

On November 1, I emailed the State Department, requesting they speak with me, for more information. Our office emailed every business day and received no response until November 7. Then, in a scripted response, they refused my request to speak with me. No one, not one person, is willing to talk about the details.

Since they wouldn't talk to me in the privacy of my office, let me just ask them here in a public forum: Why did our ambassador die, and how did our ambassador die? It's been 2 months. You should know. Was it smoke inhalation, or was it some other cause? Was there physical evidence of torture on the ambassador's body as it was returned? And why were the bodies returned to Andrews Air Force Base when protocol dictates they go to Dover for the immediate investigation?

These questions need to be answered. The State Department needs to be forthcoming. The administration needs to be forthcoming.

I pray this Congress will exercise that authority.

THE OUTPOURING OF VOLUNTEERS IN REBUILDING NEW JERSEY

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to point out to my colleagues that the damage in my district and throughout my State in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy was nothing less than catastrophic. But I really want to talk about the rebuilding effort today and what we need to do over the long term.

The amount of outpouring, if you will, from volunteers, from just regular people in the district, was just overwhelming. I want to thank FEMA. I want to thank the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and all the different groups that are out there and continue to be out there today helping with this effort. The outpouring of volunteers from our own district and from New Jersey was just incredible.

Just a few days ago, I remember going to Union Beach, which was one of the towns that was hardest hit, and seeing so many people bring in food and clothing and cleaning supplies. One guy who owns a pizza place brought in a pizza oven and was making pizzas, and another guy brought in a TV so people could watch TV at the center where people come to sign up for FEMA. It was just amazing. It showed the spirit, if you will, of the people that they were willing to do that.

Thank you all again. Obviously, we're going to work on rebuilding, which is certainly the next step here in Congress and elsewhere.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, this being the first day that we've convened since the election, I want to begin by expressing my appreciation to our chaplain, Father Conroy, for his very inspiring and thoughtful prayer.

Mr. Speaker, we are here this week to deal with a very important issue. And I will say that we were all taught as kids, better late than never. We're here because U.S. workers at this point don't have access to 140 million potential consumers for their goods and services. I'm talking about the vote that we're going to have on so-called "Russia Permanent Normal Trade Relations."

Mr. Speaker, Vladimir Putin is not a good guy. Vladimir Putin has inflicted horrendous human rights policies on the people of Russia. We have seen crony capitalism take hold. And that's why it's very important, Mr. Speaker, that the United States of America be at the table as part of the WTO's effort to force Russia to live with the rules-based trading system.

Last year we exported \$11 billion in goods and services to Russia. If we can pass PNTR, we will double that to \$22 billion by 2017.

Mr. Speaker, it's a very important vote. We need to make sure that it's successful this week, and I'm gratified that it's going to be done in a bipartisan way.

□ 1410

EU EMISSIONS TRADING SCHEME PROHIBITION

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, a little bit later today the House is going to vote on the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme Prohibition Act. This is a bill that is very important to our civilian and civil aviation operators. It would block them from participating in the European Union's emissions trading scheme.

Now the reason this is important is because of this: according to Bloomberg news, the inclusion of the airline industry in the EU's 2005 cap-and-trade program will cost U.S. airline companies between—get this—\$10.1- and \$39.4 billion from 2012 to 2020. Now who do you think is going to pay that cost? Consumers are going to pay it.

The House has already decided we don't want a cap-and-trade system. We voted against that domestically, so why would we want our airline industry to have to participate in this on an international basis? MIT economists have looked at it and said the new rule will increase costs on passengers flying to Europe, all to subsidize their cap-and-trade systems.

With rising fuel costs and a down economy, we simply cannot afford this. So for these reasons, I urge my col-

leagues to protect American sovereignty to support our domestic aviation industry and vote in favor of H.R. 1956.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK) laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable NANCY PELOSI, Democratic Leader:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, November 13, 2012.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House,
U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER: Pursuant to section 1238(b)(3) of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2001 (22 U.S.C. 7002), amended by the Division P of the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003 (22 U.S.C. 6901), I am pleased to reappoint Mr. Michael Wessel of Falls Church, VA, to the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

Thank you for your attention to this appointment.

