

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

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY ACT OF 2007

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3018) to provide for payment of an administrative fee to public housing agencies to cover the costs of administering family self-sufficiency programs in connection with the housing choice voucher program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3018

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 "Family Self-Sufficiency Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. ADMINISTRATIVE FEES FOR FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM COSTS.

Subsection (h) of section 23 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437u(h)) is amended by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following new paragraph:

“(1) SECTION 8 FEES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a fee under section 8(q) for the costs incurred in administering the self-sufficiency program under this section to assist families receiving voucher assistance through section 8(o).

“(B) ELIGIBILITY FOR FEE.—The fee shall provide funding for family self-sufficiency coordinators as follows:

“(i) BASE FEE.—A public housing agency serving 25 or more participants in the family self-sufficiency program under this section shall receive a fee equal to the costs of employing one full-time family self-sufficiency coordinator. An agency serving fewer than 25 such participants shall receive a prorated fee.

“(ii) ADDITIONAL FEE.—An agency that meets minimum performance standards shall receive an additional fee sufficient to cover the costs of employing a second family self-sufficiency coordinator if the agency has 75 or more participating families, and a third such coordinator if it has 125 or more participating families.

“(iii) PREVIOUSLY FUNDED AGENCIES.—An agency that received funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development for more than three such coordinators in any of fiscal years 1998 through 2007 shall receive funding for the highest number of coordinators funded in a single fiscal year during that period, provided they meet applicable size and performance standards.

“(iv) INITIAL YEAR.—For the first year in which a public housing agency exercises its

right to develop an family self-sufficiency program for its residents, it shall be entitled to funding to cover the costs of up to one family self-sufficiency coordinator, based on the size specified in its action plan for such program.

“(v) STATE AND REGIONAL AGENCIES.—For purposes of calculating the family self-sufficiency portion of the administrative fee under this subparagraph, each administratively distinct part of a State or regional public housing agency shall be treated as a separate agency.

“(vi) DETERMINATION OF NUMBER OF COORDINATORS.—In determining whether a public housing agency meets a specific threshold for funding pursuant to this paragraph, the number of participants being served by the agency in its family self-sufficiency program shall be considered to be the average number of families enrolled in such agency's program during the course of the most recent fiscal year for which the Department of Housing and Urban Development has data.

“(C) PRORATION.—If insufficient funds are available in any fiscal year to fund all of the coordinators authorized under this section, the first priority shall be given to funding one coordinator at each agency with an existing family self-sufficiency program. The remaining funds shall be prorated based on the number of remaining coordinators to which each agency is entitled under this subparagraph.

“(D) RECAPTURE.—Any fees allocated under this subparagraph by the Secretary in a fiscal year that have not been spent by the end of the subsequent fiscal year shall be recaptured by the Secretary and shall be available for providing additional fees pursuant to subparagraph (B)(ii).

“(E) PERFORMANCE STANDARDS.—Within six months after the date of the enactment of this paragraph, the Secretary shall publish a proposed rule specifying the performance standards applicable to funding under clauses (i) and (iii) of subparagraph (B). Such standards shall include requirements applicable to the leveraging of in-kind services and other resources to support the goals of the family self-sufficiency program.

“(F) DATA COLLECTION.—Public housing agencies receiving funding under this paragraph shall collect and report to the Secretary, in such manner as the Secretary shall require, information on the performance of their family self-sufficiency programs.

“(G) EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall conduct a formal and scientific evaluation of the effectiveness of well-run family self-sufficiency programs, using random assignment of participants to the extent practicable. Not later than the expiration of the 4-year period beginning upon the enactment of this paragraph, the Secretary shall submit an interim evaluation report to the Congress. Not later than the expiration of the 8-year period beginning upon such enactment, the Secretary shall submit a final evaluation report to the Congress. There is authorized to be appropriated \$10,000,000 to carry out the evaluation under this subparagraph.

