

Park: "Happy will be the men who, having the power and the love and the benevolent forecast to [create a park], will do it. They will not be forgotten. The trees and their lovers will sing their praises, and generations yet unborn will rise up and call them blessed." Please give your support to creating Pinnacles National Park. Generations yet to come will thank you for it.

KEN BURNS.
DAYTON DUNCAN.

Mr. LAMBORN. I would like to inquire if the gentleman from the Northern Marianas has any other speakers?

Mr. SABLAN. No, we don't, Mr. Speaker.

At this time, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Likewise, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3641, 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.

AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER FOR THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3706) to create the Office of Chief Financial Officer of the Government of the Virgin Islands, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3706

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

SECTION 1. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.

(a) APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Governor of the Virgin Islands shall appoint a Chief Financial Officer, with the advice and consent of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands, from the names on the list required under section 2(d). If the Governor has nominated a person for Chief Financial Officer but the Legislature of the Virgin Islands has not confirmed a nominee within 90 days after receiving the list pursuant to section 2(d), the Governor shall appoint from such list a Chief Financial Officer on an acting basis until the Legislature consents to a Chief Financial Officer.

(2) ACTING CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER.—If a Chief Financial Officer has not been appointed under paragraph (1) within 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Virgin Islands Chief Financial Officer Search Commission, by majority vote, shall appoint from the names on the list submitted under section 2(d), an Acting Chief Financial Officer to serve in that capacity until a Chief Financial Officer is appointed under the first sentence of paragraph (1). In either case, if the Acting Chief Financial Officer serves in an acting capacity for 180 consecutive days, without further action the Acting Chief Financial Officer shall become the Chief Financial Officer.

(b) DUTIES OF CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER.—The duties of the Chief Financial Officer shall include the following:

(1) Develop and report on the financial status of the Government of the Virgin Islands not later than 6 months after appointment and quarterly thereafter. Such reports shall be available to the public.

(2) Each year prepare and certify spending limits of the annual budget, including annual estimates of all revenues of the territory without regard to sources, and whether or not the annual budget is balanced.

(3) Revise and update standards for financial management, including inventory and contracting, for the Government of the Virgin Islands in general and for each agency in conjunction with the agency head.

(c) DOCUMENTS PROVIDED.—The heads of each department of the Government of the Virgin Islands, in particular the head of the Department of Finance of the Virgin Islands and the head of the Internal Revenue Bureau of the Virgin Islands shall provide all documents and information under the jurisdiction of that head that the Chief Financial Officer considers required to carry out his or her functions to the Chief Financial Officer.

(d) CONDITIONS RELATED TO CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER.—

(1) TERM.—The Chief Financial Officer shall be appointed for a term of 5 years.

(2) REMOVAL.—The Chief Financial Officer shall not be removed except for cause. An Acting Chief Financial Officer may be removed for cause or by a Chief Financial Officer appointed with the advice and consent of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands.

(3) REPLACEMENT.—If the Chief Financial Officer is unable to continue acting in that capacity due to removal, illness, death, or otherwise, another Chief Financial Officer shall be selected in accordance with subsection (a).

(4) SALARY.—The Chief Financial Officer shall be paid at a salary to be determined by the Governor of the Virgin Islands, except such rate may not be less than the highest rate of pay for a cabinet officer of the Government of the Virgin Islands or a Chief Financial Officer serving in any government or semiautonomous agency.

(e) REFERENDUM.—As part of the closest regularly scheduled, islands-wide election in the Virgin Islands to the expiration of the fourth year of the five-year term of the Chief Financial Officer, the Board of Elections of the Virgin Islands shall hold a referendum to seek the approval of the people of the Virgin Islands regarding whether the position of Chief Financial Officer of the Government of the Virgin Islands shall be made a permanent part of the executive branch of the Government of the Virgin Islands. The referendum shall be binding and conducted according to the laws of the Virgin Islands, except that the results shall be determined by a majority of the ballots cast.

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a commission to be known as the "Virgin Islands Chief Financial Officer Search Commission".

(b) DUTY OF COMMISSION.—The Commission shall recommend to the Governor not less than 3 candidates for nomination as Chief Financial Officer of the Virgin Islands. Each candidate must have demonstrated ability in general management of, knowledge of, and extensive practical experience at the highest levels of financial management in governmental or business entities and must have experience in the development, implementation, and operation of financial management systems.

