

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, 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.

BLOCKING PROPERTY OF PERSONS THREATENING THE PEACE, SECURITY, OR STABILITY OF YEMEN—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 112-109)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the “order”) declaring a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Yemen and others to threaten Yemen’s peace, security, and stability.

The order does not target the entire country of Yemen or its government, but rather targets those who threaten the peace, security, or stability of Yemen, including by obstructing the implementation of the agreement of November 23, 2011, between the Government of Yemen and those in opposition to it, which provides for a peaceful transition of power that meets the legitimate demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people for change, or by obstructing the political process in Yemen. The order provides criteria for the blocking of property and interests in property of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to: have engaged in acts that directly or indirectly threaten the peace, security, or stability of Yemen, such as acts that obstruct the implementation of the agreement of November 23, 2011, between the Government of Yemen and those in opposition to it, which provides for a peaceful transition of power in Yemen, or that obstruct the political process in Yemen; be a political or military leader of an entity that has engaged in the acts described above; have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, the acts described above or any person whose property and interests in property are blocked

pursuant to the order; or be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

The designation criteria will be applied in accordance with applicable Federal law including, where appropriate, the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the authority to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

BARACK OBAMA.
THE WHITE HOUSE, May 16, 2012.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM EXTENSION ACT

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5740) to extend 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. 5740

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 “National Flood Insurance Program Extension Act”.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1319 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4026) is amended by striking “the earlier of the date of the enactment into law of an Act that specifically amends the date specified in this section or May 31, 2012” and inserting “June 30, 2012”.

(b) FINANCING.—Section 1309(a) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4016(a)) is amended by striking “the earlier of the date of the enactment into law of an Act that specifically amends the date specified in this section or May 31, 2012” and inserting “June 30, 2012”.

SEC. 3. USE OF PRIVATE INSURANCE TO SATISFY MANDATORY PURCHASE REQUIREMENT.

Section 102(b) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking “lending institutions not to make” and inserting “lending institutions—“(A) not to make”;

(B) in subparagraph (A), as designated by subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, by striking “less.” and inserting “less; and”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(B) to accept private flood insurance as satisfaction of the flood insurance coverage requirement under subparagraph (A) if the coverage provided by such private flood insurance meets the requirements for coverage under such subparagraph.”;

(2) in paragraph (2), by inserting after “provided in paragraph (1).” the following new sentence: “Each Federal agency lender shall accept private flood insurance as satisfaction of the flood insurance coverage requirement under the preceding sentence if the flood insurance coverage provided by such private flood insurance meets the requirements for coverage under such sentence.”;

(3) in paragraph (3), in the matter following subparagraph (B), by adding at the end the following new sentence: “The Federal National Mortgage Association and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation shall accept private flood insurance as satisfaction of the flood insurance coverage requirement under the preceding sentence if the flood insurance coverage provided by such private flood insurance meets the requirements for coverage under such sentence.”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(5) PRIVATE FLOOD INSURANCE DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ‘private flood insurance’ means a contract for flood insurance coverage allowed for sale under the laws of any State.”.

SEC. 4. PRIVATIZATION INITIATIVES.

(a) FEMA AND GAO REPORTS.—Not later than the expiration of the 18-month period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Comptroller General of the United States shall each conduct a separate study to assess a broad range of options, methods, and strategies for privatizing the national flood insurance program and shall each submit a report to the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate with recommendations for the best manner to accomplish such privatization.

(b) PRIVATE RISK-MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES.—

(1) AUTHORITY.—The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency may carry out such private risk-management initiatives under the national flood insurance program as the Administrator considers appropriate to determine the capacity of private insurers, reinsurers, and financial markets to assist communities, on a voluntary basis only, in managing the full range of financial risks associated with flooding.

(2) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than the expiration of the 12-month period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall assess the capacity of the private reinsurance, capital, and financial markets by seeking proposals to assume a portion of the program’s insurance risk and submit to the Congress a report describing the response to such request for proposals and the results of such assessment.

(3) PROTOCOL FOR RELEASE OF DATA.—The Administrator shall develop a protocol to provide for the release of data sufficient to

conduct the assessment required under paragraph (2).

