

I also want to acknowledge one of the players on that team, Sarah Pavan, a junior, who has become the second player in NCAA history to be named the American Volleyball Coaches Association Player of the Year and Academic All-American of the year from ESPN Magazine. That is truly a student athlete.

I urge all of my colleagues to join the Nebraska delegation today in recognizing the outstanding play of our volleyball team, the coaching and the support that this volleyball team has from its fans in Nebraska.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, so I am pleased to yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am just going to close on this resolution and thank my colleagues for bringing it to the floor. This is House Resolution 99, which commends the University of Nebraska-Lincoln volleyball team for winning the NCAA Division I women's volleyball championship. It has been fun for me to listen to my colleagues as they commend this spectacular team. And even though I am a Californian, I still want to let them know that this is a wonderful accomplishment, and particularly, I applaud the women athletes that were part of this contest.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 99, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE AFRICAN AMERICAN SPIRITUAL AS A NATIONAL TREASURE

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 120) recognizing the African American spiritual as a national treasure.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 120

Whereas beginning in 1619, when slavery was introduced into the European colonies, enslaved Africans remained in bondage until 1865, when the United States ratified the 13th amendment to the Constitution;

Whereas during that period of the history of the United States, the first expression of that unique American music was created by enslaved African Americans who—

(1) used their knowledge of the English language and the Christian religious faith, as it had been taught to them in the New World; and

(2) stealthily wove within the music their experience of coping with human servitude and their strong desire to be free;

Whereas, as a method of survival, enslaved African Americans who were forbidden to speak their native languages, play musical

instruments they had used in Africa, or practice their traditional religious beliefs, relied on their strong African oral tradition of songs, stories, proverbs, and historical accounts to create this original music, now known as spirituals;

Whereas Calvin Earl, a noted performer and educator on African American spirituals, remarked that the Christian lyrics became a metaphor for freedom from slavery, a secret way for slaves to “communicate with each other, teach their children, record their history, and heal their pain”;

Whereas the New Jersey Historical Commission found that “some of those daring and artful runaway slaves who entered New Jersey by way of the Underground Railroad no doubt sang the words of old Negro spirituals like ‘Steal Away’ before embarking on their perilous journey north”;

Whereas African American spirituals spread all over the United States, and the songs we know of today may only represent a small portion of the total number of spirituals that once existed;

Whereas Frederick Douglass, a fugitive slave who would become one of the leading abolitionists of the United States, remarked that the spirituals “told a tale of woe which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension; they were tones loud, long, and deep; they breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains. . . .”; and

Whereas the American Folklife Preservation Act (Public Law 94-201; 20 U.S.C. 2101 note) finds that “the diversity inherent in American folklife has contributed greatly to the cultural richness of the nation and has fostered a sense of individuality and identity among the American people”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes that African American spirituals are a poignant and powerful genre of music that have become one of the most significant segments of American music in existence;

(2) expresses the deepest gratitude, recognition, and honor to the former enslaved Africans in the United States for their gifts to our Nation, including their original music and oral history; and

(3) requests that the President issue a proclamation that reflects on the important contribution of African American spirituals to American history, and naming the African American spiritual a national treasure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may insert material relevant to H. Res. 120 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the African

American spiritual as a national treasure. From 1619 to 1865, enslaved African Americans created their own unique form of expression known today as spirituals. As African Americans were not allowed to speak their native languages or play African musical instruments, spirituals were incorporated into the English language and the Christian religious faith. These spirituals were the strong African oral tradition of songs, stories, proverbs and historical accounts. Spirituals have been a part of American culture from times of slavery to today, and their legacy is clear in today's gospel music.

Spirituals were also sung during the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Songs that we are familiar with, such as “We Shall Overcome” and “Marching ‘Round Selma,” were heard in the South to unite African Americans in the struggle for civil rights.

Some of the more commonly known songs, including “Swing Low Sweet Chariot” and “The Gospel Train,” used language which described religious activities but had a second meaning relating to the Underground Railroad.

Calvin Earl, a noted performer and educator of African American spirituals, stated that the lyrics used in spirituals became a metaphor for freedom from slavery, and they were a secret way for slaves to communicate with each other, teach their young, record their history and heal their pain.

Frederick Douglass, a fugitive slave who became one of the United States' leading abolitionists, stated that spirituals “told a tale of woe which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension” and that “every tone was a testimony against slavery and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains.”