(c) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Commission shall be composed of 8 members appointed not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act. Persons appointed as members must have recognized business, government, or financial expertise and experience and shall be appointed as follows:

(A) 1 individual appointed by the Governor of the Virgin Islands.

(B) 1 individual appointed by the President of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands.

(C) 1 individual, who is an employee of the Government of the Virgin Islands, appointed by the Central Labor Council of the Virgin Islands.

(D) 1 individual appointed by the Chamber of Commerce of St. Thomas-St. John.

(E) 1 individual appointed by the Chamber of Commerce of St. Croix.

(F) 1 individual appointed by the President of the University of the Virgin Islands.

(G) 1 individual, who is a resident of St. John, appointed by the At-Large Member of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands.

(H) 1 individual appointed by the President of AARP Virgin Islands.

(2) TERMS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each member shall be appointed for the life of the Commission.

(B) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy shall be appointed for the remainder of that term.

(3) BASIC PAY.—Members shall serve without pay.

(4) QUORUM.—Five members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum.

(5) CHAIRPERSON.—The Chairperson of the Commission shall be the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States Virgin Islands or the designee of the Chief Justice. The Chairperson shall serve as an ex officio member of the Commission and shall vote only in the case of a tie.

(6) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet at the call of the Chairperson. The Commission shall meet for the first time not later than 15 days after all members have been appointed under this subsection.

(7) GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT.—Members may not be current government employees, except for the member appointed under paragraph (1)(C).

(d) REPORT; RECOMMENDATIONS.—The Commission shall transmit a report to the Governor, the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate not later than 60 days after its first meeting. The report shall name the Commission's recommendations for candidates for nomination as Chief Financial Officer of the Virgin Islands.

(e) TERMINATION.—The Commission shall terminate upon the nomination and confirmation of the Chief Financial Officer.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

For the purposes of this Act, the following definitions apply:

(1) CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER.—In sections 1 and 2, the term "Chief Financial Officer" means a Chief Financial Officer or Acting Chief Financial Officer, as the case may be, appointed under section 1(a).

(2) COMMISSION.—The term "Commission" means the Virgin Islands Chief Financial Officer Search Commission established pursuant to section 2.

(3) GOVERNOR.—The term "Governor" means the Governor of the Virgin Islands.

(4) REMOVAL FOR CAUSE.—The term "removal for cause" means removal based upon misconduct, failure to meet job requirements, or any grounds that a reasonable person would find grounds for discharge.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) and the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise

and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 3706 would create the Office of Chief Financial Officer of the Government of the Virgin Islands to assist in the development of a balanced budget through a review of incoming revenues and recommend spending limits to the Governor and legislature. The intent behind the bill is to create more fiscal certainty and address concerns regarding the overestimation of incoming revenues, which leads to overspending and a budget deficit in the Virgin Islands. The bill would allow Virgin Islands voters to have the final say on the office. If they find this to be a successful process, they will vote in a referendum to determine if the office should be retained in the long term.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SABLON. I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

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

Mr. SABLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3706, to create an Office of Chief Financial Officer for the Government of the United States Virgin Islands.

Delegate CHRISTENSEN is to be commended for her hard work on behalf of her constituents. Today marks the fourth time—the fourth time—the House will vote on legislation she sponsored to provide greater accountability and transparency in the management of her district's finances.

This is a good bill, I urge my colleagues to support its adoption, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SABLON. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield as much time as she may consume to the distinguished gentleman from the United States Virgin Islands, Dr. CHRISTENSEN.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I thank the ranking member for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in strong support of H.R. 3706, legislation I introduced to provide for a Chief Financial Officer for the Government of the Virgin Islands. I want to begin by thanking Chairman HASTINGS and Ranking Member MARKEY of the Natural Resources Committee for their support in making it possible for H.R. 3706 to be on the floor today. I also want to thank Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs Chairman JOHN FLEMING and, of course, Ranking Member KILLI SABLON for their support, as well.

Mr. Speaker, today, as you heard, marks the fourth time in 9 years that this House will consider legislation that I have sponsored to provide for a

CFO for my congressional district, the U.S. Virgin Islands. It has passed the previous three times.

While I have been severely criticized by some for its introduction, there are many who support it. But I continue to believe that having an independent professional third party being responsible for determining the amount of revenues that the local government has available to spend for an ensuing fiscal year would be a positive development for our government and is also generally supported by a broad cross-section of our electorate.

