. It is 40 percent of all healthcare spending in the country. We are dying.

Then, we have this other issue that we are not having children. This last year, fertility rates in the United States collapsed to 1.62, meaning France has more children than we do.

You tell me how we finance things like Social Security, Medicare, and these things, which are pay-as-you-go. Today's taxpayers are sort of paying the benefits of today's retirees, which is the way it was designed because we always expect population stability.

In 15 years, this country has more deaths than births. We are having the fifth year in a row where prime-age males are dying younger. A child born today, particularly a male child born today, is estimated to have a shorter life expectancy than you and I.

There is something incredibly immoral happening, and I would say it is our own policies. We have incentivized leaving the workforce. We have financed unhealthy living. We do a number of things where we have indemnified being alive, healthy, and part of society.

It is immoral what we have done under policy, and most of the policies have been brought to us by that side. We make the sin of continuing it.

Here is the punch line. This punch line is really uncomfortable, and you may want to run away from me because I am an idiot willing to tell the truth.

The average family is going to get back Social Security money and about a \$72,000 spiff for the average couple, which is a crack rate of return. Most people don't realize that your Social Security payment is actually progressive. If you were at the lower end, you get a decent rate of return. If you are at the higher end, you actually get a substantially negative rate of return.

For every dollar you paid when you paid your FICA taxes for Medicare, we now calculate you get \$5 to \$6 back. This right here and the financing costs to that is the primary driver of U.S. debt.

I have been booed. I have had someone throw something at me. I have had a woman stand on her chair and scream at me that she wants every dime. It is fine. It is an earned benefit. You earned it.

My argument is that we need to think more like revolutionaries. Legalize the technology. Do the financing of the cures, the very things where we could crash the price of healthcare and have a healthier and more moral society, maybe with family formation, maybe where young working men aren't dying younger, maybe where obesity isn't killing off substantial portions of society.

It is moral, and I need us to think much more because complex problems, the terrible things, often require complex solutions, and I don't know if this place is capable of thinking of complexities.

Mr. ROY. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. ROY. Would the gentleman agree that the fundamental obstacle to achieving what the gentleman just outlined is that it has a lot of complexities in it?

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Yes, but we have a plan. We have a plan.

Mr. ROY. We will go through committees, figure out the work. It is tough work. We will do it.

Would the gentleman agree the primary obstacle to that is, and I am going to use this term broadly, the buildup—the gentleman referenced K Street and the army of lobbyists—the sort of corporatization of all things that we do, meaning healthcare is driven predominantly by the massive corporations—pharmaceutical, hospitals, pharma. My life got saved by great innovation in pharmaceuticals when I had cancer. I am for it.

But the corporatization, the corporate cronyism, the extent you have these massive entities, including, by the way, those that are driving our food supply, all the regulations prohibiting small farms and small meatpacking plants to ship the stuff to have local produce and local foods so that you can eat healthy. It is the massive corporate interests that come here lobbying for benefits and tax breaks that, by the way, are going to be front and center among Republicans when everyone says that we must go back and put in place all the tax benefits, which some are good, as I was talking about earlier.

Does the gentleman agree that some of these are part of the problem?

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. This is probably going to be the first time you have ever heard this, CHIP. I don't think you are cynical enough. That is actually very funny for those of us who know CHIP.

We have actually created a motto in our office: Money, power, vanity, but most of the time, it is about the money.

I would argue that Congress has become substantially a protection racket. We protect incumbent bureaucracies and incumbent business models. When someone comes to us and says: Hey, I have this thing you can blow into and, boom, it will tell you that you have the flu, and it can bounce off your medical records and order your antivirals that Lyft can drop off in 2 hours. That technology exists. We will find a way to make that illegal. We will make it so you can't be reimbursed. It will be illegal for an algorithm to write a prescription—those sorts of things.

There is a revolution of technology around us where we can make our lives so much easier. You and your family can have more time, and we can crash the debt and deficit, and young people don't have to live poorer than their parents because that is what the math says.

This will be the first generation coming up right now that will be economically more disadvantaged than their parents. That is immoral, and we can

stop it, but we have to think disruptively.

Maybe I am a little bit of a utopian on some of this stuff. The Democrats, all their taxes, you get about 1.5 percent of GDP when you do economic effects. I have offered some pretty brutal amendments here, which are never going to pass, on cutting spending and nondefense discretionary. If you let me have everything, I can get 1 percent of nondefense discretionary, 2½ percent.

The runway rate this year, I think it is going to go down near the ending of the last quarter of this year, but we are burning 8, 9 percent of GDP in borrowing.

Here is my problem: If you are borrowing about 8 percent of GDP and everyone's proposal, because this is our campaign talking points, is down here, we have to revolutionize policy.

There is our problem because there will be an army of people in the hallways here really cranky at us because we are forcing them to compete, have a vibrant economy, and bring technology, disruption, and productivity to market.

It means they have to change their business models. The bureaucracies have to actually be, in many ways, replaced with technology.

Mr. PERRY. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. PERRY. Are you talking about, to be clear, crashing the cost of healthcare?

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. And government.

Mr. PERRY. You are talking about bringing down substantially, almost cataclysmically—

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. No, no, no. Don't use a word like that. Just morally. Morally.

Mr. PERRY. That is fine, but substantially, the magnitude. That money is going somewhere right now.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Yes.

Mr. PERRY. Wherever that is going, those folks want that money.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Of course. How much of that is on borrowed money right now?

Mr. PERRY. It is all borrowed money.

So who is going to be unhappy if we do that?

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Oddly enough, I get this crazy thing where I will get business models that are built on today's way of healthcare reimbursement, which need sick people to exist. They will come in and say: Okay, I am wearing two hats. For my business, I need to stop you, SCHWEIKERT.

It is like the fights we had here on telehealth and digital medicine, those things. They fought like crazy to stop that, and then, in the next sentence as they are walking out the door, they are saying: But we want it for our family. We want the technology. We want the time. We want to be healthier. We want this.

That is actually why I am hoping at some point the morality of what people would want for themselves and their families, they will see actually it is good business, moral, and really important for the future survival of this Republic.

Mr. PERRY. I am not going to hold my breath.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. You have to keep trying. My argument is that there is a path.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate you tolerating us, but there is a path where you can make this math work. The problem is it is going to be hard. There are going to be people who are upset because you are making them rethink how they do their business. You are going to make bureaucrats either rebuild their bureaucratic model or actually go find a job in the private sector, but we don't have a choice.

Be prepared. There is a way to save us. One of our economists has played some math games, and the theory is depending on where interest rates are at, because functionally the bond market is getting close to running this country, depending on where interest rates are, you may have 3, 5 years, could be longer, where a movement in the bond market starts to consume all your variability.

At that point, it is almost too late to do major policy. At that point, you are doing policy to pacify those whom you are trying to sell your debt to.

□ 1800

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. This election you just saw, you have the prosperity of your family and the tax code, but you have an opportunity to use that stressor.

Mr. ROY, this is actually where my punch line at the end was going to be: Are we nimble enough to use the stressor of the expiring tax provisions to get us to think about things we could do to change the cost of government because it is like the debt ceiling around here and other things? Without those and without a stressor on this place, this place will not do anything that is hard.

Let's think creatively. Let's do quality math. Let's be hopeful, but let's demand that the public understand the scale of the problem and that there is hope. It just is that hope isn't perpetual. We may only have a few more years, and then the revolution is too late to be able to make the difference.

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

#### CRISIS AT THE BORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Roy) for 30 minutes.

Mr. ROY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT), my colleague and friend, for his steadfast dedication to ensuring

the American people are informed, at least the 72 people that were watching C-SPAN while you were extemporaneously educating them.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. My own family doesn't watch.

Mr. ROY. In all seriousness, we were able to push this out. We were able to do clips. It is important that we continue to have this conversation.

The gentleman is correct, in very broad terms and very specific terms, about the extent to which we have a fiscal crisis looming. It is incumbent upon this body to do something about it.

We have structural reforms we could put in place that the gentleman is talking about. I think we just covered that quite nicely, but we also need to be aware of what we need to do with our discretionary spending and using the power of the purse, both to constrain the bureaucracy that is still a third of that annual spending and constrain that spending also for the purpose of limiting tyranny over the American people.

This is one of those things that frustrates me among my colleagues, both Democrat and Republican. The gentleman from Arizona is not in that group, by the way, because the gentleman from Arizona, I think, largely would agree with what I am getting at here. I have colleagues who will always slip into saying: It doesn't matter. Stop worrying about discretionary. Stop having a fight about \$100 billion or \$30 billion or whatever your debate is about constraining discretionary spending.

When I say that to the average listener, what I mean is what we spend every year on the stuff you see in the bureaucracy, such as the Department of Justice, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Defense, all of those things that make up the alphabet soup of government that, frankly, are the things impacting your life every day, or undermining, frankly, your freedoms every day.

