

Mr. LATHAM. Objection.

The CHAIR. Objection is heard.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Chair, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentlewoman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Chair, if I had an opportunity to offer my amendment today, an amendment that passed with the support of both parties in last year's T-HUD appropriations bill, I would raise the fact that the Department of Housing and Urban Development, in many communities across the country, has taken a step back from their mission.

They have a very important mission when it comes to homelessness among veterans, ensuring affordable housing partnerships, and combating the foreclosure crisis.

Still, last year, we were disserved by the leadership at the Department when they closed a number of field offices all across the country, including the field office in the Tampa Bay area, that I represent, and in the Orlando area.

Now, Florida has a population of almost 20 million people. We have 1.5 million veterans, and it is estimated that about 8,000 of them are homeless. We have 47,000 people in Florida that are battling homelessness, and our foreclosure rate is still too high. Nearly 9 percent of all Florida homes with mortgages are in some state of foreclosure.

So it was very disturbing last year when HUD pulled back on the ground, closed community offices in Tampa and Orlando. In fact, they shut down 16 field offices. The problem was that they didn't consult Congress, as they were supposed to. They came, they talked with us, but they didn't really allow us any adequate input.

I encourage the leaders, like the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. PASTOR), who has been on this issue, to continue this dialogue with the Department and the U.S. Senate in conference.

My amendment would have cut the executive office budget of HUD here in Washington, D.C., by \$3.5 million and, instead, devoted those funds back to our local communities to fight homelessness among veterans, foreclosures, and the other challenges we face.

The shift of these dollars out of D.C. to our local communities would have sent a very strong message. You know, those fields offices, especially the one I had in the Tampa Bay area, was a critical access point for my neighbors and for many of the community's non-profits.

We are being hurt by their decision, and all my amendment would have done—and I hope this dialogue will continue—is ensure that the Department remains focused on backing up what they said that they would do to ensure that our local communities would not be hurt by taking away people on the ground that interact on an everyday basis with the people we represent.

So at this time, I want to thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. PASTOR)

for his involvement in this issue and urge everyone involved in the negotiations to emphasize the importance of having HUD focused on their mission on the ground in our neighborhoods, in our cities and towns and not on the bureaucracy here in Washington, D.C.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent that we go back to page 70 for the purpose of offering an amendment.

The CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

Mr. LATHAM. There is an objection.

The CHAIR. Objection is heard.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from North Carolina is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Chairman, if I would have been able to offer my amendment today, it would have clarified an existing Federal highway priority corridor between Raleigh, North Carolina, and Norfolk, Virginia.

It would have also codified the corridor as a future interstate highway. This designation, Mr. Chairman, could eventually improve transportation and commerce and economic development in North Carolina and Virginia.

Eastern North Carolina, Mr. Chairman, remains one of the poorest areas in the country, despite the economic resurgence many other areas of the country have seen. My amendment, if it had been made in order, would enable future construction between Raleigh and Norfolk to build on an existing corridor where half of the route already meets Federal freeway standards.

Improving on existing infrastructure can save taxpayer money and help expedite the project's completion.

Mr. Chairman, I urge colleagues in future debates to consider this request.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BROWN of Georgia) having assumed the chair, Mr. HOLDING, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4745) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

□ 1600

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to sus-

pend 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.

URGING AFGHANISTAN TO PURSUE A TRANSPARENT, CREDIBLE, AND INCLUSIVE RUN-OFF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 600) urging the Government of Afghanistan, following a successful first round of the presidential election on April 5, 2014, to pursue a transparent, credible, and inclusive run-off presidential election on June 14, 2014, while ensuring the safety of voters, candidates, poll workers, and election observers.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 600

Whereas on April 5, 2014, the Government of Afghanistan held the first round of the presidential election in which voter participation was 60 percent;

Whereas on May 15, 2014, Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission (IEC) certified the results, and announced that a run-off election would be held on June 14, 2014, because no candidate received more than 50 percent of the votes;

Whereas on May 14, 2014, the IEC invalidated votes from 331 polling stations and removed them from the final tabulation, based on Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) decisions;

Whereas there have been widespread reports of voter and election monitor intimidation, including the killing of members of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) during an attack at the Serena Hotel in Kabul on March 20, 2014, as well as attempts to bribe members of the IEC, the ECC, and other election monitoring organizations;

Whereas investigations by the ECC, and its coordination with the IEC, have not been conducted in a transparent manner;

