

and House Republicans have been saying for years: ObamaCare is destroying and will destroy 2.5 million jobs. 2.5 million fewer Americans will be out of work due to the President's health care takeover.

Our economy cannot truly recover unless ObamaCare is repealed. The President's Big Government policies are destroying jobs. House Republicans have solutions that will put Americans back to work. We understand the status quo should be job growth to help our middle class families achieve opportunity.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

THIRD YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF BAHRAIN PROTESTS

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the third anniversary of the peaceful uprising in Bahrain. Three years after mass protests filled the streets, the Bahraini Government's promises of reform remain unfulfilled. Systematic human rights abuses, restrictions on freedom of expression, and arbitrary detention continue unabated.

Nabeel Rajab, a prisoner of conscience whom I have adopted as part of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission's Defending Freedoms project, is one of thousands who have been detained or tortured for peacefully calling for reforms. Prisoners like Nabeel are denied access to medical treatment, and many are prevented from speaking about their abuse, even to their families and lawyers.

Because Bahrain is our ally and home to the 5th Fleet, the U.S. has the responsibility to ensure that the Bahraini Government adheres to its human rights commitments and enacts meaningful reforms. These should include releasing political prisoners and ensuring accountability for torture. Absent such steps, the U.S. must consider contingency planning for the relocation of the fleet.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 5:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1730

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BLACK) at 5 o'clock and 30 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.

NATIONAL INTEGRATED DROUGHT INFORMATION SYSTEM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2013

Mr. HALL. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2431) to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2431

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act of 2013".

SEC. 2. NIDIS PROGRAM AMENDMENTS.

Section 3 of the National Integrated Drought Information System Act of 2006 (15 U.S.C. 313d) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting before the period at the end the following: "to better inform and provide for more timely decision-making to reduce drought related impacts and costs";

(2) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

"(b) SYSTEM FUNCTIONS.—The National Integrated Drought Information System shall—

"(1) provide an effective drought early warning system that—

"(A) collects and integrates information on the key indicators of drought and drought impacts in order to make usable, reliable, and timely forecasts of drought, including assessments of the severity of drought conditions and impacts; and

"(B) provides such information, forecasts, and assessments on both national and regional levels;

"(2) communicate drought forecasts, drought conditions, and drought impacts on an ongoing basis to public and private entities engaged in drought planning and preparedness, including—

"(A) decisionmakers at the Federal, regional, State, tribal, and local levels of government;

"(B) the private sector; and

"(C) the public;

"(3) provide timely data, information, and products that reflect local, regional, and State differences in drought conditions;

"(4) coordinate, and integrate as practicable, Federal research and monitoring in support of a drought early warning system;

"(5) build upon existing forecasting and assessment programs and partnerships, including through the designation of one or more cooperative institutes to assist with National Integrated Drought Information System functions; and

"(6) continue ongoing research and monitoring activities related to drought, including research activities relating to length, severity, and impacts of drought and the role of extreme weather events and climate variability in drought."; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(e) REPORT.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of the National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act of 2013, the Under Secretary shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report that contains—

"(A) an analysis of the implementation of the National Integrated Drought Information System program, including how the information, forecasts, and assessments are utilized in drought policy planning and response activities;

"(B) specific plans for continued development of such program, including future milestones; and

"(C) an identification of research, monitoring, and forecasting needs to enhance the predictive capability of drought early warnings that include—

"(i) the length and severity of droughts;

"(ii) the contribution of weather events to reducing the severity or ending drought conditions; and

"(iii) regionally specific drought impacts.

"(2) CONSULTATION.—In developing the report under paragraph (1), the Under Secretary shall consult with relevant Federal, regional, State, tribal, and local government agencies, research institutions, and the private sector."

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 4 of such Act (15 U.S.C. 313d note) is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

"There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act \$13,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2018."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HALL. Madam 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. 2431, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HALL. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2431, a bill to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System.