The thing that drives me crazy in this town is you will hear Members of Congress who come down here and they say: Chip, we have a razor-thin majority. Don't you understand? Chip, it is all mandatory spending. You don't have to focus on this \$100 billion. We are talking about \$35 trillion in debt.

That happens all the time. I assume the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY) would agree with me. I assume, in his career, since he has been here a few years longer than I have, that we hear that as an excuse for ignoring our job to constrain the bureaucracy, using the power of the purse, almost every single day that we come down here to the floor, when we are in committee or in our conference meetings. I assume the gentleman agrees with me on that point.

Mr. PERRY. Of course I do. We have fought bitterly. I mean, even if you just look at the last few years here

since the pandemic, the pandemic was unexpected, decisions were made, and in hindsight we obviously made some wrong choices.

Be that as it may, it was expensive. People were out of work. The government forced them out of work, forced them to close their businesses. It was only right, since the government had the authority and the power to do that, to make them as whole as possible.

Now, we can debate that as long as we want to, but subsequent to the end of the pandemic, it should have been reasonable for the people in this room on either side of the aisle to say: Well, let's just reset back to prepandemic.

Believe it or not, at that time, if we had just gone back to that number, the budget would have balanced.

Mr. ROY. You are quite right.

Mr. PERRY. We would actually have taken in enough revenue to pay for the things that we were buying, but a substantial portion of this body, unfortunately, my friends, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, said: No, no, no. We are going to keep spending now at the pandemic level even though the pandemic is over.

Mr. ROY. The gentleman is correct. I think that is one of the things I want to stress. I came down here not to talk about spending. However, on the heels of our friend from Arizona, I want to make the point and then pivot to what I think is important to talk about. I am sure the gentleman will agree.

In the context, it matters, right? What we fund matters. We are funding the Department of Homeland Security and for them to utterly fail to secure the homeland and endanger our own people and empower migrants to be able to actually flood in and get dumped into the United States, including the individual who was paroled into the United States and killed Laken Riley, including individuals who were dumped into the United States and shot those two police officers in New York just last week, including the individual who killed a woman named Lizbeth Medina in my own State—killed her, and her mom found her in the bathtub when she was supposed to be cheerleading on the streets. I can give example after example. We are funding that. We are funding the DHS that does that.

We are funding the FBI that has been politicized against the former President, against our own people, like Scott Smith and Mark Houck and other people around the country. We are politicizing the FBI and the Department of Justice that is using the FACE Act to put a 75-year-old woman in jail for 2 years for praying at an abortion facility.

You are paying for that, ladies and gentlemen. You, the American taxpayer, are paying for that, and guess what? With all due respect to my Republican colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans are funding it.

They are funding it, and they come down and they say: Well, we have a duty to do that.

Our Democratic colleagues will say: We must do all these things. You are politicizing this. You are making it this way.

My Republican colleagues will say: Well, CHIP, of course, we would like to do that. Of course, we would like to fix it, but you don't understand. You can't do math. We have a razor-thin majority. We can't possibly get it done.

By the way, when did they ever talk about the razor-thin majority in the Senate, which exists?

Mr. PERRY. Right. It does.

Mr. ROY. One last point. Has my friend from Pennsylvania heard the same issues? I won't say who, but I have already heard very important Members of this body, in terms of their rank and committee, already talking about the fact that, no matter what happens in November, if we win the White House and President Trump is in the White House and if we win the House of Representatives, even grow our majority, and if we win back the Senate and have a majority of two, three, or four, depending on how you go look at the scoreboard, that we will not have 60 votes.

We are told: Unless you can do something on reconciliation, which is a maneuver—for all you Americans out there—to find a way to bend around the 60-vote threshold in the Senate, well, then you are just stuck. We are sorry. You just have to accept it, CHIP.

Does the gentleman hear that all the time, and has he already heard Members already setting the stage for January to say: We can't do the things that we said we would do?

Mr. PERRY. Of course, I have heard it. I have heard it ever since I have been here. There is always some reason: We have a slim majority. We don't have a majority at all. We don't have 60. We don't have the Presidency. We have this House, not that body. It is the courts. There is always some reason to say we can't do it.

I was in a committee hearing today talking about waste and abuse on foreign affairs. I found out that we send money to Nepal to support atheism. We send some of your money to Nepal, which is a highly religious society, to support atheism.

What I am told is: Well, not all bills are perfect. Nobody agrees with that, but we had to get the bill passed.

Well, somebody agreed with it. It ended up in there.

Mr. ROY. Right.

Mr. PERRY. Somebody wanted that, so I am supposed to go along with that. The people that I represent that wake up early in the morning and go to work and pay their taxes, their money is going for that when they can't afford their electricity bill, their food bill, or their daycare bill. It is insane.

This whole thing about a wide-open border, not only can they not afford to pay the bills, but their kids can't even get jobs now coming out of high school because they are competing with people who are here illegally who will take

those jobs where you start out, where the only skill you have, Mr. ROY, is, I can show up on time with a good attitude. That is the skill I had when I was 13 or 14 years old, right? That is the skill I had when I started.

You start out doing things that maybe a lot of people don't want to do, but now there are other people in this country with a work permit. Your kids can't even get started anymore. That is the insult upon injury.

You are being taxed out of your homes. You can't afford your bills. Other people are taking your work. You are being told to sit down and shut up and just take it, whether you are in Congress or, Heaven forbid, you are at home and you are watching on TV and you are saying: What do I do about any of this? I told my Representative, and they said they can't stop it.

Mr. ROY. In the meantime, I want to pivot to the border point you just raised, but I would like to make the point. We are funding all those rules and the requirements that are driving the American family out of the ability to afford a life.

Just today, I had a crack in my windshield, and I was just there at the dealer's getting it looked at and getting it worked on. We couldn't go do a non-dealer part for reasons I won't get into. It was \$1,100 for a windshield. They used to be 200 bucks. You would call Safelite or somebody to come out, and they would replace the glass. Now they say: Well, you can't just replace the glass because it has all these sensors in the windshield.

Mr. PERRY. Mandated by the government.

Mr. ROY. Right. Guess what? Now, increasingly, all of these things are mandated by the idiots in this Chamber.

Mr. PERRY. Like the kill switch.

Mr. ROY. Right. The idiots in this Chamber voted to cause that to happen and back up what the regulators down the street are forcing on the average American.

Here is what I don't get, right? All my colleagues here, if I forced my colleagues, one by one, to go down to the microphone on any one of these issues and explain to their constituents: I am going to vote—as some Republicans did last fall—I am going to vote against eliminating a kill switch in a car, which is going to dramatically increase the cost of that car, dramatically increase the cost of that windshield, dramatically increase the chance that that car is going to shut down in the 20-below-zero cold in North Dakota and leave you on the side of the road because you have a computer determining whether you can start the car, if I made every Member go defend that, they would start to think twice about it because that is a hard thing to defend.

However, they didn't want to vote against it because MADD came around and lobbied for it. They didn't want to be against that, so 19 Republicans say:

No. Sorry. I can't vote against killing the kill switch.

If you put it out there and start really telling the American people: Hey, should we have something in there that protects people from drunk driving, they will say: Well, I guess so.

What if that would cost you another \$10,000 for the car?

They would say: Are you out of your freaking mind?

However, we do it, and we do it for the same reason Mr. SCHWEIKERT was talking about why our healthcare costs are high. It is because there is an army of lobbyists in town, or there is an army of people who are going to go out and say certain things. The one thing Mr. SCHWEIKERT said, when he talked about how we are going to make sure that we are protecting incumbents, he didn't mention about protecting the incumbency of the people in this room, people who hold onto their election certificate like it is the most important damned thing they will ever have in their life, instead of the opportunity to come here and do what we said we would do.

Does the gentleman agree?

Mr. PERRY. I do agree. I do agree with that completely. Protecting that, and, of course, what we are seeing right now is the protection or the attempted protection of that at the Presidential level.

For 3½ years, I have watched the President say: I can't do anything about a wide-open border. I can't take any action. There is nothing I can do. It must come from the legislature.

Yet, somehow, now that all the polls have turned around and it looks ominous in 5 months, somehow, he found the wherewithal to say: Well, shazam, I can take executive action.

Who knew? Well, the American people knew because, before he got there, executive action was taken, and the border was relatively secure, much more secure than it is now.

For 3½ years, it has been wide open, and, essentially, our President just acknowledged what we all knew, that this has been meaningful. This has been by design, the wide-open border has been intentional, and he could have done something about it, but he chose not to until he had no other choice politically.

Even at that, I am sure that my good friend from Texas, who is on the front lines in Texas, is going to talk about the provisions of this. The one I find interesting, we are going to stop these people coming in once we hit the threshold unless they are minors, unaccompanied children. Unless they are minors, unaccompanied children, we are going to let—so we are going to allow the sex trafficking of children to continue, even as we know that our Federal Government has lost track of literally tens of thousands of children illegally in our country, unaccompanied.

Mr. ROY. There were 85,000 documented in one case, for sure.

Mr. PERRY. Yes, 85,000. Right. Yeah.