Sincerely,

NANCY PELOSI,
House Democratic Leader.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 5 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 12 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1702

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK) at 5 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.

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 motions 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.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

EUROPEAN UNION EMISSIONS TRADING SCHEME PROHIBITION ACT OF 2011

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1956) to prohibit operators of civil aircraft of the United States from participating in the European Union's emissions trading scheme, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1956

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 “European Union Emissions Trading Scheme Prohibition Act of 2011”.

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON PARTICIPATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION’S EMISSIONS TRADING SCHEME.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Transportation shall prohibit an operator of a civil aircraft of the United States from participating in the emissions trading scheme unilaterally established by the European Union in EU Directive 2003/87/EC of October 13, 2003, as amended, in any case in which the Secretary determines the prohibition to be, and in a manner that is, in the public interest, taking into account—

(1) the impacts on U.S. consumers, U.S. carriers, and U.S. operators;

(2) the impacts on the economic, energy, and environmental security of the United States; and

(3) the impacts on U.S. foreign relations, including existing international commitments.

(b) PUBLIC HEARING.—After determining that a prohibition under this section may be in the public interest, the Secretary must hold a public hearing at least 30 days before imposing any prohibition.

(c) REASSESSMENT OF DETERMINATION OF PUBLIC INTEREST.—The Secretary—

(1) may reassess a determination under subsection (a) that a prohibition under that subsection is in the public interest at any time after making such a determination; and

(2) shall reassess such a determination after—

(A) any amendment by the European Union to the EU Directive referred to in subsection (a); or

(B) the adoption of any international agreement pursuant to section 3(1).

(C) enactment of a public law or issuance of a final rule after formal agency rulemaking, in the United State to address aircraft emissions.

SEC. 3. NEGOTIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Transportation, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, and other appropriate officials of the United States Government—

(1) should, as appropriate, use their authority to conduct international negotiations, including using their authority to conduct international negotiations to pursue a worldwide approach to address aircraft emissions, including the environmental impact of aircraft emissions; and

(2) shall, as appropriate and except as provided in subsection (b), take other actions under existing authorities that are in the public interest necessary to hold operators of civil aircraft of the United States harmless from the emissions trading scheme referred to under section 2.

(b) EXCLUSION OF PAYMENT OF TAXES AND PENALTIES.—Actions taken under subsection (a)(2) may not include the obligation or expenditure of any amounts in the Airport and Airway Trust Fund established under section 9905 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or amounts otherwise made available to the Department of Transportation or any other Federal agency pursuant to appropriations Acts, for the payment of any tax or penalty imposed on an operator of civil aircraft of the United States pursuant to the emissions trading scheme referred to under section 2.

SEC. 4. DEFINITION OF CIVIL AIRCRAFT OF THE UNITED STATES.

In this Act, the term “civil aircraft of the United States” has the meaning given the term under section 40102(a) of title 49, United States Code.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

Florida (Mr. MICA) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MICA. First of all, 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 materials on S. 1956.

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

There was no objection.

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

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, and welcome back. The Congress is back in session today, and I guess all people’s property and welfare and everything else is now at risk. But I’m pleased to be here to help lessen some of that risk that is a threat which has been offered to the United States in the form of a European Union emissions trading scheme.

The bill that I propose today is S. 1956, which replaces the bill that was passed a year ago in October of 2011, and that’s H.R. 2594. That’s legislation which I authored which basically does the same thing, again, giving the authority to prohibit the United States aircraft and operators of commercial aviation from participating in the European Union’s emissions trading scheme.

Let me take just a minute and explain what this is. Several years ago, the European Union and some of the folks that are honestly concerned about emissions that come from aviation, commercial aviation in particular, decided to come up with a scheme or a plan to impose a tax on all aircraft. Now, if this had been done within the confines of the European Union, I don’t think we would be standing here. But what they did is really go beyond the borders of the European Union and say that any aircraft entering the European Union from another nation will be subject to an emissions tax—and not when it reached the borders of the European Union or their states, but from where it departed.