(c) REINSURANCE.—The National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 is amended—

(1) in section 1331(a)(2) (42 U.S.C. 4051(a)(2)), by inserting “, including as reinsurance of insurance coverage provided by the flood insurance program” before “, on such terms”;

(2) in section 1332(c)(2) (42 U.S.C. 4052(c)(2)), by inserting “or reinsurance” after “flood insurance coverage”;

(3) in section 1335(a) (42 U.S.C. 4055(a))—

(A) by inserting “(1)” after “(a)”;

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(2) The Director is authorized to secure reinsurance coverage of coverage provided by the flood insurance program from private market insurance, reinsurance, and capital market sources at rates and on terms determined by the Director to be reasonable and appropriate in an amount sufficient to maintain the ability of the program to pay claims and that minimizes the likelihood that the program will utilize the borrowing authority provided under section 1309.”;

(4) in section 1346(a) (12 U.S.C. 4082(a))—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting “, or for purposes of securing reinsurance of insurance coverage provided by the program,” before “of any or all of”;

(B) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “estimating” and inserting “Estimating”;

(ii) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period;

(C) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking “receiving” and inserting “Receiving”;

(ii) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period;

(D) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by striking “making” and inserting “Making”;

(ii) by striking “; and” and inserting a period;

(E) in paragraph (4)—

(i) by striking “otherwise” and inserting “Otherwise”;

(ii) by redesignating such paragraph as paragraph (5); and

(F) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following new paragraph:

“(4) Placing reinsurance coverage on insurance provided by such program.”; and

(5) in section 1370(a)(3) (42 U.S.C. 4121(a)(3)), by inserting before the semicolon at the end the following: “, is subject to the reporting requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, pursuant to section 13(a) or 15(d) of such Act (15 U.S.C. 78m(a), 78o(d)), or is authorized by the Director to assume reinsurance on risks insured by the flood insurance program”.

(d) ASSESSMENT OF CLAIMS-PAYING ABILITY.—

(1) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than September 30 of each year, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall conduct an assessment of the claims-paying ability of the national flood insurance program, including the program’s utilization of private sector reinsurance and reinsurance equivalents, with and without reliance on borrowing authority under section 1309 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4016). In conducting the assessment, the Administrator shall take into consideration regional concentrations of coverage written by the program, peak flood zones, and relevant mitigation measures.

(2) REPORT.—The Administrator shall submit a report to the Congress of the results of each such assessment, and make such report available to the public, not later than 30 days after completion of the assessment.

SEC. 5. STUDIES OF VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY-BASED FLOOD INSURANCE OPTIONS.

(a) STUDIES.—The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Comptroller General of the United States shall each conduct a separate study to assess options, methods, and strategies for offering voluntary community-based flood insurance policy options and incorporating such options into the national flood insurance program. Such studies shall take into consideration and analyze how the policy options would affect communities having varying economic bases, geographic locations, flood hazard characteristics or classifications, and flood management approaches.

(b) REPORTS.—Not later than the expiration of the 18-month period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Comptroller General of the United States shall each submit a report to the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate on the results and conclusions of the study such agency conducted under subsection (a), and each such report shall include recommendations for the best manner to incorporate voluntary community-based flood insurance options into the national flood insurance program and for a strategy to implement such options that would encourage communities to undertake flood mitigation activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DAVID SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to add extraneous materials on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1740

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today to ask my colleagues for their support of H.R. 5740, the National Flood Insurance Program Extension Act.

The program is set to expire on May 31, and this critical legislation will spare property owners and the housing market from another lapse in the NFIP. It extends the National Flood Insurance Program’s authorization for 30 days, until June 30. In addition, it would initiate several noncontroversial reforms to develop private sector options in the flood insurance market.

Like many of my colleagues—especially my good friend and cosponsor of both this bill and our long-term reauthorization, the gentlelady from California, MAXINE WATERS—I am frustrated that the House must consider yet another short-term extension. It has been 10 months since the House sent H.R. 1309, a comprehensive, bipartisan reform and a 5-year reauthorization measure, to the Senate.

