



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 170

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2024

No. 149

## House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. EZELL).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,  
September 24, 2024.

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

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

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 9, 2024, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

### SHOOTING IN BIRMINGHAM'S FIVE POINTS SOUTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise to honor the victims of the horrific mass shooting that rattled the Birmingham community over the weekend.

On Saturday night, just after 11 p.m., 21 people were shot in Birmingham's Five Points South entertainment district. Four of them tragically lost their lives.

Let me be clear: this, indeed, is a senseless violence and unacceptable, and it must stop. Our thoughts are with the families as they endure this unimaginable loss. Nothing compares to the pain of losing a loved one to gun violence. We stand with them in this time of great sadness, and we pray for a speedy recovery for those who were injured.

I join in expressing my gratitude to the police officers and first responders, as well as our county, State, and Federal partners, for their quick response.

My staff and I have been closely monitoring the situation, and we stand ready to assist the city of Birmingham in any way that we can.

While this horrific tragedy has focused the eyes of the Nation on Birmingham, Alabama, the surge of gun violence is a reality that far too many of my constituents endure every day.

Our communities are crying out for change, and we, as elected officials, owe it to them to do all that we can at every level of government to keep them safe.

Again, I want to be clear: this senseless violence is unacceptable, and it must stop. That means bringing more resources to community organizations that are fighting to break the cycle of violence. It means teaching our children about alternatives to gun violence, and it also means passing commonsense measures to keep weapons off of the streets of America.

Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers are important. They are needed, but they will not bring back the lives of those lost to gun violence, nor will they prevent such tragedies from happening again.

The Members of this body cannot continue to sit by as family after family, community after community, are torn apart. It is time for Congress to finally pass universal background checks, red flag laws, and a ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines.

It is also time for State officials in the State of Alabama to reverse the permitless carry law, which has allowed the unchecked proliferation of guns onto our streets. Only by taking meaningful action can we stem this needless loss of life.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to keep the entire Birmingham community in their prayers, and I hope that we can come together and turn this pain into purpose and do something about it.

### RETURN TO TRUE CAPITALISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, the final frontier of the woke mind virus is the banks and capitalism themselves. They have already tarnished America's other institutions.

Last week, House Republicans passed H.R. 5339, the Protecting Americans' Investments from Woke Policies Act, a bill that would confront and dispatch one of the most nefarious and hidden forms of wokeness: environmental, social, and governance investing, or ESG for short.

In his book, "Go Woke, Go Broke," author Charles Gasparino punctures the woke mind virus and ESG.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the book review of "Go Woke, Go Broke."

[From the Wall Street Journal, Sept. 8, 2024]

'GO WOKE, GO BROKE' REVIEW: THE WORST INVESTMENTS

(By Tunku Varadarajan)

Charles Gasparino is a gladiatorial journalist. When he steps into the arena to fight a money-man or enterprise that he believes is anticapitalist or crooked, he can be brutal. Making an enemy of him is not for the faint-hearted: Watch him trade insults with his critics on social media. He was once a Wall Street reporter for this newspaper, where

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

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



Printed on recycled paper.

H5651

editors and colleagues remember him for his no-holds-barred style. Which is precisely how we'd describe the approach in "Go Woke, Go Broke," Mr. Gasparino's blistering account of "how corporate America became something close to a foot soldier in the progressive movement." Now a senior correspondent at the Fox Business Network, Mr. Gasparino is also a columnist at the New York Post, whose irreverent, indignant (and often irresistible) tabloid style is very much in evidence here. (Fox, the Post and the Journal share common ownership.)

"Go Woke, Go Broke" is a takedown of "corporate wokeness," which Mr. Gasparino describes as the "noxious ideology of progressive politics in the boardroom—an ideology, he says, that "needs to die a thousand deaths." The book can be seen as a demotic complement to "Woke, Inc." (2021), by the brainy (and sometimes tiresome) former Republican presidential contender Vivek Ramaswamy. Mr. Gasparino's is the better book for its plain-spokenness: Many more Middle Americans—whose jobs have been outsourced or have been imperiled by the high-minded dictates of "diversity"—will grasp its message. These are the people who, Mr. Gasparino argues, have been shafted by the Wall Street "fat cats" who've grown "much fatter" by their "feeding at the ESG trough."

ESG stands for "environmental, social, and governance"—metrics intended to direct or funnel investment in an ostensibly socially responsible direction. Mr. Gasparino is a populist-capitalist, and ESG is his *bête noire*, along with "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI). These "leftist shibboleths" have, the author says, "warped" American business practices for nearly two decades and grew in intensity under the second Obama administration.

Mr. Gasparino traces the roots of ESG to the 1980s and '90s, when business leaders began embracing so-called corporate social responsibility (or CSR, in its now archaic abbreviation). CSR, in time, evolved into benevolent notions of stakeholder capitalism, championed by the likes of Klaus Schwab, the founder of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Davos Man, writes Mr. Gasparino, "represents the ultimate marriage of the progressive globalist corporate citizen with the globalist progressive regulatory bureaucrat."

All this performatively moral investing is a revolt against Milton Friedman, the economist who in 1970 stated that "the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits." Friedman, writes Mr. Gasparino, would have hated ESG and DEI, "among the most heinously anti-American management philosophies ever developed." (Readers of Mr. Gasparino's robust book will realize pretty quickly that nuance is for wimps.)

Basing his book largely on a host of interviews with "company insiders," Mr. Gasparino gives us entertaining (and informative) accounts of corporate blunders in the name of wokeness. He reminds us of the time AB InBev—the holding company for Anheuser-Busch and its beer, Budweiser—thought it would be a great idea to use a "transwoman influencer" named Dylan Mulvaney to market its top-selling Bud Light. Middle America revolted and stopped buying the beer, heretofore branded as a manly beverage. Mr. Gasparino also recounts how the discount retailer Target was punished by consumers for promoting "tuck-friendly" bathing suits for men transitioning to "women" alongside rainbow-colored onesies for toddlers. And Disney, recalls the author, erred politically and financially when its chief executive, Bob Chapek, embarked on a bruising battle with Florida's Gov. Ron DeSantis and challenged the valid-

ity of a state law barring public schools from teaching sexual education to children before the fourth grade. In each case, the company's stock price tanked and sales plummeted.

It enrages Mr. Gasparino that America's corporate management luxuriates "in progressive causes as a side hustle." But in some cases, he tells us, these causes are the main course. Among the villains trying to ram ESG down our throats are Larry Fink, the CEO of BlackRock; Jamie Dimon, the CEO of JPMorgan Chase; David Solomon, the CEO of Goldman Sachs; and the "ESG-obsessed" Gary Gensler, President Biden's chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, whom Mr. Gasparino describes as "a male version" of Sen. Elizabeth Warren, "among the most woke, annoying, and . . . dangerous bureaucrats in government." Add to the list Adena Friedman, the CEO of Nasdaq, which demands that companies seeking to list on its exchange disclose board-level diversity statistics and, if the need arises, explain why they don't have a diversity of directors. Such demands aren't, of course, slapped on Chinese companies, which are, Mr. Gasparino points out, curiously exempt from all the wokiest rules. When was the last time a Chinese company was asked why it didn't have a Uyghur on its board, or an LGBTQ+ person?

Attacking Larry Fink as "Mr. ESG," says Mr. Gasparino, has become "a rallying cry on the populist right," whose backlash against corporate wokeness has been so fierce that even BlackRock has started to dismount from its moral high horse. Consumers' Research, a conservative advocacy group pushing back against ESG, derides the abbreviation as "elitists, socialists, and grifters," as well as "erasing savings and growth"—pungent and effective put-downs. More and more investors are aware that ESG-specific funds are expensive and rarely beat the market. In fact, writes Mr. Gasparino, "they're some of the worst investments," even as they make it harder to tackle inflation by forcing curbs on fossil fuels. But Middle America appears to have woken up to the peril of ESG and is giving voice to its displeasure. "It's now their Arab Spring," says Mr. Gasparino. This may be hyperbolic overreach, even for the crusading Mr. Gasparino, but he's confident that America's version of a grassroots people's revolt will end better than the one in the Middle East. Let's pray he's right.

Ms. FOXX. He describes ESG, and diversity, equity, and inclusion, DEI, as ". . . among the most heinously anti-American management philosophies ever developed."

This book amplifies the points we made when we passed our legislation last week. ESG is an ideological cancer buoyed by asset managers, banks, and financial institutions that kneel at the altar of anticapitalism.

Americans saving for retirement don't want to see their hard-earned money go up in flames in ESG funds. They want a sizeable return on their investments.

We need to embrace true capitalism again in America. This woke garbage needs to be put out to pasture and left to die.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF GLEN NEFF MCGHIE, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to eulogize three individuals who made a difference in their lives, in so many different ways, to our community and to our country.

Glen Neff McGhie, Jr., was one of those whose life made a difference. He exemplified service to our community and to our country.

He served in Vietnam. After coming home, he continued to dedicate much of his life to helping veterans in need, who needed support after serving our country, as well as those who had suffered disabilities.

He was a devout volunteer to the Disabled American Veterans organization and served as president of the Veterans Home of California, a home that I have worked with for many, many years that we brought together with State and Federal funding.

Glen was very proud of the ability to provide services to our veterans throughout the San Joaquin Valley. One of his last major accomplishments was building a monument, which is seen here, to honor veterans in the San Joaquin Valley whose lives exemplified public service. For a grateful Nation, we can never ever be thankful enough, and Glen understood that.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring the memory of Glen Neff McGhie. He will be remembered for so many of the invaluable contributions he has made, not only to our community, but to our valley, to our State, and to our Nation.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF KATHY BONILLA

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to honor the life of Kathy Bonilla. Kathy was a stellar educator who represented Fresno City College and the State Center Community College System, again, in the San Joaquin Valley.

She understood the importance of the community college system in California, which encompassed 116 community colleges. State Center was where she did so much for so many who have received their community college education.

Since 1991, she served as a public information officer for Fresno City College, home of the Rams, ensuring that the community learned about the college's exemplary programs and outstanding students, who were all using this opportunity to further their education so that they could have opportunities for career paths that would add value and make a difference for our country.

Her extensive contributions established her as an expert in media, and her work extended to the State level as an active member of the California Community College Public Relations Organization because it was important to talk about all the incredible things that Fresno City College did and the opportunities that they provided for students throughout our valley.

Above all, Kathy was a wonderful mother and wife to her husband, Jesse, and their daughter, Angelina.

She is missed. Her humor will remain a reminder of the joy she has filled countless lives with. We mourn the loss of this esteemed member of our community.

Dr. Carole Goldsmith knows that she made a difference. The people in Fresno know that she made a difference, and we will miss her.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DOROTHY "DOTTIE" JONES

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to honor the life of Dottie Jones, and what an incredible life it was. She lived 103 years, and she lived with passion and determination.

A loving mother of four children and a lifelong friend, she peacefully passed away at 103 years of age.

When Dottie was 21 years of age, she saw the attack on Pearl Harbor. A year later, in 1942, she enlisted in the United States Navy to serve our country.

She was among the first of women to join the United States Navy and served during World War II with distinction and honor, where only 350,000 females served in the United States military during World War II.

She was a groundbreaker in so many different ways, breaking the glass ceiling, knowing that women could do these jobs and serve their country with distinction and honor and make a difference, and what a difference she made.

Throughout her life, she contributed to our community in so many different ways. The legacy of her strength, her love, and resilience will live in the hearts of her family and all of those who knew her and had the privilege of being a part of her life.

Ms. Jones, my friend, will be deeply missed, and I thank her for a job well done.

GOLD STAR FAMILY REMEMBRANCE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize this week as Gold Star Family Remembrance Week.

Every September, Gold Star Family Remembrance Week takes place the week before Gold Star Mother's Day, which has been observed by Presidential proclamations on the last Sunday of September since 1936.

The Gold Star symbol, a significant reminder of sacrifice, originated in 1917, when United States began its involvement in World War I.

Families would hang banners to represent a family member in the armed services. If the family member passed in combat, the family would change the banner from a blue star to a gold star, a symbol of the highest honor and most profound loss.

We will never know the exact number of Gold Star families. However, according to the National Gold Star Family

Registry, at least 472,251 fallen military members are registered by loved ones. At least 36,584 of those service-members have been registered in my home State of Pennsylvania.

As an Army dad, I am blessed that my son returned home. I am aware that this is not the case for all families, and we must take the time to remember, respect, and honor the families of our fallen servicemembers.

I look forward to supporting efforts, such as Gold Star Family Remembrance Week, to honor and remember our fallen servicemembers and their families. This week recognizes the loss and sacrifices of families in support of fallen members of the Armed Forces, as well as veterans.

I look forward to supporting legislative efforts to honor this occasion and encourage my fellow Americans to perform acts of community service and goodwill to honor those families.

Our servicemembers are the bravest among us. They answer the call to protect and defend our country in times of war and in times of peace.

This important week is a time to remember the families of the brave men and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our freedom.

Mr. Speaker, let us all take a moment to remember that our freedom is not free.

We cannot begin to imagine the loss and the pain these families have experienced. Gold Star families have lost a loved one in the name of protecting our freedom, and they deserve our gratitude every day.

□ 1015

CONGRATULATING JORDAN CHILES ON GOLD MEDAL IN GYMNASTICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. PEREZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jordan Chiles, a Gold Medal Olympic gymnast representing Team USA on her incredible performance in Paris.

Chiles grew up in Vancouver and attended Prairie High School. She was raised by parents who were both parents, a unique identity I proudly relate to.

By the time Jordan had graduated high school, she had already made a national name for herself. At only 12, she made the U.S. gymnastics national team, a truly remarkable feat for any age.

Jordan's incredible journey as an athlete, where she navigates the pressure of being watched by millions, is nothing short of inspiring.

Mr. Speaker, Jordan Chiles has made her community in southwest Washington and her country very proud.

RECOGNIZING VANCOUVER POLICE CHIEF JEFF MORI

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Police Chief Jeff Mori of

the Vancouver Police Department and congratulate him on his upcoming retirement.

Chief Mori has served the Vancouver Police Department for 5 years and spent over 31 years working in law enforcement.

While serving as chief, Chief Mori oversaw the rollout of the VPD camera program, the recruitment and hiring of over 75 officers and staff, and advocated for a southwest Washington regional Criminal Justice Training Academy, which is now successfully training new recruits.

The Vancouver Police Department is our first line of defense to keep our communities safe, and it is a responsibility I know they don't take lightly.

Although we are losing a valued member of the team, I know his impact will remain.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chief Mori for all that he has done for our community. I am honored to have gotten to know him and for the chance to work with him, and I hope that retirement treats him well.

SKILLSUSA'S NATIONAL LEADERSHIP & SKILLS CONFERENCE

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the six high school students from my district who placed in the top three for their category at SkillsUSA's National Leadership & Skills Conference this past June.

The SkillsUSA competition highlights skilled trades and the accomplishments of career-ready leaders in a nationwide, weeklong event.

Sebastian Nejar and Luke Twiss from Evergreen High School in Vancouver won a silver medal in the category of interactive application and video game development.

Zachariah Hubbard and Kaiden Wood from Rochester High School won a silver medal in the category of commercial SUAS drone.

Daniel Dugas and Mason Young from Rochester High School also won a silver medal in the category of robotics—urban search and rescue.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate each team for such a great accomplishment. They all have made us very proud in southwest Washington.

RECOGNIZING RETIREMENT OF BILL DRAPER

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of Bill Draper, who has been a construction technology instructor at Cascadia Tech for 28 years.

Cascadia Tech Academy is a premier career and technical education institution that was created in partnership with 10 school districts in my community. Cascadia Tech provides hands-on learning opportunities for students so they can develop talents and gain credentials that will make them ready to hit the ground running after graduation.

After 11 years in the construction field, Bill became a steward of the next generation of doers and makers. I have seen firsthand the incredible respect his students have for him and the pride

he cultivates in them for the trades, which is why he so deservedly earned the Evergreen School District's Educator of the Year award in 2021.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Bill for all he has done for our community and our students. I wish him the very best in his last year in the classroom and in his well-deserved retirement.

**MIA AIR FORCE SERGEANT DAVID STANLEY  
PRICE FINALLY COMES HOME**

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the return home to Centralia for Air Force Sergeant David Stanley Price, who has been considered missing in action for the last 56 years.

On March 11, 1968, while serving in the Vietnam war, Sergeant Price was declared missing in action when the outpost he was manning was attacked.

On that day, he, along with 10 other servicemembers manning that post, were deemed to be killed or captured.

Finally, last year, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency recovered his remains and was able to identify Sergeant Price. This allowed for him to finally return home and end the decades of worry and wondering his family has gone through.

Sergeant Price was a husband and father and an active member of his community. I cannot imagine the pain his loved ones have had to endure over the last 56 years, but I hope the return of his remains brings them some measure of peace.

Sergeant Price made the ultimate sacrifice for his country, and I am grateful that he can be properly laid to rest at home.

**HONORING HEROES WHO MADE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE IN OCTOBER 1983**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 241 American heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice on October 23, 1983, 41 years ago, in Beirut, Lebanon.

For my family and so many families, this day is deeply emotional.

When I enlisted in 1979 as a young man, I wanted to serve and be part of something bigger. That led me to the United States Marine Corps.

Like every marine, I took an oath to God, to country, and to the corps. Semper Fidelis is not just a slogan or creed. For every marine, it is a way of life.

Only those who have earned the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor can fully understand the faith and loyalty instilled in us in the Marine Corps. Semper Fidelis is part of the very fabric of every marine, past and present.

I served as the first lieutenant in the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines. In 1983, my battalion was ordered to Beirut, Lebanon, in support of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment and the 24th Marine Amphibious Unit.

I vividly remember the evenings we sat on the roof of the Marine barracks

with the American flag flying over our heads. The nearby barrage of small armed gunfire and mortar rounds made it very clear that we were in harm's way.

On that terrible day 41 years ago, a terrorist affiliated with Hezbollah and Hamas, financed by Iran, drove a truck bomb into the barracks we called home.

Mr. Speaker, 241 American servicemen were killed, 220 of which were my fellow marines, 241 sons, brothers, fathers, and friends, the heroes who never returned home.

Mr. Speaker, 241 came in peace, and 241 lives were stolen from us by an act of pure evil.

It was the deadliest day for the Marine Corps since the Battle of Iwo Jima.

It is by the grace of God that I was able to come home to my wife, Denise, who was expecting our first child, Nicole. My battalion had shipped out 10 days before the bombing, but, Mr. Speaker, today is not about me.

Today is about the 241 soldiers, sailors, and marines who laid down their lives to protect our freedoms. Today is about every veteran who nobly wore the uniform of our Armed Forces.

On this somber day, I look out at the flag flying over the U.S. Capitol and feel the same reverence I felt standing below the Stars and Stripes on the roof of the Beirut barracks in 1983.

Though I will never know exactly why I was spared when so many were not, I understand that our first duty is to remember and be faithful. Every year, it does not get any easier to think of my fellow marines who never made it back home.

In the last few months, we have seen some level of justice, with the military termination of two of those responsible for stealing 241 futures with no regard for decency or humanity. While this is a moment I and so many have waited for, the families of the fallen deserve more. It is my mission to ensure we all remember the tragedy of this day and the lives we lost.

Mr. Speaker, we must always remain faithful and never forget the ultimate sacrifice these fine marines made on our behalf for freedom.

Semper Fi.

**SOUNDING ALARM ON PROJECT 2025**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Mrs. TRAHAN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. TRAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to sound the alarm about the dangerous and extreme policies put forward in Project 2025, the self-described blueprint for the Republican President to take over total control of the Federal Government and our lives.

Spanning more than 900 pages, Project 2025 lays out not a concept of a plan but a plan for Donald Trump or another GOP President to ignore the

Constitution and unilaterally turn back the clock on working families, women, and our children.

For families, Project 2025 calls to eliminate overtime pay and kick people with preexisting conditions off of their healthcare insurance.

For women and girls, Project 2025 calls for taking the Republican abortion bans that are devastating women in Georgia and Texas and jeopardizing IVF in Alabama and doing the same nationally.

For our children, Project 2025 calls for eliminating the Department of Education and defunding our public schools.

Each and every one of these proposals would have been devastating for millions of Americans. I know that, Mr. Speaker, because every one of them would have ruined my life.

My dad was a union ironworker. He picked up overtime whenever possible so that he could keep a roof over our heads and put food on the table. Like so many families, Project 2025 taking away the chance to work overtime could have meant us losing our home or going to bed hungry.

When my dad was diagnosed with MS at just 48 years old, he needed his health insurance to visit the doctor and afford his medications. Project 2025 allowing an insurance corporation to kick him off his healthcare coverage just because he was sick would have been a death sentence, just as it could be for millions of Americans with pre-existing conditions.

When my husband and I decided to start our family but struggled to get pregnant, we were forced to turn to IVF, and we are so fortunate to have our two beautiful daughters, but as we saw in Alabama, Project 2025's proposals that endanger IVF fertility treatments can be physically and mentally debilitating for couples turning to fertility treatments as their last hope.

Finally, I am the proud product of Lowell Public Schools, from elementary to high school. Like any public school student, I can tell you so many stories of teachers who made the most of the little resources they had to give us every opportunity to succeed.

Ripping that lifeline away from working families, as Project 2025 proposes, is a horrible idea, plain and simple.

Project 2025 will take us backward to a time when life was great if you were wealthy or well connected, but that same time was hard. It was hard for workers and parents like mine who wanted nothing more than to give their kids a better life than they had. That is why I am here to say that we can't and we won't go back.

House Democrats will move our country forward with a vision where people are proud to be an American again.

They are proud because working families aren't just getting by and making ends meet, but they are getting ahead.

They are proud because women have the freedom to make their own healthcare decisions without the fear of politicians getting in the way.

Lastly, they are proud because our children can go to class and thrive while us moms and dads don't have to worry about their school being defunded or, worse, the next target of a deranged mass shooter.

Mr. Speaker, that should be something all of us can get behind, and it is why I will urge my Republican colleagues to reject Project 2025 and work with us to build a future where people have every chance to get ahead.

#### RECOGNIZING BANK OF BOTETOURT'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CLINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a cornerstone of our community, the Bank of Botetourt, as they celebrate 125 years of dedicated service.

Founded as the Bank of Buchanan in 1899 and chartered by the general assembly, the institution began its journey on Main Street in Buchanan. In 1995, they changed their name to the Bank of Botetourt.

Today, they have grown into a vital part of our local economy, boasting \$800 million in assets and employing 133 individuals across 13 locations.

Covering 2,500 square miles, they positively impact the lives of residents throughout Botetourt, Franklin, Roanoke, and Rockbridge Counties, as well as the city of Salem. Most recently, they have expanded their reach by establishing new offices in Rocky Mount and Goodwill's Melrose Plaza in Roanoke.

Throughout its remarkable 125-year history, the bank has been guided by seven dedicated presidents and remains one of only six Virginia State-chartered banks to have existed before the establishment of the State Corporation Commission.

Mr. Speaker, I, once again, congratulate the Bank of Botetourt for 125 years of outstanding, efficient, and courteous service to our citizens. May their success continue for many more years to come.

□ 1030

#### RECOGNIZING MUHLENBERG LUTHERAN CHURCH'S 175TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize an incredible milestone for Muhlenberg Lutheran Church in Virginia's Sixth District as they celebrate their 175th anniversary this year.

Muhlenberg has come far from their humble beginnings in 1849 in downtown Harrisonburg. The first worship space was a small, wooden structure on the corner of Wolfe and Main, and the congregation boasted 50 baptized members.

The church grew in size and spirit, and after one century, Muhlenberg broke ground on its current location along East Market Street.

The new soaring spire was topped with a unique "Gospel cross" containing four outward-pointing arrows. The cross is a perfect representation of the church's identity as members go forth in all directions to live out Christ's love.

Muhlenberg's values can be seen in their work to establish People Helping People and Second Home to sponsor refugee families and to support numerous local nonprofits and global missions.

Muhlenberg celebrated their anniversary with a homecoming banquet complete with live music, catered lunch, the unveiling of their signature quilt, and a special program recounting memories of the many saints who have gone before them.

As they mark 175 faithful years, they look forward to many more, inviting all to gather at the wellspring of God's grace.

#### HONORING GOLD STAR MOTHER'S DAY

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, this week, we honor Gold Star Mothers and the families of our fallen servicemembers.

Gold Star Mother's Day, observed on the last Sunday of September, is a tribute to the valor of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our Nation and the immense pain their families endure.

The Gold Star symbol originated during World War I when families displayed blue stars for their loved ones in the military.

When a servicemember was lost, families would replace the blue star with a gold star, a poignant representation of the profound loss experienced by these families. It is a symbol of love, loss, and sacrifice.

While we may never know the exact number of Gold Star families, the national Gold Star Family Registry reports at least 472,259 fallen military members are honored by loved ones. In Virginia alone, at least 9,640 servicemembers have been recognized.

Today and every day, we remember the bravery of our fallen heroes and acknowledge the tremendous sacrifice made by their mothers, fathers, siblings, and loved ones.

Their families endured unimaginable pain, yet they show incredible resilience and strength. Their sacrifice shapes their lives and reminds us of the true cost of freedom.

As we honor Gold Star Mothers, we extend our deepest gratitude to all military families. They are the backbone of our Armed Forces, supporting their loved ones through deployments and navigating uncertainty with resilience.

As a Nation, we are forever grateful for the sacrifices made by our servicemembers and their families. Mr. Speaker, we must continue to provide support and resources to help Gold Star families heal and honor the memories of their loved ones.

#### RECOGNIZING TERRI TULLEY

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable individual from

Virginia's Sixth District, Ms. Terri Tulley.

Tulley served in the United States Marine Corps from 2000 to 2003 and broke her leg while stationed in Japan in 2001. Due to complications, her leg was amputated in 2020.

Tulley went on to train for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in a variety of sports, including swimming, adaptive fitness, softball, pickleball, air rifle, and cornhole.

Tulley was one of 13 people chosen to compete in New Orleans in July on a team sent by the Veterans Affairs facility in Martinsburg, West Virginia.

She competed in 7 events and left with 1 gold medal and 2 silver medals in swimming and adaptive fitness. She also placed in the top 8 for pickleball and the top 10 for air rifle.

Her remarkable athletic accomplishments and commitment to overcoming adversity are testaments to her exceptional character. Her achievements as an athlete, veteran, wife, and mother deserve commendation.

Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate this achievement, we congratulate Terri Tulley on her remarkable feats and thank her for her service. On behalf of Virginia's Sixth District, I extend our deepest gratitude and best wishes.

#### HONORING LEONARD KRAEMER

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, today I honor a special person from Virginia's Sixth District, Mr. Leonard Kraemer, for his amazing service to our country.

#### WORKING IN A BIPARTISAN MANNER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to answer a question that I was asked actually on the plane ride here yesterday from Michigan.

I was sitting next to a woman. She recognized me. She was from a different political affiliation. She said: It just looks like such a mess in Washington. Is anything getting done?

I will highlight some of the things that we actually did get done this week, just in the past week, because of bipartisan cooperation.

It doesn't make headlines, it is not sexy, but I think it is important to understand that the country wants us to work together, and when we do, we pass things that are important.

This week, we passed important bipartisan priorities and legislation. We worked hard to get them across the finish line.

Here is an example. We passed the Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism Pilot Program Act. It is a lot of words, but it is a bipartisan bill I introduced in December of 2023. It is basically TSA PreCheck for freight coming across our borders. This bill will cut a lot of red tape for companies transporting goods across our borders.

In Michigan, we are a northern border State. It will help keep our country

safe by creating this pilot program that allows us to move more freight and allow freight and warehouse companies to participate in Customs and Border Protection's CTPAT program. It is a public-private partnership that basically allows you to get preclearance to move freight and store freight that has been precleared.

I introduced this bill because Michigan is a border State. Every single day we have 40,000 commuters, tourists, and truck drivers coming across our border.

Mr. Speaker, \$323 million worth of goods every single day is coming across our borders, one of the busiest land borders in the country.

I introduced this bill specifically because of freight companies and businesses like Frontline Logistics, which is a small, 15-person business in Brighton, Michigan. They reached out and they said: Hey, we want to expand this TSA PreCheck program so we can grow our business and other small businesses can grow.

The bill will become law because it was bipartisan, and I am grateful to the group of bipartisan Members in the House who sponsored this bill and helped get it passed not just in the House but in the Senate, and it is on its way to be signed at the White House.

Here is another example from yesterday. There was not a lot of press on this. We passed the IMPACTT Human Trafficking Act, which is designed to give survivors of human trafficking and law enforcement officers who fight this crime the tools and the resources they need.

Michigan is number eight in the country for human trafficking. Again, our border plays a role in this. It is an issue that is close to many people's hearts. We have had young women, in particular, taken from their homes and moved across State lines.

Again, this bill will become law because it was bipartisan, and I was proud to introduce it with Representative JOYCE as well as Representatives WAGNER and TITUS. That bipartisan support got it over the finish line in the House and in the Senate.

Similarly, just yesterday, the House passed the Senate version of the Building Chips in America Act, a bipartisan bill that Congresswoman KIGGANS introduced here in the House and on which I am a proud cosponsor.

It will streamline the process so that we can build more microchips in the United States, manufacture more microchips in the United States. We invented those microchips. We make zero percent of the microchips that go in cars. That is a problem. We were able to pass this yesterday because it was bipartisan, and it passed unanimously in the Senate.

These bills are evidence that we do not need to be at each other's throats. In fact, being at each other's throats is principally against the mission of what it means to be a Representative.

It means you are not getting work done. It means you are doing things for political posturing. It means that you care more about making a statement that makes the news or goes viral on Twitter than you do about actually moving the ball down the field for your constituents.

I hope that when Congress returns in November and when a new Congress is sworn in next year, we can learn that basic lesson. We do our best work when we work together, even when it is hard.

We could do things that support the Commerce Department. Yesterday, they put in a big countermeasure to make sure that Chinese-connected vehicles aren't moving around in the United States. Congress should pass legislation that strengthens that.

We could pass the farm bill, which should be bipartisan, a big piece of legislation every 5 years.

The National Defense Authorization Act, funding our military, funding our military salaries, big appropriations bills that go to the essential function of government, all of that is work on our plate after the election.

I sincerely hope that we are able to act like adults and do the things that most people want us to do, which is get in a room, hash things out, hammer it out, compromise, and move the ball forward for the American people. I urge my colleagues to remember this. It is much easier to get things done when we work together.

#### HOUSING ISSUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FLOOD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FLOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss Vice President KAMALA HARRIS' housing plan.

First, let's talk about the broader problem. Housing is less affordable and less available today, and it is bringing costs onto the American people.

Overall, housing underproduction costs the U.S. economy \$1.6 trillion in lost wages and productivity every single year.

The U.S. needs to build 4.3 million more apartments by 2035 to meet the demand for rental housing. This includes 600,000 units to fill the shortage from after the 2008 financial crisis.

Underproduction of housing has translated to higher housing costs, resulting in a decline of 4.7 million affordable apartments from 2015 to 2020.

Housing underproduction also increases the cost of living for families, inhibits geographic mobility, burdens both renters and buyers, and stifles economic productivity.

According to one estimate, from 1964 to 2009, our national housing shortage lowered aggregate economic growth by 36 percent.

All of that is to say there is no question we have a housing supply problem in this country. Unfortunately, Vice President KAMALA HARRIS' plans would make the problem much, much worse.

The Harris plan's goals are to "lower housing costs for working families and end America's housing shortage." The problem is that the Biden-Harris policies and the Harris plan will actually raise housing costs and worsen the housing crisis.

I will break it down piece by piece to demonstrate why. First, let's start with KAMALA HARRIS' proposal to add tens of thousands of dollars in new downpayment assistance for home buyers.

Large amounts of downpayment assistance might sound nice, it might sound like it is free, but it is exactly the wrong answer in this environment with housing shortages across the country.

More government subsidies won't bring housing costs down. They will continue to increase demand and drive prices even higher.

The great irony is that this policy would hurt the very people it is intended to help. Think about a young person who is currently renting but planning to buy a home. He and his wife may be looking at prices on Zillow and diligently saving up for a downpayment on a nearby house. They financially planned for this goal, and they have been working toward it for years.

If the Harris plan's subsidy were to go into effect, the prices of those homes would increase. They could find themselves further from their goal, even if they were able to receive the promised subsidy themselves.

It is a classic example of why progressive economic policies fail. Instead of working through a market-focused solution, the Harris plan simply throws money on the problem, and it hopes for the best. That is not leadership, and that is not going to solve the problem.

Next, let's talk about rent caps. Earlier this year, the Biden-Harris administration announced their intention to impose rent caps on "corporate landlords."

Rent caps are a failed policy with a long track record of exacerbating housing shortages by dissuading developers from building new rental units in high-demand areas.

If investors know that future rent increases will be capped, they shift their capital elsewhere. That means less building, less housing supply, fewer options, and it drives demand for existing units even higher, which pushes rents up in buildings that aren't even subject to the caps.

We have seen how these policies work in New York and San Francisco where rent control has been in place for decades.

According to AEIR, rent control policies in New York City resulted in more rental units being abandoned than built in the 1970s and 1980s.

We can expect more of the same under the Harris plan, which will replicate these failures on a national scale.

To recap, the Harris plan would implement an expensive downpayment assistance subsidy. It would hamper new

development by putting in place rent caps that disincentivize investment.

In other words, HARRIS would both increase demand and limit supply, the exact wrong combination of policies if you want housing costs to go down.

The result is a housing market where both renters and potential homeowners are squeezed, leaving everyone with fewer choices and higher prices.

Vice President HARRIS has said previously that “Bidenomics is working.” For those that are concerned about rising housing costs, her words should be taken literally and taken as a warning.

Vice President HARRIS plans to continue the inflationary policies of the Biden-Harris administration, exacerbating our housing affordability problems and leaving renters with less options and future home buyers with even higher costs.

If America wants to boost housing supply and end the inflationary policies of the Biden-Harris era, we need to cut red tape, streamline Federal housing programs, and remove barriers to building new units.

Until we move toward a solution that encourages private investment in development, we can expect that our country’s housing shortage will persist, leaving the American Dream out of reach for everyday working families.

□ 1045

#### REMEMBERING LARRY FISHER FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO HIS COMMUNITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DESAULNIER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Larry Fisher.

Throughout his life, Larry showed incredible dedication to his community. He was a proud alumnus of the University of Southern California. After his graduation from USC, he served as executive director of the California Democratic Party. In 1966, he joined Braun and Company and rose through the ranks to become CEO of this international public relations firm, which eventually became Braun and Ketchum.

In his retirement, Larry moved to the bay area with his wife, Betty, and briefly worked as director for Options Recovery in Berkeley, California, assisting people through the process of recovering from addiction. He then became the spiritual director, working with clients to help them find new meaning in life.

Sadly, Larry passed away this year. Our hearts are with his wife, Betty; their children, Timothy and Lara; and the rest of their family. Larry will be remembered for his outstanding character and community contributions. Please join me in honoring Larry Fisher for his incredible impact on his community, his State, and the country.

#### INCREDIBLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF AMIT ELOR

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Amit Elor for making history as the youngest wrestler from Team USA to earn an Olympic Gold Medal.

Amit was born and raised in Walnut Creek, California, and has been wrestling since the age of 4. In 2022, Amit won under 23, then under 20, and senior world titles, making her the youngest U.S. senior world champion in wrestling. She went on to win those titles again in 2023, making her the only wrestler in history to win these three titles 2 years in a row.

In August, Amit won an Olympic Gold Medal in the women’s freestyle in her weight group. Her astonishing skill and unwavering dedication to the sport make her an inspiration for the next generation of girls’ wrestling.

Our community is incredibly proud of Amit, and it was a delight to root for her during the Paris Olympics alongside California’s 10th Congressional District. Please join me in congratulating Amit Elor on her incredible accomplishments and the many more to come.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF BETTE BOATMUN

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and work of Bette Boatman.

Bette was a trailblazer for women in leadership in the community, water agencies in California, and in special districts. She was a native New Yorker who settled in Concord, California, with her family of six. In 1974, Bette was appointed to the Contra Costa Water District’s Board, and she served in that seat for over 46 years. She was instrumental in implementing many significant projects, such as building the Randall-Bold Water Treatment Plant and expanding Los Vaqueros Reservoir.

Bette was passionate about bringing more women into elected office and into the water industry. She was an active member of many organizations, including the Concord branch of American Association of University Women, Soroptimist International of the Americas, and many others.

In 2020, the Association of California Water Agencies presented her with a lifetime achievement award for her lasting contributions to California water.

Sadly, Bette passed away last week, on September 19, and our hearts are with her family. Bette will be remembered as a remarkable leader and a true visionary when it came to water conservation and women in politics. Please join me in honoring Bette Boatman for her incredible impact on our environment, her community, the State of California, and this country.

#### SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CISCOMANI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in observation of Suicide Preven-

tion Month, a time to raise awareness on this urgent crisis and to rededicate ourselves to watching out and caring for each other, not just this month but every single day.

Suicide is a complex, personal, and devastating moment. The loss of life is painful, and the heartbreaking aftermath spreads beyond the individual to friends, family, coworkers, neighbors, and society itself.

Whether you are a servicemember, veteran, or civilian, mental health challenges affect us all. We must work to end the stigma surrounding mental health and asking for help. Seeking help is not a sign of weakness. In fact, it is a sign of strength.

If you or a loved one are struggling with your mental health, please know there is a caring community who stands ready to assist. You can get help 24/7 by calling or texting 988 or you can chat with the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988lifeline.org.

During this month, let us dedicate ourselves to shifting public perceptions, spreading hope, and sharing vital information and resources for people struggling with their mental health.

Know that you are not alone.

#### ADDRESSING CRISIS AT THE SOUTHERN BORDER

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my legislation, H.R. 9678, the FLASH Act.

For 3½ years, border districts, like mine, have suffered the devastating consequences stemming from the crisis at our southern border. As a result, bad actors are emboldened, CBP agents and officers are overwhelmed and overworked, our communities have become more dangerous, and the environment along the border has been harmed.

My legislation will address this crisis and secure the border by allowing States to place temporary barriers on Federal lands, providing for the construction of navigable roads to enhance CBP’s ability to do their job, and directing Federal managers to develop plans to address growing trash piles along the border that hurt our environment.

Securing the border and protecting the environment are not partisan issues. They remain top of mind for the constituents in my entire southern Arizona district.

I remain committed to working with anyone on either side of the aisle to find common ground to address the issues impacting communities in my district and our Nation.

#### HISPANIC RESTAURANT WEEK

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1480, recognizing Hispanic Restaurant Week, a time to mark and honor the significant contribution of Hispanic restaurant owners and workers.

In southern Arizona and across the United States, countless Hispanics have opened a restaurant in search of their American Dream. These establishments allow Hispanics to share their rich culinary traditions and bold flavors, all while creating jobs and

strengthening our local economy. Growing up in a Hispanic household myself, I can confidently say these are some of the best restaurants in our country.

As a Hispanic myself, I am proud to co-lead this resolution with a bipartisan group of colleagues to dedicate this week to Hispanic restaurants and thank all of the owners, chefs, servers, dishwashers, and more for all their work and contributions to our community and Nation.

#### ACCESS PROMOTES UNDERSTANDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. KENNEDY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 20th anniversary of the Arab-American Community Center for Economic and Social Services of WNY. ACCESS was founded to promote understanding and foster bonds of friendship between Arab Americans and people of all faiths, ethnicities, and backgrounds, recognizing the critical importance of dialogue and understanding.

Over the past 20 years, ACCESS has connected individuals with legal services, financial assistance, healthcare, and employment opportunities. It provides our young people, who often face uncertain and challenging circumstances, with the mentorship and programs required to enrich their lives and set them on a path of success for the future.

In addition, ACCESS is committed to aiding immigrants as they pursue their dream of citizenship, helping them navigate the application process financially, culturally, and linguistically. For refugees fleeing persecution, poverty, and violence, ACCESS offers programs that help people and families begin new lives, acclimate to life in the United States, and thrive.

I thank Executive Director Talib Abdullah and the leadership of the board for their extraordinary efforts meeting our community's needs and making western New York a more welcoming and connected home for all.

Our community and Nation look forward to their continued success and congratulate them.

#### SICKLE CELL DISEASE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the passage of the Sickle Cell Disease and Other Heritable Blood Disorders Research, Surveillance, Prevention, and Treatment Act.

I am proud to support this critical legislation to reauthorize Federal efforts to research, prevent, and treat sickle cell disease through 2028.

Sickle cell disease is an inherited genetic blood condition affecting approximately 100,000 Americans and a million people around the world.

As a clinical nurse specialist caring for sickle cell patients, my own mother knew firsthand the hardships stemming from this terrible disease, includ-

ing pain, anemia, infections, and stroke, as well as kidney, liver, and heart disease.

For those with sickle cell, life expectancy is 20 years shorter than the average.

We have more to do, especially as this disease disproportionately impacts Black and Latino people who are already facing health inequities.

To put it in perspective, in my home State of New York, one in every 365 Black babies is born with sickle cell disease.

During Sickle Cell Awareness Month this September, the legislation passed in the House will honor the resilience of those affected by this disease, advance important research to improve treatment options, and help ensure equitable access to care for all patients. The time to act is now.

#### COMBATING ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the passage of two bipartisan bills that will continue our Nation's commitment to researching, treating, and ultimately curing Alzheimer's disease that has caused so much heartbreak and pain across the country.

Families are enduring the profound emotional, physical, and financial toll of Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Nearly 7 million Americans currently live with Alzheimer's, but their burden is not theirs alone. Each of those individuals have families and communities that are impacted. In fact, the Alzheimer's Association estimates that 11 million Americans provide unpaid support to patients every year, accounting for more than 18 billion hours of care.

This disease impacts families in every State, city, neighborhood, and of all races, incomes, and religions. My own family has felt the pain of Alzheimer's, as my grandmother suffered for years with this debilitating disease. I watched as my family provided 24-hour care for her in her home until the time that she passed.

It is critical that we make Federal investments to research and address Alzheimer's disease and provide resources for the patients and families who are impacted. The bipartisan legislation to extend and strengthen the National Alzheimer's Project and to develop the Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Research, Care, and Services will go a long way to combat this terrible disease.

I thank the advocates who have volunteered their time caring for loved ones, fighting for research funding, and for always keeping faith for future generations that will hopefully not have to feel the grief of watching a loved one slowly slip away.

#### REMEMBERING MARK MORTENSON

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of Mark Mortenson, who passed on September 14 and whose life work always brought beauty and wonder to so many lives in western New York.

After taking on his most recent role as president and CEO of Buffalo and

Erie County Botanical Gardens in 2022, Mark was ready to take on a new multimillion dollar expansion to fulfill its mission to change the region.

His life will always be remembered in western New York. Our prayers are for his loved ones that he left behind: his husband, Curt Maranto; and his children, Nicolas, Kiara, Mikey, Elliott, Emily, and the late Clayton, who will always be remembered.

He will be missed. May he rest in peace.

□ 1100

#### COMMEMORATING FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MIDDLEBURG'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BEAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the Lord says that when two or more people gather in prayer, there He will be also. At the First Baptist Church of Middleburg this past Sunday, we certainly felt the Lord's presence.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a spiritual rock in northeast Florida. On September 22, First Baptist Church of Middleburg celebrated its 125th anniversary.

Abby and I had the privilege of attending the commemorative service this past Sunday, and when we entered the sanctuary, it was obvious the holy spirit was already there. The congregation, the choir, Pastor Chris Bonts, and the entire pastoral staff team were celebrating the church's long history and its future as a missionary church.

In 1899, a dozen citizens gathered in the back of a local general store to start a church that would honor the Lord and serve Middleburg. Mr. Speaker, 125 years later from those humble beginnings, First Baptist Middleburg has transformed the lives of thousands through the Gospel and community partnerships.

From youth outreach programs to food pantries to recovery ministries for those impacted by addiction and a robust missionary presence around the world, First Baptist Middleburg is spreading the good news to neighbors and strangers alike.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating First Baptist Middleburg's 125 years in service to Him and others. I congratulate First Baptist, and let's go get them on the next 125 years.

#### HONORING CAELEB DRESSEL

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great northeast Florida athlete who made a big splash this summer at the Paris Olympics.

Caeleb Dressel is a Green Cove Springs native who was a Clay High Blue Devil who went on to earn—get this—10 NCAA national championships at the University of Florida as a Fighting Gator. Caeleb is a three-time Olympian, earning a career nine Gold Medals and one Silver, placing him in a very elite group of swimmers.

Caeleb has the type of résumé that can impress almost anyone. In addition to holding several current world records in swimming, Caeleb was the 2021 Sports Illustrated Male Athlete of the Year.

Caeleb is a husband and father who takes all his roles seriously.

In a recent interview, Caeleb talked about the importance of training and hard work and the honor of being part of a national team, as well as the joy of seeing other people—how about this—reaching their goals and dreams. In short, Caeleb Dressel is an inspiration to us all.

Mr. Speaker, I ask our colleagues to join me today in recognizing a great American athlete who continues to make Clay County proud. We are all so glad it went swimmingly.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of Caeleb. Go get them, Caeleb.

#### HONORING RYAN MURPHY

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, northeast Florida has done it again. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a mainstay of U.S. swimming and a northeast Florida native who absolutely smashed it at the 2024 Paris Olympics, Ryan Murphy.

Ryan hails from Jacksonville and first dreamed about the Olympics when he was 7. This Bolles Bulldog has quite the résumé. In addition to an impressive five Olympic Gold Medals, Ryan is a former and current world record holder who medaled in the 100-meter backstroke in three Olympic Games.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing a northeast Floridian who exemplifies American excellence and hard work. Ryan Murphy's pool résumé is very swim-pressive. Jacksonville and his country are proud.

Whatever his next race is, go get them.

#### RECOGNIZING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH HONOREES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Hispanic Heritage Month to recognize two constituents of our district who have impacted the history and culture of Hispanic Americans across Nebraska and the Second Congressional District.

Linda Rivera Garcia and Jose Francisco Garcia, descendants of Mexican-born grandparents, founded the Mexican American Historical Society of the Midlands. They have dedicated their whole adult lives to creating awareness of the rich legacy built by the presence of Mexican Americans in the Midlands.

Linda Garcia grew up on a farm in Papillion, Nebraska, my hometown, and attended a one-room country school. She graduated from Papillion High School with her brother, representing the only persons of color in the late fifties and early sixties. Linda would go on to obtain a degree in the

arts at the College of Saint Mary in Omaha, Nebraska.

For over 50 years, Linda has used her artistic presence as a community advocate for Mexican Americans. She has received many accolades, including being named Hispanic Woman of the Year by the Mexican American Commission. The Great Plains Museum in Lincoln and the Willa Cather museum in Red Cloud, Nebraska, featured Linda's art exhibits. She serves as a storyteller with the National Arts Council and Humanities Nebraska and is the artistic director and cultural curator of the South Omaha Museum of Immigrant History.

Jose Garcia was born and raised on the west side of Kansas City, Missouri. Growing up, Jose sold TV Guides and worked at a Mexican grocery store.

After graduating high school, he would go on to work at Macy's, Aetna Insurance, and the Commerce Trust bank, all while attending night school at a junior college.

In 1966, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served in Vietnam. Jose would then use the GI Bill to obtain a degree in psychology from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and became involved in the Chicano student movement of the time.

Jose moved to Omaha in 1976 and married the love of his life, Linda, in 1977, starting a family just south of Saint Frances Cabrini Church in South Omaha. Jose directed the Chicano Awareness Center and, in 1980, began working with the Chicago & North Western Railroad. Additionally, he hosted a community news program called "Razatimes."

Aside from their accomplishments, Linda and Jose would establish three "Houses of Culture," "Casas de Cultural," in South Omaha. In 2009, they founded the Mexican American Historical Society of the Midlands to curate, preserve, collect, and exhibit the presence of Mexican-American and Latino history, culture, and traditions.

Through the historical society, the Garcias currently manage a 2,000-square-foot collection of Chicano, Latino, and Mexican cultural materials, images, literature, folk art, and objects documenting the postcolonial Spanish-speaking peoples with Midwestern ancestry. They also support the South Omaha Museum of Immigrant History.

The Garcias' lifelong commitment to preserving Hispanic heritage and culture will impact future generations. As we reflect on the significant contributions of Hispanic Americans to our society and culture, I recognize and thank both Garcias for the long-lasting legacy they have contributed to Nebraska's Second Congressional District.

#### RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 6 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Illinois) at noon.

#### PRAAYER

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

From the bottom of our hearts, O Lord, we offer our prayers to You. Our whole being, we lay before You, trusting that You will receive us and will receive our prayers in the mercy of Your loving-kindness.

Now, having given ourselves to You, our hopes, our fears, our plans, and our control, we pray that we will have the faith to lean wholly on You and not on our own understanding, that we will believe in Your sovereignty that we don't feel like we have to figure everything out on our own.

Instead, may we yield our whole selves, submitting both our pride and our will to Your leading. May we loose our grip on the reins and let You direct our paths. In everything we do today and everywhere we go, may we listen for and heed Your voice.

In this may our whole spirit, soul, and body be found blameless in Your sight.

In Your gracious 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 gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. BROWNLEY 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.

#### FOCUSING ON SUICIDE PREVENTION

(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, September is Suicide Prevention Month, and nearly every 12 minutes, an American dies by suicide.

It is now the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. Suicide claims the lives of more than 2,000 Pennsylvanians each year, an average of 5 lives a day.

Madam Speaker, suicide is preventable. Increasing access to crisis resources saves lives. Mental and behavioral health research saves lives. Ending the stigma surrounding suicide saves lives.

There is no single cause of suicide, and suicide risk increases when several health factors and life stressors converge to create an experience of hopelessness and despair.

Together, we can reverse this course. By making mental health care, substance abuse treatment, and suicide prevention a national priority, we can reverse the tide on these deaths of despair.

In fact, in 2020, the U.S. designated 988 as the national suicide and crisis hotline, making it easier for all Americans to reach help if needed.

Madam Speaker, let's keep the conversation going year-round. We can all play an important role in prevention.

---

#### PROJECT 2025 PLEDGES EGREGIOUS ASSAULT ON OUR FREEDOMS

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

Ms. BROWNLEY. Madam Speaker, from imposing a nationwide ban on abortion to curbing voting rights to gutting Social Security and Medicare, Project 2025 is an extremist MAGA Republican manifesto that pledges an egregious assault on our freedoms, our economy, and our democracy.

At the urging of the former President, a small but extreme number of House Republicans are threatening to shut down the government unless they can impose radical actions of Trump's Project 2025.

A government shutdown would not only have a devastating economic impact, but it would jeopardize the critical services and programs American families rely on, hinder our military readiness, and deprive veterans of the healthcare they need and benefits they have earned.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to reassess their priorities and prioritize the interests of the American people over the interests of the former President. We must keep the Federal Government open and keep the Federal Government working for the people.

---

#### OBSERVING CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL WELLNESS MONTH

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

Mrs. KIM of California. Madam Speaker, September marks National Children's Emotional Wellness Month.

Depression and anxiety impact far too many children and teenagers. One in five Americans ages 3 through 17 suffers from an emotional, mental, or behavioral disorder, according to NIH.

Pediatricians, therapists, and mental health care providers work around the clock to support the emotional needs and well-being of our youth.

Local nonprofits, such as the Extraordinary Lives Foundation in California's 40th District, can also play a role in addressing the emotional and mental health challenges among young Americans through unique approaches such as therapeutic resources and educational opportunities.

Madam Speaker, I thank our mental health care providers for equipping children and families with tools to adapt to difficult circumstances and express emotions in a healthy way.

Together, we will create a better future for our children.

---

#### HONORING 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF NAZARETH UNIVERSITY

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

Mr. MORELLE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the 100th anniversary of Nazareth University, led by my dear friend, President Beth Paul, which was founded in 1924 by members of the Sisters of St. Joseph, a group with which I proudly share a name.

The five founding sisters saw the school as an opportunity to respond to the needs of the time and provide women with educational opportunities.

On September 24, 1924, Nazareth's initial class of 25 began their studies in the glass house on Lake Avenue, a date we now recognize as Naz Day.

They set out to create success against all odds, and by every measure, it has been an outstanding success.

One hundred years later, they have grown to a 150-acre campus, with nearly 2,500 students in more than 80 academic programs. The legacy of the Sisters of St. Joseph lives on through Nazareth's success, and I am proud to support their continued growth and prosperity.

Madam Speaker, here is to the next 100 years.

---

#### END HUNGER NOW

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

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, antihunger advocates across the country have been sounding the alarm that hunger is increasing at a disturbing rate. In my district, I am seeing longer lines at food banks, empty shelves at pantries, and people skipping meals because they can't afford food.

A new report from the Economic Research Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture confirms that about 3 million more people live in households struggling with food insecurity in 2023 than in 2022. In total, 18 million households, 47 million people, are struggling to feed themselves and their families. It is shameful.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, more investments in our antihunger and antipoverty safety net helped feed people, and we saw hunger decrease.

Sadly, Republicans blocked extensions of these programs, and now, we have seen hunger increase.

We have the roadmap. We know what to do. What we need is the political will to follow it.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in demanding a bipartisan farm bill that improves our Federal nutrition programs, a tax bill that reinstates the expanded EITC and child tax credit, and legislation to implement the Biden-Harris administration's National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health.

Together, we can end hunger now.

---

#### RECOGNIZING THE HONORABLE ALGENON L. MARBLEY

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

Mrs. BEATTY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of the distinguished service of the Honorable Algenon L. Marbley from my district, who has served the Southern District of Ohio since 1997 after his appointment by President Clinton and unanimous confirmation by the United States Senate.

In 2019, Judge Marbley became the first Black American to serve as chief district judge for the Southern District of Ohio.

Under his leadership, the court remained one of the Nation's most productive, even through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2023, the district was ranked in the top 15 most productive Federal district courts, and his dedication to justice is unparalleled.

As Chief Judge Marbley celebrates his 70th birthday and concludes his tenure, I extend my deepest gratitude and friendship for his service and wish him the best as he serves as a senior Federal judge.

---

#### RECOGNIZING FREDERICKSBURG NATIONALS ON WINNING THE CAROLINA LEAGUE BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

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

Ms. SPANBERGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Fredericksburg Nationals for winning the Carolina League baseball championship.

On Wednesday night, the FredNats won the third and deciding game of the Carolina League championship series.

The FredNats took the series 3-0, securing the franchise's first league crown since relocating to Fredericksburg in 2020. This run was no easy task, and at every game, the FredNats showed us that championships are won with passion, grit, and teamwork.

I must admit that I had the opportunity to throw out the first pitch for the FredNats earlier this season, and after that, I definitely knew that we should leave baseball to the pros.

As the Representative for Virginia's Seventh District, I congratulate our Fredericksburg Nationals—the players, coaches, staff, and fans—for a terrific season and this incredible achievement.

We couldn't be prouder.

---

**HONORING AL MCCOY, THE GREATEST BASKETBALL ANNOUNCER OF ALL TIME**

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

Mr. STANTON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of the greatest basketball announcer of all time and Arizona sports legend, the voice of the Phoenix Suns, Al McCoy, who passed away recently at age 91.

When fans think of the Phoenix Suns, we hear Al McCoy. When I was growing up in Phoenix, NBA games weren't televised, and working-class families, like my own, couldn't afford tickets to the Suns games. My family experienced the Phoenix Suns sitting around the living room radio, listening to the great Al McCoy.

Al's unforgettable voice took my family with them all the way to the 1976 championship game against the Boston Celtics, high-fiving each other with each "whammo," "swish-a-roo for two," or "zing go the strings," and sharing his frustration after a crushing game six defeat.

The Stanton family, like so many Suns fans in Arizona, were brought closer together over our shared love for basketball all because of Al McCoy.

Over five decades on the mike, Al's constant presence brought the entire Phoenix community together. No matter what was going on in the world, Suns fans knew it was going to be a good day when we heard Al say "shazam" on the radio.

Madam Speaker, I say Godspeed to Al.

---

**HONORING JARED ISAACMAN AS FIRST NONPROFESSIONAL ASTRONAUT TO WALK IN SPACE**

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

Ms. WILD. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to honor one of my constituents,

Jared Isaacman, who made history earlier this month as the first nonprofessional astronaut to walk in space, as part of the SpaceX Polaris Dawn mission. While in space, the crew conducted tests to study how humans can function in space.

Jared has long been an integral part of the Lehigh Valley community. He is the founder of an Allentown-based company, Shift4, an e-commerce payment system now seen all over the world.

Jared is also a remarkable philanthropist who has positively impacted so many lives throughout our district. Thanks to his generous contributions, the Lehigh Valley now has an outstanding children's hospital at St. Luke's Hospital network.

Children in our community are able to receive the care they need in a less intimidating and more child-friendly environment, helping ease the stress of medical visits for kids and parents alike.

Madam Speaker, I thank Jared for his commitment to our Lehigh Valley community, and I congratulate him again on this historic flight.

---

□ 1215

**HONORING MAJOR GENERAL ONDRA L. BERRY**

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

Mr. HORSFORD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Major General Ondra L. Berry, a leader who has dedicated his life to both his community and his country.

General Berry enlisted in the Nevada Air National Guard in 1986 and earned his commission as a second lieutenant by 1990. He served 25 years with the Reno Police Department, retiring as assistant chief.

In 2019, he made history as Nevada's first Black adjutant general, leading the National Guard through its largest-ever activation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

General Berry's initiatives, including the Battle Born Youth ChalleNGe Academy and mental health programs like Purple Resolve have impacted countless lives.

His career has earned him honors like the Legion of Merit and the Meritorious Service Medal, and he has served his community by cofounding the Northern Nevada Black Cultural Awareness Society and serving on several boards.

I wish General Berry the very best in his well-deserved retirement.

---

**SUPPLEMENTAL DISASTER FUNDING**

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

Ms. TOKUDA. Madam Speaker, this week, the House will vote to keep the government open until December. While millions of Americans can rest assured that critical services will continue, disaster-stricken communities like Florida, which is currently facing another hurricane, Georgia, Tennessee, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Vermont, and yes, my community in Maui, have once again been denied the additional support they need and they deserve.

This continuing resolution is yet another missed opportunity to give my Maui constituents some certainty in their long road to recovery.

Just last week, Congressman LAMALFA and I led a bipartisan coalition of Members, all representing disaster-affected communities, in calling for Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery funding and the Disaster Tax Relief Act to be included in government spending legislation. Instead, Congress will leave town this week with little to offer.

Any year-end government spending package must include disaster recovery funding. We cannot delay further, not when far too many communities like Maui are still waiting and hurting. We owe it to them and all our disaster-stricken communities to get this done, and I will not stop fighting until we deliver the support they so desperately need.

---

**CONGRATULATING BISHOP DR. J.E. REDDICK ON HIS RETIREMENT**

(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, from a skinny kid who preached on a street corner in Kinston, North Carolina, to the national president of the National Convention of Free Will Baptists, United States of America, overseeing 150,000 members, we owe a great deal of honor and gratitude to Johnny Ervin Reddick, also known back home as Bishop Dr. J.E. Reddick, on his retirement and life of service.

At the age of 8, he wanted to preach the Gospel. By 29, he was elected the annual bishop/moderator, the youngest in his church's history.

He has served many congregations, including pastoring Mt. Calvary Free Will Baptist Church in La Grange for 70 years and Maury Chapel Free Will Baptist Church in Hookerton for 60 years.

Donned in a robe with his cross, his sermons have inspired thousands, including me. His true American story, grounded in faith, is about serving the Lord and people.

We thank and honor the bishop for his prayers and inspiration. May God bless him.

---

**DARK DAYS WITH PROJECT 2025**

(Mr. MAGAZINER asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MAGAZINER. Madam Speaker, it is no wonder that Donald Trump doesn't want people to know that Project 2025 is his plan. It is cruel, unpopular, and out of touch with the needs of the American people.

Among other things, Project 2025 will hand a future Trump administration nearly unlimited power, which they will use to eliminate health coverage for people with preexisting conditions.

Do you remember what it used to be like when people would go to the doctor, only to be denied healthcare because they had asthma or diabetes or cancer? There were no caps on out-of-pocket costs, so a trip to the hospital meant that a family could lose everything.

Donald Trump's Project 2025 plan calls for ending the Affordable Care Act and taking us back to the dark days when even people who had health insurance would be denied care simply because they had been sick or injured in the past. Even the \$35 a month cap on insulin would end under Donald Trump's Project 2025 plan.

It is dangerous, it is cruel, it throws the health and safety of millions of Americans into jeopardy, and we cannot let Donald Trump and congressional Republicans take us back to those dark days.

#### HONORING JOHNNY CASH

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, today I attended a marvelous program in Emancipation Hall where a statue of Johnny Cash was unveiled for time immemorial.

The statue of Johnny Cash was placed there by the State of Arkansas who earlier placed the statue of Daisy Bates in the Capitol.

I commend the State of Arkansas for doing that, and for the outstanding addresses by Arkansas legislators, their Governor, and by Rosanne Cash, daughter of Johnny Cash.

Johnny Cash was born in Arkansas, but he came to Memphis to start his musical career. He went to Sun Records, and Sam Phillips got him started.

He was at Sun Records on a day when Elvis was there, Jerry Lee Lewis was there, and Carl Perkins was there. They put together songs that day that Sam Phillips recorded. It was called the Million Dollar Quartet.

Johnny Cash was a great singer, a great humanitarian, worthy of this honor, and someone we should all remember, a life well lived and memorialized here in the Capitol.

#### CELEBRATING THE KAPTUR-ROGOWSKI HOUSE OPENING

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise with profound gratitude to congratulate and celebrate Erie County Health Department's new Kaptur-Rogowski House, a new landmark of compassion and community impact that just opened in northwest Ohio. I thank Erie County Health Commissioner Pete Schade and his marvelous committee.

This new facility, born from a vision of healing and supported by a broad partnership of community, is more than just a building. It is a beacon of hope for those facing mental health crises, substance abuse recovery, and other urgent health needs.

The Kaptur-Rogowski House offers a sanctuary where individuals can find respite, receive treatment, and begin their journey toward recovery with the support of dedicated professionals.

I am thrilled to see this vision come to life in honor of our mother, father, and brother's legacy and reflecting our community's values of empathy and support.

Our work is far from over. This is just one giant step to longer-term treatment and a continued effort to ensure every person in America has access to the care and support they require.

Thank you to everyone who has made this possible. Together, we are building a better America by making a lasting difference one life at a time.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3334, SANCTIONING TYRANNICAL AND OPPRESSIVE PEOPLE WITHIN THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 8205, KEEPING VIOLENT OFFENDERS OFF OUR STREETS ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 8790, FIX OUR FORESTS ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. 1469, ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR KEY OFFICIALS IN THE BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION RESPONSIBLE FOR DECISION-MAKING AND EXECUTION FAILURES THROUGHOUT THE WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1486 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

#### H. RES. 1486

*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. 3334) to provide for the imposition of sanctions on members of the National Communist Party Congress of the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are

wedged. 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 Foreign Affairs or their respective designees. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Foreign Affairs now printed in the bill, 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. No further amendment to the bill, as amended, shall be in order except those printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules. Each such further amendment may be offered 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, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such further amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill 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. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 8205) to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide that Byrne grant funds may be used for public safety report systems, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 118-51 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 the Judiciary or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 3. 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. 8790) to expedite under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and improve forest management activities on National Forest System lands, on public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, and on Tribal lands to return resilience to overgrown, fire-prone forested lands, 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 Natural Resources or their respective designees. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill, modified by the amendment printed in part C 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. No further amendment to the bill, as amended, shall be in order except those printed in part D of the report of the Committee on Rules. Each such further amendment may be offered 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, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such further amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill 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. 4. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the resolution (H. Res. 1469) ensuring accountability for key officials in the Biden-Harris administration responsible for decision-making and execution failures throughout the withdrawal from Afghanistan. The resolution shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the resolution and preamble to adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question except 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.

SEC. 5. Section 3(j) of House Resolution 5 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this subsection, ‘non-governmental capacity’ shall mean any capacity except representing the executive branch of the United States government.”.

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

Mr. BURGESS. Madam 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.

□ 1230

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

MODIFICATION TO AMENDMENT NO. 3 PRINTED IN PART D OF HOUSE REPORT 118-705 OFFERED BY MR. BURGESS

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that amendment No. 3 printed in Part D of House Report 118-705, to be offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO) or a designee, be modified by the amendment I have placed at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the modification.

The Clerk read as follows:

Modify amendment number 3 printed in Part D of H. Rept. 118-705 to read as follows:

“At the end of Title III add the following:  
**SEC. 307 CONTAINER AERIAL FIREFIGHTING SYSTEM (CAFFS).**

‘(a) Evaluation.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the National Interagency Aviation Committee and the Interagency Airtanker Board, shall jointly conduct an evaluation of the container aerial firefighting system to assess the use of such system to mitigate and suppress wildfires.

‘(b) Report.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the National Interagency Aviation Committee and the Interagency Airtanker Board, shall jointly submit to the appropriate committees a report that includes the results of the evaluation required under subsection (a).

‘(c) Appropriate Committees Defined.—In this section, the term “appropriate committees” means—(1) the Committees on Agriculture and Natural Resources of the House of Representatives; and (2) the Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.”’

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The amendment is modified.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, last night, the House Committee on Rules met to report House Resolution 1486, providing for the consideration of four pieces of legislation.

First, the rule provides for consideration of H. Res. 1469, condemning the Biden-Harris administration and individuals therein responsible for the military withdrawal of Afghanistan and subsequent evacuation. This will be considered under a closed rule, with 1 hour of debate equally divided by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Second, the rule provides for consideration of H.R. 3334, the STOP CCP Act, under a structured rule, with 1 hour of debate equally divided by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and provides one motion to recommit.

Third, the rule provides for consideration of H.R. 8205, the Keeping Violent Offenders Off Our Streets Act, under a closed rule, with 1 hour of debate

equally divided between the chair and the ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary and provides for one motion to recommit.

The rule also provides for consideration of H.R. 8790, the Fix Our Forests Act, under a structured rule, with 1 hour of debate equally divided between the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources and provides one motion to recommit.

Finally, the rule provides clarification in House rules regarding the regulations governing the availability of remote witness testimony.

Madam Speaker, it has been over 3 years since the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan; 3 years since 13 members of our armed services fell on account of the Biden-Harris administration’s rushed operation to fulfill a campaign promise; 3 years of not one single acknowledgment by the President, the Democratic nominee for President, the current Vice President, or anyone in the administration, for that matter, to acknowledge what happened in August 2021.

For better or for worse, the American people saw this tragedy with their own eyes, as Afghan civilians clung to an airplane leaving Kabul airport, and the American people have been awaiting accountability from those responsible for a long time.

Well, that wait ends this week when the House considers H. Res. 1469 to condemn those in the Biden-Harris administration responsible for the events that led up to and unfolded in July and August of 2021.

Despite the Biden-Harris administration’s incessant stonewalling of proper congressional oversight and accountability, Chairman McCaul and the Foreign Affairs Committee have investigated the events surrounding and during the Afghanistan withdrawal. Their recently released report is as stunning as it is outrageous.

The Biden-Harris administration ignored that the Taliban was not meeting its obligations under the Doha agreement. For example, the Taliban had yet to cut ties with al-Qaida by the time the evacuation started, something that the Biden-Harris administration knew.

Secondly, the administration prioritized optics and political expediency over the safety of our service-members and civilian personnel. The Taliban had already entered Kabul before the evacuation of nonmilitary personnel began.

Third, they failed to plan for the go-to-zero order appropriately, which led to the deadliest attack on U.S. military personnel in a decade.

Fourth, the failures damaged America’s credibility and standing in the world. I cannot stress enough the significance of these events. We abandoned our allies, leaving them to slaughter, and allowed terrorism once again to flourish in the area.

Fifth, there was a concerted and deliberate misinformation campaign that

touched nearly every stage of the withdrawal.

These failures have had a profound impact on our country, but not a single person in the Biden-Harris administration has yet been held accountable.

Recruitment into our military has plummeted after the prospective servicemembers saw that they would basically be used as disposable chess pawns in a political promise.

The Taliban has organized a de facto permanent regime built on torture, violence, and religious and political oppression. Without a United States presence in the area, counterterrorism operations have been hindered, and foreign adversaries like China have moved in to establish diplomatic relations with the regime.

Most importantly, however, these events signaled weakness, emboldening China, Russia, and their proxies to become more aggressive with their geopolitical ambitions. China became emboldened to pursue its objectives with respect to Taiwan. Russian leaders saw an opening, and they invaded Ukraine, knowing that the United States was weak and could not be trusted, a shameful and disastrous series of events that our country is paying the price for currently and will continue to pay this price for decades.

Afghanistan is not the only area where the Biden-Harris administration has shown weakness. This week, the House of Representatives will consider the STOP CCP Act, which will impose significant and punitive sanctions on individuals of the Chinese Communist Party.

Madam Speaker, there is broad agreement in this body over the atrocities of the Chinese Communist Party. Where we seemingly don't agree is whether there should be consequences for these atrocities. Up to this point, the Biden-Harris administration has yet to impose any meaningful sanction on the Chinese Government officials for their political and religious oppression of their own people. The STOP CCP Act forces the administration to finally do so and speak loudly that oppression of God-given rights will be met with consequence.

Speaking of consequences, the Keeping Violent Offenders Off Our Streets Act imposes strict regulations and penalties on charitable bond funds, whose funding has exploded in recent years as a result of the George Floyd protests in the summer of 2020. These funds, like the Minnesota Freedom Fund, bail out violent criminals who in many cases then go on to commit more crime. H.R. 8205 ensures that these funds are subject to penalties and licensing requirements to protect our communities and keep criminals where they belong, which is behind bars.

The final bill provided under the rule, the Fix Our Forests Act, is bipartisan legislation that addresses the wildfire crisis across the country. Now, in classic fashion, the Biden-HARRIS administration and their allies in Congress

spent billions of dollars to address the increase in wildfire occurrences and their severity without fixing the underlying problem: bureaucratic red tape and extreme environmental and serial litigators that prevent the correct management of forests.

H.R. 8790 makes targeted, yet transformational, changes to the Federal agencies responsible for our forests to improve the way we manage our forests and ensure projects are not held up in the bureaucracy or in the courts.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying bills, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, since day one of this Congress, the Republican majority has been a complete and total disaster—failed speakerships, failed rules votes, failed bills, failure to address real problems, failure to pass real solutions, and failure to even send bills to the Senate. Today is more of the same, more failure from this dysfunctional Republican majority.

Speaker JOHNSON promised he would get all 12 appropriations bills across the finish line before August. They couldn't even pass half of them. He tried to coax the MAGA extremists into voting for a continuing resolution by tacking on more election fraud conspiracies. That plan went down in flames.