“(H) INCENTIVES FOR INNOVATION AND HIGH PERFORMANCE.—The Secretary may reserve up to 10 percent of the amounts made available for administrative fees under this paragraph to provide support to or reward family self-sufficiency programs that are particularly innovative or highly successful in achieving the goals of the program.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) and the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) will each control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials on H.R. 3018.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I enthusiastically endorse for favorable consideration this bill authored by Mrs. JUDY BIGGERT. This, Mr. Speaker, is much needed legislation to enhance and to improve a program that assists families who hold a section 8 housing voucher with the goal of leading to economic independence.

Under the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, public housing agencies work with welfare agencies, schools and businesses to develop a program that gives participating Family Self-Sufficiency families the skills and experiences necessary for them to obtain employment that pays a living wage.

Now, this is not an expensive program. In my State of Wisconsin, for example, eight public housing authorities have successfully competed for Family Self-Sufficiency Programs with awards ranging from \$34,000 up to only \$47,000.

□ 2215

But while it is expensive, it's inexpensive. It is very successful.

While my home public housing authorities in Milwaukee do not anticipate the section 8 family self-sufficiency programs, they do have a public housing family self-sufficiency program in its second year, which is very similar to the section 8 self-sufficiency program.

They have linked in really creative way to a "Make Your Money Talk" program. It's a wealth-building program that is partnered with the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation, and they have 39 families enrolled.

Based on prior outcomes, participants have used their savings generated from family self-sufficiency to start a business or purchase a home. One resident in particular, a resident of the Westlawn housing development, has started her own cleaning business that has become quite successful.

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

Mrs. BIGGERT. I thank the gentlelady for her comments, and I would yield myself time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as the author of H.R. 3018, the Family Self-Sufficiency Act, I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this important legislation.

First, let me thank Congresswoman WATERS for working with me to include the language of this bill in the section

8 reform bill, H.R. 1851, the Section 8 Voucher Reform Bill Act of 2007, which the House passed on July 12 of last year by a vote of 333–83.

Not to anyone's great surprise, the Senate has yet to take up this larger section 8 reform package. My hope is that the House will pass this bill today, and the Senate will, at a minimum, move this smaller but very important noncontroversial bill.

The bill will strengthen the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, or FSS, and help more disadvantaged families gain independence from government assistance. The FSS is offered in connection with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. It provides homeownership counseling, job training, child care, education and other services to help individuals obtain work.

Let me take just a minute to give you just one example of a Family Self-Sufficiency Program success story from my congressional district. Angela, a single mother of two from Willowbrook, Illinois, served 6 years in the Navy. When she finished her service, she got a part-time job and, thanks to the GI Bill, enrolled as a full-time student. Yet she still struggled to make ends meet.

In stepped the wonderful team at the DuPage Housing Authority. Through their Family Self-Sufficiency Program, they helped Angela with the rent for a dozen months, moving her and her two children from tenant-based rental assistance to the Housing Choice Voucher Program. During this time Angela was able to complete college and obtain a degree with a double degree in human resources management and psychology.

The FSS program then connected Angela to a resume-writing class offered by the Illinois Employment Training Center. Within just 1 week of posting her new, polished resume, Angela secured three interviews and a new part-time job.

This March, Angela secured full-time employment as a human resource assistant at the Edward Hines VA Hospital. Angela now earns twice the hourly wage she did when she started working with the FSS program. But the story doesn't end there.

FSS also connected Angela with a financial planner who helped empower Angela with a little financial literacy to improve her budgeting and asset management skills. Today, Angela is working to prepare herself for homeownership, a long way to come from public housing.

Now, Angela is also giving back. She is an active member of the FSS program in DuPage County, providing insights and suggestions to help keep the program relevant and effective for local participants.

Even amidst record-high energy prices and other challenges facing our economy, there are bright stars like Angela who, with a little help, can suc-

cessfully make ends meet, raise children, get an education, secure a job and achieve the dream of homeownership.

What better way to help more of our neighbors in need than to support this bill today. It's a simple, bipartisan step that we can now take to ensure that a brief period of economic hardship doesn't turn into a lifetime of poverty and dependence for many of our Nation's most vulnerable families.