Our Committee on Financial Services approved H.R. 1309 by a unanimous vote of 54–0 in the committee, and it passed on the House floor by a vote of 406–22. As part of that process, we secured the input and support of groups representing the views of everyone from taxpayers to businesses to wildlife defenders. And yet, after five additional short-term extensions, the Senate has still not considered any legislation to reform the NFIP. Instead, all we hear are excuses and rumors—that the administration doesn’t want Congress to look productive, that floor time in the Senate is too precious, or that Senate leaders simply don’t want to deal with possibly difficult amendments.

The time for excuses has run out. This program is more than \$17 billion in debt to the taxpayers. We owe it to the homeowners, to the housing market, and to taxpayers to begin the process of fixing this program, even if we must do it 30 days at a time.

Today, we are sending to the Senate H.R. 5740. Should the Senate pass this short-term extension bill, it will have around 6 weeks from today to take up a flood reform measure and send it to the House. In the meantime, this 30-day extension will initiate key elements of our bipartisan House-passed reforms. It opens the door to private sector participation by asking FEMA and the GAO to study the cost and feasibility of private reinsurance, as well as the private market’s capacity to provide new options for homeowners. It also says that private insurance coverage can take the place of government coverage to meet the requirements of lenders in flood-prone areas. The sooner we begin making these changes, the sooner taxpayers can stop bearing the full expense and risk of an outdated flood program.

Over the next 6 weeks, the Senate will have more than enough time to pass long-term reform. Again, last July, the House passed H.R. 1309 by an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote, 406–22. The House then sent this text to the Senate two additional times. In December, the House passed flood reform as part of H.R. 3630, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act, and last week the House passed the same flood measure as part of H.R. 5652, the Reconciliation Act.

But this isn’t like other partisan battles. It should not be that difficult. Even the White House is with us. In September 2011, President Obama released a statement in support of our reforms as part of his “Plan for Economic Growth and Debt Reduction” because the House bill would spare taxpayers from billions in losses.

Senate Banking Committee Chairman JOHNSON has secured committee approval of his own version, S. 1940, along with strong bipartisan support. And in February, 41 Senators—Republicans and Democrats—sent a letter to Senate leadership asking that Senate leaders REID and MCCONNELL schedule

flood insurance reform for floor consideration.

There is simply no reason that in the next few days we cannot sit down and reconcile any differences that remain between the House and Senate visions for flood reform, and today's legislation will give the Senate time to make that a possibility. It will also begin the process of fixing the NFIP and protecting taxpayers from unnecessary risk.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill because this program is too important to let lapse and too in debt to continue without reform.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The National Flood Insurance Program plays a very, very key role in our Nation's efforts to prevent and recover from flood disasters. Floods are now the number one natural disaster in the United States in terms of lives lost and property damaged.

Now, here is exactly what the National Flood Insurance Program does:

First, it identifies areas of flood risk; secondly, it encourages communities to implement measures to mitigate against the risk of flood loss; thirdly, it provides financial assistance to help individuals recover more rapidly from flooding disasters, and it lessens the financial impact of flood disasters on individuals, on businesses, and all levels of government.

In recent years, a series of short-term reauthorizations and temporary suspensions of the NFIP have eroded confidence in the program among our stakeholders—including State government, tribal governments, local communities, individual policyholders, mortgage lenders, and the private insurance industry. In addition to disrupting the program's day-to-day operations, short-term reauthorizations and temporary suspensions—like what we're doing here in 30 days—creates significant uncertainty regarding the Federal Government's long-term commitment to underwriting and indemnifying flood losses. So in the absence of such a commitment, our stakeholders are less likely to make the necessary investments that are needed to successfully sustain, strengthen, and grow the program, thereby undermining the program's effectiveness and efficiency over time.

As my colleague, Mrs. BIGGERT, mentioned earlier, Congress last passed a bill to extend the National Flood Insurance Program authorization on December 23, 2011—5 months ago—as a part of the full-year omnibus appropriations bill for fiscal year 2012. Even prior to this action, we in the House took decisive action to extend the flood insurance program the way it should be by approving a 5-year flood insurance reform reauthorization bill last July that passed this House on a strongly bipartisan Republican and Democratic vote of 406–22.