Here we are, a week before the government shuts down, and Republicans had to move on to a new plan. Despite the Rules Committee taking testimony from appropriators last night on the continuing resolution, there is no CR in this rule. I checked. I double checked. I made sure nothing was stuck to the pages. I looked under the table.

What was the point of that exercise last night in the Rules Committee other than to once again demonstrate that this Republican majority cannot fulfill its most basic function, keeping the government open without help from Democrats?

Let's be clear. Their majority is not a working majority. They don't have the votes without Democrats, so my friends are putting up a continuing resolution on suspension and, once again, they are asking Democrats to bail them out.

Madam Speaker, when will the other side stop letting the MAGA extremists run this place?

Look at the bills that are coming to the floor today: More MAGA messaging measures that will never, ever become law. It is pathetic. There is a bill that claims to be tough on China. Well, let me tell you, there are very few people who are as tough a critic as I am when it comes to China's human rights record. I think I am one of a handful, only a handful, of legislators in this

body and the other body who have actually been sanctioned by China. I am not even allowed in the country nor is my family. Believe me when I say this is a stupid way to handle a complicated geopolitical challenge. We need to be smart on China. We need to pass bills that actually get results, not just pass bills that sound tough on paper, which is all this bill is.

□ 1245

Then, we have another no-good bill that Republicans claim will tackle crime, but we all know what this is really about. This bill's only purpose is to attack Vice President HARRIS.

The former President keeps spinning the narrative on the campaign trail that crime is at an all-time high. He has trouble with facts.

Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert into the RECORD an article: "Murder and other violent crime dropped across the U.S. last year, FBI data shows."

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

There was no objection.

[From NBC News, September 23, 2024]

MURDER AND OTHER VIOLENT CRIME DROPPED ACROSS THE U.S. LAST YEAR, FBI DATA SHOWS

(By Ryan J. Reilly and Ken Dilanian)

WASHINGTON—Crime, including serious violent incidents like murder and rape, dropped nationally from 2022 to 2023, according to new data released by the FBI on Monday.

Violent crime was down about 3 percent from 2022 to 2023, and property crime took a similar drop of 2.4 percent, the FBI reported in its annual "Summary of Crime in the Nation." The most serious crimes went down significantly: murder and non-negligent manslaughter were down an estimated 11.6 percent—the largest single year decline in two decades—while rape decreased by an estimated 9.4 percent.

Preliminary numbers showed that 2024 crime numbers were also dropping for the early part of this year, continuing a trend of easing crime as the U.S. has come out of the pandemic.

Among property crimes, burglary decreased by an estimated 7.6 percent. Motor vehicle theft, however, was up by an estimated 12.6 percent between 2022 and 2023. Recorded incidents of shoplifting were also up: from 999,394 in 2022 to 1,149,336 in 2023, which is roughly the same level of incidents reported in 2019, before the pandemic. (Store closures and COVID-19 security measures likely decreased shoplifting in 2020 and 2021, and may have affected 2022 incidents as well.)

Public perception of crime is often out of step with the facts, especially in the age of social media, ease of digital communications between neighbors and doorbell cameras, when Americans may be more aware of individual crimes than they would have been in the past.

But the violent crime rate dropped from 2022 to 2023, from 377.1 violent crimes per 100,000 people in 2022 to 363.8 violent crimes per 100,000 people in 2023, the new FBI data shows.

As part of his 2024 campaign, former President Donald Trump has tried to spread the notion that the United States is undergoing a crime wave, and he called the FBI's prior numbers a "fraud" during his debate with

Kamala Harris, saying that some cities weren't included. But the FBI factors in the information gaps into their estimates. The bureau noted that its 2023 data included full-year numbers from "every city agency covering a population of 1,000,000 or more inhabitants."

Overall, the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) collected information from 700 additional agencies in 2023 compared to 2022. The total population covered by the report is more than 315 million people, or 94.3 percent of the country.

President Joe Biden issued a statement saying the FBI numbers confirm "that Americans are safer than when we took office," adding violent crime was near a 50-year low.

"None of this happened by accident. Vice President Harris and I invested in public safety and took action to stop the illegal flow of guns into our communities. Our American Rescue Plan—which every Republican in Congress voted against—helped deliver over \$15 billion in public safety funding that enabled over 1,000 state, city, and county governments to avoid cuts to police budgets, invest in community violence interventions, and take other essential steps to keep communities safe," Biden said.

Mr. MCGOVERN. This report was released yesterday, by the way. The data shows that violent crime has dropped in recent years, but Republicans are ignoring these facts and choosing to push messaging bills like this one instead.

It really is quite sad that that is kind of the state of affairs on the Republican side.

Look, I get it. I get it. My Republican friends are afraid because Vice President HARRIS was a prosecutor who put felons in jail, and, well, I will just let everyone who is watching fill in the rest.

Then, we have an absurd, nonbinding resolution that politicizes the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Playing politics with this is disgusting.

This is not about honoring our fallen soldiers. This is about politics at its worst.

This bill didn't even go through regular order. It was introduced 5 days ago and didn't go through committee.

Republicans were so anxious to get this resolution to the floor before the election that they didn't even get Members' input. Was it written by the Trump campaign? I mean, give me a break.

This is not the way we honor our fallen soldiers. We don't play politics with tragedies.

Let me just state for the record, thanks to President Biden and Vice President HARRIS, for the first time in decades, the United States is not at war anywhere in this world.

Finally, we have the Fix Our Forests Act. In my opinion, this is a pro-polluter bill that ignores the realities of climate change when it comes to wildfires.

I will be opposing this bill because the so-called Fix Our Forests Act will not fix our forests. Instead, I think it would bypass critical environmental laws, cut out scientific input, and undermine our Nation's core environmental laws.

Madam Speaker, look, here is the reality: Republicans have fumbled left and right over the last 2 years. They really have become the party of broken promises, wasting everybody's time and wasting taxpayer money on absurd messaging bills that are going nowhere.

While we have real challenges in this country, this is the junk they bring to the floor. People want us to work together to get things done, and instead, this majority spends their time fighting amongst themselves and accomplishing absolutely nothing for the American people.

It is simple, really. The other side wants to come down here and talk about anything other than their plans for the future because when they do that, people see how weird they are.

They don't want to talk about Project 2025, their dystopian plan to take total control of our country, dismantle our system of checks and balances, and take away people's freedoms.

They don't want to talk about how their draconian abortion bans are killing women and putting them at extreme risks.

They don't want to talk about how 9 years after starting to run for President, Donald Trump still doesn't have an actual plan to provide better healthcare for the American people.

They don't want to talk about how Donald Trump's big economic plan would result in average families spending an extra \$4,000 per year—\$4,000 more per year that families would pay if his plans were enacted.

They come down here and bring up some absurd messaging bills to avoid talking about how weird and unpopular their agenda is.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, before I go to the gentleman from New York, I do want to point out that, sadly, in January of this year, January 29, 2024, three U.S. soldiers were killed in Jordan. The three soldiers are Sergeant William Jerome Rivers of Carrollton, Georgia; Specialist Kennedy Ladon Sanders of Waycross, Georgia; and Specialist Breonna Alexsondria Moffett of Savannah, Georgia. All were assigned to the 718th Engineer Company, 926th Engineer Battalion, Fort Moore, Georgia.

Do not continue to repeat the lie that we have no soldiers standing in harm's way during the Biden administration. It was brought up during the debate by the Vice President. It was wrong then. It is wrong now.

We have soldiers on the ground in Iran and Syria. Of course, there are soldiers deployed in the Continent of Africa. We can't forget everything that is happening right now with the Houthi rebels placing our servicemembers in danger.

Do not make the mistake that the world is completely at peace under the

beneficence of the current Biden administration.

Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LANGWORTHY), a valuable member of the Rules Committee.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this rule, which will provide consideration for commonsense legislation that would hold accountable local leaders that are pushing an antipolice, pro-crime agenda on our States and cities.

Madam Speaker, as the only New Yorker on this side of the aisle today, I can tell you that I have seen firsthand what happens when a Democrat-run State bows to the radical left and embraces the unaccountable system of charitable bail funds and institutes full-blown bail reform.

Violent offenders are getting a free pass while law-abiding citizens are left to suffer. Look at the facts: In New York City, after bail reform, crime jumped 20 percent after they pushed for this in the name of social justice. Judges can't even set bail for crimes like petty larceny or grand larceny or burglary.

Who pays the price? Innocent American families.

Now, unfortunately, my home State of New York is just one of many Democrat-run States in jurisdictions around the country that have given criminals a get-out-of-jail-free card.

What is worse is that these policies have the full backing of the Democratic Party, including their nominees, KAMALA HARRIS and Tim Walz. HARRIS, in particular, supported these radical bail funds, actively encouraging donations to bail out criminals, many of whom were charged with violent crimes. They are the faces of a party that have abandoned the safety of our communities in favor of appeasing a far-left mob.

Democrats would have you believe that these policies are about helping lower-income communities, but let's be perfectly, honestly clear: These policies are hurting the very people they claim to protect.

These multimillion-dollar bail funds, like the Minnesota Freedom Fund and The Bail Project, aren't helping. They are putting violent criminals, domestic abusers, and sexual predators right back on the street.

Who suffers? Everyday Americans in cities like New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. These so-called reforms are nothing more than a betrayal of the people and a destruction of the rule of law in this country.

Look no further than the facts. Groups like the Minnesota Freedom Fund bailed out individuals charged with violent crimes, including domestic violence and sexual assault, and Democrats are more than happy to just look the other way. They decided that protecting a radical base is more important than protecting the innocent victims.

This is what the Biden-Harris administration and Democrats across this

country have stood for, policies that prioritize criminals over communities, chaos over safety, and special interests over the hardworking American people. They have abandoned our law enforcement. They have turned their backs on the very citizens they were elected to serve.

I call on my colleagues across the aisle to listen to their constituents in their own Democrat-run States and cities who are absolutely fed up with rampant violent crime and fed up with the revolving door prison and jail system that Democrats and their bail funds have facilitated.

They are sick and tired of watching their communities deteriorate and small businesses have to close due to crime skyrocketing.

The least we can do, Madam Speaker, is ensure that these bail funds operate under some level of accountability and transparency.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support this rule today and the underlying legislation.

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

Madam Speaker, the gentleman from Texas says that the Biden administration is weak. I guess the gentleman and I have a different definition of what weakness looks like.

It was Republicans, by the way, not Joe Biden, who held up aid for our allies for 9 months because their side buys into Kremlin propaganda. I think that is weak, quite frankly.

It was a Republican President who went to North Korea and tried to get a brutal dictator to like him. He actually said they wrote each other love letters. He went there and groveled to Kim Jong Un. I don't think that that is a sign of strength. I think that is a sign of weakness.

It is the Republican candidate for President who praises Putin on a regular basis, calls him Vladimir, loves Xi Jinping, says Viktor Orban is fantastic.

Don't even lecture us about human rights when the majority can't bring itself to be critical of what the Republican standard-bearer says on a regular basis. That is not strength. That is pathetic. It makes us look weak.

Meanwhile, after they wrecked our image on the world stage, it is President Joe Biden who has had to rebuild it. I don't call that weakness. I call that a sign of strength. Standing with our NATO allies, standing with the people of Ukraine as Russia drops bombs on them on a regular basis, that is not weakness. That is strength.

The gentleman from New York, I mean, listening to him speak, one would think that we are living in 14th century Europe during the black plague.

The fact is that we live in the best place in the world. There is no other place in the world I would rather live than in the United States of America, and it is the best time in history, quite frankly, for a whole bunch of reasons.

Please don't put words in my mouth. I didn't say that none of our soldiers were in harm's way. I said we are living in a time when we were not at war with any country. That is what I said. I have to insist on accuracy when it comes to my words.

We can do better, and we should work to improve the lives of the people we represent.

Crime is down. The gentleman from New York who just spoke apparently wasn't here when I inserted the FBI report, but that is facts. Crime is down.

The economy is strong and growing stronger.

Science is improving our lives in new ways every single day. It is amazing.

The Republican agenda of division and hate only takes us backward. Let's go forward. Let's work together on something, and maybe we can start today. Rather than politicizing the tragic deaths of American servicemen, maybe we can start the day today by actually helping our veterans, something that my Republican friends have a hard time trying to do.

Madam Speaker, I urge that we defeat the previous question, and if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to include an additional \$12 billion in the continuing resolution that our Nation's veterans need for their healthcare.

Madam Speaker, let's remember how we got here. Republicans talked a big game all Congress about how they were going to return to regular order and pass 12 individual appropriation bills, but consistent with the theme of dysfunction for this Republican majority, they instead spent months fighting amongst themselves.

What was the result? How many awful, partisan, go-nowhere appropriation bills were they actually able to pass? Madam Speaker, 5, 5 out of 12, and they didn't even send the Homeland Security appropriations bill over to the Senate. Why? Because they threw a tantrum and refused to send their Homeland Security appropriations bill to the Senate unless their awful H.R. 2 border bill got signed into law.

That is not how this works. They need to watch "Schoolhouse Rock!" Maybe they can learn something.

Once again, Democrats are the adults in the room who are being asked to come in and clean up the Republican mess—in this case, to ensure that our basic responsibility of governing is met: Keeping the lights on.

Now, the continuing resolution that we will consider later this week has some good pieces in it, and it will keep the American people's government open for another 3 months, but there is always room for improvement.

That is why I am offering this amendment to provide an extra \$12 billion to maintain medical care for veterans, money that the Department of Veterans Affairs says that they will need. Our veterans deserve our support.

It is our responsibility to provide the care that they have earned.

Madam 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. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DELUZIO) to discuss our proposal.

□ 1300

Mr. DELUZIO. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

This country has a sacred obligation to America's veterans, to my fellow veterans. It is a promise that after we complete our service in uniform to this great Nation, our government will, in turn, deliver the care and benefits that we have earned.

For too long, this promise has been broken for so many of my fellow veterans, and finally, we are making some progress.

The Honoring our PACT Act and the Cost of War Toxic Exposure Fund have helped my fellow toxic-exposed veterans and their survivors get the healthcare and benefits they have long earned but only recently were offered.

More veterans than ever are now receiving life-changing benefits. Over the last 2 years, VA has approved more than 1.2 million PACT Act claims, and the Veterans Health Administration is expected to serve 127 million appointments by the end of this year. That is 7 million more than 2023.

This growth in the number of claims and appointments has outpaced VA's initial estimates, causing the funding shortfall that the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. McGOVERN) alluded to.

I say it is about time that more of my fellow veterans receive the care they have earned. It is our sacred obligation here in this Chamber and this Congress to ensure our veterans are taken care of, and that includes paying for the cost of war.

We have got to make sure the VA is fully staffed, it is modernized, and it is able to meet the needs of my fellow veterans.

While there is no funding shortfall for this fiscal year, next year we expect the Veterans Health Administration to cross that red line around March of 2025. That is exactly why the now-failed Republican 6-month CR proposal last week would have been a disaster.

Since the current proposed CR goes until December, we have time to address this \$12 billion shortfall, so we are submitting this amendment to appropriate \$12 billion for the VA Cost of War Toxic Exposure Fund.

Caring for veterans is part of the cost of war, and patriotic Americans expect us to pay for it.

We cannot have veterans miss out on the hard-earned benefits they earned through their service, and we cannot send Americans off to war and then pinch pennies when the bill comes due, especially when billionaires and huge corporations don't pay their fair share in taxes in this country.

House Democrats are committed to getting veterans the healthcare and the benefits that we are owed. That was the PACT Act's commitment, and we intend to keep that promise.

I urge my colleagues to defeat the previous question so we can keep this country's obligation.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

First off, I do want to remind the House that the House passed \$3 billion in veterans funding last week and sent it over to the Senate. This gives us time to act on further veterans funding prior to the December 20 deadline that will be part of the continuing resolution that will pass later this week.

The Military Construction-VA appropriations bill was, in fact, the first House-passed appropriations bill. Representative CARTER from Texas led that subcommittee and passed that bill much earlier in the year. It has been sitting over in the Senate. It hasn't seen any activity. That bill actually could have been passed by both the House and the Senate and signed by the President of the United States.

I am grateful that my counterpart, the ranking member of the committee, allowed you to see, Madam Speaker, what I live with on a daily basis, which is a severe case of Trump derangement syndrome. We see it on display in the Rules Committee almost continuously. You have heard a brief exposure of that today on the floor of the House.

I apologize to the country that they had to put up with that, but, again, this is my life in the Rules Committee. Trump derangement syndrome is alive and well and put forth on virtually every argument that goes forth in the Rules Committee.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I would just say to the gentleman from Texas that I am sorry that I guess I hurt his feelings with some of the things I have said, but it is the truth, and I guess the truth hurts.

Madam Speaker, earlier I said that this majority has turned the Republican Party into a circus of chaos, broken promises, and failures.

Let's talk about that just a little bit more, shall we?

Since last January, this majority wasted 26 entire days, nearly a month, on fighting with each other as they tried to elect a Speaker of the House. Madam Speaker, 5 days were spent electing Kevin McCarthy, who was then booted out of the speakership and ended up leaving office. Madam Speaker, 21 days were spent as the Repub-

lican Conference argued about who was next in line. We ended up with Speaker JOHNSON, and we went from a bad Speaker to an even worse one.

That is nearly a month. That is nearly a month completely wasted on nothing more than bickering amongst themselves.

I will also remind you, Madam Speaker, the House was held hostage for days in June of last year because a tiny, extreme faction of the Republican Conference chose to throw a fit over the debt deal negotiated by President Biden and Speaker McCarthy.

Republicans struck down a rule on the floor for the first time in over two decades, holding the House floor schedule hostage all for camera time while MAGA threw a fit.

Now, we have seen a total of seven failed rules in this Congress, seven. Hell, we have even seen Republicans vote down not just the rules but vote down their own bills because there are times even conservative Members have thought the MAGA weirdo bills are just too weird and too extreme.

Get this, Madam Speaker, even when House Republicans manage to succeed, they fail to govern.

We keep hearing them complain about the border.

News flash, they passed the Department of Homeland Security funding bill 3 months ago, and they never sent it to the Senate. They put it in a filing cabinet and locked the door.

What is this, hide and seek? They are passing bills and hiding them in the basement so they can complain about the border more and more and more instead of trying to fix it. Someone needs to show these guys "Schoolhouse Rock!" I mean, we are talking about their number one priority, and they don't even send the bill over to the Senate.

It just shows how fake all their outrage is about the border.

I will leave you with this, Madam Speaker: Despite all the talk from this Republican majority that the 118th Congress would be the most open Congress ever, last night Republicans, again, broke their own record for the most closed Congress in the history of the country.

In addition to being the most ineffective and dysfunctional Congress in history, it is now also the most closed. Republicans have advanced 106—I am sorry. It is actually now 108. There are two more closed rules in the rule we are talking about today. Before they broke their record, their previous record was 103 closed rules when Paul Ryan was Speaker.

That means that they broke their own record for the most closed Congress in history. They are going to be unbeatable when it comes to a closed Congress.

Madam Speaker, it is more than about numbers. It is about what they represent.

As of this week, Republicans have now blocked 5,822 amendments from de-

bate. They have even blocked the majority of their own Members' amendments from coming to the floor from debate.

It is ironic, the party that calls us snowflakes is afraid to even allow debate on the merits of these amendments.

Every amendment they block is another idea that is prevented from a vote on the House floor.

Now, let's look at some of the examples of what they thought was too crazy to bring to the floor.

They blocked an amendment blocking smuggling of U.S. firearms across the Mexican border. They thought that was too radical to bring to the floor.

They blocked an amendment protecting food for seniors participating in Meals on Wheels.

They blocked an amendment providing postpartum mental health information to pregnant students. By the way, that was a Republican amendment.

Look, we know Republicans have the majority. These amendments might lose, but a truly open and inclusive process that Republicans promised would let us debate these issues on the merits.

It is all part of a pattern. They are afraid of debating because they don't want to engage on policy. For them this is all just a game. It is about trying to hold onto power for the sake of holding onto power.

It is one broken promise after another from these guys. The truth is, Republicans have nothing, nothing, nothing to show for their time in power, just incompetence and chaos.

That is why I think people will be rejecting them in November.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

The rules brought forth today, two are closed, but in both instances, neither received an amendment in which to make in order. If there are no amendments, by definition, then it is a closed rule.

I do want to point out that this majority has reported nearly twice the number of bills as the last Congress when the gentleman, the ranking member, was, in fact, the chairman of the committee. I would also like to point out that since there was a change in the chairman of the Rules Committee, all Rules Committee votes have passed on the floor. I hope that pattern continues today.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

The gentleman just put forward a straw man argument. The way it usually works is the Rules Committee sends out a notice asking for amendments that sets a deadline. It gives a week for our people to construct their ideas and send them to the Rules Committee.

On this package, they never sent out a notice or a deadline. I mean, the reality is, I think everybody already knew what was coming.

I am going to tell you, there is no defense for being the most closed Congress in the history of the United States. They fight amongst themselves and they basically work overtime to prevent thoughtful ideas from coming to the floor. They are good about debating trivial issues passionately, but they are not very good about debating important ones. Everything that they bring to the floor is not about moving the ball forward in terms of helping improve the quality of life for the American people. It is all about messaging and gotcha and division and pushing hate in this country. It just has to stop, and hopefully it will.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, may I inquire as to how many speakers the gentleman has remaining?

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I am prepared to close after the gentleman closes.

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 8½ minutes remaining.

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

Madam Speaker, I have already spoken about why these messaging measures will do nothing to help Americans, what a complete disaster this dysfunctional Republican majority has been, and how their weird, unpopular agenda is wrong for this country.

Now, I want to speak to you, Madam Speaker, and to the American people about the alternative, about what President Joe Biden, Vice President KAMALA HARRIS, and Democrats here in Congress have accomplished and what we will continue to fight for in the years to come.

Democrats delivered the American Rescue Plan, helping to end the COVID crisis and reopening our economy that was shut down under Donald Trump.

Democrats delivered the CHIPS and Science Act, bringing jobs back from China and supply chains back from overseas.

Democrats delivered the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, a historic investment that will rebuild our infrastructure for generations and generations to come.

Democrats delivered the bipartisan Honoring our PACT Act, expanding VA healthcare and benefits for millions and millions of veterans who have been exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances.

Democrats delivered the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, the most significant piece of gun violence prevention legislation in nearly 30 years.

That is what leadership looks like. It looks like making this country better.

It looks like imagining and doing big things. It looks like finding common ground across the aisle where and when we can. It looks like delivering real, concrete results for the people of this country.

Democrats fight for lower prices. We fight to build an opportunity economy. We fight to protect our freedoms. We fight to ensure liberty and justice for every single American.

We believe good policy can unite people. We want to bring people together and focus on what we have in common in this country because there is so much more that unites us than divides us.

□ 1315

Madam Speaker, people are fed up with this majority's dysfunction. They are fed up with Republican incompetence.

What we Democrats, President Biden, and Vice President HARRIS offer is the opposite. Instead of division, Democrats offer unity. Instead of talking about the past and complaining, Democrats talk about the future and giving people hope. Instead of dysfunction, we will run this country like professionals and get stuff done to make America the best it can be.

The choice this November is a consequential one, Madam Speaker, and we can continue down the same failed path of dysfunction and disarray, or we can fire this failed MAGA majority. We can let Republicans keep sowing anger and hate, or we can let Democrats bring some decency and dignity back to this place. We can let Republicans continue fighting with each other, or we can let Democrats fight on behalf of the American people.

That is what is on the line this November, and the choice could not be more clear.

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

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 14 minutes remaining.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time on the Republican side.

Madam Speaker, it is ironic that we keep hearing about unity. I heard the word "unity" I don't know how many times during the inaugural address of President Biden, yet it is virtually impossible for a Republican to get a telephone call answered from the head of any Federal agency.

This has been the most walled-off administration that I have ever seen. I served in the Bush Presidency, the Obama Presidency, and the Trump Presidency, and I have never seen an administration that behaves in the way this administration does.

The gentleman referenced the aid to the country of Ukraine. I voted for that aid package in June 2022. We didn't get a lot of information before

the bill was brought to the floor. Then-Speaker PELOSI brought it rather hurriedly. It came to the Rules Committee in an emergency hearing, but what was happening in Ukraine seemed so horrific that any ability to help seemed important.

Then I waited after that vote. I waited for the administration to come to talk to us about what the strategy is, where we are going, and what the plan is. Is there an exit strategy out there somewhere?

Again, we had another vote last March, once again hoping that the administration would begin to behave differently and at least inform the Congress of what their plans were. I voted again for that aid package. I caught a lot of grief from my constituents back home for voting for that package. At the same time, once again, no information was forthcoming from the administration, no plan and no strategy.

Madam Speaker, we had big meetings over in the auditorium in the Capitol Visitor Center just prior to the invasion of Ukraine. All the generals and Cabinet Secretaries were there. They told us that it was too late, that there was nothing we could do, and that Ukraine would fall in 3 days. They didn't.

That is when the administration came back and started asking for these aid packages, but never once did they fill in the blanks of: this is what we plan to do, this is where we plan to go.

Even today, the administration seems to be arguing with itself. Do we allow for Ukraine to use that aid in a more robust way to defend itself, or is it all just purely risk-averse defense spending that they will do?

Again, we don't know. I would love to hear the administration give us a reason why it is important to continue to send American tax dollars because they have a plan for victory and a plan for ending the war.

We heard a lot of discussion about the previous administration, the Trump administration, and the world was never more prosperous and at peace.

Madam Speaker, do you remember the comment in early October last year when the statement was made by the administration that they have never seen the Middle East more quiet than it is today? Oh, my God, where are we now? Where are we now?

Where are the plans of the administration? When are they going to come to talk to us about the correct way forward?

We hear arguments internally, arguments with the administration arguing with itself. We heard the Vice President and the President basically arguing about the way forward with what to do with the problems in the Middle East, but, again, no one comes to us and lays out what the plan is going forward.

Madam Speaker, I have never seen a world more dangerous than it is today. I feel as if we are living on a knife's

edge and that, at any point, one false move, one miscalculation by one individual, could lead the world into a confrontation and conflagration the likes of which the world has never seen before.

We do need to be concerned about that. We do need the United States to lead. We need a strong leader in the United States, and I would argue that the prior President evidenced that type of strong leadership, and the world was a safer place. The world was a more prosperous place.

Now, since the gentleman brought up the Inflation Reduction Act and the American Rescue Plan, these were the very matches that lit the fuse on inflation in this country in January 2021.

Inflation was at 1.6 percent in December 2020. Then, a year later, where was it? It was going up toward 8 percent.

The Secretary of the Treasury said she thought it would be transitory. The Chair of the Federal Reserve thought it would self-correct. Then it didn't, and the American people suffered.

Why weren't we concerned about the suffering of the American people in the last Congress when we continued to lay spending bill over spending bill, which the people could no longer afford?

So, yes, it is tough. Now, we are having to dial some of that back, and it is not easy. Any time the Federal Government spends a dollar, it immediately creates a constituency, and it is difficult to dial those dollars back.

We argue with ourselves here in the Congress about what the best path forward is, but at the same time, we have an obligation. We have an obligation to fund the government, which we will have an opportunity to do later this week.

Madam Speaker, I do want to urge colleagues to support this rule. I do want to encourage colleagues to support the underlying legislation. I do want us to hold the Federal agencies accountable to the American people, solve critical issues for our constituents, and restore American strength on the world stage.

I said in committee yesterday that these bills are about accountability to the governed, respect for law and order, strength on the world stage, and rightsizing Federal agencies. These are the core tenets of House Republicans. That is what we pledged to the American people, and it is what the American people expect from this body.

Madam Speaker, I, again, urge my colleagues to support the rule and support the underlying legislation.

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

**AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 1486 OFFERED BY  
MR. MCGOVERN OF MASSACHUSETTS**

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

SEC. 6. No motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 9747 shall be in order that does not provide that the bill is considered as amended as follows.

SEC. 7. The amendment referred to in section 6 is as follows:

“Division A of H.R. 9747 is amended by inserting after section 152 the following:

Sec. 153. In addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes, there are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, 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, \$12,000,000,000, which shall remain available until September 30, 2029.”

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, 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 on the resolution.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be 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 1 o'clock and 22 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1330

**AFTER RECESS**

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. OBERNOLTE) at 1 o'clock and 30 minutes p.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 1486;

Adoption of House Resolution 1486, if ordered; and

Motions to suspend the rules and pass:

H.R. 3208;

H.R. 8057; and

H.R. 7073.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes or 2-minute votes.

**PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3334, SANCTIONING TYRANNICAL AND OPPRESSIVE PEOPLE WITHIN THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 8205, KEEPING VIOLENT OFFENDERS OFF OUR STREETS ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 8790, FIX OUR FORESTS ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. 1469, ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR KEY OFFICIALS IN THE BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION RESPONSIBLE FOR DECISION-MAKING AND EXECUTION FAILURES THROUGHOUT THE WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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. 1486) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3334) to provide for the imposition of sanctions on members of the National Communist Party Congress of the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 8205) to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide that Byrne grant funds may be used for public safety report systems, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 8790) to expedite under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and improve forest management activities on National Forest System lands, on public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, and on Tribal lands to return resilience to overgrown, fire-prone forested lands, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 1469) ensuring accountability for key officials in the Biden-Harris administration responsible for decisionmaking and execution failures throughout the withdrawal from Afghanistan; and for other purposes, 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 208, nays 204, not voting 20, as follows:

[Roll No. 443]

**YEAS—208**

Aderholt	Biggs	Chavez-DeRemer
Alford	Bilirakis	Ciscomani
Allen	Bishop (NC)	Cline
Amodei	Boebert	Cloud
Armstrong	Bost	Clyde
Arrington	Brecheen	Cole
Babin	Buchanan	Collins
Bacon	Bucshon	Comer
Baird	Burchett	Crane
Balderson	Burgess	Crawford
Banks	Burlison	Crenshaw
Barr	Calvert	Curtis
Bean (FL)	Cammack	D'Esposito
Bentz	Carey	Davidson
Bergman	Carl	De La Cruz
Bice	Carter (TX)	Diaz-Balart

NAYS—204

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

bee

Call No. 443.  
Mrs. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 443.

Stated against:

Mr. GOMEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I was not

MR. GOMEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I was not recorded on roll call vote No. 443. Had I been

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 212, noes 207, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 444]

AYES—212

ATES-212

Barr  
Bean (FL)

Allen	Bentz	Burchett	Castor (FL)	Garamendi	Larsen (WA)
Amodei	Bergman	Burgess	Castro (TX)	Garcia (IL)	Larson (CT)
Armstrong	Bice	Burlison	Cherfilus-	Garcia (TX)	Lee (CA)
Arrington	Biggs	Calvert	McCormick	Garcia, Robert	Lee (NV)
Babin	Bilirakis	Cammack	Chu	Golden (ME)	Lee (PA)
Bacon	Bishop (NC)	Carey	Clark (MA)	Goldman (NY)	Leger Fernandez
Baird	Boebert	Carl	Clarke (NY)	Gomez	Levin
Balderson	Bost	Carter (TX)	Cleaver	Gonzalez, V.	Lieu
Banks	Brecheen	Chavez-DeRemer	Clyburn	Gottheimer	Lofgren



Post Office'', 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 motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 415, nays 0, answered “present” 2, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 446]

YEAS—415

Adams	Costa	Guest	McIver
Aderholt	Courtney	Guthrie	Meeks
Aguilar	Craig	Hageman	Menendez
Alford	Crane	Harder (CA)	Meng
Allen	Crawford	Harris	Meuser
Allred	Crenshaw	Harshbarger	Mfume
Amo	Crockett	Hayes	Miller (IL)
Amodei	Crow	Hern	Miller (OH)
Armstrong	Cuellar	Higgins (LA)	Miller (WV)
Arrington	Curtis	Hill	Miller-Meeks
Auchincloss	D'Esposito	Himes	Molinaro
Babin	Davids (KS)	Hinson	Moolenaar
Bacon	Davidson	Horsford	Mooney
Baird	Davis (IL)	Houchin	Moore (AL)
Balderson	Davis (NC)	Houlehan	Moore (UT)
Balint	De La Cruz	Hoyer	Moore (WI)
Banks	Dean (PA)	Hoyle (OR)	Moran
Barr	DeGette	Hudson	Morelle
Barragán	DeLauro	Huffman	Moskowitz
Bean (FL)	DelBene	Huizenga	Moulton
Beatty	Deluzio	Issa	Mrvan
Bentz	DeSaulnier	Ivey	Mullin
Bera	Diaz-Balart	Jackson (IL)	Murphy
Bergman	Dingell	Jackson (NC)	Nadler
Beyer	Doggett	Jackson (TX)	Napolitano
Bice	Donalds	Jacobs	Neal
Biggs	Duarte	James	Neguse
Bilirakis	Duncan	Jayapal	Newhouse
Bishop (GA)	Dunn (FL)	Jeffries	Nickel
Bishop (NC)	Edwards	Johnson (GA)	Norcross
Blumenauer	Ellzey	Johnson (LA)	Norman
Blunt Rochester	Emmer	Johnson (SD)	Nunn (IA)
Boebert	Escarbar	Jordan	Obernolte
Bonamici	Eshoo	Joyce (OH)	Ocasio-Cortez
Bost	Espaiatl	Joyce (PA)	Ogles
Boyle (PA)	Estes	Kammlager-Dove	
Brecheen	Ezell	Kaptur	Omar
Brown	Fallon	Kean (NJ)	Owens
Brownley	Feeenstra	Keating	Pallone
Buchanan	Ferguson	Kelly (IL)	Palmer
Bucshon	Finstad	Kelly (MS)	
Budzinski	Fischbach	Kelly (PA)	Rosendale
Burchett	Fitzgerald	Kennedy	
Burgess	Fitzpatrick	Khanna	
Burlison	Fleischmann	Kiggans (VA)	
Bush	Fletcher	Kildee	Bowman
Calvert	Flood	Kiley	Cárdenas
Cammack	Fong	Kilmer	Carter (GA)
Caraveo	Foster	Kim (CA)	DesJarlais
Carbajal	Foushee	Kim (NJ)	Evans
Carey	Foxx	Krishnamoorthi	
Carl	Frankel, Lois	Kuster	ANNOUNCEMENT
Carson	Franklin, Scott	Kustoff	
Carter (LA)	Fry	LaHood	
Carter (TX)	Fulcher	LaLota	
Cartwright	Gaetz	LaMalfa	
Casar	Gallego	Lamborn	
Case	Garamendi	Landsman	
Casten	Garbarino	Langworthy	
Castor (FL)	Garcia (IL)	Larsen (WA)	
Castro (TX)	Garcia (TX)	Larson (CT)	
Chavez-DeRemer	Garcia, Mike	Latta	
Cherifilus-	Garcia, Robert	LaTurner	
McCormick	Gimenez	Lawler	
Chu	Golden (ME)	Lee (CA)	
Ciscomani	Goldman (NY)	Lee (FL)	
Clark (MA)	Gomez	Lee (NV)	
Clarke (NY)	Gonzales, Tony	Lee (PA)	
Cleaver	Gonzalez, V.	Leger Fernandez	NEXT GENERAL
Cline	Good (VA)	Lesko	SEARCH
Cloud	Gooden (TX)	Letlow	ACT
Clyburn	Gosar	Levin	
Clyde	Gottheimer	Lieu	
Cohen	Graves (LA)	Lofgren	
Cole	Graves (MO)	Lopez	
Collins	Green (TN)	Loudermilk	
Comer	Green, Al (TX)	Lucas	
Connolly	Griffith	Luna	
Correa	Grothman	Luttrell	

Panetta	Spartz
Pappas	Stansbury
Pelosi	Stanton
Peltola	Stauber
Pence	Steel
Perez	Stefanik
Perry	Steil
Peters	Steube
Pettersen	Stevens
Pfluger	Strickland
Phillips	Strong
Pingree	Suozzi
Pocan	Swallowell
Porter	Sykes
Posey	Takano
Pressley	Tenney
Quigley	Thanedar
Ramirez	Thompson (CA)
Raskin	Thompson (MS)
Reschenthaler	Thompson (PA)
Ryan (VA)	Thune

research, development, and demonstration related to the evolution of next generation pipeline systems, and for other purposes, as amended, 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 motion offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 373, nays 41, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 447]

YEAS—373

Adams	Curtis	Houlahan
Aderholt	D'Esposito	Hoyer
Aguilar	Davids (KS)	Hoyle (OR)
Alford	Davidson	Hudson
Allen	Davis (IL)	Huizenga
Allred	Davis (NC)	Hunt
Amo	De La Cruz	Issa
Amodei	Dean (PA)	Ivey
Armstrong	DeGette	Jackson (IL)
Arrington	DeLauro	Jackson (NC)
Auchincloss	DelBene	Jackson (TX)
Babin	Deluzio	Jacobs
Bacon	DeSaulnier	James
Baird	Diaz-Balart	Jeffries
Balderson	Dingell	Johnson (GA)
Balint	Doggett	Johnson (LA)
Banks	Donalds	Johnson (SD)
Beatty	Duarte	Jordan
Bentz	Duncan	Jordan
Bera	Dunn (FL)	Joyce (OH)
Bergman	Edwards	Joyce (PA)
Beyer	Ellzey	Kaptur
Bice	Emmer	Keating
Bilirakis	Escobar	Kelly (IL)
Bishop (GA)	Eshoo	Kelly (MS)
Bishop (NC)	Estes	Kelly (PA)
Blumenauer	Ezell	Kennedy
Blunt Rochester	Fallon	Khanna

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—2

NOT VOTING—15

Bowman	Frost	Luetkemeyer
Cárdenas	Granger	Nehls
Carter (GA)	Greene (GA)	Rodgers (WA)
DesJarlais	Grijalva	Webster (FL)
Evans	Hunt	Wexton

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE  
The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining

□ 1411

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NEXT GENERATION PIPELINES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7073) to improve public-private partnerships and increase Federal

Adams	Curtis	Houlahan
Aderholt	D'Esposito	Hoyer
Aguilar	Davids (KS)	Hoyle (OR)
Alford	Davidson	Hudson
Allen	Davis (IL)	Huizinga
Allred	Davis (NC)	Hunt
Amo	De La Cruz	Issa
Amodei	Dean (PA)	Ivey
Armstrong	DeGette	Jackson (IL)
Arrington	DeLauro	Jackson (NC)
Auchincloss	DelBene	Jackson (TX)
Babin	Deluzio	Jacobs
Bacon	DeSaulnier	James
Baird	Diaz-Balart	Jeffries
Balderson	Dingell	Johnson (GA)
Balint	Doggett	Johnson (LA)
Banks	Donalds	Johnson (SD)
Beatty	Duarte	Jordan
Bentz	Duncan	Joyce (OH)
Bera	Dunn (FL)	Joyce (PA)
Bergman	Edwards	Kaptur
Beyer	Ellzey	Keating
Bice	Emmer	Kelly (IL)
Bilirakis	Escarobal	Kelly (MS)
Bishop (GA)	Eshoo	Kelly (PA)
Bishop (NC)	Estes	Kennedy
Blumenauer	Ezell	Khanna
Blunt Rochester	Fallon	Kiggans (VA)
Boebert	Feeenstra	Kildee
Bonamici	Ferguson	Kiley
Bost	Finstad	Kilmer
Boyle (PA)	Fischbach	Kim (CA)
Brown	Fitzgerald	Kim (NJ)
Brownley	Fitzpatrick	Krishnamoorthi
Buchanan	Fleischmann	Kuster
Bucshon	Fletcher	Kustoff
Budzinski	Flood	LaHood
Burgess	Fong	LaLota
Calvert	Foster	LaMalfa
Cammack	Foushee	Lamborn
Caraveo	Frankel, Lois	Landsman
Carbaljal	Franklin, Scott	Langworthy
Cardenas	Fry	Larsen (WA)
Carey	Fulcher	Larson (CT)
Carl	Gallego	Latta
Carson	Garamendi	LaTurner
Carter (LA)	Garbarino	Lawler
Carter (TX)	Garcia (IL)	Lee (FL)
Cartwright	Garcia (TX)	Lee (NV)
Case	Garcia, Mike	Leger Fernandez
Casten	Gimenez	Lesko
Castor (FL)	Golden (ME)	Letlow
Castro (TX)	Goldman (NY)	Levin
Chavez-DeRemer	Gomez	Lieu
Cherifius-	Gonzales, Tony	Lofgren
McCormick	Gonzalez, V.	Lopez
Chu	Gooden (TX)	Loudermilk
Ciscomani	Gotheimer	Lucas
Clark (MA)	Graves (LA)	Luna
Cleaver	Graves (MO)	Luttrell
Clyburn	Green (TN)	Lynch
Clyde	Green, Al (TX)	Mace
Cohen	Griffith	Magaziner
Cole	Guest	Maloy
Comer	Guthrie	Mann
Connolly	Harder (CA)	Manning
Correa	Harshbarger	Mast
Costa	Hayes	Matsui
Courtney	Hern	McBath
Craig	Higgins (LA)	McCaul
Crawford	Hill	McClain
Crenshaw	Himes	McClellan
Crockett	Hinson	McCollum
Crow	Horsford	McCormick
Cuellar	Houchin	McGarvey

McIver	Quigley	Steil
Meeks	Raskin	Stevens
Menendez	Reschenthaler	Strickland
Meng	Rogers (AL)	Strong
Meuser	Rogers (KY)	Suozzi
Mfume	Rose	Swalwell
Miller (IL)	Rosendale	Sykes
Miller (OH)	Ross	Tenney
Miller (WV)	Rouzer	Thanedar
Miller-Meeks	Ruiz	Thompson (CA)
Mills	Rulli	Thompson (MS)
Moolenaar	Ruppersberger	Thompson (PA)
Mooney	Rutherford	Tiffany
Moore (AL)	Ryan	Timmons
Moore (UT)	Salazar	Titus
Moore (WI)	Salinas	Tokuda
Moran	Sánchez	Tonko
Morelle	Sarbanes	Torres (CA)
Moskowitz	Scalise	Torres (NY)
Moulton	Scanlon	Trahan
Mrvan	Schakowsky	Trone
Mullin	Schiff	Turner
Murphy	Schneider	Underwood
Napolitano	Scholten	Valadao
Neal	Schrier	Van Drew
Neguse	Schweikert	Van Duyne
Newhouse	Scott (VA)	Van Orden
Nickel	Scott, Austin	Vargas
Norcross	Scott, David	Vasquez
Norman	Self	Veasey
Nunn (IA)	Sessions	Wagner
Obernolte	Sewell	Walberg
Ogles	Sherman	Waltz
Owens	Sherrill	Wasserman
Pallone	Simpson	Schultz
Palmer	Slotkin	Watson Coleman
Panetta	Smith (MO)	Weber (TX)
Pappas	Smith (NE)	Webster (FL)
Pelosi	Smith (NJ)	Wenstrup
Peltola	Smith (WA)	Westerman
Pence	Smucker	Wild
Perez	Sorenson	Williams (GA)
Peters	Soto	Williams (NY)
Pettersen	Spanberger	Williams (TX)
Pfluger	Spartz	Wilson (FL)
Phillips	Stansbury	Wilson (SC)
Pingree	Stanton	Wittman
Pocan	Stauber	Womack
Porter	Steel	Yakym
Posey	Stefanik	Zinke

## NAYS—41

Barragán	Foxx	McClintock
Bean (FL)	Gaetz	McGovern
Biggs	Garcia, Robert	Nadler
Brecheen	Good (VA)	Ocasio-Cortez
Burchett	Gosar	Omar
Burlison	Grothman	Perry
Bush	Hageman	Pressley
Casar	Harris	Ramirez
Clarke (NY)	Huffman	Roy
Cline	Jayapal	Takano
Cloud	Kamlager-Dove	Tlaib
Collins	Lee (CA)	Velázquez
Crane	Lee (PA)	Waters
Espaiplat	Massie	

## NOT VOTING—18

Barr	Granger	McHenry
Bowman	Greene (GA)	Molinaro
Carter (GA)	Grijalva	Nehls
DesJarlais	Kean (NJ)	Rodgers (WA)
Evans	Luetkemeyer	Steube
Frost	Malliotakis	Wexton

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1417

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

## FIX OUR FORESTS ACT

## GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their re-

marks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 8790.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House on the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 8790.

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

□ 1421

## 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. 8790) to expedite under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and improve forest management activities on National Forest System lands, on public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, and on Tribal lands to return resilience to overgrown, fire-prone forested lands, and for other purposes, with Mr. FITZGERALD 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 Natural Resources or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PORTER) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I rise in strong support of H.R. 8790, the Fix Our Forests Act, a bipartisan forestry package that I am proud to lead with my good friend and colleague from California (Mr. PETERS) and which passed out of the Natural Resources Committee earlier this year by voice vote.

This comprehensive package is the product of many months of hard work and bipartisan collaboration. This bill was not formulated in Washington, D.C. From field hearings in the shadow of Half Dome in Yosemite National Park to site visits to Tribal reservations in New Mexico, we have traveled the country to hear from experts and find consensus on the best approaches to improve the management of our Nation's forests.

I may be the only licensed forester in Congress, but you don't need a forestry degree to understand that our Nation's dire forest health crisis demands our immediate attention. This year alone, wildfires have burned more than 7.3 million acres nationally. In the past 10 years, wildfires in the U.S. have burned

over 73 million acres, roughly the same area as the State of Arizona.

Catastrophic wildfires are much more than just statistics. They destroy lives. They destroy property. They degrade our air and water quality, turn abundant wildlife habitat into moonscapes, and create billions of dollars in economic damage.

One of the most tragic consequences of the wildfire crisis is seeing entire communities in the path of uncontrollable megafires leveled year after year.

The 2018 Camp fire in California destroyed the towns of Paradise and Concow, burning over 18,000 structures and killing 85 people. In 2020, the North Complex fire completely engulfed and demolished the towns of Berry Creek and Feather Falls, wiping out over 2,300 structures. Just last year, I saw firsthand the immediate aftermath of the devastating wildfire in Maui that destroyed the historic town of Lahaina, causing untold damages.

Behind these examples are real people who are left to pick up the pieces and communities that will never be the same again. With over 1 billion acres at risk for wildfire across the country, we sadly know these tragedies will persist without intervention. In fact, the Forest Service has identified more than 70,000 communities and 44 million homes that are at risk of experiencing a catastrophic wildfire in the wildland-urban interface.

The good news is that we know what needs to be done. We must increase the pace and scale of scientifically proven forest management to restore health and resiliency to our Nation's forests.

The Fix Our Forests Act will restore forest health, increase resiliency to catastrophic wildfires, and protect vulnerable communities. Right now, it takes 3 to 5 years to begin work on a forest management program. This bill simplifies and streamlines cumbersome and costly environmental reviews so that, if enacted, land managers could go into our forests the next day and begin the work we know needs to happen.

H.R. 8790 empowers States, Tribal, local, and private partners to get more work done on the ground by strengthening the Good Neighbor Authority and Stewardship Contracting.

This bill also creates a framework for prioritizing treatments in our most at-risk areas. By encouraging the adoption of innovative science and technology, we can improve wildfire suppression capabilities, lower costs, and protect communities.

The best part is that we will save a pound in cure by investing a penny in prevention. The Congressional Budget Office has confirmed that reducing the risk of wildfires will lower wildfire suppression costs, allowing us to invest more in proactive, preventative forest management. If you believe that money is the only thing that will fix this problem, then you should vote for the Fix Our Forests Act because the bill will free up financial resources to

invest in critical forest management work.

This is a good bill that will help us finally turn the tide against the historic forest health crisis. I thank Members on both sides of the aisle who have contributed their input and ideas to this bipartisan product. I am proud to support even more bipartisan amendments offered by my colleagues on both sides of the aisle today.

They say the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The next best time is today. While we can't reverse the decades of inadequate forest management that have led us to this dire juncture, we can take a positive step today that will ensure healthier forests and communities for our children far into the future.

Mr. Chair, I support the bill and reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,  
Washington, DC, September 3, 2024.

Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,  
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 8790, the "Fix Our Forests Act". Thank you for collaborating with the Committee on Agriculture on the matters within our jurisdiction.

The Committee on Agriculture will forego any further consideration of this bill. However, by foregoing consideration at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over any subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. The Committee on Agriculture also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees should it become necessary and ask that you support such a request.

We would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 8790 and request a copy of our letters on this matter be published in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration.

Sincerely,  
GLENN "GT" THOMPSON,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,  
Washington, DC, September 11, 2024.

Hon. GLENN "GT" THOMPSON,  
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write regarding H.R. 8790, the "Fix Our Forests Act," which was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on June 26, 2024.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture and appreciate your willingness to forgo any further consideration of this bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Agriculture will not formally consider H.R. 8790 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained therein.

I am pleased to support your request to name members of the Committee on Agriculture to any conference committee to consider such provisions. I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,  
BRUCE WESTERMAN,  
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, September 10, 2024.

HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN,  
Chair, Committee on Natural Resources,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIR WESTERMAN: H.R. 8790, the "Fix Our Forests Act", was referred primarily to the Committee on Natural Resources, with an additional referral to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

H.R. 8790 contains provisions within the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology's Rule X jurisdiction. As a result of your having consulted with the Committee and to expedite this bill for floor consideration, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will forego action on the bill. This is being done based on our mutual understanding that doing so will in no way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology with respect to the appointment of conferees, or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation.

I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding, and would request that you include a copy of this letter and your response in the committee report or in the Congressional Record during the floor consideration of this bill. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,  
FRANK D. LUCAS,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,  
Washington, DC, September 12, 2024.

Hon. FRANK D. LUCAS,  
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and  
Technology, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write regarding H.R. 8790, the "Fix Our Forests Act," which was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on June 26, 2024.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and appreciate your willingness to forgo any further consideration of this bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will not formally consider H.R. 8790 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained therein.

I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the committee report and the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,  
BRUCE WESTERMAN,  
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

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

Today, I rise in opposition to this bill, the so-called Fix Our Forests Act.

This bill is anything but a fix for our forests, and it threatens to intensify not just the wildfire crisis but also the biodiversity and climate crises.

We appreciate the focus and leadership that Chair WESTERMAN has shown on these issues, and it is clear to me and so many others that our forests are a genuine passion of his. Unfortunately, this bill completely misses the mark and has the potential to do serious damage.

Last Congress, Democrats delivered. We secured more than \$15 billion in his-

toric investments through the infrastructure law and the Inflation Reduction Act to help keep communities safe, restore healthy ecosystems, and promote healthy and sustainable forest management techniques.

We provided resources for the Forest Service so they could treat a record-breaking number of acres without gutting environmental protections. We provided planning resources for at-risk communities. We provided more than \$1 billion for staffing and resources in our permitting offices, funds that have already shortened project timelines by an average of 6 months. In addition, we supported better pay and benefits for wildland firefighters, an issue that I personally and consistently championed.

□ 1430

It is critical that our Federal land management agencies and their partners have the resources and staff capacity that is required to promote resilient forests and safe communities.

It is shocking that most House Republicans voted against those two successful, popular laws: the Inflation Reduction Act and the bipartisan infrastructure law. It is also shocking that right at the moment when a lot of those investments are close to needing reauthorization, the majority is turning its back once again, and it is in stark contrast with the bill today.

That is not for lack of trying on our side, but unfortunately, our Republican counterparts in the House Committee on Natural Resources have refused to work with committee Democrats on changes to the most egregious sections of this bill.

I was optimistic at seeing several amendments filed by Democrats that highlight the missing pieces of this legislation. These included an effort to consider climate change in the bill, add authorizations for much-needed funding throughout an otherwise unfunded bill, and to rid this bill of the unprecedented and dangerous sections that strip Americans of access to the courts under the guise of litigation reform.

Of course, these amendments were not ruled in order, supposedly due to Republican floor rules and procedure, rules and procedures that apparently apply only selectively because this bill has a slew of violations throughout, including numerous violations of the CutGo rules that are allegedly so important to the far-right Freedom Caucus.

I hope those Freedom Caucus members know what they are being asked to vote for. What is in this bill that is so important that CutGo no longer applies? Well, the heart and soul of this bill is a longstanding Republican wish list of priorities that undermine science-based management decisions, bedrock environmental protections, and opportunities for community input.

The so-called Fix Our Forests Act inappropriately stretches the credulity of

NEPA's emergency authorities. It undercuts the popular and bipartisan Endangered Species Act and even makes it more difficult for communities to challenge proposed projects in their own backyards.

The climate crisis, the biodiversity crisis, and the safety of our communities all converge in our Nation's forests. Unfettered backcountry logging is not the answer. We need to support communities, not silence them.

Do you know what else is not in this bill? Unlike the fire response laws that Democrats passed last Congress, there is nothing here about firefighter pay. What kind of fire response bill doesn't include pay for our firefighters in it? Are you kidding me?

H.R. 8790 sets a dangerous precedent. The climate crisis is now. The wildfire crisis is now. We shouldn't be wasting our time on rushed bills with no real solutions.

Many of the Republican initiatives here have already stalled in the 2025 farm bill process. A better strategy to address the wildfire crisis would be to work across jurisdictional boundaries and with our Senate colleagues to find true consensus.

We should be passing regular appropriation bills this week so that agencies like FEMA and the Forest Service have the resources they need and are not scrambling at the end of the fiscal year to find ways to fulfill their existing mandates, let alone the new and unfunded ones in this bill.

This is a live issue, by the way. The chief of the Forest Service has warned us explicitly that they are facing budget shortfalls due to Republican-led appropriations bills. In fact, just on Friday, the Forest Service announced that it had to halt 2025 seasonal hires amid the budget crunch.

We also need to work on providing relief and support for the communities that have been devastated by wildfire instead of trying to have Federal agencies undertake extensive management projects in their backyard without any true consent.

We should be passing legislation that pays our Federal wildland firefighters and gives them the benefits that they deserve, another major priority that this bill fails to advance.

The Forest Service is already stretched dangerously thin, and Federal firefighters are chronically underpaid. If we genuinely want to protect our communities and environment from devastating wildfires, we must prioritize people, ecosystems, and the economy. This bill fails to do each of those things.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, as I stated earlier, if forest health was about spending more money, then we would have the healthiest forests we have ever had, as my friends across the aisle interjected \$12 billion into the Forest Service budget

through the IRA and the ILJA, but their own goal of managing 6 million acres a year is going down—not going up but going down. It shows us that money is not the problem.

On the subject of firefighter pay, I think we can agree that our firefighters need higher pay. That is why, in the appropriations bill on the Interior, we had an increase in firefighter pay. There was only one Democrat who voted for that bill on the House floor.

Republicans have voted to increase the pay for firefighters, but again, it is not about money. If it was about money, then my colleagues would support this bill because the CBO has said this bill would actually save money. If we are not spending all this money fighting forest fires, we will be saving money coming out of the Treasury that we can spend on proactive things, like management.

Again, it is about the policy. This is good policy. It is bipartisan policy. We have worked hard to try to make it that.

Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE), the chairman of the Western Caucus.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Chair, I thank Mr. WESTERMAN for yielding me time to debate on this very important issue and bill.

Mr. Chair, I rise in support of the Fix Our Forests Act. As chairman of the Congressional Western Caucus, I can tell you that wildfire risk remains top of mind as States across the West are ravaged by wildfires year after year.

In fact, as we heard, just this year alone, over 7 million acres have burned due to out-of-control fires, and get this: Fire season is not over yet. We are already above our 10-year average of acres affected, with fires burning larger and hotter than ever before.

We need proactive forest management now, and the Fix Our Forests Act will help us achieve that goal. This bipartisan effort will enable desperately needed active forest management by expediting permitting reviews and limiting senseless lawsuits from extreme environmentalists.

With more proactive forest management, we can prevent the risk of fires raging out of control and save our communities from devastating damage.

Mr. Chair, I thank my good friend from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) for his leadership on this legislation. I am very proud to support this victory for rural Western America.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I yield my self such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, bad process leads to bad policy. Unfortunately, the process for this bill has been a chaotic mess from the start.

We never had a hearing on an introduced bill, just the discussion draft, and that is despite, or maybe because of, the longstanding administration policy of not spending limited time and resources testifying on draft bills.

We raced to markup without testimony from the Department of the Interior.

The administration nevertheless went above and beyond and provided extensive technical assistance and edits from both the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service.

I am not talking about policy differences here. I am talking about serious concerns with the bill not making sense. Unfortunately, the sponsor ignored those red flags.

Let me give you an example. The bill sets a timeline based on when a categorical exclusion is published in the Federal Register. I would like to make a point that was brought to our attention by the Forest Service itself: Categorical exclusions are not published in the Federal Register.

That is how sloppy the drafting is in this bill, and the process defects have continued.

This bill has numerous violations of the Freedom Caucus' floor protocols requiring offsets for authorized spending. I guess the CutGo protocols are out the window now.

It is convenient that, as of this morning, we still don't have a score from the CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, on the bill. Maybe the Freedom Caucus just isn't aware of the problem.

The cherry on top? Republicans accidentally made in order an amendment drafted so badly that it would strike out the bill entirely and replace it with a noncontroversial bill that Democrats support. Republicans had to come to Democrats this morning to ask for our help in fixing that mistake.

I will end where it started: Bad process leads to bad policy.

Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Chair, I am not sure how familiar everyone is with the committee proceedings on this legislation, but just in case, I want to offer a little refresher.

This is not the first time that I have spoken out on the majority's either inability or outright refusal to do what is right by our Nation's firefighters.

In August 2023, my friend and colleague, Representative JOE NEGUSE, who is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Federal Lands, introduced the Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act of 2023. This bipartisan legislation would permanently fix the pay cliff that our firefighters, our hometown heroes who are actually out there fixing our forests, are facing at the end of this week.

We have known about this pay cliff for well over a year, but here we are, nearing the end of 2024, and the majority has still failed to enact a permanent fix. There is certainly not one in this bill, the Fix Our Forests Act.

Right now, the Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act of 2023 has over two dozen champions on both sides of the aisle, evenly divided by Democrats and Republicans, myself included. Yet, all we have to show for this is yet another temporary fix in this week's CR, with Republican leadership once again stringing along these

men and women in uniform for another few months without a permanent solution.

As appropriators on both sides of the aisle have emphasized, these temporary patches end up costing taxpayers more than simply locking in a permanent pay fix. Strangely, this all comes after the House Republicans actually did vote for a permanent fix, as the chairman has stated.

Let me clear this up: It was part of the fiscal year 2025 Interior appropriations bill, which stands no chance of making it to the President's desk because of the majority's insistence on including over 80 poison pill policy riders to appease partisan extremists. If they were serious, they would have dropped these partisan riders.

Now, in spite of the bipartisan support for both the Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act and my own amendment to this bill to achieve the same goal, the majority is now claiming that that permanent pay fix is somehow not germane to the Fix Our Forests Act.

I ask, again, who exactly are the people on the front lines doing the work of fixing our forests? Answer: Our wildland firefighters.

Men and women are being paid less than a living wage in one of the wealthiest countries in the world to literally jump out of planes and contain fires before they burn down our homes and businesses.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Nevada.

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Chair, instead, we are going to slap a Band-Aid on this and revisit the pay issue after another congressional recess, which just got longer.

Meanwhile, these firefighters will hold their breath for another torturous 3 months, or even worse, they will get fed up and walk off the job, and our country will be less safe as a result.

What is happening is not just wrong, but it is nonsensical. We have firefighters risking their lives, needing a fix, with Republicans and Democrats both supporting a fix. Either a stand-alone bill or an amendment to this bill would provide that permanent fix, yet we don't have one. No more excuses.

□ 1445

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, you know, I hate to spend time in debate laying out how the procedures of the House work, but, number one, the majority doesn't determine what is germane. The Parliamentarian determines what is germane.

Number two, wildland firefighters actually support our bill. We gave our friends across the aisle an opportunity to vote for a pay increase for wildland firefighters that is in an appropriations bill. This is an authorization bill. It is not an appropriations bill. They chose to vote against the increased pay in

the appropriations bill, but again, we are working on an authorization bill, and it does meet House floor protocol.

There is not a CutGo because we are not cutting. Actually, the only thing we are cutting are expenses to the Federal Government.

I just wanted to clarify those few things.

Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DUARTE).

Mr. DUARTE. Mr. Chair, I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for yielding, and I rise in support of the Fix Our Forests Act.

As someone who farms on the edge of the forest in California, I can tell you, bad policies coming out of Washington and Sacramento, exacerbated by frivolous litigation, have led to failed outcomes in Federal forest management. There is no doubt about it: This is abandonment of one of our natural resources.

As we see with government-imposed droughts in California, laws and regulations are being twisted to block forest management and timber harvesting in our national forests, which peaked in the 1980s, but steadily declined and have not recovered. This has been exacerbated by the designation of over 111 million acres of preservation wilderness areas that severely limit access, ban timber harvests, and make even firefighting difficult in our forests.

This resource abandonment is also hurting our communities. Countless jobs are lost, and insurance companies are seeking to cancel policies and refusing to even provide fire insurance coverage in areas of California because of the risk of out-of-control forest fires.

These fires also devalue our national forest habitat and watersheds.

For example, we are now learning that some of these fires burn so hot that they may be changing the soil chemistry to create cancer-causing hexavalent chromium. That is the Erin Brockovich compound. This raises serious concerns about the toxic chemical getting into our groundwater when runoff from burn areas occurs.

That raises another serious concern: sedimentation of our rivers. When our forests burn, debris washes off the Sierra Nevadas and settles into our waterways, silting up our rivers, streams, and reservoirs and hurts fish species. This increases flood risks and decreases our ability to store water.

These fires also release millions of tons of pollution into the air that we breathe that can cause respiratory issues.

This resource abandonment is hurting Californians, which is unacceptable, and that is why I am proud to support the Fix Our Forests Act.

This commonsense legislation will make necessary reforms to expedite forest management projects and reduce frivolous lawsuits designed to slow or block action. This bill will help protect our forests, the environment, and will

create jobs, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS).

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Chair, this year, wildfires have already burned over 7 million acres of forests and over 1,000 homes and other structures. Hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to evacuate, often with just minutes to pack their most important belongings, not knowing if they will ever return to their homes.

Many have done all the right things to protect their property, but because of the magnitude of the wildfire crisis, they cannot get insurance for their homes. Every day of fire season feels like they are gambling with everything they own.

After decades of mismanagement and misguided fire suppression tactics, there is now a scientific consensus on the solution: active forest management, State, local, Federal, and Tribal collaboration; and continued research and development on next-generation technologies and solutions.

The problem is that forest management projects like clearing dead trees and dry vegetation that fuel fires often require multiyear environmental reviews followed by years of litigation in many cases. While we wait for analysis, forests burn down, air pollution worsens, and the threats posed by climate change to our local communities are exacerbated.

Places like Jimtown, Montana, know the consequences of inaction, where the Forest Service proposed treating at-risk land near people's homes. They conducted a comprehensive environmental review, and they gained community support. Then an outside group decided that they knew better than the experts and the Forest Service and the residents, and they sued. They claimed the NEPA analysis did not do enough to study the impact on a particular bird of prey, the goshawk—not that they didn't study it, but they didn't study it enough. Locals pleaded with the group to drop that lawsuit, but the group decided to go through with the appeal anyway.

A hearing was set for October of 2003, but unfortunately, in July of 2003, the exact type of fire the Forest Service warned about burned down that forest. The fire caused evacuations, took out power to a nearby community, and cost over \$1 million to suppress.

When the case was finally heard 2 years later, the Ninth Circuit ruled in the Forest Service's favor and found the reviews were sufficient.

That is the problem. The community and its needs were ignored. The community wasn't helped. It was ignored. Lives, homes, and businesses were all needlessly put in harm's way. The goshawks' habitat was destroyed.

The Fix Our Forests Act that I co-sponsored with Mr. WESTERMAN is a

comprehensive bill to simplify and expedite the most critical forest management projects while maintaining strong environmental standards.

It will reduce the threat of litigation that delays these projects, and it adds new opportunities for communities to engage early in the process. It also creates new programs to protect homes and communities from fires and makes it easier for them to access Federal assistance.

This is a bipartisan bill with cosponsors from both sides of the aisle, and it passed out of the committee by a voice vote. It is endorsed by the wildland firefighters, who we all agree, it seems to me, deserve a raise, and we should make that happen.

I worked with groups like The Nature Conservancy and the Environmental Defense Fund, and others to write this bill. The Nature Conservancy has decided to stay neutral on the bill because of one provision they find problematic. To Chair WESTERMAN's credit, he accepted The Nature Conservancy's other edits. The Nature Conservancy has the luxury of staying neutral as an outside group, but we all need in this body to decide where we stand.

I have spoken with colleagues on my side of the aisle, Democrats, who tell me that they will oppose the bill, although they agree with 18 out of 22 things in the text. Compromise is about accepting the 4 things you don't like so you can get the 18 things you do like. Mr. WESTERMAN has worked with me and other Democratic offices to adopt Democratic amendments to improve the legislation.

We don't have the time to wait for perfect. Every day we wait, more land burns down. Let's get this bill passed and provide some hope for Americans.

Mr. Chair, this Fix Our Forests Act establishes a national Fireshed Center as the central information hub of our wildfire strategy.

I introduced an amendment with Representative HARDER to clarify the center's role, which was not made in order due to a misunderstanding about germaneness. Our amendment would have clarified the purposes of the center, provided it with specific direction for its implementation, and provided safeguards for the protection of sensitive propriety information, while ensuring representation from non-Federal entities.

I look forward to working with the gentleman, Mr. WESTERMAN, in conference to get these changes made.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, I sincerely thank the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS) for his remarks and for his partnership on this legislation. As he mentioned, due to some procedural issues, we were not able to consider an amendment he was offering to make improvements to the bill's Fireshed Center. This is an effort that I support, and I regret we were unable to get this amendment made in order.

I do look forward to working with the gentleman on incorporating the amendment in the future discussions with the Senate.

I also thank Matt Weiner and the entire team at Megafire Action for working with us tirelessly on this important amendment and for their support of this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. TIFFANY), the subcommittee chair on Federal Lands.

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of Chairman WESTERMAN's bipartisan Fix Our Forests Act.

This bill is the culmination of the House Committee on Natural Resources' efforts this Congress to advance innovative solutions to increase the pace and scale of forest management, protect vulnerable communities from catastrophic wildfires, and restore health and resiliency to our Nation's ailing forests and Federal lands.

Addressing the health of our forests and rangelands is not an issue that will be solved by simply throwing more dollars at it. We need substantive changes in our land management practices.

Undermining active forest management has caused damage to our Nation's forests and Federal lands, and we have seen the consequences of this mismanagement out West, resulting in year after year of bad wildfire seasons.

We can act right now to reverse this trend, and that starts with passing this bill.

This bill contains streamlined tools to expedite bureaucratic environmental reviews, ending frivolous litigation that delays important projects, expanding Good Neighbor Authority, prioritizing high-risk forests, and a fix to the Cottonwood decision, which is responsible for doubling the cost of some projects.

It also includes my bill, the ACRES Act, which requires land managers to produce yearly hazardous fuels reduction reports based on the actual number of acres that they treated, and I will note that this proposal already passed the House with robust bipartisan support.

The provisions included in this bill will lead to better management, which in turn, will result in better outcomes for our land managers and our local communities with fewer wildfires and a cleaner environment.

To one of the comments, Mr. Chair, that was shared previously about the firefighter problem we have and the danger they are being put in, the number one thing we can do to protect firefighters' health and life is to manage our forests.

Take a look at this chart here to my right where you see forest management. The amount of wood that is being harvested, all from our Federal forests, steadily declined since the 1980s.

What happened with wildfires? They increased significantly. There is a direct correlation. Manage our forests,

take timber off from it, and we will not have these wildfires as we have seen since 1988.

I thank the chairman, Mr. WESTERMAN, for his tireless work on this in the Natural Resources Committee, which I sit on, and I urge passage of this bill.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank the gentleman for his leadership on the subcommittee and for his work going into this bill to make the bill better and to add some of the things that he mentioned.

When we talk about taking timber off of the forests, we are not talking about clear-cutting. It always gets misconstrued that we want to clear-cut the forests. I challenge anyone to show me where the U.S. Forest Service is clear-cutting because you won't find that. I have asked them: Is there any place you still clear-cut? And they said: No.

What we are talking about is forest management, where we go in and we thin out, we create growing space, we allow these trees to be healthier, more vibrant. We allow them to have access to sunlight, access to soil moisture and nutrients, and it gives them an opportunity to grow. It also creates space when the fire comes through it can drop down to the forest floor where it can easily be put out if it needs to be put out.

Some fire is beneficial to the forest, but certainly not fire that gets up in the crown of the trees and destroys everything in its path.

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

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I want to briefly address a claim that we heard earlier that this bill was written by The Nature Conservancy or written with them. I am sure that that would come as a surprise to the bill's author, Chairman WESTERMAN, but moreover, we have checked with the group, and not only did they not write it, The Nature Conservancy says they have not even endorsed this bill.

I just want to clear that up for everyone.

Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE).

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Mr. Chair, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 8790, the Fix Our Forests Act.

This bill had real potential, potential that could have been realized if committee Democrats had been meaningfully involved in its development.

Wildfires are a crisis that demands our collective attention across party lines. We have seen firsthand how it devastates communities, including in southern California where the Post fire continues to burn in the rugged hills of East L.A.

Hot, dry, and windy conditions intensified by the climate crisis are fueling more frequent and severe wildfires. These fires are spreading faster, lasting longer, and growing more intense.

Let me be clear: While this may seem like the new normal, it is anything but. The wildfire crisis is linked directly to the climate crisis, and if we are serious about protecting our communities, we must tackle both head-on.

That means reducing emissions and committing to a clean, renewable economy, something that, sadly, this Congress under Republican leadership refuses to address.

□ 1500

We must also ensure that our Federal land management agencies have the resources, personnel, and tools to promote resilient forests and safe communities.

That is why House Democrats took bold action in the last Congress.

Through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, we secured \$28 billion for the Department of the Interior and \$5.5 million for the Forest Service to address wildfire management and resilience.

Let's not forget: every single Natural Resources Committee Republican voted "no." Then came the Inflation Reduction Act, which provided an additional \$2.5 billion for ecosystem resilience and \$500 million for wildfire workforce needs. Once again, Republicans opposed these critical investments.

Thanks to these historic actions, the Biden-Harris administration has made significant progress. The national wildfire strategy is delivering record-breaking restoration efforts to strengthen our landscapes and keep communities safe.

We also established the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission, which released 148 consensus recommendations. I am pleased to see that the Fix Our Forests Act incorporates several of these recommendations.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. In fact, Mr. Chair, we support 18 of the 22 sections of the bill. However, without additional changes, the bill includes harmful provisions that go beyond what the wildfire commission recommended.

Despite 148 opportunities for consensus, my colleagues across the aisle couldn't resist undermining our bedrock environmental protections like NEPA, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act.

This is unnecessary because the evidence is clear: the Forest Service has achieved record-breaking results in reducing wildfire risks, thanks to the investments Democrats made last Congress over Republican opposition.

Instead of weakening vital environmental laws, we should focus on building on the progress we have already made.