Whereas 17 members of the Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF) were killed in Taliban and insurgent attacks while supporting the April 5, 2014, elections;

Whereas the United States and Afghanistan signed the Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement to strengthen Afghan sovereignty, stability, and prosperity, while emphasizing a shared goal to defeat al-Qaeda and its terrorist affiliates;

Whereas United States and coalition armed forces have greatly contributed to the stability and security of Afghanistan at a considerable personal sacrifice; and

Whereas the United States has contributed more than \$100,000,000 toward the 2014 Afghan presidential election: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends the Government of Afghanistan for holding a successful first round of the presidential election and expresses strong support for a credible, inclusive, and transparent second round on June 14, 2014;

(2) supports the mandate of Afghan electoral bodies such as the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) to administer, adjudicate, and manage polls, as well

as oversee logistical and technical preparations in a transparent, fair, and credible manner to prevent fraud and misconduct;

(3) encourages the Government of Afghanistan to implement measures that will increase voter participation, particularly among the Afghan female population;

(4) recognizes the determination of the Afghan people to exercise their right to vote and determine their country's destiny;

(5) urges the Government of Afghanistan to take steps to assure that fraudulent electoral activities do not take place during the runoff;

(6) urges the IEC to adopt measures to better mitigate fraud, improve electoral transparency of the polling and counting process, and communicate these measures clearly and consistently to the people of Afghanistan;

(7) urges close and continuing communication between the IEC and the Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF) to identify and provide security for vulnerable areas of the country during the election period;

(8) encourages all elements of Afghan society to refrain from fomenting violence and other disturbances in voting areas;

(9) urges the ANSF to make every necessary effort to ensure the safety of voters, candidates, poll workers, and election observers;

(10) expresses its support for the full participation of Afghan civil society in the election process;

(11) recognizes that a democratically-elected government that reflects the will of the Afghan people and is committed to combating terrorism would promote the long-term stability and security interests of Afghanistan, its neighbors, and its partners in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization International Security Assistance Force, including the United States; and

(12) recognizes the sacrifices of United States and coalition armed forces that have contributed, and will continue to contribute, to the security and stability of Afghanistan.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GRAYSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. 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 this resolution.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this coming Saturday, the Afghan people will exercise their right to vote and their right to determine their country's future, choosing between two candidates to complete the first democratic transfer of power in Afghanistan's long, violent history.

This vote holds out the promise of helping to solidify the achievements of U.S. international forces there. That is why this bipartisan resolution, which I am pleased to cosponsor, urges the Government of Afghanistan to pursue a secure, transparent, and credible runoff Presidential election.

Make no mistake—the Taliban would love nothing more than to disrupt this

democratic process and see the Government of Afghanistan fail. During the past month, Taliban fighters have ramped up their attacks, of course, while threatening polling centers and election officials.

Indeed, on Friday, the Taliban attempted to assassinate the leading Afghan Presidential candidate, Abdul Abdullah, in a suicide car bombing. After emerging unharmed, Abdullah said:

Threats can't stop us and our people. We are still dedicated to what we have promised for a better future.

For those of you who followed his campaign later that day, he was undeterred and went from event to event.

Well, this election offers the chance for Afghanistan to embark on that better future by taking the final steps towards a legitimate transition of power.

Just over 2 months ago, Afghans overwhelmingly flocked to the polls to vote in Presidential and in provisional elections. More than 7 million Afghan citizens cast a ballot during the first round of voting. To put that in perspective, for those of you who remember, that was about 4.5 million who voted in 2009. This dwarfed that number—7 million.

That first round election also saw a prominent female politician selected as a running mate, a choice that likely helped inspire some 2.5 million Afghan women to come out to the polls and to vote. While she and her running mate came in third, no aspiring leader can afford to ignore the interests of half of Afghanistan's population, who want better education, health, and other basic services.

Although the April elections were a significant improvement over 2009, there is plenty of room for progress. Numerous electoral complaints led to the invalidation of votes, and in May, Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission fired poll workers, some of whom were accused of voter fraud. This is exactly why it is so critical for the Government of Afghanistan to take these proactive steps to champion a secure and fair runoff election. A successful election will help emphasize Afghanistan's commitment to good governance, and it will provide much-needed legitimacy to the incoming President of that country.