Unfortunately, the National Flood Insurance Program is set now to expire May 31, just over 2 weeks from today, and guess what? June 1 also happens to mark the official start of the hurricane season in this country. This lets you know how we have got to put pressure on the Senate to act responsibly. Here we are attempting to pass a 30-day extension just 2 weeks before the devastating hurricane season starts. Urgency is necessary here. This is why reauthorizing of the National Flood Insurance Program before it expires is essential to our Nation's efforts to prevent and recover from flood disasters.

So I'm pleased that the bill that we have before us does extend the program for 30 days, but it is not a perfect bill, as I said. I believe that many in this Chamber—just about everybody in the House of Representatives—would prefer to see the Senate take up and pass our bill for the 5-year extension, H.R. 1309. Short of that, I believe that many on our side would prefer to take up a flood extension bill that will provide a clean extension.

In addition, there is the possibility—count it, with 2 weeks to go, who knows—the Senate simply may not agree to an extension that only runs 30 days and includes authorization provisions. We just learned last evening that the junior Senator from Oklahoma, Senator TOM COBURN, objected to the majority leader's request to take up and approve a clean, short-term extension bill that would extend the program until December 31, 2012. So here we are, 2 weeks before the hurricane season starts, and the flood program runs out, and still no action from the Senate.

□ 1750

I think it is also important to note that while this body repeatedly has voiced concern with spending, particularly with spending that is not offset with cuts, the Congressional Budget Office has indicated this bill will cost \$2 million over 5 years, an amount that is not offset in this bill.

Despite some of these shortcomings, I believe it is of utmost importance that we avoid any lapse in the program. Any lapse, regardless of the duration, would cause significant dislocation in our very fragile housing market for borrowers unable to complete mortgage closings, for insurance agents that sell national flood insurance policies as a part of their business, and for insurance companies that may be forced to reevaluate their voluntary participation, our National Flood Insurance Program's own Write Your Own program. All are very vital.

Finally, we have a broad coalition of stakeholders who support the bill, who support the 5-year extension, including industry insurance trade groups, floodplain managers, the Realtors who are holding their annual conference in Washington, D.C., this week, many other groups. In addition, FEMA's Administrator, Mr. Craig Fugate, re-

cently sent a letter to Congress urging approval of the extension. So here we are, we've got to pass this 30-day extension.

In conclusion, I just want to add that, thanks to Mrs. BIGGERT and to Ms. WATERS, we were able to do something that was vitally needed. As many of you know, my State of Georgia was devastated with floods; and one of the things that did come out of this is, during the hardship times, very difficult for individuals to pay for the flood insurance in a lump sum. As we have made part of our extension effort, they can now pay in quarterly installments, and that's a great thing.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), the chairman of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. BACHUS. I thank the gentlelady. We're here on the floor discussing this bill for one reason and for one reason only, and that's that the Senate has not done their job.

Ten months ago, Madam Speaker, this House passed a bipartisan, long-term reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program. Our bill passed unanimously out of committee and then passed the House, overwhelmingly, with over 400 votes, Democrats and Republicans joining together.

Our bill not only included a 5-year reauthorization of the program, a long-term reauthorization, which is what's needed, but included many needed reforms that reduce the burden on taxpayers, increase private market participation, and help bring certainty to the housing market.

We did our job, Madam Speaker, but the Senate's failed to do their job. Seventeen temporary extensions. Perhaps none of us should be surprised. After all, it's been 3 years since the Senate even bothered to pass a budget. Not to mention, at a time when millions of Americans are out of work, the Senate has failed to vote on 27 job-creating bills we passed out of the House, overwhelmingly.

Now Majority Leader HARRY REID has failed to find time to schedule floor time, even though the Senate, under the leadership of Chairman JOHNSON and Ranking Member SHELBY, unanimously passed a bill almost identical to the bill we passed 10 months ago.

But because of a dysfunctional Senate that's not working, we're once again faced with the risk of having the flood insurance shut down, as the gentleman from Georgia said, right before hurricane season starts. I can't think of a worse time. A shutdown of flood insurance, even a temporary one, would do tremendous damage to our struggling economy and our Nation's fragile housing market.

