

Through its stewardship, the Subcommittee on Government Organization, Efficiency and Financial Management has conducted a series of hearings on the problems of improper payments, and this legislation is the result of our findings on those hearings.

I also want to thank the staff who worked very hard on H.R. 4053. Of course, it is a proud accomplishment when you listen to the stories of people who are in the military and when you hear how they go months and months without their families getting paid, that they are transferred from one base to another and, as a result, the families do not get paid because they're saying they cannot locate where they are. Of course, many times when soldiers are transferred from one base to another, you'll find that they are not able to get paid. I think that that's something that we should abort because here they are defending this country in a magnificent way, and we cannot find a way to get them paid. This legislation points out how important it is to be able to get them paid.

On that note, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE), who is very interested in this and who has expressed over and over again how important it is to make certain that our military people are paid and are paid on time.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I thank the gentleman, my good friend from New York.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act, a bill that will help the Federal Government better protect taxpayer dollars against waste, fraud, and abuse.

According to the Government Accountability Office, as my friend from Utah just said, the Federal Government made \$108 billion in improper payments during fiscal year 2012 alone, which is unacceptable. This bill will increase transparency while eliminating and recovering these improper payments through the creation of a government-wide do-not-pay list. This list will prevent improper payments, such as Social Security checks for deceased Americans, before that payment ever goes out.

The national deficit remains one of the biggest challenges facing this country, and I am proud to cosponsor this bill because it protects taxpayer dollars by forcing the Federal Government to scrutinize every dollar spent—just like every American family does. I urge my colleagues to support its passage.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, but I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, in closing, first let me just thank and commend my colleague Mr. TOWNS. This very well might be the final bill that he will introduce and that will pass this body. He is a good and decent

gentleman. When I came here 4 years ago as a freshman, he was one of the most gracious and great people to work with. He was the chairman of our committee. I was a fresh newbie there; yet he helped me in every way while showing a great deal of respect across the aisle.

I congratulate him on an amazing experience here in the Congress. This is another example of a good bill that this gentleman is putting forward. I wish him nothing but the best with the rest of his career and life and everything else. We need more good people like Mr. TOWNS participating in this Congress. So I congratulate him on this bill, urge the passage of this bill, and thank him for his great work.

Mr. TOWNS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. CHAFFETZ. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. TOWNS. Let me just say, too, that you're right, this is probably my final bill, and it has been great serving here in this Congress for 30 years. You've taught me a lot, too, and let me just tell you the latest thing that you taught me.

We were having a hearing with all of these professional football players in terms of how they performed on the field and regarding enhancement drugs and all of that. When they turned to you—because we were saying that you were the only football player on the committee—you said that you were not a football player but that you were a kicker. I thought that that was a very interesting comment because I'd just assumed all of these years that you were a football player since you set all those records.

I want to thank you so much for your kind words. It has been a delight to work with you as well.

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Mr. CHAFFETZ. Reclaiming my time, again I commend the gentleman for this bill and his great career, and I urge passage of this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4053, 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. TOWNS. 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.

GAO MANDATES REVISION ACT OF 2012

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3315) to repeal or modify certain

mandates of the Government Accountability Office.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3315

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 “GAO Mandates Revision Act of 2012”.

SEC. 2. REPEALS AND MODIFICATIONS.

(a) CAPITOL PRESERVATION FUND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.—Section 804 of the Arizona-Idaho Conservation Act of 1988 (2 U.S.C. 2084) is amended by striking “annual audits of the transactions of the Commission” and inserting “periodic audits of the transactions of the Commission, which shall be conducted at least once every 3 years, unless the Chairman or the Ranking Member of the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate or the Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives, the Secretary of the Senate, or the Clerk of the House of Representatives requests that an audit be conducted at an earlier date.”.

(b) JUDICIAL SURVIVORS' ANNUITIES FUND AUDIT BY GAO.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 376 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking subsection (w); and
(B) by redesignating subsections (x) and (y) as subsections (w) and (x), respectively.

(2) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 376(h)(2) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking “subsection (x)” and inserting “subsection (w)”.

(c) ONDCP ANNUAL REPORT REQUIREMENT.—Section 203 of the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 2006 (21 U.S.C. 1708a) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking “of each year” and inserting “, 2013, and every 3 years thereafter,”; and

(2) in subsection (b), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “at a frequency of not less than once per year—” and inserting “not later than December 31, 2013, and every 3 years thereafter—”.

(d) USERRA GAO REPORT.—Section 105(g)(1) of the Veterans' Benefits Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-275; 38 U.S.C. 4301 note) is amended by striking “, and annually thereafter during the period when the demonstration project is conducted.”.

(e) SEMIPOSTAL PROGRAM REPORTS BY THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE.—Section 2 of the Semipostal Authorization Act (Public Law 106-253; 114 Stat. 636; 39 U.S.C. 416 note) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (c); and
(2) by redesignating subsections (d) and (e) as subsections (c) and (d), respectively.

(f) EARNED IMPORT ALLOWANCE PROGRAM REVIEW BY GAO.—Section 231A(b)(4) of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (19 U.S.C. 2703a(b)(4)) is amended—

(1) by striking subparagraph (C); and
(2) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (C).

(g) AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION'S FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND AUDITS.—Section 2103(h) of title 36, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “of paragraph (2) of this subsection” and inserting “of section 3515 of title 31”;
(2) in paragraph (1), by striking “(1)”; and
(3) by striking paragraph (2).

