

more mental health services than psychologists, psychiatrists and psychiatric nurses combined.

More than 600,000 people in the United States hold social work degrees. The Veterans Administration employs more than 4,400 social workers to assist veterans and their families with individual and family counseling, client education, end-of-life planning, substance abuse treatment, crisis intervention and other services.

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

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 266. This resolution would recognize the important work of our Nation's social workers and support the goals and ideals of Professional Social Worker Month and World Social Worker Day.

Social work is a profession for those with a strong desire to help improve people's lives and play a valuable role in the Nation's health care system. Social workers help people function the best way they can in their environment, deal with their relationships, and solve personal and family problems.

Social workers often see clients who face life-threatening disease or social problems such as inadequate housing, unemployment, a serious illness, a disability, or substance abuse. Social workers also assist families that have serious domestic conflicts, sometimes involving a child or spousal abuse.

For example, child, family and school social workers provide social services and assistance to improve the social and psychological functioning of children and their families and to maximize the family well-being and academic functioning of children. They assist single parents, arrange adoption, or help find foster homes for neglected, abandoned or abused children.

In schools, they address problems such as teenage misbehavior and truancy and advise teachers on how they can cope with problem students. Social workers also specialize in services for senior citizens, running support groups for family caregivers or for the adult children of aging parents, advising elderly people or family members about choices in areas such as housing, transportation, and long-term care and coordination and monitoring of these services.

Through employee assistance programs, they may help workers cope with job-related pressures or with personal problems that affect the quality of their work.

Medical and public health social workers provide persons, families, and vulnerable populations with psychosocial support needed to cope with chronic, acute and terminal illnesses such as Alzheimer's disease and cancer. They also assess and treat individuals with mental illness or substance abuse, including abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. They also may help plan for supportive services to ease patients' return into the community.

In my State of Tennessee, we have a long tradition of recognizing the vital role of social workers. In 2005, the Tennessee legislature, of which I was honored to serve as a member for many years, passed important legislation which required social workers to have received a B.S. or master's degree in social work from an accredited school, received a doctorate or Ph.D. in social work, or have a specialized certificate or license from the State.

As a society, we have come to trust that the people using a certain title have completed specific training to prepare them for their work in assisting the public. Thanks to this legislation, Tennessee now ensures that positions requiring the skills and training of professional social workers are filled with fully qualified professionals.

In addition, the East Tennessee State University Department of Social Work has a long and proud history of preparing the majority of social workers in the region that I represent. In addition to providing high-quality education to future social workers, the Department hosts a Social Work Career Day where students, community agencies and practitioners come together and share educational experience and information on a career in social work. Students and faculty are also involved in a number of community based interdisciplinary learning and service activities.

According to the United States Department of Labor, the need for additional social workers is expected to increase faster than the average of all other occupations through the year 2014 due to the rapidly growing elderly population which is expected to create greater demand for health and social careers. The growth in social work is expected to occur most rapidly in home health care services, assisted living and senior living communities and the school setting. In addition, there is expected to be a significant need for those social workers specializing in substance abuse.

Nearly 50 percent of the United States population, age 15 to 54, report having at least one psychiatric disorder. Both severe and persistent mental disorders, including addictions, have profound consequences for individuals, their families and society, affecting their ability to learn, to grow into healthy adults and to nurture children, to work and secure housing and to engage in other routines of living. Recognizing the prevalence of mental disorders and the cost they exact on our society, social workers provide more than 40 percent of all mental health services available to Americans, making them an integral part of our Nation's health care delivery system.

So we stand here to recognize the importance of our Nation's social workers and support the Professional Social Worker Month and World Social Worker Day. We also stand to encourage more young adults to seek out educational

and professional opportunities as social workers where they can play a positive impact on changing people's lives.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in highlighting the contributions of social workers and to support House Resolution 266.

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

□ 1500

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Today we thank all those who have toiled in the fields of our community, including my maternal grandmother, who left the comfort of her home each day at the turn of the century and went to the Lower East Side to help immigrants. And we praise all of those who reach out to others every day in their community.

Social workers' service makes our communities stronger. March is National Professional Work Month, and Tuesday, March 27 is World Social Worker Day. I honor their service and thank them for caring for all of us each day.

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

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. 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 New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 266.

The question was taken.

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

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. 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.

DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS DISASTER ELIGIBILITY ACT

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1468) to ensure that, for each small business participating in the 8(a) business development program that was affected by Hurricane Katrina of 2005, the period in which it can participate is extended by 18 months, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1468

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 "Disadvantaged Business Disaster Eligibility Act".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF PARTICIPATION TERM FOR VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA.

(a) RETROACTIVITY.—If a small business concern, while participating in any program or activity under the authority of paragraph (10) of section 7(j) of the Small Business Act

(15 U.S.C. 636(j)), was located in a parish or county described in subsection (b) and was affected by Hurricane Katrina of 2005, the period during which the small business concern is permitted continuing participation and eligibility in such program or activity shall be extended for an additional 18 months.