Mr. ROY. And I am glad the gentleman brings this issue up because I would note that, today, while I was sitting in the House Judiciary Committee with the gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY)—who just came in to join us, who is going to take the microphone, I am sure, in a little bit—we had the Attorney General before us. We were questioning the Attorney General in the House Judiciary Committee.

In that exchange, I was asking the Attorney General about the extent to which he believes that it is wrong for Texas to have passed what we call SB4 in Texas to empower Texans to do the job of stopping people from being released into the United States, contrary to law, and endangering the people of Texas that has led directly to the death of Texans, does he believe, as the Attorney General of the United States, that it is wrong for Texas to do that?

The reason I asked him that question is because, as the Attorney General of the United States, he is, of course, leading litigation to stop us. He is suing Texas, taking us to court to try to prevent us from doing it because of the Supremacy Clause. The Federal Government is supposed to do this, and you don't have a say.

Well, hold on a second. If the Federal Government is supposed to secure the border of the United States and manage this inflow of people and it is violating the laws and dumping people into the United States, are we saying that the people of Texas can't, under the invasion clause or otherwise, say: It is our duty as the people of Texas to protect our citizens and our people?

□ 1815

The Attorney General, of course, said no. He has got to take us to court and go sue us. The fact is he is, therefore, ignoring—

Mr. PERRY. When is the invasion clause operable then?

Mr. ROY. I think he would say it is not.

Mr. PERRY. When is it? Never?

Mr. ROY. I think he would say if you have got a literal army of people coming across the river, I suppose. I think they would probably fight us on that.

Mr. PERRY. If you came across with a gun and you were wearing a uniform with your name on it, that is an invasion. If you don't have a gun and you don't have a uniform, no matter what your intentions are or the scale, that is not an invasion.

Mr. ROY. I am not sure that they have stipulated the former, but they certainly want to try to stop us from identifying and recognizing the latter. The reality is that the people of Texas are fed up and they are asking their leaders to do the job the Federal Government won't do.

I will compliment Republicans. I am not afraid to criticize both Republicans or Democrats. I will compliment Republicans for having done a year ago what we have never done, which is set

aside the absurdity of saying you have got to do amnesty and setting aside the absurdity of saying you have got to open the floodgates to more people coming into the country, even though we allow about a million people a year to come in.

Mr. PERRY. Legally.

Mr. ROY. Legally.

Even though we have 51.5 million people in the United States who are foreign-born. You have the Chamber of Commerce and all of the big interests coming down here saying: You guys have got to open up more immigration. You have to do it.

We always bow down. We always say: Okay, we will do that. We will do amnesty, but can we just get some security? We beg for crumbs.

A year ago, we did something different. We came together as Republicans, and we passed the most comprehensive and strongest border security bill we have ever passed.

Frankly, I don't think my colleagues fully understand the historical importance of that, even many who support it and talk about it and tweet about it.

I have been here in some various forms, now 5 years as Member of Congress. I was here as chief of staff for Senator TED CRUZ. I was on the Senate Judiciary Committee as a lawyer. I watched the debates and the failures and the Gangs of Eight and all of the machinations. I watched in 2017 when we had two different bills, so-called Goodlatte 1, Goodlatte 2. We left President Trump stranded. We blew it.

Last year, we came together, we set the terms of what we will now do next year. That matters.

When Republicans unite to achieve something, not unity for the sake of it. I get so tired of hearing my colleagues talk about unity. I say something like: To do what?

It doesn't matter. We have just got to unite. To do what? Right?

When we unite to say we are going to stand up and say we are going to secure the border of the United States, we did it. We didn't always agree, by the way. People swept aside our differences of opinion a year ago.

We fought through it. We met, we worked, and we passed the best border security bill we have ever passed. The Senate has sat on it. They tried to pass a sham bill, which the President today went to the microphone and gave up the game. Remember the Senate bill? The Senate bill said: Oh, don't worry, guys. We are going to cap the flow at 5,000.

Mr. PERRY. A day.

Mr. ROY. A day. Which, by the way, Obama's Secretary of Homeland Security, Jeh Johnson, said a thousand a day was basically a crisis.

We are going to cap it at 5,000 a day, rest easy, but we are going to have all these exceptions. We are going to have exceptions for unaccompanied children; exceptions for parolees when we are violently just dumping people into the United States under parole; exceptions

for foreign nationals who use the CBP One app, which is another version of parole.

We objected. All the Democrats said: You guys are not doing this bipartisan bill.

Guess what the President did today? He went to the microphone, and he looked at America and he said: "We need to regain control of the border."

The President of the United States today acknowledged to everybody watching and to every American that we do not have control of the border. That is what the President did today.

The President also went to the microphone today and said: "I will cap it at 2,500." If the President of the United States has the authority today to issue an order to cap it at 2,500, did he not have that authority 2 months ago or 6 months ago or 2 years ago or 3½ years ago? Of course, he did. That gives up the game on the Senate bill when they said they would cap it at 5,000 and the President comes in 3 months later, why?

It is because he is looking at the polls and he is looking at his butt getting kicked and he is looking at losing the House and the Senate. Now, he is, like, oh, crap. I have got to do something to actually look like I care about the border when everybody in America knows I don't.

Madam Speaker, so he did it. He went to the microphone, and he said it and he made a joke of the Senate bill that all of those Senate Democrats and all of our Democratic colleagues have been lying to the American people that we have been obstructing good bills when they are the ones that put forward a sham bill and the President made it clear today.

Does the gentleman agree?

Mr. PERRY. I agree completely. The historical perspective of what we accomplished in the House over a year ago now with the most righteous border security bill ever to pass out of the House is to give Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate the alternative, so when the President says: Well, you haven't done anything over there. You haven't passed anything, and you won't pass the bipartisan bill.

Madam Speaker, it doesn't matter. I mean, it is awesome when it can be bipartisan, but what is more awesome is when it can be correct, when it actually is the solution to the problem.

The Senate bill, the so-called border protection bill that allows 5,000 people every single day to hemorrhage across our border illegally, is not a solution. It is not a solution to an open border. It is just a codification of an open border.

The fact that some of my friends on the other side of the aisle didn't want to vote in favor of securing the border shouldn't be a reason for the President to say: You haven't done anything.

We get that he doesn't like it. He doesn't like it because it actually would have secured the border. That

goes to the point. It was always his intention. It has always been his intention. It has always been the intention of my friends on the other side of the aisle to leave the border wide-open as long as they possibly could and get away with it. The only reason it is changing now is because the polls reflect that the American people are, number one, sick of it; and, number two, know they are being lied to and know that the President has the authority and the ability to secure the border.

Mr. ROY. I will ask the gentleman a quick question, then I will leave both of us a little time at the end. We have got about 9 minutes left.

I will give a chance for us to talk about June 6, which is coming up in a couple days. I want to ask one thing today, in that we just talked about the border. We just talked about the extent to which they are wide-open, being ignored, endangering the American people. It is purposeful.

We just talked about the attorney general suing to get in front of Texas trying to secure our borders. I just want to point out the extent to which the current administration is defying and undermining the rule of law on a daily basis.

As we sit here in this Chamber and we sit here under Moses and we sit here in recognition of the importance of the rule of law, this administration is at war with the rule of law: the borders are open, ignoring the law; student loan repayments, ignoring the Supreme Court and the law to try to buy votes. You have got wide-open streets and criminals on the streets, and we are not prosecuting crimes that we need to prosecute.

More importantly, you have an administration hell-bent on trying to use the political apparatus to target a former President and to use it in direct violation of everything we understand and know about the importance of blind justice. You cannot get away from that reality.

Today, we have an attorney general who is choosing to target one President and say: I am going to charge you with a crime. Right? And then choosing not to charge the other President for basically the same crime with the classified record stuff. You have got the Attorney General of the United States saying, I am not going to turn over audio of the very rationale for why Special Counsel Hur said: No, we shouldn't go after the current President because, frankly, he is not mentally able to do it, and he will be a sympathetic figure.

They don't want to turn over the audio, even though it is the same material, and the attorney general testified to that today.

That is an abomination to the rule of law that you have got the New York prosecutor in complete and obvious coordination with the attorney general, where the deputy to the number three goes up and works with the D.A. in

New York and they prosecute the former President of the United States.

They prosecute him on a State law charge, but then they bastardize and shoehorn in a Federal charge they won't even define. Then they use that to run through multiple charges that most observers say may not even get through the State system without their supreme court in New York throwing it out.

We have got 6 minutes. I will get to this other issue.

Does the gentleman see the problem with what is happening to the rule of law, the very foundation that causes migrants to want to come here and the strength of this economy and this country?

Mr. PERRY. I do, and I lament this. I say this often. The gentleman from Texas has heard me say that this is the Constitution of the United States of America, Madam Speaker.

It is a quick read. You can probably read that in less than an hour. Everybody can see it is a piece of paper. It cannot defend itself.

Mr. ROY. Correct.