When I first sponsored the first CFO bill in 2003, the Territory was technically insolvent, and urgent action was necessary to avoid needing a Federal bailout and all that would entail. After studying the experience of the District of Columbia, which sought and obtained a Federal bailout and the accompanying loss of political autonomy through a financial control board, I concluded then that it would have been better if we avoided being taken over by a control board, and I crafted my original CFO bill to do that.

Unlike H.R. 3706, my first chief financial officer bill did involve a loss of authority for the Governor and legislature to accumulate public debt, but it was temporary and would have prevented a complete loss of political autonomy. Today, while the territory is experiencing very serious fiscal challenges, the government is not on the verge of imminent fiscal collapse and no longer has a structural deficit over \$1 billion or annual deficits in excess of \$100 million.

In view of this, one could reasonably ask, then, why the need for the current bill? First of all, H.R. 3706 seeks to end the acrimony and mistrust among the different branches of Virgin Islands Government and the public at large and provide for revenue projections from a highly qualified person. This individual would be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the legislature but does not serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

This is the process that is used by the District of Columbia currently through its CFO, and there have been no complaints from the chief executive of D.C., the mayor, about a loss of sovereignty or of a return to colonialism.

Since last year, when the Virgin Islands Governor John de Jongh, Jr., announced a pending \$135 million deficit in his budget projections for fiscal year 2012, several members of the 29th legislature questioned the Governor's numbers and they have continued to do so, pointing to differences in figures between reports done by auditors and figures presented in budget documents.

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Similarly, public sector union members who have been greatly impacted by various austerity measures also scoffed at the budget projections, saying:

there had not been enough transparency to truly demonstrate that there really was a fi-

nancial crisis and (that there was) no other way to solve it but layoffs or pay cuts.

H.R. 3706 does not affect in any way the Governor or the legislature's ability to spend the territory's funds as they see fit. It simply attempts to end questions on what the exact revenue of the territory is so that we can move forward on a sound economic recovery.

I'm not under any illusion that my CFO bill will be a cure-all for all that ails the Virgin Islands. I am, however, proposing it as a 5-year pilot program for improving transparency and trust in our budgetary and fiscal practices. If Virgin Islanders approve of the process and system for determining our annual budget limits that the bill provides, they can vote to make it permanent through a referendum that is provided for after 4 years of the CFO's 5-year term.

Each time I have introduced this or one of the earlier versions of this bill, there have been concerns that the United States Congress is imposing itself into the governance of the territory. There are some that would wish that this were the case, but I am not one of them, and this bill would not do that.

Because we do not have a constitution, the people of the Virgin Islands have come to Congress on a number of occasions, for example, to attempt to abolish the Office of Lieutenant Governor; to expand borrowing authority, which we did; to limit the number of senators, and for other purposes. I don't really see this process as being any different coming as a representative of the people of the Virgin Islands and representing their interests.

Moreover, attempts by our local legislature to pass similar legislation have failed, and legislative proposals by nonpartisan organizations have never been considered. Therefore, as a representative of the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands in the Congress, it fell to me, and I accept the responsibility. I just regret that our Governor and I could not see eye to eye on this.

The Federal Government has and will be providing significant funds to the U.S. Virgin Islands, especially in light of the economic disaster that currently exists. I am sure that having such an office as the one being proposed by H.R. 3706 will enhance our ability to successfully navigate through this very critical time because of the added accountability and transparency that it provides.

So I thank you for the time, and I urge my colleagues to support the adoption of H.R. 3706.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to inquire if my colleague, Mr. SABLON, has any further speakers.

Mr. SABLON. Mr. Speaker, at this time I have no further speakers, and I urge the adoption of the legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. I, too, yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3706, as amended.

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. LAMBORN. 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, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

LA PINE LAND CONVEYANCE ACT

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 270) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain Federal land to Deschutes County, Oregon.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 270

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 "La Pine Land Conveyance Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) CITY.—The term "City" means the City of La Pine, Oregon.

(2) COUNTY.—The term "County" means the County of Deschutes, Oregon.