The wildfire crisis is, and should be, a bipartisan priority. Democrats stand

ready to work together on consensus-based solutions that provide our land management agencies with the tools they need. Unfortunately, H.R. 8790 is not that solution.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, if the minority truly were concerned about carbon in the atmosphere, their number one priority would be to keep forests healthy, to keep massive amounts of carbon dioxide from going up in wildfires, and to keep dead and decaying wood from being digested by microorganisms and being released as methane into the atmosphere.

If we want to make less carbon in the atmosphere and if we want to keep it in the trees, then we should utilize the greatest carbon capture and sequestration device ever known to man, and that is a tree. It is on a wide scale a low-cost and economical way to capture and sequester carbon. However, when we let our forests become subject to bug and infestation attacks and to catastrophic wildfire, then we are going in the opposite direction.

If somebody wants to make the argument that we need healthy forests for a better climate, then they should vote for this bill because that is what this bill would do.

Mr. Chair, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BENTZ).

Mr. BENTZ. Mr. Chairman, I thank Chair WESTERMAN for the work he has done in creating the Fix Our Forests Act.

The path to solving any problem starts with an understanding of scale. The Western United States has millions upon millions of acres of trees, over 85 million acres of forests on the West Coast alone. In my State of Oregon, there are 30 million acres; Washington, 22.5 million; and California, 33 million. There are 85 million acres of forest, 132,000 square miles, an area bigger than New Mexico.

Now, it is not a problem to have forests. When they are managed well, they are an incredible, essential, and an irreplaceable asset. However, our forests are growing faster and faster, building up huge amounts of potential energy which, without any doubt whatsoever, will burn as things are currently situated.

Fires are perhaps started by an arsonist, a lightning bolt, or the negligence of a camper. When this happens, the overgrown and dry forests will burn like paper. If there is even a moderate wind, these fires spread just like wildfire because they are burning up and destroying land, animals, structures, homes, and even people.

Just this year in Oregon, in my home State, almost 2 million acres burned. A huge amount of these 2 million acres was forestland. The Forest Service says that about 250 million of our tax dollars were spent fighting these fires. At least 32 homes were destroyed. That is in addition to hundreds of homes that have been lost in previous fires.

The value of timber burned up on private ground, 330,000 acres, caught up in

this year's fires, just in Oregon, is in the tens of millions of dollars.

Because of forest fire risk, the cost of fire insurance on thousands of homes across Oregon is skyrocketing and in some cases is not even available.

The amount of CO<sub>2</sub>, smoke, ash, dust, and permanent environmental harm is enormous. The old-growth timber burned up and forever lost is unforgivable. This is just a sample of what has happened in Oregon.

The same thing on an even greater and more damaging scale happened in California this year, Washington, Montana, and so on.

The causes of overgrown and dry forests burning up are many, but one of the obvious things we should be doing, and something that all rational people agree upon, is to reduce the amount of fuel in our forests, to actually go in and remove woody material from these 85 million acres that are not essential to the forest.

So why isn't this happening?

Why are we dragging our feet when it comes to getting brush and understory of small trees out of our forests?

Why are we failing to clean up our forests and protecting them?

Of course, the reason is our laws and the haystack of regulations that get in the way. They create delays, they create roadblocks, they create litigation paralysis, and they create endless bureaucratic efforts to write the perfect management plan. It is this set of problems and obstacles that the Fix Our Forests Act, brought to us today by Chair WESTERMAN, would help significantly resolve.

The summary of the Fix Our Forests Act calls out the fact that we would be simplifying the approach to this, and that would be an excellent idea, revitalizing our rural economies, and renewing and prioritizing our science. All of these are excellent things.

I just want to say that when I was young, living on a ranch in eastern Oregon on the border of the Malheur National Forest, a fire in our forest was rare. In fact, in the 15 years I lived in that beautiful place, I remember only one forest fire in that forest. Now horrific fires are an annual and all too predictable occurrence. These are not small fires. These are terrible, destructive, and awful fires.

Just this summer, I received a call from a terrified constituent begging me to call airplanes with fire retardant to save their home. It is a miracle that only one person, and that was bad enough, was killed this year in fighting these fires. Next year we may be not so lucky.

Let's pass this bill so we can get into the forests now, not years from now, reduce fuel loads and make our communities and our people safer and our forests more resilient.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA), who is a cosponsor of the bill and has been a tireless advocate on improving forest health.

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Chair, I appreciate this opportunity. I think we have seen why we are here today. It is because in the past decade, America has witnessed firsthand the devastation, the death, and the massive destruction from wildfires.

In my home State of California, this year alone, wildfires have burned almost 1 million acres. That is just one-fourth of the acres that burned back in 2020.

In my congressional district along the coast of California, we have endured some of the most extreme wildfires in our Nation's history in the Los Padres National Forest, Santa Cruz Mountains, and the Big Sur coastline.

Now, unfortunately, 80 percent of wildfires are caused by humans. What really makes us vulnerable to these extreme fires in this time of extreme weather and, yes, in this time of extreme climate change, is that we are doing what we can to fight the fires, but we just aren't doing enough to prevent the fires.

Decades of dereliction when it comes to doing anything to manage wildlands is a persistent cause of why the Western United States is so susceptible to the devastating conflagrations we are experiencing.

That is why we need to do something, anything, when it comes to the management of our forests and to be proactive when it comes to protecting our wetlands and the lives and livelihoods of those who live in the wildland-urban interface.

The Fix Our Forests Act is a big step in the right direction to restore the health of forests, to bolster their resiliency, and, yes, to reduce the threat of wildfires.

This legislation would allow all levels of government to play their part with community wildfire risk reduction programs, a national Fireshed Center, and, yes, to fix our flawed permitting system, not by getting rid of NEPA but with the flexibility necessary so that those on the ground can implement prevention projects, manage our forests, and therefore protect our forests.

Another key part of this legislation would also expand and encourage the use of prescribed burns in fireshed areas that would not only help prevent fires, it would help my congressional district keep on track with our management plan.

As wildfire seasons have turned into wildfire years, we have learned our lesson and have done an excellent job fighting fires, but now it is time we must do something to prevent wildfires.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chairman, the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, and litigation are not the reason that we have catastrophic wildfires. In fact, a 2020 study showed that only one out of every 450 NEPA reviews are ever challenged in court.

Plus, the Forest Service already conducts over 85 percent of its work

through existing categorical exclusions, which allows proceeding without a NEPA environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement.

The reality is that the Forest Service has a wide range of tools and policies designed to expedite the forest management projects.

Here is the actual problem: The Forest Service is chronically underfunded. Gaps in funding are directly tied to project delays and management challenges across the agency. A review conducted by the "Columbia Journal of Environmental Law" found that many sources of delay attributed to NEPA are caused by external factors, and they point to inadequate staffing, insufficient funding, and delays of obtaining information from permittees.

The Forest Service doesn't need us to roll back our environmental laws. It needs sustainable funding and additional staff capacity.

However, the Republicans who keep voting against that funding would rather scapegoat our environmental laws and the public's right to access the courthouse.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, it was insinuated earlier that my good friend, Mr. PETERS, did not work with The Nature Conservancy.

It begins by saying that: "TNC, which has decades of experience in wildfire mitigation and resilience work, was at the table with Representatives PETERS and WESTERMAN to improve this bill from its initial draft form."

They go on to say that they are not endorsing the bill because of some issues they have, but they also list several things that they approve of in the bill.

Mr. Chair, I include in the RECORD the Nature Conservancy statement.

#### TNC NEW STATEMENT

TNC's position: TNC, which has decades of experience in wildfire mitigation and resilience work, was at the table with Reps. PETERS and WESTERMAN to improve this bill from its initial draft form, and while it has certainly improved since that point due in part to our advocacy, we are not endorsing the bill due to a remaining problematic provision in the litigation reform section that TNC believes could damagingly limit community engagement.

However, we also believe there are beneficial provisions in the bill, such as the Good Neighbor Authority provisions, the inclusion of Tribal priorities in the fireshed management section, the Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Program, and the Seeds of Success cross agency coordination.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM).

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Chair, I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for yielding.

Mr. Chair, I rise in strong support of H.R. 8790, the Fix Our Forests Act.

The fear facing many of my constituents during California's peak wildfire

season, especially in the canyon communities close to the Cleveland National Forest, became a reality in recent weeks as multiple wildfires burn simultaneously in southern California, including the Airport fire in my district.

The Airport fire has burned over 23,500 acres, and still counting, in Orange and Riverside Counties.

I am grateful to the first responders who are working day and night to keep our communities safe. Times like these also show us that first responders need all tools available to protect our communities and respond to the ever-changing threat that wildfires pose.

The Fix Our Forests Act includes legislation that I introduced called the Wildfire Technology Demonstration, Evaluation, Modernization, and Optimization, or DEMO, Act, that would address this need.

I introduced the DEMO Act after hearing from firefighting agencies and companies developing innovative technologies.

This bipartisan legislation aims to deploy more emerging technologies to fight wildfires by allowing private entities to partner with Federal land management agencies to test wildfire technologies in a 7-year pilot program.

This is a win-win for private entities looking to test their technologies at scale and Federal land management agencies working to deploy emerging technologies to help combat wildfires.

I thank my friend, Representative CROW, for his partnership on the DEMO Act, as well as Chairman WESTERMAN and Representative PETERS for including my legislation in this important and timely bill to keep our communities and forests safe from wildfires.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 8790.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentlewoman for her efforts in helping make this a better bill. She knows all too well the devastation of catastrophic wildfires like what are happening in her district.

Mr. Chair, I have no further requests for time, I am prepared to close, and I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, may I inquire how much time remains.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California has 8 minutes remaining.

□ 1515

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

Mr. Chair, we need to clear up the record about this idea that the Forest Service supports expanded categorical exclusions, often called CEs.

The Fix Our Forests Act would massively expand categorical exclusions for fireshed management projects, including activities like logging and pesticide application, which would have significant impacts on forest ecosystems.

Typically, categorical exclusions are developed by the agencies with the

input of experts. They are detailed and specific with appropriate guardrails that prevent unnecessary harm, and they are a useful tool. In fact, 82 percent of Forest Service projects are executed using categorical exclusions.

The so-called Fix Our Forests Act takes a sledgehammer to that track record. The Forest Service has said that they would use any new authorities Congress grants to them, but they are not advocating for any larger categorical exclusions.

We are not here to try and stop the Forest Service from using the tools that it has. What we are trying to do is avoid complicating the processes that the Forest Service has, and that is a real issue.

The Forest Service has explicitly told us in technical assistance that this bill's directives around the creation and implementation of fireshed management projects are duplicative and confusing. Why aren't we listening to them?

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

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

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Chair, I know that conversations about wildfire can be very difficult for Members on both sides. The fires this year and in recent years have been devastating, and I have seen it firsthand with wildfires in my district.

I close with the same message that I started with: Republican leadership is using the very real and painful wildfire crisis as a Trojan horse for a long-standing wish list of harmful environmental policies. Our forests are critical carbon reserves, majestic destinations for outdoor recreation, and habitats for a range of wildlife, including many threatened and endangered species. All of that will be put at risk by this bill's overzealous approach to logging and other destructive management practices.

This bill codifies and expands the use of emergency authorities dramatically, bending the protections provided by the successful, popular, and iconic laws, such as the Endangered Species Act and NEPA. There is nothing discrete or cute about opening this many acres to management without proper review.

Mr. Chair, confronting the wildfire crisis is hard work that requires smart planning and broad collaboration. We won't get there through shortcuts and rollbacks.

Relying on rushed planning for routine forest management undermines community involvement. We shouldn't be undercutting the people who are most at risk.

The Forest Service has been asking us to help them with consistent, reliable budgets. They have been warning us that the appropriations numbers from our Republican colleagues are causing extreme budget shortfalls. They announced just last week that

the Forest Service cannot afford to hire nonfire temporary staff anymore.

Let me repeat that: The Republican inability to fund the government on time and with sufficient resources has caused the Forest Service to place a freeze on hiring the very staff who hike into the backcountry to maintain the trails that so many of us use and love.

Finally, this bill fails to provide a permanent and much-needed fix for wildland firefighter pay. That should be one of our top priorities when it comes to confronting the wildfire crisis. Yet, it is completely sidestepped by this legislation.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Chair, what we are doing is not working. Our forests are not getting healthier. Our environment is not getting better. The climate is not getting better. Wildlife habitats are not getting better. Water quality is not getting better. It is all getting worse from the things that we have been doing the last 30 years.

If that is not enough evidence to say it is time for a change, I don't know what is. The time to fix our forests is now. This is a good, commonsense, bipartisan bill for our forest health and our Nation's benefit. The Fix Our Forests Act will end the status quo of overgrown, fire-prone tinderboxes.

Mr. Chair, again, this bill will make our forests healthier and more resilient. It will protect our communities, save taxpayer money, and cut red tape. I urge the adoption of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

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

The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources, printed in the bill, modified by the amendment printed in part C of House Report 118-705, shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read.

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

H.R. 8790

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

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

(a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the “Fix Our Forests Act”.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Definitions.

**TITLE I—LANDSCAPE-SCALE RESTORATION**

*Subtitle A—Addressing Emergency Wildfire Risks in High Priority Firesheds*

Sec. 101. Designation of fireshed management areas.

Sec. 102. Fireshed center.

Sec. 103. Fireshed registry.

Sec. 104. Shared stewardship.

Sec. 105. Fireshed assessments.

Sec. 106. Emergency fireshed management.

Sec. 107. Sunset.

*Subtitle B—Expanding Collaborative Tools to Reduce Wildfire Risk and Improve Forest Health*

Sec. 111. Modification of the treatment of certain revenue and payments under good neighbor agreements.

Sec. 112. Fixing stewardship end result contracting.

Sec. 113. Intra-agency strike teams.

Sec. 114. Locally-led restoration.

Sec. 115. Joint Chiefs landscape restoration partnership program.

Sec. 116. Collaborative forest landscape restoration program.

*Subtitle C—Litigation Reform*

Sec. 121. Commonsense litigation reform.

Sec. 122. Consultation on forest plans.

**TITLE II—PROTECTING COMMUNITIES IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE**

Sec. 201. Community wildfire risk reduction program.

Sec. 202. Community wildfire defense research program.

Sec. 203. Vegetation management, facility inspection, and operation and maintenance relating to electric transmission and distribution facility rights-of-way.

Sec. 204. Categorical exclusion for electric utility lines rights-of-way.

Sec. 205. Seeds of success.

**TITLE III—TRANSPARENCY AND TECHNOLOGY**

Sec. 301. Biochar innovations and opportunities for conservation, health, and advancements in research.

Sec. 302. Accurate hazardous fuels reduction reports.

Sec. 303. Public-private wildfire technology deployment and demonstration partnership.

Sec. 304. GAO study on Forest Service policies.

Sec. 305. Forest Service Western headquarters study.

Sec. 306. Keeping forest plans current and monitored.

**SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

*In this Act:*

(1) **DIRECTOR.**—The term “Director” means the Director of the Fireshed Center appointed under section 102.

(2) **FIRESHED.**—The term “fireshed” means a landscape-scale area that faces similar wildfire threat where a response strategy could influence the wildfire outcome.

(3) **FIRESHED MANAGEMENT PROJECT.**—The term “fireshed management project” means a project under section 106.

(4) **FIRESHED REGISTRY.**—The term “Fireshed Registry” means the fireshed registry established under section 103.

(5) **FOREST PLAN.**—The term “forest plan” means—

(A) a land use plan prepared by the Bureau of Land Management for public lands pursuant to section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712);

(B) a land and resource management plan prepared by the Forest Service for a unit of the National Forest System pursuant to section 6 of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604); or

(C) a forest management plan (as defined in section 304 of the National Indian Forests Resources Management Act (25 U.S.C. 3104)) with respect to Indian forest land or rangeland.

(6) **GOVERNOR.**—The term “Governor” means the Governor or any other appropriate executive official of an affected State or Indian Tribe or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(7) **HAZARDOUS FUELS MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES.**—The term “hazardous fuels management activities” means any vegetation management

activities (or combination thereof) that reduce the risk of wildfire, including mechanical thinning, mastication, prescribed burning, cultural burning (as determined by the applicable Indian Tribe), timber harvest, and grazing.

(8) **HFRA TERMS.**—The terms “at-risk community”, “community wildfire protection plan”, and “wildland-urban interface” have the meanings given such terms, respectively, in section 101 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511).

(9) **INDIAN FOREST LAND OR RANGELAND.**—The term “Indian forest land or rangeland” means land that—

(A) is held in trust by, or with a restriction against alienation by, the United States for an Indian Tribe or a member of an Indian Tribe; and

(B)(i)(I) is Indian forest land (as defined in section 304 of the National Indian Forest Resources Management Act (25 U.S.C. 3103)); or

(ii) formerly had a forest cover or vegetative cover that is capable of restoration.

(10) **INDIAN TRIBE.**—The term “Indian Tribe” has the meaning given that term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

(11) **NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS.**—The term “National Forest System lands” has the meaning given the term in section 11(a) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1609).

(12) **PUBLIC LANDS.**—The term “public lands” has the meaning given that term in section 103 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702), except that the term includes Coos Bay Wagon Road Grant lands and Oregon and California Railroad Grant lands.

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

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

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

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

(15) **SECRETARIES.**—The term “Secretaries” means each of—

(A) the Secretary of the Interior; and

(B) the Secretary of Agriculture.

(16) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture.

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

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

(B) the Secretary of the Interior, with respect to public lands.

(18) **STATE.**—The term “State” means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, and each territory of the United States.

## **TITLE I—LANDSCAPE-SCALE RESTORATION**

### **Subtitle A—Addressing Emergency Wildfire Risks in High Priority Firesheds**

#### **SEC. 101. DESIGNATION OF FIRESHED MANAGEMENT AREAS.**

(a) **DESIGNATION OF FIRESHED MANAGEMENT AREAS.**—

(1) **INITIAL DESIGNATIONS.**—For the period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act and ending on the date that is 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, there are designated fireshed management areas, which—

(A) shall be comprised of individual landscape-scale firesheds identified as being a high risk fireshed in the “Wildfire Crisis Strategy” published by the Forest Service in January 2022;

(B) shall be comprised of individual landscape-scale firesheds identified by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, as being in the top 20 percent of the 7,688 firesheds published by the Rocky Mountain Research Station of the Forest Service in 2019 for wildfire exposure based on the following criteria—

(i) wildfire exposure and corresponding risk to communities, including risk to structures and life;

(ii) wildfire exposure and corresponding risk to municipal watersheds, including tribal water supplies and systems; and

(iii) risk of forest conversion due to wildfire;

(C) shall not overlap with any other fireshed management areas;

(D) may contain Federal and non-Federal land, including Indian forest lands or rangelands; and

(E) where the Secretary concerned shall carry out fireshed management projects.

#### **(2) FURTHER FIRESHED MANAGEMENT AREA DESIGNATIONS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—On the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act and every 5 years thereafter, the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, shall submit to the relevant Congressional Committees an updated map of firesheds based on the Fireshed Registry maintained under section 103.

(B) **DESIGNATION.**—Not later than 60 days after submitting an updated fireshed map under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall, based on such map, designate additional fireshed management areas that are identified as being in the top 20 percent of firesheds at risk of wildfire exposure based on the criteria specified in subparagraphs (B), (C), (D), and (E) of paragraph (1).

(b) **APPLICABILITY OF NEPA.**—The designation of fireshed management areas under this section shall not be subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

#### **SEC. 102. FIRESHED CENTER.**

##### **(a) ESTABLISHMENT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, and the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the U.S. Geological Survey, shall jointly establish a Fireshed Center (hereinafter referred to as the “Center”) comprised of at least one career representative from each of the following:

(A) The Forest Service.

(B) The Bureau of Land Management.

(C) The National Park Service.

(D) The Bureau of Indian Affairs.

(E) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

(F) The U.S. Geological Survey.

(G) The Department of Defense.

(H) The Department of Homeland Security.

(I) The Department of Energy.

(J) The Federal Emergency Management Agency.

(K) The National Science Foundation.

(L) The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

(M) The National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

(N) The National Institute of Standards and Technology.

(2) **DIRECTOR.**—The Secretary, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, and the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the U.S. Geological Survey, shall jointly appoint a Director of the Center, who—

(A) shall be an employee of the U.S. Geological Survey or the Forest Service;

(B) shall serve an initial term of not more than 7 years; and

(C) may serve one additional term of not more than 7 years after the initial term described in subparagraph (B).

(3) **ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATION.**—The Secretary, acting through the Chief of the Forest

Service and the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the U.S. Geological Survey, may jointly appoint additional representatives of Federal agencies to the Center, as the Secretaries determine necessary.

(b) **PURPOSES.**—The purposes of the Center are to—

(1) comprehensively assess and predict fire and smoke in the wildland and built environment interface across jurisdictions to inform—

(A) land and fuels management;

(B) community, public health, and built environment risk reduction; and

(C) fire response and post-fire recovery;

(2) provide data aggregation, real-time land and fuels management services, and science-based decision support services;

(3) reduce fragmentation and duplication across Federal land management agencies with respect to predictive service and decision support functions related to wildland fire and smoke;

(4) promote coordination and sharing of data regarding wildland fire and smoke decision making between Federal agencies, States, Indian Tribes, local governments, academic or research institutions, and private entities;

(5) streamline procurement processes and cybersecurity systems related to addressing wildland fire and smoke;

(6) amplify and distribute existing, and develop as necessary, publicly accessible data, models, technologies (including mapping technologies), assessments, and National Weather Service fire weather forecasts to support short- and long-term planning regarding wildland fire and smoke risk reduction and post-fire recovery while avoiding duplicative efforts; and

(7) maintain the Fireshed Registry established under section 103.

(c) **MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING.**—The Center may enter into memorandums of understanding, contracts, or other agreements with State governments, Indian Tribes, local governments, academic or research institutions, and private entities to improve the information and operations of the Center.

##### **(d) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, TECHNICAL SERVICES, AND STAFF SUPPORT.**—

(1) **USGS SUPPORT.**—The Secretary of the Interior shall make personnel of the U.S. Geological Survey available to the Center for such administrative support, technical services, and development and dissemination of data as the Secretary determines necessary to carry out this section.

(2) **USFS SUPPORT.**—The Secretary shall make personnel of the Forest Service available to the Center for such administrative support, technical services, and the development and dissemination of information related to fireshed management and the Fireshed Registry as the Secretary determines necessary to carry out this section.

#### **SEC. 103. FIRESHED REGISTRY.**

(a) **FIRESHED REGISTRY.**—The Secretary, acting through the Director of the Fireshed Center appointed under section 102, shall maintain a Fireshed Registry on a publicly accessible website that provides interactive geospatial data on individual firesheds, including information on—

(1) wildfire exposure delineated by ownership, including rights-of-way for utilities and other public or private purposes;

(2) any hazardous fuels management activities that have occurred within an individual fireshed in the past 10 years;

(3) wildfire exposure with respect to such fireshed delineated by—

(A) wildfire exposure and corresponding risk to communities, including risk to structures and life;

(B) wildfire exposure and corresponding risk to municipal watersheds, including tribal water supplies and systems; and

(C) risk of forest conversion due to wildfire;

(4) the percentage of the fireshed that has burned in wildfires in the past 10 years, including, to the extent practicable, delineations of acres that have burned at a high severity;

(5) spatial patterns of wildfire exposure, including plausible extreme fire events; and

(6) any hazardous fuels management activities planned for the fireshed, including fireshed management projects.

(b) COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLANS.—The Director shall make data from the Fireshed Registry available to local communities developing or updating community wildfire protection plans.

(c) REQUIREMENT TO MAINTAIN.—As part of the website containing the Fireshed Registry, the Director shall—

(1) publish fireshed assessments created under section 105; and

(2) maintain a searchable database to track—

(A) the status of Federal environmental reviews, permits, and authorizations for fireshed management projects, including—

(i) a comprehensive permitting timetable;

(ii) the status of the compliance of each lead agency, cooperating agency, and participating agency with the permitting timetable with respect to such fireshed management projects;

(iii) any modifications of the permitting timetable required under clause (i), including an explanation as to why the permitting timetable was modified; and

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

(B) the projected cost of such fireshed management projects; and

(C) in the case of completed fireshed management projects, the effectiveness of such projects in reducing the wildfire exposure within an applicable fireshed, including wildfire exposure described in subparagraphs (A) through (C) of subsection (a)(3).

(d) RELIANCE ON EXISTING ASSESSMENTS.—In carrying out this section, the Director may rely on assessments completed or data gathered through existing partnerships, to the extent practicable.

#### SEC. 104. SHARED STEWARDSHIP.

(a) JOINT AGREEMENTS.—Not later than 90 days after receiving a written request from a Governor of a State or an Indian Tribe, the Secretary concerned shall enter into a shared stewardship agreement (or similar agreement) with such Governor or Indian Tribe to jointly—

(1) promote the reduction of wildfire exposure, based on the criteria in section 101(a)(1)(B), in fireshed management areas across jurisdictional boundaries; and

(2) conduct fireshed assessments under section 105.

(b) ADDITIONAL FIRESHED MANAGEMENT AREAS.—With respect to a shared stewardship agreement (or similar agreement) with a Governor of a State or an Indian Tribe entered into under subsection (a), the Secretary concerned, if requested by such Governor or Indian Tribe, may—

(1) designate additional fireshed management areas under such agreement; and

(2) update such agreement to address new wildfire threats.

#### SEC. 105. FIRESHED ASSESSMENTS.

##### (a) FIRESHED ASSESSMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the Secretary concerned enters into an agreement with a Governor of a State or an Indian Tribe under section 104, the Secretary concerned and such Governor or Indian Tribe shall, with respect to the fireshed management areas designated in such State, jointly conduct a fireshed assessment that—

(A) identifies—

(i) using the best available science, wildfire exposure risks within each such fireshed man-

agement area, including scenario planning and wildfire hazard mapping and models; and

(ii) each at-risk community within each fireshed management area;

(B) identifies potential fireshed management projects to be carried out in such fireshed management areas, giving priority—

(i) primarily, to projects with the purpose of reducing—

(I) wildfire exposure and corresponding risk to communities, including risk to structures and life;

(II) wildfire exposure and corresponding risk to municipal watersheds, including tribal water supplies and systems;

(III) risk of forest conversion due to wildfire; or

(IV) any combination of purposes described in subclauses (I) through (III); and

(ii) secondarily, to projects with the purpose of protecting—

(I) critical infrastructure, including utility infrastructure;

(II) wildlife habitats, including habitat for species listed under the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.);

(III) the built environment, including residential and commercial buildings;

(IV) resources of an Indian Tribe, as defined by the Indian Tribe; or

(V) any combination of purposes described in subclauses (I) through (IV);

(C) includes—

(i) a strategy for reducing the threat of wildfire to at-risk communities in the wildland-urban interface on both Federal and non-Federal land;

(ii) a timeline for the implementation of fireshed management projects;

(iii) long-term benchmark goals for the completion of fireshed management projects in the highest wildfire exposure areas so that such projects contribute to the development and maintenance of healthy and resilient landscapes; and

(iv) policies to ensure fireshed management projects comply with applicable forest plans and incorporate the best available science;

(D) shall be regularly updated based on the best available science, as determined by the Secretary concerned; and

(E) shall be publicly available on a website maintained by the Secretary concerned.

(2) LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION.—Upon the written request of a local government, the Secretary concerned and the Governor of the State in which the local government is located may allow such local government to participate in producing the fireshed assessment under paragraph (1) for such State.

##### (3) INFORMATION IMPROVEMENT.—

(A) MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING.—In carrying out a fireshed assessment under this subsection, the Secretary concerned may enter into memorandums of understanding with other Federal agencies or departments (including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), States, Indian Tribes, private entities, or research or educational institutions to improve, with respect to such assessment, the use and integration of—

(i) advanced remote sensing and geospatial technologies;

(ii) statistical modeling and analysis; or

(iii) any other technology or combination of technologies and analyses that the Secretary concerned determines will benefit the quality of information of such an assessment.

(B) BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE.—In using the best available science for the fireshed assessments completed under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary concerned and Governor shall, to the maximum extent practicable, incorporate—

(i) traditional ecological knowledge from Indian Tribes;

(ii) data from State forest action plans and State wildfire risk assessments;

(iii) data from the Fireshed Registry maintained under section 103; and

(iv) data from other Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments or agencies.

(b) APPLICABILITY OF NEPA.—Fireshed assessments conducted under this section shall not be subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

#### SEC. 106. EMERGENCY FIRESHED MANAGEMENT.

##### (a) FIRESHED MANAGEMENT PROJECTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary concerned, acting through a responsible official, shall carry out fireshed management projects in fireshed management areas designated under section 101 in accordance with this section.

(2) FIRESHED MANAGEMENT PROJECTS.—The responsible official shall carry out the following forest and vegetation management activities as fireshed management projects under this section:

(A) Conducting hazardous fuels management activities.

(B) Creating fuel breaks and fire breaks.

(C) Removing hazard trees, dead trees, dying trees, or trees at risk of dying, as determined by the responsible official.

(D) Developing, approving, or conducting routine maintenance under a vegetation management, facility inspection, and operation and maintenance plan submitted under section 512(c)(1) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1772(c)(1)).

(E) Removing trees to address overstocking or crowding in a forest stand, consistent with the appropriate basal area of the forest stand as determined by the responsible official.

(F) Using chemical or re-seeding and planting treatments to address insects and disease and control vegetation competition or invasive species.

(G) Any activities recommended by an applicable fireshed assessment carried out under section 105.

(H) Any activities recommended by an applicable community wildfire protection plan.

(I) Any combination of activities described in this paragraph.

##### (3) EMERGENCY FIRESHED MANAGEMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—For any fireshed management area designated under section 101, the following shall have the force and effect of law:

(i) Section 220.4(b) of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act), with respect to lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary.

(ii) Section 46.150 of title 43, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act), with respect to lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior.

(iii) Section 402.05 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act).

(iv) Section 800.12 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act).

##### (B) UTILIZATION OF EXISTING STREAMLINED AUTHORITIES IN FIRESHED MANAGEMENT AREAS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Fireshed management projects carried out under this section shall be considered authorized projects under the following categorical exclusions:

(I) Section 603(a) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591b(a)).

(II) Section 605(a) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591d(a)).

(III) Section 606(b) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591e(b)).

(IV) Section 4080(b) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C. 6592b(b)).

(V) Section 4(c)(4) of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (Public Law 106-506; 114 Stat. 2353).

(VI) Subject to subsection (d) of section 4080 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C. 6592c) in the same manner as authorized emergency actions (as defined in subsection (a) of such section) are subject to such subsection.

(ii) USE OF EXPEDITED AUTHORITIES.—In carrying out a fireshed management project, the

Secretary shall apply a categorical exclusion under clause (i)—

(I) in a manner consistent with the statute establishing such categorical exclusion; and

(II) in any area—

(aa) designated as suitable for timber production within the applicable forest plan; or

(bb) where timber harvest activities are not prohibited.

(iii) **FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT REQUIREMENTS.**—In carrying out this section, the Secretary concerned shall ensure compliance with the amendments made to the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) by the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 (Public Law 118–5).

(iv) **USE OF OTHER AUTHORITIES.**—To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary concerned shall use the authorities provided under this section in combination with other authorities to carry out fireshed management projects, including—

(I) good neighbor agreements entered into under section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a) (as amended by this Act);

(II) stewardship contracting projects entered into under section 604 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c) (as amended by this Act);

(III) self-determination contracts and self-governance compact agreements entered into under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.); and

(IV) agreements entered into under the Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004 (25 U.S.C. 3115a et seq.).

(b) **EXPANSION.**—

(1) **HFRA AMENDMENTS.**—The Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 is amended—

(A) in section 603(c)(1) (16 U.S.C. 6591b(c)(1)), by striking “3000 acres” and inserting “10,000 acres”;

(B) in section 605(c)(1) (16 U.S.C. 6591d(c)(1)), by striking “3000 acres” and inserting “10,000 acres”; and

(C) in section 606(g) (16 U.S.C. 6591e(g)), by striking “4,500 acres” and inserting “10,000 acres”.

(2) **INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT AMENDMENT.**—Section 40806(d)(1) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C. 6592b(d)(1)), by striking “3,000 acres” and inserting “10,000 acres”.

(3) **LAKE TAHOE RESTORATION ACT AMENDMENTS.**—Section 4(c)(4)(C) of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (Public Law 106–506; 114 Stat. 2353) is amended—

(A) by striking “Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit”; and

(B) by inserting “applicable to the area” before the period at the end.

#### SEC. 107. SUNSET.

The authority under this subtitle shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

#### Subtitle B—Expanding Collaborative Tools to Reduce Wildfire Risk and Improve Forest Health

#### SEC. 111. MODIFICATION OF THE TREATMENT OF CERTAIN REVENUE AND PAYMENTS UNDER GOOD NEIGHBOR AGREEMENTS.

(a) **GOOD NEIGHBOR AUTHORITY.**—Section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(6), by striking “or Indian tribe”; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)(A), by inserting “, Indian tribe,” after “Governor”;

(B) in paragraph (2)(C)—

(i) by striking clause (i) and inserting the following:

“(i) **IN GENERAL.**—Funds received from the sale of timber or forest product by a Governor, an Indian tribe, or a county under a good neighbor agreement shall be retained and used

by the Governor, Indian tribe, or county, as applicable—

“(I) to carry out authorized restoration services under the good neighbor agreement; and

“(II) if there are funds remaining after carrying out subclause (I), to carry out authorized restoration services under other good neighbor agreements and for the administration of a good neighbor authority program by a Governor, Indian tribe, or county.”; and

(ii) in clause (ii), by striking “2024” and inserting “2029”;

(C) in paragraph (3), by inserting “, Indian tribe,” after “Governor”; and

(D) by striking paragraph (4).

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—Section 8206(a) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(B), by inserting “, Indian tribe,” after “Governor”; and

(2) in paragraph (5), by inserting “, Indian tribe,” after “Governor”.

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by this section apply to any project initiated pursuant to a good neighbor agreement (as defined in section 8206(a) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a(a)))—

(1) before the date of enactment of this Act, if the project was initiated after the date of enactment of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334; 132 Stat. 4490); or

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

#### SEC. 112. FIXING STEWARDSHIP END RESULT CONTRACTING.

Section 604 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by inserting “, including retaining and expanding existing forest products infrastructure” before the period at the end;

(2) in subsection (d)(3)(B), by striking “10 years” and inserting “20 years”; and

(3) in subsection (h), by adding at the end the following:

“(4) **SPECIAL RULE FOR LONG-TERM STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTS.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—A long-term agreement or contract entered into with an entity under subsection (b) by the Chief or the Director shall provide that in the case of the cancellation or termination by the Chief or the Director of such long-term agreement or contract, the Chief or the Director, as applicable, shall provide 10 percent of the agreement or contract amount to such entity as cancellation or termination costs.

“(B) **DEFINITION OF LONG-TERM AGREEMENT OR CONTRACT.**—In this paragraph, the term ‘long-term agreement or contract’ means an agreement or contract under subsection (b)—

“(i) with a term of more than 5 years; and

“(ii) entered into on or after the date of the enactment of this paragraph.”.

#### SEC. 113. INTRA-AGENCY STRIKE TEAMS.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary concerned shall establish intra-agency strike teams to assist the Secretary concerned with—

(1) any reviews, including analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), consultations under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.), and consultations under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), with the intent to accelerate and streamline interagency consultation processes;

(2) the implementation of any necessary site preparation work in advance of or as part of a fireshed management project;

(3) the implementation of fireshed management projects under such section; and

(4) any combination of purposes under paragraphs (1) through (3).

(b) **MEMBERS.**—The Secretary concerned may appoint not more than 10 individuals to serve on an intra-agency strike team comprised of—

(1) employees of the Department under the jurisdiction of the Secretary concerned;

(2) employees of a different Federal agency, with the consent of that agency’s Secretary;

(3) private contractors from any nonprofit organization, State government, Indian Tribe, local government, quasi-governmental agency, academic institution, or private organization; and

(4) volunteers from any nonprofit organization, State government, Indian Tribe, local government, quasi-governmental agency, academic institution, or private organization.

(c) **SUNSET.**—The authority provided under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

#### SEC. 114. LOCALLY-LED RESTORATION.

(a) **THRESHOLD ADJUSTMENT.**—Section 14(d) of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a(d)) is amended by—

(1) striking “\$10,000” and inserting “\$55,000”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following: “Beginning on January 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, the amount in the first sentence of this subsection shall be adjusted by the Secretary for changes in the Consumer Price Index of All Urban Consumers published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor.”.

(b) **FIRESHED MANAGEMENT PROJECTS.**—Beginning on the date that is 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall solicit bids under section 14 of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a(d)) for fireshed management projects under section 106.

#### SEC. 115. JOINT CHIEFS LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.

Section 40808 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C. 6592d) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)—

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

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

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(D) to recover from wildfires; or

“(E) to enhance soil, water, and related natural resources.”;

(2) in subsection (d)(1)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by inserting “and post-wildfire impacts” after “wildfire risk”; and

(B) in subparagraph (F), by inserting “, as identified in the corresponding State forest action plan or similar priority plan (such as a State wildlife or water plan)” before the semicolon;

(3) in subsection (g)(2), by inserting “and at least once every 2 fiscal years thereafter” after “and 2023”; and

(4) in subsection (h)(1), by striking “and 2023” and inserting “through 2028”.

#### SEC. 116. COLLABORATIVE FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PROGRAM.

Section 4003 of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (16 U.S.C. 7303) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(3)—

(A) in subparagraph (D), by striking “species;” and inserting “species or pathogens;”;

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

(C) in subparagraph (H), by adding “and” after the semicolon at the end; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

“(I) address standardized monitoring questions and indicators;”;

(2) in subsection (c)(3)(A)—

(A) in clause (i), by striking “and” at the end;

(B) in clause (ii), by adding “and” at the end; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(iii) include a plan to provide support to collaborative processes established pursuant to subsection (b)(2);”;

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

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

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

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

“(G) proposals that seek to use innovative implementation mechanisms, including good neighbor agreements entered into under section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a);

“(H) proposals that seek to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire or increase ecological restoration activities—

“(i) within areas across land ownerships, including State, Tribal, and private land; and

“(ii) within the wildland-urban interface (as defined in section 101 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511)); and

“(I) proposals that seek to enhance watershed health and drinking water sources.”; and

(B) in paragraph (3)—

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

“(A) 4 proposals in any 1 region of the National Forest System to be funded during any fiscal year; and”;

(ii) by striking subparagraph (B); and

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

(4) in subsection (f)(6), by striking “2019 through 2023” and inserting “2023 through 2029”.

### Subtitle C—Litigation Reform

#### SEC. 121. COMMONSENSE LITIGATION REFORM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—A court shall not enjoin a covered agency action if the court determines that the plaintiff is unable to demonstrate that the claim of the plaintiff is likely to succeed on the merits.

(b) BALANCING SHORT-AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF COVERED AGENCY ACTION IN CONSIDERING INJUNCTIVE RELIEF.—As part of its weighing the equities while considering any request for an injunction that applies to a covered agency action, the court reviewing such action shall balance the impact to the ecosystem likely affected by such action of—

(1) the short- and long-term effects of undertaking such action; against

(2) the short- and long-term effects of not undertaking such action.

(c) LIMITATIONS ON JUDICIAL REVIEW.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law (except this section), in the case of a claim arising under Federal law seeking judicial review of a covered agency action—

(A) a court shall not hold unlawful, set aside, or otherwise limit, delay, stay, vacate, or enjoin such agency action unless the court determines that—

(i) such action poses or will pose a risk of a proximate and substantial environmental harm; and

(ii) there is no other equitable remedy available as a matter of law; and

(B) if a court determines that subparagraph (A) does not apply to the covered agency action the only remedy the court may order with regard to such agency action is to remand the matter to the agency with instructions to, during the 180-day period beginning on the date of the order, take such additional actions as may be necessary to redress any legal wrong suffered by, or adverse effect on, the plaintiff, except such additional actions may not include the preparation of a new agency document unless the court finds the agency was required and failed to prepare such agency document.

(2) EFFECT OF REMAND.—In the case of a covered agency action to which paragraph (1)(B) applies, the agency may—

(A) continue to carry out such agency action to the extent the action does not impact the additional actions required pursuant to such paragraph; and

(B) if the agency action relates to an agency document, use any format to correct such document (including a supplemental environmental document, memorandum, or errata sheet).

(d) LIMITATIONS ON CLAIMS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law (except this section), a claim arising under Federal law seek-

ing judicial review of a covered agency action shall be barred unless—

(1) with respect to an agency document or the application of a categorical exclusion noticed in the Federal Register, such claim is filed not later than 120 days after the date of publication of a notice in the Federal Register of agency intent to carry out the fireshed management project relating to such agency document or application, unless a shorter period is specified in such Federal law;

(2) in the case of an agency document or the application of a categorical exclusion not described in paragraph (1), such claim is filed not later than 120 days after the date that is the earlier of—

(A) the date on which such agency document or application is published; and

(B) the date on which such agency document or application is noticed; and

(3) in the case of a covered agency action for which there was a public comment period, such claim—

(A) is filed by a party that—

(i) participated in the administrative proceedings regarding the fireshed management project relating to such action; and

(ii) submitted a comment during such public comment period and such comment was sufficiently detailed to put the applicable agency on notice of the issue upon which the party seeks judicial review; and

(B) is related to such comment.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AGENCY DOCUMENT.—The term “agency document” means, with respect to a fireshed management project, a record of decision, environmental document, or programmatic environmental document.

(2) COVERED AGENCY ACTION.—The term “covered agency action” means—

(A) the establishment of a fireshed management project by an agency;

(B) the application of a categorical exclusion to a fireshed management project;

(C) the preparation of any agency document for a fireshed management project; or

(D) any other agency action as part of a fireshed management project.

(3) NEPA TERMS.—The terms “categorical exclusion”, “environmental document”, and “programmatic environmental document” have the meanings given such terms, respectively, in section 111 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4336e).

#### SEC. 122. CONSULTATION ON FOREST PLANS.

(a) FOREST SERVICE PLANS.—Section 6(d)(2) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604(d)(2)) is amended to read as follows:

“(2) NO ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION REQUIRED UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall not be required to reinitiate consultation under section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536(a)(2)) or section 402.16 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation), on a land management plan approved, amended, or revised under this section when—

“(A) a new species is listed or critical habitat is designated under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); or

“(B) new information reveals effects of the land management plan that may affect a species listed or critical habitat designated under that Act in a manner or to an extent not previously considered.”.

(b) BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT PLANS.—Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(g) NO ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION REQUIRED UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall not be required to reinitiate consultation under section 7(a)(2) of the Endan-

gered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536(a)(2)) or section 402.16 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation), on a land use plan approved, amended, or revised under this section when—

“(1) a new species is listed or critical habitat is designated under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); or

“(2) new information reveals effects of the land use plan that may affect a species listed or critical habitat designated under that Act in a manner or to an extent not previously considered.”.

### TITLE II—PROTECTING COMMUNITIES IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE

#### SEC. 201. COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION PROGRAM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretaries shall jointly establish an interagency program to be known as the “Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Program” that shall consist of at least one representative from each of the following:

(1) The Office of Wildland Fire of the Department of the Interior.

(2) The National Park Service.

(3) The Bureau of Land Management.

(4) The United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

(5) The Bureau of Indian Affairs.

(6) The Forest Service.

(7) The Federal Emergency Management Agency.

(8) The United States Fire Administration.

(9) The National Institute of Standards and Technology.

(10) The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the program established under subsection (a) is to support interagency coordination in reducing the risk of, and the damages resulting from, wildfires in communities (including tribal communities) in the wildland-urban interface through—

(1) advancing research and science in wildfire resilience and land management, including support for non-Federal research partnerships;

(2) supporting adoption by Indian Tribes and local governmental entities of fire-resistant building methods, codes, and standards;

(3) supporting efforts by Indian Tribes or local governmental entities to address the effects of wildland fire on such communities, including property damages, air quality, and water quality;

(4) encouraging public-private partnerships to conduct hazardous fuels management activities in the wildland-urban interface;

(5) providing technical and financial assistance targeted towards communities, including tribal communities, through streamlined and unified technical assistance and grant management mechanisms, including the portal and grant application established under subsection (c), to—

(A) encourage critical risk reduction measures on private property with high wildfire risk exposure in such communities; and

(B) mitigate costs for and improve capacity among such communities.

(c) PORTAL AND UNIFORM GRANT APPLICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—As part of the program established under subsection (a), the Secretaries and the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall establish a portal through which a person may submit a single, uniform application for any of the following:

(A) A community wildfire defense grant under section 40803(f) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C. 6592(f)).

(B) An emergency management performance grant under section 662 of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 (6 U.S.C. 761).

(C) A grant under section 33 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229).

(D) A grant under section 34 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229a).

(E) Financial or technical assistance or a grant under sections 203, 205, 404, 406, or 420 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5133, 5135, 5170c, 5172, 5187).

(2) **SIMPLIFICATION OF APPLICATION.**—In establishing the portal and application under paragraph (1), the Secretaries and the Administrator shall seek to reduce the complexity and length of the application process for the grants described in paragraph (1).

(3) **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**—The Secretaries shall provide technical assistance to communities or persons seeking to apply for financial assistance through the portal using the application established under paragraph (1).

(d) **COLLABORATION AND NONDUPLICATION.**—In carrying out the program established under section (a), the Secretaries shall ensure collaboration and nonduplication of activities with the Building Technologies Office of the Department of Energy.

(e) **SUNSET.**—The program established under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

**SEC. 202. COMMUNITY WILDFIRE DEFENSE RESEARCH PROGRAM.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretaries shall, acting jointly, expand the Joint Fire Science Program to include a performance-driven research and development program known as the “Community Wildfire Defense Research Program” for the purpose of testing and advancing innovative designs to create or improve the wildfire-resistance of structures and communities.

(b) **PROGRAM PRIORITIES.**—In carrying out the program established under subsection (a), the Secretaries shall evaluate opportunities to create wildfire-resistant structures and communities through—

- (1) different affordable building materials, including mass timber;
- (2) home hardening, including policies to incentivize and incorporate defensible space;
- (3) subdivision design and other land use planning and design;
- (4) landscape architecture; and
- (5) other wildfire-resistant designs, as determined by the Secretary.

**(c) COMMUNITY WILDFIRE DEFENSE INNOVATION PRIZE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—In carrying out the program established under subsection (a), the Secretaries shall carry out a competition through which a person may submit to the Secretaries innovative designs for the creation or improvement of an ignition-resistant structure or fire-adapted communities.

(2) **PRIZE.**—Subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purpose, the Secretaries may award a prize under the competition described in paragraph (1), based on criteria established by the Secretaries and in accordance with paragraph (3).

(3) **SCALE.**—In awarding a prize under paragraph (2), the Secretaries shall prioritize for an award designs with the most potential to scale to existing infrastructure.

(d) **SUNSET.**—The program established under subsection (a) shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

**SEC. 203. VEGETATION MANAGEMENT, FACILITY INSPECTION, AND OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE RELATING TO ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION FACILITY RIGHTS-OF-WAY.**

(a) **HAZARD TREES WITHIN 150 FEET OF ELECTRIC POWER LINE.**—Section 512(a)(1)(B)(ii) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1772(a)(1)(B)(ii)) is amended by striking “10” and inserting “150”.

(b) **CONSULTATION WITH PRIVATE LAND-OWNERS.**—Section 512(c)(3)(E) of such Act (43 U.S.C. 1772(c)(3)(E)) is amended

(1) in clause (i), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in clause (ii), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(iii) consulting with a private landowner with respect to any hazard trees identified for removal from land owned by the private landowner.”;

(c) **REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS.**—Section 512(c)(4)(A)(iv) of such Act (43 U.S.C. 1772(c)(4)(A)(iv)) is amended to read as follows:

“(iv) ensures that—

“(I) a plan submitted without a modification under clause (iii) shall be automatically approved 120 days after being submitted; and

“(II) with respect to a plan submitted with a modification under clause (iii), if not approved within 120 days after being submitted, the Secretary concerned shall develop and submit a letter to the owner and operator describing—

“(aa) a detailed timeline (to conclude within 165 days after the submission of the plan) for completing review of the plan;

“(bb) any identified deficiencies with the plan and specific opportunities for the owner and operator to address such deficiencies; and

“(cc) any other relevant information, as determined by the Secretary concerned.”.

**SEC. 204. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR ELECTRIC UTILITY LINES RIGHTS-OF-WAY.**

(a) **CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.**—Forest management activities described in subsection (b) are a category of activities hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4322).

(b) **FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES DESIGNATED FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.**—The forest management activities designated under subsection (a) for a categorical exclusion are—

(1) the development and approval of a vegetation management, facility inspection, and operation and maintenance plan submitted under section 512(c)(1) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1772(c)(1)) by the Secretary concerned; and

(2) the implementation of routine activities conducted under the plan referred to in paragraph (1).

(c) **AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.**—On and after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

(d) **EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN AREAS FROM CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.**—The categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) shall not apply to any forest management activity conducted—

(1) in a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System; or

(2) on National Forest System lands on which the removal of vegetation is restricted or prohibited by an Act of Congress.

(e) **PERMANENT ROADS.**—

(1) **PROHIBITION ON ESTABLISHMENT.**—A forest management activity designated under subsection (b) shall not include the establishment of a permanent road.

(2) **EXISTING ROADS.**—The Secretary concerned may carry out necessary maintenance and repair on an existing permanent road for the purposes of conducting a forest management activity designated under subsection (b).

(3) **TEMPORARY ROADS.**—The Secretary concerned shall decommission any temporary road constructed for carrying out a forest management activity designated under subsection (b) not later than the date that is 3 years after the date on which the forest management activity is completed.

(f) **APPLICABLE LAWS.**—Clauses (iii) and (iv) of section 106(a)(3) shall apply to forest management activities designated under subsection (b).

**SEC. 205. SEEDS OF SUCCESS.**

(a) **STRATEGY ESTABLISHED.**—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act,

the Secretaries and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly develop and implement a strategy, to be known as the “Seeds of Success strategy”, to enhance the domestic supply chain of seeds.

(b) **ELEMENTS.**—The strategy required under subsection (a) shall include a plan for each of the following:

(1) Facilitating sustained interagency coordination in, and a comprehensive approach to, native plant materials development and restoration.

(2) Promoting the re-seeding of native or fire-resistant vegetation post-wildfire, particularly in the wildland-urban interface.

(3) Creating and consolidating information on native or fire-resistant vegetation and sharing such information with State governments, Indian Tribes, and local governments.

(4) Building regional programs and partnerships to promote the development of materials made from plants native to the United States and restore such plants to their respective, native habitats within the United States, giving priority to the building of such programs and partnerships in regions of the Bureau of Land Management where such partnerships and programs do not already exist as of the date of enactment of this Act.

(5) Expanding seed storage and seed-cleaning infrastructure.

(6) Expanding the Warehouse System of the Bureau of Land Management, particularly the cold storage capacity of the Warehouse System.

(7) Shortening the timeline for the approval of permits to collect seeds on public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

(c) **REPORT.**—The Secretaries and the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the relevant Congressional Committees the strategy developed under paragraph (1).

**TITLE III—TRANSPARENCY AND TECHNOLOGY**

**SEC. 301. BIOCHAR INNOVATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSERVATION, HEALTH, AND ADVANCEMENTS IN RESEARCH.**

(a) **DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.**—

(1) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purpose, not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the covered Secretaries shall establish a program to enter into partnerships with eligible entities to carry out demonstration projects to support the development and commercialization of biochar in accordance with this subsection.

(B) **LOCATION OF DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.**—In carrying out the program established under subparagraph (A), the covered Secretaries shall, to the maximum extent practicable, enter into partnerships with eligible entities such that not fewer than one demonstration project is carried out in each region of the Forest Service and each region of the Bureau of Land Management.

(2) **PROPOSALS.**—To be eligible to enter into a partnership to carry out a biochar demonstration project under paragraph (1)(A), an eligible entity shall submit to the covered Secretaries a proposal at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the covered Secretaries may require.

(3) **PRIORITY.**—In selecting proposals under paragraph (2), the covered Secretaries shall give priority to entering into partnerships with eligible entities that submit proposals to carry out biochar demonstration projects that—

(A) have the most carbon sequestration potential;

(B) have the most potential to create new jobs and contribute to local economies, particularly in rural areas;

(C) have the most potential to demonstrate—

(i) new and innovative uses of biochar;

(ii) market viability for cost effective biochar-based products;

(iii) the ecosystem services created or supported by the use of biochar;

(iv) the restorative benefits of biochar with respect to forest health and resiliency, including forest soils and watersheds; or

(v) any combination of purposes specified in clauses (i) through (iv); and

(D) are located in areas that have a high need for biochar production, as determined by the covered Secretaries, due to—

(i) nearby lands identified as having high or very high or extreme risk of wildfire;

(ii) availability of sufficient quantities of feedstocks;

(iii) a high level of demand for biochar or other commercial byproducts of biochar; or

(iv) any combination of purposes specified in subparagraphs (A) through (D).

(4) USE OF FUNDS.—In carrying out the program established under paragraph (1)(A), the covered Secretaries may enter into partnerships and provide funding to such partnerships to carry out demonstration projects to—

(A) acquire and test various feedstocks and their efficacy;

(B) develop and optimize commercially and technologically viable biochar production units, including mobile and permanent units;

(C) demonstrate—

(i) the production of biochar from forest residue; and

(ii) the use of biochar to restore forest health and resiliency;

(D) build, expand, or establish biochar facilities;

(E) conduct research on new and innovative uses of biochar;

(F) demonstrate cost-effective market opportunities for biochar and biochar-based products;

(G) carry out any other activities the covered Secretaries determine appropriate; or

(H) any combination of the purposes specified in subparagraphs (A) through (F).

(5) FEEDSTOCK REQUIREMENTS.—To the maximum extent practicable, an eligible entity that carries out a biochar demonstration project under this subsection shall, with respect to the feedstock used under such project, derive at least 50 percent of such feedstock from forest thinning and management activities, including mill residues, conducted on National Forest System lands or public lands.

(6) REVIEW OF BIOCHAR DEMONSTRATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The covered Secretaries shall conduct regionally-specific research, including economic analyses and life-cycle assessments, on any biochar produced from a demonstration project carried out under the program established in paragraph (1)(A), including—

(i) the effects of such biochar on—

(I) forest health and resiliency;

(II) carbon capture and sequestration, including increasing soil carbon in the short-term and long-term;

(III) productivity, reduced input costs, and water retention in agricultural practices;

(IV) the health of soil and grasslands used for grazing activities, including grazing activities on National Forest System land and public land;

(V) environmental remediation activities, including abandoned mine land remediation; and

(VI) other ecosystem services created or supported by the use of biochar;

(ii) the effectiveness of biochar as a co-product of biofuels or in biochemicals; and

(iii) the effectiveness of other potential uses of biochar to determine if any such use is technologically and commercially viable.

(B) COORDINATION.—The covered Secretaries shall, to the maximum extent practicable, provide data, analyses, and other relevant information collected under subparagraph (A) with recipients of a grant under subsection (b).

(7) LIMITATION ON FUNDING FOR ESTABLISHING BIOCHAR FACILITIES.—If the covered Secretaries provide to an eligible entity that enters into a

partnership with the covered Secretaries under paragraph (1)(A) funding for establishing a biochar facility, such funding may not exceed 35 percent of the total capital cost of establishing such biochar facility.

(b) BIOCHAR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy, shall establish or expand an existing applied biochar research and development grant program to make competitive grants to eligible institutions to carry out the activities described in paragraph (3).

(2) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this subsection, an eligible institution shall submit to the Secretary a proposal at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(3) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible institution that receives a grant under this subsection shall use the grant funds to conduct applied research on—

(A) the effect of biochar on forest health and resiliency, accounting for variations in biochar, soil, climate, and other factors;

(B) the effect of biochar on soil health and water retention, accounting for variations in biochar, soil, climate, and other factors;

(C) the long-term carbon sequestration potential of biochar;

(D) the best management practices with respect to biochar and biochar-based products that maximize—

(i) carbon sequestration benefits; and

(ii) the commercial viability and application of such products in forestry, agriculture, environmental remediation, water quality improvement, and any other similar uses, as determined by the Secretary;

(E) the regional uses of biochar to increase productivity and profitability, including—

(i) uses in agriculture and environmental remediation; and

(F) new and innovative uses for biochar by-products; and

(G) opportunities to expand markets for biochar and create related jobs, particularly in rural areas.

(c) REPORTS.—

(1) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the covered Secretaries shall submit to Congress a report that—

(A) includes policy and program recommendations to improve the widespread use of biochar;

(B) identifies any area of research needed to advance biochar commercialization; and

(C) identifies barriers to further biochar commercialization, including permitting and siting considerations.

(2) MATERIALS SUBMITTED IN SUPPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET.—Beginning with the second fiscal year that begins after the date of enactment of this Act and annually thereafter until the date described in subsection (d), the covered Secretaries shall include in the materials submitted to Congress in support of the President's budget pursuant to section 1105 of title 31, United States Code, a report describing, for the fiscal year covered by the report, the status of each demonstration project carried out under subsection (a) and each research and development grant carried out under subsection (b).

(d) SUNSET.—The authority to carry out this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) BIOCHAR.—The term “biochar” means carbonized biomass produced by converting feedstock through reductive thermal processing for non-fuel uses.

(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible entity” means—

(A) a State, local, or Tribal government;

(B) an eligible institution; or

(C) a private, non-private, or cooperative entity or organization;

(D) a National Laboratory (as such term is defined in section 2 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 15801)); or

(E) a partnership or consortium of two or more entities described in subparagraphs (A) through (D).

(3) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION.—The term “eligible institution” means land-grant colleges and universities, including institutions eligible for funding under the—

(A) Act of July 2, 1862 (12 Stat. 503, chapter 130; 7 U.S.C. 301 et seq.);

(B) Act of August 30, 1890 (26 Stat. 417, chapter 841; 7 U.S.C. 321 et seq.), including Tuskegee University;

(C) Public Law 87-788 (commonly known as the “McIntire-Stennis Act of 1962”); or

(D) Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note; Public Law 103-382).

(4) FEEDSTOCK.—The term “feedstock” means excess biomass in the form of plant matter or materials that serves as the raw material for the production of biochar.

(5) COVERED SECRETARIES.—The term “covered Secretaries” means—

(A) the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service;

(B) the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management; and

(C) the Secretary of Energy, acting through the Director of the Office of Science.

#### SEC. 302. ACCURATE HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION REPORTS.

(a) INCLUSION OF HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION REPORT IN MATERIALS SUBMITTED IN SUPPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning with the first fiscal year that begins after the date of enactment of this Act, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretary concerned shall include in the materials submitted to Congress in support of the President's budget pursuant to section 1105 of title 31, United States Code, a report on the number of acres of Federal land on which the Secretary concerned carried out hazardous fuels reduction activities during the preceding fiscal year.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—For purposes of the report required under paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned shall—

(A) in determining the number of acres of Federal land on which the Secretary concerned carried out hazardous fuels reduction activities during the period covered by the report—

(i) record acres of Federal land on which hazardous fuels reduction activities were completed during such period; and

(ii) record each acre described in clause (i) once in the report, regardless of whether multiple hazardous fuels reduction activities were carried out on such acre during such period; and

(B) with respect to the acres of Federal land recorded in the report, include information on—

(i) which such acres are located in the wildland-urban interface;

(ii) the level of wildfire risk (high, moderate, or low) on the first and last day of the period covered by the report;

(iii) the types of hazardous fuels activities completed for such acres, delineating between whether such activities were conducted—

(I) in a wildfire managed for resource benefits; or

(II) through a planned project;

(iv) the cost per acre of hazardous fuels activities carried out during the period covered by the report;

(v) the region or system unit in which the acres are located; and

(vi) the effectiveness of the hazardous fuels reduction activities on reducing the risk of wildfire.

(3) TRANSPARENCY.—The Secretary concerned shall make each report submitted under paragraph (1) publicly available on the websites of

the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior, as applicable.

(b) ACCURATE DATA COLLECTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned shall implement standardized procedures for tracking data related to hazardous fuels reduction activities carried out by the Secretary concerned.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The standardized procedures required under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) regular, standardized data reviews of the accuracy and timely input of data used to track hazardous fuels reduction activities;

(B) verification methods that validate whether such data accurately correlates to the hazardous fuels reduction activities carried out by the Secretary concerned;

(C) an analysis of the short- and long-term effectiveness of the hazardous fuels reduction activities on reducing the risk of wildfire; and

(D) for hazardous fuels reduction activities that occur partially within the wildland-urban interface, methods to distinguish which acres are located within the wildland-urban interface and which acres are located outside the wildland-urban interface.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 2 weeks after implementing the standardized procedures required under paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned shall submit to Congress a report that describes—

(A) such standardized procedures; and

(B) program and policy recommendations to Congress to address any limitations in tracking data related to hazardous fuels reduction activities under this subsection.

(c) GAO STUDY.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) conduct a study on the implementation of this section, including any limitations with respect to—

(A) reporting hazardous fuels reduction activities under subsection (a); or

(B) tracking data related to hazardous fuels reduction activities under subsection (b); and

(2) submit to Congress a report that describes the results of the study under paragraph (1).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION ACTIVITY.—The term “hazardous fuels reduction activity”—

(A) means any vegetation management activity to reduce the risk of wildfire, including mechanical treatments and prescribed burning; and

(B) does not include the awarding of contracts to conduct hazardous fuels reduction activities.

(2) FEDERAL LANDS.—The term “Federal lands” means lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture.

(e) NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.—No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this section, and the activities authorized by this section are subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purposes.

**SEC. 303. PUBLIC-PRIVATE WILDFIRE TECHNOLOGY DEPLOYMENT AND DEMONSTRATION PARTNERSHIP.**

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED AGENCY.—The term “covered agency” means—

(A) each Federal land management agency (as such term is defined in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. 6801));

(B) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration;

(C) the United States Fire Administration;

(D) the Federal Emergency Management Agency;

(E) the National Aeronautics and Space Administration;

(F) the Bureau of Indian Affairs;

(G) the Department of Defense;

(H) a State, Tribal, county, or municipal fire department or district operating through the

United States Fire Administration or pursuant to an agreement with a Federal agency; and

(I) any other Federal agency involved in wildfire response.

(2) COVERED ENTITY.—The term “covered entity” means—

(A) a private entity;

(B) a nonprofit organization; or

(C) an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)).

(b) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretaries, in coordination with the heads of the covered agencies, shall establish a deployment and demonstration pilot program (in this section referred to as “Pilot Program”) for new and innovative wildfire prevention, detection, communication, and mitigation technologies.

(c) FUNCTIONS.—In carrying out the Pilot Program, the Secretaries shall—

(1) incorporate the Pilot Program into the National Wildfire Coordinating Group;

(2) in consultation with the heads of covered agencies, identify and advance the demonstration and deployment of key technology priority areas with respect to wildfire prevention, detection, communication, and mitigation technologies, including—

(A) hazardous fuels reduction treatments or activities;

(B) dispatch communications;

(C) remote sensing, detection, and tracking;

(D) safety equipment; and

(E) common operating pictures or operational dashboards; and

(3) connect each covered entity selected to participate in the Pilot Program with the appropriate covered agency to coordinate real-time and on-the-ground testing of technology during wildland fire mitigation activities and training.

(d) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to be selected to participate in the Pilot Program, a covered entity shall submit to the Secretaries an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretaries may require, including a proposal to demonstrate technologies specific to the key technology priority areas identified pursuant to subsection (c)(2).

(e) PRIORITIZATION OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES.—In selecting covered entities to participate in the Pilot Program, the Secretaries shall give priority to covered entities—

(1) that have participated in the Fire Weather Testbed of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; or

(2) developing and applying emerging technologies for wildfire mitigation, including artificial intelligence, quantum sensing, computing an quantum-hybrid applications, augmented reality, 5G private networks, and device-to-device communications supporting nomadic mesh networks.

(f) OUTREACH.—The Secretaries, in coordination with the heads of covered agencies, shall make public the key technology priority areas identified pursuant to subsection (c)(2) and invite covered entities to apply under subsection (d) to test and demonstrate their technologies to address such priority areas.

(g) REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for the duration of the Pilot Program, the Secretaries shall submit to the relevant Congressional Committees, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report that includes, with respect to the Pilot Program, the following:

(1) A list of participating covered entities.

(2) A brief description of the technologies deployed and demonstrated by each such covered entity.

(3) An estimate of the cost of acquiring each such technology and applying the technology at scale.

(4) Outreach efforts by Federal agencies to covered entities developing wildfire technologies.

(5) Assessments of, and recommendations relating to, new technologies with potential adoption and application at-scale in Federal land management agencies’ wildfire prevention, detection, communication, and mitigation efforts.

(6) A description of the relationship and coordination between the Pilot Program and the activities of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, including the Fire Weather Testbed.

(h) SUNSET.—The authority to carry out this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

**SEC. 304. GAO STUDY ON FOREST SERVICE POLICIES.**

Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) conduct a study evaluating—

(A) the effectiveness of Forest Service wildland firefighting operations;

(B) transparency and accountability measures in the Forest Service’s budget and accounting process; and

(C) the suitability and feasibility of establishing a new Federal agency with the responsibility of responding and suppressing wildland fires on Federal lands; and

(2) submit to Congress a report that describes the results of the study required under paragraph (1).

**SEC. 305. FOREST SERVICE WESTERN HEADQUARTERS STUDY.**

Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Chief of the Forest Service shall—

(1) conduct a study evaluating—

(A) potential locations for a Western headquarters for the Forest Service, including potential locations in at least 3 different States located west of the Mississippi river; and

(B) the potential benefits of creating a Western headquarters for the Forest Service, including expected—

(i) improvements to customer service;

(ii) improvements to employee recruitment and retention; and

(iii) operational efficiencies and cost savings; and

(2) submit to Congress a report that describes the results of the study required under paragraph (1).

**SEC. 306. KEEPING FOREST PLANS CURRENT AND MONITORED.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary—

(1) to the greatest extent practicable and subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purpose—

(A) ensure forest plans comply with the requirements of section 6(f)(5)(A) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604(f)(5)(A)); and

(B) prioritize revising any forest plan not in compliance with such section 6(f)(5)(A);

(2) not be considered to be in violation of section 6(f)(5)(A) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604(f)(5)(A)) solely because more than 15 years have passed without revision of the plan for a unit of the National Forest System;

(3) not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, submit to the relevant Congressional Committees the date on which each forest plan required by such section 6 was most recently revised, amended, or modified;

(4) seek to publish a new, complete version of a forest plan that the Secretary has been directed to amend, revise, or modify by a court order within 60 days of such amendment, revision, or modification, subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purpose; and

(5) maintain a central, publicly accessible website with links to—

(A) the most recently available forest plan adopted, amended, or modified by a court order as a single document; and

(B) the most recently published forest plan monitoring report for each unit of the National Forest System.

(b) GOOD FAITH UPDATES.—If the Secretary is not acting expeditiously and in good faith, within the funding available to revise, amend, or modify a plan for a unit of the National Forest System as required by law or a court order, subsection (a) shall be void with respect to such plan and a court of proper jurisdiction may order completion of the plan on an accelerated basis.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit a report to the relevant Congressional Committees summarizing the implementation of this section.

The Acting CHAIR. No further amendment to the bill, as amended, shall be in order except those printed in part D of House Report 118–705.

Each such further amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by the 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, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. MOLINARO

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in part D of House Report 118–705.

Mr. MOLINARO. 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 21, line 10, strike “and”.

Page 21, line 14, insert “and” after the semicolon.

Page 21, after line 14, insert the following:

(v) a strategy for reducing the threat of wildfire to improve the effectiveness of wildland firefighting, particularly the effectiveness of fuels treatments that would improve wildland firefighter safety during wildfires;

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, 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, I rise today to support and speak briefly on my amendment, which seeks to highlight the importance of protecting our wildland firefighters by considering strategies to mitigate health risks to them.

As we witness the increasing devastation caused by wildfires across our country, we cannot and should not overlook the heroic efforts of those brave men and women who fight them. They risk their lives on the front lines, protect their communities and natural landscapes, facing extreme danger in unpredictable environments, and often working long hours in extremely hazardous conditions.

Unfortunately, though, there are times that their protection and well-being can be seen as an afterthought. I extend my appreciation to the gen-

tleman from California (Mr. HARDER) for his work on this amendment. Our bipartisan amendment seeks to consider strategies that would enhance wildland firefighter safety in the fireshred assessment.

Providing Federal assistance to States to augment these plans will only reduce wildfire exposure risks. As a member of my own local fire department, I too understand the great sacrifice that too many certainly make on our behalf. Addressing firefighter safety is not something we can do in isolation. It requires cooperation from all levels of government.

Our amendment is just one step forward. We need to continue to push for bipartisan solutions that prioritize the safety of wildland firefighters, and this is a fight that transcends, of course, party lines because the lives of those brave men and women who fight the fires and their safety are at stake.

I express my appreciation to Chairman WESTERMAN and Representative HARDER for their work on this bill.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition to the amendment, even though I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I am not opposed to this amendment.

I congratulate my colleague, Representative HARDER, for getting it made in order for consideration today, but I do want to take this opportunity to comment on the overall process we have seen on the underlying bill.

This amendment is an example of the sort of thing we could have figured out months ago if Republican leaders had not insisted on such a rushed, chaotic process for this bill.

The hearing was on a discussion draft, which meant that it happened without testimony from one of the affected Federal departments. Then my Republican colleagues ignored extensive technical assistance and red flags provided by the Department of the Interior and by the Forest Service.

I emphasize again: I am not even talking about policy differences here. I am talking about serious concerns that the bill doesn’t make sense.

Unfortunately, the sponsor ignored those red flags. Throughout the process, committee Democrats have asked to be included so that we could try to reach consensus on this bill.

We could have made suggestions, such as this amendment before us. We could have offered improvements to address the administration’s concerns, but we were excluded. Now we are here with a bill that doesn’t comply with the Republican Conference’s own CutGo protocols and that, as of this morning, didn’t even have a CBO score.

Finally, for anyone who missed this earlier, Republicans accidentally made

in order an amendment drafted so badly that it would strike the bill entirely and replace it with a non-controversial bill that Democrats support. That sounded good to me, but Republicans had to come to us this morning to ask for our help in fixing that mistake.

Here is the bottom line: I am not opposed to this amendment, but, unfortunately, it won’t be enough to make a bad bill, created through a bad process, into a good one. Maybe we could have gotten there with an inclusive process, but that is not the path my colleagues on the other side of the aisle chose, and that is where we are today.

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

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate my colleague’s support for our amendment.

Mr. Chair, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of this bipartisan amendment offered by my colleague from New York (Mr. MOLINARO), and the gentleman from California (Mr. HARDER).