Mr. PERRY. There it is, laying on the desk. This is the owner's manual. This is the operator's manual. This is the set of instructions for running your country. We all take an oath to follow this thing. However, if you are not going to, if you choose not to, this Constitution can do nothing about it. It can do nothing.

It takes people of integrity. People that are willing to sacrifice their own personal viewpoints on occasion or what I call the avarice of man, their own personal greed; the things that they want for the sake of this. When people refuse to do this, refuse to do that, and just use the awesome authority granted to them in a position whether it is electoral or otherwise in places like the Department of Justice, well, that is what we have today.

That is what we have today, which is a Soviet-style show trial to go after your political rivals. This is the thing of dictators and tyrants.

One of the practitioners I saw this week before I came in said: It is crazy. It is crazy. I said: It is not crazy; it is tyranny. It is tyranny.

Mr. ROY. I assume the gentleman would agree with me—and I am going to switch topics, but it is a transition that makes it more meaningful—that when the boys walked into the wall of bullets that they walked into at Normandy in 1944 that they weren't doing it to toss aside the rule of law and the Constitution, all that this country stands for.

I have chosen not to go to Normandy and to make the trip. I didn't wear the uniform. I want to leave it to those who did. Some who wore the uniform aren't going. I want the gentleman to comment on this as he has served for almost three decades or something along those lines in the United States Armed Forces—just so everybody knows, today is June 4.

In 2 days, it will be 80 years since those men got in those boats, jumped out into the stormy seas, ran on to the sand, ran into a wall of bullets, went up the cliffs, and then went all the way to Bastogne, to Germany, went through all of what they went through, this is the message from General Eisenhower on the order of June 6, 1944:

“Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

“You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hope and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

“Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

“But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!

“I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!

“Good luck! And let us beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.”

Those words speak for themselves. We honor and tribute those who lost their lives, those who fought, those who came home, those few World War II veterans who remain with us.

I will turn over the remaining 1½ minutes to my friend who wore the uniform that I did not wear.

Mr. PERRY. No words that we can use today can adequately honor the sacrifices of those who gave the last full measure and signed up to do it. There is just no way you can describe what they endured and what they knew they were going to endure.

Many of them never made it off the beach. Many of them never made it out of the boat. So many of them even joined up and lied about their age so they could go fight for what they believed in: this country, this idea.

□ 1830

The idea is that everybody is equal under the law, that no one person is more important than another person, that you can make decisions for your life based on what you want to do. You

can buy the gas stove that you want or not buy any stove at all. You can buy a car with a windshield sensor in it or no windshield sensor in it.

Madam Speaker, they didn't give their lives for this government that we have now that bankrupts families, that puts the fear of the government in them if they say something, that they are going to be hauled off to jail in the middle of the night or be drawn out on the lawn in their shorts in the wee hours of the morning. Yet, that is what we have right now.

Madam Speaker, we need to honor the commitment they made for the country that they loved that existed then. That is the best thing we could do.

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

#### SOUNDING ALARMS ABOUT AI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY) for 30 minutes.

Mr. KILEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to sound the alarm again about the rapidly advancing capabilities of artificial intelligence systems.

I will say at the outset that while in a sense this is alarming, it is also incredibly exciting. The level of innovation and the expansion capabilities that we are seeing hold the promise of making life better in countless ways for people across the country and around the world.

Yet, at the same time, the pace at which these capabilities are growing has unpredictable risks, as well. We are seeing more and more people who work at or have worked at the leading AI companies who are starting to sound this alarm, as well.

Today, we got a letter from employees of OpenAI, former employees and other researchers. This is according to WIRED reporting. A group of current and former OpenAI employees have issued a public letter warning that the company and its rivals are building artificial intelligence with undue risk, without sufficient oversight, and while muzzling employees who might witness irresponsible activities.

These risks, the letter says, range from the further entrenchment of existing inequalities to manipulation and misinformation and to the loss of control of autonomous AI systems.

As long as there is no effective government oversight of these corporations, the letter says, current and former employees are among the few people who can hold them accountable.

What the authors of this letter are calling for is protection for whistleblowers at the companies who bring to light information about what might be going on there that could be of public concern.

Now, there might, perhaps, be some role for us here when it comes to the question of protecting whistleblowers,

but I think there are a couple of other actionable steps that we can take to try to give a greater level of attention and scrutiny to a topic that truly merits it.

I will also say that I am quite skeptical of efforts that we see in several States now to try to regulate this innovation in a way that just stops it in its tracks. I think that the measures that I have seen are rather crude in their formulation and probably wouldn't work. If they did work, they would deprive us of innumerable potential benefits.

What we can do is try to find ways of promoting much greater transparency as far as what is going on at these leading companies so that we all can become more aware of the potential for new capabilities to emerge or for what those capabilities are when they do emerge in the lab.

I think it is worth exploring what sort of reporting and dialogue avenues we might be able to put in place, as well as using our ability to provide transparency and encourage public debate here through, for example, holding hearings on what is going on at some of these leading companies or on questions such as whether AGI, known as artificial general intelligence, is something that might be just around the corner and what the implications of that will be.

I think that given the profound ways in which this technology is already changing the world, and is very likely to do so at a whole other level in the not too distant future, we need to have as many voices as possible participating in these very urgent questions as to how we ensure that this technology continues to benefit humanity and how we can collectively control the risks in a way that is consistent with our values.

The final thing that I think we could do right now to really have a positive impact is to promote basic research or cutting-edge research when it comes to AI safety and alignment issues.

Today, one of the employees who left OpenAI made a statement saying: "These systems are not ordinary software. They are artificial neural nets that learn from massive amounts of data. There is a rapidly growing scientific literature on interpretability, alignment, and control, but these fields are still in their infancy."

There is a growing scientific literature on these fields of interpretability, alignment, and control, but they are still in infancy. What we need to do is try to propel that field into full maturity as quickly as possible because the pace of innovation is truly breathtaking right now as models are being scaled up and new capabilities are emerging. We need to do everything we can to encourage research that can be helpful in mitigating the risks as those capabilities continue to grow.

That is something we can do here. I have introduced a bill to do just that.

It would provide grants for AI safety research as well as some reporting back from those who receive the grants.

A fundamental function of government is to catalyze research in areas where there might not be a commercial incentive. That is, perhaps, the most important thing that we could do now to try to prepare us for the future ahead and to ensure that we maximize the benefits while minimizing the risks.

#### FUNDING CALIFORNIA'S HIGH-SPEED RAIL PROJECT

Mr. KILEY. Madam Speaker, I stand in strong support of the House Transportation Committee's investigation into California's so-called high-speed rail project.

This project has truly been a disappointment of historic proportions. It has now tripled in cost to \$128 billion with little more to show for it after 15 years than one bridge to nowhere that was recently unveiled.

The House Transportation Committee, in addition to its Senate counterpart, is demanding documents on the Biden administration's decision to allocate substantial Federal taxpayer dollars to this highly questionable endeavor when there is no reasonable path forward for successful completion.

In fact, a New York Times expose found the train is not even on track to be completed this century. A lead operator several years ago abandoned the project to build in North Africa where it was "less politically dysfunctional" than California. That operator, by the way, brought a high-speed train online in Morocco in 2018.

The letter from Chairman GRAVES and Senator CRUZ goes into some detail about the problems that have beleaguered the California High-Speed Rail Authority, CHSRA. It says: "Despite California's reputation as a high-tax State, the high-speed rail project far exceeds the State's ability to finance the project, and it is now seeking Federal subsidies. In March 2023, CHSRA Peer Review Group, whose job is to evaluate CHSRA's funding plans, sounded the alarm. It reported an astounding 'unfunded gap of \$92.6 billion to \$103.1 billion between estimated costs and known State and Federal funding' for the full San Francisco-to-San Diego system."

The letter is requesting documents from the Department of Transportation concerning its decision to award \$3 billion more to this project and to keep it on life support, which is a concern to California taxpayers not only because these Federal funds are partially our taxes but also because it is continuing to keep the project going so that more and more of our State tax dollars will have to go to it, as well.

Among the requests that are being made of the Department of Transportation is information concerning the Department's "evaluation of the issues facing the CHSRA, including but not limited to the level of risk associated

with the unbid, technically challenging elements of the project, including tunnels and viaduct; the low ridership projected for the Merced-to-Bakersfield segment; the remaining gap in funds needed for completion of the Merced-to-Bakersfield segment, even after the recent awards of more than \$3 billion; the lack of an independent review of the economic and financial justification for the project as noted by the peer review group; and the large gap in funds needed for completion of at least the phase I segment from San Francisco to Los Angeles; and DOT's plans to address the issues raised by the CHSRA IG and peer review group prior to obligating funds to CHSRA."

Madam Speaker, I have been calling for this project to end for years. It is not even clear that if and when it is ever built, it will be anything close to state-of-the-art technology.

For Californians to have to continue to pay billions and billions of dollars more for this project when our roads continue to deteriorate and to be among the worst in the country despite us paying the highest taxes when it comes to gas is absolutely unacceptable. I am hoping that this investigation, which I will look forward to being part of as a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, will play a role in finally bringing the project to an end.