Specifically, what does it mean? I'd like to introduce a letter from the National Association of Realtors. It is already delaying close to 1,300 house closings every day. If it expires, it will

stop all development dead in its tracks in 21,000 communities across America.

Let me close by saying I want to commend our colleague, Mrs. BIGGERT. Congresswoman BIGGERT has done an exceptional job on this important issue. I'd like to commend Congresswoman and Ranking Member MAXINE WATERS. They've worked, over the last year, for a long-term reauthorization. We've come together and done our job.

I would like to commend the Senate, but, unfortunately, the Senate is not working. It's time for the Senate to pass a 5-year bill, and it's time for them to pass it immediately. That's why, although we have passed a 5-year reauthorization, we're here. But we're only passing a 1-month extension because the best they can do is another extension—number 17—which would put it into December, when we all know that's a lame duck Congress and we're going to be confronted with tremendous other issues at that time.

To the Senate I say: Let's get going.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®,

Washington, DC, May 16, 2012.

Hon. SPENCER BACHUS,

Chairman, House Committee on Financial Services, House of Representatives, Rayburn Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BACHUS: The 1 million members of the National Association of REALTORS® supports a temporary extension of National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) authority to enable the Senate to finish work on its long-term reauthorization and reform measure (S. 1940). The House is scheduled to vote on H.R. 5740 to extend authority by 30 days to June 30, 2012. We urge a yes vote.

NFIP authority is set to expire on May 31, 2012. Consequently, property buyers in more than 21,000 communities across the United States will no longer be able to obtain the flood insurance required by law for the purchase of a home or building. Each day that program authority lapses, more than 1,300 home sales will be delayed or cancelled. Allowing another lapse only exacerbates the many serious economic challenges facing a nation that relies on a vibrant real estate market for its economy.

Homebuyers, small business owners and local communities urge the House to vote yes on H.R. 5740 to keep the NFIP from lapsing. Your vote to extend authority will avoid further market disruption while Congress works toward long-term reauthorization and reform.

Sincerely,

MAURICE "MOE" VEISSI,

2012 President, National Association of REALTORS®.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Ms. WATERS).

Ms. WATERS. I'd like to thank Representative SCOTT for his leadership on this issue. I'd like to thank Chairman BACHUS for his support for all of the work that has gone into flood insurance reform.

I rise today in support of H.R. 5740, the National Flood Insurance Program Extension Act of 2012. But more than anybody, I'd like to thank Representative BIGGERT for her hard work on this bill and flood insurance reform, and I'm pleased to cosponsor this legislation.

While this bill, by no means, is a substitute for the comprehensive set of reforms included in H.R. 1309, the Flood Insurance Reform Act, a bipartisan bill which passed the House last year, I believe that we must act to pass this bill so that the flood insurance program does not lapse.

The flood insurance program provides valuable protection for approximately 5.5 million homeowners. Unfortunately, the lack of a long-term authorization has placed the program at risk. The program lapsed three times in 2010. These lapses meant FEMA was not able to write new policies, renew expiring policies, or increase coverage limits. Given the current crisis in the housing market, this instability in the flood insurance program is hampering that market's recovery and must be addressed.

The current authorization for the flood insurance program expires on May 31. The next day, hurricane season begins. It is irresponsible to have our Nation's homeowners vulnerable to flooding at any time, but to allow such a lapse during hurricane season is especially troubling.

Even though this bill only extends the program for 30 days, I hope that this brief window will give our counterparts in the Senate enough time to pass their flood insurance reform bill so that this program has all of the resources it needs to fully serve homeowners and the communities in which they live.

I strongly urge an "aye" vote on this bill in the hope that the next flood insurance bill we vote on is a comprehensive reauthorization bill.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the gentle lady yielding time to me, especially because I am opposed to this bill. I would just have one question for my colleagues, and I would ask this: What in the world is the Federal Government doing in the national flood insurance business?

And I would give the sponsors certainly of this legislation credit for the fact that they're trying to reform what I think is an unnecessary Federal Government boondoggle. But rather than reforming this, I think we need to eliminate this program.

Let me just give you an example, Mr. Speaker.