This resolution is endorsed by the NAACP and the National Council of Negro Women, and I want to add my voice to theirs in support of helping to preserve a treasured, a really treasured piece of American history.

I urge my colleagues to resoundingly pass this resolution.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 120, recognizing African American spirituals as a national treasure.

Simply defined, spirituals are the songs created and first sung by African Americans during the times of slavery. These songs should be celebrated as a part of the American culture today, for they are the source from which gospel, jazz and blues evolved. The lyrics of these songs are tightly linked with the lives of their authors and were inspired by the message of Jesus Christ and the Gospel of the Bible.

□ 1130

The most pervasive message conveyed by spirituals is that of an

enslaved people yearning to be set free. The slaves believed they understood better than anyone what freedom truly meant in both a spiritual and a physical sense, and I believe they were correct in believing that.

The Old Testament Scriptures that are referenced in their songs spoke of deliverance in this world, and they believed God would deliver them from bondage just as he had delivered the people of Israel.

These spirituals are different from hymns and psalms, because their creators used them as a way of sharing the hard condition of being a slave while also singing about their love and faith in God. They used the songs to teach their young, to record their history, and to heal their pain. These songs awakened possibilities in their lives and inspired so many to dream.

Because the slaves were forbidden to learn how to read and write, they had to find ways to communicate secretly. The spirituals were a medium for several layers of communication and meaning.

Throughout the 20th century the spirituals experienced a renaissance as African Americans documented their struggles for equality. During the 1950s and 1960s, before and during rallies for civil rights, demonstrators often sang spirituals such as, "We Shall Overcome," and, believe it or not, "This Little Light of Mine," one of my favorite songs in my childhood.

The lyrics of these new spirituals dealt with improvement and with a new kind of freedom. Many of them were inspired by social problems such as segregation, drug and alcohol abuse, and a basic lack of human equality. Today the congregation of my church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and so many other churches in our community and across the country, continues to sing these spirituals. They inspire in us the human struggle for freedom and remind us of the lessons of history.

I am honored to stand here today in support of House Resolution 120 to express the deepest gratitude and recognition to the former enslaved African Americans for their gifts to our Nation, including their spiritual music and oral history. I ask my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of legislation that would recognize the African American spiritual as a national treasure, and would like to say thank you to my colleague from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) with whom I introduced this legislation in the Congress, as well as my colleagues on the floor this morning, the gentlewoman from California and the gentleman from Michigan, and also the chairman, Mr. MILLER, for bringing the bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, even though they sprang from one of the darkest periods of our Nation's history, a period of turmoil that Americans still live with to this day, as we all know, African American spirituals have inspired many of America's most remarkable and enduring musical accomplishments. Name the modern music form, and it owes a debt to the spiritual. Jazz, blues, rock and roll, gospel all trace their origins to this particular musical heritage. Today people around the world play, listen to, and find the deepest of inspiration in the music of Africans who lived their lives in slavery.

In so many ways this is a uniquely American music, one born of our uniquely American experience, reminding us who we are, where we come from, and all that we are capable of as a society and as a Nation.

The African American spiritual is as poignant and powerful a genre of music as any in history. And throughout history the African American spiritual has been kept alive through that oral tradition. For certain, this was so before the abolition of slavery in 1865 when these songs provided comfort and an outlet for spiritual yearning for so many, but also in the years immediately following abolition when few wished to sing African American spirituals, so acute was the pain and anguish they called to mind.

Thankfully there were some who recognized in the power of these songs the collective experiences from which they came and their intrinsic cultural and musical value. And by the late 19th and early 20th century, the spiritual was kept alive by churches and singing groups like the Fisk Jubilee Singers, who traveled and performed these remarkable pieces in the face of hostility and intolerance. Indeed, in 1872, the Jubilee Singers sang at the World Peace Festival in Boston and were invited to perform at the White House that year by no less than President Grant himself.

Today African American spirituals are not only performed in spirituals and concert halls across the world, they are also studied by sociologists and musicologists across the country. The University of Denver's Spirituals Project puts it aptly in its mission statement: "Spirituals uplift in times of crisis, heal, comfort, inspire, and instill hopes and dreams, thereby transforming individuals, communities, and whole societies."