I want to thank Chairman SMITH for his good work in bringing this bill to the House floor and for his bipartisan support. I also want to thank the gentleman and Representative BEN LUJÁN of New Mexico for joining me as an original sponsor. In 1998, Congress passed the National Drought Policy Act, establishing a Commission to provide recommendations on Federal drought policies.

The concept of creating a national drought monitoring and information system was proposed by the Commission in its 2000 report and promoted by various stakeholders, including the Western Governors' Association and in the 2004 report, "Creating a Drought Early Warning System for the 21st Century."

I was pleased to become involved in this effort with former Congressman and now-Senator MARK UDALL and to introduce the NIDIS Act of 2006, which Congress passed and became public law.

NIDIS is administered within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. NIDIS established the U.S. Drought Portal, which has become a very valuable resource for decision-makers at the Federal, State, and local levels, and for farmers, businessmen, and individuals.

This Web site provides current data for weather observations, early warnings about droughts, and support services for managing droughts. The Web site includes the U.S. Drought Monitor map, another valuable feature that is updated weekly. For example, according to the most recent Drought Monitor map, about 21 percent of the U.S. is experiencing severe to exceptional drought conditions. More than 56 percent of the country has abnormally dry to exceptional drought conditions.

Madam Speaker, NIDIS is an example of a program that is working effectively and that has broad support. Rather than creating a new government bureaucracy, NIDIS represents a collaborative framework between Federal, states, and academic partners.

The NIDIS reauthorization will improve interagency coordination, early warnings, critical data sharing, and decision services related to drought. The bill encourages further research, monitoring, and forecasting, along with further development of regional early warning systems.

Madam Speaker, reauthorizing NIDIS will strengthen this important program and will help our State, it will help the local, and it will help the Federal officials, farmers, and water managers better prepare for and respond to drought.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2431, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 2431, the National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act of 2013. This vital program, known as NIDIS, was originated by my friend and former committee chair, Mr. RALPH HALL, in 2006. The program provides critical drought information to communities all across our Nation.

Over the past three decades, it is estimated that droughts have cost our country hundreds of billions of dollars in economic impacts. Loss estimates from the 2012 drought alone run upwards of \$70 billion. Moreover, the effects of climate change are anticipated to exacerbate this problem in many parts of the country, including my home State of Texas.

Right now, California is experiencing its driest period in recorded history. Sixty-seven percent of the State of California is experiencing extreme or

exceptional drought conditions. We all know that farmers and ranchers bear the brunt of these dry conditions. That hits the pocketbooks of every American as food prices do go up, but the damage is not limited to agriculture.

For instance, in the West, conditions are again ripe for extreme wildfires that scarred more than 9 million acres last year, putting homes and properties in jeopardy.

Tourism is suffering as water levels in lakes and rivers plummet and snow packs languish, leaving boats on dry land and skis in the attic. Communities are imposing water restrictions, and power plants and grid operators are taking a serious look at the emergency plans should water for cooling towers and hydroelectric dams fall short.

If you look at the top five most expensive disasters in the United States since 1980, three of those are due to drought. The NIDIS program is intended to help alleviate some of the economic impacts of drought.

Notably, one of the program's goals is to improve drought early warning. Advanced warning of impending droughts would allow States, localities, and farmers to better plan their activities so that the economic costs associated with droughts could be reduced or mitigated.

In light of the scope of the economic impacts of drought, and the potential of the NIDIS program to lessen these impacts, I remain concerned about the authorization levels in H.R. 2431. My Democratic colleagues and I tried to modestly increase the authorization levels during committee consideration of the bill, but we were not successful.

Every witness who has ever testified or spoken to our committee about this program has highlighted the need to improve the program's early warning capability. This isn't a goal that can be accomplished for free. It will take a sustained investment of additional funds to achieve results we desperately need.

While I wish the authorization numbers in the bill before us today were higher, they are much better than the numbers in the Senate bill, which locks the program into a funding cap that is below current spending for the next 5 years.