So many of us were very strongly opposed to ObamaCare, the government takeover of health care, because we didn't believe the Federal Government should be running the health care for our entire Nation. But apparently we have no problem with the Federal Government running a National Flood Insurance Program.

This program was created in 1968. We started writing policies in 1972, and today this program is almost \$18 billion in debt. And FEMA says that this debt will never be paid for, never, never

be paid off. So not only is the Federal Government improperly running a flood insurance program, it's operating a very bad flood insurance program.

This program is not actuarially sound. It charges some of the highest risk areas subsidized rates and charges other areas of no risk astronomical rates to pay for those subsidies.

□ 1800

You can use my home State of Michigan as a great example where our residents have been forced into this program and have been charged thousands of dollars every year even though we have almost no risk of flooding. In Michigan, we actually look down at the water, not up at the water. We've paid multiple times more in premiums than we've ever received back in benefits. In short, Mr. Speaker, the people of the great State of Michigan are getting fleeced by this program.

Obviously, we are a compassionate Nation. When we have a case of a natural disaster, or what have you, we need to make sure that we step up and give relief to our fellow Americans, but what we are doing here today is simply not fair. What we should have is a national catastrophic fund so that everybody pays, not just some who are being forced to subsidize others. That is not fair.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that my colleagues would join me in rejecting the reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program so that we can get to work on a way to allow the private marketplace to move in and to replace it.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA).

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you, Congressman SCOTT.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the National Flood Insurance Program, and I urge support on both sides of the aisle for the 30-day extension today, H.R. 5740.

I would like to thank my friend, Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS from California, and my esteemed colleague, Congresswoman JUDY BIGGERT of Illinois, for their work on this bill and on H.R. 1309, which I proudly cosponsored. Ideally, we should be increasing certainty for homeowners by reauthorizing the program for 5 years, as effected by H.R. 1309, which passed the House last July with over 400 votes. Now it waits for Senate action. I respectfully urge our counterparts in the Senate to pass a longer-term authorization.

Since 2008, the National Flood Insurance Program has operated on several short-term extensions, which only increase uncertainty in the housing market. As hurricane season approaches, Congress needs to act with all diligence to provide stability for the housing market and to give peace of mind to homeowners.

Mrs. BIGGERT. At this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD), a member of the committee.

Mr. DOLD. I certainly want to thank my good friend from Illinois for her leadership and for her giving me some time, and I want to thank the ranking member, Ms. WATERS, for her leadership as well.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H.R. 5740. The history of American flood disasters has clearly shown us two things:

First, an effective and proactive National Flood Insurance Program with paid-in premiums is a much better deal for taxpayers than after-the-fact Federal disaster assistance, which was the inevitable Federal response to flood disasters before this program's inception;

Second, any lapse in the program's authorization irreparably damages our mortgage and real estate markets, and avoiding that irreparable damage is particularly important right now when those markets are already so seriously challenged.

Although reauthorization is essential, we also recognize that the program needs meaningful reforms. We must gradually diminish taxpayer exposure to flood losses while improving the program's solvency and self-sufficiency; and we must work with the private sector to expand its role in protecting against flood disasters.

Under Chairwoman BIGGERT's leadership, a long-term reauthorization bill with these necessary reforms, H.R. 1309, passed out of the Financial Services Committee unanimously, 54-0, and then the same bill received nearly unanimous bipartisan support right down here where over 400 Members voted in its favor. With that kind of overwhelming bipartisan support, I must say that it's a little frustrating that we're here once again discussing a short-term reauthorization, largely because the other body hasn't considered the long-term bill, even though the long-term bill passed out of the Senate Banking Committee by voice vote.

One thing that seems clear is that the strategy of short-term authorizations, the corresponding temporary program lapses and uncertainty do not work to minimize taxpayer risk or to expand the private sector's role, but we must deal with the existing realities. To properly reform and strengthen this program, we need to reauthorize this program on a long-term basis, and we need to do so promptly; but the Senate hasn't acted, and we can't tolerate any lapse in the program.

So I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5740, which will avoid a destructive program lapse while we continue to work towards a long-term authorization.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. I yield myself such time as I may consume to respond very briefly.