This amendment ensures that each fireshred assessment required by the bill also includes consideration of a strategy to reduce the threat that wildfires pose to wildfire firefighters’ health and safety.

Specifically, the amendment requires that fireshred assessments analyze the effectiveness of fuel treatments that would improve both the efficacy of wildland firefighting and the safety of wildland firefighters.

Fireshred assessments are a strategic tool for gauging or reducing the risk of wildfire in high-risk areas. By targeting treatments in the right areas, we can protect communities and put firefighters into winnable situations where they can effectively battle wildfires.

This amendment focuses on a crucial dimension of the wildfire crisis; namely, the safety of the brave men and women who regularly put themselves in danger to combat raging wildfires.

The amendment correctly identifies fuel treatments as a meaningful way to accomplish this goal, as proactively treated areas can slow the advancing wildfires and give firefighters precious time to safely combat an approaching blaze.

Mr. Chair, I appreciate the bipartisan collaboration reflected in this amendment. I urge my colleagues to support the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to oppose the underlying bill, 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. 2 OFFERED BY MR. LAMALFA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in part D of House Report 118–705.

Mr. LAMALFA. 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:

After section 116 insert the following:

**SEC. 117. UTILIZING GRAZING FOR WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION.**

The Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, in coordination with holders of permits to graze livestock on Federal land, shall develop a strategy to increase opportunities to utilize livestock grazing as a wildfire risk reduction strategy, including—

(1) completion of reviews (as required under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (U.S.C. 4321 et seq.)) to allow permitted grazing on vacant grazing allotments during instances of drought, wildfire, or other natural disasters that disrupt grazing on allotments already permitted;

(2) use of targeted grazing;

(3) increased use of temporary permits to promote targeted fuels reduction and reduction of invasive annual grasses;

(4) increased use of grazing as a postfire recovery and restoration strategy, where appropriate; and

(5) use of all applicable authorities under the law.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Chairman, for my colleague from California (Ms. PORTER), I have an amendment that should raise the balance to loving this bill.

Mr. Chair, as part of the Fix Our Forests Act, I have been able to add my amendment, which is contained in H.R. 7666. It directs the Forest Service to expand the use of utilizing targeted animal grazing in fuels management programs to reduce wildfire risk.

It will make the use of grazing to reduce fine fuels found in forest floors and the meadows near them, which make fires burn hotter, faster, and more dangerously. Utilizing livestock for fire fuel management is common sense, and it has been practiced for many years. It is being curtailed by more and more difficult permitting processes in more recent years.

It is a very important tool that, unfortunately, is not being utilized enough, whether it is cattle on the vast plains and areas around our forested areas, sheep, or, as we have seen success, even in urban areas, people hiring goatherds to come in and clean those difficult areas that are hard for people themselves to get in, such as along riverbanks and places like that.

□ 1530

We know this tool works well in order to curb that flammable material.

The West continues to face a wildfire and a forest health crisis. In California, as we have listed out here today, we have seen many firsthand instances of fire that are just unbelievably large and devastating. It is even more increasing in later fire seasons here.

I can talk about my district itself and the catastrophic damage we have had. The Camp fire in Paradise was over 100,000 acres, but key to that argument is the loss of 85 lives in that devastating fire. The North Complex, my colleague from Arkansas mentioned earlier, has consumed portions of Forbestown and Berry Creek, and it was over 318,000 acres. Then, we had, later on, the million-acre Dixie fire. Most recently, the Park fire, which started in a park near Chico, ended up consuming right under 430,000 acres.

These are all six- and seven-digit numbers that have burned right in my backyard, in just one district, and over 2 million acres in just a few short years, with the Park fire being now the fifth largest in California history.

Seven million acres have burned in the Western States this year. This legislation is important across many fire-prone areas.

Herd agencies are limited in the scope of tools they can consider, and often the post-fire teams bear the burden of suggesting creative tools, like livestock grazing.

This isn't creative. This is actually well-known. If they want to call it creative, I am for anything that will get us to use this tool even more.

My amendment would enhance the intent of the Fix Our Forests Act and help with preventing more catastrophic and preventable fires. It is known to work.

Mr. Chair, I also thank my friend, Mr. VASQUEZ, for his support with this legislation as we partner on this amendment.

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

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. PERRY). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I am not opposed to this amendment, and I have worked collaboratively with my colleague, Mr. LAMALFA, across the aisle on wildfire issues. I will also congratulate my Democratic colleague, Representative VASQUEZ, for getting this amendment made in order.

I do want to register the same concerns that I have expressed before. The process on the Fix Our Forests Act has been a total black box. A good amendment or two does not change the overall bill, which would gut bedrock environmental laws.

Committee Democrats have asked again and again to try to work together to reach consensus on this bill, and it would have been a great opportunity to talk about this amendment, which, again, I do not oppose.

Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. VASQUEZ), my colleague.

Mr. VASQUEZ. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of my amendment with Representative LAMALFA.

New Mexicans know all too well how disastrous wildfires can be for our families, homes, private property, culture, and tradition. We need to use every tool in our toolbox to lessen the frequency and severity of wildfires.

Livestock grazing can help us accomplish that goal. Grazing targeted areas can help slow the spread of an intense burn and control the temperature of a fire by reducing the amount of flammable organic fuel.

This bipartisan amendment adds the text of our bill, the Utilizing Grazing for Wildfire Risk Reduction Act, to the proposed legislation. This amendment ensures that grazing is a tool that can be used proactively to prevent wildfires and keep New Mexicans safe. It helps cut through red tape and makes it easier for ranchers to assist in preventing devastating wildfires that destroy our lands, culture, and livelihood.

I appreciate Congressman LAMALFA for working with me on this important bipartisan amendment that uses a commonsense approach to reduce the threat of wildfires. We know that the cost of fighting wildland fires is astronomical, so we must use every available resource to prevent future natural and human-caused disasters.

Ms. PORTER. 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. LAMALFA).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3, AS MODIFIED, OFFERED BY MR. VALADAO

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3, as modified, printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment, as modified.

The text of the amendment, as modified, is as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 3, AS MODIFIED, OFFERED BY MR. VALADAO OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of Title III add the following:

**SEC. 307. CONTAINER AERIAL FIREFIGHTING SYSTEM (CAFFS).**

(a) EVALUATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the National Interagency Aviation Committee and the Interagency Airtanker Board, shall jointly conduct an evaluation of the container aerial firefighting system to assess the use of such system to mitigate and suppress wildfires.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the National Interagency Aviation Committee and the Interagency Airtanker Board, shall jointly submit to the appropriate committees a report that includes the results of the evaluation required under subsection (a).

(c) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate committees” means—(1) the Committees on Agriculture and Natural Resources of the House

of Representatives; and (2) the Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Chair, I thank Chairman WESTERMAN and his staff at the Natural Resources Committee for their work on this very important bill. I appreciate his partnership and work to ensure my amendment was included today.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support my amendment, which would dramatically increase the number of aerial assets available for wildfire emergencies.

Containerized Aerial Firefighting Systems, or CAFFS, are airdrop-capable disposable containers for water or fire retardant, which can be dropped from much higher altitudes and with less visibility than current aerial firefighting operations. Current aerial firefighting operations depend on single-mission aircraft, but CAFFS can be used by any standard cargo plane.

The use of CAFFS provides more coverage for firefighters on the ground and allows teams to quickly respond to prevent smaller fires from becoming uncontrollable. These systems are being used in other countries, but not here in the United States. We have the technology that we can deploy to stop the devastation these fires cause, and we should be using it.

Mr. Chair, I urge all of my colleagues to support the passage of this amendment to help combat and contain wildfires in a quicker and more efficient way.

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

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I am not opposed to this amendment. As corrected, it would add a bill that we previously passed in the Natural Resources Committee by unanimous consent and then here on the floor on suspension by a voice vote.

I say I am not opposed to this amendment as corrected because this is the amendment that I referenced earlier. The amendment that Republicans accidentally made in order, a version of this amendment that was drafted so badly that would have deleted the entire text of the Fix Our Forests Act.

In other words, it wouldn't have just added Mr. VALADAO's bill to the overall legislation. It would have deleted the overall bill and replaced it with Mr.

VALADAO's bill, which, as I noted, is a noncontroversial bill that Democrats support.

Republicans came to Democrats this morning to ask for our help in fixing that mistake. My concern here is that that is reflective of a process problem: the sloppy drafting in the underlying bill, the refusal to incorporate well-intentioned feedback from the administration, and the exclusion of committee Democrats from developing this bill.

This is bad process.

I am not opposed to this amendment, which already passed the House floor on suspension, but one good amendment is not enough to fix the bad bill.

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

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Chair, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN), the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of the amendment offered by Mr. VALADAO of California.

This amendment does require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct an evaluation of the container aerial firefighting system to assess the use of such a system to mitigate and suppress wildfires. The Secretaries must conduct this evaluation in consultation with the National Interagency Aviation Committee and the Interagency Airtanker Board.

As we attempt to combat the devastating wildfire crisis, it is essential that agencies like the U.S. Forest Service are utilizing all available technologies to suppress wildfires. The technology supported by this amendment involves disposable containers that are dropped with water or fire retardant, which could potentially decrease the response time to fires and increase the number of aircraft available for firefighting duties.

While the technology is not new, the wildland firefighting agencies have not actively studied it. This amendment, therefore, would ensure that our wildland firefighting agencies are fully informed about both the effectiveness and potential cost savings of this important technology.

Mr. Chair, again, I thank Representative VALADAO for his work on this amendment. Throughout the drafting process, he has continually advocated for the interests of those in his district and correctly emphasized the importance of leveraging all available technology and resources to better protect vulnerable communities.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment, as modified, offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO).

The amendment, as modified, was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MR. GARAMENDI

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 4 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Mr. GARAMENDI. 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 8, after line 8, insert the following (and redesignate subsequent paragraphs accordingly):

(18) SPECIAL DISTRICT.—The term “special district” means a political subdivision of a State that—

(A) has significant budgetary autonomy or control;

(B) was created by or pursuant to the laws of the State for the purpose of performing a limited and specific governmental or proprietary function; and

(C) is distinct from any other local government unit within the State.

Page 29, before line 1, insert the following (and redesignate subsequent subparagraphs accordingly):

(A) in section 3 (16 U.S.C. 6502), by inserting at the end the following:

“(3) LOCAL GOVERNMENT.—The term ‘local government’ means a county, municipality, or special district.

“(4) SPECIAL DISTRICT.—The term ‘special district’ means a political subdivision of a State that—

“(A) has significant budgetary autonomy or control;

“(B) was created by or pursuant to the laws of the State for the purpose of performing a limited and specific governmental or proprietary function; and

“(C) is distinct from any other local government unit within the State.”.

Page 30, line 15, strike “and”.

Page 30, after line 15, insert the following (and redesignate subsequent paragraphs accordingly):

(2) in subsection (a), by inserting the following:

“(11) SPECIAL DISTRICT.—The term ‘special district’ means a political subdivision of a State that—

“(A) has significant budgetary autonomy or control;

“(B) was created by or pursuant to the laws of the State for the purpose of performing a limited and specific governmental or proprietary function; and

“(C) is distinct from any other local government unit within the State.”.

Page 30, line 18, insert “special district,” after “tribe.”.

Page 30, line 24, insert “a special district,” after “Indian tribe.”.

Page 31, line 2, insert “special district,” after “tribe.”.

Page 31, line 12, insert “special district,” after “Indian tribe.”.

Page 31, line 17, insert “special district,” after “tribe.”.

Page 31, line 23, insert “special district,” after “tribe.”.

Page 31, line 25, insert “special district,” after “tribe.”.

Page 65, line 11, insert “special district,” after “local.”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of my amendment and the underlying bill.

I thank Mr. WESTERMAN as well as Mr. PETERS for presenting the bill to us. It is a necessary fix to an ongoing challenge that we have in our national forests and in the urban-wildland interface areas.

I also thank Congressman FALLON, who is the cosponsor of this amendment.

Now, what we are trying to do here is to include special districts. Right now, special districts are not included in the legislation. Tribes and local governments are, and that is all to the good, however, in California, special districts often provide the necessary control of the areas in the wildland areas as well as in the urban-wildland interface.

Specifically, in my district, we have the East Bay Regional Park District. Most of the wildland in the East Bay of San Francisco Bay is controlled and owned by the park district.

Right now, they would not be able to participate in the programs of this legislation, so we clarified that special districts are eligible to participate in the wildfire-prevention programs authorized under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003, as well in this new legislation, the Fix Our Forests Act. This would provide opportunities for the special districts to help reduce the wildfire risk, support responsible environmental stewardship, and facilitate emergency response and all of the other elements in the legislation.

Secondly, the amendment expands the Good Neighbor Authority to include special districts. The Good Neighbor Authority allows the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to collaborate with States, counties, and federally recognized Indian Tribes to plan and implement cross-jurisdictional restoration work.

Since special districts are not currently included in the Good Neighbor Authority, they must collaborate with the State government or other eligible entity to participate. Our amendment would finally allow the special districts to enter into Good Neighbor Authority agreements and use their local expertise and partnerships to advance restoration projects in their communities.

As Western States face an increasingly severe year-round fire season, we will need every tool in the toolbox to implement proper forest management practices and reduce the risk that wildfires pose to our communities.

Our amendment would put special districts on par with other forms of government and allow them to be a strong partner in protecting their communities.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to adopt our commonsense, bipartisan amendment that would enable the special districts to participate in existing conservation efforts and further use their specialized expertise to uphold the health and safety of our community.

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

□ 1545

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Arkansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of this bipartisan amendment offered by the gentleman from California, Representative GARAMENDI, and the gentleman from Texas, Representative FALLON.

This is a thoughtful amendment that will enable special districts to participate in the biochar research and development program established in section 301 of the bill. This amendment would also make special districts eligible to participate in the Good Neighbor Authority.

Across the Nation, there are over 39,000 special districts and political subdivisions within States, such as resource conservation districts or water districts.

Both the biochar and Good Neighbor Authority sections of this bill already allow participation from States, Tribes, and local governments.

Providing eligibility for special districts is a commonsense change to ensure more non-Federal partners can participate in these vitally important programs that promote forest health.

I particularly support expanding access for special districts to the biochar projects authorized by section 301 of the bill.

Biochar is an emerging technology that has shown enormous potential as an additive to improve soil health and as a significant carbon sequestration tool, and it also helps the water retention ability of soil.

A key barrier to expanding active forest management is a lack of market access for low-value hazardous fuels that must be removed from overgrown Federal forests.

Biochar is an innovative solution that could create new markets for these low-value materials, thus increasing the pace and scale of forest management. I also support adding special districts to the Good Neighbor Authority.

Since 2014, there have been 490 Good Neighbor projects in 34 States, and every year, over 273 million board feet of timber is being sold.

Adding special districts to this program creates new opportunities for even more forest management projects that could further increase Good Neighbor Authority for forest management activities.

I thank Representatives GARAMENDI and FALLON for their efforts to improve this legislation by thoughtfully including special districts.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support 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 California (Mr. GARAMENDI).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MR. OBERNOLTE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 5 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Mr. OBERNOLTE. 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 73, line 12, strike "and".

Page 73, after line 14, insert the following: "(F) interoperable commercial data; and

Page 74, line 8, insert "thermal mid-wave infrared equipped low earth orbit satellites," after "applications".

Page 74, line 10, insert "and detection" before the period.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from California (Mr. OBERNOLTE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

MODIFICATION TO AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MR. OBERNOLTE

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent that my amendment be modified with the form I have placed at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the modification.

The Clerk read as follows:

MODIFICATION TO AMENDMENT NO. 5  
BY MR. OBERNOLTE

Modify the amendment so as to read as follows:

Page 73, line 12, strike "and".

Page 73, after line 14, insert the following: "(F) interoperable commercial data; and"

Strike and replace Section 303, subsection (e) to read as follows:

"(e) PRIORITIZATION OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES.—

"In selecting covered entities to participate in the Pilot Program, the Secretaries shall give priority to covered entities—

"(1) that have participated in the Fire Weather Testbed of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; or

"(2) developing and applying emerging technologies for wildfire mitigation, including artificial intelligence, quantum sensing, computing and quantum-hybrid applications, thermal mid-wave infrared equipped low earth orbit satellites, augmented reality, 5G private networks, and device-to-device communications supporting nomadic mesh networks and detection."

Mr. OBERNOLTE (during the reading). Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading of the modification.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the original request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The amendment is modified.

The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, thank you very much for the opportunity to present my amendment to the Fix Our Forests Act.

Mr. Chair, I represent a very mountainous region of California, and every year we have wildfires burn in my region.

The problem is particularly acute this year. We have two major wildfires that are still burning in my district, the Bridge fire and the Line fire. Mr. Chair, together, these fires have consumed nearly 100,000 acres.

Thankfully, relatively few structures have been affected this year, but Mr. Chair, I was convinced 2 weeks ago that we were going to lose over 1,000 homes in my district.

This problem is particularly acute because the fires spread so quickly. Unfortunately, the Line fire that caused the evacuation of parts of my hometown in California was started by arson, and that arsonist started three different fires that day.

Two of them, Mr. Chair, firefighters were able to jump on quickly and extinguish. It is the third one that spread quickly enough that it became the conflagration that threatened many communities in my district.

This amendment prioritizes emerging technology, such as early-detection technology and the artificial intelligence techniques required to process it in the pilot program that this bill establishes.

Mr. Chair, there is a lot of promise in early-detection technologies. Conventional satellite detection relies on satellites and geostationary orbits that are far away from the Earth, and therefore, have very poor spatial resolution. Those satellites can only detect a fire when it is already quite large.

Mr. Chair, new low-Earth orbit satellites with thermal detection technology have much better spatial resolution, and they can detect a forest fire when it just begins.

Moreover, these new technologies can be transmitted to the Earth in minutes instead of hours. If you combine that with the artificial intelligence processing technology that looks at these images and can distinguish between a campfire and a tree that is hit by lightning that is the potential source of a forest fire, that is a game-changing development in wildfire technology.

Combine that with fast, aerial, fire-fighting platforms, and we will be able to put out fires before they get started and avoid some of the catastrophes that have afflicted my district in recent years.

I think this is a commonsense amendment. I am thankful it is bipartisan. I thank my bipartisan sponsor, Congresswoman PETTERSEN from Colorado, who shares my concern about this, and I urge adoption of my amendment.

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

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. VALADAO). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I am not opposed to this amendment, but I remain opposed to the underlying bill, which is filled with environmental poison pills and which the administration has warned us is so poorly drafted that they do not and will not know how to implement parts of it. Nothing in this otherwise sound amendment addresses these concerns.

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

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Mr. Chair, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN), the chair of the Natural Resources Committee and my friend.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of the bipartisan amendment offered by Representatives OBERNOLTE of California and PETTERSEN of Colorado, which supports the use of thermal, midwave, infrared-equipped, low-Earth orbit satellites.

It is a mouthful, but it is a good addition to the Fix Our Forests Act, and it shows that we are trying to incorporate the latest technology. We are trying to incorporate AI technology and more remote sensing technology so that we can be on the cutting edge of the fight against wildland fire.

Again, I commend my colleagues for their dedication and willingness to work together to ensure that the best solutions can be brought to bear on addressing the wildfire crisis.

I urge everyone to support the amendment and the underlying bill.

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Mr. 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 California (Mr. OBERNOLTE).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MR. HARDER

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 6 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Mr. HARDER. 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 add the following:

**TITLE IV—ENSURING CASUALTY ASSISTANCE FOR OUR FIREFIGHTERS**

**SEC. 401. WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT CASUALTY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

(a) DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAM.—Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Inter-

rior shall develop a Wildland Fire Management Casualty Assistance Program (referred to in this section as the “Program”) to provide assistance to the next-of-kin of—

(1) firefighters who, while in the line of duty, suffer illness or are critically injured or killed; and

(2) wildland fire support personnel critically injured or killed in the line of duty.

(b) ASPECTS OF PROGRAM.—The Program shall address the following:

(1) The initial and any subsequent notifications to the next-of-kin of a firefighter or wildland fire support personnel who—

(A) is killed in the line of duty; or

(B) requires hospitalization or treatment at a medical facility due to a line-of-duty injury or illness.

(2) The reimbursement of next-of-kin for expenses associated with travel to visit a firefighter or wildland fire support personnel who—

(A) is killed in the line of duty; or

(B) requires hospitalization or treatment at a medical facility due to a line-of-duty injury or illness.

(3) The qualifications, assignment, training, duties, supervision, and accountability for the performance of casualty assistance responsibilities.

(4) The relief or transfer of casualty assistance officers, including notification to survivors of critical injury or illness in the line of duty and next-of-kin of the reassignment of such officers to other duties.

(5) Centralized, short-term and long-term case management procedures for casualty assistance, including rapid access by survivors of firefighters or wildland fire support personnel and casualty assistance officers to expert case managers and counselors.

(6) The provision, through a computer accessible website and other means and at no cost to survivors and next-of-kin of firefighters or wildland fire support personnel, of personalized, integrated information on the benefits and financial assistance available to such survivors from the Federal Government.

(7) The provision of information to survivors and next-of-kin of firefighters or wildland fire support personnel on mechanisms for registering complaints about, or requests for, additional assistance related to casualty assistance.

(8) Liaison with the Department of the Interior, the Department of Justice, and the Social Security Administration to ensure prompt and accurate resolution of issues relating to benefits administered by those agencies for survivors of firefighters or wildland fire support personnel.

(9) Data collection, in consultation with the United States Fire Administration and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, regarding the incidence and quality of casualty assistance provided to survivors of firefighters or wildland fire support personnel.

(c) LINE OF DUTY DEATH BENEFITS.—The Program shall not affect existing authorities for Line of Duty Death benefits for Federal firefighters and wildland fire support personnel.

(d) NEXT-OF-KIN DEFINED.—In this section, the term “next-of-kin” means person or persons in the highest category of priority as determined by the following list (categories appear in descending order of priority):

(1) Surviving legal spouse.

(2) Children (whether by current or prior marriage) age 18 years or older in descending precedence by age.

(3) Father or mother, unless by court order custody has been vested in another (adoptive parent takes precedence over natural parent);

(4) Siblings (whole or half) age 18 years or older in descending precedence by age.

(5) Grandfather or grandmother.

(6) Any other relative (precedence to be determined in accordance with the civil law of descent of the deceased former member's State of domicile at time of death).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from California (Mr. HARDER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. HARDER. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of my amendment to the Fix Our Forests Act.

Our wildland firefighters are heroes. They are at the front lines of combating this wildfire crisis every day.

They work in hazardous conditions, inhaling toxic smoke and enduring temperatures of up to 1,300 degrees Fahrenheit, all the while working up to 18 hours a day.

Our wildland firefighters put their lives on the line to keep our families safe, a job that is so often thankless.

When a tragic accident occurs and a wildland firefighter is harmed, it is our responsibility to provide them with everything they need.

My amendment will ensure that ill, injured, or deceased firefighters and their loved ones have support and resources through establishing a Casualty Assistance Program at the Department of the Interior.

Currently, only a few agencies have this program. For example, the Forest Service. Unfortunately, the Department of the Interior does not.

That means that almost 5,000 Department of the Interior firefighters are left out of a program that will provide them and their families with these critical resources during the hardest moments in their life.

These firefighters are trained the same, they are paid the same, and most importantly, they do the same work, putting their lives on the line every single day as their Forest Service colleagues. Yet, they don't receive the same benefits today. My amendment would immediately fix this and start giving them the resources that they deserve.

I urge my colleagues to vote for my amendment to ensure all wildland firefighters and their families have support and access to the resources they deserve.

Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS).

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Chairman, we cannot prevent the spread of megafires without prioritizing the needs of wildland firefighters and their families.

Wildland firefighters play a critical role managing our forests and protecting communities from the threats posed by wildfires.

We are so grateful to have their support for the underlying bill. This is dangerous work, and Congress can and must do more to protect these public servants.

One component of this is providing respectful notification and helping

families navigate their options when tragedy occurs.

Congress can take a big step toward that end right now by establishing a Casualty Assistance Program at the Department of the Interior to provide support for all the critically ill, injured, or deceased wildland firefighters and their loved ones.

While this program already exists for some Federal firefighters, almost 5,000 Department of the Interior firefighters and their families lack access to this aid, leaving them unsupported during some of the hardest, most painful times in their lives.

Creating a Casualty Assistance Program through the Department of the Interior will ensure support for all our Federal wildland firefighters and their families.

We have to provide for those who risk life and limb to protect our communities from devastating wildfires. This program is one small way that we show gratitude for our firefighters and their loved ones, by making sure that they have what they need when the unimaginable happens.

I strongly support the inclusion of Mr. HARDER's amendment and the inclusion of this necessary program in the Fix Our Forests Act. This is only one step toward ensuring our firefighters receive every bit of support that they deserve.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Arkansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I join my colleague, Mr. PETERS, rising in support today of Representative HARDER's amendment, which does authorize the Department of the Interior to create a Casualty Assistance Program to provide support for wildland firefighters and the families of the firefighters who have been critically injured or killed in the line of duty.

As was mentioned, the Forest Service already has a Casualty Assistance Program, which provides travel expenses for next of kin to visit a wildland firefighter hospitalized due to a line-of-duty injury, or worse, killed in action.

It also provides directions for short- and long-term case management procedures for casualty assistance. This commonsense amendment will make the same services available to wildland firefighters at the Department of the Interior, providing critical support to the families of these firefighters.

As wildfire seasons have grown in both length and severity, the job of wildland firefighter has become increasingly dangerous.

Between 2013 and 2022, 96 wildland firefighter fatalities occurred. While Congress works to address the forest

conditions that are putting wildland firefighters into increasingly dire situations, we must also ensure that we are providing adequate support to them and their families.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HARDER. 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. HARDER).

The amendment was agreed to.

□ 1600

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. BARR

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 7 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Mr. BARR. 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 insert the following:

**TITLE IV—WHITE OAK RESILIENCE**

**SEC. 401. WHITE OAK RESTORATION INITIATIVE COALITION.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The White Oak Restoration Initiative Coalition shall be established—

(1) as a voluntary collaborative group of Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments and private and non-governmental organizations to carry out the duties described in subsection (b); and

(2) in accordance with the charter titled “White Oak Initiative Coalition Charter” adopted by the White Oak Initiative Board of Directors on March 21, 2023 (or a successor charter).

(b) DUTIES.—In addition to the duties specified in the charter described in subsection (a)(2), the duties of the White Oak Restoration Initiative Coalition are—

(1) to coordinate Federal, State, Tribal, local, private, and non-governmental restoration of white oak in the United States; and

(2) to make program and policy recommendations, consistent with applicable forest management plans, with respect to—

(A) changes necessary to address Federal and State policies that impede activities to improve the health, resiliency, and natural regeneration of white oak;

(B) adopting or modifying Federal and State policies to increase the pace and scale of white oak regeneration and resiliency of white oak;

(C) options to enhance communication, coordination, and collaboration between forest land owners, particularly for cross-boundary projects, to improve the health, resiliency, and natural regeneration of white oak;

(D) research gaps that should be addressed to improve the best available science on white oak;

(E) outreach to forest landowners with white oak or white oak regeneration potential; and

(F) options and policies necessary to improve the quality and quantity of white oak in tree nurseries.

(c) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, TECHNICAL SERVICES, AND STAFF SUPPORT.—The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall make such personnel available to the White Oak Restoration Initiative Coalition for administrative support, technical services, and development and dissemination of educational materials as the Secretaries determine necessary to carry out this section.

(d) PRIVATE FUNDING OF WHITE OAK RESTORATION PROJECTS.—Subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purpose, the Secretary of Agriculture may make funds available to the White Oak Restoration Initiative Coalition to carry out this section from the account established pursuant to section 1241(f) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3841(f)).

**SEC. 402. FOREST SERVICE PILOT PROGRAM.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall establish and carry out 5 pilot projects in national forests to restore white oak in such forests through white oak restoration and natural regeneration practices that are consistent with applicable forest management plans.

(b) NATIONAL FORESTS RESERVED OR WITHDRAWN FROM THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.—At least 3 pilot projects required under subsection (a) shall be carried out on national forests reserved or withdrawn from the public domain.

(c) AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary of Agriculture may enter into cooperative agreements to carry out the pilot projects required under subsection (a).

(d) SUNSET.—The authority under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

**SEC. 403. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR WHITE OAK REVIEW AND RESTORATION.**

(a) ASSESSMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior shall carry out an assessment of land under the administrative jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior, including fish and wildlife refuges and abandoned mine land, to evaluate—

(A) whether white oak is present on such land; and

(B) the potential to restore white oak forests on such land.

(2) USE OF INFORMATION.—In carrying out the assessment under paragraph (1), the Secretary may use information from sources other than the Department of the Interior, including from the White Oak Initiative and the Forest Service.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary shall submit to Congress, and make publicly available on the website of the Department of the Interior, a report regarding the results of the assessment carried out under this subsection.

(b) PILOT PROJECTS.—After the date on which the report required under subsection (a)(3) is submitted, the Secretary shall establish and carry out 5 pilot projects in different areas of land described in subsection (a)(1) to restore and naturally regenerate white oak.

(c) AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary of the Interior may enter into cooperative agreements to carry out the pilot projects required under subsection (b).

(d) SUNSET.—The authority under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

**SEC. 404. WHITE OAK REGENERATION AND UP-LAND OAK HABITAT.**

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture (in this section referred to as the “Secretary”) shall establish a non-regulatory program to be known as the “White Oak and Upland Oak Habitat Regeneration Program” (in this section referred to as the “Program”).

(b) DUTIES.—In carrying out the Program, the Secretary shall—

(1) draw upon the best available science and management plans for species of white

oak to identify, prioritize, and implement restoration and conservation activities that will improve the growth of white oak within the United States;

(2) collaborate and coordinate with the White Oak Restoration Initiative Coalition to prioritize white oak restoration initiatives;

(3) adopt a white oak restoration strategy that—

(A) supports the implementation of a shared set of science-based restoration and conservation activities developed in accordance with paragraph (1);

(B) targets cost effective projects with measurable results; and

(C) maximizes restoration outcomes with no net gain of Federal full-time equivalent employees; and

(4) establish the voluntary grant and technical assistance programs in accordance with subsection (e).

(c) COORDINATION.—In establishing the Program the Secretary, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall consult with—

(1) the heads of Federal agencies, including—

(A) the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; and

(B) the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service; and

(2) the Governor of each State in which restoration efforts will be carried out pursuant to the Program.

(d) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the Program include—

(1) coordinating restoration and conservation activities among Federal, State, local, and Tribal entities and conservation partners to address white oak restoration priorities;

(2) improving and regenerating white oak and upland oak forests and the wildlife habitat such forests provide;

(3) carrying out coordinated restoration and conservation activities that lead to the increased growth of species of white oak in native white oak regions on Federal, State, Tribal, and private land;

(4) facilitating strategic planning to maximize the resilience of white oak systems and habitats under changing climate conditions;

(5) engaging the public through outreach, education, and citizen involvement to increase capacity and support for coordinated restoration and conservation activities for species of white oak; and

(6) increasing scientific capacity to support the planning, monitoring, and research activities necessary to carry out such coordinated restoration and conservation activities.

(e) GRANTS AND ASSISTANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To the extent that funds are available to carry out this section, the Secretary shall establish a voluntary grant and technical assistance program (in this section referred to as the “grant program”) to achieve the purposes of the Program described in subsection (d).

(2) ADMINISTRATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall enter into a cooperative agreement with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (in this subsection referred to as the “Foundation”) to manage and administer the grant program.

(B) FUNDING.—Subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purpose, after the Secretary enters into a cooperative agreement with the Foundation under subparagraph (A), the Foundation shall for each fiscal year, receive amounts to carry out this subsection in an advance payment of the entire amount on October 1, or as soon as practicable thereafter, of that fiscal year.

(3) APPLICATION OF NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION ESTABLISHMENT ACT.—Amounts received by the Foundation to carry out the grant program shall be subject to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act (16 U.S.C. 3701 et seq.), excluding section 10(a) of that Act (16 U.S.C. 3709(a)).

(f) SUNSET.—The authority under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

**SEC. 405. TREE NURSERY SHORTAGES.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall—

(1) develop and implement a national strategy to increase the capacity of Federal, State, Tribal, and private tree nurseries to address the nationwide shortage of tree seedlings; and

(2) coordinate such strategy with—

(A) the national reforestation strategy of the Forest Service; and

(B) each regional implementation plan for National Forests.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under subsection (a) shall—

(1) be based on the best available science and data; and

(2) identify and address—

(A) regional seedling shortages of bareroot and container tree seedlings;

(B) regional reforestation opportunities and the seedling supply necessary to fulfill such opportunities;

(C) opportunities to enhance seedling diversity and close gaps in seed inventories; and

(D) barriers to expanding, enhancing, or creating new infrastructure to increase nursery capacity.

**SEC. 406. WHITE OAK RESEARCH.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture may enter into a memorandum of understanding with a Tribe or institution, including a covered land grant college, to collaboratively conduct research on—

(1) white oak genes with resistance or tolerance to stress;

(2) white oak trees that exhibit vigor for the purpose of increasing survival and growth;

(3) establishing a genetically diverse white oak seeds bank capable of responding to stressors;

(4) providing a sustainable supply of white oak seedlings and genetic resources;

(5) improved methods for aligning seed sources with the future climate at planting sites;

(6) reforestation of white oak through natural and artificial regeneration;

(7) improved methods for retaining and increasing white oak trees in forests;

(8) improved methods for reforesting abandoned mine land sites; and

(9) economic and social aspects of white oak forest management across land ownerships.

(b) CONSULT.—In carrying out the research under subsection (a), the Tribe or institution, including a covered land grant college, that enters into the memorandum of understanding under such subsection may consult with such States, nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, and other scientific bodies, as the entity subject to such memorandum determines appropriate.

(c) SUNSET.—The authority under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) COVERED LAND GRANT COLLEGE DEFINED.—In this section, the term “covered

land grant college" means an 1862 Institution, an 1890 Institution, or a 1994 Institution (as such terms are defined, respectively, in section 2 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601)).

**SEC. 407. USDA FORMAL INITIATIVE.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service and in coordination with the Chief of the Forest Service, shall establish a formal initiative on white oak to—

(1) re-establish white oak forests where appropriate;

(2) improve management of existing white oak forests to foster natural regeneration of white oak;

(3) provide technical assistance to private landowners to re-establish, improve management of, and naturally regenerate white oak;

(4) improve and expand white oak nursery stock; and

(5) adapt and improve white oak seedlings.

(b) SUNSET.—The authority under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

**SEC. 408. AUTHORITIES.**

To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall use the authorities provided under this title in combination with other authorities to carry out projects, including—

(1) good neighbor agreements entered into under section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113); and

(2) stewardship contracting projects entered into under section 604 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of my bipartisan amendment to the Fix Our Forests Act, a terrific piece of bipartisan legislation, and I compliment both Chairman WESTERMAN and the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS) for their leadership on this.

My amendment would, if enacted, secure the future of the American white oak, which is one of the most important tree species in the Eastern United States. It occupies 104 million acres in this country and is vital for biodiversity, wildlife, and our economy.

American white oak is used in almost every forest product, including furniture, flooring, cabinetry, barrels for aging wine, American whiskey and, yes, Kentucky bourbon, which is America's native spirit by the definition passed by Congress, and which must be aged in new charred white oak barrels.

Kentucky's Sixth District is home to some of the world's most renowned distilleries. The industry as a whole produces over \$9 billion and more than 23,000 jobs for the Commonwealth annually. Additionally, Kentucky distillers exported over \$500 million worth of products abroad in 2022.

The problem is that while there is ample mature white oak now, there

will not be in the future unless immediate and widespread action is taken. Young stands of white oak simply don't exist in the amount needed to support wildlife and sustainable forestry and do not exist for the future of the bourbon industry.

Reforestation of white oak is challenging because without some additional assistance here, white oak is extremely slow growing. Over the next 20 years, the population of white oak is expected to drop considerably, which will have a significant negative impact on Kentucky's ability to age and produce bourbon.

My amendment addresses this specifically by establishing the White Oak Restoration Initiative Coalition to encourage the Forest Service to work alongside private and State partners at no cost to the taxpayer.

Additionally, the amendment asks the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to regenerate white oak through a series of pilot projects in national parks and on volunteered private lands.

Lastly, it allows the Forest Service to enter into memorandums of understanding with land grant institutions to conduct much-needed research on white oak.

This bipartisan amendment does not authorize any new spending or programs but instead would work within existing programs and agency budgets to preserve our heritage and fortify an industry that is critical to Kentucky's economy and is America's native spirit.

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

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I think you know what I am about to say. I am not opposed to this amendment, but I continue to strongly oppose the underlying bill. It is full of poison pills that harm the environment and will spread our Forest Service even thinner right when we need them more than ever. Unfortunately, nothing in this amendment addresses those concerns.

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

Mr. BARR. Mr. Chair, I would just say to my friend from California that former Speaker Henry Clay, who was famous for bringing barrels of white oak filled with Kentucky whiskey up to the Capitol Building, used to famously say that Kentucky bourbon could lubricate the wheels of government. I would hope that the gentlewoman would take that into consideration in withdrawing her opposition to this very important amendment.

Mr. Chair, I yield time to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN), the sponsor of the legislation and the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I rise in strong support of his amendment.

This amendment will add to the underlying legislation key pieces of Representative BARR's bipartisan White Oak Resilience Act, which passed out of the Natural Resources Committee unanimously this year.

While the Fix Our Forests Act primarily addresses the dire state of our overgrown and fire-prone forests in the West, this amendment addresses an urgent challenge confronting our Eastern forests.

At current trends, we face an imminent shortage of white oak trees throughout their native range of the Eastern United States. Because of a lack of necessary forest management practices and shifts in the forest environment, we have created a situation where white oak seedlings and saplings are not growing at a sustainable rate. Presently, roughly 75 percent of white oaks in the U.S. are classified as mature. The lack of younger trees is very troubling. Without intervention, the white oak population will drastically decline in the next 10 to 15 years. White oaks are a keystone species that provide immense ecosystem benefits to the many forests within the species' 104-million-acre range. This iconic American tree is especially important for wildlife that is both a preferred food source and habitat for many species.

As Representative BARR mentioned, there are many uses for white oak, many uses that are especially important to the great State of Kentucky. This is a good amendment that will help restore the long-term viability of this beautiful and important tree. I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. It is a win-win. It is a win for reforestation, it is a win for the Kentucky bourbon industry, and it certainly will help this important bipartisan legislation, Fix Our Forests Act, pass.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR).

The amendment was agreed to.

**AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MS. PETTERSEN**

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 8 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Ms. PETTERSEN. 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 subtitle B of title I add the following:

**SEC. 117. PROGRAM TO SUPPORT PRIORITY REFORESTATION AND RESTORATION PROJECTS OF DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior, in coordination with the heads of covered Federal agencies, shall establish a program to provide support for priority projects identified under subsection (c)(2), in accordance with this section.

(b) SUPPORT.—In carrying out the program under subsection (a), the Secretary may provide support through—

(1) cooperative agreements entered into in accordance with processes established by the Secretary; and

(2) contracts, including contracts established pursuant to the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.).

(c) ANNUAL IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITY PROJECTS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act and annually thereafter, the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the heads of covered Federal agencies, shall—

(1) identify lands of the United States administered by, or under the jurisdiction of, the Secretary of the Interior that require reforestation and restoration due to unplanned disturbances and that are unlikely to experience natural regeneration without assistance; and

(2) establish a list of priority projects for reforestation and restoration for the upcoming year, which may include activities to ensure adequate and appropriate seed and seedling availability to further the objectives of other priority projects.

(d) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out the program under subsection (a) and the requirements under subsection (c), the Secretary shall consult or collaborate with, as appropriate, and inform the following:

(1) State and local governments.

(2) Indian Tribes.

(3) Covered institutions of higher education.

(4) Federal agencies that administer lands of the United States that adjoin or are proximal to lands that are the subject of priority projects and potential priority projects.

(5) Other stakeholders, as determined by the Secretary.

(e) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of the Interior shall submit to the relevant Congressional Committees a report that includes the following:

(1) An accounting of all lands identified under subsection (c)(1) for the period covered by the report.

(2) A list of priority projects identified under subsection (c)(2) for the period covered by the report and, with respect to each such priority project, any support issued under the program under subsection (a) and any progress made towards reforestation and restoration.

(3) An accounting of each contract and cooperative agreement established under the program under subsection (a).

(4) A description of the actions taken in accordance with subsection (d).

(5) Assessments with respect to—

(A) gaps in—

(i) the implementation of the program under subsection (a); and

(ii) the progress made under the program with respect to priority projects; and

(B) opportunities to procure funding necessary to address any such gaps.

(f) NONDUPLICATION.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary of the Interior shall collaborate with the Secretary of Agri-

culture and the Secretary of Defense to ensure the nonduplication of activities carried out under section 205.

(g) SUNSET.—The authority provided under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term “covered Federal agency” means the National Park Service, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, or the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

(2) COVERED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term “covered institution of higher education” has the meaning given the term “eligible institutions” in section 301(e)(3)).

(3) NATURAL REGENERATION; REFORESTATION.—The terms “natural regeneration” and “reforestation” have the meanings given such terms in section 3(e)(4)(A) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1601(3)(4)(A))

(4) RESTORATION.—The term “restoration” means activities that facilitate the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed, including the reestablishment of appropriate plant species composition and community structure.

(5) UNPLANNED ECOSYSTEM DISTURBANCE.—The term “unplanned ecosystem disturbance” means any unplanned disturbance that disrupts the structure or composition of an ecosystem, including a wildfire, an infestation of insects or disease, and a weather event.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. PETTERSEN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Colorado.

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

Over 3 million people in my home State of Colorado live in areas at moderate to high risk of wildfires, which is over 50 percent of our State’s population. Since 2001, 20 of the largest wildfires in our recorded history have occurred in Colorado, resulting in the loss of more than 2,500 homes over the past two decades.

Wildfires have not only threatened lives but also damaged ecosystems and disrupted communities.

Coloradans feel the devastating impacts of climate change every single day. This is our new normal: Fires are burning more frequently and more fiercely than ever before.

It is essential that we recognize the urgency of addressing this crisis to protect our communities. While recognizing that this bill doesn’t include everything that we want to see, it is an important step moving forward.

We need a holistic approach, and this includes investing in predisaster mitigation measures, such as strengthening our infrastructure in housing and enhancing early detection capabilities, supporting our wildland firefighting workforce, and focusing on post-disaster resilience.

My amendment is a piece of this comprehensive response. Specifically, my amendment will require the Department of the Interior, in coordina-

tion with States, local governments, Tribes, and colleges to identify critical lands in need of reforestation and restoration due to natural disasters, and to support projects in those areas.

By investing in restoration and reforestation projects, we can ensure that our communities not only recover but also rebuild in a way that enhances their resilience against future disasters.

Unfortunately, wildfires leave lasting scars on our landscapes and can permanently alter our environment, heightening the risk of deadly flash flooding and mud flows. I hear from my constituents about their concerns regarding wildfires but also, unfortunately, flooding is close behind.

That is why it is important that we pass this amendment to strengthen the provisions in the underlying bill and ensure our communities are equipped to face the challenges head-on.

Recovery after a wildfire is a lengthy and challenging process. However, my amendment, together with the provisions in the bill, represents a step toward building stronger, more resilient communities against the threat of wildfires.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support the adoption of this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Arkansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of this amendment, which seeks to expand nursery and seed capacity, support reforestation efforts by State, Tribal, and local governments, as well as institutions of higher education on lands managed by the Department of the Interior.

I thank the amendment’s sponsor for her engagement on this important issue. I greatly appreciate her and her staff’s willingness to work with us on some revisions to the amendment. This amendment will help improve badly needed reforestation and restoration activities across the Nation by engaging non-Federal partners, including Tribes, who are critical partners as we seek to improve the health of our Nation’s forests.

The magnitude of our wildfire and forest health crisis demands an all-hands-on-deck approach. I am encouraged that this amendment will empower non-Federal partners to assist in vital work.

The Department of the Interior has identified a reforestation backlog of roughly 2.4 million acres across their land management agencies. This total is likely to grow considering the massive numbers of acres lost to wildfires

in recent years. This is a good amendment and will help tackle the enormous reforestation and restoration backlog affecting Department of the Interior lands. I urge my colleagues to support the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Chair, I urge 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 gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. PETTERSEN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 9 OFFERED BY MR. MULLIN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 9 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Mr. MULLIN. 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 13, line 1, strike “predict” and insert “predict, using data tools (including artificial intelligence) and other decision support products.”.

Page 13, line 5, strike “community” and insert “community (including at-risk communities identified in fireshed assessments conducted under section 105)”.

Page 14, line 2, strike “and” at the end.

Page 14, line 4, strike the period at the end and insert “; and”.

Page 14, after line 4, insert the following new paragraph:

(8) disseminate data tools (including artificial intelligence) and other decision support products, for use in manners consistent with the purposes described paragraphs (1) through (7), to the following:

(A) Federal agencies.

(B) Indian Tribes.

(C) State and local governments.

(D) Academic or research institutions.

(E) Other entities, public or private, identified by the Director.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from California (Mr. MULLIN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

My California congressional district sits on the San Francisco peninsula and is home to a vibrant innovation economy that supports every sector of American industry.

The leading-edge technologies being developed and improved in the bay area have the potential to help keep the rest of California and our Western States safe from the risk of wildfire.

My amendment today seeks to ensure that we are using the best technologies available to understand wildfire risk. Artificial intelligence, with its potential to analyze large datasets and improve predictive models, can and should play an important role in informing land management decisions.

These data tools will be vital for enabling the proposed Fireshed Center in the Fix Our Forests Act. This should be

an easy vote for those who support using the best available technologies to protect communities and inform land management activities.

Mr. Chair, I urge the adoption of my amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Arkansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of this amendment, which would clarify that the Fireshed Center created by this legislation can use artificial intelligence and other decision support tools to assess fire risk to communities and landscapes.

The Fix Our Forests Act establishes a new Fireshed Center for relevant land management and science-focused agencies to comprehensively assess and predict fire across the landscape and in the wildland-urban interface. This will reduce fragmentation and create a one-stop shop for predictive services that can help inform suppression and management decisions across jurisdictional landscapes.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MULLIN. 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. MULLIN).

The amendment was agreed to.

□ 1615

AMENDMENT NO. 10 OFFERED BY MR. VALADAO

The Acting CHAIR (Ms. BOEBERT). It is now in order to consider amendment No. 10 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Mr. VALADAO. Madam Chair, I rise as the designee for the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA).

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill add the following:

#### TITLE IV—EXPANSION OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS UNDER WATER SOURCE PROTECTION PROGRAM

##### SEC. 401. WATER SOURCE PROTECTION PROGRAM.

Section 303 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6542(g)(4)(B)) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (7) as paragraphs (2) through (8), respectively;

(B) by inserting before paragraph (2), as so redesignated, the following:

“(1) ADJACENT LAND.—The term ‘adjacent land’ means non-Federal land, including State, local, and private land, that is adjacent to, and within the same watershed as, National Forest System land on which a watershed protection and restoration project is carried out under this section.”; and

(C) in paragraph (2), as so redesignated—

(i) by redesignating subparagraphs (G) and (H) as subparagraphs (K) and (L), respectively; and

(ii) by inserting after subparagraph (F) the following:

“(G) an acequia association;

“(H) a local, regional, or other public entity that manages stormwater or wastewater resources or other related water infrastructure;

“(I) a land-grant mercedes;

“(J) a local, regional, or other private entity that has water delivery authority;”;

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking “The Secretary shall” and inserting the following:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) REQUIREMENTS.—A watershed protection and restoration project under the Program shall be designed to—

“(A) protect and restore watershed health, water supply and quality, a municipal or agricultural water supply system, and water-related infrastructure;

“(B) protect and restore forest health from insect infestation and disease or wildfire; or

“(C) advance any combination of the purposes described in subparagraphs (A) and (B).

“(3) PRIORITIES.—In selecting watershed protection and restoration projects under the Program, the Secretary shall give priority to projects that would—

“(A) provide risk management benefits associated with: drought; wildfire; post-wildfire conditions; extreme weather; flooding; resilience to climate change; and watershed and fire resilience, including minimizing risks to watershed health, water supply and quality, and water-related infrastructure, including municipal and agricultural water supply systems;

“(B) support aquatic restoration and conservation efforts that complement existing or planned forest restoration or wildfire risk reduction efforts; or

“(C) provide quantifiable benefits to water supply or quality and include the use of nature-based solutions, such as restoring wetland and riparian ecosystems.

“(4) CONDITIONS FOR PROJECTS ON ADJACENT LAND.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—No project or activity may be carried out under this section on adjacent land unless the owner of the adjacent land agrees in writing that the owner is a willing and engaged partner in carrying out that project or activity.

“(B) EFFECT.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize any change in—

“(i) the ownership of adjacent land on which a project or activity is carried out under this section; or

“(ii) the management of adjacent land on which a project or activity is carried out under this section, except during the carrying out of that project or activity.”;

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “with end water users” and inserting “with end water users to protect and restore the condition of National Forest watersheds and adjacent land that provide water—

“(A) to the end water users subject to the agreement; or

“(B) for the benefit of another end water user.”;

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (C), by striking “or” at the end;

(ii) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (E); and

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

“(D) a good neighbor agreement entered into under section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a); or”; and  
(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(3) COOPERATION WITH NON-FEDERAL PARTNERS.—The Secretary shall cooperate with non-Federal partners in carrying out assessments, planning, project design, and project implementation under this section.”;

(4) in subsection (d)—

(A) by amending paragraph (2) to read as follows:

“(2) REQUIREMENT.—A water source management plan shall be—

“(A) designed to protect and restore ecological integrity (as defined in section 219.19 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this subparagraph));

“(B) based on the best available scientific information; and

“(C) conducted in a manner consistent with the forest plan applicable to the National Forest System land on which the watershed protection and restoration project is carried out.”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(4) REDUCING REDUNDANCY.—An existing watershed plan, such as a watershed protection and restoration action plan developed under section 304(a)(3), or other applicable watershed planning documents as approved by the Secretary may be used as the basis for a water source management plan under this subsection.”; and

(5) in subsection (e)(1), by striking “primary purpose of” and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting “primary purpose of advancing any of the purposes described in subsection (b)(2).”.

#### SEC. 402. WATERSHED CONDITION FRAMEWORK TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.

Section 304(a) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6543(a)) is amended in paragraphs (3) and (5) by striking “protection and”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. VALADAO. Madam Chair, my amendment would add the text of my bill, the bipartisan Headwaters Protection Act, to the Fix Our Forests Act.

This commonsense language is led by my colleague from California (Mr. COSTA) and myself, and it has bipartisan support. It was included in the House Committee on Agriculture’s farm bill.

This amendment expands public and private partnerships in forestry and watershed management projects under the Water Source Protection Program. These projects can improve access to clean drinking water, provide for greater downstream water availability, and prevent future wildfires.

My amendment makes changes to improve the program, including expanding the number of entities that are eligible to participate in the program to include local, regional, and public entities that have water management and delivery expertise; allowing non-Federal partners to input their knowledge and expertise in the design and implementation of forestry and watershed management projects; and allowing for the use of existing watershed

condition frameworks to reduce bureaucracy and deploy projects faster.

Overall, this amendment would support efforts in the San Joaquin Valley like the Olam project, a series of wildlife prevention and restoration projects in the Pine Flat watershed between public and private partners. This amendment would build off of the good work done in the Fix Our Forests Act, and I urge its adoption.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Chair, I rise today in support of this bipartisan amendment being offered by Representatives COSTA and VALADAO of California.

The Committee on Natural Resources held a field hearing this Congress in Representative VALADAO’s district on the importance of water, and this amendment is a bipartisan, good faith effort to help address concerns raised at that hearing.

This bipartisan amendment would expand public and private forestry and watershed management partnerships and reduce redundancies under the existing Water Source Protection Program.

Representatives COSTA and VALADAO’s amendment includes good governance changes to the Water Source Protection Program. It expands the number of eligible lands and entities under the program and reduces duplicative application materials and red tape for existing watershed restoration action plans.

Finally, this amendment establishes clear program priorities that help align the program to its core mission.

These changes align with the spirit of the Fix Our Forests Act. Oftentimes, we hear calls for more funding to solve a problem. However, oftentimes, by focusing on a program’s priorities and reducing red tape, the cost goes down and funding can be shifted away from bureaucracy and toward getting work done on the ground.

Again, I commend Representatives VALADAO and COSTA for reaching across the aisle to work together on this amendment. I have had the pleasure of working with both of these gentlemen on the Save Our Sequoias Act.

Mr. Chair, I encourage support of the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. MOONEY). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 11 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. VALADAO). It is now in order to consider amendment

No. 11 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I rise as the designee for the gentleman from Montana (Mr. ZINKE).

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 31, line 5, strike “and”.

Page 31, after line 5, insert the following:

“(II) to carry out reconstruction, repair, and restoration of non-National Forest System roads necessary to implement projects on Federal lands;

“(III) to construct new permanent roads on Federal lands that are—

“(aa) necessary to implement authorized restoration activities; and

“(bb) approved by the Federal agency through an environmental analysis or categorical exclusion decision;

“(IV) to complete new permanent road construction to replace and decommission an existing permanent road that is adversely impacting forest, rangeland, or watershed health; and”.

Page 31, line 6, strike “(II)” and insert “(V)”.

Page 31, line 7, strike “subclause (I)” and insert “subclauses (I) through (IV)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Colorado.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I rise today to offer the amendment on behalf of my friend from Montana, Representative ZINKE, which will improve the effectiveness of the Good Neighbor Authority.

The Good Neighbor Authority program enables cross-boundary forest management activities with States, Tribes, and counties. Collaborative tools like this program are critical to confronting the wildfire crisis as raging wildfires don’t respect man-made borders that separate forests into different jurisdictions.

Since 2014, over 490 Good Neighbor Authority projects have been started in 34 States, and more than 273 million board feet of timber is sold yearly through this program.

Currently, funds from the sale of timber from Good Neighbor Authority projects can be used to treat insect-and disease-infested trees, reduce hazardous fuels, improve forest health, and restore and repair decommissioned Forest Service roads necessary to implement restoration activities.

This amendment would expand the permissible uses of timber receipts derived from Good Neighbor Authority projects to include the reconstruction, repair, and restoration of roads on non-Forest Service lands when such activities are needed to implement forest management projects on Federal land.

New road construction on Federal lands would also be a permitted use under this amendment to facilitate authorized restoration projects. However, these new road projects would still be required to comply with the applicable environmental review processes.

Further, this amendment would allow timber receipts to be used to construct new roads to replace existing roads that adversely impact forest, rangeland, or watershed health.

Access to areas urgently needing treatment remains a huge challenge to improving forest health. Roads are beneficial for forest management, provide the public with access to outdoor recreation opportunities, and enable safer and more effective wildland firefighting.

This thoughtful amendment from Representative ZINKE will improve forest management activities under Good Neighbor Authority by empowering partners to overcome some of the access challenges preventing badly needed work in our forests.

Mr. Chair, I thank Representative ZINKE for his leadership on this issue.

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

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, this amendment would permit the use of Good Neighbor Authority revenues for the construction of new roads.

Currently, the Forest Service manages 372,000 miles of roads across 193 million acres that they manage. Due to such a large inventory, the Forest Service often faces financial difficulties in operation and maintenance.

Over half, over 58 percent, of the Forest Service's \$7.66 billion of deferred maintenance is related to roads. The Forest Service has a colossal network of roads that is already far too big for them to maintain.

For this reason, it is hard to support an amendment that would allow the construction of even more roads but doesn't provide any resources for the future maintenance of those new Forest Service roads.

Our Forest Service is spread dangerously thin due to Republican budget cuts. This amendment would make the problem even worse.

Mr. Chair, I urge a "no" vote, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, this is a good amendment that allows for good use of our resources.

It allows Tribes and local communities to take care of the roads that are necessary to access, to be able to do these forest management projects, and also to be able to fight fires when they break out and stop them before they get too big.

Mr. Chair, I support the amendment.

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

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gen-

tlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 12 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 12 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Ms. BOEBERT. 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 29, after line 3, insert the following:

(B) in section 603(c)(2)(B) (16 U.S.C. 6591b(c)(2)(B)), by striking "Fire Regime Groups I, II, or III" and inserting "Fire Regime I, Fire Regime II, Fire Regime III, Fire Regime IV, or Fire Regime V".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Colorado.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I rise to offer my amendment that clarifies existing authorities may be utilized to prevent wildfires in Fire Regimes IV and V, thereby expanding the acres of at-risk forests that would be eligible for streamlined management authorities.

This important amendment is critical to fire mitigation efforts across the States of Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Utah, Nevada, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, New York, Maine, West Virginia, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Missouri, Louisiana, Mississippi, Indiana, Ohio, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Virginia, North Carolina, Iowa, Florida, and Texas.

The Forest Service estimates 63 million acres are currently at risk of catastrophic wildfire, and each year, nearly 10 million acres in the U.S. catch on fire. Colorado also had the three largest recorded wildfires in State history in 2020.

Federal agencies have chosen to spend billions on the back end, putting out wildfires as opposed to prioritizing active management upfront that would reduce the size and number of wildfires.

According to the Colorado State Forest Service, more than 24.4 million acres of Colorado forestland impact Colorado's water supply, where 80 percent of the State's population relies on those forested watersheds for municipal water supplies.

Healthy forests act as a natural water filter and storage system and are critical to maintaining healthy watersheds. In the United States, forests are a source of drinking water for over 180 million people.

We can reduce the size and severity of wildfires through active forest management, which will also help protect our watersheds and municipal water supplies.

Let's actively manage our forests, be good stewards of the land that we have

been blessed with, and pass this important amendment.

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

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, this amendment would further expand a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act for projects completed in two additional fire management regimes.

For context, one of the new regimes, Fire Regime V, applies to vegetation types that rarely burn, typically due to a lack of moisture or fuel. The fire return interval in those landscapes is more than 200 years.

Because of the categorization of these fire regimes, hazardous fuels management is not as high of a priority and does not need a legislative categorical exclusion expansion.

This follows the trend that my Republican colleagues have been setting. They have been legislatively expanding categorical exclusions, and the Committee on Natural Resources Democrats remain opposed.

During our debate today, we have shown how meddling in the National Environmental Policy Act process is dangerous and how it sets a precedent that will do more harm than good. Categorical exclusions are most effective when they are developed with expert input by agencies and the Council on Environmental Quality instead of mandated by Congress.

This amendment simply continues to build on the slew of National Environmental Policy Act waivers that the Fix Our Forests Act advances, and it is no surprise that my Republican counterparts have chosen to make this amendment in order.

Mr. Chair, I urge a "no" vote, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1630

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I seem to recall just yesterday that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle had no problem meddling in NEPA to get their leftwing projects through CHIPS authorized.

Mr. Chair, I would like to just highlight the drought that has caused these catastrophic wildfires.

Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of the gentlewoman's amendment, and I appreciate the hard work that Representative BOEBERT has put into this thoughtful amendment, which does include Fire Regimes IV and V, and as we have these very dry, fire-prone areas out West, it is important to include these two fire regimes.

Again, I support the amendment.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, the proposal of utilizing existing authorities to prevent wildfires in Fire Regimes IV and V is crucial as it focuses on

proactive management and streamlining of forest health.

As someone who prioritizes humans flourishing, I see the value in taking measures that can prevent environmental disasters that have devastating impacts on human beings and their property.

It is important to remember that we have the power to shape our environment and neutralize dangers through human innovation powered by cost-effective energy. In the case of wildfire prevention, this could mean better forest management practices, controlled burns to reduce fuel load, and advanced fire detection and suppression technologies.

Again, Mr. Chair, I would urge the adoption of my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I continue to oppose the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. ELLZEY). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 13 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 13 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Ms. BOEBERT. 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 71, line 1, strike “treatments” and insert “treatments, grazing.”

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Colorado.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I rise to offer my amendment that will ensure grazing as one of the hazardous fuels reduction activities authorized by the bill.

Our Federal lands are overgrown and poorly managed, making them more susceptible to wildfire and disease. Catastrophic wildfires have taken a tremendous toll on Coloradans. These incidents have threatened the lives of millions of people and accounted for millions of dollars of damages each year.

Farmers and ranchers have lost crops, livestock, and structures, have been evacuated, and had their operations disrupted by smoke, public safety power shutoffs, or loss of insurance.

There are Federal lands in Colorado and the West where we once had 50 to 100 trees per acre, but now we see 500 to 1,000 trees per acre. There are also 6 billion standing dead trees in the Western United States. Some people call that a problem. I call it a tinderbox waiting to burn.

Fuel treatments are effective, and Federal agencies have made clear that over 90 percent of the fuel treatments

are effective in changing fire behavior and/or helping with the control of wildfire.

Grazing animals play an important part in maintaining healthy ecosystems by controlling the ecological balance of vegetative species, reducing fire fuels that result from the accumulation of nonnative plant biomass, and improving the soil health by trampling plant residue and their own waste into the soil profile.

Cattle, sheep, and goats can play a regenerative wildfire mitigation role that also provides for our food and fiber needs.

Let's support our Nation's ranchers and encourage innovative and cost-effective hazardous fuel reductions like grazing.

I urge passage of my amendment that ensures the grazing activities are recognized as hazardous fuels reduction work when the agency calculates the number of acres treated to reduce hazardous fuels, improving transparency and accountability.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Arkansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of this amendment being offered by Representative BOEBERT.

This amendment ensures that livestock grazing activities are considered as hazardous fuels reduction work when Federal land management agencies calculate the number of acres treated to reduce hazardous fuels.

Section 302 of the Fix Our Forests Act requires land management agencies to submit a yearly hazardous fuels reduction report to Congress based on the actual number of acres the respective agencies treated over the past year. The goal is to improve transparency and accountability.

Livestock grazing is beneficial for land. Just last month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture released research showing livestock grazing can lower wildfire risk and limit invasive grasses. The rangeland scientists who published this report include researchers from Representative BOEBERT's home State of Colorado.

I, again, thank her for her leadership and for supporting our ranching and farming families.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I thank the chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee for supporting this important amendment that supports

our farmers and ranchers back home and reduces the hazardous fuels by allowing grazing to take place on our public lands.

Again, I urge adoption of this amendment.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 14 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 14 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Ms. BOEBERT. 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 38, after line 12, insert the following: “(H) proposals that seek to remove or treat insects or diseases, including the removal of trees killed by, or infested with, bark beetles in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.”

Page 38, line 13, strike “(H)” and insert “(I)”.

Page 38, line 23, strike “(I)” and insert “(J)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Colorado.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I rise to offer my amendment that will require regional foresters to submit a plan through the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program for the treatment and removal of trees killed by or infested with bark beetles in Western States.

The bark beetle epidemic has caused significant damage to roughly 100,000 square miles of forest in the Western United States alone. There are 600 different species of bark beetles in the United States. Several species, such as the mountain pine beetle, attack and kill live trees. Most species of bark beetles live in dead, weakened, or dying hosts.

Along the West Coast and through the Rocky Mountains, bark beetles have affected tens of millions of acres of forests. While bark beetles are native to U.S. forests and play important ecological roles, they can cause extensive tree mortality and negative economic and social impacts.

Spruce beetles have killed millions of trees on more than 1.8 million acres in Colorado since 2000 and provided increased fuels for wildfires. In Colorado, 2021 was one of the worst wildfire seasons our State has ever endured with the three largest fires in State history.

Bark beetle epidemics and catastrophic wildfires are a significant threat. This can be minimized by thinning overgrown forests and removing hazardous fuels produced by beetle

overpopulation. This process is sure to create jobs and increase overall forest health.

I urge passage of my amendment that would prioritize Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program activities that address the bark beetle epidemic, a major contributor to wildfires in Colorado and the West.

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

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to this amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, this amendment was summarized by Republicans as requiring the regional foresters to develop plans for the treatment and removal of dead or dying trees due to insect disease.

However, I want to clarify that this amendment actually doesn't require anything of regional foresters at all. Instead, it requires special consideration for project proposals under the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program that seek to remove or treat insects or diseases.

The purpose of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program is to encourage the collaborative science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes.

Insect treatments are already eligible under the program and are executed often as restoration treatments. However, they are also often, and should be, used in tandem with other collaborative strategies as part of a broader landscape treatment plan.

I urge a "no" vote, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, let the beetle battle begin. The bark kill epidemic in Colorado and the western United States is a problem that we must address. I drive by these dying forests on a regular basis, and seeing the tinderbox that it has created is a huge devastation.

The carbon emissions that are released from a catastrophic wildfire are very harmful and impactful to my State of Colorado and the West, so I say it is time to do something about the beetle kill, beetle kill, beetle kill.

Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN), the chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I thank her for bringing this amendment, which is important. I support the amendment.

Unfortunately, our forests out West are overstocked. They compete with each other. They get weak. They invite disease and insect infestation. These insects and diseases kill the trees, and then you have dry kindling for a lightning strike or a wildfire that gets out, and it creates the perfect storm for catastrophic wildfires.

Again, I thank Representative BOEBERT for her efforts to improve the

health of our western forests, and I support the amendment.

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

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 15 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 15 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Ms. BOEBERT. 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 38, after line 12, insert the following: "(H) proposals that seek to facilitate the sale of firewood and Christmas trees on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary or the Secretary of the Interior;".

Page 38, line 13, strike "(H)" and insert "(I)".

Page 38, line 23, strike "(I)" and insert "(J)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Colorado.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I rise today to offer my amendment that requires regional foresters to submit a plan on the sale of Christmas trees and firewood on Federal land.

Under current law, American families can purchase a permit from the Forest Service to cut Christmas trees from their favorite national forest, as well as harvest any firewood, transplants, posts, and poles, and other forest products to improve forest health.

We have seen successful Christmas tree and firewood harvesting operations in my home State of Colorado, and this program has served as a locally based solution to help thin our overgrown forests.

□ 1645

According to the Forest Service: "The permit system helps to thin densely populated stands of small-diameter trees. Local forest health experts identify areas that benefit from thinning trees and tend to be the perfect size for Christmas trees. Removing these trees in designated areas helps other trees grow larger and can open areas that provide food for wildlife."

My constituents are struggling right now as they deal with the disastrous effects of the Democrats' destructive economic policies. They unleashed record inflation on Americans that has raised utility bills, driven up energy costs, and made it harder to live for most Americans.

My amendment provides an affordable fuel alternative for families across the Nation to heat their homes as well

as create lasting holiday memories for families to interact with their local forests.

I urge my colleagues to support my commonsense amendment to prioritize collaborative forest landscape restoration program activities to allow for the removal of firewood and Christmas trees.

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

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to this amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chairman, similar to Ms. BOEBERT's last amendment, this amendment was summarized by Republicans as requiring that regional foresters develop plans, in this case the plans for the sale of Christmas trees and firewood.

Once again, I would like to clarify that this amendment does not do that. It does not require anything of regional foresters.

Instead, it requires special consideration for project proposals under the collaborative forest landscape restoration program that seek to facilitate the sale of Christmas trees and firewood on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary of the Interior.

The landscape restoration program was not created for the sole purpose of revenue building by removing trees from public lands. The program is meant to do what it says in its program title: promote collaboration among Federal land management agencies and the public for the purposes of restoring forest landscapes.

Tree harvesting for anything other than the purpose of landscape restoration is not in the spirit of the program. By placing a preference on projects that are related to Christmas tree harvest, this amendment would limit the landscape restoration program by prioritizing a marketable product over landscape restoration. To be extra clear, the Forest Service already has broad authority to conduct the sale of firewood and Christmas trees. They don't need it under this restoration program.

Mr. Chair, I urge a "no" vote, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, it is so sad to hear my colleagues on the other side of the aisle hate Christmas.

This would allow restoration of our forests. As I said, our forests are overgrown. This would allow a fun way for families to participate in healthy forest management by thinning some of the living trees that are overgrown on our forestland.

Mr. Chair, I again, urge the adoption of this amendment.

Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and for her amendment.

Mr. Chair, I note that over 2.3 million households rely on firewood to heat

their homes. I didn't say they enjoy a nice evening by the fire. They rely on firewood to heat their homes. It is even more common in western, rural communities near Federal lands, especially in counties with significant Native American communities.

The Forest Service has made some positive efforts with programs like Wood For Life, which provides firewood from forest restoration projects in northern Arizona to local Tribal communities that otherwise could not afford to heat their homes.

Providing ample firewood sources to these communities is an essential and cost-effective service the Forest Service should be helping to provide.

Also, for as little as \$5, more than 300,000 American families receive a Christmas tree permit from Forest Service properties each year. This not only helps Americans celebrate the Christmas season, but it also helps manage our forests through the removal of forest products that may otherwise fuel the next wildland fire.

I commend Representative BOEBERT for her work on this creative and thoughtful amendment that can make a big difference in the lives of rural Americans, and I urge its support.

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

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

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire how much time is remaining.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Colorado has 1 minute remaining.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, this legislative proposal is an excellent example of how local solutions can make a big difference in managing our environment and mitigating risk. The success of Christmas tree and firewood harvesting operations in Colorado are a testament to the power of human ingenuity when it is coupled with a deep understanding of local environments and needs. These operations help to thin overgrown forests, reducing the fuel load and therefore the risk of uncontrollable wildfires. They also provide valuable resources to the local communities turning what could be a negative, overgrown forests, into a positive, holiday trees and firewood for heating.

Mr. Chair, I urge adoption of the amendment in the spirit of Christmas and heating homes efficiently, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, as a Christian, I am offended that my colleague on the other side of the aisle would suggest that I hate Christmas.

This bill is not about and has nothing to do with inhibiting people from celebrating their religious holidays, including through having a Christmas tree.

This bill is about this amendment, and this debate is about the fact that this amendment does not do what the gentlewoman from Colorado claims that it does.

This bill does not require regional foresters to do anything.

I support the Forest Service using its existing authority to permit the harvesting of Christmas trees and trees for firewood, but that is not what this amendment actually does.

I close by observing to my colleague that many of us make happy family memories with trees that are living. We have ways to enjoy trees without cutting them down or burning them.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 16 OFFERED BY MR. LALOTA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 16 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Mr. LALOTA. 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 title III add the following:

**SEC. 307. STUDY ON PINE BEETLE INFESTATION.**

Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall—

(1) carry out a study on the causes and effects of, and solutions for, the infestation of pine beetles in the North Eastern region of the United States; and

(2) submit to the relevant Congressional Committees a report that includes the results of the study required under paragraph (1).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Chair, I thank the chairman for his leadership.

Mr. Chairman, the southern pine beetle, a pest no larger than a grain of rice, has emerged as one of the most significant threats to our forests in the eastern United States. Nowhere is this issue more evident than in my home district on Long Island, where Suffolk County has been hit especially hard.

Since the pine beetle first appeared on Long Island in 2014, it has destroyed approximately 5,000 acres of forest, including an estimated 800 acres this year alone.