(b) PARISHES AND COUNTIES COVERED.—Subsection (a) applies to any parish in the State of Louisiana, or any county in the State of Mississippi or in the State of Alabama, that has been designated by the Administrator of the Small Business Administration as a disaster area by reason of Hurricane Katrina under disaster declaration 10176, 10177, 10178, 10179, 10180, or 10181.

(c) REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE.—The Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall ensure that the case of every small business concern participating before the date of the enactment of this Act in a program or activity covered by subsection (a) is reviewed and brought into compliance with this section.

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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. 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 the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, Hurricane Katrina forced evacuation of individuals and business owners who are only recently recovering and rebuilding. Clearly, through no fault of their own, these firms have been disrupted.

A number of these businesses are participants in the SBA's 8(a) program, the primary way that minority entrepreneurs enter the Federal marketplace. 8(a) is a business development initiative, and that is what the companies in the gulf region need right now.

Because of the magnitude of the disaster, these companies need additional time in the 8(a) program. This will counterbalance the period of inoperability these firms experienced due to Hurricane Katrina. And I commend my colleague Mr. JEFFERSON from Louisiana for offering this solution.

As currently structured, the program allows businesses to participate for a limited length of time. They are given 9 years and 9 years only. Even if the companies fail, they can never reapply and get back in.

In this way 8(a) is different than any other SBA procurement initiative, which allow companies to be certified for increments of 3 years. As long as they meet the eligibility criteria, they can continue being recertified without end.

It is because of this limitation that the 8(a) program is simply not struc-

tured to respond to companies that have been victimized by disasters.

This bill is targeted and narrow. It applies only to 8(a) program participants in Alabama, Mississippi, or Louisiana that were impacted by this disaster. At most, this represents barely 4 percent of all 8(a) participants. Eighteen months is not a significant amount of time, but it could play a major role in ensuring that these businesses are able to participate in the rebuilding of their home States.

I urge support of this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1468, the Disadvantaged Business Disaster Eligibility Act. This legislation, as the chairwoman indicated, would simply extend for 18 months the period of time that 8(a) Small Business Development Program participants who enrolled in the program prior to August 29 of 2005 could stay in the program by 18 months if they had their businesses primarily located in the area devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

The 8(a) Small Business Development Program, administered by the Small Business Administration, provides a useful mechanism for aspiring entrepreneurs and existing small business owners who, for social or economic reasons, may not have the same opportunities other small business owners have had and face challenging barriers to their success.

Entrepreneurs who participate in the 8(a) program undergo an extensive 9-year process, where they obtain specialized business training, counseling, marketing assistance, and high-level executive development. They also receive additional help in the form of low-interest loans, access to government surplus office equipment, and bonding assistance.

The Small Business Development Program provides many of the tools needed for any small business to succeed. Most significantly, the program assists these entrepreneurs in obtaining Federal Government contracts as a base from which to grow their businesses. Given the devastation to the gulf coast region by Hurricane Katrina, access to Federal Government contracts constitutes an important component of the region's rebirth, and I think we all agree that we all want to see the rebirth in that area occur.

Tragically, as every American remembers, the late summer of 2005 proved to be one of the most catastrophic in American history. The 9.7 million Americans residing on the gulf coast of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi were victims of an unprecedented natural disaster, which, unfortunately, has become a nightmare that is etched in all our memories and a daily challenge for those who lived through it.

The storms of 2005 drowned 80 percent of New Orleans in seawater, killed

in excess of 1,600 people, destroyed more than 200,000 gulf coast homes, and displaced more than 1 million of our fellow Americans. Starting a new business is challenging under normal circumstances. Only two-thirds of them make it through their first 2 years. And needless to say, the devastation along the gulf coast compounds this difficulty exponentially.

This legislation provides some additional time for those businesses facing the 9-year participation deadline provided for in the 8(a) program to get back on their feet. Nothing in the Small Business Act currently allows for an extension of participation as a result of extraordinary circumstances such as those created by Hurricane Katrina.

For business owners that may not have had access to their businesses or their customers for months, the rigidity of the Small Business Act seems unduly harsh. An additional 18 months of assistance to firms who face an uphill battle before the storms hit who are now hanging on by a thread after the storms have passed is truly the least that we can do.

Today I encourage my colleagues to support this necessary legislation.

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

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JEFFERSON).

Mr. JEFFERSON. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I am pleased to sponsor H.R. 1468, the Disadvantaged Business Disaster Eligibility Act. I would like to thank Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ as well as Ranking Member CHABOT for their leadership in committee on this important bill. I would also like to thank the other members of the committee for voting in a bipartisan spirit to bring this measure to the floor in an expeditious manner.

This bill provides that if a small business affected by Hurricane Katrina that participates in any section 8(a) business development program, the eligibility period for its participation in such program is extended by 18 months.