And in much the same spirit of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, I want to say thank you to a good friend, a musicologist himself, for bringing to my attention the need for the Congress to honor this vital piece of our national heritage, Calvin Earl. As the youngest of nine children in North Carolina, Calvin taught himself the guitar at age 7, forming his first rhythm and blues group while serving in the Army before spending several decades performing jazz and big band music. Since 1989, Calvin has dedicated himself to pre-

serving and sharing spirituals with a new generation of Americans. Traveling the country, he builds on the traditional words and melodies to illuminate the history and complexity of this unique art form.

It was from Calvin that I learned about this remarkable tradition, how spirituals enabled slaves to teach their children, record their history, and surreptitiously communicate with one another. Indeed, songs such as "Wade in the Water," "The Gospel Train," and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" all reference the Underground Railroad. Another, "Follow the Drinking Gourd," even contained a coded map to the Underground Railroad. As these songs were spontaneous, their authors are not known, though they were the inspiration for the writers of the first gospel songs, from Charles Albert Tindley to Harry Thackert Burleigh to John Rosamond Johnson.

Mr. Speaker, no less than Frederick Douglass remarked that such spirituals "told a tale of woe which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension. They were tones loud, long, and deep. They breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains."

Indeed, in so many ways the African American spiritual embodies who we are as Americans. The impact it has made on the cultural heritage of America, and indeed every American, is incalculable. I thank all who have allowed us to bring this resolution for consideration today. I urge my colleagues to support honoring this national treasure and this timeless reminder of the enduring human spirit.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Sires) for 2 minutes.

Mr. Sires. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 120, which recognizes the African American spiritual as a national treasure. The slave Africans who came to the European colonies were forbidden to speak their native languages, use African musical instruments, or practice their spiritual beliefs. To keep their African traditions alive through songs and stories, the slaves created a new kind of music. Today these are known as spirituals.

Mr. Calvin Earl, my constituent from Jersey City, has devoted his entire life to educating people about the history and the importance of African American spirituals. He started a program called The Gifts from My Ancestors. Through songs, dances, and storytelling, this program has helped people experience the story of enslaved African Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Mr. Earl for his work, and I believe it is time to recognize the importance of these spirituals and preserve them for future generations by voting in favor of H. Res. 120.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for 2 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from California for yielding. I rise in strong support of H. Res. 120, recognizing the African American spiritual as a national treasure.

Growing up in the rural South in the 1950s, we grew up on what was then called the Negro spiritual, and many of these songs, of course, had great meaning, especially the lyrics. I remember, "Follow the Old Man" that is "Coming to Carry Me to Freedom" if you "Follow the Drinking Gourd." Well, gourds supposedly grew northward, and if you followed the direction of the gourd, you would get out of the slave South back during slavery and the abolitionist period, and you would be headed north. And so not only did these songs sound good, not only were they spiritually uplifting as one that I heard on this past Sunday at the Second Baptist Church in Maywood, Illinois, but they also were didactic; they were teaching and inspirational.

So I commend the gentlewoman from Connecticut for her introduction of this great resolution and urge its support.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER) for 2 minutes.

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California for yielding.

I would like to lend my voice and praise of the African American spiritual and a group that I consider to be the leading practitioners of today and for the last 135 years, namely the Fisk Jubilee Singers.

As the Representative from Nashville, Tennessee, I have the honor of representing Fisk University, which, under the able leadership of President Hazel O'Leary, is achieving new heights and excellence. The Fisk Jubilee Singers have been there since 1871, singing some of the most beautiful music in the world and a music that is laden with a God-given message.

No other music that I am familiar with covers the range from agony to inspiration, from the depths of human misery and despair all the way up to religious bliss. This is remarkable music, and I would suggest to you if you haven't heard the Fisk Jubilee Singers sing it under the able direction of Dr. Paul Kwami, you have not fully lived. This is a truly remarkable group and a remarkable inspirational message.

So let's praise today the anonymous African American genius that has allowed these songs to flourish and survive some of the toughest conditions on our planet, and let's honor groups like the Fisk Jubilee Singers that keep that tradition alive and fresh for each new generation. Yes, Mr. Speaker, this is truly a national treasure. We need to

honor and preserve it and spread its wonderful message all around the world. The African American spiritual is part of God's great heritage.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that today this House will honor one of America's oldest and most unique cultural treasures, the African American spiritual. No music in the world communicates as much as the African American spiritual. It is music borne of suffering. Music that expresses anguish, unity, and hopeful transcendence. Our reverence and deep gratitude for this music is only surpassed by our shame over the conditions that gave it rise. What we are doing today is wholly appropriate—and long overdue.