It does so by addressing the lack of consistent Federal funding for administering FSS services. The bill establishes a minimum ratio of program coordinators to participants, with funding for one coordinator per housing authority, serving an annual average of 25 or more families enrolled in FSS, two coordinators for 75 or more families, and three coordinators for 125 or more families.

It also requires HUD to establish and implement performance measures, collect data on FSS programs, evaluate their effectiveness, and report to Congress on its findings. Finally, the bill provides some funding flexibility to reward innovative and successful FSS programs.

These are good, flexible programs that help put disadvantaged families on the path to independence. Public housing can be an important safety net, but it is not a permanent solution. Let's give these individuals all the support we can to help them stand on their own two feet.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank John Day, president of the DuPage Housing Authority; Jeffrey Lubell, executive director of the Center for Housing Policy; and the folks at the American Association of Service Coordinators, the National Housing Conference, the New America Foundation, and the Corporation for Enterprise Development, for making this bill a reality.

I would, of course, like to thank Angela for her courage and willingness to let me share her success story with all of you today.

I would also like to thank the gentledady from Wisconsin for managing this bill and all the hard work that she puts into the Financial Services Committee.

With that, I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

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

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I just want to tell you how moving the gentledady's story was about Angela, and how encouraged she must be and others who benefit from this program.

This is welfare reform done right, and I want to congratulate her on her compassion, for pushing this bill through.

I certainly urge all of my colleagues to vote unanimously for this great bill.

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

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield as much time as she might

consume to the gentledady from Texas (Ms. GRANGER).

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to get here in time to speak about an issue I feel very strongly about. I speak about the need to honor the Code Talkers. It was brought to my attention by my friend and constituent, Mr. Ben Tahmahkera, of Fort Worth, Texas. He is a proud Comanche himself and passionately articulated the important role of the Code Talkers contributed to our Nation during World War II.

Mr. Tahmahkera came to me and pointed out that in July, 2001, President Bush honored the Navajo Code Talkers for their contribution to the United States Armed Forces as radio operators in World War II. Mr. Tahmahkera was very pleased to hear about the Navajo recognition, but he wanted to make sure the sacrifices of the Comanche Code Talkers and other Code Talkers were not forgotten either.

Mr. Tahmahkera suggested that I learn more about Charles Chibitty, who at the time was the only surviving Comanche Code Talker.

In January of 1941, Charles Chibitty enlisted in the United States Army and was assigned the Army's 4th Signal Company. Chibitty himself probably saved thousands of lives during the Normandy invasion alone, and he remembers, years after the battle, that he could clearly remember the messages he received and set out on D-day.

On that day, he identified where our troops were, protected them from being fired on by our own troops and, in general, completely confused the Germans. Chibitty specifically remembers saying in code to our men, "Okay, we know where you are. Just keep on doing what you are doing."

The code that Chibitty used was never broken.

For a long time, Germans believed it was just gibberish, and eventually the Germans sent spies to training grounds in Ft. Gordon and reservations in Oklahoma to try and crack the code. None of the spy missions were successful.

After hearing the compelling story of the Comanche Code Talkers from Mr. Tahmahkera, I introduced a bill to award the Comanche Code Talkers the Congressional Gold Medal in December 2001 during the 107th Congress.

I have worked to get these men an honor that is long overdue for the past several Congresses. After a lot of hard work and research by many different Members today, we are, at long last, honoring the Code Talkers who so nobly served our country during both World War I and World War II.

My friend, Representative DAN BOREN from Oklahoma, I appreciate his work and this Congress for bringing the bill to the floor.

Like the Navajo Code Talkers who were recognized for services in 2001, the Comanches, along with members of at least 15 other tribes, acted as Code Talkers in some capacity during both world wars. The Code Talkers were

sent out on their own to provide communications on enemy locations and their strength.

They sometimes spent 24 hours in headphones without sleep or food. Many of these men endured terrible conditions without protection from the enemy. The Code Talkers were able to send messages in their native dialect, a code an enemy could never track. Military commanders credit the Code Talkers with saving the lives of countless American soldiers and ultimately to the success of the United States in many battles.