The pine barrens region in Suffolk County is suffering devastation, as countless once-green trees have turned yellow and orange, clear evidence that they are dying. This damage doesn't just affect the trees. It threatens an ecosystem that is home to dozens of animals and plants, including endangered species.

These forests are crucial for preserving clean drinking water, and if we don't take action now, we risk irreparable harm to this vital resource. State officials have been working tirelessly to manage the spread of the beetle through surveillance and the re-

moval of dead and infested trees. However, this problem is growing exponentially due to warmer winters and drought conditions, and we need a more comprehensive approach to understand and combat this threat.

That is why my amendment here today is so important.

Mr. Chairman, my commonsense amendment would direct the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a comprehensive study on the impact of beetle infestations in the northeastern region of the United States.

The detailed study will investigate the causes, effects, and potential solutions to this growing problem, with a particular focus on our forests in the northeast.

This amendment is about more than just studying a pest. It is about protecting the natural heritage of the northeast, securing clean water, and ensuring the health and resiliency of our forests for future generations.

A comprehensive study will help us understand why these beetles have moved north and how we can mitigate their impact. It will provide the scientific foundation needed to implement effective management strategies, preserve our forests, and maintain the ecological balance that is so vital to the region.

Mr. Chair, I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for his support on this amendment and his leadership on the Fix Our Forests Act, and I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense amendment.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I am going to close out my comments on all of these amendments by reiterating what I have been saying.

I strongly oppose the underlying bill. It is full of poison pills that harm the environment and will spread our Forest Service even thinner right when we need them most.

If Republicans had listened to the administration's concerns about how this bill is poorly drafted, and if they hadn't excluded committee Democrats from the drafting process then maybe we could have a consensus set of solutions in front of us.

Instead, we have a bill full of environmental rollbacks, new unfunded programs that will spread our Forest Service thin, and no pay fix for our firefighters. It is a supposed wildfire response bill, but it doesn't have firefighter pay in it.

It is a bill that is being offered by Republicans who style themselves as fiscally conservative. Yet, as we approach a final vote on this legislation in a

matter of minutes, we do not know the costs of the bill because Republicans through a rushed process made sure that the Congressional Budget Office did not have a chance to score the bill.

Nothing in this amendment addresses any of these extensive and serious concerns.

I strongly oppose the bill, as does Ranking Member GRIJALVA, as does the White House.

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

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding.

Mr. Chair, I thank my friend, Representative LALOTA, for filing this amendment which seeks to address the serious threat to forests in the American northeast. The amendment does require the Forest Service to conduct a study on the causes and effects of the infestation of pine beetles in the northeastern region of the U.S. and offer solutions to the pressing problem.

The southern pine beetle is an invasive species that has been expanding into northeastern forests in recent years. As a southerner, I wish all the southern pine beetles would leave the South, but I don't wish them on my friends in the North.

It is an invasive species that poses a serious threat to the health of pine forests in the North.

Concerning tree mortality has been documented in recent years in pitch pine stands in several northeastern States, including New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

The expansion of this invasive species into northern forests is concerning and warrants our attention.

This is a good amendment that addresses a very real threat to forests in the northeast. Examining this threat further and developing solutions to prevent, treat, and detect insect infestations is an important endeavor.

I, again, applaud Representative LALOTA for his leadership in this effort, and I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

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

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

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. MOONEY). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. There being no further amendments, under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ELLZEY) having assumed the chair, Mr. MOONEY, 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. 8790) to expedite under the National Environmental Policy Act

of 1969 and improve forest management activities on National Forest System lands, on public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, and on Tribal lands to return resilience to overgrown, fire-prone forested lands, and for other purposes, and, pursuant to House Resolution 1486, he reported the bill, as amended by that resolution, back to the House with sundry further amendments adopted in the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on any further amendment reported from the Committee of the Whole? If not, the Chair will put them en gros.

The amendments were agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 268, nays 151, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 448]

YEAS—268

Aderholt	Cole	Gonzales, Tony	Adams	Gottheimer	Omar
Aguilar	Collins	Gonzalez, V.	Amo	Green, Al (TX)	Pallone
Alford	Comer	Good (VA)	Balint	Hayes	Phillips
Allen	Correa	Gooden (TX)	Barragán	Horsford	Pingree
Allred	Costa	Gosar	Beatty	Hoyle (OR)	Pocan
Amodei	Craig	Graves (LA)	Beyer	Huffman	Porter
Armstrong	Crane	Graves (MO)	Blumenauer	Ivey	Pressley
Arrington	Crawford	Green (TN)	Blunt Rochester	Jackson (IL)	Quigley
Auchincloss	Crenshaw	Griffith	Bonamici	Jacobs	Ramirez
Babin	Cuellar	Grothman	Boyle (PA)	Jayapal	Raskin
Bacon	Curtis	Guest	Brown	Jeffries	Ross
Baird	D'Esposito	Guthrie	Brownley	Johnson (GA)	Ruppersberger
Balderson	Davids (KS)	Hageman	Bush	Kamlager-Dove	Ryan
Banks	Davidson	Harder (CA)	Carbajal	Keating	Salinas
Barr	Davis (NC)	Harris	Carson	Kelly (IL)	Sánchez
Bean (FL)	De La Cruz	Harshbarger	Casar	Kennedy	Barbanes
Bentz	Diaz-Balart	Hern	Case	Khanha	Scanlon
Bera	Donalds	Higgins (LA)	Casten	Kildee	Schakowsky
Bergman	Duarte	Hill	Castor (FL)	Kilmer	Schiff
Bice	Duncan	Himes	Castro (TX)	Clark (MA)	Schneider
Biggs	Dunn (FL)	Hinson	Cherifilus-	Kim (NJ)	Scott (VA)
Bilirakis	Edwards	Houchin	McCormick	Landsman	Scott, David
Bishop (GA)	Ellzey	Houlahan	Chu	Larsen (WA)	Sewell
Bishop (NC)	Emmer	Hoyer	Clark (MA)	Larson (CT)	Sherman
Boebert	Eshoo	Hudson	Clarke (NY)	Lee (CA)	Smith (WA)
Bost	Estes	Huizenga	Cleaver	Lee (PA)	Sorensen
Brecheen	Ezell	Hunt	Cohen	Leger Fernandez	Takano
Buchanan	Fallon	Issa	Connolly	Levin	Stansbury
Buchanon	Feenstra	Jackson (NC)	Courtney	Lieu	Soto
Budzinski	Ferguson	Jackson (TX)	Crockett	Lofgren	Stevens
Burchett	Finstad	James	Crow	Lynch	Strickland
Burgess	Fischbach	Johnson (LA)	Davis (IL)	Magaziner	Swalwell
Burlison	Fitzgerald	Johnson (SD)	Dean (PA)	Matsui	Sykes
Calvert	Fitzpatrick	Jordan	DeGette	McCath	Takano
Cammack	Fleischmann	Joyce (OH)	DeLauro	McClellan	Thanedar
Caraveo	Flood	Joyce (PA)	DelBene	McCullom	Titus
Cárdenas	Fong	Kaptur	Deluzio	McGarvey	Tlaib
Carey	Foxx	Kean (NJ)	DeSaulnier	McGovern	Tokuda
Carl	Franklin, Scott	Kelly (MS)	Dingell	McIver	Tonko
Carter (LA)	Fry	Kelly (PA)	Doggett	Menendez	Torres (NY)
Carter (TX)	Fulcher	Kiggans (VA)	Escobar	Meng	Trahan
Cartwright	Gaetz	Kiley	Espaiat	Mifune	Trone
Chavez-DeRemer	Gallego	Kim (CA)	Fletcher	Moore (WI)	Underwood
Ciscomani	Garamendi	Krishnamoorthi	Foster	Morelle	Vargas
Cline	Garbarino	Kuster	Foushee	Moskowitz	Velázquez
Cloud	Garcia, Mike	Kustoff	Frankel, Lois	Moulton	Wasserman
Clyburn	Gimenez	LaHood	Garcia, Robert	Nadler	Schultz
Clyde	Golden (ME)	LaLota	Garcia (TX)	Napolitano	Waterson
			Gomez	Garcia, Robert	Neal
				Goldman (NY)	Neguse
				Goldman (NY)	Norcross
				Ocasio-Cortez	Williams (GA)
					Wilson (FL)

NOT VOTING—13

LaMalfa	Newhouse	Smith (NE)
Lamborn	Nickel	Smith (NJ)
Langworthy	Norman	Smucker
Latta	Nunn (IA)	Spanberger
LaTurner	Obernolte	Spartz
Lawler	Ogles	Stanton
Lee (FL)	Owens	Stauber
Lee (NV)	Palmer	Steel
Lesko	Panetta	Stefanik
Letlow	Pappas	Steil
Lopez	Pelosi	Steube
Loudermilk	Peltola	Strong
Lucas	Pence	Suozzi
Luna	Perez	Tenney
Luttrell	Perry	Thompson (CA)
Mace	Peters	Thompson (MS)
Malliotakis	Pettersen	Thompson (PA)
Maloy	Pfluger	Tiffany
Mann	Posey	Timmons
Manning	Reschenthaler	Torres (CA)
Massie	Rodgers (WA)	Turner
Mast	Rogers (AL)	Valadao
McCaul	Rogers (KY)	Van Drew
McClain	Rose	Van Duyne
McClintock	Rosendale	Van Orden
McCormick	Rouzer	Van Orden
McHenry	Roy	Vasquez
Meuser	Ruiz	Veasey
Miller (IL)	Rulli	Wagner
Miller (OH)	Rutherford	Walberg
Miller (WV)	Salazar	Waltz
Miller-Meeks	Scalise	Weber (TX)
Mills	Scholten	Webster (FL)
Molinaro	Schriner	Wenstrup
Moolenaar	Schweikert	Westerman
Mooney	Scott, Austin	Williams (NY)
Moore (AL)	Self	Williams (TX)
Moore (UT)	Sessions	Wilson (SC)
Moran	Sherrill	Wittman
Mrvan	Simpson	Womack
Mullin	Slotkin	Yakym
Murphy	Smith (MO)	

NAYS—151

Greene (GA)	Meeks	Zinke
Grijalva	Nehls	
Luetkemeyer	Wexton	

□ 1737

Ms. ESHOO and Messrs. THOMPSON of Mississippi, SCHWEIKERT, and BISHOP of Georgia changed their vote from "nay" to "yea."

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea on Roll Call No. 443, Yea on Roll Call No. 444, Yea on Roll Call No. 445, Yea on Roll Call No. 446, Yea on Roll Call No. 447, and Yea on Roll Call No. 448.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUEST). The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

ELECTING A MEMBER TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. AGUILAR. Mr. 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. 1492

*Resolved*, That the following named Member be, and is hereby, elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY: Mrs. McIver (to rank immediately after Mr. Kennedy).

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS: Mrs. McIver.

Mr. AGUILAR (during the reading). Mr. 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.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN ENGROSSMENT OF H.R. 8790, FIX OUR FORESTS ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Clerk be authorized to make technical corrections in the engrossment of H.R. 8790, to include corrections in spelling, punctuation, section and title numbering, cross-referencing, conforming amendments to the table of contents

and short titles, and the insertion of appropriate headings.

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

There was no objection.

MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR BIRMINGHAM SHOOTING VICTIMS

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

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise to recognize the victims of the horrific mass shooting that rattled my Birmingham, Alabama, community over the weekend.

On Saturday night, just after 11 p.m., 21 people were shot in Birmingham's Five Points South entertainment district, and four lost their lives.

Our thoughts are with the families as they endure this unimaginable loss, and we pray for a speedy recovery for those that were injured.

James 2:26 teaches us that faith without works is dead. While our thoughts and prayers are important, only by taking meaningful action can we stem this needless loss of life.

Elected officials at every level must do all we can to eliminate the epidemic of gun violence that is raging in our communities. It is past time for Congress to act.

I ask my colleagues to join me in a moment of silence for the Birmingham victims of Saturday night's mass shooting and their families.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

□ 1745

MICHEL O. MACEDA MEMORIAL ACT

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5302) to designate the Air and Marine Operations Marine Unit of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection located at 101 Km 18.5 in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, as the "Michel O. Macea Marine Unit".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5302

*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 "Michel O. Macea Memorial Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Marine Interdiction Agent Michel O. Macea served honorably in the United

States Army as a wheeled vehicle mechanic prior to joining the United States Border Patrol as an Agent in Douglas, Arizona, in April 2016.

(2) Agent Macea became a Marine Interdiction Agent with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Air and Marine Operations in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, in 2021.

(3) On November 17, 2022, Agent Macea and 2 other agents were conducting a drug interdiction stop off the coast of Puerto Rico, during which the agents boarded the target vessel.

(4) During the stop, Agent Macea was mortally wounded when 1 of the occupants of the vessel shot the boarding agents with a firearm.

(5) Agent Macea is survived by his daughter, brother, and parents.

SEC. 3. DESIGNATION.

The Air and Marine Operations Marine Unit of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection located at 101 Km 18.5 in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, shall forever be known and designated as the "Michel O. Macea Marine Unit".

SEC. 4. REFERENCES.

Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the marine unit referred to in section 3 shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Michel O. Macea Marine Unit".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the measure under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5302, the Michel O. Macea Memorial Act.

On November 17, 2022, Marine Interdiction Agent Michel Macea was conducting a drug interdiction stopped 14 miles off the coast of Puerto Rico when he was tragically mortally wounded in a firefight with drug smugglers. Agent Macea's heroism and service to our country is a debt that can never be repaid.

This legislation would designate Air and Marine Operations Unit in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, as the Michel O. Macea Marine Unit. I urge all of my colleagues to support this gesture, recognizing a monumental hero.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are considering H.R. 5302, the Michel O. Macea Memorial Act. This legislation reminds us of the men and women in law enforcement and the risks that they face every day to keep our communities safe. Marine Interdiction

Agent Michel Macea is one of those heroes.

For years, Agent Macea served as a U.S. Army veteran, a former Border Patrol agent, and a Marine Corps interdiction agent for CBP's Air and Marine Operations. He was a dedicated public servant who put his life on the line time and time again.

On November 17, 2022, Agent Macea was doing his job stopping drug smugglers in the high seas. On that day, Agent Macea and other marine agents interdicted a narcotics-smuggling vessel just 12 miles off the coast of Puerto Rico.

During the ensuing gunfight, Agent Macea was killed and two other agents were seriously injured. Thanks to their heroic actions that day, 3,000 pounds of cocaine did not reach our country.

This bill renames the CBP Air and Marine Operations unit in Puerto Rico after Agent Macea.

A few months ago, I visited Puerto Rico, and Agent Macea's name came up again and again and again. It is clear that Agent Macea is missed by his community and his colleagues.

With this bill, we honor Agent Macea's sacrifice and commitment to our Nation, as well as the work of others like Agent Macea, those who put their lives at stake on a day-to-day basis to protect the American people.

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

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN).

Mrs. GONZALEZ-COLÓN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bipartisan legislation, H.R. 5302, the Michel O. Macea Memorial Act. This bill will designate the Mayaguez Marine Unit of U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations or CBP AMO in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, in honor of Marine Interdiction Agent Michel Macea, who died in the line of duty while conducting a drug interdiction operation off the island's coast.

On the morning of November 17, 2022, CBP AMO agents were alerted of a suspicious vessel located approximately 13 miles off the southwestern coast of Puerto Rico.

Marine Interdiction Agents Michel Macea, Jorge Santiago, and Mark Lamphere arrived in the area to intercept the boat suspected of smuggling cocaine. As they were boarding the vessel, one of the drug traffickers opened fire on them.

Agents Santiago and Lamphere were gravely injured. Agent Santiago has thankfully recovered and is back to full duty. Agent Lamphere continues the long recovery from his wounds in anticipation of returning to full duty soon. It has been 2 years.

Unfortunately, Agent Macea was mortally wounded during the shoot-out and passed away later that day in the hospital.

Agent Macea began his CBP career in April of 2016 as a U.S. Border Patrol agent in Douglas, Arizona. In 2021, he transferred to AMO and served as a marine interdiction agent with the Mayaguez Marine Unit in Puerto Rico until the time of his death. Prior to joining CBP, Agent Macea honorably served our Nation in the U.S. Army as a wheeled vehicle mechanic. He is survived by his daughter, brother, and parents.

Agent Macea's death is a stark reminder of the dangers our CBP agents face each day to secure our Nation's borders, including our Caribbean border in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. His sacrifice is also a testament to their bravery and unwavering commitment to keep our communities safe.

For the heroic actions during the November of 2022 drug interdiction operation off Puerto Rico's coast, which led to the seizure of over 2,900 pounds of cocaine, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy recognized Agent Macea, CBP AMO's Caribbean air and marine branch, and partners from the U.S. Coast Guard and the Puerto Rico Police Bureau with a 2022 Marine Interdiction Award.

In February of 2023, CBP began construction of a new modernized facility for the Mayaguez Marine Unit, Agent Macea's unit, to support its critical border security mission in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean region. I had the honor of attending the groundbreaking ceremony and made a commitment to work in Congress to rename the unit after this American hero. I am glad that today we are one step closer to making this a reality.

Agent Macea gave his life protecting Puerto Rico and the rest of our Nation from the threats posed by drug traffickers and transnational criminal organizations. Officially designating the CBP AMO Mayaguez Marine Unit as the Michel Macea Marine Unit will be a fitting tribute to his memory and sacrifice.

I thank the Homeland Security Committee chair, Mr. GREEN, and the ranking member for cosponsoring and helping bring this bill to the floor, but I also thank Senator RICK SCOTT of Florida, who introduced a companion version of my bill.

Let me also thank the men and women of CBP for their work to secure our Nation's land and maritime borders and their support for this legislation to honor their fallen colleague. In particular, I recognize AMO Executive Assistant Commissioner Jonathan Miller and CBP's Office of Congressional Affairs for their assistance and advocacy for this bill.

Lastly, I commend the Federal and local law enforcement agencies in Puerto Rico who have made it a priority to seek justice for Agent Macea and ensure those responsible for his death face the consequences of their crime.

A joint investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Homeland

Security investigations, with the collaboration of CBP, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the Puerto Rico Police Bureau targeted the drug trafficking organizations responsible for killing Agent Macea and injuring his two partners. As of today, Federal agencies have arrested, and the U.S. Attorney's office has indicted, 18 individuals.

As we approach the 2-year anniversary of his death, I urge my colleagues in the House to support H.R. 5302 and ensure we honor Marine Interdiction Agent Macea's life, sacrifice, and the legacy of his service.

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

In closing, I thank Congresswoman GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN for introducing this legislation and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their support. By passing this bill, we honor the memory of Agent Macea and the other men and women of DHS who, like Agent Macea, risk their lives on a daily basis to protect us here in this great country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5302, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5302. The frontline personnel who work tirelessly to protect our homeland are the reason we can all sleep soundly at night. This bill extends our gratitude to Michel O. Macea for his heroism and service to this great Nation. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5302.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT EDUCATION ACT OF 2023

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4259) to amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to require notification with respect to individualized education program teams, and for other purposes.

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

H.R. 4259

*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 "Think Differently about Education Act of 2023".

#### SEC. 2. NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT FOR IEP TEAMS.

Section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(8) NOTIFICATION REQUIRED.—At the beginning of each school year, each local educational agency, State educational agency, or other State agency, as the case may be, shall notify each parent of a child with a disability in the agency’s jurisdiction that such parent may, under paragraph (1)(B)(vi), include individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate, as part of the individualized education program team for such child.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BEAN) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials on H.R. 4259.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4259, the Think Differently about Education Act of 2023.

America’s children are our Nation’s future leaders, and they deserve to be equipped with the resources they need to succeed in the classroom. This is something that everyone can and should agree on. Every child, including children with learning differences, has unique needs that must be met and understood by teachers and school administrators.

H.R. 4259 builds on existing progress achieved by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act by adding another layer of critical protections for parents of children with disabilities.

Under this legislation, educational agencies would be required to properly inform parents of their right to bring in outside experts who can advocate for the best interests of their children when it comes to their education. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, this bill will improve families’ ability to advocate for their children to receive an education that allows them to flourish.

Mr. Speaker, this is a solution that safeguards parental rights and reaffirms the fundamental role of parents in the care, upbringing, and education of their children. The simple truth is that every child has the potential to flourish when given the right support.

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

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the bill H.R. 4259.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The motion is withdrawn.

#### THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT EDUCATION ACT OF 2023

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the

bill (H.R. 4259) to amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to require notification with respect to individualized education program teams, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

#### H.R. 4259

*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 “Think Differently about Education Act of 2023”.*

#### SEC. 2. NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT FOR IEP TEAMS.

*Section 614(d)(1)(B) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(B)) is amended—*

*(1) in clause (iv), by redesignating subclauses (I) through (III) as items (aa) through (cc), respectively (and by conforming the margins accordingly);*

*(2) by redesignating clauses (i) through (vii) as subclauses (I) through (VII), respectively (and by conforming the margins accordingly);*

*(3) in the matter preceding subclause (I), as so redesignated, by striking “The term” and inserting the following:*

*“(i) IN GENERAL.—The term”; and*

*(4) by adding at the end the following:*

*“(ii) NOTIFICATION REQUIRED.—Within a reasonable timeframe prior to the first convening of the individualized education program team for a child with a disability for a school year, the local educational agency that serves such child shall notify the parent of such child that such parent may, under clause (i)(VI), include other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate, as part of the individualized education program team.”.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BEAN) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4259.

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

There was no objection.

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

#### □ 1800

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 4259, the Think Differently about Education Act.

The bill requires schools to notify parents of their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Parents can invite experts with specialized knowledge of their child to attend the child’s individualized education program meeting. This is important because key decisions are being made about their child’s education in this meeting.

This proposal actually restates present law, but it ensures that parents

are aware of and can exercise a right they have under current law.

However, I want to make it clear that I am not advocating for further amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act at this time.

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill and encourage my colleagues to do the same, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. MOLINARO), the bill’s sponsor.

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful that my Think Differently about Education Act has come to the floor today.

This builds off of an initiative we launched in my home county about a decade ago. We launched the ThinkDIFFERENTLY initiative as a means of embracing every one of every ability, creating a community that is more welcoming and supportive. The focus has been to break down barriers and create opportunities for those with intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities.

ThinkDIFFERENTLY is simply a call to action. This bill, the Think Differently about Education Act, builds on the success of that ThinkDIFFERENTLY initiative.

This bill requires that public schools, K-12, notify parents of a child with a disability about their right to a third-party advocate in IEP meetings. Individualized education program plans are a document that outlines the educational needs of children with a disability, tailored specifically for them in coordination with the school, the parent or guardian, and the child.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, commonly known as IDEA, requires public schools to develop an IEP plan for every student with a disability. IDEA also entitles that the child and parent are able to bring a third-party advocate to the IEP meeting. However, in most cases, sadly, parents are unaware of their rights. Because of that, CSE meetings are conducted without parents knowing what resources, support, and educational opportunities might be available to their children.

In many cases, this leaves parents and guardians who are not always familiar with IDEA and everything that should be included in an IEP confused and, sadly, left out, their children losing great opportunity, which is also often self-interested. Many times, school districts are focused on financial benefits instead of providing the direct benefits of a quality and full education to those with disabilities.

Now, I know this firsthand as the parent of a child with a disability. While my daughter, Abigail, now 20 years old, continues to benefit from quality education in our home school district, too many families like ours have had to navigate this system without the knowledge of and partnership of a third-party advocate.

My bill would ensure that parents are fully aware of their rights to bring a third-party advocate to an IEP meeting to ensure that their child is getting the most comprehensive and disability-specific IEP plan possible.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very basic, commonsense bill that builds on the need to ensure that every one of every ability has their right to pursue a fulfilled life, a pursuit of happiness.

For those living with intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities, far too often, they are restrained and restricted from doing so because they are not provided the broad access to a quality education.

In this case, we simply remind school districts that parents have the right to have a third party standing beside them navigating that system, and in the end, I think more individuals with disabilities will attain the education opportunities they so deserve.

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

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. HOUCHIN), who serves on the Committee on Education and the Workforce and is celebrating her birthday today.

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of a critical piece of legislation, the Think Differently about Education Act, as a proud cosponsor.

This bill is about empowering families, ensuring transparency, and providing the necessary support to students with disabilities as they navigate their educational journey.

Each year, in thousands of schools across the Nation, individualized education program meetings, or IEP meetings, are taking place. Parents and school staff come together to develop a personalized plan that addresses the unique needs of every child.

However, many parents face these meetings feeling overwhelmed and unsure. Some may not realize they have a right to bring an advocate, therapist, or lawyer to help them through the process. Unfortunately, most parents sit in these meetings without the support they deserve.

This is where the Think Differently about Education Act steps in, a simple, commonsense solution, but one that can make a world of difference. It would require K-12 schools to inform parents of their right to bring a third-party advocate to IEP meetings.

By empowering parents with this knowledge, we can ensure they are fully supported as they advocate for their child's education.

This isn't just about informing parents. It is about creating a culture where families feel supported and engaged in their child's educational journey.

Every child deserves a quality education that meets their unique needs,

and every family deserves to be empowered to advocate for their child.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Think Differently about Education Act so that we can support more families on this journey.

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

Mr. Speaker, the Think Differently about Education Act is a bipartisan bill that requires schools to notify parents of their right under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to bring an expert with specialized knowledge or expertise regarding their child to individualized education program meetings.

While parents clearly have this right under current law, they might not always be appropriately informed about their rights. This legislation ensures that parents will know that they can include experts who can assist them in shaping an IEP that meets the student's individual needs.

Mr. Speaker, I support the bill and encourage my colleagues to support it as well.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, all children, including children with learning disabilities, deserve a high-quality education that prepares them for full participation in society.

H.R. 4259, the Think Differently about Education Act of 2023, builds upon the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which gives teachers, parents, and schools the tools to ensure students in special education receive the opportunities they deserve.

H.R. 4259 would make it easier for families to ensure their children will have the tools they need to succeed in school. Every child has the potential to flourish when just given the right support.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BEAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4259, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### STOP CAMPUS HAZING ACT

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5646) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require institutions of higher education to disclose hazing incidents, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5646

*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 "Stop Campus Hazing Act".

#### SEC. 2. INCLUSION OF HAZING INCIDENTS IN ANNUAL SECURITY REPORTS.

##### (a) STATISTICS ON HAZING INCIDENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 485(f)(1)(F) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(1)(F)) is amended—

(A) in clause (i)(IX), by striking "and" after the semicolon;

(B) in clause (ii), by striking "and" after the semicolon;

(C) in clause (iii), by striking the period at the end and inserting ";" and"; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

"(iv) of hazing incidents that were reported to campus security authorities or local police agencies.".

(2) COMPILATION OF HAZING INCIDENTS.—Section 485(f)(7) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(7)) is amended by inserting after the second sentence the following: "For hazing incidents referred to in clause (iv) of paragraph (1)(F), such statistics shall be compiled per each single hazing incident and in accordance with the definition of the term 'hazing' in paragraph (6)(A)(vi), and if the same person or persons commit more than one hazing act, and the time and place intervals separating each such act are insignificant, such acts shall be reported as a single hazing incident".

(3) BEGINNING OF COMPILATION OF HAZING STATISTICS.—Not later than January 1 of the first year after the date of enactment of this Act, each eligible institution participating in any program under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.), other than a foreign institution of higher education, shall begin to collect statistics on hazing incidents for the purpose of complying with clause (iv) of section 485(f)(1)(F) of such Act, as added by paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(4) DEFINITION OF HAZING.—Section 485(f)(6)(A) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(vi) The term 'hazing', for purposes of reporting statistics on hazing incidents under paragraph (1)(F)(iv), means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act committed by a person (whether individually or in concert with other persons) against another person or persons regardless of the willingness of such other person or persons to participate, that—

"(I) is committed in the course of an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in, a student organization; and

"(II) causes or creates a risk, above the reasonable risk encountered in the course of participation in the institution of higher education or the organization (such as the physical preparation necessary for participation in an athletic team), of physical or psychological injury including—

"(aa) whipping, beating, striking, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on someone's body, or similar activity;

"(bb) causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, extreme calisthenics, or other similar activity;

"(cc) causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to consume food, liquid, alcohol, drugs, or other substances;

"(dd) causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to perform sexual acts;

"(ee) any activity that places another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm

through the use of threatening words or conduct;

“(ff) any activity against another person that includes a criminal violation of local, State, Tribal, or Federal law; and

“(gg) any activity that induces, causes, or requires another person to perform a duty or task that involves a criminal violation of local, State, Tribal, or Federal law.”.

(5) DEFINITION OF STUDENT ORGANIZATION.—Section 485(f)(6)(A) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)) is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(vii) The term ‘student organization’, for purposes of reporting under paragraph (1)(F)(iv) and paragraph (9)(A), means an organization at an institution of higher education (such as a club, society, association, varsity or junior varsity athletic team, club sports team, fraternity, sorority, band, or student government) in which two or more of the members are students enrolled at the institution of higher education, whether or not the organization is established or recognized by the institution.”.

(b) STATEMENT OF POLICY AND PREVENTION PROGRAM ON HAZING.—Section 485(f)(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(1)) is amended by inserting after subparagraph (J) the following:

“(K) A statement of current policies relating to hazing (as defined by the institution), how to report incidents of such hazing, and the process used to investigate such incidents of hazing, and information on applicable local, State, and Tribal laws on hazing (as defined by such local, State, and Tribal laws).

“(L) A statement of policy regarding prevention and awareness programs related to hazing (as defined by the institution) that includes a description of research-informed campus-wide prevention programs designed to reach students, staff, and faculty, which includes—

“(i) the information referred to in subparagraph (K); and

“(ii) primary prevention strategies intended to stop hazing before hazing occurs, which may include skill building for bystander intervention, information about ethical leadership, and the promotion of strategies for building group cohesion without hazing.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICATION.—The amendments made by this section shall—

(1) take effect on the date that is 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) apply with respect to the annual security report required under section 485(f)(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(1)) for the calendar year that is 2 years after such date of enactment, including any data collected on or after such effective date, and any subsequent report required under such section.

### SEC. 3. CAMPUS HAZING TRANSPARENCY REPORT.

Section 485(f) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092(f)) is further amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (9) through (18) as paragraphs (10) through (19), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (8) the following:

“(9)(A) Each institution participating in any program under this title, other than a foreign institution of higher education, shall develop, in accordance with the institution’s statement of policy relating to hazing under paragraph (1)(K), a report (which shall be referred to as the ‘Campus Hazing Transparency Report’) summarizing findings concerning any student organization (except that this shall only apply to student organizations that are established or recognized by the institution) found to be in violation of an institution’s standards of conduct relating to

hazing, as defined by the institution, (hereinafter referred to in this paragraph as a ‘hazing violation’) that requires the institution to—

“(i) beginning July 1, 2025, collect information with respect to hazing incidents at the institution;

“(ii) not later than 12 months after the date of the enactment of the Stop Campus Hazing Act, make the Campus Hazing Transparency Report publicly available on the public website of the institution; and

“(iii) not less frequently than 2 times each year, update the Campus Hazing Transparency Report to include, for the period beginning on the date on which the Report was last published and ending on the date on which such update is submitted, each incident involving a student organization for which a finding of responsibility is issued relating to a hazing violation, including—

“(I) the name of such student organization;

“(II) a general description of the violation that resulted in a finding of responsibility, including whether the violation involved the abuse or illegal use of alcohol or drugs, the findings of the institution, and any sanctions placed on the student organization by the institution, as applicable; and

“(III) the dates on which—

“(aa) the incident was alleged to have occurred;

“(bb) the investigation into the incident was initiated;

“(cc) the investigation ended with a finding that a hazing violation occurred; and

“(dd) the institution provided notice to the student organization that the incident resulted in a hazing violation.

“(B) The Campus Hazing Transparency Report may include—

“(i) to satisfy the requirements of this paragraph, information that—

“(I) is included as part of a report published by the institution; and

“(II) meets the requirements of the Campus Hazing Transparency Report; and

“(ii) any additional information—

“(I) determined by the institution to be necessary; or

“(II) reported as required by State law.

“(C) The Campus Hazing Transparency Report shall not include any personally identifiable information, including any information that would reveal personally identifiable information, about any individual student in accordance with section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (commonly known as the ‘Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974’).

“(D) The institution shall publish, in a prominent location on the public website of the institution, the Campus Hazing Transparency Report, including—

“(i) a statement notifying the public of the annual availability of statistics on hazing pursuant to the report required under paragraph (1)(F), including a link to such report;

“(ii) information about the institution’s policies relating to hazing under paragraph (1)(K) and applicable local, State, and Tribal laws on hazing; and

“(iii) the information included in each update required under subparagraph (A)(iii), which shall be maintained for a period of 5 calendar years from the date of publication of such update.

“(E) The institution may include, as part of the publication of the Campus Hazing Transparency Report under subparagraph (D), a description of the purposes of, and differences between—

“(i) the report required under paragraph (1)(F); and

“(ii) the Campus Hazing Transparency Report required under this paragraph.

“(F) For purposes of this paragraph, the definition of ‘campus’ under paragraph (6)(A)(ii) shall not apply.

“(G) An institution described in subparagraph (A) is not required to—

“(i) develop the Campus Hazing Transparency Report under this subsection until such institution has a finding of a hazing violation; or

“(ii) update the Campus Hazing Transparency Report in accordance with clause (iii) of subparagraph (A) for a period described in such clause if such institution does not have a finding of a hazing violation for such period.”.

### SEC. 4. JEANNE CLERY CAMPUS SAFETY ACT.

Paragraph (19) of section 485(f) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(19)), as so redesignated, is amended by striking “Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act” and inserting “Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Act”.

### SEC. 5. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act, or an amendment made by this Act, shall be construed to affect the rights (including remedies and procedures) available to persons under the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States or rights to due process.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MOLINARO). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. OWENS) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OWENS. 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 in the RECORD on H.R. 5646.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the Stop Campus Hazing Act, H.R. 5646.

Given that it is National Hazing Prevention Week, I am pleased that we are considering this bipartisan bill. H.R. 5646 will help ensure that our campuses remain safe environments for all students.

Safety is a top priority for the Committee on Education and the Workforce’s agenda and is boldly highlighted in H.R. 5646.

Hazing has been a persistent problem in America’s postsecondary education. In fact, a national study on hazing found 55 percent of college students involved in clubs, teams, and organizations experienced hazing. The same report found students’ exposure to hazing prevention efforts is limited.

Since the year 2000, there have been more than 100 hazing-related deaths.

On September 21, 2023, Republican and Democratic lawmakers introduced the Stop Campus Hazing Act with the aim to combat hazing and protect students across the country. The House Committee on Education and the Workforce passed this bill on September 11, 2024.

If enacted, the bill would do the following.

First, the bill would add hazing incidents to the Clery Act “Annual Security Report,” enhancing the transparency of campus crime statistics.

Second, the bill would require universities to develop campus-wide educational programs aimed at preventing hazing. Additionally, it requires an institution to report publicly on their websites the findings of student organizations’ hazing violations so students and parents can make informed choices on whether or not to join student organizations.

The Stop Campus Hazing Act is a result of tireless advocacy from affected families, campus safety professionals, and dedicated organizations. The legislation responds to the needs of these stakeholders while also balancing any additional burden on institutions.

This is why this legislation is so critical. It respects institutions’ existing processes and provides clear guidance on reporting and transparency.

Hazing is a persistent issue that endangers young lives and undermines the very promise of an educational environment conducive to learning.

By strengthening policies around hazing prevention and reporting, we are reinforcing the message that student safety comes first. With that, let’s pass the Stop Campus Hazing Act.

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

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, extracurricular groups, athletic teams, and on-campus organizations are formed to serve common objectives while providing a safe and welcoming environment for students.

However, hazing is a dangerous and yet all-too-common practice that runs counter to the values of these organizations and threatens student health and safety.

Too many lives have already been lost because of hazing, including one in my State of Virginia. In 2021, Adam Oakes, a freshman at Virginia Commonwealth University, tragically died because of an alcohol-related hazing incident at a fraternity.

Regrettably, since 2000, there have been over 100 hazing-related deaths on college campuses nationally.

The fact is that nothing can lessen the agony of losing a child or a friend. However, I am hopeful that from these tragedies, Congress can step in and help students and families avoid future tragedies.

We are here today because of the tireless advocacy of families and friends who have lost loved ones from hazing. For years, these families have worked to advance State and Federal policies to end hazing and protect students. Some of those families have joined us in the gallery today.

The bipartisan Stop Campus Hazing Act, H.R. 5646, would protect students from hazing on college campuses by improving reporting and prevention standards.

□ 1815

Specifically, it mandates that colleges and universities report hazing occurrences in their annual Clery reports, the incidents of crime reports, establishes campus-wide anti-hazing education programs and increases transparency about past hazing incidents so students can make informed decisions about joining campus organizations. Taken together, these policies create a roadmap for a cultural shift in hazing on our campuses that will save students’ lives.

I thank the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN) for their leadership on this issue.

I support H.R. 5646 and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5646, the Stop Campus Hazing Act.

This legislation, which is long overdue, will finally provide additional protection for students on college campuses nationwide. This is a bipartisan product years in the making. It includes provisions from two previous anti-hazing bills, including a piece of legislation I was proud to lead on called the END ALL Hazing Act.

Simply put, the Stop Campus Hazing Act would improve hazing reporting and prevention on college campuses, including by requiring hazing incidents to be reported by institutions in their annual security report, also known as the Clery report.

The bill also outlines a responsible definition of “hazing” so the campus safety professionals can analyze if a reported incident may constitute hazing for the Clery report.

This definition will help students, parents, and the public have access and increased transparency into student organizations on campuses who have reported incidents of hazing.

Finally, this bill builds upon the actions many States have taken, including Pennsylvania, to ensure that State laws are respected when any investigations are conducted.

Mr. Speaker, none of this would be possible without the long and tireless work of many advocates, including Evelyn and Jim Piazza. Evelyn and Jim are the parents of Tim Piazza, who tragically passed away in February 2017 at Penn State as a direct result of a hazing ritual at his fraternity. Tomorrow would have been Tim’s 27th birthday.

In the face of this unspeakable tragedy, Evelyn and Jim have been at the forefront of efforts in Pennsylvania, here in Congress, and in other States around the country to speak about the dangers of hazing and enact change in Tim’s honor.

In fact, the legislation before us today is shaped by the work of the

Timothy J. Piazza Center for Fraternity and Sorority Research and Reform at Penn State, which Evelyn and Jim played a direct role in establishing.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the numerous individuals and organizations that helped bring this legislation to the floor today, including Congresswoman MCBATH, Congressman DUNCAN, the National Panhellenic Conference, the North American Interfraternity Conference, the Clery Center, the Anti-Hazing Coalition, and many others.

As we recognize National Hazing Prevention Week this week, I am proud that we can come together in a bipartisan manner to protect students nationwide in an effort to ensure that no one will have to experience what the Piazza family has over the past 7 years.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH), the lead sponsor on the legislation.

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I think this is truly one of the best representative policies for bipartisanship. When our children are dying and when our children are no longer safe in their environments, when they are simply going to school to get an education, I cannot think of a greater time for bipartisanship. I thank Congressmen OWENS, SCOTT, and DUNCAN so very much for their willingness to save our children.

My son, Jordan, was killed in a shooting in 2012, so I know the pain of losing a child. I know the hole that it leaves in your soul and the questions it leaves you behind to dwell on; the feelings of guilt and yearning to do anything that you can to reverse the irreversible and to spend just a little bit more time with that person who was taken from you far too soon. You want to tell them all the things that you wish that you could have during their short time here on Earth, but we know that we are not that lucky.

The only thing that we can do now is harness that pain and try to do something positive with it. Harness it and try to make a lasting change that will prevent other families from suffering a similar tragedy. We must try to create a legacy that truly speaks to the memory of that person that you loved so deeply.

This is the reason why I came to Congress, and the same reason why Jeanne Clery’s parents took their power back and got the Clery Act signed into law after the tragic killing of their daughter on campus in 1986.

Jeanne Clery’s parents made the same argument that I have heard time and time again from families all over this country who have lost loved ones to hazing at colleges and universities: If we had only known; if only we had been made aware sooner; if only we had been given a clearer picture of the situation that took our child away from us, maybe we could have done something.

That is what this bill is about. It is about transparency and accountability, empowering students and families so that they can make informed decisions about the schools that they attend or the clubs that they join.

It is about ensuring that college remains a place of new beginnings and hope for our children's future. It is simply about just saving lives.

I thank all of the families who have been working on this effort for so many years and who are watching from home but also watching here with us today in our House gallery.

I thank Hank Nuwer for his years of meticulous research on the history of hazing deaths in this country.

I thank Representatives JEFF DUNCAN and GLENN THOMPSON for their commitment to helping to see this bill through.

I thank Chairwoman FOXX, Ranking Member BOBBY SCOTT and their staff for coming together on this truly critical issue.

With efforts like these we are showing the American people that regardless of what they see on social media or whatever they see on TV, there are still people in Washington who are willing to put partisanship aside, engage in good faith together, and do the hard work that is so necessary to make positive change for the folks that are relying on us back home.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this bill. I am so encouraged by this measure to come together to say the least of these, to save our children. They deserve so much more from us, and in these moments today we are giving them what they deserve, a chance to survive, a chance to grow and to prosper, and a chance to be in America the way it is designed for them to be.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair respectfully and very politely reminds Members that the rules don't allow references to persons in the gallery.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support today of H.R. 5646, the Stop Campus Hazing Act, legislation that I have been the lead Republican cosponsor for the past three Congresses.

Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago last Saturday, a young man named Tucker Hipps, a senior counselor at Palmetto Boys State, and a political science major like myself at my alma mater Clemson University, was found in the waters of Lake Hartwell, having fallen off a bridge in an apparent and suspected incident of campus hazing.

Mr. Speaker, 10 years later, the Hipps family, who are with us today, are still searching for justice for Tucker. I continue to pray that they find those answers.

I am proud of the South Carolina State legislature that they named their campus hazing legislation after Tucker.

Today, I am proud to bring bipartisan legislation to the House floor along with my friend that you just heard from, my colleague Congresswoman MCBATH, to honor Tucker's memory and the memories of hundreds of other campus hazing victims by mandating greater transparency in fraternity hazing reporting.

No parent should have to endure what Gary and Cindy Hipps have had to go through, the senseless loss of a beloved son. The, as yet, fruitless search for answers or bringing those responsible to justice.

Yet, in Tucker's loss and the loss of so many others, we may learn lessons that inform the policy choice that we make today.

We act today so that parents may know and make informed decisions about the colleges that they send their kids off to.

I thank all the people involved in this legislation that has taken way too long, from Cindy Hipps to the Clery Center to the DeVercelly family. I thank them for being here today. I thank Chairwoman FOXX and Ranking Member SCOTT for their support, as well as Clemson University and the fraternal councils for realizing the need to move forward with these reforms. I thank the sponsor of this bill, Congresswoman MCBATH, for all her tireless efforts to bring us here today.

May God bless the memory of Tucker Hipps, and in his memory, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH).

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a list of names of students who died from hazing-related activities. This is a list of known hazing deaths from 1847 to 2023. These are the names that we honor today with this legislation.

Year, Name, Institution, State:

1847, Jonathan D. Torrence, Amherst College, Massachusetts; 1873, Mortimer N. Leggett, Cornell University, New York; 1884, Frederick Schwatka Strang, United States Naval Academy, Maryland; 1892, Wilkins Ruskin, Yale University, Connecticut; 1899, Edward F. Berkeley, Cornell University, New York; 1900, Hugh C. Moore, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Massachusetts; 1900, Oscar Booz, United States Military Academy, New York; 1903, Martin Loew, University of Maryland, Baltimore, Maryland; 1905, Stuart L. Pierson, Kenyon College, Ohio; 1905, James R. Branch, Jr., United States Naval Academy, Maryland; 1906, William Miller, Stanford University, California; 1908, Emil S. (Ernie) Gram, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Massachusetts; 1912, Isaac William Rand, University of North Carolina, North Carolina; 1913, Francis W. Obenchain, Purdue University, Indiana; 1914, William R. Bowlus, St. John's Military College, Maryland; 1915, Thurber Sweet, Virginia Military Institute, Virginia; 1915, Eldridge Scott Griffith, University of Kentucky, Kentucky.

1915-1916, Ludwig Von Gerichten, New Mexico Military Institute, New Mexico; 1916, Paul N. Blue, Morningside College, Iowa; 1916, William Lifson, University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania; 1917, William Ashcom Bullock, College of the City of New York, New York; 1919, Frank McCullough, Colgate University, New York; 1921, Leighton Mount, Northwestern University, Illinois; 1922, William Duncan Saunders, Hamilton College, New York; 1923, Glenn Kersh, University of Alabama, Alabama; 1923, Ainsworth Brown, Franklin and Marshall College, Pennsylvania; 1923, Louis Aubere, Northwestern University, Illinois; 1925, Reginald Stringfellow, University of Utah, Utah; 1928, Nolte McElroy, University of Texas, Texas; 1929, Orsa George Steinmetz Jr., Indiana University, Indiana; 1931, Lloyd Neuman Aune, Stout Institute, Wisconsin; 1934, Paul Kutch, Oregon State University, Oregon; 1935, Richard Wendell Beitzel, Dickinson College, Pennsylvania.

1936, Willie B. Barkley, Mississippi State University (then Mississippi State College), Mississippi; 1940, Hubert L. (Hugo) Spake Jr., University of Missouri, Missouri; 1945, Robert G. Perry, St. Louis University, Missouri; 1948, James (Jim) Irvin Peterson, Montana State University, Montana; 1949, Hale Thompson Gehl, Brown University, Rhode Island; 1950, Gerald Loren Follett, University of California, Berkeley, California; 1950, Dean J. Niswonger, Wittenberg University, Ohio; 1951, Allen Kaplan, Northwestern State College, Louisiana; 1951, Thomas Kleppner, University of Miami, Florida; 1951, Fred E. Evens, University of Miami, Florida; 1953, Calvin Dougherty, Milligan College, Tennessee; 1954, Peter Mertz, Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania; 1956, Thomas Clark, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Massachusetts; 1956, Karl B. Bailey, Rice University (then Rice Institute), Texas; 1956, Cecil William Carroll, Rice University (then Rice Institute), Texas; 1957, Max Caulk, University of California, Santa Barbara, California; 1959, Richard Terrell Swanson, University of Southern California, California.

1960, Harry Lamphier, Jr., Northern Illinois University, Illinois; 1960, William Gustafson, Northern Illinois University, Illinois; 1960, William Kempfer, Northern Illinois University, Illinois; 1960, John Pauls, Northern Illinois University, Illinois; 1961, Joe Henry Derham, Jr., Clemson University, South Carolina; 1964, Jose Manual Costa, University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island; 1965, Richard Winder, Georgetown College, Kentucky; 1967, John E. Clifton, Baylor University, Texas; 1968, Michael L. DiBacco, Steubenville College, Ohio; 1968, Trent Ciarrochia, Steubenville College, Ohio; 1968, William Entinger, Steubenville College, Ohio; 1969, Scott Edward Graeler, Muskingum University (then Muskingum College), Ohio; 1970, Donna Bedinger, Eastern Illinois University, Illinois; 1971, Wayne Kennedy, Tulane University, Louisiana; 1972, Fred Phillip Bronne, Pierce College, California; 1972, Brian Cursack, University of Maryland, Maryland; 1973, Mitchell (Mitch) Fishkin, Lehigh University, Pennsylvania; 1974, Thomas Morgan Elliott, Grove City College, Pennsylvania.

1974, John Curtin, Grove City College, Pennsylvania; 1974, Rudolph Mion, Grove City College, Pennsylvania; 1974, Gary Gilliland, Grove City College, Pennsylvania; 1974, William E. Flowers, Monmouth College, New Jersey; 1974, Michael James Bishop, Bluefield State College, West Virginia; 1975, Richard A. Gowins, Northern Illinois University, Illinois; 1975, David "Lumpy" Hoffmann, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, Wisconsin; 1975, John Davies, University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada; 1975, John Asher, Washington State University, Washington; 1975, Theodore Ben, Cheyney University of Pennsylvania (then-Cheyney State College), Pennsylvania; 1976, Samuel Mark Click, Texas Tech University, Texas; 1976,

Thomas Fitzgerald, St. John's University, New York; 1977, Robert J. Bazile, University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania; 1977, Randall Crustals, University of Missouri, Rolla, Missouri; 1978, Stephen J. McNamara, Loras College, Iowa; 1978, Charles (Chuck) Stenzel, Alfred University, New York; 1978, Nathaniel Swinson, North Carolina Central University, North Carolina.

1979, Bruce Wiseman, Louisiana State University, Louisiana; 1979, Richard C. Fuhs, Jr., Rutgers University, New Jersey; 1979, Norsha Lynn Delk, Virginia State College, Virginia; 1979, Robert Etheridge, Virginia State College, Virginia; 1980, Kingsley Davidson, University of North Dakota, North Dakota; 1980, David Masciantonio, Clarkson University, New York; 1980, Curtis Huntley, Mississippi State University, Mississippi; 1980, Lex Dean Batson, University of Missouri, Missouri; 1980, Joseph (Joey) Parrella, Ithaca College, New York; 1980, Steve Call, University of Lowell, Massachusetts; 1980, L. Barry Ballou, University of South Carolina, South Carolina; 1981, Rick Cerra, University of Wisconsin, Superior, Wisconsin; 1982, Victor (Ricky) M. Siegel, Towson State University, Maryland; 1982, Christopher Meigs, University of Virginia, Virginia; 1982, Brian H. McKittrick, University of Virginia, Virginia; 1984, Arnaldo Mercado Perez, University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico; 1983, Vann Watts, Tennessee State University, Tennessee; 1984, Brad Bing, University of California, Davis, California; 1984, Bruce Dean Goodrich, Texas A & M University, Texas.

1984, Jay Lenaghan, American International College, Massachusetts; 1984, Jeffrey Franklin Long, California State University, Chico, California; 1985, Sherri Ann Clark, University of Colorado, Colorado; 1985, Richard "Rich" Allyn Butler, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri; 1986, Harold Thomas, Lamar University, Texas; 1986, Mark Seeberger, University of Texas, Texas; 1987, Harry (Skip) Cline Jr., University of Mississippi, Mississippi; 1987, Todd Alan Prince, University of Arkansas, Arkansas; 1987, David Dunshee, Stanford University, California; 1988, James Callahan, Rutgers University, New Jersey; 1988, Bryan Higgins, State University of New York at Albany, New York; 1988, Matthew S. McCoy, University of Richmond, Virginia; 1988, Gregg Scott Phillips, University of Texas, Texas; 1988, Sean T. Hickey, Rider University (then Rider College), New Jersey; 1989, Joel Harris, Morehouse College, Georgia; 1989, Steven Butterworth, Dickinson College, Pennsylvania; 1990, Nick Haben, Western Illinois University, Illinois.

1991, Mike Nisbet, University of Missouri, Rolla, Missouri; 1991, John Moncello, University of California, Berkeley, California; 1991, Rolland C. Pederson, Trinity University, Texas; 1992, Jonathan S. McNamara, University of Vermont, Vermont; 1992, Gregory Batipps, University of Virginia, Virginia; 1992, J.B. (John B.) Joynt III, Frostburg State University, Maryland; 1993, Chad Sauzier, Auburn University, Alabama; 1993, Leslie Ware, Alcorn State University, Mississippi; 1994, Terry Linn, Bloomsburg University, Pennsylvania; 1994, Michael Davis, Southeast Missouri State, Missouri; 1994, Justin Chambers, Carnegie Mellon University, Pennsylvania; 1995, Gabriel Higgins, University of Texas, Texas; 1995, Brian Nicholas Cook, University of Virginia, Virginia; 1995, Matthew Garofolo, University of Iowa, Iowa; 1996, Todd Martin Cruikshank, University of New Hampshire, New Hampshire; 1997, Trey Walker, Texas A & M, Texas; 1997, Brian T. Sanders, University of California Los Angeles, California; 1997, Brian Pearce, University of California Los Angeles, California; 1997, Steven Velazquez, North Carolina State University, North Carolina.

1997, Benjamin Wynne, Louisiana State University, Louisiana; 1997, Binaya Oja, Clarkson University and State University of New York at Potsdam, New York; 1997, Scott Krueger, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Massachusetts; 1998, John Laduca, University of Washington, Washington; 1998, Courtney Cantor, University of Michigan, Michigan; 1998, Dudley R. Moore IV, University of Mississippi, Mississippi; 1998, Jack L. Ivey, Jr., University of Texas, Texas; 1999, Kevin Lawless, Iona College, New York; 1999, Stephen Petz, Ferris State University, Michigan; 1999, Donnie Lindsey Jr., University of Richmond, Virginia; 2000, Adrian Heideman, Chico State University, California; 2000, Terry Ryan Stirling, Old Dominion University, Virginia; 2000, Ben Folsom Grantham III, University of Georgia, Georgia; 2001, Seth Korona, Indiana University, Indiana; 2001, Joseph T. Green, Tennessee State University, Tennessee; 2001, Chad Meredith, University of Miami, Florida; 2001, Ken Christiansen, University of Minnesota, Duluth, Minnesota; 2001, Zachary Aaron Michael Mullins, Texas Tech University, Texas;

2002, Clay Warren, Texas Tech University, Texas; 2002, Ben Klein, Alfred University, New York; 2002, Brian Nicholas Jimenez, San Diego State University, California; 2002, Zachary Jacobs, San Diego State University, California; 2002, Kenitha Saafir, California State University, Los Angeles, California; 2002, Kristin High, California State University, California; 2002, Albert (A.J.) Santos, University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada; 2002, Daniel Reardon, University of Maryland, Maryland; 2002, Gregory (Greg) Randall Davis, Occidental College, California; 2003, Nicholas Grass, Yale University, Connecticut; 2003, Kyle Burnat, Yale University, Connecticut; 2003, Andrew Dwyer, Yale University, Connecticut; 2003, Sean Fenton, Yale University, Connecticut; 2003, Walter Dean Jennings, Plattsburgh State (State University of New York), New York; 2003, Jerry Hopkins, Rochester Institute of Technology New York; 2003, Kelly Nester, Plymouth State University, New Hampshire; 2003, Robert Schmalz, Bradley University, Illinois; 2004, Lynn Gordon "Gordie" Bailey Jr., University of Colorado, Colorado.

2004, Blake Hammontree, University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma; 2004, Brent E. Johnson, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Illinois; 2005, Matthew Carrington, Chico State University, California; 2005, Kenny Luong, University of California Irvine, California; 2005, Phanta "Jack" Phoummarath, University of Texas, Texas; 2006, Tyler Cross, University of Texas, Texas; 2006, Zach Dunlevy, Limestone College, South Carolina; 2007, Nikolas Gallegos, Stephen F. Austin University, Texas; 2007, Gary Louis DeVercely, Jr., Rider University, New Jersey; 2008, Brett Griffin, University of Delaware, Delaware; 2008, Johnny D. Smith, Wabash College, Indiana; 2008, Harrison Kowiak, Lenoir Rhyne University, North Carolina; 2008, Michael Anthony Smallwood Starks, Utah State, Utah; 2008, Carson Leonard Starkey, Cal Poly, California; 2009, Arman Partamian, SUNY Geneseo, New York; 2009, Donnie Wade Jr., Prairie View A & M, Texas; 2010, Samuel Mason, Radford University, Virginia; 2010, Victoria Carter, East Carolina University, North Carolina; 2010, Briana Latrice Gather, East Carolina University, North Carolina.

2011, George Desdunes, Cornell University, New York; 2011, Robert Darnell Champion, Florida A & M, Florida; 2012, William (Will) Torrance, Vincennes University, Indiana; 2012, Philip Dhanens, Fresno State University, California; 2012, Everett Glenn, Lafayette College, Pennsylvania; 2012, David R. Bogenberger, Northern Illinois University, Illinois; 2012, Preston Vorhauer, University

of Idaho, Idaho; 2012, Marcus Thomas, Bethune-Cookman University, Florida; 2012, Robert Eugene Tipton, Jr., High Point University, North Carolina; 2012, David Shannon, University of North Carolina, North Carolina; 2012, Jack Culolias, Arizona State University, Arizona; 2013, Marvell Edmondson, Virginia State University, Virginia; 2013, Jauwan Holmes, Virginia State University, Virginia; 2013, Peter Tran, San Francisco State University, California; 2013, Anthony Barksdale II, Boston University, Massachusetts; 2013, Chun "Mike" Deng, Baruch College, New York; 2014, Marquise Braham, Penn State, Altoona, Pennsylvania; 2014, Armando Villa, California State University, Northridge, California; 2014, Tucker W. Hipp, Clemson University, South Carolina.

2014, Trevor Duffy, University of Albany, New York; 2014, Nolan M. Burch, West Virginia University, West Virginia; 2014, Dalton Debrick, Texas Tech University, Texas; 2014, Clayton Real, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nebraska; 2015, Praneet Karki, Louisiana State University, Louisiana; 2015, Charlie Terreni, Jr., University of South Carolina, South Carolina; 2016, Michael Anthony Walker, Ferrum College, Virginia; 2016, Ryan Abele, University of Nevada, Nevada; 2016, Jordan Taylor, Texas State, Texas; 2016, Joe Dada, Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania; 2017, Timothy J. Piazza, Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania; 2017, Maxwell (Max) Gruver, Louisiana State University, Louisiana; 2017, Andrew Coffey, Florida State, Florida; 2017, Matthew (Matt) Ellis, Texas State University, Texas; 2017, Alasdair Russell, University of Southern California, California; 2017, Harrison Carter Cole, Hampden Sydney College, Virginia; 2017, Jordan Hankins, Northwestern University, Illinois; 2018, Joseph Little, Texas A & M, Texas; 2018, Collin Wiant, Ohio University, Ohio.

2018, Nicholas "Nicky" Cumberland, University of Texas, Texas; 2018, Tyler Hilliard, University of California at Riverside, California; 2018, Alexander Levi Rainey Beletsis, University of California, Santa Cruz, California; 2019, Marlon Jackson, Delaware State University, Delaware; 2019, Noah Domingo, University of California, Irvine, California; 2019, Sebastian Serafin-Bazan, University of Buffalo, New York; 2019, Bea Castro, Cal State Fullerton, California; 2019, Samuel Martinez, Washington State University, Washington; 2019, Antonio (Anthony) Tsialas, Cornell University, New York; 2019, Rahat Jalil, University of Nebraska, Nebraska; 2019, Justin King, Bloomsburg University, Pennsylvania; 2019, Dylan Hernandez, San Diego State, California; 2020, Lauren Nicole Sawyer, Emory & Henry College, Virginia; 2021, James Gilfedder, Lyon College, Arkansas; 2021, Adam Jeffrey Oakes, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), Virginia; 2021, Stone Justin Foltz, Bowling Green State University, Ohio; 2021, Lofton Hazelwood, University of Kentucky, Kentucky; 2021, Phat Nguyen, Michigan State University, Michigan; 2023, Luke Tyler, Washington State University, Washington.

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, while we have a number of hazing victims' families who are joining us today here in the House gallery, we know that hazing has taken hundreds of lives and impacted countless families.

I would also like to thank Dr. Hank Nuwer for his years of research in compiling this list. Without this important work, hazing prevention work would not have come as far as it has.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following letters of support. One is from the Clergy Center and the StopHazing organization, along with a list of endorsing organizations, including the National Association of Clergy Compliance Officers and Professionals, the American College Health Association, the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Incorporated, which represents the Divine Nine, NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, and another letter from the Anti-Hazing Coalition, which includes a number of hazing victims' families, the Hazing Prevention Network, the National Panhellenic Conference, and the North American Interfraternity Conference.

CLERY CENTER,  
STOP HAZING,  
September 23, 2024.

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

Hon. HAKEEM JEFFRIES,  
*Democratic Leader, House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR SPEAKER JOHNSON AND LEADER JEFFRIES: On behalf of StopHazing and Clergy Center, we are writing to express our strong support for H.R. 5646, the Stop Campus Hazing Act, and to urge its swift passage. This bipartisan legislation offers a critical opportunity to address the persistent issue of hazing, a practice that continues to threaten the health, safety, and well-being of students on college campuses across the United States.

Hazing remains a deeply troubling problem in our higher education system. More than half of college students involved in co-curricular activities like athletic teams, fraternities, sororities, and other campus groups experience hazing, according to the National Study of Student Hazing. Even more concerning is the fact that many incidents go unreported, with students feeling pressured to remain silent due to the social dynamics that reinforce these harmful traditions. Tragically, since 2000, college hazing has led to more than 100 student deaths; countless physical injuries, and psychological damage from the abusive behavior. These realities highlight the urgency of adopting meaningful reforms to end these senseless practices.

The Stop Campus Hazing Act represents a crucial step toward preventing hazing and protecting students from harm. This legislation includes several critical provisions, including a requirement for colleges and universities to improve transparency by reporting hazing incidents in their Annual Security Reports, commonly known as Clery Reports. This step will make hazing incidents more visible and hold institutions accountable for how they handle hazing cases. The bill also mandates the implementation of campus-wide, research-based hazing prevention programs designed to address root causes of hazing, equip students with the tools to intervene as bystanders, and ultimately prevent these dangerous behaviors before they occur.

In addition to improving accountability and prevention, the Stop Campus Hazing Act promotes transparency for students and parents by requiring institutions to publicly disclose their hazing prevention policies and any organizations that have been found in violation of these policies. Such trans-

parency is essential for students and families to make informed decisions when considering membership in campus organizations. By ensuring all parties have access to this vital information, we can empower students and their families to make safer, more informed choices and create an environment where hazing is no longer tolerated.

This legislation is the product of years of bipartisan cooperation and expert input from national campus safety advocates, fraternities and sororities, and families who have tragically lost loved ones to hazing. It incorporates elements from two previous bills, the Report and Educate About Campus Hazing (REACH) Act and END ALL Hazing Act, and has been thoroughly vetted by stakeholders and experts including researchers who have documented the harmful and far-reaching consequences of hazing. As such, the Stop Campus Hazing Act has garnered support from a broad coalition of organizations dedicated to campus safety and student well-being.

We commend the House Committee on Education and the Workforce for advancing this important bill. It is now imperative the full House considers and passes H.R. 5646 without delay. Doing so will send a strong message that student safety is a priority and that we are committed to preventing the senseless tragedies caused by hazing.

A decades-long journey for many grieving families, H.R. 5646 provides an actionable framework to address hazing on college campuses, and its passage will mark a significant victory for student safety, educational integrity, consumer protection, and prevention. We stand ready to support these efforts and to work with you and your colleagues to ensure no more students suffer from hazing.

On behalf of these groups, and the students and families who have endured harm and tragedy from hazing, we urge Members to vote in favor of H.R. 5646 to ensure this life-saving legislation moves forward.

Sincerely,  
ELIZABETH J. ALLAN, Ph.D.,  
*Principal, StopHazing.*  
JESSICA A. MERTZ,  
*Executive Director,*  
*Clergy Center.*

Organizations and Associations Endorsing the Stop Campus Hazing Act:

Active Minds, AHA! Movement, American College Health Association (ACHA), Anti-Hazing Coalition, Antonio Tsialas Leadership Foundation, Association of Big Ten Students, Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors (AFA), Behavioral Health Foundation, Clergy Center, College Safety Coalition, End Rape On Campus, God Bless the Child Productions, LLC, Guardian Angel Community Services—Sexual Assault Service Center, Hazing Prevention Network, HazingInfo.org.

Holmes Murphy Fraternal Practice, iamstonefoltz FOUNDATION, International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA), It's On Us, Love Like Adam Foundation, MacKay & Associates, Mount Carmel College of Nursing, Mt Salem Missionary Baptist Church, National Association of Clergy Compliance Officers and Professionals (NACCOP), NASPA—Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, National Organization for Victim Advocacy (NOVA), National Panhellenic Conference, National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc., National Women's Law Center, NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation,

NMB Foundation, North American Interfraternity Conference, Protect Students Abroad, Robert D. Champion Drum Major for Change Foundation, Inc., SAFE Campuses, LLC, Sexual Violence Prevention Association (SVPA), SNAPPED: The Podcast, Soteria Solutions, Steward Tilghman Fox

Bianchi & Cain, P.A., Stockton University-Athletics and Recreation, StopHazing, The Fierberg National Law Group, PLLC, Tucker W. Hipps Memorial Foundation, Viisights Inc., VTV Family Outreach Foundation, ZeroNow.

ANTI-HAZING COALITION  
September 23, 2024.

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

Hon. HAKEEM JEFFRIES,  
*Democratic Leader, House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*

Hon. STEVE SCALISE,  
*Majority Leader, House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*  
Hon. KATHERINE CLARK,  
*Democratic Whip, House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR SPEAKER JOHNSON, LEADER SCALISE, LEADER JEFFRIES, AND WHIP CLARK: On behalf of the Anti-Hazing Coalition, we write in strong support of the Stop Campus Hazing Act (H.R. 5646), which will be considered on the House floor this week. It is fitting the House chose to consider the bill during National Hazing Prevention Week when our coalition and the broader higher education community make a concerted effort to raise awareness and increase education about hazing.

We are a coalition representing parents who have lost their sons as a result of hazing and work closely with other organizations also seeking to end all hazing on college campuses. These organizations include the North American Interfraternity Conference, representing 58 men's fraternities; the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), representing 26 women's sororities; and the Hazing Prevention Network, a national non-profit dedicated to empowering people to prevent hazing.

As a coalition, we strongly support the Stop Campus Hazing Act, which is a consensus bill that incorporates provisions from prior hazing-related bills from previous Congresses. The bill would require institutions of higher education to maintain and update biannually a page on their websites that discloses student organization violations of the institution's code of conduct that threaten the safety of students and provide students with educational programming related to hazing. As the leaders in providing anti-hazing programming and education on college campuses, we believe this legislation will give institutions, organizations, and students the latitude to address—rather than hide—the small-scale violations of the student code of conduct that, if not addressed, can grow into more dangerous hazing behaviors that threaten student safety.

Passage of this important legislation is a critical opportunity for Congress to show its bipartisan commitment to saving the lives of our college students and its full commitment to end hazing. Thank you for your leadership in bringing this bill to the House floor. We hope you will do everything in your power to help it become law this year.

Sincerely,  
The Family of Harrison Kowiak (passed away on November 18, 2008).

The Family of Marquise Braham (passed away on March 14, 2014).

The Family of Dalton Debrick (passed away on August 24, 2014).

The Family of Timothy J. Piazza (passed away on February 4, 2017).

The Family of Max Gruver (passed away on September 14, 2017).

The Family of Collin Wiant (passed away on November 12, 2018).

The Family of Justin King (passed away on September 14, 2019).

Todd Shelton, Executive Director, Hazing Prevention Network.

Dani Weatherford, CEO, National Panhellenic Conference.

Judson Horras, CEO, North American Interfraternity Conference.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I also include in the RECORD letters of support from the Clery Center on behalf of Connie Clery and the Clery family, and from Safe Campuses, LLC, to support changing the name of the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act to the Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Act.

CLERY CENTER,  
Fort Washington, PA, August 27, 2024.

DEAR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: On behalf of Clery Center, Connie Clery, and the Clery family, I am writing to express our strong support for renaming the “Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act” to the “Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Act.” We believe this revised name more accurately reflects the broad scope and intent of the legislation, and we urge Congress to support this change.

Since its enactment, the Clery Act has served as a cornerstone in the effort to improve campus safety across the United States. As a consumer protection law, it provides the transparency and accountability that families and students deserve. The law’s requirements, which include the disclosure of campus crime statistics, the implementation of safety policies, and the provision of timely warnings, have significantly contributed to the safety and well-being of students, faculty, and staff on college campuses.

Over the years, the Clery Act’s role has expanded beyond the mere disclosure of statistics and encompasses a comprehensive approach to preventing and responding to crime on campus. The term “Campus Safety” encapsulates this broader mission and better communicates the law’s purpose to all stakeholders, including students, parents, campus administrators, and law enforcement. We also believe the name change will foster greater collaboration and encourage more robust administrative support on campuses.

Most importantly, this change would continue to honor Jeanne Clery’s legacy in a meaningful way. The tragedy that befell Jeanne inspired a movement that has undoubtedly saved countless lives, and this updated title would reflect the ongoing impact of her legacy on campus communities nationwide.

We respectfully request that you consider supporting this change. Thank you for your continued dedication to improving campus safety and for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

JESSICA A. MERTZ,  
Executive Director.

SAFE CAMPUSES LLC,  
Re Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Act.  
Thomason, GA, March 18, 2024.  
Hon. BERNIE SANDERS,  
Chairman, Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor and Pensions, Washington, DC.  
Hon. BILL CASSIDY, M.D.,  
Ranking Member, Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor and Pensions, Washington,  
DC.  
Hon. VIRGINIA FOXX,  
Chairwoman, Committee on Education and the  
Workforce, Washington, DC.  
Hon. ROBERT C. SCOTT,  
Ranking Member, Committee on Education and  
the Workforce, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SANDERS, CHAIRWOMAN  
FOXX, RANKING MEMBER CASSIDY, AND RANK-  
ING MEMBER SCOTT: As a social entrepreneurship we work with colleges and universities to create safer campuses and believe that modernizing the full name of the Jeanne Clery Act, the primary federal law on this subject, has the potential to help it better achieve its intended goals. Updating the name to be the “Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Act” will place the focus, as it should be, on our shared goal of safer campuses rather than outdated bureaucratic references.

The current legal name the “Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act”, set by Section 485(f)(18) of the Higher Education Act, can be an impediment by placing the focus on “security” rather than safety and on crime statistics alone. Congress has very thoughtfully expanded the law to encompass a range of multidisciplinary safety issues and disclosures like emergency notifications that this name no longer accurately reflects.

We would ask that you please consider amending the name of this landmark legislation to be the “Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Act” as part of any higher education related measure that your committees may advance. This will continue to memorialize the living legacy of Jeanne Clery and help better focus efforts in a way that will improve campus safety. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

S. DANIEL CARTER,  
President.

□ 1830

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, the Stop Campus Hazing Act addresses hazing as a campus safety issue, and updating the name is better reflective of that focus.

Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation to ensure that every student has access to a safe learning environment.

Today, with this legislation, we ensure that students and parents will better understand the culture and dangers of hazing on college campuses. As a result, I believe that H.R. 5646 is an important step forward to protect the health, safety, and future of our students.

Again, I thank Representatives MCBATH and DUNCAN for their leadership on this issue.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, for far too long, the culture of hazing has permeated college campuses, impacting all types of student organizations. While some anti-hazing policies and laws are in place,

more can be done to ensure all tools are appropriately used to deter this very dangerous culture.

That is where H.R. 5646, the Stop Campus Hazing Act, comes in. It will improve reporting and prevention on college campuses. Simply put, it means ensuring students are safe.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the bill’s authors, Representative LUCY MCBATH and Representative JEFF DUNCAN.