#### CONCERN ABOUT PRESIDENT BIDEN

Mr. KILEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express grave concern over the Biden administration's decision to withhold information that is of very much legitimate public interest and concern.

Specifically, that is the audio recordings of President Biden's interviews with Special Counsel Robert Hur, which were subpoenaed but have not been turned over, and over which the President has now made an assertion of executive privilege.

I have discussed before the many legal problems—indeed, absurdities—of his assertion of executive privilege. I want today to make perhaps a more important point: That is that the administration is going out of its way to prevent the public from getting information that the public very much wants and needs.

During today's Judiciary Committee hearing with Attorney General Merrick Garland, I asked him about Robert Hur and his report. I asked, first of all, whether he regrets picking Robert Hur to be special counsel, and the Attorney General said no.

I asked him about his statement when he appointed Robert Hur, about his long and distinguished career as a prosecutor, if he stood by that, and the Attorney General stood by that.

Moreover, he did not dispute any of the substance of Special Counsel Hur's report. For example, I asked him about Special Counsel Hur's finding that there was evidence the President willfully retained classified documents, and Attorney General Garland did not dispute that finding.

Indeed, when Special Counsel Hur himself testified before our committee a few months ago, I asked Special Counsel Hur if a reasonable juror could have voted to convict President Biden. Special Counsel Hur said yes. That is that there was sufficient evidence to sustain a conviction of President Biden for committing a felony.

Of course, President Biden has not been charged. The special counsel did not recommend charges. One of the reasons that he gave for not doing so was the President's "diminished faculties and faulty memory," at other points referred to as "poor memory" or that his memory had "significant limitations."

Special Counsel Hur concluded that these factors would make it more difficult to obtain a unanimous jury verdict. I will say again the language from the report: "diminished faculties and faulty memory."

These were the conclusions that Mr. Hur reached based upon his interviews with the President. Again, Merrick Garland, Attorney General Garland, who is withholding these recordings, has not disputed any of the special counsel's findings.

Merrick Garland and now President Biden himself are withholding the evidence that Special Counsel Hur used to conclude that the President has diminished faculties and a faulty memory. There is nothing the President or the Attorney General could say to dispute that.

It is the inescapable conclusion of the fact that Attorney General Garland continues to stand by the Hur report and not dispute it.

□ 1845

That is a big problem because I am not myself offering any opinions here on the faculties or cognitive abilities of the President. I am simply quoting the findings of Special Counsel Hur. The public is very much concerned about these issues when it comes to the competency of the Commander in Chief. I don't think anyone would doubt that there is a legitimate public interest in whether the Commander in Chief does have diminished faculties and a faulty memory.

Again, the conclusion is inescapable, that we now have the administration withholding this evidence that is of great concern to the public, and the basis on which they are doing so is almost trivial. The basis on which they are doing so is that if they turn over these recordings, then somehow that will deter future witnesses from cooperating in future investigations because they don't want their words to become public.

Let's take that at face value. Let's assume that it is true, that there would be a deterrent effect or a chilling effect. The problem is that the Justice Department has already released transcripts of the recordings, so if we were to weigh the interests here, there is the undeniable public interest in whether

the President has diminished faculties and a faulty memory, as Special Counsel Hur reported. That is the interest on one side.

The interest on the other side is whatever marginal added deterrence there might be from releasing a recording over and above a transcript with the exact words from that recording. One would have to conclude that that additional deterrence effect, to the extent that there is any, is quite small, quite marginal, negligible compared to the overriding public interest in the matter at hand.

Therefore, there is simply no justification for the Justice Department to continue to stonewall or the White House to claim executive privilege. Indeed, it is even more disturbing in light of the fact that the White House tried to alter the Hur report itself. Special Counsel Hur testified to our committee that the White House did request to make edits to the report.

I am, again, calling on the White House and Attorney General Garland to release these recordings of which the public has a legitimate interest in hearing so that they can draw whatever conclusions they might for themselves.

#### APPROPRIATIONS FUNDS FOR VETERANS

Mr. KILEY. Madam Speaker, today we began work on passing the fiscal year 2025 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill to maintain our commitment to our Nation's veterans and bolster our national security.

The bill provides a total of \$378.6 billion in overall funding. This includes \$337.4 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs, which is \$75.5 million more than President Biden's request. It includes \$112.6 billion for medical care.

This is tremendously important to me and so many folks in my district. One of the things that we are most proud of in my district office is helping veterans get the care and the benefits that they deserve, and this bill will go a long way toward delivering on what we owe our veterans. Indeed, the bill takes away experimental programs and makes sure that the funding that is in the bill is there to fully support our veterans.

This bill is deserving of bipartisan support, and I will continue to support veterans and support the funding for veterans that they are entitled to. I am very glad to see that it is coming up for consideration and is on its way to passage and, hopefully, being signed into law very soon.

#### CONGRATULATING SARAH KOLIGIAN ON HER RETIREMENT

Mr. KILEY. Madam Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize Folsom Cordova Unified School District Superintendent, Dr. Sarah Koligian, who is retiring after 37 years in public education, the past 7 of which she spent serving Folsom Cordova schools.

Dr. Koligian was born and raised in California's San Joaquin Valley and at-

tended Cal State University, Fresno where she earned her doctorate in education.

She began teaching in Fresno, where she was a resource teacher at Madison Elementary. She held various administrative positions and served as a superintendent for other school districts before joining Folsom Cordova in 2017.

In her role as superintendent for the Folsom Cordova Unified School District, Dr. Koligian supported over 20,000 students and almost 3,000 employees across 36 schools. Under her supervision, Folsom Cordova continues to be considered one of the top performing school districts in the region, with award-winning schools and programs.

During her tenure, she faced unprecedented challenges, including those related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite those obstacles, she received the Association of California School Administrators Superintendent of the Year award in 2021, which is quite the distinction.

Throughout her career, she also achieved many long-term goals for the district, including overseeing the opening of two new schools and expanding school resources by implementing transitional kindergarten, community schools, and growing career technical education programs.

Dr. Koligian is known by others for her expertise, enthusiasm, and devotion to her work. I applaud Dr. Koligian for her unwavering dedication to providing educational opportunity, promoting student success, and leading the school district through significant growth and achievement.

Therefore, on behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I am honored to recognize Dr. Koligian for her leadership and nearly four decades of service to public education. I join the students, teachers, and parents of the Folsom Cordova Unified School District in wishing her the very best in her retirement.

#### DETECTIVE JASON WESTGATE NAMED TO THIRD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT POLICE HONOR ROLL

Mr. KILEY. Madam Speaker, it is my distinct honor to name Detective Jason Westgate of the Rocklin Police Department to the Third Congressional District Police Honor Roll.

With an exemplary career spanning over 29 years in law enforcement, Detective Westgate has demonstrated unparalleled commitment to justice, community safety, and the highest standards of law enforcement.

After joining the Rocklin Police Department, Jason quickly distinguished himself as a formidable force against narcotics and crime, earning positions such as canine handler, narcotics detective, SWAT officer, corporal, and eventually leading to his crucial role in the Tri-County Drug Enforcement Team, known as TRIDENT. His tenure in TRIDENT has been marked by significant achievements that reflect his dedication, strategic intellect, and leadership.

From 2016 onward, Detective Westgate and his drug-trained canine,

Maddie, have worked together to significantly disrupt drug trafficking operations, leading to the recovery of vast quantities of illegal substances and illicit money which might have otherwise devastated many lives and communities.

In addition to his field work, Jason's contributions to training programs for new officers and his involvement in community education on drug abuse prevention highlight his holistic approach to law enforcement.

He embodies the spirit of community policing by building strong relations with citizens and educating the younger generation, thereby nurturing a safer environment.

Throughout his distinguished career, Detective Westgate has earned numerous honors, reflecting his exceptional skills, reliability, and esteemed reputation among his peers, supervisors, and the community. These accolades include being named the TRIDENT Detective of the Year twice and a Chief's Certificate of Commendation, as well as recent recognitions from the Sacramento FBI and various local law enforcement agencies.

However, the most distinguished of his numerous recognitions is the International Narcotics Interdiction Association 2023 Officer of the Year award. This award serves as evidence of his exceptional impact and contributions to narcotics interdiction, not just on a national scale, but internationally.

His unwavering dedication and outstanding contributions to law enforcement deserve this high recognition, not only as a testament to his personal achievements, but as a beacon of exemplary service that inspires officers across the Nation.

#### SHERIFF MIKE FISHER NAMED TO THIRD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT POLICE HONOR ROLL

Mr. KILEY. Madam Speaker, I would like to offer congratulations to Sheriff Mike Fisher of the Sierra County Sheriff's Department for being named to the Third Congressional District Police Honor Roll. Sheriff Fisher has now been named to the honor roll twice in as many years.