So this would be, first of all, counter to international agreements. It is also a tax that they propose to impose on us that is unfair in every way, violates national agreements that we’ve had, and it unilaterally imposes this emissions trading scheme on all of the countries, including the United States. It would have a very damaging effect, first of all, because it does not do what it was set up for. The purpose of this was to try to limit or even compensate for emissions; and the scheme, as proposed, did neither.

First of all, it would impose a tax on the airlines, which would be passed on to consumers, so we would have higher aviation taxes. Secondly, when they collected the money, the plan was flawed in that the money was not in

fact directed to compensate for emissions. It was basically a money-and-tax grab by European powers and not really accomplishing it. So they put a nice title on it and imposed a tax—again, unfair—against and in total violation of international law and U.S. sovereignty.

So we have tried to work with the European Union. As the chair of the Transportation Committee, we led a meeting here in Washington with EU officials and sat down one floor below where I’m standing in March of 2011 and tried to resolve the differences. We actually led a delegation and went to Brussels, the headquarters of the European Union; met in Brussels in June and July of 2011 and further discussed trying to come to some agreement to resolve differences on this matter.

And then we took our case, as Members of the United States Congress, to the International Civil Aviation Organization, which is located in Montreal. That’s the international civil aviation group that sets some of the policies and the standards for international and national aviation around the world. In fact, in October, a year ago, before we introduced this legislation, we convinced I believe it was some 27 or 28 of the 35 of their governing body to vote in favor of a position we held, which other nations also held. And I think only a small minority of some of the European Union core nations, in fact, prevailed in that vote. So we succeeded in garnering international support because this isn’t a tax that affects only the United States, but it affects countries around the world. So we had many international partners who said this is unfair, it’s not properly crafted, and it lacked transparency and definition.

□ 1710

In fact, when we sat with the European Union counterparts, parliamentarian to parliamentarian, they could not define exactly what they were doing or how they were going to impose this. And I think they’re still at a loss because they don’t have it completely settled.

So there is some good news on the horizon. Yesterday, the EU announced the postponement of imposing the Emissions Trading Scheme to international flights until 2014. Now, that’s a temporary delay of imposition. They have said that they’d leave some of the decision up to ICAO, but ICAO does not set policy for the United States of America.

We are a sovereign Nation, and we must, again, I think, defend the position, our position, our sovereignty and concurrence with international trade agreements that have previously been agreed on. We’ve got to hold people’s feet to the fire and respect also U.S. sovereignty.

So that’s how we have gotten ourselves into this fix. We have a temporary delay; maybe that’s because of this legislation that’s up today. But we

must move forward, I think, in giving the Secretary of Transportation and our officials the ability to thwart this kind of unfair tax imposed on our carriers, and that's exactly what this legislation does.

We're not doing it by ourselves. We have dozens of other countries that expressed their opposition. So we join our colleagues, both Democrat and Republican, in the committee in bringing forward this bill. It is modeled after what the House passed in October of 2011. And by passing this bipartisan, bicameral legislation that the Senate has now passed, we are notifying the European Union that we are not going to support the scheme and that, in fact, we want a positive outcome.

We want a long-term solution, but we will not allow the United States to be held hostage. The European Union or any other nation or group of nations cannot hold us hostage on these tax and international flight issues.

So we'll work with ICAO, and we'll continue to work with the European Union and others. And in the meantime, I ask my colleagues to support Senate bill 1956.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of S. 1956, a bill to protect America's airline workers, passengers, and airlines from an Emissions Trading Scheme by the European Union that flies in the face of the international community.

In my view, the EU's proposed Emissions Trading Scheme is inconsistent with international aviation law and practice. Additionally, airlines and labor groups oppose it because it will impose new and unjustified costs on the industry and destroy American jobs. Rather than solving a serious global problem, the Emissions Trading Scheme has created an international distraction.

Along with 35 Democratic and Republican colleagues, I was pleased to cosponsor a similar bill last year. As I said when the House passed the bill, reducing the aviation emissions is a goal worth pursuing. I do not think anyone disagrees on that.

But the EU's Emissions Trading Scheme, when applied to U.S. airlines, is the wrong way to achieve the right objective. It goes against international law and agreements, and it brings the hand of European regulators into our own airspace. The EU's go-it-alone approach is not the way to find a global solution to a global problem.

A large part of the international community rejects the EU's approach. The United States has joined more than 20 other countries in signing two declarations pointing out the many fatal flaws in the Emissions Trading Scheme, and calling on EU members to rejoin ongoing work within the International Civil Aviation Organization.

European leaders appear to be getting the message. Just yesterday, EU officials announced a one-year suspen-

sion of ETS application to international flights as long as a global deal is reached. But Congress must enact this bill regardless, to send a strong message to the EU that whether the International Aviation Organization is able to act on the EU's timetable or not, the EU's unilateral scheme is not the proper way to solve a global problem.

This bill will protect U.S. airlines and all those who rely on them for travel and employment from the unjust effects of the Emissions Trading Scheme. This bill directs the Secretary of Transportation to prohibit U.S. airlines from participating in the Emissions Trading Scheme if the Secretary finds that it is in the public interest.

The bill also encourages the government to continue negotiating with the EU on a resolution, and it prohibits use of the Airport and Aviation Trust Fund, or any appropriated funds, to pay penalties to EU countries on behalf of airlines.

It ensures that American taxpayers will not end up paying the bill for a counterproductive emissions scheme that causes more problems than it solves. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to yield 6 minutes at this point to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI), who chairs the Aviation Subcommittee in the House.

Mr. PETRI. I thank my chairman.

I rise in support of the bill before us, Senate bill 1956, the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme Prohibition Act of 2011.

In January 2012, the European Union began to unilaterally apply its Emissions Trading Scheme to all civil aviation operators landing in or departing from one of the EU Member States.

Just yesterday, the EU announced it was going to postpone the application of the Emissions Trading Scheme on international operators until 2014. Prior to that announcement, EU Member States would have required international air carriers and operators to pay for emission allowances and, in some cases, penalties for carbon emissions starting in April of next year.

While this postponement is a good first step, it is not a total withdrawal of this illegal scheme, and therefore, we must press ahead with this bipartisan legislation to ensure U.S. operators and consumers are protected.

The EU Emissions Trading Scheme is legally questionable in a number of ways. First, it applies to the entire length of the flight, including those parts of the flight outside the EU's airspace. For instance, if a flight leaves Los Angeles to London, taxes would be levied not just for the portion of the flight over the United Kingdom, but also for the portions of the flight over the United States, Canada, and international waters.

The European Union's unilateral application of their emissions scheme to

U.S. aviation operators without the consent of the United States Government raises significant legal concerns under international law, including violations of the Chicago Convention and the U.S.-EU Air Transport Agreement.

There are also concerns that the Emissions Trading Scheme is nothing more than a revenue raiser for the EU Member States, as there is no requirement that EU Member States must use the funds for anything related to the reduction of emissions by the civil aviation sector.

The EU Emissions Trading Scheme will take money from the airline industry that would otherwise be invested in NextGen technologies and the purchase of new aircraft, two proven methods for improving environmental performance and reducing emissions.

Airlines for America, an air transport trade association, testified before our Aviation Subcommittee last year that the extraction of capital from the aviation system, as envisioned under the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, could threaten over 78,000 American jobs. This is unacceptable.

But despite serious legal issues and objections by the international community, the European Union is pressing ahead with its plans. In September 2011, 21 countries, including the United States, signed a joint declaration against the EU Emissions Trading Scheme in New Delhi, India.

In the last year, there have been several other multinational meetings of countries who oppose the scheme, including meetings that took place in Russia and in the United States.

The bill before us directs the Secretary of Transportation to prohibit U.S. aircraft operators from participating in this illegal scheme. The bill also directs appropriate U.S. government officials to negotiate a worldwide approach to address aircraft emissions, and to take appropriate actions to hold U.S. civil operators harmless from the EU's Emissions Trading Scheme.

□ 1720

The EU needs to slow down and carefully weigh its decision to include international civil aviation in its emissions trading scheme. A better approach would be to work with the international civil aviation community through the U.N. International Civil Aviation Organization to establish consensus-driven initiatives to reduce aviation emissions.

I am pleased to see movement on the part of the EU to work with the international community at ICAO to seek a global approach to civil aviation emissions. While the postponement for a year is a positive sign, it is not enough to ensure U.S. operators will not be negatively impacted by the trading scheme at some point in the future. Therefore, we are moving forward with this bipartisan bill to ensure U.S. operators will not ever be subjected to the illegal European scheme.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan, bicameral legislation.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the distinguished ranking member on the Energy and Commerce Committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN).

Mr. WAXMAN. Thank you very much for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Thune bill.

A warmer planet has less ice, higher sea levels, more water in the atmosphere, more powerful storms, more frequent floods, dryer droughts, and worse wildfires. Two weeks ago, Hurricane Sandy brought a powerful and tragic reminder that the combination of sea level rise and more powerful storms can be deadly, devastating and extremely costly. Hurricane Sandy was only the latest and most dramatic in a series of extreme weather events. Over the past 2 years, we've had record-breaking temperatures, the worst drought in 50 years, major floods, numerous tornadoes and thunderstorms, and vast wildfires.

This is what global warming looks like, and if we continue to ignore it, it will soon look far worse. We should be doing all that we can to reduce carbon pollution and slow global warming, but the Thune bill, instead, tries to stop efforts to reduce carbon pollution.

Specifically, the bill targets the European Union's requirement that airlines modestly reduce their carbon pollution. Aviation is a significant and fast-growing source of carbon pollution, and talks on an international agreement to control this pollution have languished for over a decade. So, since nothing was happening for 10 years, the European Union acted to require, for the price of only a few dollars a ticket—just a small fraction of the fee that the airlines impose on consumers just to pay for their bags going on the same airplane—that the amount of money be imposed unless the airlines can reduce the contribution to global warming.

These environmental requirements are no more a violation of national sovereignty than the aviation safety and security requirements imposed overseas by the United States or the taxes on aviation imposed by other nations. Everyone, including the European Union, agrees it would be better to address this issue on aviation from a global basis rather than through regional requirements.

Last week, international negotiations made progress on developing such an alternative to the EU requirements. In response, the European Union announced yesterday that it would delay the enforcement of the aviation requirements for a year in order to create a positive atmosphere and facilitate progress on global alternatives. That makes the Thune bill unnecessary. The airlines now do not have to comply with the EU requirements for at least a year and a half. The Thune bill is counterproductive. It would respond to the European Union's conces-

sion by enacting a retaliatory measure, which will undermine rather than advance progress towards an agreement.

There are other serious problems with this bill. The bill directs the Secretary of Transportation, if he finds it in the public interest, to bar U.S. airlines from complying with the EU requirement to control carbon pollution. It also directs the Secretary to hold the U.S. airlines harmless from the requirements. If we bar the airlines from complying, they will incur steep penalties estimated at over \$20 billion by 2020. The Thune bill then says the government is going to have to hold the airlines harmless from this cost. That means that taxpayers may be on the hook for over \$20 billion, although the bill also limits the use of appropriated funds. Or the hold harmless provision would force the Secretary to use existing authority to require European airlines to pay the fees to compensate the U.S. airlines.

Rather than doing something constructive about global warming, we are going to ignite a trade war with the Europeans. We ought to be working with them in an international context to do something rather than punish them if they punish us and have the taxpayers pay the bill because the Europeans have waited 10 years for an international agreement and nothing has happened.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. RAHALL. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. WAXMAN. Even if you oppose the EU aviation requirements, the Thune bill makes no sense. It's unnecessary and it's counterproductive, as the European Union just agreed to delay the requirements targeted by the bill. It also risks taxpayer dollars, threatens to provoke an international trade war, and jeopardizes U.S. national security.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this unnecessary and misguided bill.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, might I just inquire as to how much time remains on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 6½ minutes remaining. There are 11½ minutes remaining on the other side.

Mr. MICA. I yield myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I have the greatest respect for Mr. WAXMAN and his leadership on many issues. Some of them we agree on—we're both art lovers and we both have great wives—but I have to disagree with him on a couple of points. First, I'd have to disagree with him on some of the climate statements that he made. I could spend the rest of the time debating that, but that's not what is before us.

What is before us is legislation that actually gives the administration and the Secretary of Transportation the authority and also the discretion to work on this issue. If you don't have the backing of Congress, how can he negotiate? He wouldn't have the au-

thority or the discretion to impose some difference with the European Union. You can't fold the United States' tent here.

The other point that was made by Mr. WAXMAN was that we aren't working with them. Well, we hosted them right here. We sat and talked to them. Then we went to Brussels. We sat and talked to them. Then we went to Montreal with the ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organization, which helped settle some of these matters and set the standards. When we left, they voted 26-36 to agree with the United States. So, in the international body, they were defeated.

This does impose a penalty and a tax on the United States. It's unfair. If it's within the European Union, that may be within their discretion to do it, but not from the point of departure in the United States into the European Union or, for that matter, from any sovereign nation. The money doesn't go to clean it up. I know Mr. WAXMAN loves the environment—so do I—but this money doesn't go for that purpose. It can be used for anything. It's not for engine technology; it's not for the restoration of the environment; and it doesn't stop emissions.

So this bill does represent a bipartisan, bicameral compromise, but it gives us the authority to hold their feet to the fire and get a solution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1730

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman I'm going to yield to now may be departing the Congress after this session; but we will still value his professionalism, his expertise, and certainly his friendship for the very near and distant future.

I'm happy to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO), the once chairman and now ranking member of our Aviation Subcommittee on Transportation.

Mr. COSTELLO. I thank the ranking member for yielding, and I thank him for his kind words and his friendship, as well.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 1956, a bill that will protect U.S. airlines, their employees, and passengers from an overreaching law of the European Union that unfairly charges U.S. airlines for emissions in U.S. airspace on flights between the United States and Europe. The Obama administration has taken a strong stance against the EU's emission trading scheme on the grounds it is inconsistent with international aviation law and practice. Additionally, airlines and labor groups also oppose it because it will impose an unjustified cost on the industry and destroy American jobs.

I'm pleased to note that just yesterday, as you heard already, the European leaders said that they would suspend application of the ETS to international flights for a year, pending a global agreement on international emissions at the U.N. International

Civil Aviation Organization, but that announcement in no way weakens the case for passing this bill. We must send a strong message to the EU that, regardless of whether ICAO delivers on a deal on the EU's timetable, the U.S. Government opposes the EU's unilateral local solution to a global problem.

This bill is similar to the bill that passed the House last year, a bill that I was pleased to cosponsor, along with Chairman MICA, Ranking Member RAHALL, Chairman PETRI, and 32 other Democratic and Republican Members. Similar to the House bill, this bill calls upon the Department of Transportation to prohibit U.S. airlines from participating in the emissions trading scheme. This bill further protects our national interest by ensuring that both airlines and U.S. taxpayers are held harmless from the emissions trading scheme.

I congratulate my friends Senator THUNE and Senator MCCASKILL for having championed this legislation in the other body. This bill sends a strong message from Congress that we do not support what the EU is doing for a variety of reasons.

As I noted last year in our Aviation Subcommittee hearing on the emissions trading scheme, and again on the House floor when the House passed its own bill, climate change is a global problem that requires a global solution. Working through ICAO, the United States is committed to finding a global solution to address aviation emissions based on consensus. I'm optimistic that the global agreement can, in fact, be reached.

More than 20 other international partners have joined the United States in producing strong declarations calling on the EU to come back to the table and to work on an international plan.

At the same time, we must recognize that our own government and airlines are doing the right thing to reduce harmful carbon emissions. The FAA and the airline industry are investing billions of dollars in the NextGen air traffic upgrades, and the FAA plans to reduce emissions by 2 percent through these improvements. Further, U.S. airlines improved fuel efficiency by approximately 110 percent since 1978. From 2000 to 2009, U.S. carriers reduced fuel burn and carbon emissions by 15 percent while carrying 7 percent more passengers. NextGen will help aircraft operators save money and, in fact, save more than 1.4 billion gallons of fuel, cutting the carbon emissions by nearly 14 million tons by 2018.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to support this legislation. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, we don't have any further speakers on our side, and I reserve the balance of my time to close.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

In conclusion, let me again reiterate the support that this legislation has

from the Air Line Pilots Association, the Airports Council International, the American Society of Travel Agents, the Transportation Trades Department, the AFL-CIO, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Travel Association, and the Independent Pilots Association, among many other groups that have sent a "dear colleague" to all of us.

To reiterate what I said in my opening comments, the European Union's ETS will do nothing to decrease aviation emissions. The solution to decreasing aviation emissions lies in an international agreement currently progressing through the International Civil Aviation Organization that is slated for consideration October 2013 at that body's triennial assembly.

With that, I urge my colleagues to support the pending legislation and commend Chairman MICA and Subcommittee Chairman PETRI and our Ranking Member COSTELLO for all of the hard work that they have put into this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MICA. I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, again I'd urge my colleagues to pass S. 1956.

This does represent an honest effort to find a solution to deal with global emissions. They are a problem. We have tried to work with our European Union counterparts. Again, we've had meetings nonstop. When some of this issue began, we went there and talked. We took it to the international body of ICAO. They voted 26-36 to side with the United States' position; but sometimes in this business, you have to bring things to a head.

We passed this legislation a year ago with bipartisan support—Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. RAHALL, our side of the aisle. It was a little bit tougher measure than what has come from the Senate. The Senate did give discretion to the DOT Secretary and the administration so that they had both the authority and also the discretion to act.

I don't think yesterday that the European Union would have deferred to ICAO for a year if we hadn't pressed this; but we do need to bring folks together of goodwill, find a solution, something that is fair. And if we do want to clean up the environment and we want to have people pay a penalty for polluting, then we should ensure that that money goes back into cleaning up the pollution or at least developing the technology or offsetting the damage that's being done. The current scheme—and it is a scheme, which I have a definition of "scheme" here. A scheme is a systematic plan of action, a secret, or devious plan, a plot. That's not what we need to do here. We do need to work together, find a solution that's fair for sovereign nations and also accomplishes the laudable goal that we all set out to do.

I'm glad I helped force the issue. I appreciate my colleagues joining in this effort, and I think this is a reasonable

bipartisan, bicameral solution that will accomplish the goal we set out.

Again, I ask my colleagues to vote in support of S. 1956, and I'm pleased to yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WHITFIELD). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1956.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STREAMLINING CLAIMS PROCESSING FOR FEDERAL CONTRACTOR EMPLOYEES ACT

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6371) to amend title 40, United States Code, to transfer certain functions from the General Accountability Office to the Department of Labor relating to the processing of claims for the payment of workers who were not paid appropriate wages under certain provisions of such title.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6371

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 "Streamlining Claims Processing for Federal Contractor Employees Act".

SEC. 2. TRANSFER OF ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.

(a) AUTHORITY OF COMPTROLLER GENERAL TO PAY WAGES AND LIST CONTRACTORS VIOLATING CONTRACTS.—Section 3144 of title 40, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking "of Comptroller General"; and

(2) in subsection (a)(1), by striking "Comptroller General" and inserting "Secretary of Labor".

(b) REPORT OF VIOLATIONS AND WITHHOLDING OF AMOUNTS FOR UNPAID CONTRACTS AND LIQUIDATED DAMAGES.—Section 3703(b)(3) of title 40, United States Code, is amended by striking "Comptroller General" both places it appears and inserting "Secretary of Labor".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

□ 1740

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 6371.

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

There was no objection.

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