In my mind, the Native American Code Talkers are some of our Nation's greatest heroes. As my good friend, Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England said, "The story of the Native American Code Talkers is one of the most inspiring chapters in America's march to victory in World War II. Their heroic and dramatic contributions were instrumental in driving back our enemies across the Pacific."

It's time for Congress to give the Native American Code Talkers the recognition they deserve for their contribution to U.S. victories in World War I and World War II.

Charles Chibitty, a true American hero, was also a loyal friend. He once turned down a Medal of Honor because it did not include all the four signal companies who he considered his brothers.

Chibitty said, I am glad that I am still here, but I miss my comrades. I know that my comrades that have already gone before me are listening and laughing right now. I know when I go up there someday, they will be there waiting for me.

Today, at long last, we honor the late Charles Chibitty and all of his friends who served our country as their service Code Talkers during World War I and World War II.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4544.

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Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. 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 Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3018.

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. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

EXTENDING THE AUTHORIZATION OF THE NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6965) to extend the authorization of the national flood insurance program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6965

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM.

(a) PROGRAM EXTENSION.—Section 1319 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4026) is amended by striking "September 30, 2008" and inserting "April 30, 2009".

(b) FINANCING.—Section 1309(a) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 4016(a)) is amended by striking "September 30, 2008" and inserting "April 30, 2009".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) and the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) will each control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material thereon.

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

There was no objection.

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

(Mr. WATT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, this bill would extend the National Flood Insurance Program by 7 months. During the most recent hurricanes of last year, we found that the program had some substantial problems to it. The House has passed a bill, the Senate has passed a bill, and we have been unable to this point to reconcile the two bills.

So the solution in the meantime is to extend the existing flood insurance program by 7 months. It is important to homeowners and businesses so they can have easy access to flood insurance.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in reluctant support really of H.R. 6965 to extend the authorization of the National Flood Insurance Program. I would prefer that this would be a debate on a consensus reform package that would put the National Flood Insurance Program on a more actuarially sound footing.

Both the House and Senate have passed separate bills that include important and necessary reforms. However, there are significant differences between the two packages. And, unfor-

tunately, we have been unable to reach a compromise on our differences.

Although there are differences in the two approaches, there are some similarities. For instance, both measures would reauthorize the flood program for 5 years and include important reforms to phase out premium subsidies and require more realistic pricing that is actuarially sound and based on the actual risk of flooding. Both bills would also phase out rate subsidies for nonresidential properties and non-primary residences.

One of the great challenges for this program is the debt, which presents an ongoing challenge and stands at \$17.4 billion resulting from the 2005 hurricanes. Any flood program reform package has to address the NFIP's debt, the interest payments on that debt and the net impact that they have on the budget.

We also have to face the reality of new claims in the pipeline to cover losses from Hurricanes Ike and Gustav, as well as the flooding in the Midwest earlier this summer.

Both bills contain strong and prudent reforms designed to strengthen the flood program, phase out subsidies, and encourage a premium pricing structure that is based on the actual risk of property loss from flooding.

The National Flood Insurance Program is currently set to expire on September 30. For this reason we are today considering a simple 7-month extension designed to keep the flood insurance program up and running past the September 30 deadline. Allowing the flood insurance program to expire could cause serious disruptions to the mortgage market and we could not afford to let that happen, especially in light of our current financial instabilities. A 7-month extension would allow Congress time to complete their work on a comprehensive reform package.

I want my colleagues in the House to know that the Republican members on the Financial Services Committee remain committed to enacting comprehensive reforms that not only modernize the National Flood Insurance Program so that homeowners will continue to have access to flood insurance, but also to protect the American taxpayer at the same time. I urge passage of this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time, although I have no further speakers.

Mr. WATT. I thank the gentlewoman for her excellent presentation on this. If she is prepared to yield back, I am also prepared to yield back.

Mrs. CAPITO. I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6965.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the