As a sheriff in a small rural community, Sheriff Fisher wears many different hats. He runs the office, deals with budgets, handles recruitment and hiring, and is the head of the Office of Emergency Services.

At a time when many law enforcement agencies are struggling with hiring and retaining good, qualified candidates, the Sierra County Sheriff's Office has expanded and hired new, enthusiastic deputies who have become solid members of the community.

Although Sheriff Fisher deals with the same administrative responsibilities as in bigger counties, he also remains available to everyone in the community. He personally responds to questions and concerns of his constituents. He is approachable and responsive and cares deeply about all members of the community.

Public safety is Sheriff Fisher's primary goal. He has been instrumental in

educating the community to prepare for wildfires. As director of emergency services, he has implemented several notification alternatives to alert the residents regarding emergencies and how to evacuate. He has also been a fierce advocate for Sierra County to retain landline phone service since cellular service in the area is not reliable.

In addition to these challenges, Sheriff Fisher is active on patrol and conducting investigations. He works closely with other departments and agencies, coordinating search and rescue operations in remote areas.

Sheriff Fisher has consistently and selflessly put the well-being of the county ahead of any personal considerations. He is willing to make hard choices to protect our community.

For his continued dedication to Sierra County, organizational leadership, and commitment to public safety, I am honored to include Sheriff Mike Fisher of the Sierra County Sheriff's Department in the Third Congressional District Police Honor Roll.

#### OFFICER SHANNON RAULS NAMED TO THIRD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT POLICE HONOR ROLL

Mr. KILEY. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to name Roseville Police Officer Shannon Rauls to the 2024 Third Congressional District Police Honor Roll. Shannon joined the police academy in May of 2017 and graduated from the academy and was sworn in as a police officer in November of 2017.

Shannon is one of the unsung heroes of the Roseville Police Department. She goes to work every day, works hard, and is an exceptional representation of what it means to be a Roseville police officer.

Officer Rauls became a field training officer just 4 years after she became an officer. Field training officers have the single most important role in the entire department, as they train future officers. She is patient, sets high expectations, is a great teacher, and gives candidates the room to grow and learn.

Officer Rauls also works as a patrol officer and is an outstanding teammate with her fellow officers on patrol. She builds great relationships with her teammates, works hard as part of the team, and will hold teammates accountable when the standards of her team are not being met. She has an exceptionally high standard for herself and makes her peers around her want to raise their standards as well.

Finally, she is one of the original members of the department's reformed honor guard. They represent the entire department when they participate in a fallen officer service or memorial.

For every other assignment in the police department, the division commander has the final approval for who joins the team. However, the police chief personally selects every member of the honor guard because of how important this team is for representing the department.

Most of all, Officer Rauls is an example of what it means to be a Roseville

police officer. She is a mentor and role model and an outstanding teammate for her patrol team. She is a great example of what police officers are really like every day, not necessarily what you always see in the news.

Officer Rauls works every day to make her community better, and she is very much deserving of a place in the Third Congressional District Police Honor Roll.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President including by referencing other sources that would have been out of order if spoken in the Member's own words.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. KILEY. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 59 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, June 5, 2024, at 9 a.m.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-4426. A letter from the Secretary, Market Participants Division, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Capital and Financial Reporting Requirements for Swap Dealers and Major Swap Participants (RIN: 3038-AF33) received May 28, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

EC-4427. A letter from the Program Analyst, OBPA, Specialty Crops Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Marketing Order Regulating the Handling of Spearmint Oil Produced in the Far West; Salable Quantities and Allotment Percentages for the 2024-2025 Marketing Year [Doc. No.: AMS-SC-23-0068] received May 28, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

EC-4428. A letter from the Program Analyst, OBPA, Specialty Crops Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Onions Grown in Certain Designated Counties in Idaho and Malheur County, Oregon; Increased Assessment Rate [Doc. No.: AMS-SC-23-0033] received May 28, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

EC-4429. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Public and Indian Housing, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting the Department's final rule — Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016—Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Project-Based Voucher Implementation; Additional Streamlining Changes [Docket No.: FR-6092-F-03] (RIN: 2577-AD06) received May 28, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

EC-4430. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Office of Public and Indian Housing, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting the Department's final rule — Economic Growth Regulatory Relief and Consumer Protection Act: Implementation of National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) [Docket No.: FR-6086-F-03] (RIN: 2577-AD05) received May 28, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

EC-4431. A letter from the Regulatory Specialist, Chief Counsel's Office, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's Interpretive Letter — Clarifying: (1) Authority of a Bank to Engage in Certain Cryptocurrency Activities and (2) Authority of the OCC to Charter a National Trust Bank received May 16, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

EC-4432. A letter from the OBPA, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's request for cooperative agreement applications — Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children Workforce — Implementation Projects [Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NIFA-WICWD-010853] received May 28, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-4433. A letter from the Program Analyst, OBPA, Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's Substance Use Prevention Education in the WIC Program — Fiscal Year 2024 Request for Applications (RFA), Assistance Listing Number (ALN): 10.557 received May 28, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

EC-4434. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Office of Inspector General Semi-annual Report to Congress for the period ending March 31, 2024; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-4435. A letter from the Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting the Administration's semiannual report prepared by the Inspector General for the period of October 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-4436. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, Office of Sustainable Fisheries — GARFO, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Herring Fishery; Adjustments to 2018 Management Area Annual Catch Limits; Correction [Docket No.: 171213999-8128-01] (RIN: 0648-XF898) received May 30, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-4437. A letter from the Management Analyst, JAO, PERMA, Policy and Regulations Branch, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Threatened Species Status With Section 4(d) Rule for Atlantic Pigtoe and Designation of Critical Habitat [Docket No.: FWS-R4-ES-2018-0046; FF09E21000 FXES111090FEDR 223] (RIN: 1018-BD12) received May 29, 2024, pursuant to

5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-4438. A letter from the Communications Specialist, Office of Protected Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule, emergency final rule — Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Commercial Fishing Operations; Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Regulations [Docket No.: 220223-0053] (RIN: 0648-BL26) received May 28, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-4439. A letter from the Communications Specialist, Office of Protected Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Species; Designation of a Non-essential Experimental Population of Central Valley Spring-Run Chinook Salmon in the Upper Yuba River Upstream of Englebright Dam, Authorization for Release, and Adoption of Limited Protective Regulations Under the Endangered Species Act [Docket No.: 221219-0278] (RIN: 0648-BK00) received May 28, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-4440. A letter from the Communications Specialist, Office of Protected Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Russian River Estuary Management Activities [Docket No.: 220413-0096] (RIN: 0648-BK97) received May 28, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-4441. A letter from the Communications Specialist, Office of Protected Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Sea Turtle Conservation; Shrimp Trawling Requirements [Docket No.: 210325-0069] (RIN: 0648-BK45) received May 28, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-4442. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, Office of Sustainable Fisheries — GAR, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Monkfish Fishery; 2019 Monkfish Specifications [Docket No.: 190213108-9232-01] (RIN: 0648-XG820-X) received May 30, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-4443. A letter from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, Office of Sustainable Fisheries — GARFO, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Black Sea Bass Fishery; 2018 February Recreational Season Modification [Docket No.: 171023999-8070-02] (RIN: 0648-BH35) received May 30, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-4444. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, Office of Sustainable Fisheries — GARFO, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the North-

eastern United States; Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fisheries; Commercial Accountability Measures Framework Adjustment [Docket No.: 180220191-8945-02] (RIN: 0648-BH80) received May 30, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-4445. A letter from the Acting Branch Chief NOAA/NMFS, Office of Sustainable Fisheries — Southeast Region, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Red Snapper Data Calibrations and Harvest Levels [Docket No.: 221122-0247] (RIN: 0648-BL02) received May 28, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

## REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 784. A bill to require any person that maintains an internet website or that sells or distributes a mobile application that is owned, wholly or partially, by the Chinese Communist Party or by a non-state-owned entity located in the People's Republic of China, to disclose that fact to any individual who downloads or otherwise uses such website or application; with amendments (Rept. 118-536). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas: Committee on Small Business. H.R. 7984. A bill to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to improve access to disaster assistance for individuals located in rural areas, and for other purposes (Rept. 118-537). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas: Committee on Small Business. H.R. 7989. A bill to provide for a memorandum of understanding between the Small Business Administration and the National Council on Disability to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes (Rept. 118-538). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas: Committee on Small Business. H.R. 8014. A bill to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to issue rules for cancelled covered solicitations, to amend the Small Business Act to provide assistance to small business concerns relating to certain cancelled solicitations, and for other purposes (Rept. 118-539). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Ms. FOXX: Committee on Education and the Workforce. H.R. 6418. A bill to modify the program of grants to support high-quality charter schools; with an amendment (Rept. 118-540). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

## PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. COLLINS:

H.R. 8603. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a pilot program for

a Federal and State multi-entity pass accepted by one or more Federal land management agencies and one or more State land management agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER:

H.R. 8604. A bill to reduce regulatory barriers to housing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CAREY (for himself and Mr. LANDSMAN):