Mr. Speaker, I am particularly proud to represent Fisk University, a fine American college with a tremendous sense of history and purpose. Fisk was founded in the wake of the Civil War to educate all students, regardless of color. It was a costly and controversial mission, and in order to keep the school's doors open, a group of students embarked on a fundraising tour in October 1871. This choral ensemble soon became known as the Fisk Jubilee Singers. They earned renown all over the world, singing for U.S. presidents and poets, European royals and American intellectuals alike.

But most of all, Mr. Speaker, in their 135 years of existence, the Fisk Jubilee Singers have exposed people across the globe to the African American spiritual. They have reminded us all of our country's shared history, and they have told, in vivid word and tune, the story of a People. From "Wade in the Water" to "Go Down, Moses," and many songs between and since, the African American spiritual is a vital piece of American culture. Today we honor that tradition and those groups who keep it alive—groups like the Fisk Jubilee Singers.

The word "jubilee," Mr. Speaker, rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures, came to signify the proclamation of freedom from slavery. Today let this House rededicate itself to that powerful message and to those who have lifted their voices to express the pain of bondage and redemptive promise of freedom—of jubilee—throughout our Nation's history.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, we have no further speakers.

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

It always amazes me how the Lord manages to turn evil to good. And this is a good example of that; how under the terrible abuse and sin of slavery came the beautiful spirituals that we are honoring in this particular resolution. It is a real national treasure. It is something that I grew up with.

I recall my family, in which we had a number of musicians. Very frequently we were singing Negro spirituals, and in groups at church we would sing Negro spirituals, and yet look where this music came from, out of the terrible black mark on the history of this country when we had slavery over half the Nation. And yet the human response guided by God came out of these people and produced this beautiful, beautiful music. It is a heritage we all have, it is a heritage we must enjoy and, above all, a heritage that we must honor, as we are honoring in this resolution today.

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

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to close on House Resolution 120.

□ 1145

I want to thank my colleagues for their eloquence in speaking to this resolution. Truly, the African American spiritual is a national treasure. It must be embraced as such, enjoyed and enhanced, always in our thoughts and in our history because it has played such a critical part to so many thousands and thousands and thousands of people. And so I thank everyone for being here today and for presenting that to us.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this resolution to recognize the African American spiritual as a national treasure.

Till the passage of the 13th Amendment, African American slaves were prevented from speaking their native languages, playing musical instruments they had used in Africa, and practicing their traditional religious beliefs. Despite attempts to strip away the history and identity of these individuals, they relied on a strong oral tradition to pass down stories and family narratives in the form of original songs, now known as spirituals.

These African American spirituals came to represent a part of history that many tried to silence through oppression and slavery. These songs are a part of the spirit that could not be destroyed by the institution of slavery. And while the spirituals we know today likely represent only a small portion of the total number, they remain an important link to the past as we teach new generations the meaning of our roots.

For African Americans, identifying their history and researching genealogy becomes challenging due to a lack of organized records. Many are left with piecing together records of their ancestors left from former slave owners. Through song we can identify with our past, and the African American spiritual is one of the few remaining bastions of African American tradition and history though art.

I urge my colleagues to honor our history by voting for this important piece of legislation.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 120, to recognize the African American spiritual as a national treasure.

When slavery was introduced into the European colonies in 1619, the dark days that followed ignited the faith and hope of our ancestors that one day their descendants would live in freedom and helped them bear the unbearable burden of bondage.

To help our ancestors tolerate the incomparable injustices they suffered as slaves, they gathered together in unity and sang spiritual songs. Their strong faith in God was displayed through song and gave them hope that they would one day be free from the bondage of slavery. There was a transportation that took place when those songs were sung, for that moment they were carried away with their tunes from the problems and injustices they faced in their daily lives and could sing aloud to God who they depended on for help.

Frederick Douglass, a fugitive slave who would become one of the leading abolitionists

of the United States, remarked that the spirituals, "told a tale of woe which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension; they were tones loud, long, and deep; they breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains. . . ."

Unfortunately their plight for freedom from slavery would not end until 1865 when the United States ratified the 13th amendment to the constitution, but our fight for equality against injustices, though easier today, still taries on. The singing of these African American spirituals is just as much a part of America as our flag and should be celebrated and seen as a thread in the fabric of our rich and diverse nation.

Many slaves were not allowed to learn to read and write but they were allowed to have their faith and their song. It was these two things that became a foundation in the African American community and intertwined, was used as a method of survival, as a means to cope with human servitude and echoed their strong desire to be free. It was in these songs that an oral history of their plight was communicated to each other, taught to their children, recorded their sad history and healed their broken hearts.