There is a great urgency here. There is a very serious cry coming from the American people. That cry is saying, Help us, and the kind of help we need is to prepare for the storm before the hurricane is raging.

We live in storm alley. Now, I can tell you from firsthand experience that I represent a district in the State of Georgia where in 2010, I believe it was, we had the worst flood in over 500 years. I represent the Chattahoochee River, which overflowed. I represent one county in which we had 10 people who lost their lives, and seven of those people were from one county in my district, in Douglas County. Cobb County had losses. We got on, I guess we call it, Air Force Two with Vice President BIDEN, and we flew down with FEMA and Homeland Security, and we toured that place. I'm sure you all saw on CNN and Fox and MSNBC—and on all the news stations—where Six Flags Over Georgia, the amusement park, was totally under water.

So I can speak for my community and my area as those of us in the House have spoken—over 400 strong. Why in the world the United States Senate is sitting on the reauthorization is a mystery amidst the cry coming from the American people. Now our season is on us. Hurricane season starts in 2 weeks.

Let me just tell you that I've heard from one of the individuals on the other side, and I wanted to respond to some of those concerns as to why this bill is so important.

Our reauthorization bill would require annual notifications to homeowners who are living in flood zones about the risks in their communities. Many people move into these areas, and they don't even know they're in flood zones. What we've got in this bill is that they will be notified every year. They need that information so they can make the adjustments. I mentioned the affordable insurance coverage. I need not mention the flood maps, themselves, many of which all throughout this country are outdated, that leave many of your constituents and my constituents—I hope the Senate is hearing because they're their constituents as well—at risk for flood damage without even their knowledge.

Let's hope that this message gets across to the Senate that we need action. The American people are crying for help, and we need to give it to them immediately. We've got 2 weeks to do it, and we dare not let this hurricane season come upon us with the National Flood Insurance Program's having expired.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY), a member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. DUFFY. I first want to recognize the gentlelady from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) and the gentlelady from California (Ms. WATERS) for their great and hard work on the reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program.

While I rise today in support of this short-term extension, I have to be frank and honest and tell you that I am disappointed that we haven't found both Chambers coming together to reauthorize this program for 5 years.

What this does is to create uncertainty in the market. For the individual who may have a home in a floodplain or for a community that has many of its pieces of property in a floodplain, without having a long-term bill, it creates uncertainty for them.

□ 1810

It creates uncertainty in the housing market, which has obviously gone through some very strenuous times since the 2008 financial crisis. This legislation, a long-term fix, would breed certainty in that market as well.

As we look back at last summer, we passed this legislation with both sides of the aisle coming together. It doesn't happen very often. It was one of those great moments in the House where it was a vote of 406-22. Both Republicans and Democrats joined hands in passing this legislation. Now we're just waiting for the Senate to act. It's a bill that's going to save \$4.2 billion over the course of 10 years. It includes reforms that are going to save taxpayers money by eliminating unnecessary rate subsidies and encouraging the development of a private flood insurance market.

I support the short-term extension, but I also encourage the Senate to act.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time. I would inquire if the lady from Illinois has any more speakers.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I think we have just one more speaker.

At this time, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. PALAZZO).

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, once again we find that good legislation that was passed by the House has been taken hostage by the Senate.

As we approach yet another deadline on the reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program, the Senate is refusing to take up our long-term solution.

Ten months ago, we passed a 5-year bill that would bring much needed certainty and stability to the people depending on this program. The short-term package before us today fails to provide a long-term solution to a very real long-term problem.

NFIP provides flood insurance to more than 20,000 communities across this Nation, including more than 50,000 families in my district. Many of my constituents in Mississippi are still dealing with the effects of Hurricane Katrina. They have experienced record flooding in recent years, and we are fast approaching another hurricane season. We have no other choice. We must act now. It is out of necessity that I support this short-term extension, but we must remain focused on a longer-term solution for the sake of those in the Gulf Coast States and high-risk flood areas. They depend on the National Flood Insurance Program.

Between now and the next time this extension expires, I urge my colleagues in the Senate to revisit and embrace H.R. 1309, our 5-year solution.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I will close with my remarks.