(3) MAP.—The term "map" means the map entitled "La Pine, Oregon Land Transfer" and dated December 11, 2009.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

SEC. 3. CONVEYANCES OF LAND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, subject to valid existing rights and the provisions of this Act, and notwithstanding the land use planning requirements of sections 202 and 203 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712, 1713), the Secretary shall convey to the City or County, without consideration, all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to each parcel of land described in subsection (b) for which the City or County has submitted to the Secretary a request for conveyance by the date that is not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) DESCRIPTION OF LAND.—The parcels of land referred to in subsection (a) consist of—

(1) the approximately 150 acres of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, Prineville District, Oregon, depicted on the map as "parcel A", to be conveyed to the County, which is subject to a right-of-way retained by the Bureau of Land Management for a power substation and transmission line;

(2) the approximately 750 acres of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, Prineville District, Oregon, depicted on the map as "parcel B", to be conveyed to the County; and

(3) the approximately 10 acres of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, Prineville District, Oregon, depicted on the

map as "parcel C", to be conveyed to the City.

(c) AVAILABILITY OF MAP.—The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the Bureau of Land Management.

(d) USE OF CONVEYED LAND.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Consistent with the Act of June 14, 1926 (commonly known as the "Recreation and Public Purposes Act") (43 U.S.C. 869 et seq.), the land conveyed under subsection (a) shall be used for the following public purposes and associated uses:

(A) The parcel described in subsection (b)(1) shall be used for outdoor recreation, open space, or public parks, including a rodeo ground.

(B) The parcel described in subsection (b)(2) shall be used for a public sewer system.

(C) The parcel described in subsection (b)(3) shall be used for a public library, public park, or open space.

(2) ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The Secretary may require such additional terms and conditions for the conveyances under subsection (a) as the Secretary determines to be appropriate to protect the interests of the United States.

(e) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—The Secretary shall require the County to pay all survey costs and other administrative costs associated with the conveyances to the County under this Act.

(f) REVERSION.—If the land conveyed under subsection (a) ceases to be used for the public purpose for which the land was conveyed, the land shall, at the discretion of the Secretary, revert to the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) and the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LAMBORN. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

S. 270 will convey to the city of La Pine and Deschutes County, Oregon, 910 acres in three parcels and requires that the land be used only for purposes consistent with the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. The conveyances would be subject to valid existing rights and will address the city's and county's need for existing land.

One parcel of 750 acres will be used by the county to accommodate the expansion of its wastewater treatment facilities. The county will also use 150 acres to develop rodeo grounds and allow for the future development of ball fields, parks, and recreation facilities. A parcel of 10 acres in the center of La Pine will continue to be used for the public library and additional open space use.

Finally, the bill requires the county to pay all administrative costs associated with the transfer.

I urge support for the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

Mr. SABLON. Mr. Speaker, S. 270, sponsored by Senator RON WYDEN, provides for the conveyance of approximately 900 acres of land from the Bureau of Land Management to the city of La Pine, Oregon, and Deschutes County, Oregon. These lands will be used for public purposes as required by the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. We do not object to this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oregon, my good friend and colleague, Mr. WALDEN.

Mr. WALDEN. I want to thank my colleagues here on the floor today for their support of this legislation, S. 270, the La Pine Land Conveyance Act.

This legislation was originally crafted over in the Senate by my friend and colleague, Senator WYDEN. We've worked together on this project and thought that the most expeditious way to solve the problem for the people of La Pine was to just move his bill on through the Senate, and that's what we're doing today.

The La Pine Land Conveyance Act is the result of efforts of local officials who recognized years ago that for Oregon's newest city, the city of La Pine, to be able to take care of its residents, it needed a helping hand from the Federal Government. Here's why:

Seventy-eight percent of Deschutes County, the county in which the city of La Pine is located, is managed, owned, and controlled by the Federal Government. They're literally surrounded by Federal land. In fact, their own library sits on BLM land.

So, as they became a city and began to try to address the issues that brought about their desire to be a city, they realized they needed to be able to expand a little and take care of some of their problems. So, S. 270 will provide the city with 750 acres so it can build a new wastewater treatment facility, which will allow the community to move off of septic systems and onto municipal water and sewer systems. They have a real problem in La Pine with a fairly high water table and issues related to septic systems, so this will help solve that.

In addition, this legislation also transfers 150 acres to the La Pine Park and Recreation District to establish a more permanent home for what's known as the "Greatest Little Rodeo in Oregon," the La Pine Rodeo, and also to help them build out one of their other celebrations, one which all Americans take advantage of, and that's the Fourth of July.

Now, why are these two things important? Well, among another reasons, it's a job creator. Expanding out the rodeo grounds really will help them grow jobs in this remote, rural community in Deschutes County. In addition,