When the Federal Government is spending tens of billions of dollars per year to mitigate the effects of drought, I think it makes sense to spend a couple million extra dollars to try to reduce those massive costs to our taxpayers in our communities. It is pretty clear that in this instance an ounce of prevention will get us a pound of cure.

In spite of these concerns, however, I support H.R. 2431 and the reauthorization of NIDIS, a program which provides crucial information to help our farmers and communities prepare for and mitigate the impacts of drought.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1745

Mr. HALL. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the

gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the full committee.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the former chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee for yielding me time.

H.R. 2431, the National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act of 2013, makes minor improvements to the NIDIS program and helps establish better drought forecasting and coordination.

I am glad that the Science, Space, and Technology Committee's chairman emeritus, Congressman RALPH HALL of Texas, is the lead sponsor of this bill and the original author of the NIDIS authorization in 2006. I thank the gentleman for his persistent leadership over the years on this issue.

Recent droughts in Texas and around the country have been severe. The NIDIS program has helped State and local governments, farmers, ranchers, and others both monitor and predict drought conditions.

More than one-third of the United States is currently experiencing moderate to severe drought conditions. By some estimates, the historic drought in 2012 cost our national economy as much as \$70 billion.

NIDIS is a good program that has a history of bipartisan support. It represents the kind of interagency and intergovernmental cooperation that we need to reauthorize in this difficult fiscal environment.

As a success story, the NIDIS program currently operates the U.S. Drought Portal, a Web site that features a range of services related to drought. This includes historical data on past droughts, current data from climate observations, early warnings about emerging and potential droughts, decision support services for managing droughts, and a forum for stakeholders to discuss drought-related issues.

These services have been vital to our efforts to better forecast as well as understand the conditions that lead to drought. This bill reauthorizes an important program that provides early warnings about potential droughts. It also supports services for local and State decisionmakers to better manage and prepare for drought conditions.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT).

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Texas, though at this moment I feel like I am surrounded by Texans in this particular discussion.

I am from Arizona. I am actually from the desert part of Arizona in the desert Southwest. So why is a bill such as H.R. 2431 so important to us?

The data collection and the management of the data models for those of us

who are in an arid region of the country is really, really important to us. We have come so far in the last couple of decades. The ability for my water management authorities in our reservoirs to know what is happening in the snowpacks all the way up into Colorado and on this side of the Continental Divide and learning whether we are moving into a “La Nina” or “El Nino” year—which actually makes huge differences to the expected rainfall, particularly in the winter months, in the desert Southwest—is important to us because we are getting better and better at forecasting even a year out in our expectations.

And so I have great appreciation for the gentlewoman from Texas, the chairman emeritus, and the other chairman from Texas, one more time—remember, as Texans, you are easterners to those of us in Arizona—because this bill is appreciated.

I know there is always a discussion about funding. But one of my great interests in this is the continued movement of the data-sharing as our universities across the country, particularly in the Southwest, build better and better and healthier and more robust models and the ability for that data to help States like mine manage our water resources into the future.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I would simply urge support for H.R. 2431, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2431, 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. HALL. Madam 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 motion will be postponed.

SUPPORTING THE DEMOCRATIC AND EUROPEAN ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF UKRAINE

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 447) supporting the democratic and European aspirations of the people of Ukraine, and their right to choose their own future free of intimidation and fear, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 447

Whereas a democratic, prosperous, and independent Ukraine is in the national interest of the United States;

Whereas the Government of Ukraine has declared integration with Europe a national

priority and has made significant progress toward meeting the requirements for an Association Agreement;

Whereas on November 21, 2013, following several months of intense outside pressure, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich abruptly suspended negotiations on the Association Agreement one week before it was due to be signed at the European Union's Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania;

Whereas this reversal of stated government policy precipitated demonstrations by hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens in Kyiv as well as in cities throughout the country;

