

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.

The bill before us will take a small yet important step toward greater efficiency in Federal construction contracting. For more than 80 years, Federal contractors have been required to pay workers the locally prevailing wage. Additionally, since 1961, those same workers have been entitled to one and a half times their basic rate of pay for every hour worked that exceeds 40 hours per week.

While the Department of Labor is obligated to enforce these laws, the Government Accountability Office has long been responsible for processing claims of workers being denied their appropriate wages. If a Labor Department investigation determines a contractor has not been paid the appropriate wage, the names of affected employees are sent to the GAO by the department. The GAO then ensures underpaid workers receive the compensation they are due. The GAO's responsibility in this process is purely administrative. The GAO makes no determination on the merit of each claim nor does it have the authority to question the judgment of the Labor Department. In fact, the GAO doesn't even directly deliver to workers their lost wages. Instead, that responsibility is vested with the Department of Treasury.

While claims processing was once routine business for the GAO, this authority has increasingly transitioned to the executive agencies charged with enforcing the law, such as the Department of Defense involving matters of military pay. Additionally, personnel changes within the GAO are making it more difficult for the agency to meet this responsibility. Key staff members have retired and more are expected to do so at any time. The GAO should not have to undertake this administrative burden any longer.

H.R. 6371 will transfer this payment authority from the GAO to the Department of Labor, thereby reducing unnecessary bureaucracy and ensuring workers receive their compensation in a timely manner. By reforming the claims process, we can remove redundancies and promote greater efficiency within the Federal Government. I urge my colleagues to support the Streamlining Claims Processing for Federal Contractor Employees Act.

Before I conclude, I would like to take a moment to recognize a distinguished colleague who will soon be enjoying a well-deserved retirement. I wish she were with us this evening, but travel arrangements don't always work out as planned. Since 1993, Representative LYNN WOOLSEY has proudly represented the people of California's Sixth Congressional District. Her personal story has informed her work in public office, as well as inspired many of her colleagues on Capitol Hill, myself included.

I have had the opportunity over the last 2 years to work closely with Representative WOOLSEY on the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections and witness firsthand her passion for

public service. While we may differ on a range of issues, no one can question her strong commitment to working families. I wish Representative WOOLSEY and her family all the best in the years ahead, and may they be long and filled with good health.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First, Mr. Speaker, I would like to associate myself with the kind remarks about the gentlelady from California. She has had an excellent career in Congress, and has elected not to return. We will certainly miss her and her advocacy for those most in need.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the pending legislation. H.R. 6371, the Streamlining Claims Processing for Federal Contractor Employees Act, will transfer certain responsibilities for overseeing and administering the Davis-Bacon Act from the Government Accountability Office to the Department of Labor.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the gentleman from Michigan that this is a sensible and technical fix since the Department of Labor is responsible for many aspects of enforcing prevailing wage law. This change will allow for greater efficiency in the Davis-Bacon prevailing wage protections and will help ensure that workers receive unpaid wages as quickly as possible.

The gentleman from Michigan has pointed out that we should always promote streamlined and efficient government. That's why I'm particularly disappointed that this bill does not also transfer GAO's debarment authority under the Davis-Bacon Act. Moving that additional function would place more enforcement functions under one roof.

Mr. Speaker, I support Davis-Bacon because it provides protections to contractors and subcontractors working on federally funded contracts. The most obvious protection is that it requires all contractors and subcontractors to pay the prevailing wage, denying unfair competition to those contractors who underpay their employees. Davis-Bacon protections prevent government spending from driving down living standards. Improved productivity on projects with prevailing wage application offsets higher wages. Furthermore, better-skilled workers attracted by the higher wages are likely to complete the jobs more efficiently and with higher-quality work. Studies have shown that construction workers in prevailing wage States produce 13 to 15 percent more value added from their work compared to workers in States without prevailing wage laws.

Now I recognized that everyone does not agree with the underlying principles of the Davis-Bacon Act. However, regardless of one's position on the underlying law, we can all agree that the law ought to be administered as efficiently as possible. That's why I rise in support of H.R. 6371, and thank the

gentleman from Michigan for introducing the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The American people expect us to do all we can to promote better efficiency within the Federal Government. Washington allocates hundreds of billions of dollars each year on construction projects, affecting the lives of workers and employers across the country. We should never allow unnecessary bureaucracy to squander taxpayer resources or stand between workers and the wages they have earned. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6371, the Streamlining Claims Processing for Federal Contractor Employees Act.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6371.

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. WALBERG. 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.

SPACE LAUNCH LIABILITY PROVISIONS EXTENSION

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6586) to extend the application of certain space launch liability provisions through 2014.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6586

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION.

Section 50915(f) of title 51, United States Code, is amended by striking "December 31, 2012" and inserting "December 31, 2014".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. PALAZZO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi.

□ 1750

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 6586, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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