(h) SENATE PRESERVATION FUND AUDITS.—Section 3(c)(6) of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2004 (2 U.S.C. 2108(c)(6)) is amended by striking “annual audits of the Senate Preservation Fund” and inserting “periodic audits of the Senate Preservation

Fund, which shall be conducted at least once every 3 years, unless the Chairman or the Ranking Member of the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate or the Secretary of the Senate requests that an audit be conducted at an earlier date.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Government Accountability Office is a great aide to the United States Congress. They help by auditing and examining government programs and reporting its findings to Congress. They serve a valuable position in the work that we do.

The GAO is responsible for 102 recurring annual statutory mandates and receives over 700 additional requests each year. It's quite a demand on the resources that we've given them.

This bill eliminates or decreases the recurrence of several GAO reports and auditing requirements for eight Federal programs or commissions. In recent years, we've been asking GAO to do more with less, as we should; but GAO will become more efficient by reducing obligations that once served an important purpose but now needlessly consume its limited resources. Eliminating these mandates will also allow GAO to more quickly respond to Congressional requests for assistance. GAO handpicked these reports as overly burdensome with modest benefits, and the related committees of jurisdiction concur.

Senator CARPER introduced Senate bill S. 3315, the GAO Mandates Revision Act, in June of this year, and the measure passed the United States Senate by unanimous consent in September. We urge all of our colleagues to support this measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of the bill before us today. S. 3315 amends certain statutes which require the Government Accountability Office to submit annual audits or reports to Congress. While the annual reporting requirements previously mandated are no longer necessary, this bill will require GAO to report its findings to Congress on issues covered by the reports every 3 years. This requirement will provide GAO

with a more streamlined approach in reporting to Congress and will reduce the unnecessary costs and time spent to conduct annual audits or reports on these particular issues.

It is important to know that all the committees affected by this legislation have been consulted and have agreed to these changes. At a time when constituents are rightly demanding a more efficient government, now is the time to enact this legislation.

I thank the majority for bringing this bill to the floor and the Senate for passing the underlying measure. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I have no speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, we urge passage of S. 3315 introduced by Senator CARPER. It is a good, common-sense piece of legislation. The committees of jurisdiction concur. It is bipartisan in its approach. We urge its passage.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3315.

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.

D.C. COURTS AND PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICE ACT OF 2011

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1379) to amend title 11, District of Columbia Official Code, to revise certain administrative authorities of the District of Columbia courts, and to authorize the District of Columbia Public Defender Service to provide professional liability insurance for officers and employees of the Service for claims relating to services furnished within the scope of employment with the Service.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1379

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 “D.C. Courts and Public Defender Service Act of 2011”.

SEC. 2. AUTHORITIES OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS.

(a) PERMITTING JUDICIAL CONFERENCE ON BIENNIAL BASIS; ATTENDANCE OF MAGISTRATE JUDGES.—Section 11-744, District of Columbia Official Code, is amended—

(1) in the first sentence, by striking “annually” and inserting “biennially or annually”;
(2) in the first sentence, by striking “active judges” and inserting “active judges and magistrate judges”;

(3) in the third sentence, by striking “Every judge” and inserting “Every judge and magistrate judge”; and

(4) in the third sentence, by striking “Courts of Appeals” and inserting “Court of Appeals”.

(b) EMERGENCY AUTHORITY TO TOLL OR DELAY JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS.—

(1) PROCEEDINGS IN SUPERIOR COURT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of Chapter 9 of title 11, District of Columbia Official Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 11-947. Emergency authority to toll or delay proceedings.

“(a) TOLLING OR DELAYING PROCEEDINGS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In the event of a natural disaster or other emergency situation requiring the closure of Superior Court or rendering it impracticable for the United States or District of Columbia Government or a class of litigants to comply with deadlines imposed by any Federal or District of Columbia law or rule that applies in the Superior Court, the chief judge of the Superior Court may exercise emergency authority in accordance with this section.

“(2) SCOPE OF AUTHORITY.—(A) The chief judge may enter such order or orders as may be appropriate to delay, toll, or otherwise grant relief from the time deadlines imposed by otherwise applicable laws or rules for such period as may be appropriate for any class of cases pending or thereafter filed in the Superior Court.

“(B) The authority conferred by this section extends to all laws and rules affecting criminal and juvenile proceedings (including, pre-arrest, post-arrest, pretrial, trial, and post-trial procedures) and civil, family, domestic violence, probate and tax proceedings.

“(3) UNAVAILABILITY OF CHIEF JUDGE.—If the chief judge of the Superior Court is absent or disabled, the authority conferred by this section may be exercised by the judge designated under section 11-907(a) or by the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration.

“(4) HABEAS CORPUS UNAFFECTED.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.

“(b) CRIMINAL CASES.—In exercising the authority under this section for criminal cases, the chief judge shall consider the ability of the United States or District of Columbia Government to investigate, litigate, and process defendants during and after the emergency situation, as well as the ability of criminal defendants as a class to prepare their defenses.

“(c) ISSUANCE OF ORDERS.—The United States Attorney for the District of Columbia or the Attorney General for the District of Columbia or the designee of either may request issuance of an order under this section, or the chief judge may act on his or her own motion.

“(d) DURATION OF ORDERS.—An order entered under this section may not toll or extend a time deadline for a period of more than 14 days, except that if the chief judge determines that an emergency situation requires additional extensions of the period during which deadlines are tolled or extended, the chief judge may, with the consent of the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration, enter additional orders under this section in order to further toll or extend such time deadline.

“(e) NOTICE.—Upon issuing an order under this section, the chief judge—

“(1) shall make all reasonable efforts to publicize the order, including, when possible, announcing the order on the District of Columbia Courts Web site; and

“(2) shall send notice of the order, including the reasons for the issuance of the order, to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives.