

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate the 35th Anniversary of the *Apollo 11* mission this week, I rise to pay tribute to the achievements of the past, and to urge my colleagues to set our sights on the potential of the future.

The historic steps taken by Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin 35 years ago will be remembered by future generations as one of the greatest accomplishments of the 20th Century. While these steps were taken on another world, they were born right here on Earth. That was an exciting time in my district in North Alabama, which is the home of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, and the von Braun rocket team. Wernher von Braun, Marshall's first Director, led the development of the roadmap for putting humans on the Moon. Through bold thinking, ingenious engineering, and a lot of good old-fashioned hard work, NASA's engineers and scientists built the colossal Saturn V—a rocket powerful enough to take our astronauts out of the tight grasps of Earth's gravity.

Apollo 11 established the U.S. as the world's leader in space and boosted our economy with technology and innovation. But the most important benefit realized from the *Apollo 11* moon landing may have been the effect it had on the children of that era—it inspired them—us—to dream—to reach for the stars. Like generations before, those who come after us have an inherent desire to explore the unknown.

It is appropriate during this special week for us to give consideration to the future of space exploration, which has been put before us in NASA's new space exploration vision. It begins with the return to flight of the Space Shuttle, and the completion of the ISS as a unique scientific laboratory. It includes the robotic exploration of our solar system and the universe beyond. And it includes the extending of human exploration beyond Earth's orbit—first to the Moon, and then ultimately onto Mars.

To be sure, realizing such a vision will require advances in space transportation systems. But advances in transportation have always opened new frontiers for our civilization. Examples include the first ocean-crossing ships of the New World explorers, the stage coaches and trails of the Great American West, the first transcontinental steam locomotives, the first automobiles off the assembly line, the flight of the Wright Brothers, and the historic escape of the Earth's gravity by the Apollo program. During the era, each of these advances required valuable resources and an unusually high degree of risk-taking, but the return on investment, unpredictable at the time, turned out to be tremendous. Each of these advances would ultimately change the very fabric of our society.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take a few seconds to highlight some results from a Gallup poll on Space Exploration that was just released yesterday.

According to this Gallup poll, over two-thirds of the respondents are interested in America's space program, and only 11% were not interested at all. A majority of the adults surveyed—68%—agree that it is important for the Nation to have a space program that uses both human and robotic exploration. Almost two-thirds of the adults surveyed believe that space exploration should be funded at or above the current level. And 68% of the public supports the space exploration vision, at the funding level of 1% of the Federal budget.

So you see that while we stand here today to honor the epic accomplishments of the past, Americans look forward to realizing the great achievements of the future. Mr. Speaker, I close by extending my congratulations to the many people across our Nation who had a hand in that historic mission 35 years ago.

Today, as Americans, we remember *Apollo's* race to the Moon with pride, wonder, and awe. And we look forward to many more missions of extraordinary achievement and discovery from our Nation's space program.

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the *Apollo 11* mission and honor a native of the 4th district of Ohio, Neil Armstrong. As mission commander, Armstrong was first to step on the lunar surface at 10:56 p.m., EDT on July 20, 1969. His immortal words—"That is one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind"—will resonate in our hearts and minds forever.

Neil Alden Armstrong took his first steps in Wapakoneta, Ohio. Born to Stephen and Viola Armstrong, Neil developed an early interest in flying. At age six, he took his first airplane ride in Warren, Ohio in a Ford Tri-Motor plane nicknamed the "Tin Goose". He began taking flying lessons at the age of fifteen and had his student pilot's license before graduating from Blume High School in 1947.

While in college at Purdue University, he was called up for active duty in the Navy and was sent to Korea as an aviator. During the war, he flew seventy-eight combat missions from the aircraft carrier USS Essex. Following the war, Armstrong joined the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics and was sent to the Lewis Research Center near Cleveland, Ohio (today the Glenn Research Center) where he was an engineer and test pilot. At Lewis and later at NASA's Flight Research Center in Edwards, California, Armstrong flew over 200 different models of aircraft while pursuing a master of science degree in aerospace engineering from the University of Southern California.

In 1962, Armstrong was transferred to astronaut status and moved to El Lago, Texas, where he underwent four years of training for the Apollo program. He commanded his first space mission as pilot for *Gemini VII*, but his most famous mission came when *Apollo 11* launched on July 16, 1969. Armstrong and the two other astronauts, "Buzz" Aldrin and Michael Collins, spent eight days in space and 2½ hours on the Moon's surface.

For his work as an astronaut, Armstrong received the Medal of Freedom, the NASA Distinguished Service Medal, the NASA Exceptional Service Medal, and the Congressional Space Medal of Honor. Neil Armstrong went where no one had gone before and helped our Nation become the leader in space exploration. This man from rural Ohio paved the way for generations to continue to explore and dream of the far reaches of our universe. As our Nation embarks on future space travels, we need to take time to honor those explorers who carved out a new path for us to follow.

□ 1700

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KLINE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 723.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 723, the resolution just considered.

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

There was no objection.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2443, COAST GUARD MARITIME TRANSPORTATION ACT FOR 2004

Mr. SESSIONS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-618) on the resolution (H. Res. 730) waiving points of order against the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2443) to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2004, to amend various laws administered by the Coast Guard, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. PLATTS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4259) to amend title 31, United States Code, to improve the financial accountability requirements applicable to the Department of Homeland Security, to establish requirements for the Future Years Homeland Security Program of the Department, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read 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 "Department of Homeland Security Financial Accountability Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) Influential financial management leadership is of vital importance to the mission success of the Department of Homeland Security. For this reason, the Chief Financial Officer of the Department must be a key figure in the Department's management.

(2) To provide a sound financial leadership structure, the provisions of law enacted by

the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-576) provide that the Chief Financial Officer of each of the Federal executive departments is to be a Presidential appointee who reports directly to the Secretary of that department on financial management matters. Because the Department of Homeland Security was only recently created, the provisions enacted by that Act must be amended to include the Department within these provisions.

(3) The Department of Homeland Security was created by consolidation of 22 separate Federal agencies, each with its own accounting and financial management system. None of these systems was developed with a view to executing the mission of the Department of Homeland Security to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, reduce the Nation's vulnerability to terrorism, and minimize the damage and assist in the recovery from terrorist attacks. For these reasons, a strong Chief Financial Officer is needed within the Department both to consolidate financial management operations, and to insure that management control systems are comprehensively designed to achieve the mission and execute the strategy of the Department.

(4) The provisions of law enacted by the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 require agency Chief Financial Officers to improve the financial information available to agency managers and the Congress. Those provisions also specify that agency financial management systems must provide for the systematic measurement of performance. In the case of the Department of Homeland Security, therefore, it is vitally important that management control systems be designed with a clear view of a homeland security strategy, including the priorities of the Department in addressing those risks of terrorism deemed most significant based upon a comprehensive assessment of potential threats, vulnerabilities, criticality, and consequences. For this reason, Federal law should be amended to clearly state the responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Homeland Security to provide management control information, for the benefit of managers within the Department and to help inform the Congress, that permits an assessment of the Department's performance in executing a homeland security strategy.

SEC. 3. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 901(b)(1) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (G) through (P) as subparagraphs (H) through (Q), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subparagraph (F) the following:

“(G) The Department of Homeland Security.”.

(b) APPOINTMENT OR DESIGNATION OF CFO.—The President shall appoint or designate a Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Homeland Security under the amendment made by subsection (a) by not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) CONTINUED SERVICE OF CURRENT OFFICIAL.—An individual serving as Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Homeland Security immediately before the enactment of this Act, or another person who is appointed to replace such an individual in an acting capacity after the enactment of this Act, may continue to serve in that position until the date of the confirmation or designation, as applicable (under section 901(a)(1)(B) of title 31, United States Code), of a successor under the amendment made by subsection (a).

(d) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) HOMELAND SECURITY ACT OF 2002.—The Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-296) is amended—

(A) in section 103 (6 U.S.C. 113)—

(i) in subsection (d) by striking paragraph (4), and redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (4);

(ii) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (f); and

(iii) by inserting after subsection (d) the following:

“(e) CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER.—There shall be in the Department a Chief Financial Officer, as provided in chapter 9 of title 31, United States Code.”; and

(B) in section 702 (6 U.S.C. 342) by striking “shall report” and all that follows through the period and inserting “shall perform functions as specified in chapter 9 of title 31, United States Code, and, with respect to all such functions and other responsibilities that may be assigned to the Chief Financial Officer from time to time, shall also report to the Under Secretary for Management.”.

(2) FEMA.—Section 901(b)(2) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking subparagraph (B), and by redesignating subparagraphs (C) through (H) in order as subparagraphs (B) through (G).

SEC. 4. FUNCTIONS OF CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

(a) PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS.—Section 3516 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(f) The Secretary of Homeland Security—

“(1) shall for each fiscal year submit a performance and accountability report under subsection (a) that incorporates the program performance report under section 1116 of this title for the Department of Homeland Security;

“(2) shall include in each performance and accountability report an audit opinion of the Department's internal controls over its financial reporting; and

“(3) shall design and implement Department-wide management controls that—

“(A) reflect the most recent homeland security strategy developed pursuant to section 874(b)(2) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002; and

“(B) permit assessment, by the Congress and by managers within the Department, of the Department's performance in executing such strategy.”.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF AUDIT OPINION REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall include audit opinions in performance and accountability reports under section 3516(f) of title 31, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a), only for fiscal years after fiscal year 2005.

(c) ASSERTION OF INTERNAL CONTROLS.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall include in the performance and accountability report for fiscal year 2005 submitted by the Secretary under section 3516(f) of title 31, United States Code, an assertion of the internal controls that apply to financial reporting by the Department of Homeland Security.

(d) AUDIT OPINIONS OF INTERNAL CONTROLS OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING BY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER AGENCIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Chief Financial Officers Council and the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency established by Executive Order 12805 of May 11, 1992, shall jointly conduct a study of the potential costs and benefits of requiring the agencies listed in section 901(b) of title 31, United States Code, to obtain audit opinions of their internal controls over their financial reporting.

(2) REPORT.—Upon completion of the study under paragraph (1), the Chief Financial Officers Council and the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency shall promptly submit a report on the results of the study to the Committee on Government Reform of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Governmental Affairs of the Senate, and the Comptroller General of the United States.

(3) GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE ANALYSIS.—Not later than 90 days after receiving the report under paragraph (2), the Comptroller General shall perform an analysis of the information provided in the report and report the findings of the analysis to the committees referred to in paragraph (2).

SEC. 5. FUTURE YEARS HOMELAND SECURITY PROGRAM AND HOMELAND SECURITY STRATEGY.

Section 874 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 112) is amended by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

“(b) CONTENTS.—The Future Years Homeland Security Program under subsection (a) shall—

“(1) include the same type of information, organizational structure, and level of detail as the future years defense program submitted to Congress by the Secretary of Defense under section 221 of title 10, United States Code;

“(2) set forth the homeland security strategy of the Department, which shall be developed and updated as appropriate annually by the Secretary, that was used to develop program planning guidance for the Future Years Homeland Security Program; and

“(3) include an explanation of how the resource allocations included in the Future Years Homeland Security Program correlate to the homeland security strategy set forth under paragraph (2).”.

SEC. 6. ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF PROGRAM ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION.

Section 702 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 342) is amended by—

(1) inserting “(a) In General.—” before the first sentence; and

(2) adding at the end the following:

“(b) PROGRAM ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION FUNCTION.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF PROGRAM ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Secretary shall establish an Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation within the Department (in this section referred to as the ‘Office’).

“(2) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Office shall perform the following functions:

“(A) Analyze and evaluate plans, programs, and budgets of the Department in relation to United States homeland security objectives, projected threats, vulnerability assessments, estimated costs, resource constraints, and the most recent homeland security strategy developed pursuant to section 874(b)(2).

“(B) Develop and perform analyses and evaluations of alternative plans, programs, personnel levels, and budget submissions for the Department in relation to United States homeland security objectives, projected threats, vulnerability assessments, estimated costs, resource constraints, and the most recent homeland security strategy developed pursuant to section 874(b)(2).

“(C) Establish policies for, and oversee the integration of, the planning, programming, and budgeting system of the Department.

“(D) Review and ensure that the Department meets performance-based budget requirements established by the Office of Management and Budget.

“(E) Provide guidance for, and oversee the development of, the Future Years Homeland

Security Program of the Department, as specified under section 874.

“(F) Ensure that the costs of Department programs, including classified programs, are presented accurately and completely.

“(G) Oversee the preparation of the annual performance plan for the Department and the program and performance section of the annual report on program performance for the Department, consistent with sections 1115 and 1116, respectively, of title 31, United States Code.

“(H) Provide leadership in developing and promoting improved analytical tools and methods for analyzing homeland security planning and the allocation of resources.

“(I) Any other responsibilities delegated by the Secretary consistent with an effective program analysis and evaluation function.

“(3) DIRECTOR OF PROGRAM ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION.—There shall be a Director of Program Analysis and Evaluation, who—

“(A) shall be a principal staff assistant to the Chief Financial Officer of the Department for program analysis and evaluation; and

“(B) shall report to an official no lower than the Chief Financial Officer.

“(4) REORGANIZATION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may allocate or reallocate the functions of the Office, or discontinue the Office, in accordance with section 872(a).

“(B) EXEMPTION FROM LIMITATIONS.—Section 872(b) shall not apply to any action by the Secretary under this paragraph.”

SEC. 7. NOTIFICATION REGARDING TRANSFER OR REPROGRAMMING OF FUNDS FOR DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

Section 702 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 342) is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(C) NOTIFICATION REGARDING TRANSFER OR REPROGRAMMING OF FUNDS.—In any case in which appropriations available to the Department or any officer of the Department are transferred or reprogrammed and notice of such transfer or reprogramming is submitted to the Congress (including any officer, office, or Committee of the Congress), the Chief Financial Officer of the Department shall simultaneously submit such notice to the Select Committee on Homeland Security (or any successor to the jurisdiction of that committee) and the Committee on Government Reform of the House of Representatives, and to the Committee on Governmental Affairs of the Senate.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PLATTS) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PLATTS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PLATTS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within 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 Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4259, the Department of Homeland Security Financial

Accountability Act. This legislation, which I introduced in May 2004, along with the chairman of the Committee on Government Reform, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS); the ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN); the chairman of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. COX); the ranking member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER); the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS); and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), represents a compromise between the House Committee on Government Reform and the House Select Committee on Homeland Security.

Essentially, H.R. 4259 replaces H.R. 2886, which was reported by the House Committee on Government Reform in November of 2003. This latest version, H.R. 4259, was introduced to incorporate key changes requested by the minority and the Select Committee on Homeland Security.

Madam Speaker, let me provide a brief history of this important legislation. On July 24 of last year, I, along with the gentleman from Virginia (Chairman TOM DAVIS), the gentleman from California (Ranking Member WAXMAN), the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS), and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), introduced the original H.R. 2886 to ensure that the Department of Homeland Security is subject to the same financial accountability requirements as all other Cabinet-level Departments.

This bill, and the one before us today, codifies a structure for sound financial management that is mandatory, not optional, for future administrations. H.R. 4259, like its predecessor, achieves this goal by adding the Department of Homeland Security to the list of agencies that are covered by the CFO Act of 1990.

H.R. 4259 puts the Department of Homeland Security's Chief Financial Officer on the same footing as the CFOs at the rest of the Cabinet-level Departments by ensuring that the Department's CFO is a Presidential appointee subject to Senate confirmation, reports directly to the Secretary of the Department, and is part of the statutorily created Chief Financial Officer's Council.

In addition, the bill ensures that the Department will comply with the Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996, which establishes important financial management systems requirements for the CFO Act agencies.

Additionally, this legislation requires an opinion-level audit of the Department's internal controls. Currently, OMB guidance requires a report on internal controls in conjunction with annual financial audits. Having an auditor issue an opinion on the internal controls report would help uncover inherent weaknesses and address problems as business practices are

being established, before they become ingrained. Strong internal controls are essential to sound financial management.

H.R. 4259 incorporates a number of important changes requested by the gentleman from California (Ranking Member WAXMAN) as well as the Select Committee on Homeland Security. Most notably, H.R. 4259 alters the reporting structure for the Department of Homeland Security Chief Financial Officer to allow for dual reporting to both the Secretary and the Under Secretary for Management. It also provides for the establishment of an Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation. It requires a Future Years Homeland Security Program and Homeland Security Strategy. The new bill also delays a requirement for the Department's internal control audit until fiscal year 2006.

H.R. 4259 retains key provisions from the original bill, H.R. 2886, as introduced, including the requirement that the CFO at DHS be appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The newness, size, and mission of the Department of Homeland Security calls for more accountability and oversight, not less.

At present, DHS is the only Cabinet-level Department whose CFO is not required to be Senate confirmed. This unique status demotes both the CFO position and the importance of financial management within the Department. Now is not the time to dilute the importance of the CFO position, and we should not require less financial accountability at DHS than we do at other Cabinet-level Departments.

This Department faces many daunting challenges, and these challenges will require strong leadership and a commitment from top-level management to overcome. Financial management at DHS must be of the highest priority. The legislation before the Congress today ensures that it is such a priority.

Madam Speaker, it is important to note that under the leadership of President George Bush and Department Secretary Tom Ridge, my fellow Pennsylvanian, the Department has shown a determination to be fiscally responsible, and they are to be applauded for this approach. I want to emphasize that, although they are not required to comply with the CFO Act, they have made a determined effort to do so and are setting a good example. What we are trying to do is make sure that is a permanent example followed by future administrations.

Future administrations are not bound by law, as I said, to follow this same path of fiscal responsibility. This bill rectifies that situation by codifying compliance with the provisions of the CFO Act. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4259.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, let me begin by commending both the gentleman from Virginia (Chairman TOM DAVIS); the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PLATTS), the chairman of the subcommittee; and the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), the ranking member, for their tireless efforts in forging a consensus for H.R. 4259, the Department of Homeland Security Financial Accountability Act, of which I am a proud cosponsor. Our work today will move us one step closer to ensuring that the critical resources utilized for protecting our Nation will finally have an appropriate level of management and oversight.

In an era of soaring Federal deficits, along with challenges in managing a dynamic workforce from distinct legacy agencies, the exemption of DHS's CFO from the requirements of all other Cabinet-level CFOs is irresponsible. Therefore, I am happy to say that the bill before us today is a well-crafted compromise forged after months of negotiation and deliberative discussions. There are several key provisions contained in this legislation. Most importantly, however, the bill amends the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 to include the Department of Homeland Security, ensuring that the DHS CFO is subject to the same reporting requirements, oversight responsibilities, and congressional scrutiny required for all major Cabinet-level positions. The CFO is in the executive branch.

Through thoughtful analysis and consideration, there have been several significant improvements made to this legislation, which I am happy have occurred. These include a provision requiring the CFO to be a Presidential appointee subject to Senate confirmation. The specific language would require the CFO to report directly to the Secretary of Homeland Security, and authorization for the DHS CFO to become part of the statutorily created CFO Council. To address the need for stronger fiscal oversight, the bill requires DHS to annually review its internal financial controls, ensuring that agency standards for financial management and accountability remain intact.

By adding these provisions to the bill, we are strengthening the accountability, management, and oversight responsibilities of the new Department. As we all recognize, Madam Speaker, the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security was an unprecedented effort by Congress to increase our Nation's preparedness and responsiveness to domestic security threats. The Department is one of the largest in the Federal Government, consisting of 22 legacy agencies, and has perhaps the most important mission of any Federal agency as we struggle to counteract new threats to our domestic security.

To conclude, this is a necessary step forward if we are to develop an efficient and effective agency that is ready to achieve its purpose of protecting our citizens, infrastructure, and borders. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PLATTS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to just thank our ranking member, the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS), for his work and his staff's work with me and our subcommittee staff on the majority side. It has certainly been a bipartisan effort, and I am grateful for his assistance.

Madam Speaker, I urge all Members to support the passage of H.R. 4259, the Department of Homeland Security Financial Accountability Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to thank the chairman of the subcommittee for his outstanding work in terms of bringing about a coalition to be able to work out some of the disagreements that we had, to be able to come up, I think, with a very strong bill. So I would like to salute him for that. I would like to salute the staff on both sides, the Democratic side and the Republican side, for their hard work as well.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PLATTS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4259.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

BOB MICHEL DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4608) to name the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic located in Peoria, Illinois, as the "Bob Michel Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic".

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4608

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

SECTION 1. NAME OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC, PEORIA, ILLINOIS.

The Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic located in Peoria, Illinois, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Bob Michel Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic". Any reference to such outpatient clinic in any law, regulation, map, document, record, or other paper of the United States shall be considered to be a reference to the Bob Michel Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the chief sponsor of this very important resolution, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD).

Mr. LAHOOD. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. I appreciate the work of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs in expediting this and also the majority leader's office.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to rise today to express my strong support for H.R. 4608, legislation that would name the Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic in Peoria, Illinois, after Bob Michel, the former Republican leader of the House of Representatives.

□ 1715

This year, as we mark the 60th anniversary of D-Day, we as a Nation are taking the time to reflect on those members of the greatest generation who served our country during World War II. Bob Michel is one of those heroes. As a member of the 39th Infantry, he served in England, France, Belgium and Germany. He fought from the beaches of Normandy to the Battle of the Bulge, where he was wounded by machine gun fire. His service earned him the Purple Heart, two Bronze Stars and four Battle Stars.

After the war, Bob Michel continued his service to our country and to our community, first as a congressional staffer, then as a Member of this House for 38 distinguished years.

He served 6 years as the minority whip and 15 years as the Republican leader, the longest-serving Republican leader in the history of the House of Representatives. During his career, he never forgot about those who served with him in World War II and those who served in uniform after him in peacetime and conflicts that followed.

He knows firsthand the sacrifice veterans have made for our country, so he was instrumental in gaining funding that established the VA clinic in Peoria, Illinois, in 1979, a source of care and comfort for thousands of veterans throughout central Illinois. In 2003, there were more than 42,000 visits to the Peoria clinic.

Respect for Bob Michel is certainly widespread. In 1989, President Reagan awarded the Presidential Citizens Award Medal, which recognizes individuals who performed exemplary deeds for their country and fellow citizens, to then minority leader Bob Michel.

In 1994, President Clinton honored Mr. Michel with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civilian award. In 2003, Mr. Michel became one of the first recipients of the Congressional Distinguished Service Award presented to him by the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT), and in June of this year, Mr. Michel returned to France with the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT) and was one