H.R. 8605. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the rules governing the State administration of self-employment assistance programs; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CARTER of Georgia (for himself, Ms. MANNING, Ms. STEFANKI, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. MOOLENAAR, and Mr. FITZPATRICK):

H.R. 8606. A bill to reauthorize the Director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to support Holocaust education programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. CLYBURN (for himself and Mr. MOULTON):

H.R. 8607. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain legatees of certain veterans eligible for housing loans guaranteed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. GIMENEZ (for himself, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Ms. SALAZAR, and Mr. MOSKOWITZ):

H.R. 8608. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to prohibit access by certain individuals to certain areas of airports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. GOLDMAN of New York (for himself, Mr. NADLER, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. SHERRILL, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. IVBY, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. COHEN, Ms. NORTON, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Mr. LANDSMAN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. TONKO, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. QUIGLEY, Ms. BROWNLEY, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Ms. BONAMICI, and Ms. PLASKETT):

H.R. 8609. A bill to amend title 28, United States Code, to establish an Office of Ethics Counsel and an Office of Investigative Counsel within the Supreme Court of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GREEN of Tennessee (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, and Mr. NADLER):

H.R. 8610. A bill to reauthorize and reform counter-unmanned aircraft system authorities, to improve transparency, security, safety, and accountability related to such authorities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. HAYES (for herself, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. DELAURIO, Mr. HIMES, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. NEAL, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. ADAMS, and Ms. PINGREE):

H.R. 8611. A bill to amend the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 and the Federal Crop Insurance Act with respect to transitioning producers from the noninsurance crop assistance program to whole farm revenue insurance; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ:

H.R. 8612. A bill to direct the Secretary of Education to establish a personal finance education portal on a centralized website of the Department of Education pertaining to Federal financial aid; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. LUCAS (for himself and Ms. SAINAS):

H.R. 8613. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture and the Director of the National Science Foundation to carry out cross-cutting and collaborative research and development activities focused on the joint advancement of Department of Agriculture and National Science Foundation mission requirements and priorities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MCGARVEY (for himself and Mr. GRIJALVA):

H.R. 8614. A bill to authorize the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to carry out a study to examine the potential relationship between increased health risks and living in proximity to sites that have been or are being mined for surface coal deposits, and the potential human health effects of surface coal mining operations in Central Appalachia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. MORELLE (for himself and Mrs. DINGELL):

H.R. 8615. A bill to authorize the court to impose a sentence that is below the minimum statutory sentence in the case of a victim offender; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PERRY:

H.R. 8616. A bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to require the President to establish a disaster deductible for each State to offset the amount provided to such State in response to a major disaster, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. SMITH of Washington (for himself and Mr. BACON):

H.R. 8617. A bill to provide for automatic acquisition of United States citizenship for certain internationally adopted individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi (for himself and Mrs. FOUSHEE):

H.R. 8618. A bill to require the Environmental Protection Agency to assess the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions associated with forest biomass combustion for electricity when developing relevant rules and regulations and to carry out a study on the impacts of the forest biomass industry, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. WENSTRUP:

H.R. 8619. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for S corporation reform, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. MCCLAIN:

H.R. 8625. A resolution electing Members to certain standing committees of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. AGUILAR:

H. Res. 1276. A resolution electing Members to certain standing committees of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. SCHIFF:

H. Res. 1277. A resolution responding to the promulgation of the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance, under Article 23 of the Basic Law, by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government on March 19, 2024; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

## MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

ML-116. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Senate of the State of Louisiana, relative to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4, to memorialize the Congress of the United States to support the extension of funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) of 2021, which provides Louisiana residents access to broadband services; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

ML-117. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the State of California, relative to Senate Resolution No. 83, relative to the Acknowledgement of the Tragedy of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

ML-118. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Minnesota, relative to H.F. No. 197, memorializing Congress to resolve that the requirements have been met to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and that it shall now be known as the Twenty-Eighth Amendment to the Constitution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ML-119. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Tennessee, relative to House Joint Resolution No. 801, relative to securing this nation's borders; which was referred jointly to the Committees on the Judiciary and Homeland Security.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY AND SINGLE SUBJECT STATEMENTS

Pursuant to clause 7(c)(1) of rule XII and Section 3(c) of H. Res. 5 the following statements are submitted regarding (1) the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution and (2) the single subject of the bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. COLLINS:

H.R. 8603. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To facilitate greater access to, federal and state public lands.

By Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER:

H.R. 8604. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is:

Housing

By Mr. CAREY:

H.R. 8605. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the rules governing the State administration of self-employment assistance programs.

By Mr. CARTER of Georgia:

H.R. 8606.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is:

To reauthorize the Director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to support Holocaust education programs, and for other purposes.

By Mr. CLYBURN:

H.R. 8607.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

VA Housing Loan Benefits

By Mr. GIMENEZ:

H.R. 8608.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution stating that Congress has the authority to “make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution”.

The single subject of this legislation is:

To amend title 49, United States Code, to prohibit access by certain individuals to certain areas of airports, and for other purposes.

By Mr. GOLDMAN of New York:

H.R. 8609.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress has the power “to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into the Execution for the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or any Department or Officer thereof.”

The single subject of this legislation is:

This bill authorizes the Chief Justice to (1) establish an Office of Ethics Counsel to advise justices on ethical matters, and (2) establish an Office of Investigative Counsel within the Court to probe potential instances of ethical impropriety by justices and report to Congress on compliance.

By Mr. GREEN of Tennessee:

H.R. 8610.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To reauthorize and reform counter-unmanned aircraft system authorities, to improve transparency, security, safety, and accountability related to such authorities, and for other purposes

By Mrs. HAYES:

H.R. 8611.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18, “To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.”

The single subject of this legislation is:

To improve safety net programs, disaster relief, and crop insurance access coverage for small farmers who have historically struggled to participate in them.

By Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ:

H.R. 8612.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

Education

By Mr. LUCAS:

H.R. 8613.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8, Clause 18:

“The Congress shall have Power. . . . To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.”

The single subject of this legislation is:

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture and the Director of the National Science Foundation to carry out cross-cutting and collaborative research and development activities focused on the joint advancement of Department of Agriculture and National Science Foundation mission requirements and priorities.

By Mr. MCGARVEY:

H.R. 8614.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

Health

By Mr. MORELLE:

H.R. 8615.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution and Amendment XVI of the United States Constitution.

The single subject of this legislation is:

Judiciary

By Mr. PERRY:

H.R. 8616.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is:

Disaster Relief

By Mr. SMITH of Washington:

H.R. 8617.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

Provide citizenship status to non-citizen intercountry adoptees

By Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi:

H.R. 8618.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause III

The Congress shall have Power . . .] To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes; . . .

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18:

[The Congress shall have Power . . .] To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

The single subject of this legislation is:

The bill mandates comprehensive evaluation and reporting on the environmental and community impacts of using forest biomass for electricity, aiming to ensure informed and effective regulation of this industry.

By Mr. WENSTRUP:

H.R. 8619.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is:

Tax Policy

#### ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 82: Ms. PEREZ.

H.R. 333: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.

H.R. 618: Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 705: Mr. VAN DREW.

H.R. 798: Mr. NEGUSE.

H.R. 856: Ms. ADAMS and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.

H.R. 860: Mr. NEGUSE.

H.R. 902: Mr. KEATING.

H.R. 987: Mrs. FLETCHER.

H.R. 1002: Mr. NICKEL.

H.R. 1015: Ms. BUDZINSKI, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. PANETTA, and Mr. JACKSON of Texas.

H.R. 1088: Mr. SABLAN, Mr. MOSKOWITZ, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, and Mr. LA MALFA.

H.R. 1114: Ms. TLAIB.

H.R. 1247: Mr. KHANNA.

H.R. 1250: Ms. KUSTER.

H.R. 1297: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.

H.R. 1321: Ms. MANNING.

H.R. 1322: Mrs. CHERFILUS-MC CORMICK, Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia, and Mr. MOSKOWITZ.

H.R. 1323: Mr. SORENSEN and Mr. MOSKOWITZ.

H.R. 1407: Mr. RUTHERFORD.

H.R. 1415: Ms. NORTON and Mr. BOWMAN.

H.R. 1447: Ms. KAPUR and Mr. FROST.

H.R. 1477: Ms. MALLIOTAKIS, Mr. DESJARLAIS, and Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER.

H.R. 1503: Mr. HUDSON.

H.R. 1572: Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI and Ms. STEVENS.

H.R. 1582: Mr. HUIZENGA and Mr. MILLER of Ohio.

H.R. 1692: Ms. BROWNLEY.

H.R. 1719: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.

H.R. 1763: Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 1787: Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. PHILLIPS, and Mr. BAIRD.

H.R. 1814: Mr. MR VAN and Mr. NEGUSE.

H.R. 1815: Ms. SCANLON.

H.R. 1822: Mr. ALFORD, Mr. CRAWFORD, and Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER.

H.R. 1831: Mr. FROST and Ms. BONAMICI.