The 8(a) program was designed as a 9-year business development program geared toward small businesses owned by citizens who are socially and economically disadvantaged. This program is of benefit to emerging African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and nonminority women-owned firms included in the program's coverage. Once the eligibility for the 9-year program has run out, the small business participating in the program is ineligible to re-enter it. When Hurricane Katrina ripped through New Orleans on August 29, 2005, it left 80,000 businesses damaged or destroyed, 97 percent of which were small businesses. A significant percentage were participating in the 8(a) program and were forced to shut down for an extended period of time, losing time in the program

through a series of events far beyond their control. It is only right and fair that we extend the period of eligibility so that the affected disadvantaged businesses are allowed to grow and flourish and enjoy the full 9 years of the program.

Nineteen months since Katrina struck, most of our 8(a) firms across the gulf coast are still struggling to return.

This bill is about equity and fairness at a time when the road to recovery has been anything but fair for disadvantaged firms in the region. For example, in the time just following the storm, 90 percent of the \$2 billion in initial contracts were awarded to companies based outside of the three primary affected States and to large concerns. Minority businesses received just 1.5 percent of the first \$1.6 billion spent there. Women-owned businesses received even less. This was the outcome in spite of laws such as the Stafford Act, which require contracting officials to prioritize awards to local businesses and to reach a goal of 5 percent of contracts to minority-owned businesses.

The continued recovery from Katrina is made up of many interconnected issues, and we cannot fully recover without addressing all of them. Helping small businesses, as this and other bills such as the RECOVER Act do, restores jobs that our citizens can return home to and puts our businesses back on track. It broadens the tax base of our region and helps with our recovery.

I look forward to continuing to work on the Small Business Committee with Ms. VELÁZQUEZ and Mr. CHABOT to address the needs of small businesses in the gulf region.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) for his support and cooperation in helping expedite this legislation.

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 New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1468, 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.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 13 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1700

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SALAZAR) at 5 p.m.

ANIMAL FIGHTING PROHIBITION ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 137) to amend title 18, United States Code, to strengthen prohibitions against animal fighting, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 137

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 "Animal Fighting Prohibition Enforcement Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. ENFORCEMENT OF ANIMAL FIGHTING PROHIBITIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 3 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 49. Enforcement of animal fighting prohibitions

"Whoever violates subsection (a), (b), (c), or (e) of section 26 of the Animal Welfare Act shall be fined under this title, imprisoned for not more than 3 years, or both, for each violation."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 48 the following:

"49. Enforcement of animal fighting prohibitions."

SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO THE ANIMAL WELFARE ACT.

Section 26 of the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2156) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c), by striking "interstate instrumentality" and inserting "instrumentality of interstate commerce for commercial speech";

(2) in subsection (d), by striking "such subsections" and inserting "such subsection";

(3) by striking subsection (e) and inserting the following:

"(e) It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly sell, buy, transport, or deliver in interstate or foreign commerce a knife, a gaff, or any other sharp instrument attached, or designed or intended to be attached, to the leg of a bird for use in an animal fighting venture."

(4) in subsection (g)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking "or animals, such as waterfowl, bird, raccoon, or fox hunting"; and

(B) by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following:

"(3) the term 'instrumentality of interstate commerce' means any written, wire, radio, television or other form of communication in, or using a facility of, interstate commerce"; and

(5) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(i) The criminal penalties for violations of subsection (a), (b), (c), or (e) are provided in section 49 of title 18, United States Code."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) and the gen-

tleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 137 is a bipartisan effort by the Judiciary Committee, led by the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY) as the chief sponsor and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) as the lead Democratic sponsor. Both have worked long and hard on this issue. I would also like to express my appreciation to Chairman CONYERS, Ranking Member SMITH, and Subcommittee Ranking Member FORBES for their leadership and support in moving this matter forward, and also the former chairman of the committee, Mr. COBLE, who is with us today.

The Animal Fighting Prohibition Enforcement Act of 2007 addresses the growing problem of staged animal fighting in this country. It increases the penalties under the current Federal law for transporting animals in interstate commerce for the purpose of fighting and for interstate and foreign commerce in knives and gaffs designed for use in cockfighting.

Specifically, H.R. 137 makes violations of the law a felony punishable by up to 3 years in prison. Currently, these offenses are limited to misdemeanor treatment with the possibility of a fine and up to 1 year of imprisonment. Most States make all staged animal fighting illegal. Just one State currently allows cockfighting to occur legally.

The transport of game birds for the purpose of animal fighting and the implements of cockfighting are already prohibited by Federal law, though the current law only allows, as I have indicated, the misdemeanor treatment. In 1976 Congress amended title 7, U.S. Code, section 2156, the Animal Welfare Act, to make it illegal to knowingly sell, buy, transport, deliver, or receive a dog or other animal in interstate or foreign commerce for the purposes of participation in an animal fighting venture or knowingly sponsoring or exhibiting an animal in a fighting venture if any animal in the venture was moved in interstate or foreign commerce. Amendments to the Animal Welfare Act contained a loophole, however, that allowed shipments of birds across State lines for fighting purposes if the destination State allowed cockfighting.

While Congress did amend section 26 of the Animal Welfare Act to close this