Whereas the demonstrators have been overwhelmingly peaceful and have sought to exercise their constitutional rights to freely assemble and express their opposition to President Yanukovich's decision;

Whereas the demonstrators have consistently expressed their support for democracy, human rights, greater government accountability, and the rule of law, as well as for closer relations with Europe;

Whereas on November 30, 2013, police violently dispersed peaceful demonstrators in Kyiv's Independence Square, resulting in many injuries and the arrest of several dozen individuals;

Whereas on December 11, 2013, police raided 3 opposition media outlets and the headquarters of an opposition party;

Whereas on December 11, 2013, despite President Yanukovich's statement the previous day that he would engage in talks with the opposition, police attempted to forcibly evict peaceful protesters from central locations in Kyiv;

Whereas several journalists, including from Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and civic activists supporting the demonstrators have been brutally attacked;

Whereas on January 16, 2014, the Ukrainian parliament passed, and President Yanukovich signed, legislation which severely limits the right of peaceful protest, constrains freedom of speech and the independent media, and unduly restricts civil society organizations;

Whereas the passage of these undemocratic measures and President Yanukovich's refusal to engage in substantive dialogue with opposition leaders precipitated several days of violence and resulted in several deaths and hundreds of injuries, as well as numerous allegations of police brutality; and

Whereas in the face of spreading demonstrations, Ukrainian Government representatives and opposition leaders have entered into negotiations which on January 28, 2014, resulted in the resignation of the Prime Minister and his cabinet and the repeal of most of the anti-democratic laws from January 16, 2014: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) greatly values the warm and close relationship the United States has established with Ukraine since that country regained its independence in 1991;

(2) supports the democratic and European aspirations of the people of Ukraine, and their right to choose their own future free of intimidation and fear;

(3) calls on the United States and the European Union to continue to work together to support a peaceful resolution to the crisis, and to continue to support the desire of millions of Ukrainian citizens for democracy, human rights, government accountability, and the rule of law, and closer relations with Europe;

(4) urges the Government of Ukraine, Ukrainian opposition parties, and all protesters to exercise the utmost restraint and avoid confrontation, and calls on the Gov-

ernment of Ukraine to live up to its international obligations and respect and uphold the democratic rights of its citizens, including the freedom of assembly and expression, as well as the freedom of the press;

(5) condemns all acts of violence and calls on the Government of Ukraine to bring to justice those responsible for violence and brutality against peaceful protesters, and to release and drop any criminal charges against those detained for peacefully exercising their democratic rights;

(6) welcomes the repeal by the Ukrainian parliament of most of the anti-democratic measures adopted on January 16, 2014, and urges President Yanukovich to continue to engage in substantive talks with opposition leaders to address the legitimate grievances of the opposition, and to take additional steps to de-escalate tensions;

(7) urges the United States and the European Union to continue to make clear to Ukraine's leaders that those who authorize or engage in violence against peaceful protesters will be held personally accountable;

(8) supports the measures taken by the Department of State to revoke the visas of several Ukrainians linked to the violence, and encourages the Administration to consider additional targeted sanctions against those who authorize or engage in the use of force; and

(9) urges all parties to engage in constructive, sustained dialogue in order to find a peaceful solution to Ukraine's current political and economic crisis.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and introduce extraneous materials on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to thank my good friend and distinguished colleague, the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, ELIOT ENGEL, for introducing this bipartisan resolution supporting the democratic aspirations of the Ukrainian people.

It is a timely appeal to the Government of Ukraine to stand down and to avoid all further violence, to exercise the utmost restraint and avoid confrontation. It calls on the government to bring to justice those responsible for violence against peaceful protesters and to release and drop any criminal charges against those detained for peacefully exercising their democratic rights.

At this point, the government's crackdown has led to the deaths of at least four protesters—perhaps more—and throughout Ukraine to numerous beatings, arrests, detentions, abductions—including some from hospitals—