The Old Negro spiritual is still alive today. The influence of these songs is felt in gospel and the many popular genres of music that evolved from gospel. African American spirituals spread all over the United States, and the songs we know of today may only represent a small portion of the total number of the spirituals that once existed.

I thank my colleague, Ms. DELAURO, for introducing this important legislation, to ensure that we celebrate, treasure and recognize the African American spiritual as a national treasure and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H. Res. 120, which recognizes the African American spiritual as a national treasure. The African American spiritual is both an expression of culture and faith, and a symbol of the path to triumph in our democracy.

The African American spiritual originated with many cultures in Africa, and became one of the few forms of expression that the African slaves were able to maintain while held in bondage in America. The spirituals not only served to uplift, but also served as a secret code to direct those enslaved to freedom. Lyrics from songs like "Steal Away (to Jesus)" and "Wade in the Water" were guides for those who planned to escape and served as instructions to allow those escaping to avoid being traced by slave catchers. Spirituals such as "Follow the Drinking Gourd" were also means of secretly communicating maps and directions for escaping slaves to reach the network of the Underground Railroad. After the abolition of slavery in the United States in 1865, the African American spiritual remained an important expression of culture, faith, and social justice, especially during the Civil Rights movements across the Nation in the 1950s and 1960s.

And so today, also in honor of Black History Month, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the African American spiritual and the legacy left to us by those who fought for free-

dom and rights in this country for all citizens. The African American spiritual is not only testimony of history, but is a part of our national heritage.

Mr. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield back my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 120.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. 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 question will be postponed.

TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF PROGRAMS UNDER SMALL BUSINESS ACT AND SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT ACT OF 1958

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 434) to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 through December 31, 2007, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendments:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. ADDITIONAL TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF PROGRAMS UNDER THE SMALL BUSINESS ACT AND THE SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT ACT OF 1958.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Section 1 of the Act entitled "An Act to extend temporarily certain authorities of the Small Business Administration", approved October 10, 2006 (Public Law 109-316; 120 Stat. 1742), is amended by striking "February 2, 2007" each place it appears and inserting "July 31, 2007".

(b) *EFFECTIVE DATE.*—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on February 2, 2007.

Amend the title so as to read: "An Act to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 through July 31, 2007, and for other purposes".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today we will consider H.R. 434 as it came back to us from the Senate. This bill extends the authorization of the Small Business Administration and its programs through July 31,

2007. This short-term extension will ensure entrepreneurs continue to have access to the programs at the SBA that are designed to stimulate job creation and economic development throughout the United States.

Small businesses rely heavily on the SBA and its programs to start and run their ventures. As the sole Federal agency charged with assisting this Nation's 26 million small businesses, it is critical that the SBA is able to meet their needs.

While the original bill would have extended the agency until December 31, 2007, we will support this bill in order to ensure the agency's programs can operate through the end of July with no disruptions. As such, we move to pass H.R. 434 today.

I look forward to working with Ranking Member Steve Chabot to draft a bipartisan bill that will ensure the SBA can adequately and efficiently respond to the needs of entrepreneurs. Our Nation's main job creators, small businesses, deserve nothing less.

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

This bill simply, as the chairwoman indicated, extends all the programs, including pilot programs, the authorities or provisions of the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act as they are presently constituted until July 31 of this year. The programs and authorities of the Small Business Administration expired on February 2. We would have preferred a longer extension, but the other body insisted on a shorter extension date of July 31.

Passage of this bill will hopefully give the Small Business Committees in both the House and the Senate the time necessary to work in a bipartisan manner on a more comprehensive SBA reauthorization bill.

Many of the programs of the SBA do not operate under a direct appropriation. This legislation will reaffirm their legality to operate, including the Advisory Committee on Veterans Business Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is quite simple. It contains the exact same language, with only the date changed, that passed the House last month by an overwhelming vote of 413-2.

Again, I look forward to working in a bipartisan manner with Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ and other committee members to produce a good, fiscally responsible SBA reauthorization bill that can eventually be signed into law by the President. I especially want to thank Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ for her graciousness in agreeing to bring up this bill in such a quick manner.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 434 with the Senate amendments so that our Nation's small businesses will see no interruption of service from the SBA over the next 5 months while we work to adopt a comprehensive reauthorization bill.

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