I'm hoping that perhaps Members of the Senate may be watching C-SPAN and watching us in the House. If not, I just simply urge their constituents to give them a call and ask them to move. It would be great to move on H.R. 1309. Because even if you do this temporary one, it's 30 days and we're right back here in another 4 weeks at the time that hurricanes are raging. We are really playing with fire here, and we're not doing the American people justice, and we're not doing right here.

As the gentleman from Louisiana just mentioned, vivid in our minds has got to be Katrina. We can talk about Andrew in Florida or you can talk about Hazel up in New York. Our whole country is coastline, and flooding is the worst natural disaster in our country in terms of loss of life, in terms of property. Folks need this financial assistance from this flood insurance program.

I urge my colleagues in the Senate to move and do the right thing. I urge the American people to contact their Senators and let them know we do not need to be standing naked in the face of fierce hurricanes without help and without support simply because the United States Senate failed to act in the best interest of the American people.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROSS of Florida). Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived viewing audience.

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

I thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT) for managing this bill and for all of his mention of how important this is. I also would again like to thank the gentlelady from California (Ms. WATERS) for being a cosponsor.

Mr. Speaker, I wish we did not have to be here on the floor once again with a short-term extension of the NFIP, but this program is too important to homeowners, to the housing market, and to the communities in the flood-prone areas for Congress to let it expire at the end of the month. It is also too in debt to continue without reform. And despite our best efforts in the House, the Senate has been unwilling or unable to pass a long-term NFIP reauthorization and reform bill.

As has been mentioned over and over, the House passed our 5-year NFIP reauthorization reform bill, H.R. 1309, last July with an overwhelming bipartisan majority of more than 400 votes. It also won unanimous support in the Financial Services Committee. But the Senate has not yet approved any version of flood reform. So here we are once again on the verge of a lapse in NFIP.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come to stop playing games with this important program and start enacting long-

term reforms now. With today's bill, we begin that process. First, it extends the program for an additional month to spare property owners and the housing market from another lapse. In addition, it would initiate several non-controversial reforms to develop private sector options in the flood insurance market. This is all part of the 5-year bill that we have.

Reforming the NFIP is simply too important to ignore. Our extension will give the Senate time to act, and it will begin the process of fixing NFIP to protect taxpayers from unnecessary risk.

With that, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5740, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my disappointment that this House is once again considering a short-term extension to the National Flood Insurance Program.

It has been nearly ten years since the program was last reauthorized, and the need for reauthorization has only grown more pressing. While a lapse in the program would be detrimental to countless homeowners, the program cannot continue to be sustained through a patchwork of short-term extensions.

Last July, the House of Representatives passed a long-term extension of the program with broad bipartisan support. Shortly after, the Senate Banking Committee reported its own reauthorization which is now simply gathering dust in the Senate. With the start of hurricane season only weeks away, now is not the time for the Senate's typical complacency.

Floods affect every state in the Union, and all Americans deserve the comfort of knowing they will be able to continue to benefit from the security that the National Flood Insurance Program has provided homeowners and lending institutions since 1968.

This program must be modernized and reformed to meet the realities of American homeowners and taxpayers. I urge my Senate colleagues to swiftly bring their reauthorization bill to the floor so that we can finally move a long-term reauthorization forward.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5740.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. 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, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I unintentionally voted "aye" on rollcall No. 253 when I intended to vote "no" on the motion to consider H. Res. 656, providing for consideration of the bill, H.R. 4970, to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, and providing for consideration of the

bill, H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013. I reiterate my strong support for the protection of women from acts of violence and my opposition to the reauthorization as currently written and brought forth.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO OFFER MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 4348, SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2012, PART II

Mr. BARROW. Mr. Speaker, under rule XXII, clause 7 (c), I hereby announce my intention to offer a motion to instruct on H.R. 4348, the conference report to extend Federal highway programs.

The form of the motion is as follows:

Mr. Barrow moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 4348 be instructed to insist on title II of the House bill, regarding approval of the Keystone XL Pipeline.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4310.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McHENRY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 656 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4310.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Florida (Mr. ROSS) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1820

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 4310) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2013, and for other purposes, with Mr. ROSS of Florida in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from California (Mr. McKEON) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, which