Students and their parents have advocated for this legislation. We have some of the families with us here today, and I would like to thank the families of Timothy Piazza, Max Gruver, Marquise Braham, Harrison Kowiak, Dalton Debrick, Collin Wiant, Justin King, George Desdunes, Gary DeVercelly, Jr., Sam Martinez, Gordie Bailey, Robert Champion, and Antonio Tsialis.

I also thank the Clery Center, StopHazing Coalition, Anti-Hazing Coalition, National Panhellenic Conference, North American Interfraternity Conference, National Pan-Hellenic Council, SAFE Campuses, LLC, and dozens of other groups in support of H.R. 5646 that have recognized this terrible issue and worked tirelessly with Congress to draft this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, today is an important day for student safety. I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. OWENS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5646, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MORAN). The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

#### BOLSTERING ECOSYSTEMS AGAINST COASTAL HARM ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5490) to amend the Coastal Barrier Resources Act to expand the John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5490

*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 “Bolstering Ecosystems Against Coastal Harm Act” or the “BEACH Act”.

**SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

Sec. 1. Short title.

Sec. 2. Table of contents.

**TITLE I—COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES ACT AMENDMENTS**

Sec. 101. Definitions.

Sec. 102. John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System.

Sec. 103. Require disclosure to prospective buyers that property is in System.

Sec. 104. Exceptions to limitations on expenditures.

Sec. 105. Improve Federal agency compliance with Coastal Barrier Resources Act.

Sec. 106. Evaluation of coastal ecosystem dynamics.

Sec. 107. Authorization of appropriations.

**TITLE II—CHANGES TO JOHN H. CHAFEE COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES SYSTEM MAPS**

Sec. 201. Changes to John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System maps.

**TITLE I—COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES ACT AMENDMENTS****SEC. 101. DEFINITIONS.**

Section 3 of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3502) is amended to read as follows:

**“SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

“(a) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this Act;

“(1) COASTAL BARRIER.—The term ‘coastal barrier’ means

“(A) a depositional geologic feature (such as a bay barrier, tombolo, barrier spit, bluff, or barrier island) that—

“(i) is subject to wave, tidal, and wind energies; and

“(ii) protects landward aquatic habitats from direct wave attack; and

“(B) all associated aquatic habitats including the adjacent wetlands, marshes, estuaries, inlets, and nearshore waters.

“(2) COMMITTEES.—The term ‘Committees’ means the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate.

**“(3) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.**

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘financial assistance’ means any form of loan, grant, guaranty, insurance, payment, rebate, subsidy, or any other form of direct or indirect Federal assistance other than—

“(i) deposit or account insurance for customers of banks, savings and loan associations, credit unions, or similar institutions;

“(ii) the purchase of mortgages or loans by the Government National Mortgage Association, the Federal National Mortgage Association, or the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation;

“(iii) assistance for environmental studies, planning, and assessments that are required incident to the issuance of permits or other authorizations under Federal law; and

“(iv) assistance pursuant to programs entirely unrelated to development, such as any Federal or federally assisted public assistance program or any Federal old-age survivors or disability insurance program.

“(B) FLOOD INSURANCE.—The term ‘financial assistance’ includes flood insurance described in section 1321 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4028).

“(4) GREAT LAKES.—The term ‘Great Lakes’ means Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Lake Huron, Lake St. Clair, Lake Michigan, and Lake Superior, to the extent that those lakes are subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

**“(5) OTHERWISE PROTECTED AREA.**

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘Otherwise Protected Area’ means any unit of the Sys-

tem that, at the time of designation, was predominantly composed of areas established under Federal, State, or local law, or held by a qualified organization, primarily for wildlife refuge, wildlife sanctuary, recreational, or natural resource conservation purposes.

“(B) QUALIFIED ORGANIZATION.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term ‘qualified organization’ has the meaning given the term in section 170(h)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

“(6) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means the Secretary of the Interior.

“(7) SYSTEM.—The term ‘System’ means the John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System established under section 4(a).

“(8) SYSTEM UNIT.—The term ‘System unit’ means any undeveloped coastal barrier, or combination of closely-related undeveloped coastal barriers, included within the John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System established under section 4(a).

“(9) UNDEVELOPED COASTAL BARRIER.—The term ‘undeveloped coastal barrier’ means a coastal barrier the features and associated habitats of which contain few manmade structures and these structures, and man’s activities on such features and within such habitats, do not significantly impede geomorphic and ecological processes.

“(b) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—Nothing in this section supersedes the official maps described in section 4(a).”.

**SEC. 102. JOHN H. CHAFEE COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES SYSTEM.**

Section 4 of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3503) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), to read as follows:

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System, which shall consist of those undeveloped coastal barriers and other areas located on the coasts of the United States that are identified and generally depicted as System units or Otherwise Protected Areas—

“(1) on the maps on file with the Secretary entitled ‘Coastal Barrier Resources System’, dated October 24, 1990;

“(2) on a map described in section 201(b) of the Bolstering Ecosystems Against Coastal Harm Act; or

“(3) on a map described in paragraph (1) or (2) as such map may be replaced, modified, revised, or corrected under—

“(A) subsection (f)(3);

“(B) section 4 of the Coastal Barrier Improvement Act of 1990 (16 U.S.C. 3503 note); or

“(C) any other provision of law enacted on or after November 16, 1990, that specifically replaces or authorizes the modification, revision, or correction of such a map.”;

(2) in subsection (e)—

(A) by striking “an undeveloped coastal barrier” each place it appears and inserting “a coastal barrier”; and

(B) in subparagraph (A), by striking “undeveloped”; and

(3) in subsection (f)(2), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking “copy of the map” and inserting “notification of the availability of the map”.

**SEC. 103. REQUIRE DISCLOSURE TO PROSPECTIVE BUYERS THAT PROPERTY IS IN SYSTEM.**

Section 5 of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3504) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(c) DISCLOSURE OF LIMITATIONS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of the Bolstering Ecosystems Against Coastal Harm Act, the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, shall issue regulations requiring the owner or lessor of real property located in a community affected by this Act, as determined by the Director of the United

States Fish and Wildlife Service, to disclose to a prospective buyer or lessee such location of such real property.”.

**SEC. 104. EXCEPTIONS TO LIMITATIONS ON EXPENDITURES.**

Section 6 of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3505) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (6)—

(i) in subparagraph (E), to read as follows:

“(E) Emergency actions necessary to the saving of lives and the protection of property and the public health and safety, if such actions are performed pursuant to sections 402, 403, 407, and 502 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170a, 5170b, 5173, 5192) and are limited to actions that are necessary to alleviate the applicable emergency.”; and

(ii) by adding at the end the following:

“(H) Aquaculture operations that—

(i) produce shellfish (including oysters, clams, and mussels), cultivate micro- or macro-algae, or do not require the use of aquaculture feeds; and

(ii) adhere to best management practices and conservation measures recommended by the Secretary through the consultation process referred to in this subsection.”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(7) Use of a sand source within a System unit by Federal coastal storm risk management projects or their predecessor projects that have used a System unit for sand to nourish adjacent beaches outside the System pursuant to section 5 of the Act of August 18, 1941 (commonly known as the ‘Flood Control Act of 1941’) (55 Stat. 650, chapter 377; 33 U.S.C. 701n) at least once between December 31, 2008 and December 31, 2023 in response to an emergency situation prior to December 31, 2023.”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(e) APPLICABILITY TO OTHERWISE PROTECTED AREAS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The prohibitions on new Federal expenditures and financial assistance described in section 5(a) do not apply within Otherwise Protected Areas except with respect to limitations on new flood insurance coverage described in section 1321 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4028).

“(2) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), new Federal flood insurance may be provided for a structure in an Otherwise Protected Area that is used in a manner consistent with the purpose for which such Otherwise Protected Area is protected.

“(f) APPLICABILITY TO ADDITIONS AND INSURABLE STRUCTURES.—

“(1) ADDITIONS.—With respect to an addition to the System made under section 4 on or after the date of the enactment of the Bolstering Ecosystems Against Coastal Harm Act, subject to paragraph (2), the prohibitions on new Federal expenditures and financial assistance described in section 5(a) shall take effect on the date that is 1 year after the date on which such addition is made.

(2) INSURABLE STRUCTURES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The prohibitions on new Federal expenditures and financial assistance described in section 5(a) do not apply to an insurable structure.

“(B) INSURABLE STRUCTURE DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ‘insurable structure’ means an insurable structure that is—

(i) located within an addition described in paragraph (1); and

(ii) in existence before the expiration of the applicable 1-year period described in paragraph (1).”.

**SEC. 105. IMPROVE FEDERAL AGENCY COMPLIANCE WITH COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES ACT.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7(a) of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3506(a)) is amended to read as follows:

“(a) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of the Bolstering Ecosystems Against Coastal Harm Act, the head of each Federal agency affected by this Act shall revise or issue regulations and guidance as necessary to ensure compliance with the provisions of this Act.”.

(b) GUIDANCE FOR EXPENDITURE OF FEDERAL FUNDS IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Chief of Engineers of the Army Corps of Engineers, shall develop and finalize guidance relating to the expenditure of Federal funds pursuant to the exception described in section 5(a)(3) of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3504(a)(3)) for emergency situations that threaten life, land, and property immediately adjacent to a System unit (as defined in subsection (a) of section 3 of that Act (16 U.S.C. 3502)).

**SEC. 106. EVALUATION OF COASTAL ECOSYSTEM DYNAMICS.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the heads of other appropriate Federal agencies, shall evaluate the means and measures by which the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.) could be used to further the purposes of minimizing the loss of human life, wasteful expenditure of Federal revenues, and the damage to fish, wildlife, and other natural resources associated with coastal barriers that are and will be vulnerable to coastal hazards, including flooding, storm surge, wind, erosion, and sea level rise.

## (b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate a report describing the results of the evaluation carried out under subsection (a).

(2) CONTENTS.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) a summary of the best available scientific information regarding the dynamics of coastal barrier ecosystems, including the impacts of coastal hazards, including flooding, storm surge, wind, erosion, and sea level rise, on coastal barriers and changing coastal barrier geomorphology;

(B) case studies applying the information described in subparagraph (A) to a sample of United States coastal barrier areas; and

(C) recommendations on ways to further the purpose of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act as described in section 2(b) of that Act (16 U.S.C. 3501(b)), including integrating information generated pursuant to subparagraphs (A) and (B) into guiding principles or into guidelines for recommendations and determinations pursuant to section 4(g) of that Act (16 U.S.C. 3503(g)).

(c) REVIEW.—The Secretary shall prepare the report required under subsection (b) after—

(1) providing notice and an opportunity for the submission of public comment; and

(2) considering any public comments submitted under paragraph (1).

## (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COASTAL BARRIER.—The term “coastal barrier” has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3502), as amended by this Act.

(2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Directors of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the United States Geological Survey.

**SEC. 107. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

Section 10 of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3510) is amended to read as follows:

**“SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

“There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this Act—

“(1) \$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2006 through 2010; and

“(2) \$1,962,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2031.”.

**TITLE II—CHANGES TO JOHN H. CHAFFEE COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES SYSTEM MAPS****SEC. 201. CHANGES TO JOHN H. CHAFFEE COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES SYSTEM MAPS.**

(a) REPLACEMENT MAPS DESCRIBED.—Each map included in the set of maps referred to in section 4(a)(1) of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3503(a)(1)), as amended by this section, that relates to a unit of the John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System established by section 4 of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3503) referred to in this subsection is replaced in such set with the map described in the following list with respect to that unit and any other new or reclassified units depicted on that map panel:

(1) The map entitled “Salisbury Beach Unit MA-01P Plum Island Unit MA-02P (1 of 2)” and dated December 18, 2020.

(2) The map entitled “Clark Pond Unit C00 Plum Island Unit MA-02P (2 of 2) Castle Neck Unit MA-03 Wingaersheek Unit C01 (1 of 2)” and dated December 18, 2020.

(3) The map entitled “Wingaersheek Unit C01 (2 of 2) Good Harbor Beach/Milk Island Unit C01A Cape Hedge Beach Unit MA-48 Brace Cove Unit C01B” and dated December 18, 2020.

(4) The map entitled “West Beach Unit MA-04 Phillips Beach Unit MA-06” and dated December 18, 2020.

(5) The map entitled “Snake Island Unit MA-08P, Squantum Unit MA-09P Merrymount Park Unit MA-10P West Head Beach Unit C01C/C01CP Peddocks/Rainsford Island Unit MA-11/MA-11P” and dated December 18, 2020.

(6) The map entitled “Cohassett Harbor Unit MA-12 North Scituate Unit C02P Rivermoor Unit C03” and dated December 18, 2020.

(7) The map entitled “Rexhame Unit C03A Duxbury Beach Unit MA-13/MA-13P (1 of 2)” and dated December 18, 2020.

(8) The map entitled “Duxbury Beach Unit MA-13/MA-13P (2 of 2) Plymouth Bay Unit C04” and dated December 18, 2020.

(9) The map entitled “Center Hill Complex C06 Scusset Beach Unit MA-38P Town Neck Unit MA-14P” and dated December 18, 2020.

(10) The map entitled “Scorton Unit C08 Sandy Neck Unit C09/C09P (1 of 2)” and dated December 18, 2020.

(11) The map entitled “Sandy Neck Unit C09/C09P (2 of 2) Chapin Beach Unit MA-15P” and dated December 18, 2020.

(12) The map entitled “Nobsucset Unit MA-16 Freemans Pond Unit C10” and dated December 18, 2020.

(13) The map entitled “Provincetown Unit MA-19P (1 of 2)” and dated December 18, 2020.

(14) The map entitled “Provincetown Unit MA-19P (2 of 2) Pamet Harbor Unit MA-18P Ballston Beach Unit MA-18P” and dated December 18, 2020.

(15) The map entitled “Griffin/Great Islands Complex MA-17P Lieutenant Island Unit MA-17AP” and dated December 18, 2020.

(16) The map entitled “Namskaket Spits Unit C11/C11P Boat Meadow Unit C11A/C11AP Nauset Beach/Monomoy Unit MA-20P (1 of 3)” and dated December 18, 2020.

(17) The map entitled “Nauset Beach/Monomoy Unit MA-20P (2 of 3) Harding

Beach Unit MA-40P Chatham Roads Unit C12/C12P Red River Beach Unit MA-41P” and dated December 18, 2020.

(18) The map entitled “Nauset Beach/Monomoy Unit MA-20P (3 of 3)” and dated December 18, 2020.

(19) The map entitled “Davis Beach Unit MA-23P Lewis Bay Unit C13/C13P” and dated December 18, 2020.

(20) The map entitled “Squaw Island Unit C14 Centerville Unit C15/C15P Dead Neck Unit C16 (1 of 2)” and dated December 18, 2020.

(21) The map entitled “Dead Neck Unit C16 (2 of 2) Popponesset Spit Unit C17 Waquoit Bay Unit C18 Falmouth Ponds Unit C18A” and dated December 18, 2020.

(22) The map entitled “Quissett Beach/Falmouth Beach Unit MA-42P Black Beach Unit C19, Little Sippewissett Marsh Unit C19P Chapoquoit Beach Unit MA-43/MA-43P Herring Brook Unit MA-30” and dated December 18, 2020.

(23) The map entitled “Squeteague Harbor Unit MA-31 Bassets Island Unit MA-32 Phinneys Harbor Unit MA-33 Buzzards Bay Complex C19A (1 of 3)” and dated December 18, 2020.

(24) The map entitled “Buzzards Bay Complex C19AP (2 of 3) Planting Island Unit MA-35” and dated December 18, 2020.

(25) The map entitled “Buzzards Bay Complex C19A (3 of 3) West Sconticut Neck Unit C31A/C31AP Little Bay Unit MA-47P Harbor View Unit C31B” and dated December 18, 2020.

(26) The map entitled “Round Hill Unit MA-36, Misham Point Unit C32 Demarest Lloyd Park Unit MA-37P Little Beach Unit C33 (1 of 2) Round Hill Point Unit MA-45P, Teal Pond Unit MA-46” and dated December 18, 2020.

(27) The map entitled “Little Beach Unit C33 (2 of 2) Horseneck Beach Unit C34/C34P Richmond/Cockeast Ponds Unit C35” and dated December 18, 2020.

(28) The map entitled “Coatue Unit C20/C20P (1 of 2) Sesachacha Pond Unit C21” and dated December 18, 2020.

(29) The map entitled “Coatue Unit C20/C20P (2 of 2) Cisco Beach Unit C22P Esther Island Complex C23/C23P (1 of 2) Tuckernuck Island Unit C24 (1 of 2)” and dated December 18, 2020.

(30) The map entitled “Esther Island Complex C23 (2 of 2) Tuckernuck Island Unit C24 (2 of 2) Muskeget Island Unit C25” and dated December 18, 2020.

(31) The map entitled “Harthaven Unit MA-26, Edgartown Beach Unit MA-27P Trapps Pond Unit MA-27, Eel Pond Beach Unit C26 Cape Poge Unit C27, Norton Point Unit MA-28P South Beach Unit C28 (1 of 2)” and dated December 18, 2020.

(32) The map entitled “South Beach Unit C28 (2 of 2)” and dated December 18, 2020.

(33) The map entitled “Squibnocket Complex C29/C29P Nomans Land Unit MA-29P” and dated December 18, 2020.

(34) The map entitled “James Pond Unit C29A Mink Meadows Unit C29B Naushon Island Complex MA-24 (1 of 2)” and dated December 18, 2020.

(35) The map entitled “Naushon Island Complex MA-24 (2 of 2) Elizabeth Islands Unit C31 (1 of 2)” and dated May 21, 2024.

(36) The map entitled “Elizabeth Islands Unit C31 (2 of 2) Penikese Island Unit MA-25P” and dated May 21, 2024.

(37) The map entitled “Cedar Cove Unit C34A” and dated December 18, 2020.

(38) The map entitled “Little Compton Ponds Unit D01 Tunipus Pond Unit D01P Brown Point Unit RI-01” and dated December 18, 2020.

(39) The map entitled “Fogland Marsh Unit D02/D02P, Sapowet Point Unit RI-02/RI-02P McCorrie Point Unit RI-02A Sandy Point

Unit RI-03P Prudence Island Complex D02B/D02BP (1 of 3)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(40) The map entitled "Prudence Island Complex D02B/D02BP (2 of 3)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(41) The map entitled "Prudence Island Complex D02B/D02BP (3 of 3)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(42) The map entitled "West Narragansett Bay Complex D02C" and dated December 18, 2020.

(43) The map entitled "Fox Hill Marsh Unit RI-08/RJ-08P Bonnet Shores Beach Unit RI-09 Narragansett Beach Unit RI-10/RJ-10P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(44) The map entitled "Seaweed Beach Unit RI-11P East Matunuck Beach Unit RI-12P Point Judith Unit RI-14P, Card Ponds Unit D03/D03P Green Hill Beach Unit D04 (1 of 2)" and dated September 8, 2023.

(45) The map entitled "Green Hill Beach Unit D04 (2 of 2) East Beach Unit D05P Quonochontaug Beach Unit D06/D06P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(46) The map entitled "Misquamicut Beach Unit RI-13P Maschaug Ponds Unit D07 Napatree Unit D08/D08P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(47) The map entitled "Block Island Unit D09/D09P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(48) The map entitled "Wilcox Beach Unit E01 Ram Island Unit E01A Mason Island Unit CT-01" and dated December 18, 2020.

(49) The map entitled "Bluff Point Unit CT-02 Goshen Cove Unit E02" and dated December 18, 2020.

(50) The map entitled "Jordan Cove Unit E03, Niantic Bay Unit E03A Old Black Point Unit CT-03, Hatchett Point Unit CT-04 Little Pond Unit CT-05, Mile Creek Unit CT-06" and dated December 18, 2020.

(51) The map entitled "Griswold Point Unit CT-07 Lynde Point Unit E03B Cold Spring Brook Unit CT-08" and dated December 18, 2020.

(52) The map entitled "Menunketessuck Island Unit E04 Hammonasset Point Unit E05 Toms Creek Unit CT-10 Seaview Beach Unit CT-11" and dated December 18, 2020.

(53) The map entitled "Lindsey Cove Unit CT-12 Kelsey Island Unit CT-13 Nathan Hale Park Unit CT-14P Morse Park Unit CT-15P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(54) The map entitled "Milford Point Unit E07 Long Beach Unit CT-18P Fayerweather Island Unit E08AP" and dated December 18, 2020.

(55) The map entitled "Norwalk Islands Unit E09/E09P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(56) The map entitled "Jamaica Bay Unit NY-60P (1 of 2)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(57) The map entitled "Jamaica Bay Unit NY-60P (2 of 2)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(58) The map entitled "Sands Point Unit NY-03 Prospect Point Unit NY-04P Dosoris Pond Unit NY-05P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(59) The map entitled "The Creek Beach Unit NY-06/NY-06P Centre Island Beach Unit NY-07P, Centre Island Unit NY-88 Lloyd Beach Unit NY-09P Lloyd Point Unit NY-10/NY-10P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(60) The map entitled "Lloyd Harbor Unit NY-11/NY-11P, Eatons Neck Unit F02 Hobart Beach Unit NY-13, Deck Island Harbor Unit NY-89 Centerpoint Harbor Unit NY-12, Crab Meadow Unit NY-14" and dated December 18, 2020.

(61) The map entitled "Sunken Meadow Unit NY-15/NY-15P Stony Brook Harbor Unit NY-16 (1 of 2)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(62) The map entitled "Stony Brook Harbor Unit NY-16/NY-16P (2 of 2) Crane Neck Unit F04P Old Field Beach Unit F05/F05P Cedar Beach Unit NY-17/NY-17P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(63) The map entitled "Wading River Unit NY-18 Baiting Hollow Unit NY-19P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(64) The map entitled "Luce Landing Unit NY-20P, Mattituck Inlet Unit NY-21P East Creek Unit NY-34P, Indian Island Unit NY-35P Flanders Bay Unit NY-36/NY-36P, Red Creek Pond Unit NY-37 Iron Point Unit NY-97P" and dated September 8, 2023.

(65) The map entitled "Goldsmith Inlet Unit NY-22P, Pipes Cove Unit NY-26 (1 of 2) Southold Bay Unit NY-28, Cedar Beach Point Unit NY-29P (1 of 2) Hog Neck Bay Unit NY-30 Peconic Dunes Unit NY-90P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(66) The map entitled "Little Creek Unit NY-31/NY-31P, Cutchogue Harbor Unit NY-31A Downs Creek Unit NY-32, Robins Island Unit NY-33 Squire Pond Unit NY-38, Cow Neck Unit NY-39 North Sea Harbor Unit NY-40/NY-40P, Cold Spring Pond Unit NY-92" and dated December 18, 2020.

(67) The map entitled "Truman Beach Unit NY-23/NY-23P Orient Beach Unit NY-25P Hay Beach Point Unit NY-47" and dated December 18, 2020.

(68) The map entitled "F06, NY-26 (2 of 2), NY-27, NY-29P (2 of 2), NY-41P NY-42, NY-43/NY-43P, NY-44, NY-45 NY-46, NY-48, NY-49, NY-50 NY-51P, NY-93, NY-94, NY-95P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(69) The map entitled "Gardiners Island Barriers Unit F09 (1 of 2) Plum Island Unit NY-24" and dated December 18, 2020.

(70) The map entitled "Sammys Beach Unit F08A, Accabonac Harbor Unit F08B Gardiners Island Barriers Unit F09 (2 of 2) Napeague Unit F10P (1 of 2), Hog Creek Unit NY-52 Amagansett Unit NY-56/NY-56P, Bell Park Unit NY-96P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(71) The map entitled "Fisher Island Barriers Unit F01" and dated December 18, 2020.

(72) The map entitled "Big Reed Pond Unit NY-53P Oyster Pond Unit NY-54P Montauk Point Unit NY-55P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(73) The map entitled "Napeague Unit F10/F10P (2 of 2)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(74) The map entitled "Mecox Unit F11 Georgica/Wainscott Ponds Unit NY-57 Sagaponack Pond Unit NY-58/NY-58P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(75) The map entitled "Southampton Beach Unit F12 Tiana Beach Unit F13/F13P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(76) The map entitled "Fire Island Unit NY-59P (1 of 6)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(77) The map entitled "Fire Island Unit NY-59P (2 of 6)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(78) The map entitled "Fire Island Unit NY-59P (3 of 6)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(79) The map entitled "Fire Island Unit NY-59/NY-59P (4 of 6)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(80) The map entitled "Fire Island Unit NY-59/NY-59P (5 of 6)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(81) The map entitled "Fire Island Unit NY-59/NY-59P (6 of 6)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(82) The map entitled "Sandy Hook Unit NJ-01P Monmouth Cove Unit NJ-17P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(83) The map entitled "Navesink/Shrewsbury Complex NJ-04A/NJ-04AP" and dated December 18, 2020.

(84) The map entitled "Metedeconk Neck Unit NJ-04B/NJ-04BP" and dated December 18, 2020.

(85) The map entitled "Island Beach Unit NJ-05P (1 of 2)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(86) The map entitled "Island Beach Unit NJ-05P (2 of 2)" and dated September 8, 2023.

(87) The map entitled "Cedar Bonnet Island Unit NJ-06/NJ-06P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(88) The map entitled "Brigantine Unit NJ-07P (1 of 4)" and dated September 8, 2023.

(89) The map entitled "Brigantine Unit NJ-07P (2 of 4)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(90) The map entitled "Brigantine Unit NJ-07P (3 of 4)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(91) The map entitled "Brigantine Unit NJ-07P (4 of 4)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(92) The map entitled "Corson's Inlet Unit NJ-08P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(93) The map entitled "Stone Harbor Unit NJ-09/NJ-09P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(94) The map entitled "Two Mile Beach Unit NJ-20P Cape May Unit NJ-10P Higbee Beach Unit NJ-11P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(95) The map entitled "Sunray Beach Unit NJ-21P Del Haven Unit NJ-12/NJ-12P Kimbles Beach Unit NJ-13 Moores Beach Unit NJ-14/NJ-14P (1 of 3)" and dated September 8, 2023.

(96) The map entitled "Moores Beach Unit NJ-14/NJ-14P (2 of 3)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(97) The map entitled "Moores Beach Unit NJ-14/NJ-14P (3 of 3)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(98) The map entitled "Little Creek Unit DE-01/DE-01P (1 of 2) Broadkill Beach Unit H00/H00P (1 of 4)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(99) The map entitled "Broadkill Beach Unit H00/H00P (2 of 4)" and dated September 8, 2023.

(100) The map entitled "Broadkill Beach Unit H00/H00P (3 of 4)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(101) The map entitled "Broadkill Beach Unit H00/H00P (4 of 4) Beach Plum Island Unit DE-02P" and dated September 8, 2023.

(102) The map entitled "Cape Henlopen Unit DE-03P Silver Lake Unit DE-06" and dated December 18, 2020.

(103) The map entitled "Fenwick Island Unit DE-08P" and dated September 8, 2023.

(104) The map entitled "Bombay Hook Unit DE-11P (2 of 2) Little Creek Unit DE-01P (2 of 2)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(105) The map entitled "Assateague Island Unit MD-01P (1 of 3)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(106) The map entitled "Assateague Island Unit MD-01P (2 of 3)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(107) The map entitled "Assateague Island Unit MD-01P (3 of 3)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(108) The map entitled "Fair Island Unit MD-02 Sound Shore Unit MD-03/MD-03P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(109) The map entitled "Cedar/Janes Islands Unit MD-04P (1 of 2) Joes Cove Unit MD-06 (1 of 2)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(110) The map entitled "Cedar/Janes Islands Unit MD-04P (2 of 2) Scott Point Unit MD-07P, Hazard Island Unit MD-08P St. Pierre Point Unit MD-09P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(111) The map entitled "Little Deal Island Unit MD-11 Deal Island Unit MD-12 Franks Island Unit MD-14/MD-14P Long Point Unit MD-15" and dated December 18, 2020.

(112) The map entitled "Stump Point Unit MD-16" and dated December 18, 2020.

(113) The map entitled "Martin Unit MD-17P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(114) The map entitled "Marsh Island Unit MD-18P Holland Island Unit MD-19" and dated December 18, 2020.

(115) The map entitled "Jenny Island Unit MD-20 Lower Hooper Island Unit MD-58" and dated December 18, 2020.

(116) The map entitled "Barren Island Unit MD-21P Meekins Neck Unit MD-59" and dated December 18, 2020.

(117) The map entitled "Hooper Point Unit MD-22 Covey Creek Unit MD-24" and dated December 18, 2020.

(118) The map entitled "Boone Creek Unit MD-26 Benoni Point Unit MD-27 Chlora Point Unit MD-60" and dated December 18, 2020.

(119) The map entitled "Lowes Point Unit MD-28 Rich Neck Unit MD-29 Kent Point Unit MD-30" and dated December 18, 2020.

(120) The map entitled "Stevensville Unit MD-32 Wesley Church Unit MD-33 Eastern Neck Island Unit MD-34P Wilson Point Unit MD-35" and dated December 18, 2020.

(121) The map entitled "Tanner Creek Unit MD-47 Point Lookout Unit MD-48P Potter Creek Unit MD-63 Bisco Creek Unit MD-49" and dated December 18, 2020.

(122) The map entitled "Biscoe Pond Unit MD-61P, Carroll Pond Unit MD-62 St. Clarence Creek Unit MD-44 Deep Point Unit MD-45, Point Look-In Unit MD-46 Chicken Cock Creek Unit MD-50" and dated December 18, 2020.

(123) The map entitled "Drum Point Unit MD-39 Lewis Creek Unit MD-40 Green Holly Pond Unit MD-41" and dated December 18, 2020.

(124) The map entitled "Flag Ponds Unit MD-37P Cove Point Marsh Unit MD-38/MD-38P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(125) The map entitled "Cherryfield Unit MD-64, Piney Point Creek Unit MD-51 McKay Cove Unit MD-52, Blake Creek Unit MD-53 Belvedere Creek Unit MD-54" and dated December 18, 2020.

(126) The map entitled "St. Clements Island Unit MD-55P St. Catherine Island Unit MD-56" and dated December 18, 2020.

(127) The map entitled "Assateague Island Unit VA-01P (1 of 4)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(128) The map entitled "Assateague Island Unit VA-01P (2 of 4)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(129) The map entitled "Assateague Island Unit VA-01P (3 of 4)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(130) The map entitled "Assateague Island Unit VA-01P (4 of 4) Assawoman Island Unit VA-02P (1 of 3)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(131) The map entitled "Assawoman Island Unit VA-02P (2 of 3)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(132) The map entitled "Assawoman Island Unit VA-02P (3 of 3) Metompkin Island Unit VA-03P Cedar Island Unit K03 (1 of 3)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(133) The map entitled "Cedar Island Unit K03 (2 of 3) Parramore/Hog/Cobb Islands Unit VA-04P (1 of 5)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(134) The map entitled "Cedar Island Unit K03 (3 of 3) Parramore/Hog/Cobb Islands Unit VA-04P (2 of 5)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(135) The map entitled "Parramore/Hog/Cobb Islands Unit VA-04P (3 of 5)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(136) The map entitled "Parramore/Hog/Cobb Islands Unit VA-04P (4 of 5)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(137) The map entitled "Parramore/Hog/Cobb Islands Unit VA-04P (5 of 5) Little Cobb Island Unit K04 Wreck Island Unit VA-05P (1 of 4)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(138) The map entitled "Wreck Island Unit VA-05P (2 of 4)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(139) The map entitled "Wreck Island Unit VA-05P (3 of 4) Smith Island Unit VA-06P (1 of 3)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(140) The map entitled "Wreck Island Unit VA-05P (4 of 4) Smith Island Unit VA-06P (2 of 3) Fishermans Island Unit K05/K05P (1 of 2)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(141) The map entitled "Smith Island Unit VA-06P (3 of 3) Fishermans Island Unit K05/K05P (2 of 2)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(142) The map entitled "Elliotts Creek Unit VA-09 Old Plantation Creek Unit VA-10 Wescoat Point Unit VA-11" and dated December 18, 2020.

(143) The map entitled "Great Neck Unit VA-12 Westerhouse Creek Unit VA-13 Shoot- ing Point Unit VA-14" and dated December 18, 2020.

(144) The map entitled "Scarborough Neck Unit VA-16/VA-16P Craddock Neck Unit VA-17/VA-17P (1 of 2)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(145) The map entitled "Craddock Neck Unit VA-17 (2 of 2) Hacks Neck Unit VA-18 Parkers/Finneys Islands Unit VA-19 Parkers Marsh Unit VA-20/VA-20P (1 of 3)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(146) The map entitled "Parkers Marsh Unit VA-20 (2 of 3) Beach Island Unit VA-21 (1 of 2) Russell Island Unit VA-22/VA-22P Simpson Bend Unit VA-23" and dated December 18, 2020.

(147) The map entitled "Parkers Marsh Unit VA-20/VA-20P (3 of 3) Beach Island Unit VA-21 (2 of 2) Watts Island Unit VA-27" and dated December 18, 2020.

(148) The map entitled "Drum Bay Unit VA-24" and dated December 18, 2020.

(149) The map entitled "Fox Islands Unit VA-25" and dated December 18, 2020.

(150) The map entitled "Cheeseman Island Unit VA-26" and dated December 18, 2020.

(151) The map entitled "Tangier Island Unit VA-28/VA-28P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(152) The map entitled "Elbow Point Unit VA-29 White Point Unit VA-30 Cabin Point Unit VA-31 Glebe Point Unit VA-32" and dated December 18, 2020.

(153) The map entitled "Sandy Point Unit VA-33 Judith Sound Unit VA-34" and dated December 18, 2020.

(154) The map entitled "Cod Creek Unit VA-35 Presley Creek Unit VA-36 Cordreys Beach Unit VA-37 Marshalls Beach Unit VA-38" and dated December 18, 2020.

(155) The map entitled "Ginny Beach Unit VA-39P, Gaskin Pond Unit VA-40 Owens Pond Unit VA-41, Chesapeake Beach Unit VA-42 Fleet Point Unit VA-43 Bussel Point Unit VA-44" and dated December 18, 2020.

(156) The map entitled "Harveys Creek Unit VA-45, Dameron Marsh Unit VA-63P Ingram Cove Unit VA-46 Bluff Point Neck Unit VA-47/VA-47P Barnes Creek Unit VA-48" and dated December 18, 2020.

(157) The map entitled "Little Bay Unit VA-64, North Point Unit VA-49 White Marsh Unit VA-65P, Windmill Point Unit VA-50 Deep Hole Point Unit VA-51, Sturgeon Creek Unit VA-52 Jackson Creek Unit VA-53" and dated December 18, 2020.

(158) The map entitled "Rigby Island/Bethel Beach Unit VA-55/VA-55P (1 of 2)" and dated May 21, 2024.

(159) The map entitled "Rigby Island/Bethel Beach Unit VA-55 (2 of 2) New Point Com- fort Unit VA-56" and dated May 21, 2024.

(160) The map entitled "Lone Point Unit VA-66 Oldhouse Creek Unit VA-67 Ware Neck Unit VA-57 Severn River Unit VA-58 (1 of 2)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(161) The map entitled "Severn River Unit VA-58 (2 of 2) Bay Tree Beach Unit VA-68/VA-68P Plum Tree Island Unit VA-59P (1 of 2)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(162) The map entitled "Plum Tree Island Unit VA-59P (2 of 2) Long Creek Unit VA-60/VA-60P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(163) The map entitled "Cape Henry Unit VA-61P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(164) The map entitled "Back Bay Unit VA-62P (1 of 2)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(165) The map entitled "Back Bay Unit VA-62P (2 of 2)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(166) The map entitled "Onslow Beach Complex L05 (2 of 2) Topsail Unit L06 (1 of 2)" and dated April 30, 2021.

(167) The map entitled "Morris Island Complex M06/M06P" and dated April 29, 2021.

(168) The map entitled "Hunting Island Unit SC-09P (1 of 2) Harbor Island Unit M11 (1 of 2) St. Phillips Island Unit M12/M12P (1 of 3)" and dated April 29, 2021.

(169) The map entitled "Hunting Island Unit SC-09P (2 of 2) Harbor Island Unit M11 (2 of 2) St. Phillips Island Unit M12/M12P (2 of 3)" and dated April 29, 2021.

(170) The map entitled "St. Phillips Island Unit M12 (3 of 3)" and dated April 29, 2021.

(171) The map entitled "Grayton Beach Unit FL-95P Draper Lake Unit FL-96" and dated April 30, 2021.

(172) The map entitled "Moreno Point Unit P32/P32P" and dated April 29, 2021.

(173) The map entitled "Isle au Pitre Unit LA-01" and dated March 18, 2016.

(174) The map entitled "Half Moon Island Unit LA-02" and dated March 18, 2016.

(175) The map entitled "Timbalier Bay Unit S04 Timbalier Islands Unit S05 (1 of 3)" and dated March 18, 2016.

(176) The map entitled "Timbalier Islands Unit S05 (2 of 3)" and dated March 18, 2016.

(177) The map entitled "Timbalier Islands Unit S05 (3 of 3)" and dated March 18, 2016.

(178) The map entitled "Isles Dernieres Unit S06 (1 of 3)" and dated March 18, 2016.

(179) The map entitled "Isles Dernieres Unit S06 (2 of 3)" and dated March 18, 2016.

(180) The map entitled "Isles Dernieres Unit S06 (3 of 3)" and dated March 18, 2016.

(181) The map entitled "Point au Fer Unit S07 (1 of 4)" and dated March 18, 2016.

(182) The map entitled "Point au Fer Unit S07 (2 of 4)" and dated March 18, 2016.

(183) The map entitled "Point au Fer Unit S07 (3 of 4)" and dated March 18, 2016.

(184) The map entitled "Point au Fer Unit S07 (4 of 4)" and dated March 18, 2016.

(b) NEW MAPS DESCRIBED.—The maps referred to in section 4(a)(2) of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3503(a)(2)), as amended by this Act, are the following:

(1) The map entitled "Odiorne Point Unit NH-01P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(2) The map entitled "Guilford Harbor Unit CT-19P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(3) The map entitled "Silver Sands Unit CT-21P" and dated May 21, 2024.

(4) The map entitled "Calf Islands Unit CT-20P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(5) The map entitled "Malibu Beach Unit NJ-19P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(6) The map entitled "Egg Island Unit NJ-22P (1 of 2)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(7) The map entitled "Egg Island Unit NJ-22P (2 of 2) Dix Unit NJ-23P (1 of 3)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(8) The map entitled "Dix Unit NJ-23P (2 of 3)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(9) The map entitled "Dix Unit NJ-23P (3 of 3) Greenwich Unit NJ-24P" and dated December 18, 2020.

(10) The map entitled "Woodland Beach Unit DE-09P Fraland Beach Unit DE-10 Bombay Hook Unit DE-11P (1 of 2)" and dated December 18, 2020.

(11) The map entitled "Swan Point Unit MD-65 Lower Cedar Point Unit MD-66" and dated December 18, 2020.

(c) AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary of the Interior shall keep the maps described in subsections (a) and (b) on file and available for inspection in accordance with section 4(b) of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3503(b)).

(d) SPECIAL UNIT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—"Squaw Island Unit C14" of the System, as depicted on the maps referred to in section 4(a) of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3503(a)), as amended by this Act, is designated as "Halls Island Unit C14" and in revising such maps under that section, the Secretary of the Interior shall so identify that unit.

(2) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to "Squaw Island

Unit C14" is deemed to be a reference to "Halls Island Unit C14".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 5490, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of Mrs. KIGGANS' bill, the BEACH Act, which would reauthorize and amend the Coastal Barrier Resources Act, or CBRA.

Congress passed CBRA in 1982 to restrict the use of new Federal funding that may encourage development on or around certain coastal barriers. The intention of these restrictions is to minimize the loss of human life, wasteful expenditure of Federal revenues, and the damage to fish, wildlife, and other natural resources associated with the coastal barriers.

H.R. 5490 would reauthorize CBRA and codify new maps that were recently proposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In addition, H.R. 5490 makes critical reforms to the underlying CBRA statute that will benefit coastal home buyers. Specifically, the bill would require owners who are selling or leasing property in a CBRA zone to disclose that the property is in a CBRA zone to the buyer or lessee. This is a much-needed transparency measure that is long overdue.

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

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5490, the Bolstering Ecosystems Against Coastal Harm Act, or BEACH Act.

As background, the bipartisan 1982 Coastal Barrier Resources Act established the John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System to identify hazard-prone coastal areas along the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Great Lakes coasts where development should not be encouraged.

The Federal Government had been subsidizing and encouraging development on coastal barriers, resulting in the loss of natural resources; threats to human life, health, and property; and the expenditure of millions of tax dollars each year.

The Coastal Barrier Resources Act, or CBRA, sought to stop this cycle of risky investments in undeveloped areas.

Deterring overly high levels of development on coastal barriers is even more critical now because, as we all should know, the climate crisis is upon us. These areas face increased risks from sea-level rise, flooding, erosion, storm surge, and more intense and frequent coastal storms.

In 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service started updating the CBRA system maps in the States affected by Hurricane Sandy: Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Virginia, and my home State of New York. Together, these areas comprise 42 percent of the total existing units and 16 percent of the entire current acreage of the system.

The modernized maps correct errors affecting property owners. They add new qualifying areas to the system. They provide more accurate and accessible data for planning coastal infrastructure projects, habitat conservation efforts, and flood risk mitigation measures.

The bill we are discussing today would amend CBRA by enacting the Hurricane Sandy maps, requiring disclosure to prospective buyers that a property is in the system, and clarifying Federal expenditures in certain areas.

It would also direct the Fish and Wildlife Service to study how coastal barriers are moving and changing because of climate change, which will inform future work by Congress and the Service to make sure the Coastal Barrier Resources Act continues to protect coastal communities from hazards.

The policies and language contained in the bill are the culmination of years of work by Republicans and Democrats in both the House and Senate, as well as the Fish and Wildlife Service and stakeholders. The text was carefully negotiated so that this bill could pass through both Chambers and be signed by the President before the end of this year.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the bill's sponsors, Representative KIGGANS and BLUNT-ROCHESTER, for their thoughtful work.

I would like to note for the record that one provision in this carefully negotiated text resulted in considerable back and forth with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It is our committee's understanding, based on conversations with the Army Corps, that the amendment to the Coastal Barrier Resources Act included in section 104(1)(B) of the bill applies to the following four projects: one, the Townsends Inlet to Cape May Inlet, New Jersey project for coastal storm risk management and emergency response purposes; two, the Folly Beach, South Carolina, coastal storm risk management project; three, the Carolina Beach and vicinity, North Carolina coastal storm risk management project; and, four, the Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, coastal storm risk management project.

To the best of the Corps' knowledge, no other projects would be included now or in the future.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS), who is the sponsor of the bill.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of my bill, the Bolstering Ecosystems Against Coastal Harm Act, nicknamed the BEACH Act, after the important role it will play in protecting our Nation's shorelines.

The BEACH Act would allow us to carry on the mission of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act.

Signed into law by President Reagan in 1982, the Coastal Barrier Resources Act bans most Federal tax dollars for development on storm-prone, ecologically sensitive coastal areas, helps conserve wildlife habitat, and maintains natural buffers against storms and flooding for coastal communities.

Importantly, this commonsense law does not prohibit or regulate development by State and local governments or by private landowners. It simply removes the Federal taxpayer from funding coastal development in sensitive areas, which is a conservative, market-based approach to conservation.

For 40 years, the Coastal Barrier Resources Act has not only protected millions of acres of beaches and wetlands along the East and Gulf Coasts, but it has also prevented billions of dollars in property damage from natural disasters like hurricanes and undoubtedly saved lives.

Virginia is home to over 7,000 miles of shoreline, a large majority of which falls within the Second District, which I am proud to represent here in Congress. These coastal areas play a crucial role in the Commonwealth's cultural identity and economic success.

In April 2022, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service identified nearly 100,000 new acres in Virginia to include in the Coastal Barrier Resources System.

Keeping the maps in this system up to date is essential to reflect changes in barrier configurations, such as the ones off the coast of the Eastern Shore of Virginia; to identify new sensitive areas for inclusion; and to ensure the most effective conservation of our shoreline.

I introduced the BEACH Act to approve these updated maps so we can make our coastal communities more resilient while maintaining fiscal responsibility and critical environmental protections.

We owe it to ourselves and to future generations to take care of the world we live in. Responsible conservation policies like the BEACH Act are an important step in the right direction to accomplishing that goal.

Mr. Speaker, I hope those on both sides of the aisle recognize the need for the BEACH Act, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, I am prepared to close, and I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, coastal barriers are important for the protection of coastal communities and for wildlife habitat. The BEACH Act balances these two needs by reauthorizing and amending CBRA to recognize the changes to coastal barriers that have taken place over time. The bill would also benefit coastal communities by providing much-needed transparency.

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague, Mrs. KIGGANS, for her great work on the bill. I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5490, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GEOOTHERMAL ENERGY OPPORTUNITY ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7370) to amend the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 to establish a deadline for processing applications related to geothermal leasing, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7370

*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 “Geothermal Energy Opportunity Act” or the “GEO Act”.*

#### SEC. 2. EFFECT OF PENDING CIVIL ACTIONS ON PROCESSING APPLICATIONS RELATED TO GEOTHERMAL LEASING.

*Section 4 of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1003) is amended by adding at the end the following:*

#### “(h) EFFECT OF PENDING CIVIL ACTIONS ON PROCESSING APPLICATIONS RELATED TO GEOTHERMAL LEASING.—

*“(1) REQUIREMENT TO PROCESS APPLICATIONS.—Notwithstanding the existence of any pending civil action that affects an application for a geothermal drilling permit, sundry notice, notice to proceed, right-of-way, or any other authorization under a valid existing geothermal lease, the Secretary shall, unless a United States Federal court vacates or provides injunctive relief for the applicable geothermal lease, geothermal drilling permit, sundry notice, notice to proceed, right-of-way, or other authorization, approve and issue, or deny, each such application not later than 60 days after completing all requirements under applicable Federal laws and regulations, including the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Endangered Spe-*

*cies Act of 1973, and division A of subtitle III of title 54, United States Code.*

*“(2) NO NEW AUTHORITY FOR FEDERAL COURTS.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as modifying any existing authority of a Federal court to vacate or provide injunctive relief for a geothermal lease, geothermal drilling permit, sundry notice, notice to proceed, right-of-way, or other authorization.*

*“(3) DEFINITION OF AUTHORIZATION.—In this subsection, the term ‘authorization’ means any license, permit, approval, finding, determination, or other administrative decision issued by a Federal agency, or any interagency consultation, that is required or authorized under Federal law or regulations in order to site, construct, reconstruct, or commence operations of a geothermal project administered by a Federal agency.”.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

□ 1845

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 7370, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7370, the Geothermal Energy Opportunity Act. Geothermal power has serious potential for growth in this country. In fact, DOE estimates that next-generation geothermal technologies, like enhanced geothermal systems, could provide up to 90 gigawatts of reliable baseload energy by 2050.

The best geothermal resources are located out West on Federal lands, and we must do all we can to ensure that bureaucratic red tape does not hamper the development of this resource moving forward.

H.R. 7370, the GEO Act, introduced by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CURTIS), requires the Bureau of Land Management to process geothermal permits and authorizations unless a Federal court says otherwise.

In some cases, the Biden administration has stopped processing permits and authorizations for geothermal and oil and gas projects solely because of the threat of litigation or because they have unilaterally decided to wait for the appearance of new information.

Often, this delay tactic is meant to appease radical special interest groups who wish to stop all energy development on Federal lands and whose former employees have infiltrated the Department.

Simply put, agencies should continue to move projects forward until they are directed otherwise by a court, and

agencies should defend their work in court.

Geothermal energy is becoming easier to produce every day, thanks to enhanced geothermal systems and the advanced methods these developers have borrowed from the oil and gas industry.

We cannot allow the mere threat of frivolous litigation to hamper domestic energy production. This bill would address concerns voiced by the Bureau of Land Management during our hearing to ensure they can comply with existing laws.

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

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill led by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CURTIS), H.R. 7370, the GEO Act.

The GEO Act would support the efficient approval of geothermal permit applications without sacrificing thorough review under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act.

I thank Republicans for their willingness to work across the aisle on improvements to this legislation. Through this bipartisan work, we were able to safeguard important community protections to ensure compliance with Federal laws. This way, we can ensure projects are built in a way that is safe for the communities and the environment.

We have also updated the timelines for approval so that we equip the Bureau of Land Management with adequate time to process applications. With these safeguards in place, this bill takes a step toward sustainably building a clean-energy future that centers our people and our planet.

Geothermal energy will play an especially important role in this clean-energy future. Geothermal has the smallest footprint of any energy-generation technology and uses significantly fewer resources than other sources, especially conventional fossil fuels.

According to the Department of Energy, geothermal uses about 1 to 8 acres per megawatt versus 5 to 10 acres per megawatt for nuclear operations and 19 acres per megawatt for a coal power plant.

Deploying more geothermal will allow us to protect strained resources while protecting the clean energy we know we need, and the GEO Act will assist in the deployment of this exciting technology by ensuring timeliness in permit-approval processes for geothermal energy.

Importantly, it does so without sacrificing the holistic review of environmental and community impacts during the permitting process. It is because of this that I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from

Utah (Mr. CURTIS), the lead sponsor of the bill.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, the GEO Act. Utah is a leader in geothermal energy, but many companies are being held back by the current regulatory environment.

My bill simply requires the Department of the Interior to continue issuing all authorizations as long as the underlying lease remains unchallenged. Geothermal energy is affordable, reliable, and clean energy.

After companies have invested substantial time and resources in obtaining permits, the Department of the Interior sometimes withholds notices to proceed, drilling permits, and other authorizations due to litigation threats against the project.

To be clear, these pauses have occurred without any evidence of wrongdoing by the Department of the Interior or the operators. Instead, they result from unsubstantiated threats made by private organizations. This isn't sustainable if we want geothermal to be part of our clean-energy future.

The chart to my right demonstrates how important this is throughout the West, particularly rural parts of the West, where economic development can be enhanced dramatically by these projects.

The Department of Energy projects that enhanced geothermal systems could contribute up to 90 gigawatts of electricity by 2050, accounting for almost 9 percent of U.S. energy-generation capacity.

Utah is a case study in geothermal energy, and I was proud to support the establishment of Utah FORGE in southern Utah, a dedicated underground field laboratory sponsored by the Department of Energy focused on developing, testing, and accelerating geothermal breakthroughs.

Mr. Speaker, the GEO Act is a critical step toward ensuring that Utah and the United States lead in geothermal energy and technology.

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

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CURTIS) for working on this commonsense piece of legislation. Again, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7370, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GREAT SALT LAKE STEWARDSHIP ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4094) to amend the Central Utah Project Completion Act to authorize expenditures for the conduct of certain water conservation measures in the Great Salt Lake basin, and for other purposes.

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

H.R. 4094

*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 "Great Salt Lake Stewardship Act".

#### SEC. 2. WATER CONSERVATION MEASURES IN THE GREAT SALT LAKE BASIN.

Title II of the Central Utah Project Completion Act (Public Law 102-575; 106 Stat. 4605) is amended by adding at the end the following:

#### “SEC. 213. WATER CONSERVATION MEASURES IN THE GREAT SALT LAKE BASIN.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may use any unexpended budget authority provided under subsections (a)(2) and (c) of section 202 for the conduct of water conservation measures within the Great Salt Lake basin in accordance with section 207.

“(b) COMPLIANCE WITH DEFINITE PLAN REPORT.—Any water conservation measure conducted under subsection (a) shall be considered to be compliant with the Definite Plan Report completed under section 205(a).”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4094, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the legislation led by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CURTIS), which amends the Central Utah Project Completion Act.

As we all know, the Great Salt Lake is one of Utah's most famous natural resources. In recent years, however, the lake levels have dropped to historic lows, posing a threat to the lake's ecosystem, local air quality, and the prosperity of surrounding communities.

Mr. CURTIS' legislation would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to use Central Utah Project funds toward new water conservation measures to help recover the Great Salt Lake.

Importantly, this bill does not require any new spending authorizations. I thank Representative CURTIS and the rest of Utah's congressional delegation for their leadership on this issue.

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

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4094, the Great Salt Lake Stewardship Act, would authorize expenditures and funding for water conservation measures within the Great Salt Lake basin.

As drought conditions continue to worsen with climate change, the impacts are being felt throughout the West. One key example of the adverse consequences of climate change is the Great Salt Lake, which has been rapidly declining over the past few decades. In 2022, the lake reached all-time historic low water levels, presenting serious ecological concerns.

The declines in the lake's water levels have threatened ecosystem health, disrupted bird migration, and led to concerns of exposure of toxic arsenic lake dust within the lake bottom, which could be carried out with the wind.

The bill we are considering today seeks to address these serious ecological concerns by amending the Central Utah Project Completion Act to provide additional flexibility needed to redirect and authorize unexpended funds, specifically to support water conservation measures under the Water Management Improvement Program in the basin, and expand the program service area.

The Great Salt Lake is only one example of the harms that climate change presents to communities and wildlife across the West. While this legislation is a step forward, Congress must be doing more to combat climate change and drought.

This bill is a great step, and I urge my colleagues to support it, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CURTIS), the sponsor of the bill.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, the Great Salt Lake Stewardship Act.

The Great Salt Lake is essential to the ecological and economic fabric of Utah. Residents have worked tirelessly to protect the lake, but severe drought now threatens its long-term survival.

Recognizing this urgent challenge, the Great Salt Lake Stewardship Act would extend the existing Colorado River Water Conservation Program to include the Great Salt Lake. This would grant the Secretary of the Interior greater flexibility to allocate unused funds from other sections of the Central Utah Project Completion Act, also known as CUPCA, to the water conservation program.

By expanding the program's geographical scope to cover the entire Great Salt Lake drainage basin, the bill would support State government of Utah, local communities, and water districts north of Salt Lake County in their conservation efforts to replenish the lake.

The Great Salt Lake is a national treasure and a vital part of Utah's way of life. The bill demonstrates our commitment to protecting this valuable resource without requiring new Federal funds.

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

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this commonsense legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4094.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### LAKE WINNIBIGOSHISH LAND EXCHANGE ACT OF 2024

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1657) to provide for a land exchange in the Chippewa National Forest, Minnesota, and for other purposes, as amended.

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

H.R. 1657

*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 "Lake Winnibigoshish Land Exchange Act of 2024".

#### SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) BWLT.—The term "BWLT" means Big Winnie Land and Timber, LLC, a Minnesota Limited Liability Corporation.

(2) MAP.—The term "Map" means the map entitled "Heig Land Exchange" and dated December 14, 2023.

(3) FEDERAL LAND.—The term "Federal land" means the approximately 17.5 acres of Federal land in Itasca County, Minnesota, generally depicted as the "Federal Parcel" on the Map.

(4) NON-FEDERAL LAND.—The term "non-Federal land" means the approximately 36.7 acres of non-Federal land in Itasca County, Minnesota, generally depicted as the "Non-Federal Parcel" on the Map.

(5) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service.

#### SEC. 3. EXCHANGE OF LAND.

(a) EXCHANGE AUTHORIZED.—Subject to the provisions of this Act, if BWLT offers to con-

vey the non-Federal land to the United States, the Secretary shall, not later than 1 year after the date on which such offer is made—

- (1) accept the offer;
- (2) convey to BWLT all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the Federal land, excepting and reserving an easement for road access to National Forest System land west of the Federal Parcel; and
- (3) accept from BWLT all right, title, and interest of BWLT in and to the non-Federal land.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—The exchange under subsection (a) shall be—

- (1) conditioned on title approval for the non-Federal land by the Secretary in accordance with subsection (e);

(2) conditioned on a cash equalization payment made by BWLT to the United States in accordance with subsection (c) if, under the appraisals conducted in accordance with this Act, it is determined that the value of the Federal land exceeds the value of the non-Federal land;

(3) conditioned on the satisfactory completion of a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment by BWLT, provided to the Secretary, in advance of the acceptance of the non-Federal parcel;

- (4) subject to valid existing rights; and
- (5) subject to any other terms and conditions the Secretary determines appropriate.

#### (c) EQUAL VALUE AND CASH EQUALIZATION.

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the exchange under subsection (a) shall be for equal value or the values shall be equalized by a cash payment.

(2) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the appraised value of the non-Federal land to be conveyed to the United States exceeds the appraised value of the Federal land, a cash equalization payment by the United States to BWLT is hereby waived and the amount of such waived payment shall be considered a donation by BWLT to the United States for all purposes of law.

#### (d) APPRAISALS.

(1) IN GENERAL.—The value of the land to be exchanged under this Act shall be determined by appraisals conducted by an independent and qualified appraiser mutually agreed to by the Secretary and BWLT.

(2) APPRAISAL STANDARDS.—The Secretary shall complete appraisals of the land to be exchanged under this Act in accordance with—

(A) the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions; and

(B) the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice.

(e) FORMAT.—Title to the non-Federal land to be conveyed to the United States under this Act shall be found sufficient by the Secretary pursuant to section 3111 of title 40, United States Code.

(f) MANAGEMENT OF ACQUIRED LAND.—The non-Federal land acquired by the United States under subsection (a) shall be—

(1) added to, and managed as part of, the Chippewa National Forest; and

(2) managed in accordance with the laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to National Forest System lands.

#### (g) MAP AND LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.

(1) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall finalize the Map and legal descriptions of all land to be conveyed under this Act.

(2) CONTROLLING DOCUMENT.—In the case of a discrepancy between the Map and a legal description, the Map shall control.

(3) CORRECTIONS.—The Secretary and BWLT, by mutual agreement, may correct any minor errors in the Map or in the legal descriptions, including with respect to the

boundaries of the Federal land and the non-Federal land.

(4) MAP ON FILE.—The Map and legal descriptions shall be on file and available for public inspection in appropriate offices of the Forest Service.

(h) CLOSING COSTS.—As a condition for the exchange under subsection (a), BWLT shall pay all closing costs associated with the exchange, including for—

- (1) title insurance and title search;
- (2) any applicable inspection fees, escrow fees, attorneys fees, and recording fees; and

(3) any environmental analysis or resource survey required under Federal law, regulation, or policy, including a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment of the non-Federal land.

#### (i) SURVEY.

(1) IN GENERAL.—The exact acreages and legal descriptions of the Federal and non-Federal land to be exchanged under subsection (a) shall be determined by surveys satisfactory to the Secretary.

(2) COSTS OF SURVEY.—BWLT shall bear all costs associated with the surveys under paragraph (1).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1657, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1657, the Lake Winnibigoshish Land Exchange Act of 2024, a bipartisan bill being led by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER).

This commonsense legislation will authorize the U.S. Forest Service to enter into a land exchange with the Bowen Lodge, a family-operated resort on the shores of Lake Winnibigoshish in northern Minnesota.

Exchanging parcels between the Chippewa National Forest and the Bowen Lodge will create a win-win scenario. The lodge will gain permanent access to the lake, and the Forest Service will be able to reconfigure part of its unwieldy checkerboard pattern of land ownership.

This change will provide excellent fishing and recreation opportunities for the local community and improve management efficiencies for the Federal Government.

I applaud Representative STAUBER for his leadership in this effort to improve outdoor recreation opportunities for his constituents and for all who have the pleasure of visiting and recreating in northern Minnesota. He has long been a strong advocate for responsible public land management and access for outdoor recreation, and this

legislation is an excellent reflection of that commitment.

Mr. Speaker, I support the bill and reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1900

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1657, introduced by Representative STAUBER, would authorize the U.S. Forest Service to exchange a parcel of Chippewa National Forest land for a parcel of land currently owned by the Big Winnie Land and Timber company in Minnesota.

The Forest Service parcel is commercially zoned and already leased annually for the management and operation of a marina and resort, so the land exchange is designed to ease and simplify management.

In exchange for the land that includes the marina, the Forest Service will receive a parcel that consolidates ownership in the Chippewa National Forest, providing for better land management of undisturbed sites, critical wetlands, and wildlife habitat that are currently adjacent to Federal lands. In turn, Big Winnie will continue management and operation of the marina and resort for continued visitor and commercial activity.

This bill is a commonsense solution that follows the standard protocols for these types of transactions.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for working with us to incorporate feedback from the Forest Service, including extending the timeline to allow for the completion of the exchange.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 1657, the Lake Winnibigoshish Land Exchange Act of 2024.

Lake Winnibigoshish, or Lake Winnie as it is also known, is located within the boundaries of the Chippewa National Forest and is home to Bowen Lodge, a premier, family-owned fishing lodge. Bowen Lodge has been in operation and welcoming patrons since 1925.

For the past four decades, Bill and Gail Heig and their family have operated Bowen Lodge, serving as incredible stewards of Lake Winnie and providing incredible fishing and vacation memories for Minnesotans and other out-of-towners over the years.

Currently, Bowen Lodge has a 20-year agreement with the U.S. Forest Service to lease 17½ acres of shoreline along the lake, where they operate their marina. Under the Heigs’ stewardship, Lake Winnie has remained accessible to the citizens of Itasca County and the many people who visit.

Notably, the Heigs purchased extra acreage in 2021 after an out-of-State mega-resort developer sought to pur-

chase a parcel of land, which would have changed the face of Lake Winnie forever. Now, Bowen Lodge is seeking to convey this extra acreage to the Chippewa National Forest.

It is in the best interest of the public that the Forest Service take stewardship of this land, rather than out-of-State developers that may not prioritize public access for our local community.

Additionally, this land will make it easier for the Forest Service to access and responsibly maintain their other acreage in the area.

The bill before us today would facilitate the land exchange between Bowen Lodge and the Forest Service: 17 acres of shoreline to Bowen Lodge so they can continue to operate their marina in exchange for 37 acres of nearby land to the Forest Service, which would then be added to the Chippewa National Forest.

This exchange would better align proper boundaries, put the right acreage under the right management, and ensure Minnesotans have the ability to boat, fish, and enjoy beautiful Lake Winnie.

Thanks to the Heigs’ quick thinking and strong advocacy, our way of life will be preserved.

I am proud that this land exchange is supported by local communities in Itasca County, including the local county board of supervisors that testified in support of the bill before the Natural Resources Committee last fall as well as the Mississippi Headwaters Board and other local environmental organizations. It is also supported by the U.S. Forest Service and leadership of the Chippewa National Forest.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, this is a commonsense bill that will benefit the people of northern Minnesota and our public lands. Once again, I applaud Representative STAUBER for his work on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MORAN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1657, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### MOUNTAIN VIEW CORRIDOR COMPLETION ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2468) to require the Secretary

of the Interior to convey to the State of Utah certain Federal land under the administrative jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management within the boundaries of Camp Williams, Utah, and for other purposes, as amended.

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

H.R. 2468

*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 “Mountain View Corridor Completion Act”.*

#### SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

*In this Act:*

*(1) COVERED LAND.—The term “covered land” means the approximately 200.18 acres of land depicted as “Land Proposed for Conveyance” on the map entitled “Mountain View Corridor Completion Act” and dated October 6, 2023.*

*(2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management.*

*(3) STATE.—The term “State” means the State of Utah.*

#### SEC. 3. CONVEYANCE OF BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT LAND TO STATE OF UTAH.

*(a) CONVEYANCE REQUIRED.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall convey to the State all rights, title, and interest of the United States in and to the covered land.*

##### *(b) REQUIREMENTS.—*

*(1) IN GENERAL.—The conveyance of the covered land under this section shall be subject to valid existing rights.*

*(2) PAYMENT OF FAIR MARKET VALUE.—As consideration for the conveyance of the covered land under this section, the State shall pay to the Secretary an amount equal to the fair market value of the covered land, as determined—*

*(A) in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.); and*

*(B) based on an appraisal that is conducted in accordance with—*

*(i) the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions; and*

*(ii) the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice.*

*(c) APPLICATION OF EXECUTIVE ORDER.—Executive Order 1922 of April 24, 1914, as modified by section 907 of the Camp W.G. Williams Land Exchange Act of 1989 (Public Law 101-628; 104 Stat. 4500), shall not apply to the covered land.*

##### *(d) MAP AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION.*

*(1) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall finalize a map and a legal description of the covered land to be conveyed under this section.*

*(2) CONTROLLING DOCUMENT.—In the case of a discrepancy between the map and legal description finalized under paragraph (1), the map shall control.*

*(3) CORRECTIONS.—The Secretary and the State, by mutual agreement, may correct minor errors in the map or the legal description finalized under paragraph (1).*

*(4) MAP ON FILE.—The map and legal description finalized under paragraph (1) shall be kept on file and available for public inspection in each appropriate office of the Bureau of Land Management.*

*(e) REVERSIONARY INTEREST.—If the Secretary, after consultation with the State, determines that the covered land conveyed under this section was sold, attempted to be sold, or used for non-transportation or non-defenses purposes by the State, all right, title, and interest in and to the covered land shall revert to the Secretary, at the discretion of the Secretary, after providing—*

*(1) to the State notice and a hearing or an opportunity to correct any identified deficiencies; and*

(2) to the public notice and an opportunity to comment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2468, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Representative OWENS' bill, the Mountain View Corridor Completion Act.

This legislation would expedite the completion of the Mountain View Corridor by transferring roughly 200 acres from the Bureau of Land Management to the State of Utah to complete the final segment of this large and urgently needed transportation project in Utah.

Finishing the Mountain View Corridor will improve road safety and reduce traffic congestion, results that Utah residents will readily welcome.

Over 60 percent of Utah's land is federally owned. Without these types of conveyances, Western States have limited land they can develop into the homes, schools, and roads that growing communities demand.

H.R. 2468 is an example of Federal agencies, local stakeholders, and Congress successfully collaborating productively to address the problems of a growing population.

I hope this kind of collaboration will continue with all Federal land management issues in Utah and across the West.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Representative OWENS for leading this effort, which will finally deliver the Mountain View Corridor to the growing populations of Salt Lake and Utah Counties. He worked with local communities and stakeholders, including the Utah Department of Transportation, to address this need.

Mr. Speaker, I support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2468, the Mountain View Corridor Completion Act, would authorize the Bureau of Land Management, or BLM, to convey specified BLM lands south of Salt Lake City to the State of Utah to develop new roadways and meet the increasing travel demands of the surrounding area.

The parcels of BLM land under this legislation are currently within the

boundaries of Camp Williams, a military training center for the Utah National Guard, but they are not being actively used or managed by the BLM or the National Guard.

Following the transfer, the Utah Department of Transportation will use the parcels to complete the Mountain View Corridor, a 35-mile highway between the State's most populous counties, Salt Lake County and Utah County. With these parcels, the State will develop new roadways to connect frontage roads and upgrade interchanges. The transfer of these parcels is expected to improve traffic and public safety for the general public and Camp Williams.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes," and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. OWENS), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2468, the Mountain View Corridor Completion Act.

I was pleased to introduce this legislation last year with the support of Utah's entire congressional delegation.

As the Representative of the fastest growing district in the fastest growing State in the Union, I can tell you firsthand that our transportation infrastructure is under significant stress.

Rapid growth brings with it a host of challenges, particularly in the Intermountain West, where over two-thirds of Utah is owned or controlled by various Federal agencies.

This bill addresses one of those challenges, the need to connect our communities with federally owned land.

The Utah Department of Transportation, UDOT, has anticipated significant population growth for decades, and over 15 years ago, they initiated the Mountain View Corridor project. This crucial corridor connects eastern Utah County with southwestern Salt Lake County and passes through Camp Williams, an important military training installation managed by the U.S. Army National Guard.

The existing road is vital, serving as the only public access to the headquarters of the Utah National Guard complex and providing essential access to the National Security Agency's datacenter.

While two-thirds of Mountain View Corridor has been completed, the final third requires UDOT to acquire three separate, irregular parcels of Federal land to link 36 acres currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

However, because these parcels are situated within the boundaries of an active military reservation established by a 1914 executive order, the BLM lacks the authority to transfer this land. That is why we are here today.

I am proud to report that the Utah National Guard fully supports this project and has collaborated exten-

sively with UDOT and BLM to determine the most effective alignment for the corridor.

This bill has already gone through a hearing and a markup in the House Natural Resources Committee. I am grateful for the support of my friend, Chairman WESTERMAN.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of this legislation to help Utah complete this vital transportation project 15 years in the making.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, this is straightforward, commonsense legislation done correctly by prioritizing engagement with local stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2468, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### HOLCOMBE RUCKER PARK NATIONAL COMMEMORATIVE SITE ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6852) to designate Holcombe Rucker Park, in Harlem, New York, as a National Commemorative Site, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6852

*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 "Holcombe Rucker Park National Commemorative Site Act".*

#### SEC. 2. NATIONAL COMMEMORATIVE SITE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—*Holcombe Rucker Park, in Harlem, New York, is hereby designated as the "Holcombe Rucker Park National Commemorative Site" (referred to in this section as the "Commemorative Site").*

#### (b) ADMINISTRATION.—

(1) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—*The Secretary of the Interior may enter into cooperative agreements with appropriate public or private entities, including the Mayor of New York City or the Mayor's designee, for interpretive and educational purposes related to the Commemorative Site, including installing a plaque, interpretive exhibit, or other marker, as appropriate, at the Commemorative Site, with the written consent of the owner of the Commemorative Site, to memorialize the achievements of Holcombe Rucker and to provide recognition of the historic role of Holcombe Rucker Park in the development of the game of basketball and of many of its most talented players.*

(2) EFFECT OF DESIGNATION.—*The Commemorative Site shall not be a unit of the National Park System.*

## (3) LIMITATIONS.—Nothing in this Act—

(A) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to interfere with the rights of any person with respect to private property or any local zoning ordinance or land use plan of the State of New York or any political subdivision thereof, including prohibiting any actions that may otherwise be taken by a property owner (including any owner of the Commemorative Site) with respect to the property of the owner;

(B) affects the administration of the Commemorative Site by New York City or the State of New York; or

(C) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to acquire land or interests in land through condemnation or otherwise.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

## GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 6852, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, Representative ESPAILLAT's bill, the Holcombe Rucker Park National Commemorative Site Act, will designate the historic Holcombe Rucker Park in New York City as a National Commemorative Site.

Located in the heart of New York City's Harlem neighborhood, Holcombe Rucker Park is a historically significant basketball destination that has hosted legendary basketball players such as Wilt Chamberlain, Kobe Bryant, and LeBron James.

Once described as the Mecca of Basketball, the park has appeared in many documentaries as the birthplace of streetball, a unique form of basketball that emphasizes creativity.

The park's namesake, Holcombe Rucker, was a highly influential figure in his community, and he helped over 700 children receive college scholarships for athletics.

The legislation before us today, H.R. 6852, would designate Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site. This designation would not affect private property rights, alter the local governance of the park, or make the park a unit of the National Park System. Instead, this bill presents a creative way to honor an important site that has offered generations of Harlem youth a positive outlet for sports, team building, and promoting racial equality.

Mr. Speaker, I support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6852, the Holcombe Rucker Park National Commemorative Site Act, introduced by my colleague from New York City, Representative ESPAILLAT.

