

This fund and claims process, established by BP after negotiations with the Obama administration, was created to ensure that the lives and livelihoods of those adversely affected by this massive oil spill would be duly compensated for their losses. Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster caused immeasurable damage to both the livelihoods of the gulf coast population and to the gulf coast ecosystem.

From the outset, BP volunteered that it would compensate victims of the spill for their losses. However, as with any process for compensation, there is a need for transparency, for efficiency and for equity in compensation. This legislation can provide another avenue to ensure that these essential elements are included in any compensation paid out of the BP fund and claims process.

Specifically, this legislation directs the GAO to undertake an "ongoing independent investigation and audit" of the BP fund and claims process—specifically targeting the effectiveness of the fund and claims process, the efficiency in which the claims process operates, and the accuracy in accounting for and paying out of claims. The legislation authorizes GAO to use its underlying subpoena power, where necessary, to ensure the accuracy and completeness of its audit and investigation.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this legislation requires the GAO to issue a report to Congress every 90 days during its audit and investigation, as well as a final report to Congress when the BP fund and claims process is completed. This information is essential for Congress to continue its ongoing oversight of the response and recovery of what is now likely the world's fifth largest oil spill in history.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LOBIONDO. I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY).

□ 2010

Mr. BRADY of Texas. I thank my friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO), for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6016, the Audit the BP Fund Act of 2010. I urge support for the bill that would provide for an ongoing independent Government Accountability Office investigation and audit of the operations of the compensation fund created by BP to reimburse those who were harmed by the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico beginning on April 20, 2010.

The bill specifically determines the effectiveness, including the timeliness of claim payments and the accuracy of these operations in determining amounts of damages compensated.

I believe the BP fund was established to help make whole the economies along the gulf coast that were damaged or destroyed by the disaster. \$20 billion, as we know, is a tremendous amount of money, and it can go a long way to compensate gulf coast victims of the spill.

We must ensure that compensation is done fairly, timely, and without bias, political pressure, or fraud.

We have heard complaints from State and local attorneys critical of the overly restrictive terms. Others have said there's not been enough time to assess the damages. Others are concerned that fraudsters will take money away from those honest people and families and businesses that are waiting for their dollars.

And thus far, the fund has paid out about \$400 million to approximately 30,000 claimants. Obviously, that is about 2 percent of the fund. That is slow—we think a little too inefficient for those who have been damaged—and this is precisely why we need this bill, to ensure that the fund functions as it should.

With that, I urge support for H.R. 6016.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6016, as amended, the "Audit the BP Fund Act of 2010". This legislation requires the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to undertake an ongoing audit and investigation of the BP Oil Spill Victims Compensation Fund (Fund). This bill authorizes GAO to use its subpoena power to ensure that victims of the oil spill are provided with compensation in a timely manner, the claim amounts are determined accurately, and the operations process occurs effectively. GAO will be required to report its findings to Congress every 90 days until the operations of the Fund are completed, in approximately three years.

The BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill caused immeasurable damage both to the livelihoods of the Gulf coast population and to the Gulf coast ecosystem. From the outset, BP volunteered that it would compensate victims of the spill. This summer, the White House secured a legally-binding commitment from BP to establish a \$20 billion fund to compensate victims of the spill. A central element of this Fund is that any fines and penalties that may be levied against BP and its partners shall remain wholly separate from the Fund itself. BP has also committed to honor any legitimate claims that would result in expenditures above and beyond the agreed-upon \$20 billion.

The challenge with any victims compensation fund is determining who gets—what, and how much. The agreement brokered by the White House creates an entity known as the Independent Claims Facility (ICF) to establish and implement a process by which claims will be evaluated and distributed. The White House and BP agreed that Kenneth Feinberg would be appointed to run the ICF and oversee the claims process. Mr. Feinberg was the Special Master in charge of the September 11th Victims Compensation Fund. His performance in that very difficult undertaking was widely praised. As a result—and based on his other professional experiences—Mr. Feinberg is certainly the logical choice to run the ICF fund.

While we do not doubt Mr. Feinberg's capacity and willingness for ensuring that the BP Oil Spill Victims Compensation Fund claims process occurs in an irreproachable manner, the BP spill was very much a matter of national interest and concern. This legislation will provide an oversight mechanism to ensure that the commitments of BP, negotiated by the White House, are fulfilled by all parties, and that—most importantly—those that have suf-

fered financial misfortune are duly compensated.

GAO has a long history of auditing programs. As such, it is well-situated to bring its experience to bear and report its findings to Congress. This legislation requires that the Comptroller General report to Congress every 90 days. This reporting requirement will keep Congress abreast of the effective workings of the Fund—but will also not overburden GAO's resources.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 6016.

Mr. LOBIONDO. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCMAHON. Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TONKO). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCMAHON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6016, 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.