H.R. 1841: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. TURNER, and Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida.

H.R. 2370: Mr. KENNEDY.

H.R. 2454: Mr. MOSKOWITZ.

H.R. 2474: Mr. RYAN and Mr. SHERMAN.

H.R. 2539: Ms. PETTERSEN, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, and Ms. BROWN.

H.R. 2584: Mr. NICKEL.

H.R. 2621: Ms. HOULAHAN, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, and Mr. MAGAZINER.

H.R. 2697: Ms. JACKSON LEE.

H.R. 2743: Mrs. FISCHBACH.

H.R. 2874: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.

H.R. 2891: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.

H.R. 2938: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.

H.R. 2955: Mr. MILLER of Ohio.

H.R. 2966: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER.

H.R. 3008: Mr. QUIGLEY.

H.R. 3023: Ms. HOULAHAN.

H.R. 3038: Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. SWALWELL, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, and Mr. DELUZIO.

H.R. 3225: Ms. NORTON and Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 3238: Mrs. RAMIREZ, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. FOSTER, and Mr. KEAN of New Jersey.

H.R. 3269: Mr. SMUCKER.

H.R. 3413: Mr. WEBER of Texas.

H.R. 3416: Mr. RYAN.

H.R. 3486: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.

H.R. 3537: Ms. HOULAHAN.

H.R. 3584: Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 3698: Mr. HORSFORD.

H.R. 3785: Ms. ROSS.

H.R. 3925: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.

H.R. 4184: Mr. SCHNEIDER and Mr. NORCROSS.

H.R. 4405: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.

H.R. 4439: Mrs. FOUSHEE.

H.R. 4518: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 4524: Mr. RUTHERFORD.

H.R. 4572: Ms. STANSBURY and Ms. CHU.

H.R. 4663: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.

H.R. 4867: Mr. LYNCH.

H.R. 4966: Mr. GRIJALVA.  
 H.R. 5012: Mr. CONNOLLY.  
 H.R. 5013: Mr. SIMPSON.  
 H.R. 5049: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.  
 H.R. 5097: Mr. BEYER.  
 H.R. 5175: Ms. BUDZINSKI.  
 H.R. 5414: Ms. DEGETTE and Mr. TONKO.  
 H.R. 5419: Mr. COLE.  
 H.R. 5420: Mr. NORCROSS.  
 H.R. 5488: Mrs. WAGNER.  
 H.R. 5757: Mrs. DINGELL and Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania.  
 H.R. 5840: Mr. RESCHENTHALER.  
 H.R. 5871: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.  
 H.R. 5909: Mr. FITZPATRICK.  
 H.R. 5976: Mr. AMO.  
 H.R. 6023: Ms. BROWNLEY.  
 H.R. 6116: Mr. WALTZ.  
 H.R. 6319: Mr. NICKEL.  
 H.R. 6328: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.  
 H.R. 6414: Mr. STEUBE.  
 H.R. 6451: Mr. VAN DREW.  
 H.R. 6545: Mr. NORCROSS.  
 H.R. 6598: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.  
 H.R. 6600: Ms. DE LA CRUZ.  
 H.R. 6640: Mr. KILDEE.  
 H.R. 6663: Mr. JAMES.  
 H.R. 6727: Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. NUNN of Iowa, and Mr. DELUZIO.  
 H.R. 6751: Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, Mr. LAWLER, Mr. FROST, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Ms. WILSON of Florida.  
 H.R. 6754: Mrs. RAMIREZ.  
 H.R. 6835: Mr. MAGAZINER.  
 H.R. 6887: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.  
 H.R. 6932: Mr. NICKEL.  
 H.R. 6950: Ms. MALLIOTAKIS and Mr. BILIRAKIS.  
 H.R. 6951: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. MCCORMICK, and Mr. VALADAO.  
 H.R. 7056: Mr. AUCHINCLOSS.  
 H.R. 7145: Mr. SUOZZI.  
 H.R. 7162: Ms. PINGREE.  
 H.R. 7165: Mr. AMO and Mr. MAGAZINER.  
 H.R. 7195: Ms. HAGEMAN.  
 H.R. 7203: Mr. RUTHERFORD.  
 H.R. 7213: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.  
 H.R. 7220: Mr. RUTHERFORD.  
 H.R. 7227: Mr. KHANNA, Ms. CHU, Mr. PHILIPS, Ms. BROWNLEY, and Mr. MOULTON.  
 H.R. 7266: Ms. ROSS and Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.  
 H.R. 7274: Mr. MAGAZINER.  
 H.R. 7285: Ms. PINGREE.  
 H.R. 7297: Mr. HORSFORD.  
 H.R. 7351: Mr. NICKEL.  
 H.R. 7390: Ms. OMAR.  
 H.R. 7438: Ms. STEVENS, Mrs. FOUSHEE, Mrs. PELTOLA, Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, Ms. CARAVEO, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, and Ms. MCCOL-LUM.  
 H.R. 7513: Mr. MEUSER and Mr. CRENSHAW.  
 H.R. 7600: Mr. GOLDMAN of New York.  
 H.R. 7618: Mr. LALOTA, Ms. TLAIB, and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER.  
 H.R. 7629: Mr. MRVAN and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.  
 H.R. 7631: Mr. BOST.  
 H.R. 7665: Ms. NORTON.  
 H.R. 7770: Mr. GOTTHEIMER.  
 H.R. 7859: Mrs. DINGELL and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.  
 H.R. 7866: Mr. MORELLE.  
 H.R. 7906: Mr. MOORE of Utah.  
 H.R. 7925: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.  
 H.R. 7932: Mr. RUTHERFORD.  
 H.R. 7944: Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. ALLRED, and Mr. OWENS.  
 H.R. 7953: Mr. RUTHERFORD.  
 H.R. 8060: Mr. NEHLS.  
 H.R. 8061: Mr. KUSTOFF, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mr. BUCSHON.  
 H.R. 8083: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.  
 H.R. 8114: Mr. RUTHERFORD.  
 H.R. 8117: Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. VEASEY, and Mr. GREEN of Texas.  
 H.R. 8204: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.  
 H.R. 8238: Ms. LEE of Nevada.  
 H.R. 8271: Mr. COURTNEY.  
 H.R. 8281: Mr. FERGUSON.  
 H.R. 8282: Ms. MALOY and Mr. CARTER of Georgia.  
 H.R. 8316: Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana.  
 H.R. 8331: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Ms. TOKUDA, and Mrs. FOUSHEE.  
 H.R. 8364: Ms. STEFANIK and Mr. HUIZENGA.  
 H.R. 8427: Mr. AMO.  
 H.R. 8437: Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas and Mr. BURCHETT.  
 H.R. 8478: Ms. NORTON.  
 H.R. 8485: Mr. IVEY.  
 H.R. 8501: Mr. CARSON and Ms. OMAR.  
 H.R. 8504: Mr. STEUBE.  
 H.R. 8525: Mr. NORCROSS.  
 H.R. 8591: Ms. DE LA CRUZ.  
 H.J. Res. 99: Mr. LATURNER.  
 H.J. Res. 111: Mr. YAKYM.  
 H.J. Res. 123: Mr. GROTHMAN.  
 H.J. Res. 138: Mr. SCOTT Franklin of Florida.  
 H.J. Res. 139: Mr. HERN, Ms. LETLOW, and Mr. MEUSER.  
 H.J. Res. 140: Mr. OGLES and Ms. DE LA CRUZ.  
 H.J. Res. 141: Mr. OGLES and Ms. DE LA CRUZ.  
 H.J. Res. 142: Mr. OGLES and Ms. DE LA CRUZ.  
 H.J. Res. 143: Ms. DE LA CRUZ.  
 H.J. Res. 160: Mr. BAIRD and Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas.  
 H.J. Res. 161: Mr. GROTHMAN.  
 H.J. Res. 162: Mr. NEWHOUSE and Mr. ARRINGTON.  
 H. Res. 269: Mr. CLEAVER.  
 H. Res. 443: Mr. BAIRD.  
 H. Res. 735: Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI.  
 H. Res. 861: Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI.  
 H. Res. 1042: Mr. EVANS and Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.  
 H. Res. 1131: Mr. CARTER of Georgia.  
 H. Res. 1198: Mr. COLE and Mr. AMO.  
 H. Res. 1221: Mr. McGOVERN, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, and Mrs. STEEL.  
 H. Res. 1242: Mr. NORCROSS.  
 H. Res. 1246: Mr. LATTA.  
 H. Res. 1248: Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia and Mr. MENENDEZ.  
 H. Res. 1250: Mr. AMO.  
 H. Res. 1260: Mr. GOTTHEIMER and Ms. DEGETTE.  
 H. Res. 1272: Mr. McCaul.

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PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

PT-13. The SPEAKER presented a petition of the City of Miami, Florida, relative to Commission Resolution R-24-0163, expressing its unwavering support of the State of Israel and condemning acts of aggression by the terrorist Islamic State of Iran and its terrorist proxies; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.