Holcombe Rucker Park in Harlem is named in honor of Holcombe Rucker, who dedicated his life to uplifting his community in Harlem through compassion.

A World War II veteran and graduate of the City College of New York, Mr. Rucker returned home from his military service and continued a life in public service as a junior high school teacher and as the playground director for New York City Parks at several parks in Harlem, including the one that now bears his name.

During his tenure at the park, Mr. Rucker not only served as a mentor for the community's youth but was actively engaged in empowering them. He established a youth basketball league to help kids build life skills and to keep them out of trouble in the summer, back at a time when naysayers told him it would never work because basketball was supposedly just a winter sport.

□ 1915

The program was a success. Mr. Rucker held popular, now-legendary tournaments at the park which became the Rucker Tournament. His efforts turned this neighborhood site into what The New York Times has called a "Street Basketball Mecca."

Using the increased visibility, Mr. Rucker went even further and worked to help secure hundreds of college scholarships for the youths he mentored.

Through the establishment of the Rucker Tournament, Mr. Rucker paved the way for future generations of basketball players to grow and build their skills in Harlem and Washington Heights. Many of the players who participated in his tournaments went on to play in the NBA and became legendary players in their own right. The park was renamed in his honor in 1974 and is often affectionately called just "the Rucker."

My friend Mr. ESPAILLAT's bill would recognize the iconic Holcombe Rucker Park and its historical significance in Harlem and around the world by designating it as the Holcombe Rucker Park National Commemorative Site.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, I am prepared to close, and I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT), the sponsor of the bill and my friend, colleague, and fellow New Yorker.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I begin by thanking Chairman BRUCE WESTERMAN, Ranking Member RAÚL

GRIJALVA, and of course, the gentlewoman from New York, my colleague, Congresswoman OCASIO-CORTEZ, subcommittee Chairman TOM TIFFANY, and subcommittee Ranking Member JOE NEGUSE for their leadership on this important matter.

Assistant Minority Leader JOE NEGUSE went to Rucker Park, and he shot a mean three-pointer. In fact, he earned the name "Let It Fly," JOE NEGUSE, over the summer.

I also acknowledge the families and community leaders who have championed this cause: the Rucker family, the Marius family, the McCullough family, Bobby Hunter, who was here in one of the hearings, a Harlem Globetrotter, Freddie Crawford, 155 Entertainers LLC, and so many from Harlem, including Manhattan Community Board 10 Parks Chair Horry. I thank them for their unwavering support and dedication in preserving Holcombe Rucker Park's legacy.

Today, I rise in support of H.R. 6852, the Holcombe Rucker Park National Commemorative Site Act. This legislation is more than just a symbolic gesture. It is a commitment to recognizing the historical and cultural significance of one of Harlem's most cherished landmarks.

In the 1950s, Holcombe Rucker, a World War II veteran and a scholar, had a vision for Harlem's youth. He sought to create a space where children of the Harlem community could find refuge from the street, a space that could not only showcase their athletic talents but also push young people toward higher education and economic mobility.

The Rucker Pro League was not just about basketball. It was about giving back and about mentorship, about lifting each other up.

The "Each One Teach One" program was Rucker's mantra, a motto that resulted in over 700 scholarships for young athletes.

Through his leadership, Rucker transformed the lives of hundreds, instilling in them the importance of academic achievement and community service.

This park has become a cultural institution where the worlds of sports, music, and education converge.

A generation of athletes like Julius "Dr. J" Erving, Kobe Bryant, and LeBron James have graced the court.

Beyond the fame, the real legacy of Rucker Park is in the scholarships, the mentorship, and the opportunities of upward mobility it has created for Harlem's youth.

The bill we are considering tonight will grant Federal recognition to Holcombe Rucker Park, helping to preserve this sacred space for future generations.

It ensures that Rucker's commitment to academic excellence, mentorship, and community empowerment is enshrined in our Nation's history. The recognition will highlight its historical significance and ensure its legacy is preserved.

In closing, let me emphasize that this bill isn't just about a historical basketball court. It is about honoring a man who used basketball as a tool for social change, for empowering young people, and for building a brighter future for his community. It is about continuing the legacy of resilience and empowerment that Holcombe Rucker started decades ago.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 6852. Let's honor the history, the culture, and the transformative impact of Holcombe Rucker Park.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to thank Representative ESPAILLAT for his work on this bill, which honors an important landmark without adding to the Federal estate or using taxpayer resources.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6852, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### CONTINUED RAPID OHIA DEATH RESPONSE ACT OF 2023

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1726) to require the Secretary of the Interior to partner and collaborate with the Secretary of Agriculture and the State of Hawaii to address Rapid Ohia Death, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1726

*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 "Continued Rapid Ohia Death Response Act of 2023".*

#### SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

*In this Act:*

(1) **RAPID OHIA DEATH.**—The term "Rapid Ohia Death" means the disease caused by the fungal pathogen known as *Ceratocystis fimbriata* that affects the tree of the species *Metrosideros polymorpha*.

(2) **STATE.**—The term "State" means the State of Hawaii.

#### SEC. 3. COLLABORATION.

*The Secretary of the Interior shall partner and collaborate with the Secretary of Agriculture and the State to address Rapid Ohia Death.*

#### SEC. 4. SUSTAINED EFFORTS.

(a) **TRANSMISSION.**—The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the United States Geological Survey, and the Chief of the Forest Service, acting through the Forest Service Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry, shall con-

tinue to conduct research on Rapid Ohia Death vectors and transmission.

(b) **UNGULATE MANAGEMENT.**—The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, shall continue to partner with the Secretary of Agriculture, the State, and with local stakeholders to manage ungulates in Rapid Ohia Death control areas on Federal, State, and private land, with the consent of private landowners.

(c) **RESTORATION AND RESEARCH.**—The Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall continue to provide—

(1) financial assistance, including through agreements with the Secretary of the Interior—

(A) to prevent the spread of Rapid Ohia Death; and

(B) to restore the native forests of the State; and

(2) staff and necessary infrastructure funding to the Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry to conduct research on Rapid Ohia Death.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1726, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, Representative TOKUDA's legislation, the Continued Rapid Ohia Death Response Act, directs the Secretary of the Interior to partner and collaborate with the Secretary of Agriculture and the State of Hawaii to address rapid ohia death.

Rapid ohia death is a fungal disease that has devastated Hawaii's ohia tree population. The ohia tree is important ecologically and culturally to Hawaii. Ohias regulate water flow and help prevent soil erosion. The continued loss of ohia trees can have significant economic impacts, including the loss of tourism revenue and increased water treatment and erosion control cost. Unfortunately, there is currently no cure that can help the affected trees.

H.R. 1726 would help address rapid ohia death by focusing Federal and State agencies' efforts on detection, prevention, and restoration efforts for combating this disease.

I recognize Representative TOKUDA for her work on this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,  
Washington, DC, September 15, 2023.

Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,  
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 1726, the "Continued Rapid Ohia Death Response Act of 2023". Thank you for collabo-

rating with the Committee on Agriculture on the matters within our jurisdiction.

The Committee on Agriculture will forego any further consideration of this bill. However, by foregoing consideration at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over any subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. The Committee on Agriculture also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees should it become necessary and ask that you support such a request.

We would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 1726 and request a copy of our letters on this matter be published in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration.

Sincerely,  
GLENN "GT" THOMPSON,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,  
Washington, DC, September 18, 2023.

Hon. GLENN "GT" THOMPSON,  
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write regarding H.R. 1726, the "Continued Rapid Ohia Death Response Act of 2023," which was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on June 21, 2023.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture and appreciate your willingness to forgo any further consideration of the bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Agriculture will not formally consider H.R. 1726 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained therein.

I am pleased to support your request to name members of the Committee on Agriculture to any conference committee to consider such provisions. I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,  
BRUCE WESTERMAN,  
Chairman,  
Committee on Natural Resources.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1726, the Continued Rapid Ohia Death Response Act of 2023, introduced by my colleague from Hawaii, Representative JILL TOKUDA.

This vital legislation addresses the urgent need to combat rapid ohia death, or ROD, which has already led to the loss of over 1 million native ohia lehua trees in Hawaii since its discovery in 2014.

The significance of these trees cannot be overstated. They are Hawaii's most abundant native trees and play a crucial role in preserving the State's unique biodiversity and protecting its ecosystems.

It is essential that we take immediate action to prevent further devastation and ensure the survival of this iconic species.

This bill emphasizes the need for research and aid to enhance our understanding of this deadly fungus and explore innovative solutions to combat its impact.

Furthermore, the bill fosters collaboration between Federal agencies, the State of Hawaii, and local stakeholders.

The comprehensive approach will help mitigate the threat of ROD and protect Hawaii's native forests and ecosystems, so that we can safeguard Hawaii's ohia trees for future generations and preserve the unique ecosystems and rich biodiversity that make our Nation so exceptional.

I commend my colleague, Representative TOKUDA, for championing this important legislation. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bill and reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I am prepared to close. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. TOKUDA), the sponsor of the bill.

Ms. TOKUDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1726, the Continued Rapid Ohia Death Response Act of 2023.

Ohia lehua trees form the backbone of Hawaii's forests and watersheds. It is the first tree that you will see spring up from a recent lava flow.

It grows from the sea level to 8,000 feet, and it protects our communities by literally keeping our mountains from eroding.

Ohia lehua also provides critical habitat for Hawaii's federally endangered forest birds and many other species.

They are what you call a keystone species in Hawaii's forests, and its catastrophic decline has the potential to cause major ecosystem imbalances that would impact watersheds, cultural traditions, natural resources, and the safety and quality of life of our people.

Because of this vital role they play in maintaining Hawaii's forest canopies and watersheds, rapid ohia death, or ROD, poses a lethal threat to the ecological balance and everyday life in our islands.

Initially reported in 2010, ROD has already spread to tens of thousands of acres and killed over a million trees on Hawaii island alone.

Large swaths of dead ohia trees pose a fire risk and a danger and are more prone to habitat-modifying noxious weeds and trees like miconia and strawberry guava, all of which are known to greatly impact watershed health and alter ecosystem function.

Despite efforts to contain the spread of ROD to Hawaii island through restrictions on the movement of plant material and increased sanitation protocols, ROD has now been found on the islands of Oahu, Kauai, and Maui.

Because there is no known cure for ROD, it has the potential to kill off ohia trees statewide and devastate our precious island ecosystems.

While ROD creates acres of deadly fire fuel with its dry and dead trees and poses a critical threat to our native birds, our native forests, watersheds, critically endangered forest birds, and I should note, natural beauty, support for combating ROD has been extremely limited.

For example, the Lyon Arboretum, a local research facility on Oahu, relied on funding through a GoFundMe campaign to further the vital seed banking of ohia lehua.

My bill, the Continued Rapid Ohia Death Response Act, seeks to address ROD and the urgent threat it presents.

The bill requires the Secretary of the Interior to partner and collaborate with the Secretary of Agriculture and the State of Hawaii to address ROD. It also supports ongoing detection, prevention, and restoration efforts to combat rapid ohia death.

I thank Chairman WESTERMAN, Ranking Member GRIJALVA, and especially Federal lands Ranking Member NEGUSE and his staff for their support and assistance on this bill.

We cannot stand alone, and we cannot lose our native forests in Hawaii. It protects and sustains our people and provides critical habitat for native species.

This bill is essential in turning the tide in the fight against rapid ohia death and protecting and preserving ohia lehua and Hawaii's unique ecosystems for our future generations.

I thank again all who have supported it, and I urge my colleagues to vote "yes".

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, the ohia tree is important to Hawaii's ecosystem, people, and the economy. This legislation will help focus Federal and State resources on conserving one of the most important tree species in Hawaii.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize and support my colleague Ms. TOKUDA's work on this issue, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1726, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1930

#### GEOOTHERMAL COST-RECOVERY AUTHORITY ACT OF 2024

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7422) to amend the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 to provide cost-recovery authority for the Department of the Interior, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7422

*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 "Geothermal Cost-Recovery Authority Act of 2024".

#### SEC. 2. COST RECOVERY FROM GEOTHERMAL LEASING, PERMITTING, AND INSPECTIONS.

Section 6 of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1005) is amended by adding at the end the following:

##### "(j) COST RECOVERY.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—During the period that begins on the date of enactment of this subsection and ends September 30, 2031, the Secretary may require an applicant for, or a holder of, a geothermal lease to reimburse the United States for all reasonable administrative and other costs incurred by the United States from—

"(A) processing the application for the geothermal lease, including any application for an operations plan, geothermal drilling permit, utilization plan, site license, facility construction permit, commercial use permit, and any other approval associated with a geothermal lease; and

##### "(B) inspecting and monitoring—

"(i) geophysical exploration activities; "(ii) the drilling, plugging, and abandonment of wells; and

"(iii) the construction, operation, termination, and reclamation of any well site or facility for the utilization of geothermal resources pursuant to the geothermal lease.

"(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In determining whether to require reimbursement under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider whether there is in existence a cooperative cost share agreement between the United States and the holder of a geothermal lease.

"(3) ADJUSTMENTS.—The Secretary may reduce the amount to be reimbursed under paragraph (1) if the Secretary determines—

"(A) that full reimbursement would impose an economic hardship on the applicant; or

"(B) that a less than full reimbursement is necessary to promote the greatest use of geothermal resources.

"(4) USE.—The amounts reimbursed under this subsection shall be credited to the currently applicable appropriation, account, or fund of the Department of the Interior as discretionary offsetting collections, and shall be available only to the extent provided in advance in appropriations Acts for—

"(A) processing the application for geothermal leases, including any application for operations plans, geothermal drilling permits, utilization plans, site licenses, facility construction permits, commercial use permits, and any other approval associated with geothermal leases; and

##### "(B) inspecting and monitoring—

"(i) geophysical exploration activities; "(ii) the drilling, plugging, and abandonment of wells; and

"(iii) the construction, operation, termination, and reclamation of any well site or facility for the utilization of geothermal resources pursuant to geothermal leases.".

#### SEC. 3. REPORT.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the geothermal industry and other stakeholders, shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate, and make publicly available on the website of the Department of the Interior, a report that includes—

(1) an assessment of how the amendments made by section 2 of this Act affected the Bureau of Land Management's geothermal program;

(2) any recommendations for reauthorization of section 6(j) of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970, as added by this Act; and

(3) any other recommendations for updates to such section and the Bureau of Land Management's geothermal program.

(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—In developing the report required in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Interior shall solicit facts or information from the geothermal industry and other stakeholders.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 7422, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 7422, the Geothermal Cost Recovery Authority Act of 2024 grants the Department of the Interior the authority to impose fees on geothermal leaseholders. The fees would cover costs related to geothermal lease applications, production and development plans, site licenses, permits, and approvals, as well as inspection and monitoring activities.

In 2022, BLM updated its regulations and created new geothermal cost recovery fees but did not include a fee for geothermal permits to drill. BLM argued that there is no mechanism under FLPMA to charge cost recovery fees for geothermal facilities like there is for wind and solar.

This bill would provide DOI with explicit authority to charge geothermal leaseholder fees to recover costs for geothermal lease applications and other approvals associated with exploration, drilling, construction, and operation of well sites.

As we have seen in the past, agencies have blamed slow permitting processes on a lack of funding. However, when Congress provided additional funding, permitting timelines did not improve, and taxpayer dollars were squandered.

I appreciate the changes made to the bill during the committee process to ensure fees charged under the legislation will be used explicitly for geothermal permitting. Reporting language was also included to better enable Congress to ensure these funds are used appropriately.

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

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of my bill, H.R. 7422, the Geothermal Cost Recovery Authority Act of 2024. As colleagues on both sides of the aisle can agree, geothermal energy is an extremely promising and growing source of renewable energy.

Since the 1960s, geothermal energy has been used as a sustainable and reliable source of electricity, but even though it has grown significantly since then, it still only makes up less than half of one percent of our energy generation mix.

Fortunately, new breakthroughs in technology are massively expanding where geothermal energy can be developed. This is particularly exciting because of some of the unique benefits of geothermal energy for the clean energy transition.

Geothermal provides consistent base-load power, which is available 24/7 with minimal emissions. This complements the mix of solar, wind, and storage needed to build a clean grid and is crucial for maintaining stability in our energy systems, replacing dirty base-load energy like coal.

Many of the skills needed for geothermal development are directly transferrable from industries like oil and gas. As geothermal technologies advance, we will be able to site those power plants at places like retired coal plants where fossil fuel workers can find jobs.

Better yet, many of these fossil trades are already organized and unionized. Everyone from the laborers to the workers in the power plant control rooms, to the steamfitters, pipefitters, and operating engineers can find work in geothermal. Geothermal shows truly exciting promise to help union workers transition to a clean energy economy.

As all this growth occurs, the Federal Government will also have an important role to play. The Department of Energy is supporting pilot projects and advancements in technology. Within the jurisdiction of the Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee, where I serve as ranking member, the Department of the Interior is often in charge of permitting.

In fact, the first renewable energy project sited on U.S. public lands back in 1978 was geothermal energy. Right now, nearly 70 percent of geothermal energy capacity is on federally managed Bureau of Land Management lands.

With the technological advancements we are seeing now, the Bureau of Land Management needs to be ready to scale up the deployment of this clean energy while remaining diligent about permitting responsibly, considering public input and respecting indigenous knowledge and Tribal consultation.

We have heard from geothermal developers that there can be challenges when it comes to permitting new geothermal plants. Much of that stems from capacity constraints, the need for more expertise or more staff in the right locations.

My bill, the Geothermal Cost Recovery Authority Act of 2024, will allow BLM the flexibility to charge companies cost recovery for things like inspections and monitoring, and my bill will enable BLM to hire third-party experts to help review permit applica-

tions. This flexibility will improve permitting capacity and timelines without sacrificing any of the important steps for environmental review and community input.

At a time when permitting is a contentious word in Washington, this bill shows both parties can come together around commonsense approaches to advance commonsense solutions.

I greatly appreciate my colleagues across the aisle who worked with us on the language in my bill, and I am excited to see it moving forward today, along with other positive bills for geothermal energy, like Congressman CURTIS' GEO Act.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, as part of an all-of-the-above approach to energy security, geothermal energy has great potential to help meet the United States' growing energy demands.

I appreciate Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ' work with my team to address concerns raised about H.R. 7422 during the committee's hearing and markup process. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MOORE of Utah). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7422, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### COASTAL HABITAT CONSERVATION ACT OF 2023

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2950) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior, through the Coastal Program of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, to work with willing partners and provide support to efforts to assess, protect, restore, and enhance important coastal landscapes that provide fish and wildlife habitat on which certain Federal trust species depend, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2950

*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 "Coastal Habitat Conservation Act of 2023".*

#### SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

*The purpose of this Act is to legislatively authorize the Coastal Program of the Service in effect as of the date of the enactment of this Act to conduct collaborative landscape-level planning and on-the-ground coastal habitat assessment, coastal habitat protection, coastal habitat restoration, and coastal habitat enhancement projects in priority coastal landscapes to conserve and recover Federal trust species.*

**SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

*In this Act:*

(1) **COASTAL ECOSYSTEM.**—The term “coastal ecosystem” means a biological community of organisms interacting with each other and their habitats in a coastal landscape.

(2) **COASTAL HABITAT ASSESSMENT.**—The term “coastal habitat assessment” means the process of evaluating the physical, chemical, and biological function of a coastal site to determine the value of the site to fish and wildlife.

(3) **COASTAL HABITAT ENHANCEMENT.**—The term “coastal habitat enhancement” means the manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a coastal ecosystem to increase or decrease specific biological functions that make the ecosystem valuable to fish and wildlife.

(4) **COASTAL HABITAT PLANNING.**—The term “coastal habitat planning” means the process of developing a comprehensive plan that—

- (A) characterizes a coastal ecosystem;
- (B) sets protection, restoration, or enhancement goals and identifies the priorities of those goals;
- (C) describes conservation strategies and methodologies;
- (D) establishes a timetable for implementation of the plan; and
- (E) identifies roles of participants and stakeholders.

(5) **COASTAL HABITAT PROTECTION.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The term “coastal habitat protection” means a long-term action to safeguard habitat of value to fish and wildlife in a coastal ecosystem.

(B) **INCLUSION.**—The term “coastal habitat protection” includes activities to support establishment of a conservation easement or fee title acquisition by Federal and non-Federal partners.

(6) **COASTAL HABITAT RESTORATION.**—The term “coastal habitat restoration” means the manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a coastal ecosystem with the goal of returning, to the maximum extent practicable, the full natural biological functions to lost or degraded native habitat.

(7) **COASTAL LANDSCAPE.**—The term “coastal landscape” means a portion of a coastal ecosystem within or adjacent to a coastal State that contains various habitat types, including—

- (A) a fresh or saltwater wetland in a coastal watershed;
- (B) a coastal river, stream, or waterway;
- (C) a coastal bay or estuary;
- (D) a seagrass bed, reef, or other nearshore marine habitat;
- (E) a beach or dune system;
- (F) a mangrove forest; and
- (G) an associated coastal upland.

(8) **COASTAL STATE.**—The term “coastal State” means—

(A) a State in, or bordering on, the Atlantic, Pacific, or Arctic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, the Long Island Sound, or 1 or more of the Great Lakes;

(B) the District of Columbia;

(C) the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico;

(D) Guam;

(E) American Samoa;

(F) the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands;

(G) the Federated States of Micronesia;

(H) the Republic of the Marshall Islands;

(I) the Republic of Palau; and

(J) the United States Virgin Islands.

(9) **FEDERAL TRUST SPECIES.**—The term “Federal trust species” means migratory birds, threatened species or endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), interjurisdictional fish, and marine mammals for which the Secretary has management authority.

(10) **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.**—The term “financial assistance” means Federal funding provided to Federal, State, local, or Tribal governments, nongovernmental institutions, nonprofit

organizations, and private individuals and entities through a grant or cooperative agreement.

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

(12) **SERVICE.**—The term “Service” means the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

(13) **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**—The term “technical assistance” means a collaboration, facilitation, or consulting action relating to a coastal habitat planning, coastal habitat assessment, coastal habitat protection, coastal habitat restoration, or coastal habitat enhancement project or initiative in which the Service contributes scientific knowledge, skills, and expertise to the project or initiative.

**SEC. 4. COASTAL PROGRAM.**

*The Secretary shall carry out the Coastal Program within the Service to—*

(1) *identify the leading threats to priority coastal landscapes and conservation actions to address those threats in partnership with Federal, State, local, and Tribal governments, nongovernmental institutions, nonprofit organizations, and private individuals and entities;*

(2) *provide technical assistance and financial assistance through partnerships with Federal, State, local, and Tribal governments, nongovernmental institutions, nonprofit organizations, and private individuals and entities to conduct voluntary coastal habitat planning, coastal habitat assessment, coastal habitat protection, coastal habitat restoration, and coastal habitat enhancement projects on public land or private land;*

(3) *ensure the health and resilience of coastal ecosystems through adaptive management procedures based on the best available science;*

(4) *build the capacity of Federal, State, local, and Tribal governments, nongovernmental institutions, nonprofit organizations, and private individuals and entities to carry out environmental conservation and stewardship measures;*

(5) *assist in the development and implementation of monitoring protocols to ensure the success of coastal ecosystem restoration and coastal ecosystem enhancement measures; and*

(6) *collaborate and share information with partners and the public relating to best management practices for the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of coastal ecosystems.*

**SEC. 5. REPORTS.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary, acting through the Director of the Service, shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations and Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Appropriations and Environment and Public Works of the Senate, and make available to the public on the website of the Service, a report on the Coastal Program carried out under this Act.

(b) **REQUIREMENTS.**—Each report submitted under subsection (a) shall assess on regional and nationwide bases—

(1) *Coastal Program work on coastal ecosystems;*

(2) *progress made by the Coastal Program toward identifying the leading threats to priority coastal landscapes and conservation actions to address those threats; and*

(3) *prospects for, and success of, protecting, restoring, and enhancing coastal ecosystems.*

(c) **INCLUSIONS.**—Each report submitted under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) *quantitative information on coastal landscapes protected, restored, or enhanced;*

(2) *funds appropriated to the Coastal Program that have been expended or leveraged;*

(3) *a description of adaptive management practices implemented; and*

(4) *a description of emerging challenges or data gaps that hinder the ability of the Coastal Program to achieve the purpose of this Act.*

**SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act \$16,957,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

**GENERAL LEAVE**

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2950, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Representative HUFFMAN’s bill, the Coastal Habitat Conservation Act of 2023, congressionally authorizes the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Coastal Program.

The Coastal Program was administratively created in 1984 and annually receives appropriations even though it has never been statutorily authorized. H.R. 2950 would address this currently unauthorized program and ensure that the Committee on Natural Resources has increased oversight.

Importantly, it would better enable the Committee on Natural Resources to make substantive changes to how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administers the program should those changes be necessary.

The Coastal Program is a voluntary, partnership-based program that allows the Service to provide technical and financial assistance for habitat conservation in coastal watersheds. The committee has heard testimony that outlined the successes of this program, which has conserved nearly 3 million acres of priority habitat nationwide.

The bill brings greater congressional oversight over an important program for coastal habitat conservation. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 2950, the Coastal Habitat Conservation Act, introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN), the Water, Wildlife and Fisheries Subcommittee ranking member.

This bill would provide statutory authority for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Coastal Program, including authorizing nearly \$17 million each year from fiscal year 2024 through 2028.

The Coastal Program is one of the Fish and Wildlife Service’s most effective voluntary programs for restoring and protecting the habitat. It has helped coastal communities and their partners conserve and restore coastal ecosystems since 1985. These partnerships have benefited people, habitats, and wildlife in 24 priority coastal areas, including the Gulf of Mexico, Great Lakes, Caribbean, Atlantic Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean.

The program works to create resilient coastal ecosystems, support habitat connectivity, recover Federal trust in priority species, and promote community stewardship of fish and wildlife resources. It does so by providing both technical and financial assistance to States, Tribes, coastal communities, and conservation organizations for public and private lands.

This successful program has completed nearly 5,000 projects and collaborated with over 6,400 partners, with the outcome of protecting more than 2.3 million acres of habitat and improving land and water for the people and wildlife that live there.

Our country and our planet are facing a climate crisis and a biodiversity crisis, so efforts like these are essential.

Authorizing the Coastal Program through H.R. 2950 will enable the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to continue identifying threats to coastal landscapes, providing coastal habitat planning and assessments, ensuring restoration and protection for resilient coastlines, and developing capacity building between private and public partnerships.

I strongly support the Coastal Habitat Conservation Act and urge my colleagues to pass this bill. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN).

Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2950, the Coastal Habitat Conservation Act. I was proud to join Congressman HUFFMAN as the co-lead on this bipartisan bill, which would congressionally authorize the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program.

This program is one of the Service's most effective and proven initiatives, bringing together public and private partners on a voluntary basis to protect and improve coastal habitats and ecosystems across our Nation. These efforts are carried out throughout 24 priority coastal areas along the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the Gulf of Mexico, the Great Lakes, and of course, the Caribbean.

In 2023, the Coastal Program worked with partners and local communities to implement 153 conservation projects across 19 States and territories, restoring and protecting more than 87,000 acres. This was accomplished by leveraging \$3 in partners' contributions for every Federal dollar invested in the program.

In the case of Puerto Rico, we have seen firsthand the success and the impact of this program. Between 2010 and 2021, the Coastal Program supported 218 voluntary-based projects on the island, which contributed to the restoration of almost 2,900 acres of habitat. These include projects to restore coastal dunes, wetlands, and mangrove forests. It also supported partnerships with local farmers to convert sun-

grown coffee farms into shade-grown coffee farms which help protect streams and coral reefs by reducing sources of sediment and nutrient pollution.

I trust that formally authorizing the Coastal Program, as H.R. 2950 seeks to do, will ensure it has the necessary tools to continue supporting similar locally driven conservation projects across our Nation, coastal States, and of course territories.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2950.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN), the sponsor of this bill.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New York and thank my colleagues for understanding the importance of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program and for supporting this legislation to, for the first time, authorize it in statute.

Coastal conservation is not just about protecting our environment. It is about supporting a thriving economy. However, we do face serious threats—climate change, pollution, unsustainable development, and other threats—to our coastal habitats, causing rapid deterioration of these critical resources.

I want to be very clear: This is not a local issue. Over 53 percent of the United States population lives near coastal watersheds. These areas are home to 45 percent of federally listed threatened and endangered species. Over 60 million American jobs depend on the health of our coasts.

These coastal habitats are complex, dynamic, and they don't always fit neatly within the boundaries that often guide our conservation work. The Service's Coastal Program recognizes this, and it allows for management flexibility by providing technical and financial assistance for coastal land acquisitions. This helps the Service strategically conserve coastal habitat beyond the confines of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

□ 1945

The Coastal Program has a great record of success. Since its inception in Chesapeake Bay in 1985, the program has expanded to 23 other priority coastal areas along the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and in the Gulf of Mexico, Great Lakes, and the Caribbean, including wetlands, estuaries, beaches, and mangrove forests.

Within these areas, the Service facilitates a voluntary, partnership-based relationship with coastal communities to conserve and restore coastal ecosystems and benefit fish, wildlife, and people alike.

While the Coastal Program is designed to help conserve and recover priority habitat in coastal areas, it can only be effective with adequate resources. That is why the Coastal Habitat Conservation Act of 2023 provides statutory authority to the program by

authorizing \$16.9 million annually over the next 5 fiscal years.

I am pleased that we are here supporting efforts to bring together people and private partners to voluntarily protect and improve coastal habitats. This is an approach that helps strike a balance between working landscapes and habitat conservation in our coastal communities.

With this bipartisan bill, we can ensure that this great program will continue to drive locally led conservation projects across coastal States and territories, preserving the health and resilience of coastal habitats to benefit the wildlife communities and economies that depend on them for generations to come.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2950 authorizes the Coastal Program in a fiscally responsible manner and provides for increased congressional oversight and direction of the program.

By doing so, we, as Members of Congress, will be better able to fulfill our oversight responsibilities. At the same time, this program continues its work conserving coastal ecosystems for the benefit of species and our constituents.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2950, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

---

#### ELECTRONIC PERMITTING MODERNIZATION ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5509) to modernize permitting systems at the Department of the Interior, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5509

*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 "Electronic Permitting Modernization Act".

#### SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR PERMIT ACCESSIBILITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In order to improve the overall economy, efficiency, and management of operations and activities of the Department of the Interior (referred to in this section as the "Department"), reduce paperwork, and provide high-quality services and access to the public, the Secretary of the Interior shall, to the extent practicable—

(1) design and deliver modernized electronic permitting systems to accept, process, and record applications (including plan submissions, payment activity, and other related correspondence) for permits, forms, and other paperwork required for activities regulated by the Department;

(2) provide a centralized electronic permitting system online repository, available to the public on the Department's website, that includes—

(A) hyperlinks to facilitate navigation to all Department electronic permitting systems; and

(B) with respect to permits, the contact information for the appropriate Department employees providing assistance to State, Tribal, and local governments; and

(3) provide to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate periodic updates on the implementation of paragraphs (1) and (2).

(b) DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION PROHIBITED.—No information described in section 552(b) of title 5, United States Code, or protected from disclosure by another law of the United States shall be disclosed under this Act.

(c) DUPLICATION OF SYSTEMS NOT PERMITTED.—No system shall be duplicated under this Act.

(d) CONSULTATION.—In developing the permitting systems required under section 2 of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall consult with States, local governments, Indian Tribes and other stakeholders who apply for agency permits and will use the permitting systems.

**SEC. 3. CONFORMING AMENDMENT TO ENSURE CONSISTENCY WITH THE FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT OF 2023.**

In developing the permitting systems required under section 2 of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall ensure that the Department's electronic permitting systems are consistent with the priorities identified in section 110 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4336d) with respect to any permit that requires review under that Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas

**GENERAL LEAVE**

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5509, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, Representative PORTER's bipartisan legislation directs the Secretary of the Interior to design and deliver electronic permitting systems for permits, forms, and other required paperwork to the extent practical.

Republicans have long supported streamlining and simplifying the permitting process. Additionally, the minority worked with us to address a con-

cern raised with the legislation and how it would interact with recent changes to NEPA enacted under the Fiscal Responsibility Act.

These discussions led to changes to Ms. PORTER's legislation to clarify that any permitting system related to NEPA be consistent with the priorities identified in the FRA's NEPA provision.

This legislation aims to streamline the management of operations of the Department of the Interior, improving access to our public lands and Department facilities.

Modernizing the permitting process is an overdue task needed to increase departmental efficiency and improve transparency.

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

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my colleague Representative PORTER's bill, the Electronic Permitting Modernization Act.

This legislation would codify parts of a Biden executive order that improves the navigability of the Federal Government's permitting process, and the bill would require the Department of the Interior to design and deliver a modernized electronic permitting system.

Permitting reform has been a popular topic this Congress in the Committee on Natural Resources, and on this topic, it is rare that we can achieve a bipartisan win, but we can all be for bringing the Federal permitting system into the 21st century.

That is why this bill would require the Department of the Interior to provide a centralized online repository on its website for public access to its electronic permitting system. It would also make easily available the contact information of the appropriate Department of the Interior employees who can assist State, Tribal, and local governments with permit applications.

These changes will make the lives of our constituents easier by simplifying the process of applying for a permit.

We know that we can make permitting more efficient. We can speed up processing times, and we can improve transparency for everyone involved, all without sacrificing community engagement or environmental protections.

From my district in the Bronx and Queens to across the American West, Americans are all too familiar with the legacy of sacrifice zones. Having online options for DOI permits is a common-sense solution to a part of an important issue that we all care about.

This bill also requires the Department of the Interior to provide periodic updates to the House Committee on Natural Resources, which will allow us to continue to monitor and upgrade our permitting processes.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support Representative PORTER's Electronic Permitting Modernization Act, and I urge the House to approve it.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the effort of my colleague from the OC in bringing this forward.

Really, it is about simplicity. It is about streamlining a process for people who are just seeking to engage in a process that requires paperwork, permits, and forms. Why would we not make that easier for them?

With all the different interests and needs that we could have, especially in our rural lands—parks, public lands, and the recreational users of those—the Electronic Permitting Modernization Act creates a simple online website to get and complete any necessary permits.

On the other hand, when businesses are interested in raising, logging, mining, or anything else, they will be able to find any approval documents or applications on a single web page, one-stop shopping.

I am happy that we can make it a little bit easier because, for my farming business and me, sometimes it is hard to get to the forms you need and get the stuff done. That is frustrating because all you want to do is get back to what you are doing there to begin with.

This bill actually builds off some of the work we completed last year with the Fiscal Responsibility Act by further directing Federal agencies under the Department of the Interior to provide electronic means to complete any required documentation.

This is a good step to make it simpler to get the work done. I hope it is not an excuse to create more permits and more paperwork, but this is a great way to help out with people who are just seeking to get their work done.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5509, and I appreciate the bipartisan effort on this.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PORTER), the sponsor of the bill.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, whether you are a Democrat, Republican, or Independent, we all benefit when the government works the way it is supposed to.

A 21st century nation deserves a 21st century government. The problem is too many Federal agencies still rely on outdated systems not designed for the people they serve. This leaves people looking for help stuck in a tangled web of confusing application processes, clunky government websites, and poor customer support. Long delays and processing times often follow, adding to the frustration our constituents feel.

It is why so many of them turn to us, their Member of Congress, for help. Our casework teams work hard every day to cut through the red tape, but it shouldn't have to come to that.

When we fail to modernize our way of government, we are wasting tax dollars

on inefficiency, but there is something we can do today with this bill to make government applications easier to find and simpler to submit and process.

Congress can pass the Electronic Permitting Modernization Act, which I lead with my good friend across the aisle, Representative DOUG LAMALFA.

This commonsense bill encourages the Department of the Interior to offer an online option for as many of its permits as possible. It creates a web page where our constituents can find links to the Department's online permits. Then, it would task the Department of the Interior to report back to Congress periodically on its progress toward electronic permitting.

These simple steps are no-brainers, but they are necessary to keep our government on track and to make the permitting process work for all users.

Creating an online option for more permits will make permitting easier for everyone, not just the applicant. It will reduce the amount of paperwork mailed to the agency, speed up processing times, and finally help bring our government into the 21st century.

At the same time, this bill would help Congress hold the Department of the Interior accountable for its work. With this bill, we could more easily see which bureaus are getting things done here with us in the 21st century and which bureaus are still having workers sitting in windowless rooms, opening envelopes with paper checks and forms in triplicate.

What matters the most about this bill is that it improves the daily lives of the people we serve.

Look, I am a single mom with three kids. When your life is anything like mine, you just want things that you expect to be easy to actually be easy. Let's be clear: It should be easy to find and apply for a permit to comply with the law.

Let's simplify people's lives just a little bit. Let's show them that this part of government using their public lands works efficiently.

Mr. Speaker, I thank, again, my colleague, Representative LAMALFA, as well as Chairman WESTERMAN, Ranking Member GRIJALVA, and their staff for their work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support the Electronic Permitting Modernization Act.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government is long overdue in doing the work needed to bring its permitting processes into the 21st century. The bill before us instructs the Secretary to create an electronic permitting system to accept, process, and record applications for any permitting process under the Department's jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, even though the gentlewoman from California opposed my commonsense, straightforward forestry

bill earlier today, I do recognize, commend, and support Representative PORTER for her work on this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5509, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### UPPER COLORADO AND SAN JUAN RIVER BASINS ENDANGERED FISH RECOVERY PROGRAMS RE-AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2024

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4596) to reauthorize the Bureau of Reclamation to provide cost-shared funding to implement the endangered and threatened fish recovery programs for the Upper Colorado and San Juan River Basins, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4596

*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 "Upper Colorado and San Juan River Basins Endangered Fish Recovery Programs Reauthorization Act of 2024".

##### SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF UPPER COLORADO AND SAN JUAN RIVER BASINS ENDANGERED FISH AND THREATENED FISH RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS.

(a) PURPOSE.—Section 1 of Public Law 106-392 (114 Stat. 1602) is amended by inserting "and threatened" after "endangered".

(b) DEFINITIONS.—Section 2 of Public Law 106-392 (114 Stat. 1602; 116 Stat. 3113) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking "to implement the Recovery Implementation Program for the Endangered Fish Species in the Upper Colorado River dated September 29, 1987, and extended by the Extension of the Cooperative Agreement dated December 6, 2001, and the 1992 Cooperative Agreement to implement the San Juan River Recovery Implementation Program dated October 21, 1992, and as they may be amended" and inserting "for the Recovery Implementation Program for Endangered Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin dated September 29, 1987, and the 1992 Cooperative Agreement for the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program dated October 21, 1992, as the agreements may be amended and extended";

(2) in paragraph (6)—

(A) by inserting "or threatened" after "endangered"; and

(B) by striking "removal or translocation" and inserting "control";

(3) in paragraph (7), by striking "long-term" each place it appears;

(4) in paragraph (8), in the second sentence, by striking "1988 Cooperative Agreement and the 1992 Cooperative Agreement" and inserting "Recovery Implementation Programs";

(5) in paragraph (9)—

(A) by striking "leases and agreements" and inserting "acquisitions";

(B) by inserting "or threatened" after "endangered"; and

(C) by inserting ", as approved under the Recovery Implementation Programs" after "nonnative fishes"; and

(6) in paragraph (10), by inserting "pursuant to the Recovery Implementation Program for Endangered Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin" after "Service".

(c) AUTHORIZATION TO FUND RECOVERY PROGRAMS.—Section 3 of Public Law 106-392 (114 Stat. 1603; 116 Stat. 3113; 120 Stat. 290; 123 Stat 1310; 126 Stat. 2444; 133 Stat. 809) (as amended by section 101 of division CC of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Public Law 117-328)) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking "(1) There is hereby authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary, \$88,000,000 to undertake capital projects to carry out the purposes of this Act. Such funds" and inserting the following:

"(1) AUTHORIZATION.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), there is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary for use by the Bureau of Reclamation to undertake capital projects to carry out the purposes of this Act \$50,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2024 through 2031.

"(B) ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT.—For each of fiscal years 2025 through 2031, the amount authorized to be appropriated under subparagraph (A) shall be annually adjusted to reflect widely available engineering cost indices applicable to relevant construction activities.

"(C) NONREIMBURSABLE FUNDS.—Amounts made available pursuant to subparagraph (A)":

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking "Program for Endangered Fish Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin shall expire in fiscal year 2024" and inserting "Programs shall expire in fiscal year 2031"; and

(C) by striking paragraph (3);

(2) by striking subsections (b) and (c) and inserting the following:

"(b) NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO CAPITAL PROJECTS.—The Secretary, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation, may accept contributed funds, interests in land and water, or other contributions from the Upper Division States, political subdivisions of the Upper Division States, or individuals, entities, or organizations within the Upper Division States, pursuant to agreements that provide for the contributions to be used for capital projects costs.";

(3) by redesignating subsections (d) through (j) as subsections (c) through (i), respectively;

(4) in subsection (c) (as so redesignated)—

(A) in paragraph (1)(A), by striking "\$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2024" and inserting "\$80,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2024 through 2031";

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in the first sentence, by striking "\$4,000,000 per year" and inserting "\$52,914,285 for the period of fiscal years 2024 through 2031";

(ii) in the second sentence—

(I) by inserting "Basin" after "San Juan River"; and

(II) by striking "\$2,000,000 per year" and inserting "\$27,085,715 for the period of fiscal years 2024 through 2031"; and

(iii) in the third sentence, by striking "in fiscal years commencing after the enactment of this Act" and inserting "for fiscal year 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter"; and

(C) by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following:

"(3) FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO ANNUAL BASE FUNDING.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—For each of fiscal years 2024 through 2031, the Secretary, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation, may accept funds from other Federal agencies, including power revenues collected pursuant to the Act of April 11, 1956 (commonly known as the ‘Colorado River Storage Project Act’) (43 U.S.C. 620 et seq.).

“(B) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Funds made available under subparagraph (A) shall be available for expenditure by the Secretary, as determined by the contributing agency in consultation with the Secretary.

“(C) TREATMENT OF FUNDS.—Funds made available under subparagraph (A) shall be treated as nonreimbursable Federal expenditures.

“(D) TREATMENT OF POWER REVENUES.—Not more than \$499,000 in power revenues over the period of fiscal years 2024 through 2031 shall be accepted under subparagraph (A) and treated as having been repaid and returned to the general fund of the Treasury.

“(4) NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO ANNUAL BASE FUNDING.—The Secretary, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation, may accept contributed funds from the Upper Division States, political subdivisions of the Upper Division States, or individuals, entities, or organizations within the Upper Division States, pursuant to agreements that provide for the contributions to be used for annual base funding.

“(5) REPLACEMENT POWER.—Contributions of funds made pursuant to this subsection shall not include the cost of replacement power purchased to offset modifications to the operation of the Colorado River Storage Project to benefit threatened or endangered fish species under the Recovery Implementation Programs.”;

(5) in subsection (f) (as so redesignated), in the first sentence, by inserting “or threatened” after “endangered”;

(6) in subsection (g) (as so redesignated), by striking “unless the time period for the respective Cooperative Agreement is extended to conform with this Act” and inserting “, as amended or extended”;

(7) in subsection (h) (as so redesignated), in the first sentence, by striking “Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program or the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program” and inserting “Recovery Implementation Programs”; and

(8) in subsection (i)(1) (as so redesignated)—

(A) by striking “2022” each place it appears and inserting “2030”;

(B) by striking “2024” each place it appears and inserting “2031”; and

(C) in subparagraph (C)(ii)(III), by striking “contributions by the States, power customers, Tribes, water users, and environmental organizations” and inserting “non-Federal contributions”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4596, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of Representative BOEBERT’s bill, the Upper Colorado and San Juan River Basins Endangered Fish Recovery Programs Reauthorization Act of 2024.

The Upper Colorado and San Juan River Basins endangered fish recovery programs provide Endangered Species Act compliance for over 2,500 water and hydroelectric power projects.

Without these recovery programs, projects would be open to litigation and disruptions to operations that would negatively impact millions of Americans’ water and power supplies.

These programs have been a conservation success story. Their goal is to recover four ESA-listed fish species: the Colorado pikeminnow, the razorback sucker, the humpback chub, and the bonytail. Yet, they also allow for the continuation of operations to meet current and future needs.

In recent years, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has recognized the program’s success by reclassifying the humpback chub from an endangered species to a threatened species.

□ 2000

This service has also proposed to reclassify the razorback sucker from an endangered species to a threatened species.

In a report submitted to Congress in March of 2023, the service stated: “When the recovery programs were initiated in 1988 and 1992, the trajectory of all four listed species was toward extinction. The implementation of these recovery elements not only prevented extinctions, but substantially improved the prospect for recovering the listed fishes.” This is a rare occurrence and should be celebrated.

I urge my colleagues to allow this success to continue by supporting this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4596, the Upper Colorado and San Juan River Basins Endangered Fish Recovery Programs Reauthorization Act.

This bill would reauthorize two fish recovery programs in the Colorado River Basin: the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program, and the San Juan River Basin Implementation Program.

The Colorado River is known as the hardest working river in the West, supporting a multitude of uses, including irrigation, municipal water use, recreation, and sustaining numerous fish and wildlife species.

Established in the late eighties and early nineties, these two fish recovery programs allowed the Bureau of Reclamation to partner with other Federal agencies, States, Tribes, and hydro-power customers, water users, and conservation groups to work collabora-

ratively on species recovery and ensure water-related projects are in compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

Without this reauthorization, these two programs will expire, and we risk the long history of collaboration and successful recovery of four native fish species. We need to get this done as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. Boebert), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his support, and I appreciate the bipartisan support here in the House.

I rise in support of H.R. 4596, the Upper Colorado and San Juan River Basins Endangered Fish Recovery Programs Reauthorization Act of 2024. This bicameral bill, which passed through the House Natural Resources Committee with unanimous bipartisan support, provides a clean, 7-year reauthorization of the Upper Colorado and San Juan Recovery Programs that protect four threatened and endangered native fish species in the Upper Colorado and San Juan River Basins by extending conservation programs at current funding levels for 7 additional fiscal years.

These programs provide Endangered Species Act compliance to ensure 2,500 water projects continue to function and provide legal certainty for water users throughout Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming.

These projects, including 1,200 in Colorado alone, include major water reservoirs, agricultural water users, ski areas, and power-generation facilities that use more than 3.7 million acre-feet of water per year.

The Upper Colorado and San Juan Recovery Programs were established in 1988 to achieve full recovery for four federally listed endangered fish species, including the humpback chub, bonytail, Colorado pikeminnow, and razorback sucker.

These designations led to the threat of significant water- and power-use restrictions. For over three decades, States, Tribes, local communities, environmental groups, energy users, and water users have partnered to help recover four threatened and endangered fish species while continuing water and power facility development and operations in the Upper Colorado River Basin and the San Juan River Basin.

Without these programs, these 2,500 water and power users would have to perform extremely burdensome Section 7 consultations for all 2,500 individual projects. Because of the success of these programs, the humpback chub and the razorback sucker are success stories and have been downlisted from endangered to threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Last Congress, I worked on a short-term extension to reauthorize these programs until September 30 of 2024. I

am proud to report that this bill today is the result of months of hard work with local stakeholders, the Bureau of Reclamation, and Senators Hickenlooper and Romney to provide a long-term solution by reauthorizing these vital programs until 2031.

My bill has significant support from more than 30 Colorado and Western stakeholder organizations, including Denver Water, Pueblo Water, both of the Colorado Indian Tribes, Utah Water Users Association, and many more.

I urge the passage of this critical bipartisan and bicameral legislation.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, I am prepared to close, and I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, the Upper Colorado and San Juan River Endangered Fish Recovery Programs are essential to the region's future. These programs have been successful in conserving and recovering endangered species, which is the goal of the Endangered Species Act.

Mr. Speaker, as an Arkansas Razorback, I rise in strong support of this legislation that will continue to help recover the razorback sucker.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4596, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

---

**AMENDING THE ENERGY POLICY ACT OF 2005 TO EXPEDITE GEOTHERMAL EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN PREVIOUSLY STUDIED OR DEVELOPED AREAS**

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6474) to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to expedite geothermal exploration and development in previously studied or developed areas.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6474

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

**SECTION 1. NEPA REVIEW.**

Section 390 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 15942) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting “, or the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.) for the purpose of exploration or development of geothermal resources” after “or gas”; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking “or gas” and inserting “, gas, or geothermal”; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking “or gas” and inserting “, gas, or geothermal”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

**GENERAL LEAVE**

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 6474, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in support of H.R. 6474, which will amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to expedite geothermal exploration and development in previously studied or developed areas.

First, I would like to thank my colleague, Representative STEEL, for all the good work she has done on this issue.

Duplicative leasing and the permitting process for geothermal development result in timelines longer than those of many other energy projects. With such a high potential for geothermal access across the country, it is imperative we enact pragmatic reform to give all energy industries the same opportunity.

Categorical exclusions, or CEs, expedite the NEPA process for energy projects when the area being disturbed has already undergone environmental review.

Section 390 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 granted five different CEs to expedite the development of oil and gas projects.

It is necessary that these fees also apply to geothermal exploration and development because the processes utilized by these two industries are very similar, as is the technology and equipment used to drill.

Establishing categorical exclusions for geothermal energy in areas with existing production or areas that have been recently studied is a responsible way to increase the utilization of geothermal energy, expediting the permitting process without reducing environmental standards.

This bill would expedite the approval process for certain geothermal projects by adding geothermal energy development to section 390.

Again, I applaud my colleague, Mrs. STEEL, for this commonsense and bipartisan bill.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise to comment on H.R. 6474, Representative STEEL's bill, which aims to

expedite geothermal exploration and development in previously studied or developed areas. I thank my colleague for her attention to this important issue.

I strongly support deploying geothermal energy on Federal lands. We have heard from geothermal developers that there can be challenges when it comes to permitting new geothermal plants. That is exactly why several of the bills we are discussing here today are designed to address those very challenges.

Now, what H.R. 6474 would do is legislate the creation of a new categorical exclusion for certain geothermal-related activities. Categorical exclusions are used when there is a class of actions that Federal agencies have determined do not individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the human environment, and therefore, do not require either an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA.

Currently, the oil and gas industries have a relatively narrow categorical exclusion for minor disturbances in already developed oil fields; that is, oil fields that have recently been analyzed under NEPA.

This bill attempts to put geothermal on a level playing field by taking that existing categorical exclusion and applying it basically as is to geothermal.

At the legislative hearing on this bill, the Bureau of Land Management testified that it is skeptical that this policy will provide significant benefits for geothermal because the existing categorical exclusion was designed for oil and gas, and there are considerable differences between those types of energy and geothermal.

Fortunately, the Bureau of Land Management already has the authority to establish new categorical exclusions administratively without the need for legislation.

Using that authority, the Bureau has recently finalized new categorical exclusions for geothermal energy that were adopted from other agencies and are better tailored to this unique type of energy.

The Bureau is currently working on establishing more categorical exclusions to ensure that geothermal can be deployed responsibly and efficiently on Federal land.

While I have some concerns about the expansion of existing categorical exclusions for oil and gas, I strongly support the Bureau of Land Management's work on geothermal, and again, I am grateful for my colleague's attention to this important issue.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. STEEL), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Mrs. STEEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge passage of H.R. 6474, my legislation to expedite geothermal energy growth and development.

Embracing geothermal energy will propel more sustainable, clean, and reliable energy in California and the entire country.

With a sizeable geothermal reservoir, more growth opportunities will allow California to take full advantage of our natural resources.

My bill will also support local economies as production grows. More geothermal power will create and maintain sustainable local jobs.

Geothermal can be an important tool to make America more energy independent and less dependent on our enemies. My legislation will allow my home State of California to seize the reins as the leading national energy provider.

This bill is simple and straightforward. It is just the type of common-sense solution my constituents sent me to Congress to find.

My legislation amends the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to allow for a new categorical exclusion for geothermal under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Specifically, it would create an exemption for geothermal drilling in situations where drilling has occurred within the last 5 years.

□ 2015

This bill will create an expedited approval process for geothermal projects and a more promising energy future for the United States.

I thank my legislative partners, SUSIE LEE, for working with me in a bipartisan manner to support geothermal energy. I also thank Chairman WESTERMAN and House leadership for working with us to advance this legislation. America needs an all-of-the-above energy approach that includes geothermal.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to vote “yes.”

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I am prepared to close, and I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague from California (Mrs. STEEL) for working across the aisle in this bipartisan, all-of-the-above energy bill. I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CRANE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6474.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### LAKE TAHOE RESTORATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 612) to reauthorize the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 612

*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 “Lake Tahoe Restoration Reauthorization Act”.

#### SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE LAKE TAHOE RESTORATION ACT.

(a) COOPERATIVE AUTHORITIES.—Section 4(f) of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (Public Law 106-506) is amended by striking “4 fiscal years following the date of enactment of the Water Resources Development Act of 2016” and inserting “period beginning on the date of enactment of this subsection and ending on the date described in section 10(a)”.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 10(a) of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (Public Law 106-506) is amended by striking “for a period” and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting “, to remain available until September 30, 2034.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 612, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support S. 612, the Lake Tahoe Restoration Reauthorization Act. This is a bicameral and bipartisan effort being led on the House side by Representatives AMODEI, KILEY, and DUARTE. I applaud their efforts to advance this legislation to the floor. This is a good bill that reauthorizes the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act for another decade, ensuring no lapse in funding for a significant program serving the iconic Lake Tahoe area.

During a hearing on this legislation in the Natural Resources Committee just last week, Julie Regan, the executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, ended her testimony with a quote from Congressman KILEY discussing the importance of Lake Tahoe to his community. Congressman KILEY is quoted as saying:

We can get past the political divides by implementing projects of common importance at a local level. Tahoe is the perfect example. Spanning two States, multiple overlap-

ping jurisdictions, and red and blue counties. Yet we can all agree on the goal of protecting something that is larger than us. That transcends political differences.

I could not agree more with Congressman KILEY’s sentiment. I have had the pleasure of seeing the great work in Lake Tahoe firsthand, and the collaboration occurring in the Tahoe basin is truly a model of forest management for the rest of the Nation.

S. 612 will help ensure the continued funding for restoration and resilience activities around Lake Tahoe, including critical work mitigating wildfire risk and restoring forest health. The bill also extends the authorization to enter into contracts and cooperative agreements with States and local governments to conduct fuel reduction, erosion control, and reforestation activities.

Again, I want to commend Representatives AMODEI, KILEY, and DUARTE for working with their bipartisan and bicameral colleagues to advance this important forest management effort and secure the swift consideration of this legislation in the Natural Resources Committee and on the House floor.

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

#### COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, September 20, 2024.

Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,  
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN WESTERMAN: I write to you concerning S. 612, the Lake Tahoe Restoration Reauthorization Act. The bill was referred primarily to the Committee on Natural Resources, with additional referrals to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and Committee on Agriculture. Specifically, provisions of S. 612 fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring this legislation before the House of Representatives in an expeditious manner, and accordingly, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will forgo action on the bill. However, this is conditional on our mutual understanding that doing so will not prejudice the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matter contained within the bill or similar legislation that falls under the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure’s Rule X jurisdiction. Further, should a conference on the bill be necessary, I appreciate your agreement to support my request to have the Committee represented on the conference committee.

Finally, I would ask that a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest in the bill be included in the Committee Report and Congressional Record during consideration of S. 612 on the House floor.

Sincerely,

SAM GRAVES,  
Chairman, Committee on Transportation  
and Infrastructure.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,  
Washington, DC, September 23, 2024.  
Hon. SAM GRAVES,  
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GRAVES: I write regarding S. 612, the “Lake Tahoe Restoration Reauthorization Act.” The bill was referred primarily to the Committee on Natural Resources, and additionally to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Committee on Agriculture, and was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on September 19, 2024.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and appreciate your willingness to forgo any further consideration of the bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will not formally consider S. 612 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained therein.

I am pleased to support your request to name members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to any conference committee to consider such provisions. I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill and will include such letters in the committee report on S. 612. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,

BRUCE WESTERMAN,  
Chairman, Committee on  
Natural Resources.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,  
Washington, DC, September 20, 2024.  
Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,  
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding S. 612, the “Lake Tahoe Restoration Reauthorization Act”. Thank you for collaborating with the Committee on Agriculture on the matters within our jurisdiction.

The Committee on Agriculture will forego any further consideration of this bill. However, by foregoing consideration at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over any subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. The Committee on Agriculture also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees should it become necessary and ask that you support such a request.

We would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to S. 612 and request a copy of our letters on this matter be published in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration.

Sincerely,

GLENN “GT” THOMPSON,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,  
Washington, DC, September 23, 2024.  
Hon. GLENN “GT” THOMPSON,  
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: I write regarding S. 612, the “Lake Tahoe Restoration Reauthorization Act.” The bill was referred primarily to the Committee on Natural Resources, and additionally to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Committee on Agriculture, and was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on September 19, 2024.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture and appreciate your willingness to forgo any further consideration of the bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Agriculture will not formally consider S. 612 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained therein.

I am pleased to support your request to name members of the Committee on Agriculture to any conference committee to consider such provisions. I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,

BRUCE WESTERMAN,  
Chairman, Committee on  
Natural Resources.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I rise in support of S. 612, the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act introduced by my colleague from Nevada, Senator CORTEZ MASTO.

The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act is a bicameral, bipartisan effort to continue the tremendous work being completed in California and Nevada for a variety of landscape restoration and resiliency projects.

The waters of Lake Tahoe are among some of the clearest in the world, and the basin is home to wetlands, swamps, deepwater habitat, aspen stands, forests, and meadows that support more than 1,300 species of plants and animals. Tahoe is a natural phenomenon. The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act passed in 2000 in a community effort to preserve and protect the landscape and economy of the basin.

With it came an authorization of \$300 million for 10 years and eventually \$415 million after reauthorization in 2016. Investments made by the Federal Government have leveraged \$500 million in State, local, Tribal, and private matching funds. It also supports an average of 1,700 jobs a year.

Now it is time for us to continue that commitment to protecting the alpine lake landscape.

The work being completed throughout the Lake Tahoe basin exemplifies the value of both targeted Federal investments and community collaboration in forest and landscape management.

In the 1990s, leaders in the basin came together to form a collaborative cross-boundary program known as the Environmental Improvement Program. The EIP has become a model for collaborative conservation.

Overall, ecosystem restoration and management in the Lake Tahoe basin demonstrate how collaboration, partnerships, and dedicated funding for shared goals can yield measurable results.

In the Federal Lands Subcommittee last week, Ms. Regan, the executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, said that the Tahoe model works because it is able to bring together the Federal and private funding

and community consent in a mosaic of governance.

This legislation will continue that important work.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY).

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I have a tremendous honor to represent the entire California side of Lake Tahoe, and this legislation, the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, is of the highest importance to my constituents. It is also of great importance to the State of California, as well as the State of Nevada. More than that, Lake Tahoe is an American treasure. Preserving its beauty and accessibility is a great national interest, and a national responsibility, with 80 percent of its watershed under Federal ownership.

The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act has been crucial in enabling the communities of the basin to protect the lake for all Americans and for generations to come. Indeed, this bipartisan legislation has become a national model for collaboration in the name of conservation.

Over 50 years ago, California Governor Ronald Reagan and Nevada Governor Paul Laxalt signed an interstate compact to cooperatively manage the environmental health of Lake Tahoe. This compact was ratified by Congress and signed into law by President Nixon, establishing a regional planning agency to work with the Federal Government on responsibly managing the Tahoe basin.

Congress continued to support its role in the basin’s health by passing the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2000 and again 16 years later in 2016. This generational, bipartisan support for Lake Tahoe has been vital to its preservation.

The Restoration Act needs to be reauthorized to enable continued conservation efforts. This legislation does that for another decade.

Specific programs include forest health and fuels reduction, combating invasive species, water infrastructure, and water quality improvement.

As one example, the forest health treatments enabled by the act serve as a model of effective forest management, with 21,000 acres treated. This work proved crucial in stopping the devastating Caldor fire of 2021 from becoming an even more catastrophic event, saving the city of South Lake Tahoe. Studies have shown that the forest health treatments in the area reduced the fire’s 150-foot flames to 15 feet, making it easier for fire crews to get the blaze under control.

However, much more work remains to restore the areas burned by the Caldor fire and to stop such a disaster from imperiling the basin again.

Beyond just forest health, the restoration efforts enabled by the act are working. In 2023, Lake Tahoe achieved

its highest clarity since the 1980s, thanks to projects that prevented more than 500,000 pounds of fine sediment and pollution from flowing into the lake, as well as wetlands restoration spanning 342 acres and invasive species protection spanning 271 acres. However, in the face of extreme weather and other threats, more work is needed to reduce stormwater pollution and keep Tahoe blue for the next generation.

The coalition supporting the act's renewal today spans a tremendous diversity of viewpoints. Yet we can all agree on the goal of protecting something that is larger than any of us.

Protecting Tahoe is a responsibility for all of us. At the same time, it is an opportunity to forge new partnerships and to form habits of cooperation and collaboration as we work to protect a precious resource and build a better future together. I look forward to continuing the long legacy of bipartisan leadership that has preserved this special place.

I thank my colleagues on both sides, and, in particular, Senator CORTEZ MASTO for guiding this legislation through the Senate. I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for his tremendous leadership and all his help in getting this bill to the floor today, and I urge an ‘aye’ vote.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. AMODEI). He is from the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe.

Mr. AMODEI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding. I wish to associate myself with the remarks of the chairman of the committee and the Representative from New York, (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) from the committee. I am not going to repeat all that, I am just going to add a couple of things contextually.

I know that I am the last speaker standing in the way of getting to a Special Order, so I will be brief.

First of all, to my colleague from the Golden State, it is interesting to note historically that when they decided who got to represent what sides of Lake Tahoe, Nevada got first pick. I am honored to have used that to get the side where we have the least developed side there is.

Tahoe is a success story. This is the third authorization, or the second reauthorization of what was done initially. It has been a phenomenal bipartisan effort over the years, with the late great Dianne Feinstein leading the charge, based on her history in the Tahoe basin, and help from people like JOHN GARAMENDI on the other side of the aisle, as well as many others.

I will just say this: It is a team effort that is working well. It has gone through a development stage over the last 20-plus years, but they are clicking along pretty good right now.

I don't have anything sexy to say like humpback something or other or

suckers like the fish from a couple years earlier, we have no razorback anything in Lake Tahoe, but I urge a ‘yes’ vote.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, I am prepared to close, and I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, this is a good, commonsense bill that will continue important forest management efforts in an area facing a high risk of catastrophic wildfire. This effort would not have been possible without the leadership of the Members representing the Lake Tahoe basin, including Representative KILEY of California and Congressman AMODEI of Nevada.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 612, the “Lake Tahoe Restoration Reauthorization Act.”

I thank my colleagues, Senator CORTEZ MASTO and Congressman AMODEI for their critical efforts leading the bipartisan bill before us today.

I am honored to be an original cosponsor of the House companion bill.

The “Lake Tahoe Restoration Reauthorization Act” would reauthorize \$415 million in federal funding for conservation, climate resiliency, and other critical work across the Tahoe Basin through the end of fiscal year 2034.

In addition, this bipartisan bill would renew the cooperative authorities for wildfire prevention and response, first used by the U.S. Forest Service during the 2021 Caldor Fire.

As Deputy Secretary of the Interior during the Clinton Administration, I attended the first annual Tahoe Summit in 1997, organized by the late Senator Dianne Feinstein.

Since then, we have made significant progress to safeguard Lake Tahoe for future generations of Californians and all Americans.

This progress would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of Senator Feinstein spanning three decades.

I urge my colleagues to pass this critical bill to Keep Tahoe Blue, paying tribute to Senator Feinstein’s legacy by continuing her important work.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 612.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the chair of the Committee on Ways and Means:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,  
Washington, DC, September 23, 2024.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I, Payson Thomas, Digital Press Assistant for the Committee on Ways and Means of the U.S. House of Representatives, have been served with a subpoena for testimony issued by the United States District Court for the District of Montana in United States of America v. Rogers, Case No. 23-cr-112, related to events that occurred while I was an employee of Speaker Kevin McCarthy.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that compliance with the subpoena is consistent with the privileges and rights of the House.

Sincerely,

PAYSON THOMAS.

□ 2030

#### UNSUSTAINABLE, CRIPPLING FEDERAL DEFICIT AND DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE) is recognized for one-half of the remaining time until 10 p.m. as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, tonight I join colleagues from both parties in focusing attention on what is truly one of the quietest and most avoided crises in America today. I speak very directly of our Federal budget and, in particular, its unsustainable, crippling Federal deficit and debt.

This silent but accelerating crisis threatens all of us, not only these generations, but generations into the future. This crisis is all of a fiscal crisis, an economic crisis, a social crisis, and a security crisis.

Mr. Speaker, it is a crisis that we are, frankly, busy denying. We are certainly avoiding it and explaining it away, but I think we all know instinctively in this country, and some of us know very consciously in this country, that it is an imminent crisis.

Tonight, colleagues of both parties and I, all of us members of our Bipartisan Fiscal Forum, which has 87 bipartisan Members of the House who are committed to facing and solving this threat, want to discuss this issue in a very brief discussion to assure we do not keep sweeping this crisis under the rug.

We will highlight how our Federal finances work, what is going wrong and why, what are the severe consequences if we don’t correct the cause, and what can we do about it.

I will go into details later, but I first want to invite my colleagues to share some of their concerns and perspectives.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN), a member of the Budget Committee, an accounting and fiscal management professional before his time in Congress, a

member also of the Committee on Education and the Workforce and Committee on Oversight and Accountability, and someone who knows his way around the budget.

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

I don't know whether the people back home realize how rare it is for a Democrat to be calling upon a Republican to speak about a bill, but it is a testament to the size of our fiscal crisis and the fact that we have a lot of very good, bipartisan type legislators in this building.

In any event, our national debt now stands at an astronomical \$35 trillion. It is an unconscionably large debt, which is the result of decades of wasteful Washington spending, and it is a problem both parties have contributed to.

To put it in historical perspective, as a share of our economy, the last time the debt was this high was at the end of World War II. Last year, the Federal Government spent more than \$6 trillion and racked up a deficit of \$1.7 trillion, the third highest annual deficit in our country's history.

One of the most frightening aspects of our out-of-control spending is the accelerating interest costs, which, of course, we can't reduce.

So far in 2024, we have spent \$870 billion on interest costs. That is more than we spent on Medicare or the military. It is way more than we spend on the military.

To illustrate how profligate the government is, let's take a look at how much of each year's spending was borrowed: 2018, 19 cents; 2019, 22 cents; 2020, 48 cents; 2021, 40 cents; 2022, 22 cents; and 2023, 28 cents. We expect this trend to continue for at least the next 5 years.

One cause of the red ink in recent years has been the use and abuse of emergency spending. The debt ceiling deal that was passed earlier this year set caps on discretionary spending, although there is a loophole that allows certain spending to be designated as emergency spending, and that is not subject to the cap.

While there are some items that are genuine emergencies, too often, Congress slaps the term "emergency spending" on projects it simply wants to fund despite the caps.

Here are a few examples of Federal spending that were labeled as emergency spending: \$6.6 million for the replacement of irrigation systems at two golf courses in Colorado Springs, \$12 million for the renovation of a minor league ballpark in New York State, and \$70 million for tourism marketing in Puerto Rico.

These emergency designations add up. Last year, Congress designated \$162 billion in emergency spending. This year, it is up to \$196 billion. In fact, over the last 30 years, Congress has provided \$12 trillion in emergency spending.

I have been here for some of these, and I don't consider them emergencies.

As soon as "emergency" is slapped on them, it means the money can be spent with reckless abandon.

Clearly, if we are going to tackle our debt and deficit problem, Congress will have to break its addiction to emergency spending, the culture of rampant emergency spending abuses encouraged by the CBO's baseline budget. By law, the CBO is required to assume that any spending Congress designates as emergency spending will continue on throughout the entire 10-year budget window and grow with inflation. This is obviously reckless.

Keep in mind, emergency spending is meant for one-time spending, not spending that goes on in perpetuity. You would never know that based on the way the CBO does these things.

In fact, the most recent CBO baseline update demonstrates the need for this bill. In the June report, CBO raised the projected spending over the next 10 years by \$945 billion. Nearly all of this projected increase is due to \$95 billion in supplemental foreign aid spending Congress passed earlier this year.

Does it make sense for CBO to assume this temporary spending will continue for all 10 years? It is ridiculous on its face.

To address this challenge, I am pleased to work with the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE) to introduce the Stop the Baseline Bloat Act. This bill would amend the relevant law to ensure emergency spending is not included in CBO's baseline. Getting our fiscal house in order, we must start with a neutral baseline, and this bill will make a meaningful step toward fiscal sanity.

Mr. Speaker, for this reason, I am pleased that this bill will be marked up by the House Budget Committee tomorrow morning. I hope this common-sense bill receives widespread bipartisan support.

I thank the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE) for his leadership in putting this bipartisan Special Order together and for leading the Stop the Baseline Bloat Act.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for highlighting not only the overall crisis, but certainly many of the process concerns that we all have in terms of full transparency and full accountability from the perspective of getting our budget under control.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HOULAHAN), an entrepreneur and a small business person herself, a member of the Committee on Armed Services and Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and somebody that also knows her way around a budget.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for the opportunity to speak on this Special Order.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues as a very proud member of the Bipartisan Fiscal Forum Steering Committee. Together, we are very

much committed to addressing one of the greatest threats to our Nation's long-term stability, and that is that of our unsustainable debt trajectory.

We also understand that we simply can't afford to treat our fiscal future like a political football. I represent Pennsylvania's Sixth Congressional District, a very purple community, where people understand that fiscal responsibility isn't a partisan issue, but it is a community value. We know that our prosperity both at home and across the country depends on smart and responsible fiscal stewardship.

Before coming to Congress, I was a business leader in Pennsylvania, and I have seen firsthand the risks and consequences of debt when it is not carefully managed. Businesses that ignore fiscal discipline may eventually falter. They may lose investors, may lose opportunities, or may even fail.

In the same way, if we continue on our current fiscal path as a nation, we could also find ourselves on similarly dangerous ground.

Over the past few years, this Nation and consequently the Federal Government has faced very costly and unprecedented challenges, from responding to the global pandemic, to defending our allies abroad from brutal, illegal attacks, to historic emergency national disasters. These crises have demanded investments and American leadership to protect our country and to support our global partners.

However, as interest rates now dip and inflation lowers and eases, now is, in fact, the time to refocus our efforts. In the coming months, we must have serious conversations about the future of our long-term fiscal health. As we look toward this future, the long-term implications of our national debt demand our attention and demand action.