RECOGNIZING LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AND NATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1646) recognizing the commitment and efforts made by the Library of Congress to promote the joy of reading through the sponsorship of the National Book Festival.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1646

Whereas the National Book Festival is a great national treasure that fosters the joy of reading;

Whereas the first National Book Festival was held on September 8, 2001, and was organized and sponsored by the Library of Congress and hosted by First Lady Laura Bush;

Whereas the first National Book Festival, held on the grounds of the Library of Congress and the United States Capitol, was such a success that it has become an annual event;

Whereas the National Book Festival has grown in popularity, in recent years bringing over 130,000 book lovers to the National Mall;

Whereas the National Book Festival each year has featured more than 70 award-winning and nationally known authors, illustrators, poets and storytellers;

Whereas the National Book Festival invites readers from around the Nation to celebrate books, reading, and creativity;

Whereas the National Book Festival convenes representatives from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the territories and possessions to join the Festival's "Pavilion of the States", where they may discuss and distribute materials about their respective reading and literacy-promotion programs;

Whereas the 2010 National Book Festival will be the 10th National Book Festival, representing a milestone for the Library of Congress and the Nation; and

Whereas the 2010 National Book Festival will be held on the National Mall on September 25, 2010, and will be sponsored and organized by the Library of Congress and supported by Honorary Co-chairs President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the commitment and efforts made by the Library of Congress to promote the joy of reading through the sponsorship of the National Book Festival;

(2) recognizes and emphasizes the important historic and ongoing role of the Library of Congress in organizing and running the National Book Festival; and

(3) encourages all Americans to celebrate the 10th National Book Festival, “A Decade of Words and Wonder”.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks in the RECORD and to include extraneous matter.

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

There was no objection.

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

Today, we commemorate the 10th anniversary of the National Book Festival. The Library of Congress’ commitment to the spread of knowledge is well-known and so is their unbridled joy of books and reading.

I am pleased to be a cosponsor of this resolution, along with all the members of the Committee on House Administration, and would like to congratulate the Library of Congress on another highly successful National Book Festival and laud their continued efforts to spread the joy and wonder of reading.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1646. I was privileged to be the main sponsor of this, but this is one of those unique bills where every single member of the committee, Democrat and Republican, sponsored it. That is not unusual in the sense that the goal of this bill is to celebrate one of the greatest gifts we can give to our children; that is, the gift of reading.

The first Library of Congress National Book Festival was held on September 8, 2001, so this year it celebrates its 10th anniversary with another highly attended, all-day event and remarkable panoply of authors. The National Book Festival has only grown in popularity over this last decade, and this year’s estimate is that over 150,000 individuals attended the 2010 festival this past Saturday.

The festival highlights and demonstrates the importance of literacy, creativity, and imagination in our schools, our young people, and throughout our society. The festival vividly brings to life the richness of books and fosters a lifelong love of reading.

So we congratulate the Library of Congress for its achievements in hosting the festival and wish them continued success. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the actions of the House of Representatives in recognizing the commitment and efforts made by the Library of Congress to promote the joy of reading through the National Book Festival. I support the Library of Congress in its efforts to promote and foster the joy of reading.

On September 25, 2010, the Library of Congress held its tenth National Book Festival on the National Mall. President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama served as the honorary chairs for this event. The National Book Festival invites readers from around the nation to celebrate books, reading, and creativity. It gives attendees from across the country the opportunity to visit with more than 70 award-winning authors who will talk about and sign their books. Over the past ten years, the National Book Festival has grown in popularity. Last year, it brought more than 130,000 book lovers, including those from my home state of Georgia, to the National Mall.

As the resolution states, the National Book Festival is a national treasure that fosters the joy of reading. Even in this modern digital age, reading has a host of benefits. Reading develops our creativity, broadens our interests, and introduces us to new things and different parts of the world. I am proud that Georgia was represented at the National Book Festival, along with all 50 states and the District of Columbia, at the Pavilion of the States where representatives were able to discuss and distribute materials about Georgia’s reading and literacy programs.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this resolution.

Mr. Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I’m pleased to join with my colleague in recognizing the successful annual book festival. It did set a new attendance record, and we’re delighted and we look forward to next year.

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. 1646.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FEDERAL ELECTION INTEGRITY ACT OF 2010

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and

pass the bill (H.R. 512) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to prohibit certain State election administration officials from actively participating in electoral campaigns, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 512

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 “Federal Election Integrity Act of 2010”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) chief State election administration officials have served on political campaigns for Federal candidates whose elections those officials will supervise;

(2) such partisan activity by the chief State election administration official, an individual charged with certifying the validity of an election, represents a fundamental conflict of interest that may prevent the official from ensuring a fair and accurate election;

(3) this conflict impedes the legal duty of chief State election administration officials to supervise Federal elections, undermines the integrity of Federal elections, and diminishes the people’s confidence in our electoral system by casting doubt on the results of Federal elections;

(4) the Supreme Court has long recognized that Congress’s power to regulate Congressional elections under Article I, Section 4, Clause 1 of the Constitution is both plenary and powerful; and

(5) the Supreme Court and numerous appellate courts have recognized that the broad power given to Congress over Congressional elections extends to Presidential elections.

SEC. 3. PROHIBITION ON CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES BY CHIEF STATE ELECTION ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title III of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (2 U.S.C. 431 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 319 the following new section:

“CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES BY CHIEF STATE ELECTION ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS

“SEC. 319A. (a) PROHIBITION.—It shall be unlawful for a chief State election administration official to take an active part in political management or in a political campaign with respect to any election for Federal office over which such official has supervisory authority.

“(b) CHIEF STATE ELECTION ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL.—The term ‘chief State election administration official’ means the highest State official with responsibility for the administration of Federal elections under State law.

“(c) ACTIVE PART IN POLITICAL MANAGEMENT OR IN A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN.—The term ‘active part in political management or in a political campaign’ means—

“(1) serving as a member of an authorized committee of a candidate for Federal office;

“(2) the use of official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election for Federal office;

“(3) the solicitation, acceptance, or receipt of a contribution from any person on behalf of a candidate for Federal office; and

“(4) any other act which would be prohibited under paragraph (2) or (3) of section 7323(b) of title 5, United States Code, if taken by an individual to whom such paragraph applies (other than any prohibition on running for public office).

“(d) EXCEPTION FOR CAMPAIGNS OF OFFICIAL OR IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS.—