Right now, as has been mentioned, the U.S. national debt is over \$35 trillion, larger than our entire economy's GDP. On a similar note, according to the Congressional Budget Office, if we fail to change course, interest payments on that debt alone are projected to exceed \$1 trillion annually by 2033. That is \$1 trillion just to pay the interest, money that could otherwise go toward infrastructure, families, education, and national security.

Speaking of national security, I want to be clear: Our economic security is absolutely directly tied to our ability to defend ourselves and to lead on the global stage. The more that we borrow, the more we depend on foreign creditors, and the less flexibility that we have in making decisions that are in our national interests.

As our interest outlays increase, the less funding we have to spend on things like our military's preparedness. We cannot afford to have our hands tied by debt when it comes to protecting this Nation.

In Congress, we face critical deadlines in the coming months. As we prepare to vote on yet another short-term

funding extension this week, we are reminded that a bipartisan full-year compromise for fiscal year 2025 government funding has yet to be reached.

Early next year, we will once again face the debt ceiling. These are not abstract deadlines. These are real and pressing moments where we have the opportunity to get control of our fiscal future together, but that opportunity is slipping away if we continue to delay these difficult decisions and if we continue to politicize this issue.

So that is why the Bipartisan Fiscal Forum exists. We are here. We are here to sound the alarm, and also to propose durable solutions, solutions like a bipartisan fiscal commission, or the Fiscal Responsibility Act that we passed just last year.

Our mission as a group is to raise the profile of this issue with our colleagues and with the public while ensuring that we have healthy, constructive debates on fiscal policies here in Congress.

As a bipartisan group, we know that this is not about scoring political points. This is about securing a sustainable future for our children and for our grandchildren. We may not agree on every solution or on the levers to pull, increasing revenues or decreasing costs, but we cannot afford to continue to keep kicking the can down the road.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to please come together, to set aside partisanship, and to work toward a balanced, sustainable budget. We owe that to the American people.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague so much for her very realistic and eyes-wide-open assessment of our Federal budget, and especially the focus on its impact on our national security from her own perspective in that space because I think we sometimes forget that this is a security risk, as well as a risk elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA), the co-chair of our Bipartisan Fiscal Forum, a small business person himself in his prior life, a member of the Financial Services Committee, Foreign Affairs Committee, and a leader in this area.

I thank the gentleman for joining us.

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE), my friend, for yielding time. This is a very important discussion to be having, not just among ourselves, but with the Nation and with the country.

Mr. Speaker, I start by thanking the gentleman not only for his sincere interest in this issue, but our growing friendship, as well. As I tell people back home, so often, you need to have a relationship first to then be able to build trust. When you build that trust, that is when you can go and find those solutions.

I am sure the gentleman has some constituents in Hawaii, much like I have constituents over in Michigan who sometimes say: Why are you even talking to those people? Let's just ignore them.

Well, sorry, folks. We can't do that. That is not reality. We have to deal with our colleagues, and guess what. We have gotten a very special group of people who have said: We realize that we are not going to be able to solve every problem. We are not even going to try to solve every problem, but this is a growing issue and problem for us that we need to focus and concentrate on.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is using this as an opportunity, the same as I will, to discuss some difficult truths about what we are facing and what my constituents back in southwest Michigan and the gentleman's constituents in Hawaii are all dealing with.

Frankly, the size of our national debt is just climbing at an alarming rate. It now exceeds over \$35 trillion with a t.

Probably like a lot of our colleagues here, I visit schools and I talk to kids, and I will oftentimes ask them: How many zeroes in a trillion? Usually the first answer is: A lot.

Yes, that is true. I tell these kids: You know what you need to do at some point today? Write down a 1 with 12 zeroes behind it, but then don't start at the left. Start at the right and see what \$1,000 looks like, what \$100,000 looks like, what \$1 million, \$10 million, \$100 million, and \$1 billion looks like, and you still see all these zeroes that you have to keep counting through.

Well, that \$35 trillion that we have spent here on the big giant credit card, Uncle Sam's credit card, is actually projected to reach closer to \$57 trillion in the next 10 years.

There are consequences to that. There are consequences to that. We can joke around and maybe understand that people aren't aware of what is going on. I have sort of had this running joke in our office that we need to put a big giant debt clock up here in the House Chamber to just remind people.

We have got to go out there and make sure that people understand that what is happening is this debt is crowding out other priorities, so much so that, this year, if projections hold true, we are going to see interest on the debt to exceed our military spending.

#### □ 2045

Just think of that: Interest on the debt for what we have already spent is going to exceed what we are going to be spending not just on the military but also for every program that touches kids here in this country.

That is more than Medicare. That is more than the military. We have to get serious about this.

I think everybody can understand the concept of having a credit card that has gotten a little too high, and they feel like they have had to use it because of inflation and the things going on. Think about how the interest on your credit card is now outpacing your grocery bill or outpacing your auto loan. How can you possibly function as a family? You can't.

We have to understand the debt that we have delivered here is helping drive some of that inflation. Interest rates that are there, the money that is getting taken away from other programs, is real.

I am the father of some college-aged kids and a small business owner, as you were kind enough to mention. My family is in construction. I am a former realtor. I understand and talk to people on a regular basis about what this means in their lives, and there is a real factor impacting your family, my family, and all of our constituents' families, as well.

In addition to the debt threatening to bankrupt our Nation's promises to seniors, to fueling inflation-causing interest payments, the national debt also slows economic growth. It drives up interest rates and leaves us less prepared for emergencies, whether it is a COVID-like emergency, a military-like emergency, or a natural disaster emergency. Suddenly, these things could plunge our Nation into even more chaos than what it would be normally because we are having these issues.

For these reasons, and with the help of many of our colleagues who are speaking tonight—Mr. GROTHMAN spoke, Mr. MOORE is going to be speaking, Mr. CASE, and so many others—we are really trying to tackle this with our Bipartisan Fiscal Forum.

My co-chair, SCOTT PETERS, has been a great partner in this, and he and I together introduced H.R. 5779, the Fiscal Commission Act, earlier. That would force our Congress to tackle our national debt by voting on a package of policy recommendations designed to get our Nation's fiscal house in order, both in the short term and in the long term.

As was quoted by Ms. HOULAHAN earlier, we are looking at real cuts in Social Security. We are looking at real cuts in Medicare. Those should not be acceptable. We have to wrestle this dragon to the ground.

I am proud that our legislation passed the House Budget Committee on a bipartisan basis, but we have a lot more work to do. The purpose of tonight is continuing to raise that awareness with a national audience, not just our colleagues but our constituencies, as well.

We have to make sure that people understand crystal clear how serious this issue is and the real impacts it has, making life less affordable and more difficult on our constituents, not just in the short term but certainly in the long run for our kids and our grandkids.

I know the Bipartisan Fiscal Forum, with my colleague's leadership and others, stands ready to work with anybody. We will work with anybody who is interested in this.

As has been stated, we may not always agree on the path, but we agree on the destination. That is the important part: making sure that we get to that destination because that really is

what we owe our kids and grandkids and future generations of Americans.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's leadership very much. Not only do we agree on the destination, but we agree on the problem. When you can agree on what the problem is, you can usually get to a solution. What we need to do is all agree on that problem on a bipartisan basis.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague from Utah (Mr. MOORE), a steering committee member of the Bipartisan Fiscal Forum, a member of the Budget Committee and the Ways and Means Committee, another small business person, and somebody who also knows his way around a budget.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Hawaii for yielding. I really appreciate this opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I rise alongside a bipartisan group of colleagues to discuss our Nation's greatest threat: the unsustainable deficit and spiraling national debt.

I thank my friend, Congressman CASE, for hosting this Special Order this evening and for his continued leadership on the Bipartisan Fiscal Forum.

Today, our gross national debt exceeds \$35 trillion. Our budget deficit is expected to reach \$1.9 trillion this year. Spending on interest payments just to service our debt will surpass what we spend on Medicare and national defense each, individually. This is the grave reality of our fiscal situation.

As we all know, this is not an easy issue, and it is a problem created by both parties. Durable and lasting solutions will likewise require bipartisan partnership to address these difficult budgetary realities.

I am grateful for groups like the Bipartisan Fiscal Forum, where Members who recognize the catastrophic threat posed by our fiscal state come together to elevate this issue and find commonsense solutions.

As a father of four boys, this issue is deeply personal to me. I want my sons' generation to have the same chance at the American Dream that previous generations have had.

Our national debt matters, and if we don't deal with it, our children and their children will bear the burden of higher inflation and interest costs, slower economic growth, and the national security risks associated with bloated Federal Government.

Utah, my State, is a model for responsible budgeting with a balanced budget every year and a consistent rainy-day fund. This is why, during my first term in Congress, I established a Debt and Deficit Task Force back home in Utah, comprised of leaders from across the State to create a framework of solutions for how elected officials should address our Nation's debt crisis with Utah's fiscally responsible values.

The four main pillars of our framework include growing the economy,

saving and strengthening vital programs, focusing America's spending, and fixing Congress' budget process.

I know that several of my colleagues involved in the Bipartisan Fiscal Forum have recognized many of the same structural issues and are working hard to change the tide here in Washington.

As a member of the Budget Committee, I have been proud of the work we have done this Congress to raise the profile of our national debt and deficit crisis.

Earlier this year, the committee passed my Fiscal State of the Nation Act, which would require the nonpartisan Comptroller General to provide an annual update on the Nation's finances to a joint meeting of Congress and help the Nation understand the scope of the problem.

I applaud Chairman JODEY ARRINGTON for leading the charge on a lot of important legislation and conversations that are making the dangers of our Federal debt crisis feel more real to the American people.

The committee also advanced a very important and significant bipartisan Fiscal Commission Act, crucial legislation led by Congressman HUIZENGA from Michigan and Congressman PETERS from California.

The bill would establish a commission tasked with identifying policies to improve the fiscal situation in the medium term and attain a sustainable debt-to-GDP ratio over the longer term. The commission would operate in an open and transparent manner, and importantly, it provides for expedited consideration on the House and Senate floor. That is something we haven't always had in these similar types of approaches, that there would be expedited consideration to force a House and Senate floor vote.

While establishing a fiscal commission is critical in the short term, I know many of my colleagues would agree that we need to reform our budget process to help make sustainable budgeting possible.

To illustrate the scope of the budget process challenges, here are a few figures: Congress has not adopted a budget on time since 2003; Congress has not passed all appropriations on time since 1996; and the only time Congress has passed both the budget resolution and appropriations by the deadline was 1977.

The Budget Committee is working hard on budget process reform, and I know members of the Bipartisan Fiscal Forum have ideas to revamp the process, as well.

A bipartisan bill I introduced with Congresswoman MARIE GLUESENKAMP PEREZ to tackle this problem is the Comprehensive Congressional Budget Act, which would take the next step toward an effective and inclusive congressional budgeting process by including all spending and revenue in the budget process and requiring contributions from committees with direct spending or revenue jurisdiction.

I emphasize "all spending" because, as I listed off things where we have fallen short over the last 50 years, it is not even highlighting the most important aspect: We don't vote on more than 75 percent of our budget. All 435 of us and 100 Senators are responsible in our Article I duty for our Federal budget, and we vote on approximately 23 percent of that.

This Comprehensive Congressional Budget Act would force Congress to take into consideration the entirety of the budget, and it would give the committees the right responsibility. We would have to roll up our sleeves and actually have to deal with the entirety of the budget because the fact that we just vote on appropriations bills doesn't solve a single thing.

Next year will be an important year as we deal with major fiscal cliffs. Beyond the annual appropriations process, we will have to deal with the reinstatement of the debt limit in addition to trillions of dollars of tax expirations that will affect every American family.

Groups like the Bipartisan Fiscal Forum are incredibly valuable as we take on the challenges and opportunities ahead of us in 2025.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to continuing this important work.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I thank so much my colleague for his leadership, as well. I really appreciate his highlighting the intergenerational consequences of not solving this issue today.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Hawaii has 20 minutes remaining.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate my colleagues spending the time here tonight.

Now, I will go back and add a little bit of detail, so that we can fully illustrate what the issue is, how we got here, what the consequences are, why we need to do something about it, and how we do so.

The first thing I will start with is something very basic, and that is: How do our Federal finances actually work? First and foremost, our Federal finances are no different in concept than our family or business budgets, fundamentally.

In our Federal finance situation, our taxes and fees create revenues for our government. Our programs create the expenses for our government. If the revenues exceed expenses, we call that a surplus. If expenses exceed revenues, that is a deficit. We calculate both revenues and expenses and surpluses and deficits on an annual fiscal year. When we are talking about a deficit or surplus, we are talking about what happened in a particular fiscal year.

How do we address a deficit if we have it? It is easy to understand how we deal with a surplus. We spend the money that we got and, hopefully, save up a little bit for the next year, just like any family, any business.

What do we do about deficits? We will borrow that money, and we mostly borrow it by issuing government bonds to people around the country and world who want to invest in our government bonds, believing that the United States is the most secure investment in the entire world, but we also borrow intergovernment or, more accurately, intragovernment.

We are busy borrowing, for example, from the Social Security trust fund, which is building up a surplus toward a time when it needs it far more to pay Social Security benefits, and that money is due and owing to the Social Security trust fund.

It creates extra pressure on the Social Security trust fund that money is not being used for Social Security. It is being used for everything but Social Security.

Those borrowings in a family or business setting start to overwhelm you. We, of course, like anybody else, pay interest on what we have borrowed. Our total borrowings at any one time, which are essentially the accumulation of our deficits over time, are our total government debt.

Just like any family or business, it would be nice to have no deficit or debt, but that is not most of us. It is fine to run some debt if that debt is not chronic, if that debt is not just an excuse to be irresponsible and avoid fiscally responsible behavior, and that debt is not too high in relationship to our overall budget or economy.

We measure this many times by reference to our gross domestic product, how much our economy is producing. We calculate a debt-to-GDP ratio, which, if it is too high, starts to overwhelm the economy just like any family or business budget, or if the interest on the debt is not too high in relation to our total budget.

□ 2100

Bottom line, we can afford some debt but not if it starts to get away from us. This is, again, no different in concept than a family or business budget with one exception, and that is we can go on borrowing as long as we want, even irresponsible borrowing, whereas in a family and a business budget, that is going to catch up with you sooner or later.

Now, what exactly is going wrong, and why is it going wrong?

Well, the last year that we had a surplus in our Federal budget was 2001, 23 years ago. We have run deficits every year since then.

This illustrates our deficit track since 2001 down on this side, and you can see that it increased in the middle part of 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011, during the Great Recession when we had higher expenditures for recovery and lower revenues because we were in a recession.

Then, of course, this big bump right here is COVID when we had to borrow a lot of money, when we had to run deficits in order to bail our country out

of a tremendous problem. These 2 years were deficits.

Then we recovered in the post-COVID environment, but now we see it going up again for no real good reason other than that we are running deficits.

We are now at \$1.9 trillion per year, and if we carry that out over time, we will see deficits grow to about \$2.9 trillion by 2034, not too many years away.

How about our debt?

This is our total debt, and it starts over on the left side back in 1990. We had a pretty level debt increase until the early part of the 2000s.

The last time we had a surplus, we were managing debt. Then it started to take off with that recession. It started to take off more with irresponsible budgetary decisions on revenues and expenses.

The scariest part is the acceleration of this curve right here, which takes us only to about 2022. Our debt was \$7 trillion in 2004, \$18 trillion in 2014, \$23 trillion in 2019, and now, as was already noted, it is up to \$35 trillion—23 trillion to 35 trillion in 5 years.

How about the measure of debt to GDP?

As was discussed earlier, that is a really good indication of what is actually happening in our economy. This is our debt to GDP.

Now, you can see this big bulge right here was the highest debt to GDP we have had to date. That was World War II when we had to borrow to win a war. We had to do that.

Of course, the war, aside from being tragic, was not very good for the world economy. We had a real issue, as we always do in a war. This happens from a budget perspective.

Here we see a rapid escalation in debt to GDP in the last 5 to 7 years. This number right here is about 125 percent or 124 percent, which is our highest level of debt to GDP since World War II. Unless corrected, this is what is going to happen. It will shoot up over the next 10 years.

Reference was made by my colleagues earlier to interest that we pay every year on our current national debt. Our annual interest on debt now is up to \$892 billion, and as was mentioned by reference, that is more today than we spend on defense or Medicare.

This line is interest, this red line right here. This line is defense extrapolated at the current levels out to 2034 from today, which is right over here. By the way, we all know that we need a very robust defense expenditure to handle the geopolitical challenges that we face. The green line is Medicare.

The point here is unless we get interest under control, it will essentially surpass defense and continue at an increasing gap. Medicare is going up because it is costing more. It is staying up with Medicare, and it is essentially overwhelming our ability to pay for defense and Medicare, crowding out our national budget.

Now, what are the consequences of carrying a very high deficit and a very

high debt load? Why does debt matter, in so many words?

Well, I am going to go through this pretty fast. Number one, I already said it. It crowds out other needed spending, defense and nondefense. It reduces fiscal flexibility, especially in crises.

What if we did have another COVID today or tomorrow? What if we had a major expense that we didn't anticipate?

Our debt and deficits would jack up, just as happened during COVID, just as we saw during the Second World War.

The interest rates would jack up essentially exactly when we need to have a fiscally solvent and responsible base to build on. In other words, you have to prepare for crises. When you are not in a crisis, that is the time to get your thoughts in order, and when you go there, that is when you want the flexibility.

It slows economic growth. It creates inflation pressure. It creates interest rate pressure. We have already talked about national security risks, especially with adversaries such as the People's Republic of China, who invest in our bonds.

China owns a tremendous amount of our bonds. That gives China leverage over us. I don't want to be a borrower from China. It disincentivizes responsible budgeting internationally.

Many countries around the world are facing budgetary pressures. If we can't run our own show, how can we ask them to run their own show responsibly?

Finally, it feeds directly into arguments by the PRC and others that are seeking to replace our dollar as the world's reserve currency.

Essentially, what they are saying is the dollar is not a stable, not a responsible, not a secure currency, so let's try our own. We are begging all of these questions right now.

What do we do about all of this?

There are a couple of things we can do. First of all, we can acknowledge the issue, and we can acknowledge the crisis, and we can acknowledge that we have something that we must work on.

Number one, stop looking for marginal, illusory, magic solutions. For those that say we can grow our way out of this, no, we can't.

We would have to have an annual growth rate of somewhere around the range of 10 percent a year, which is absolutely unrealistic for the foreseeable future, for us to solve this simply by growing this economy. Any economist would say that we are doing incredibly well to come even close to 10 percent a year.

We can also stop the bleeding and reduce annual deficits through mechanisms such as paygo, which is a responsible process that we have followed sometimes, and lately not followed, under which whenever we reduce revenues through tax reductions, we have to offset them with expenses or revenue somewhere else or vice versa. Whenever we increase a program cost,

we have to pay for it or else reduce another program cost so that it is budget neutral.

We obviously need to rebalance revenue and expense over time in our tax and spending policies with major decisions coming up.

Finally, as was mentioned, we probably need some major help with a fiscal commission. A fiscal commission can help us to sort through this in a non-partisan, apolitical way to provide the expertise necessary to make recommendations that we must take a look at.

To those that criticize fiscal commissions, I would pose the question, well, what is your solution, then? Is there a solution that you have that you think would help us to solve this incredible crisis?

In conclusion, for the Bipartisan Fiscal Forum, my 87 colleagues and others who believe that this is, indeed, a crisis, we have a couple of steps that we have to go through.

The first step is to stop the denial, which is where we are right now, for this to be an issue in our campaigns, in our elections, for this to be front and center in our public discourse scores.

Then we have to ask, what can we do?

There is plenty we can do.

First of all, we can get through denial and get firmly into step number two, which is to do something about it. Then next, of course, acknowledge that the solutions are hard, but the alternative of doing nothing is and will be far, far harder.

We urge acknowledgment and action both within our colleagues in Congress and especially with the American people as we consider this crisis.

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

□ 2110

#### FURTHER INVESTIGATION INTO JANUARY 6

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LOUDERMILK) is recognized until 10 p.m. as the designee of the majority leader.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise this late evening to discuss and inform the American people about a very important moment in the history of the United States.

Now, as Members of Congress, we have a very important job to do here.

We have a lot of responsibility, but one of those responsibilities, Mr. Speaker, is to seek the truth, especially in our investigative roles, and report the truth.

We also have a job of correcting the record and calling attention to a false narrative that, quite frankly, has been peddled on the American people for the last 2 years.

Now, in January of 2023, Speaker Kevin McCarthy asked me to take on a huge task, and that was to chair the first ever Subcommittee of Oversight on the Committee on House Administration. The task that he asked me to take on was to investigate the events of January 6 as well as to investigate the actions of the January 6th Select Committee.

I agreed to take on this investigation under the condition that I was provided the resources, the staff, and the funding that I needed to conduct an appropriate investigation and that I was given the freedom to pursue the truth without any political bias and thus report that evidence and that truth to the American people.

My mission was simple: Conduct a real investigation, seek out and report unaltered evidence—that is important, unaltered evidence—and let the facts speak for themselves, and ultimately let the American people draw the conclusion based on the evidence on the facts.

It is our duty to provide full transparency to the American people, and that is something that has lacked a lot in our government, especially in the past several years, but as we sought the truth of what led to January 6, what happened on January 6, what transpired on January 6, it wasn't to dispel any fact of what happened. Yes, there was violence. Yes, there was violence in this building. There was violence that happened around the Capitol, as the videos and other evidence shows.

However, the reports that we have received, especially the select committee's report is significantly flawed in their facts.

From the very beginning my subcommittee faced obstacles that were left by the January 6th Select Committee. As the House rules required, the select committee was to preserve all records that were used and acquired during their investigation, but soon after starting my task in this investigation, we realized that there was a significant amount of evidence that we did not have. There were documents, videos, certain evidence, or transcripts that had either been sent to other agencies within the executive branch or in some cases deleted—we had to hire a forensics team to recover that information—or there were certain videos of transcribed interviews that everyone on the committee admits actually existed, but no one seems to know what happened to those.

Regardless of the obstacles that we faced, we continued on with our inves-

tigation, which we spent about an entire year obtaining the information that was not archived by the select committee. A lot of this information, as we found out, did not support the narrative of the report that the select committee submitted to Congress.

My suspicion is that because that information that was deleted or hidden or sent off did not support their report is probably why they did not retain that information. However, we continued on our investigation, looking at certain aspects of what happened, including the security failure here in this building, which was one of the primary tasks of the January 6th Select Committee, but yet when you look at the report, there appears to be nothing about the security failure here at the Capitol.

That was one of our first tasks: What led to the security failure here at the Capitol? What about the pipe bombs? Looking at the pipe bombs, the tremendous failures that we saw through multiple agencies of law enforcement. There was a failure to contain the area where the pipe bombs were. The Secret Service had an advance team because Vice President-Elect KAMALA HARRIS was going to be at the DCCC. The agent advancing it walked by a pipe bomb twice with a bomb dog and never alerted on it.

We also looked into the mysterious gallows that were erected, but we also spent a lot of time on the operation and preparedness of the U.S. Capitol Police and the mutual aid expected by other agencies here to support them.

What I want to talk about here tonight is one of the mutual aid partners that should have been here at the Capitol on January 6, and that is the D.C. National Guard.

There were two significant delays in the National Guard coming to the Capitol. The first delay was the request that was made by Chief Sund—multiple requests on the days leading up to January 6. Chief Steven Sund was the Chief of the Capitol Police. He knew from the size of the crowds that were expected that he would need additional assistance.

COVID was happening at that time, so we weren't at full force in the Capitol Police because we had several officers who were out because of being quarantined due to COVID. Chief Sund anticipated he would need extra support, so he requested the National Guard in the days leading up to January 6.

Under the law at that time, the request had to be made by the Capitol Police Board. Under the Constitution, the President can't just send the National Guard to the Capitol without a request. Otherwise, he could send over the military to take over Congress if they didn't like what was going on. There had to be a request.

That official request did not come until late in the afternoon, about 2:30 in the afternoon, well after the Capitol had been breached. Once shots had been

fired at the Capitol, the final request was approved for the National Guard.

Chief Sund had made several requests during that day, which those had all been turned down for one reason or another through leadership. However, once shots were fired in the Capitol, even leadership determined maybe we do need help here, so an official request was made to the D.C. National Guard to be deployed to the Capitol.

Let me put things in perspective. The outer perimeter on the west front of the Capitol was breached by rioters at 12:53. That is 7 minutes to 1:00. President Trump was still speaking at the Ellipse at that time when the outer barriers were breached. It wasn't until 5 hours later that the National Guard arrived.

We do know that there was an initial delay here, but at around 2:30 in the afternoon, the official request was made to the Pentagon. After that request was made at 2:30, it was still almost 4 hours before the National Guard arrived.

Just like our National Guard in our States, the D.C. National Guard, one of their predominant roles is civil unrest. In fact, they are known as the Guardians of the Capitol, the Capitol Guardians. They had been used many times in the past to help quell riots and civil unrest or even act as a deterrent.

The D.C. National Guard, you would think, well, yeah, they have to be called in, they have to be mustered in, so maybe that was the delay. Maybe once the order was given, it was going to get all the guardsmen in and get them ready.

□ 2120

The Governor of the State of Georgia, Brian Kemp, has used the National Guard to help suppress riots. During the BLM riots in 2020, he called out our National Guard. The National Guard does fall under the authority of the Governor, but here in D.C., because we are not a State, that authority falls under the President of the United States.

However, by law, the President can then delegate that authority to the Department of Defense. With that chain of command, we found out in our investigation that delegation of authority was done in the days leading up to January 6.

As I will get into in just a little bit, the evidence that we have uncovered is that days before January 6, President Trump had already delegated the authority to deploy the National Guard and had the National Guard ready for deployment.

In fact, on that day, the National Guard was less than 2 miles away from this Capitol, ready with their riot gear, ready to deploy to the Capitol—not only during the 4-hour delay, but they were there from earlier that morning. Why? Because President Trump had already ordered the National Guard to be ready because of the size of the number of people who were coming to Wash-

ington, D.C. He wanted to make sure that everyone was safe and that it was peaceful.

The D.C. National Guard is the only military organization within the Department of Defense over which the President of the United States has direct and immediate command authority. As I have said, the President's command authority gets delegated to the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of Defense has further delegated operational control of the D.C. National Guard to the Secretary of the Army. So it goes the President, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Army.

On January 6, 2021, the D.C. National Guard reported to the Secretary of the Army, Ryan McCarthy. On January 5, Secretary McCarthy took it upon himself to place an unprecedented restriction on the D.C. National Guard to prevent any movement to the Capitol without his explicit permission.

What that memo said is basically: If the President himself calls you, General Walker, the Commander of the D.C. National Guard, you can't move without my authority, the Secretary of the Army. If the Secretary of Defense tells you to deploy, you can't go without my authority.

This tied the hands of the National Guard and placed sole tactical operational command of their movements in the hands of Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy.

As I said earlier, the breach of the outer perimeter happened at 12:53, 7 minutes till 1. As we are seeing the Capitol being overrun at 1 o'clock in the afternoon, the National Guard is less than 2 miles from here, with riot gear, ready to deploy, and buses ready to go.

The President had already ordered days in advance the National Guard to be readied, but senior Pentagon leaders ignored President Trump's directive to, as President Trump said in sworn testimony by Pentagon leaders, "make sure it is a safe event." Instead, they focused on optics as the Capitol was being breached.

In fact, the Director of the Army Staff, Lieutenant General Walter Piatt, later would say, "Was optics a concern for us as we prepared to use soldiers downtown in Washington, D.C.? Absolutely."

As optics concerns were being discussed, and Secretary McCarthy claimed that he was "developing a plan" during this delay—after this order was given, he is developing a plan—the D.C. National Guard was ready to move less than 2 miles from here during that crucial time.

To put things in perspective, at 2:30, the request was made by the Capitol Police Board. At 3 o'clock, the Secretary of Defense told the Secretary of the Army, Ryan McCarthy, to deploy the National Guard. That was just a few minutes after 3 p.m.

Because it was almost 6 p.m. before the National Guard arrived here at the

Capitol, Secretary McCarthy stated that he was working on a concept of operations, that he had developed a CONOPS, but he never communicated with the Capitol police or D.C. National Guard during that time period that he was developing this concept of operations.

What is more, the National Guard already had a plan. This isn't the first time that they have done this, or as they say in Texas, this wasn't their first rodeo. Many times in the past, they had been deployed to the Capitol, the National Mall area, and around the Nation's Capital to help keep the peace. In fact, the Metropolitan Police Department was already using some National Guard forces for traffic control that day.

Secretary McCarthy, as you can see in this poster, was well aware of the National Guard as he had observed training operations. He was well aware of their concept of operations, that they knew what they were doing, that they had trained for events like this.

Basically, when you are being used to supplement law enforcement, the operations plan is get yourself to the Capitol, report to the Capitol Police, get sworn in, and then do whatever the chief of police tells you to do. It is that simple, the concept of operations.

What concerns me is even though the National Guard trained for civil disturbance missions over and over again, which McCarthy was aware of, the question is: Did he use the CONOPS as a delay tactic because he knew what they were capable of doing?

In fact, over 2 hours were wasted to allegedly develop a plan, and to this day, a plan has never been produced. If they were working on a concept of operations plan, where is it? It was never communicated to the National Guard even once they were given the orders to deploy.

As we started looking into the reason for the delay, we found out that the Department of Defense inspector general was also looking into this delay. In fact, they had already produced a report, and their report laid the blame of the delay on the D.C. National Guard.

We had some whistleblowers who actually were senior officers in the D.C. National Guard who started coming to my committee and telling us: The IG report is wrong. It is flawed. That is not what happened. We were ready to go. We were purposefully delayed.

We started digging into this, and we kept digging and digging until we were able to obtain all the evidence that the DOD IG used in their report.

I can tell you here, Mr. Speaker, I still don't know how they came up with their report saying that the National Guard was the purpose of the delay when it was clearly that senior officials in the Department of Defense purposefully delayed the National Guard from coming to the Capitol that day. We will dig a little further into that evidence here in a few moments.

Two hours were wasted as, literally, there was a death outside the west

front of the Capitol during the time that the National Guard could have been here had they been deployed.

When that 2-hour delay started at 3:04, Secretary of Defense Miller provided verbal approval to Secretary McCarthy for immediate deployment to the Capitol. At 3:04, he told the Secretary of the Army to deploy to the Capitol. Numerous eyewitnesses confirmed that Miller gave this order, including Secretary McCarthy himself. He testified: Yes, I got that order.

After Miller gave this order and while the D.C. National Guard sat ready to respond, Secretary McCarthy occupied himself by allegedly coming up with a CONOPS plan, as we discussed, and drafting talking points for a national press conference with the D.C. Mayor.

At that time, no one was communicating with the D.C. National Guard, which was sitting less than 2 miles from here ready to deploy. No one was communicating while they were watching on television what was happening at the Capitol and were eager to get over here to help. During that time of making talking points for a press conference and supposedly developing an operations plan, Members were being evacuated from this very Chamber as people were pounding on the back door and breaking glass trying to get in.

While rioters breached the Capitol, McCarthy never once called the Commander of the D.C. National Guard, who is Major General Walker. He said that Major General Walker testified that he never received any communication during that time period or any communication at all from Secretary McCarthy, who did not relay Secretary of Defense Miller's order for immediate deployment of the National Guard to the Capitol.

□ 2130

General Walker ultimately received the order to deploy at 5:08 p.m.

Now, remember, the Secretary of Defense tells the Secretary of the Army at 3:04 to immediately deploy the National Guard. The National Guard doesn't receive the order until 5:08 p.m., well after law enforcement from neighboring States and jurisdictions had already come and helped quell the riots.

This is unacceptable in my opinion.

Now, Secretary McCarthy was asked specifically about his actions following Secretary Miller's 3 or 4 p.m. order by the select committee and multiple Senate committees investigating this, as well as the Department of Defense IG.

When asked by the DOD IG in March of 2021, Secretary McCarthy stated that one of his staff conveyed the order to deploy the D.C. National Guard within minutes of Miller's verbal order. So Secretary McCarthy is saying, yes, within minutes of getting the order, I conveyed that information to the D.C. National Guard.

However, the DOD IG report alleged that McCarthy personally conveyed

this order to deploy within minutes without explanation or providing evidence to support his assertion.

Major General Walker, the commander of the D.C. National Guard, has consistently refuted that order that was relayed supposedly at 3:04 p.m. He never received any communication from the Secretary of the Army.

Almost a year later, in testimony to the select committee, McCarthy testifies that he completed his CONOPS around 4:35 p.m. and called Secretary of Defense Miller and received his approval. However, that CONOPS has never emerged. It wasn't in any of the Department of Defense IG's report or their evidence, Select Committee on January 6th evidence, and we have found no evidence of that CONOPS plan.

In his testimony to the select committee when asked about the 4:35 p.m. call, McCarthy finally admitted that he never spoke directly to Major General Walker at 4:35, even though it had been testified that he had. Instead, Secretary McCarthy changed his story and told the select committee that a member of his staff who had the authority to speak as Secretary of the Army was communicating with the D.C. National Guard on his behalf on January 6.

Now, this revision to his previous version of the events is significant. The individual McCarthy claimed made this call on his behalf testified to the DOD IG that it was Secretary McCarthy who conveyed the order at 4:35 p.m.

Now, let me pause here.

The conflicting testimony raises serious doubts about the actions of the numerous senior DOD officials failing to follow direct orders resulting in the delayed deployment of the D.C. National Guard.

The only reason that Congress is now aware of these significant conflicting versions of events is because of the courageous D.C. National Guardsmen who testified in front of my subcommittee and because my subcommittee has forced the DOD IG to produce the witness interviews revealing these conflicting versions of events, which I now share publicly. These have been made public. They can be seen by anyone, all the testimony that was used by the DOD IG.

As Secretary McCarthy's story changed, it started actually to align more with Major General Walker's testimony. Again, he was the commander of the D.C. National Guard. At a March 2021 Senate hearing, General Walker testified that the DOD IG—actually, the DOD IG report alleged that in this congressional testimony General Walker mischaracterized, and his testimony was untrue without any evidence to support an allegation that General Walker committed perjury. Basically, General Walker's testimony didn't align with the DOD IG's report, so they claimed that his testimony was perjurious to the Senate.

Now, to make matters worse, while the violence and chaos continued to

unfold at the Capitol, Pentagon officials deceptively told congressional Democrat leadership on a phone call that the D.C. National Guard was on the way.

So during this entire 2½-hour delay of getting the D.C. National Guard going, no one had communicated with General Walker at all. He is sitting less than 2 miles from here with the D.C. National Guard with riot gear ready to come and help quell the riots here. No one is communicating during this entire time.

Secretary McCarthy told Democrat leadership that the National Guard was on the way. HBO footage that was obtained by my subcommittee shows that at 3:18 p.m. Secretary McCarthy told Speaker PELOSI that he never blocked the deployment of the National Guard; instead, he first needed to get approval from Secretary Miller. That was at 3:18 p.m. Secretary Miller had already told Secretary McCarthy to deploy at 3:04.

McCarthy then assured Speaker PELOSI:

We have the green light. We are moving.

However, no one had communicated to General Walker to move until after 5:00 p.m. The Pentagon mislead congressional leadership into thinking help was on the way at 3:18, when they knew for a fact it was not.

Remember, Secretary McCarthy at this time had still not communicated Secretary of Defense Miller's 3:04 deployment to the D.C. National Guard. A full 2 hours would pass before the deployment order was actually communicated to the D.C. National Guard.

The order was eventually communicated by a different McCarthy aide and not by McCarthy himself.

So on January 5, McCarthy revised the chain of command to deploy the D.C. National Guard. He informed General Walker:

You cannot go unless I specifically authorize you to go.

Yet, he had not communicated with him at any time on January 6 as they were waiting to deploy.

In these vital hours, General Walker tried to contact Secretary McCarthy, but his calls kept going straight to voicemail.

I want to reemphasize; the D.C. National Guard was ordered to be ready to deploy on January 6 on January the 3rd by an order from President Trump. That order was confirmed in testimony—if you can put up the other poster again—by General Milley himself who testified that in a phone call with the Commander in Chief, President Trump, he told Secretary Miller that POTUS said, hey, I don't care if you use the National Guard or soldiers, Active-Duty soldiers, do whatever you have to do, just make sure it is safe.

This was the testimony by General Milley testifying that, yes, on January 3, days before January 6, Trump had already delegated authority to deployment. So the reports that we heard that Trump could have just sent the

National Guard or Trump just should have picked up the phone and told them to go, he had already done his duty as Commander in Chief.

Now, I want to talk a little bit about the DOD IG report because, as I said earlier, we have investigated the same evidence that the DOD IG did, and we came up with a totally different conclusion based on the evidence and the facts that we found in the sworn testimony that there was a purposeful delay by the Department of Defense to deploy the D.C. National Guard.

The then-Army chief of staff's testimony revealed confusion regarding certain entries in the Army's timeline, but an individual within Secretary McCarthy's inner circle—this was not included in the DOD IG's report. So what has happened is we have got people within the Pentagon testifying one thing to Congress and another thing to the DOD IG in their sworn testimony.

A witness who was with McCarthy on that day testified that the D.C. National Guard did not get specific instructions from the Army until after 5:00 p.m. The DOD IG report acknowledged this inconsistency but still maintained in its report that McCarthy himself conveyed the order at 3:05.

The DOD IG reports that the order was given at 3:05 to General Walker and General Walker just did not deploy. Even though all of the testimony in the sworn affidavits or the sworn depositions and transcribed interviews all say that that communication never happened, but the DOD IG still reports that it does.

□ 2140

I do know that one DOD IG investigator claimed to Major General Walker that getting to the bottom of why was not in their lane.

The DOD IG is telling General Walker that it is not in our lane to figure out why you weren't communicated to.

They went on to say that they don't judge operational decisions. The IG only looks at whether a law was broken or a policy was violated, but those are operational decisions.

That is fine, except for why does your report say that it was the D.C. National Guard that failed to deploy when it was clear through all the records that there was a purposeful delay within the DOD?

As a result of my investigation, it is clear that the Pentagon DOD IG deliberately attempted to cover up the actions of certain DOD officials that day.

DOD IG was tasked with evaluating the Department of Defense's response on January 6; however, the Department of Defense Office of the Secretary of Defense began exerting its influence in order to manipulate the report to protect senior DOD officials who failed President Trump on that day and failed Congress.

As we have seen quite often, the coverup is worse than the crime itself.

Although the Department of Defense IG touts its independence and ability

to produce unbiased reports, the evidence obtained by my subcommittee shows that the former IG produced a flawed report with many inaccuracies that violate investigative standards. The Department of Defense IG failed to interview key personnel, specifically the D.C. National Guard personnel with firsthand knowledge, and failed to conduct complete interviews focused on facts instead of seeking witnesses to affirm the Pentagon's predetermined narrative.

As part of the coverup, the IG report invented phone calls between senior leaders that never occurred where both parties allegedly on the call denied that it ever took place. These are people who testified to the DOD IG that they never made those calls, but yet the report reflects that they did.

Worst of all, the IG report chose to protect Pentagon leadership at the expense of members of the National Guard, our volunteer men and women who were ready and waiting less than 2 miles from this Capitol with their riot gear ready to come and help Chief Sund.

The subcommittee has been seeking the truth despite efforts of the Department of Defense to obstruct and hide the evidence.

However, we have been able to bring this to light to the American people thanks to the hard work by the committee staff and our investigators who were relentless in working to get all of this evidence from the Department of Defense.

As a result of my subcommittee's work, this Congress and the American people know the truth now.

President Trump directed senior Pentagon leadership to keep January 6 peaceful and safe, including the National Guard, if needed.

General Milley was no fan of President Trump, that is known, but he testified under oath that, yes, President Trump did order the National Guard to be readied and ready for deployment on January 6. That is clear and unrefuted.

It was specific individuals at Pentagon who failed to properly execute on this directive from the Commander in Chief.

What is most concerning to me is that these revelations come from the Department of Defense's Inspector General's witness interviews. This isn't something we are making up. This is within the evidence that the Department of Defense acquired themselves that doesn't match up with their report.

However, we have now made these public so the American people can draw their own conclusions of what happened.

The DOD IG report absolved the Pentagon and DOD senior leadership of any failures on January 6. It even specifically found that there was "no delay."

This conclusion is inconsistent with the evidence in the possession of the DOD IG; therefore, the report is fundamentally flawed. We are asking the

DOD IG to reissue their report based on the evidence.

I give a lot of credit to the whistleblowers of the D.C. National Guard. In April of 2024 we were approached by National Guard who came forward as whistleblowers risking their own careers. They came forward to ensure that the truth was made known. Four of them even testified in a public hearing of the truth of what happened on that fateful day.

After months of negotiation with the DOD Inspector General and the Pentagon, our subcommittee was able to obtain and publish never-before-seen DOD IG transcripts previously withheld by the Biden-Harris administration.

Mr. Speaker, let me just give you some highlights of what we have found, and then I will wrap up as the hour is getting late.

We have senior military officials, civilian and Active Duty, who said under oath their mission was to delay the National Guard deployed to the Capitol. We have some who said: I wanted to make sure that the National Guard never arrived at the Capitol because of the optics.

Yet, had they been here, lives could have been saved. They wanted to do their job. They were less than 2 miles away ready to deploy, but no one was communicating that order to them.

The very leaders who were responsible for the security of the Capitol on January 6 used a select committee to cast their well-deserved black eye on to someone else, the same thing that happened with the DOD IG. Instead of looking at the truth, we need to make sure that we come out of this looking good.

The Capitol guardians have faced a complete leadership turnover, and we hope that we can go forward with some legislation to ensure that the D.C. National Guard is trained and ready to deploy as they were then, but we also need to make sure that when they are needed that they are sent and that they are not purposely held back.

Let me conclude with this thought: the evidence clearly shows, and the American people can go out on the website, and they can see all these sworn testimonies, they can see quotes by DOD officials concerned about the optics of National Guardsmen being at the Capitol while the Capitol is being breached violently.

If, as some believe, that January 6 was an insurrection on this institution, then purposely delaying the D.C. National Guard from coming to help quell the insurrection was, in fact, participating.

When you had the ability to send the forces to stop it, and you refused to do it because you didn't like the optics, then we need to take a serious look at this.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time here this evening. We will continue to look into the truth of what happened on that day in an unbiased way and report that.

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

---

#### SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 2228.—An act to amend the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 to clarify the scope of a major Federal action under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 with respect to certain projects relating to the production of semiconductors, and for other purposes.

---

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 47 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

---

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-5438. A letter from the Branch Chief, Farm Service Agency, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Enhancing Program Access and Delivery for Farm Loans [Docket No.: FSA-2023-003] (RIN: 0560-AI61) received August 26, 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-5439. A letter from the Program Analyst, Specialty Crop Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Onions Grown in South Texas; Increased Assessment Rate [Doc. No.: AMS-SC-23-0086] received August 26, 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-5440. A letter from the Program Analyst, Specialty Crop Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Cranberries Grown in Massachusetts, et al.; Termination of Marketing Order and Data Collection Requirements for Cranberries Not Subject to the Marketing Order [Doc. No.: AMS-SC-23-0047] received August 26, 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-5441. A letter from the Program Analyst, Specialty Crops Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Onions Grown in South Texas; Redistricting and Reapportionment of Committee Membership [Doc. No.: AMS-SC-23-0040] received August 26, 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-5442. A letter from the Program Analyst, Specialty Crops Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Olives Grown in California; Decreased Assessment Rate [Doc. No.: AMS-SC-23-0087] received August 26, 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-5443. A letter from the Program Analyst, Specialty Crops Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Tart Cherries Grown in the States of Michigan, et al.; Free and Restricted Percentages for the 2023-24 Crop Year [Doc. No.: AMS-SC-23-0074] received August 26, 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-5444. A letter from the Program Analyst, Specialty Crops Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Softwood Lumber Research, Promotion, Consumer Education, and Information Order; Adjustment to Membership [Doc. No.: AMS-SC-22-0088] received August 26, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-5445. A letter from the Program Analyst, Rural Development, Rural Housing Service, Department Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program Changes Related to Special Servicing Options [Docket No.: RHS-24-SFH-0001] (RIN: 0575-AD28) received September 6, 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-5446. A letter from the Program Analyst, Rural Development, Rural Housing Service, Department Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program Changes Related to Special Servicing Options [Docket No.: RHS-24-SFH-0001] (RIN: 0575-AD28) received September 6, 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-5446. A letter from the Supervisory Program Manager, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule — DOL Acquisition Regulation: Department of Labor Acquisition Regulation System [Docket No.: DOL-2023-0007] (RIN: 1291-AA43) received August 27, 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-5447. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTG 24-038 Certification of Proposed Issuance of an Export License Pursuant to Sec 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-5448. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTG 24-050 Certification of Proposed Issuance of an Export License Pursuant to Sec 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-5449. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTG 24-057 Certification of Proposed Issuance of an Export License Pursuant to Sec 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-5450. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTG 24-064 Certification of Proposed Issuance of an Export License Pursuant to Sec 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-5451. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Snapper-Grouper Resources of the South Atlantic; Vermilion Snapper Trip Limit Reduction [Docket No.: 130312235-3658-02; RTID 0648-XS015] received September 6, 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-5452. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transpor-

tation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class D Airspace; Fort Liberty, NC; Correction [Docket No.: FAA-2024-0383; Airspace Docket No.: 24-ASO-2] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received September 6, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-5453. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Jet Route J-211 and Revocation of VOR Federal Airway V-41; Youngstown, OH [Docket No.: FAA-2023-2513; Airspace Docket No.: 23-AGL-26] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received September 6, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-5454. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Air Tractor, Inc. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2013; Project Identifier AD-2024-00363-A; Amendment 39-22812; AD 2024-16-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 6, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-5455. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bell Textron Inc. (Type Certificate Previously Held by Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc.), Helicopters [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2010; Project Identifier AD-2024-00366-R; Amendment 39-22807; AD 2024-16-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 6, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-5456. A letter from the Management Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bell Textron Inc. (Type Certificate Previously Held by Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc.), Helicopters [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2010; Project Identifier AD-2024-00366-R; Amendment 39-22807; AD 2024-16-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 6, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

---

#### 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. SWALWELL (for himself and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi):

H.R. 9768. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish within the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency a Joint Cyber Defense Collaborative, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. LEE of Florida (for herself, Mr. GREEN of Tennessee, and Mr. MOOLENAAR):

H.R. 9769. A bill to ensure the security and integrity of United States critical infrastructure by establishing an interagency task force and requiring a comprehensive report on the targeting of United States critical infrastructure by People's Republic of China state-sponsored cyber actors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. GREEN of Tennessee (for himself, Mr. GUEST, Mr. GIMENEZ, Mr. STRONG, Mr. EZELL, and Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana):

H.R. 9770. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide for education and training programs and resources of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. McCLELLAN:

H.R. 9771. A bill to amend the Research and Development, Competition, and Innovation Act to support research into the effects of extreme weather on the subsurface natural and built environment, to support engineering standards and building codes for resilient designs against multihazards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. CURTIS:

H.R. 9772. A bill to require the Secretary of Commerce to provide training and guidance relating to human rights abuses, including such abuses perpetrated against the Uyghur population by the Government of the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. UNDERWOOD:

H.R. 9773. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate copayments by the Department of Veterans Affairs for medicines relating to preventive health services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. UNDERWOOD (for herself, Mr. MORELLE, Ms. NORTON, Mr. TONKO, Mr. HORSFORD, Ms. STEVENS, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. SCANLON, Ms. BROWN, Mr. PANETTA, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. POCAN, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. PALLOME, Ms. BARRAGAN, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Mr. HOYER, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. CRAIG, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. BUDZINSKI, Ms. TITUS, and Mr. AMO):

H.R. 9774. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand eligibility for the refundable credit for coverage under a qualified health plan; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. SPARTZ (for herself, Mr. MRVAN, Mr. YAKYM, Mr. BANKS, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. PENCE, Mr. CARSON, Mr. BUCSHON, and Mrs. HOUCHIN):

H.R. 9775. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 119 North Anderson Street in Elwood, Indiana, as the "Officer Noah Jacob Shahnavaaz Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

By Mr. BEYER (for himself, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Ms. LOFGREN):

H.R. 9776. A bill to provide for the conservation of wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Agriculture, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Armed Services, 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. BRECHEEN (for himself, Mr. SMUCKER, and Mr. LOPEZ):

H.R. 9777. A bill to amend the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act

of 1974 to require any cost estimate for a bill or joint resolution prepared by the Congressional Budget Office to include the cost to each United States citizen for carrying out such measure, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, 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. BUCSHON (for himself, Mr. BERA, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. PETERS, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. SCHRIER, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Ms. DELBENE, Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, and Ms. UNDERWOOD):

H.R. 9778. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to include penicillin allergy verification and evaluation as part of the initial preventive physical examination under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, 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, Mr. STEIL, and Mr. MORELLE):

H.R. 9779. A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to confirm the requirement that States allow access to designated congressional election observers to observe the election administration procedures in congressional elections; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. CASTEN (for himself and Ms. MATSUI):

H.R. 9780. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives and fees for increasing motor vehicle fuel economy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. CHU (for herself, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. BLUMENAUER):

H.R. 9781. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax credit for investors in start-up businesses, to provide a credit for wages paid by start-up businesses to their first employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. CLARKE of New York (for herself, Ms. BROWN, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. ADAMS, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Ms. CROCKETT, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Mrs. FLETCHER, Mrs. FOUSHEE, Ms. NORTON, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. LOFGREN, Mrs. MCBATH, Ms. McCLELLAN, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. PLASKETT, Ms. SEWELL, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Ms. VELÁQUEZ, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mr. TONKO):

H.R. 9782. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to study and report on the relationship between hair straighteners and uterine cancer, particularly among women of color; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. FOSTER:

H.R. 9783. A bill to establish a Government-wide approach to improving digital identity, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

By Mr. HORSFORD:

H.R. 9784. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Air Force to submit a briefing on efforts to meet the needs of members of the Air Force and their families at Creech Air Force

Base, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. LANGWORTHY (for himself, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, and Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina):

H.R. 9785. A bill to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to submit to Congress an annual report on biomedical research funded by the United States and performed in China; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, 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. LEVIN (for himself, Mr. PFLUGER, and Mr. PETERS):

H.R. 9786. A bill to establish a new organization to manage nuclear waste, provide a consent-based process for siting nuclear waste facilities, ensure adequate funding for managing nuclear waste, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MANN (for himself, Ms. KAPUR, Mr. COMER, Ms. BUDZINSKI, and Mr. BACON):

H.R. 9787. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prohibit the use of foreign feedstocks for purposes of the clean fuel production credit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. SANCHEZ (for herself, Mr. GOMEZ, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. LIEU):

H.R. 9788. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to disregard veteran disability compensation or pension payments in determining income for purposes of the low income housing tax credit and qualified residential rental project bonds; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. STANSBURY (for herself and Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ):

H.R. 9789. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to take into trust for the benefit of the San Felipe Pueblo certain Federal land in Sandoval County, New Mexico, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. STANSBURY (for herself, Mr. NICKEL, Mr. NEGUSE, Ms. CRAIG, Mr. PAPPAS, Ms. KUSTER, Ms. SALINAS, Mr. HORSFORD, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Ms. PETTERSEN):

H.R. 9790. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to provide for the regulation of critical parts of tabletting machines and encapsulating machines, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. SYKES (for herself and Ms. McCLELLAN):

H.R. 9791. A bill to ensure continuity of pay and allowances for members of the Armed Forces in the event of a lapse in appropriations; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mrs. SYKES (for herself, Ms. BROWN, and Ms. McCLELLAN):

H.R. 9792. A bill to provide appropriations for the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 during the first lapse in appropriations in a fiscal year; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. TORRES of New York (for himself and Mr. GARBARINO):

H.R. 9793. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to prohibit institutions of higher education from receiving gifts from certain countries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia (for herself, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. CASAR, Ms. McCLELLAN, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. ESCOBAR, Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE, Ms. NORTON, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. NICKEL, Mr. McGOVERN, Mr. MAGAZINER, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. SEWELL, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Ms. WILD, Mr. TRONE, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. TLAIB, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. BROWNLEY, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mrs. FLETCHER, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. SWALWELL, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Ms. PETTERSEN, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. EVANS, Mrs. CHERFLIUS-MC CORMICK, Mr. POCAN, Ms. OMAR, Ms. STRICKLAND, Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. TOKUDA, Ms. BALINT, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. TONKO, Ms. SALINAS, Mrs. HAYES, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mrs. TORRES of California, Mr. DELUZIO, Mr. SOTO, Ms. TITUS, Mr. COHEN, Mr. LIEU, Ms. CRAIG, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. GARCIA of Illinois, Ms. DELAUR, Ms. ROSS, Mrs. PELTOLA, Mr. HIMES, Mr. KENNEDY, Mrs. TRAHAN, Mr. CARSON, Ms. CROCKETT, Ms. STEVENS, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. PORTER, Ms. BROWN, Ms. JACOBS, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. ALLRED, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. CASTEN, Ms. CHU, Ms. BUSH, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ, Mr. BOWMAN, Mr. SORENSEN, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. BUDZINSKI, Ms. SCANLON, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mrs. FOUSH, Mr. PETERS, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, and Ms. DEGETTE):

H. Con. Res. 130. Concurrent resolution commending State and local governments for championing reproductive rights as human rights; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, 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. AGUILAR:

H. Res. 1492. A resolution electing a Member to certain standing committees of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. ARRINGTON (for himself, Mr. ELLZEY, Mr. NORMAN, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. BALDERSON, Mr. BABIN, Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. RESCHENTHALER, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. FALLON, Mr. MOOLENAAR, and Mr. DIAZ-BALART):

H. Res. 1493. A resolution strongly condemning Vice President Kamala Harris for championing policies that would exacerbate the national debt and reduce energy independence; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. BARRAGÁN (for herself, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, and Mrs. NAPOLEON):

H. Res. 1494. A resolution recognizing the threat of air pollution and extreme heat to maternal and infant health, and expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that meaningful interventions must be rapidly and equitably developed and deployed to address the unique vulnerabilities of pregnancy in Latino communities; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. DAVIS of Illinois (for himself, Mr. BURGESS, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. SEWELL, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. NORTON, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. PLASKETT, Ms. BUSH, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. CARSON, Mr. SOTO, Mr. AMO, and Ms. ADAMS):

H. Res. 1495. A resolution expressing support for the designation of September 2024 as "Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month" in order to educate communities across the United States about sickle cell disease and the need for research, early detection methods, effective treatments, and preventative care programs with respect to complications from sickle cell disease and conditions related to sickle cell disease; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. HUFFMAN (for himself and Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana):

H. Res. 1496. A resolution supporting the designation of October 23, 2024, as "National Marine Sanctuary Day"; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mrs. MCBATH (for herself, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. SWALWELL, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. WILLSON of Florida, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. MCCLELLAN):

H. Res. 1497. A resolution expressing support for the designation of the week of September 23 through September 27, 2024, as "National Hazing Awareness Week"; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. MCGARVEY (for himself, Mr. BARR, and Mr. COMER):

H. Res. 1498. A resolution supporting the designation of "National Bourbon Heritage Month"; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

By Mr. RASKIN (for himself, Mr. ALLRED, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. BROWNLEY, Ms. BROWN, Mr. CASE, Mr. CASTEN, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mrs. CHERFLIUS-MC CORMICK, Ms. CHU, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. COSTA, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. ESCOBAR, Mrs. FLETCHER, Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida, Mrs. HAYES, Mr. FROST, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. IVEY, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ, Mr. LIEU, Mr. McGOVERN, Ms. MENG, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PETERS, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POCAN, Ms. PORTER, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Mr. RUIZ, Ms. SALINAS, Ms. SCANLON, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SOTO, Mr. THANEDAR, Ms. TLAIB, and Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia):

H. Res. 1499. A resolution expressing concern about the spreading problem of book banning and the proliferation of threats to freedom of expression in the United States; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

#### 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. SWALWELL:

H.R. 9768.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, of the United States Constitution, specifically Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in congress).

The single subject of this legislation is:

To amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish within the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency a Joint Cyber Defense Collaborative, and for other purposes.

By Ms. LEE of Florida:

H.R. 9769.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

National Security

By Mr. GREEN of Tennessee:

H.R. 9770.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article One, Section Eight

The single subject of this legislation is:

To provide for education and training programs and resources of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security.

By Ms. MCCLELLAN:

H.R. 9771.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, U.S. Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is:

Studying the risks to subsurface infrastructure integrity resulting from climate conditions and other environmental variables

By Mr. CURTIS:

H.R. 9772.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

Provide the Department of Commerce the ability to inform businesses about human rights situations around the globe—especially when it comes to Xinjiang.

By Ms. UNDERWOOD:

H.R. 9773.

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:

To amend title 38, United States Code, eliminate copayments by the Department of Veterans Affairs for medicines relating to preventive health services, and for other purposes.

By Ms. UNDERWOOD:

H.R. 9774.

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:

To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve affordability and reduce premium costs of health insurance for consumers.

By Mrs. SPARTZ:

H.R. 9775.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 7

Article 1 , Section 8 , Clause 18

The single subject of this legislation is:

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 119 North Anderson Street in Elwood, Indiana, as the "Officer Noah Jacob Shahnavaz Post Office Building".

By Mr. BEYER:

H.R. 9776.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:  
article 1 section 8  
The single subject of this legislation is:  
Wildlife conservation  
By Mr. BRECHEEN:  
H.R. 9777.  
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:  
Article 1, Section 8  
The single subject of this legislation is:  
Congressional Budget Office Reform  
By Mr. BUCSHON:  
H.R. 9778.  
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:  
Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution  
The single subject of this legislation is:  
Health  
By Mr. CAREY:  
H.R. 9779.  
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:  
Article 1 Sections 4 and 5  
The single subject of this legislation is:  
To amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to confirm the requirement that States allow access to designated congressional election observers to observe the election administration procedures in congressional elections.  
By Mr. CASTEN:  
H.R. 9780.  
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:  
Article I, Section 8, Clause 1  
The single subject of this legislation is:  
To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives and fees for increasing vehicle energy performance, and for other purposes.  
By Ms. CHU:  
H.R. 9781.  
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:  
Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution  
The single subject of this legislation is:  
To provide real opportunities for growth for rising entrepreneurs for sustained success.  
By Ms. CLARKE of New York:  
H.R. 9782.  
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:  
Title I, Section 8  
The single subject of this legislation is:  
Health Care  
By Mr. FOSTER:  
H.R. 9783.  
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:  
This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.  
Single subject statement: The single subject of this legislation is digital identity.  
By Mr. HORSFORD:  
H.R. 9784.  
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:  
Constitutional Authority—Article 1 of the U.S. Constitution.  
Single Subject Line—This legislation requires transparency around programs to support the Airmen and families assigned to Creech AFB  
By Mr. LANGWORTHY:  
H.R. 9785.  
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:  
To require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to submit to Congress an annual report on biomedical re-

search funded by the United States and performed in China.  
By Mr. LEVIN:  
H.R. 9786.  
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:  
Article 1, Section 8  
The single subject of this legislation is:  
Nuclear waste management  
By Mr. MANN:  
H.R. 9787.  
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:  
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:  
To extend the Clean Fuel Production Credit for ten years and restrict the eligibility to domestic feedstock products.  
By Ms. SÁNCHEZ:  
H.R. 9788.  
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:  
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1  
The single subject of this legislation is:  
Fair housing for disabled veterans.  
By Ms. STANSBURY:  
H.R. 9789.  
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 direct the Secretary of the Interior to take into trust for the benefit of the San Felipe Pueblo certain Federal land in Sandoval County, New Mexico, and for other purposes.  
By Ms. STANSBURY:  
H.R. 9790.  
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:  
Article 1, section 8  
The single subject of this legislation is:  
This legislation target the production of fake pills by requiring those who manufacture or distribute pill tableting or encapsulating machines and their critical parts to “serialize” their machinery, keep records of relevant transactions and report those transactions to the Attorney General by creating a national registry.  
By Mrs. SYKES:  
H.R. 9791.  
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:  
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18.  
The single subject of this legislation is:  
This bill provides appropriations for pay and support for all members of the Armed Forces, civilian personnel at the Department of Defense, members of the Coast Guard, necessary contractors, and reservists during a government shutdown.  
By Mrs. SYKES:  
H.R. 9792.  
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:  
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18.  
The single subject of this legislation is:  
This bill ensure families who rely on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can continue to access their benefits up to three months after a shutdown occurs.  
By Mr. TORRES of New York:  
H.R. 9793.  
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:  
Article 1, Section 8.  
The single subject of this legislation is:  
Education

---

**ADDITIONAL SPONSORS**

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 303: Mr. CASTRO of Texas.  
H.R. 319: Ms. BOEBERT.  
H.R. 471: Mr. GROTHMAN.  
H.R. 621: Mr. CARSON.  
H.R. 816: Mr. KENNEDY.  
H.R. 827: Mr. McGOVERN.  
H.R. 1045: Mr. NORCROSS.  
H.R. 1067: Mr. LOPEZ.  
H.R. 1083: Ms. MANNING, Ms. ROSS, and Ms. OMAR.  
H.R. 1235: Mr. CISCOMANI.  
H.R. 1277: Mr. NORCROSS.  
H.R. 1359: Mr. BERA.  
H.R. 1486: Mr. BILIRAKIS.  
H.R. 1499: Mr. HORSFORD.  
H.R. 1572: Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. BUCSHON, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, and Mr. RUPPERSBERGER.  
H.R. 1610: Mr. KELLY of Mississippi.  
H.R. 1624: Ms. KAPTUR.  
H.R. 1639: Mr. MOLINARO.  
H.R. 1666: Ms. PEREZ.  
H.R. 2380: Mr. ROSE.  
H.R. 2474: Ms. ADAMS and Mrs. LESKO.  
H.R. 2604: Mr. SOTO, Mr. BERA, and Mr. RASKIN.  
H.R. 2630: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.  
H.R. 2666: Ms. STRICKLAND.  
H.R. 2722: Ms. MANNING and Mr. JAMES.  
H.R. 2816: Mr. MASSIE.  
H.R. 2871: Ms. UNDERWOOD.  
H.R. 2923: Mr. BERA.  
H.R. 2933: Mr. OWENS.  
H.R. 3029: Ms. PEREZ.  
H.R. 3074: Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas.  
H.R. 3090: Mr. MOLINARO.  
H.R. 3171: Mr. SUOZZI.  
H.R. 3228: Ms. BUDZINSKI.  
H.R. 3409: Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California.  
H.R. 3417: Mr. FRY.  
H.R. 3481: Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California.  
H.R. 3537: Mr. VAN DREW.  
H.R. 3576: Mr. ESPAILLAT and Mr. RYAN.  
H.R. 3591: Mr. LOPEZ.  
H.R. 3639: Mr. WITTMAN and Mr. HILL.  
H.R. 3649: Mr. D'ESPPOSITO.  
H.R. 3651: Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Ms. OMAR, Mr. MASSIE, and Mr. NADLER.  
H.R. 3680: Mr. TAKANO.  
H.R. 3686: Mr. VALADAO.  
H.R. 3696: Mr. ROSENDALE and Mr. CRANE.  
H.R. 3998: Mr. PHILLIPS.  
H.R. 4020: Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. TAKANO, and Ms. CHU.  
H.R. 4021: Mr. STAUBER.  
H.R. 4157: Mr. COLE, Ms. TENNEY, Ms. BROWNLEY, and Ms. STRICKLAND.  
H.R. 4550: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.  
H.R. 4717: Mr. LOPEZ.  
H.R. 4851: Mrs. DINGELL and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.  
H.R. 4914: Ms. LEE of California.  
H.R. 4936: Mr. AMO.  
H.R. 5008: Mr. CASTEN.  
H.R. 5012: Ms. BUDZINSKI.  
H.R. 5013: Ms. TENNEY.  
H.R. 5041: Ms. KAPTUR.  
H.R. 5074: Mr. ESPAILLAT and Ms. ESCOBAR.  
H.R. 5099: Mr. GROTHMAN and Mr. ROUZER.  
H.R. 5103: Mr. GIMENEZ.  
H.R. 5163: Mr. BERA.  
H.R. 5305: Mr. CALVERT and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.  
H.R. 5419: Mr. LANGWORTHY.  
H.R. 5488: Mr. HILL.  
H.R. 5566: Ms. DELBENE.  
H.R. 5568: Mr. CASTEN, Ms. MATSUI, and Ms. OMAR.  
H.R. 5598: Mr. MOLINARO.  
H.R. 5633: Mr. VASQUEZ.  
H.R. 5819: Mr. ALLRED.  
H.R. 5944: Mr. WEBER of Texas.  
H.R. 6005: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.  
H.R. 6159: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.  
H.R. 6293: Mr. POCAN.  
H.R. 6348: Mr. HORSFORD.  
H.R. 6362: Mr. CASTRO of Texas.  
H.R. 6407: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Mrs. TRAHAN.

H.R. 6727: Mr. FLEISCHMANN.  
 H.R. 6748: Ms. BUDZINSKI.  
 H.R. 6860: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.  
 H.R. 6939: Mr. LOPEZ and Mr. MOORE of Alabama.  
 H.R. 7003: Mrs. PELTOLA.  
 H.R. 7084: Mr. McGOVERN and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.  
 H.R. 7112: Mr. MAGAZINER.  
 H.R. 7222: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.  
 H.R. 7227: Mr. BERGMAN.  
 H.R. 7269: Ms. SHERRILL.  
 H.R. 7297: Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida.  
 H.R. 7367: Mr. OBERNOLTE.  
 H.R. 7384: Mr. NORCROSS.  
 H.R. 7414: Mr. FITZPATRICK.  
 H.R. 7573: Mr. VEASEY and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.  
 H.R. 7577: Mr. CROW.  
 H.R. 7594: Mr. LOPEZ.  
 H.R. 7623: Mr. CRENSHAW.  
 H.R. 7629: Mr. AMO.  
 H.R. 7634: Ms. CASTOR of Florida.  
 H.R. 7671: Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN.  
 H.R. 7770: Mr. KILEY.  
 H.R. 7829: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.  
 H.R. 7872: Mr. CROW.  
 H.R. 7944: Mr. WENSTRUP and Mr. CORREA.  
 H.R. 8023: Mr. MAGAZINER.  
 H.R. 8068: Mr. ESTES.  
 H.R. 8141: Mr. NORCROSS.  
 H.R. 8271: Mr. NICKEL.  
 H.R. 8307: Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, and Ms. BARRAGAN.  
 H.R. 8318: Mr. PANETTA.  
 H.R. 8340: Ms. STRICKLAND.  
 H.R. 8430: Mr. LOPEZ.  
 H.R. 8505: Mr. RUTHERFORD and Mr. FERGUSON.  
 H.R. 8545: Mr. CARBAJAL.  
 H.R. 8653: Mr. KUSTOFF.  
 H.R. 8683: Mr. SHERMAN and Mrs. KIM of California.

H.R. 8702: Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia.  
 H.R. 8715: Mr. BACON.  
 H.R. 8734: Mr. BURGESS.  
 H.R. 8758: Ms. SLOTKIN and Mr. AMO.  
 H.R. 8796: Ms. OMAR.  
 H.R. 8963: Mr. RESCHENTHALER.  
 H.R. 8989: Mrs. LESKO.  
 H.R. 9001: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.  
 H.R. 9015: Mr. BANKS.  
 H.R. 9046: Mr. BILIRAKIS.  
 H.R. 9096: Mr. STRONG and Mr. MOORE of Alabama.  
 H.R. 9124: Ms. PORTER.  
 H.R. 9164: Mr. MOYLAN.  
 H.R. 9172: Mr. SHERMAN.  
 H.R. 9176: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.  
 H.R. 9218: Mr. POSEY.  
 H.R. 9232: Mr. BERA.  
 H.R. 9274: Mr. CAREY, Mr. STAUBER, Mrs. KIM of California, and Mr. FRY.  
 H.R. 9349: Mr. FITZGERALD.  
 H.R. 9369: Mr. GRIJALVA.  
 H.R. 9382: Mr. CARTER of Texas and Mr. BACON.  
 H.R. 9389: Ms. ADAMS.  
 H.R. 9394: Mr. MOOLENAAR and Mrs. PELTOLA.  
 H.R. 9462: Mr. VAN DREW.  
 H.R. 9480: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.  
 H.R. 9497: Mr. BERA.  
 H.R. 9501: Mr. GOLDMAN of New York.  
 H.R. 9525: Mr. VALADAO.  
 H.R. 9535: Ms. LEE of California, Mr. PETERS, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. KILEY, and Mr. HUFFMAN.  
 H.R. 9564: Mr. MOSKOWITZ and Mr. SHERMAN.  
 H.R. 9569: Ms. HOULAHAN and Mr. WALTZ.  
 H.R. 9602: Mr. CALVERT.  
 H.R. 9617: Mr. NORMAN.  
 H.R. 9646: Mr. BURGESS and Mr. PENCE.  
 H.R. 9654: Mr. GOODEN of Texas.  
 H.R. 9668: Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana.

H.R. 9678: Ms. TENNEY.  
 H.R. 9685: Mr. WEBER of Texas.  
 H.R. 9686: Mr. ESTES.  
 H.R. 9699: Ms. MACE.  
 H.R. 9711: Mr. ESTES.  
 H.R. 9714: Mr. ESTES.  
 H.R. 9716: Mr. SUOZZI and Mr. ESTES.  
 H.R. 9718: Mr. PHILLIPS and Mr. LAWLER.  
 H.R. 9719: Mr. BERA.  
 H.R. 9722: Mr. GOLDMAN of New York.  
 H.R. 9726: Mr. VAN DREW.  
 H.R. 9731: Mr. PFLUGER.  
 H.R. 9739: Mr. CARSON.  
 H.R. 9746: Ms. JAYAPAL.  
 H.R. 9750: Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN.  
 H.R. 9760: Mr. CARBAJAL.  
 H.J. Res. 181: Mr. JAMES.  
 H.J. Res. 193: Mr. NORCROSS.  
 H. Con. Res. 10: Mr. GARBARINO.  
 H. Con. Res. 122: Mr. EZELL.  
 H. Res. 424: Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas, Mr. BURCHETT, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Mr. DELUZIO.  
 H. Res. 439: Mr. HUFFMAN.  
 H. Res. 882: Ms. TITUS.  
 H. Res. 1167: Mr. RULLI.  
 H. Res. 1348: Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. MOYLAN, Mr. MOSKOWITZ, Mr. MAST, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. CASE.  
 H. Res. 1437: Mr. MOYLAN, Mr. SABLAR, Ms. CARAVEO, Mr. LIEU, and Mr. DUARTE.  
 H. Res. 1447: Mr. HUDSON and Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia.  
 H. Res. 1448: Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER.  
 H. Res. 1449: Mr. MAST and Mr. MORELLE.  
 H. Res. 1466: Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin.  
 H. Res. 1473: Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois and Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.  
 H. Res. 1479: Mr. LIEU.  
 H. Res. 1487: Mr. SCHIFF.  
 H. Res. 1489: Mr. CARSON and Mr. MOLINARO.