Mr. Speaker, the United States has been heavily involved in Afghanistan for years. We have made great sacrifice. While the Obama administration has U.S. involvement in Afghanistan coming to a close, U.S. interest in a stable and secure Afghanistan will continue. The United States maintains an enduring national security interest in an Afghanistan that prevents itself from becoming a safe haven for terrorism. That goal becomes much harder if the Taliban is rejuvenated and successful in wrecking this weekend's elected government.

But one way we can demonstrate our commitment to Afghanistan's success

is by supporting the country's first-ever democratic transition of executive power. This resolution does exactly that, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of House Resolution 600, to extend my gratitude to Chairman ROYCE, and to urge my colleagues' support as well.

This Saturday, the people of Afghanistan will travel to the polls to elect a new President in a runoff election. The victorious candidate will replace Hamid Karzai, who has led Afghanistan since 2001.

House Resolution 600 recognizes this important moment in history and urges the Government of Afghanistan to pursue a transparent, credible, and inclusive runoff Presidential election while ensuring the safety of voters, candidates, poll workers, and election observers.

So far, the U.S. Government has contributed more than \$100 million toward the 2014 Afghanistan election, and numerous United States and coalition soldiers have sacrificed their lives in efforts to secure Afghanistan and prepare it for this crucial moment of peaceful transition of power.

I think that it is important to recognize these facts, and that is part of what House Resolution 600 seeks to do.

On April 5, the Government of Afghanistan held the first round of a Presidential election, in which almost 60 percent of eligible voters participated. Now, according to the Afghan Constitution, because no single candidate claimed more than 50 percent of the vote, a runoff election between the top two candidates will be held.

The first round of elections were promising in terms of increased voter turnout, no civilian deaths in attacks on election day, and a quick certification of results in order to set the stage for a runoff election, but more work remains to be done.

Votes from 331 polling stations were invalidated and removed from the final tabulations. Reports of voter and election monitor intimidation persist. Reports of attempts to bribe election monitors have occurred. Reports of SMS and texting capabilities being suspended on election day exist. Concerns remain about the lack of transparency and activities of the Afghan Independent Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission. Seventeen members of the Afghan National Security Forces were killed in attacks on election day. And female voter participation and protection remains at a level below what Afghan males enjoy.

In light of these issues, House Resolution 600 commends the Government of Afghanistan for holding the first round of elections and scheduling a second; expresses support for a credible, inclusive, and transparent runoff election; supports the mandate of Afghan electoral bodies to prevent voter fraud

and misconduct; encourages the Government of Afghanistan to implement measures that will increase voter participation, particularly among Afghan females; and urges the security force to continue to provide protection to vulnerable areas of the country during the election period, as well as recognizing the sacrifices of those forces that have contributed and will continue to contribute to the security and stability of Afghanistan.

This is an exciting time for Afghanistan, Mr. Speaker, and this election is an important one. American forces have been in Afghanistan now for a decade, and most of them are now coming home. This election will be crucial in proving to the world that Afghanistan is ready again to chart its own course and to provide its own security.

I wish the Afghan people well in this endeavor, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER).

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this important bipartisan resolution to urge the Government of Afghanistan to ensure a transparent process in its June 14 runoff Presidential election.

I want to commend my former Foreign Affairs Committee colleague, Mr. GRAYSON, for bringing this measure forward, and also Chairman ROYCE for his leadership on this important issue.

It makes clear that the United States supports the Afghan people in their pursuit to form an effective government through credible, violence-free elections.

Afghanistan certainly faces major challenges, but this transition is an opportunity for Afghanistan to build upon the progress it has made since 2001. Under the Taliban, women were banned from social, political, and educational participation. Now, more than one-quarter of the country's parliament is female, and more than one-third of the voters in the first round of elections were women.

There has been other strong progress, both big and small. Infant mortality has declined, the media is more accessible, the literacy rates have increased from the single digits, and there are even substantially more paved roads. Don't get me wrong. It is not all cotton candy and rainbows. To be certain, Afghanistan still has a long road ahead to achieve a democratic future, but this election is a critical step in the right direction.

It is my hope that the Government of Afghanistan recognizes the sacrifices that have been made to get to this point and will turn a page to ensure a peaceful transition of power.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bipartisan measure.

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

□ 1615

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

will just take a moment and recognize the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GRAYSON) for his initiative in introducing this bill and for his commitment to the success of democratic governance in Afghanistan.

The international community has previously pledged aid support to Afghanistan on the condition that the country hold transparent, credible, and inclusive elections this year and next year. This resolution encourages the Government of Afghanistan to uphold that commitment when Afghans finally select a successor to President Karzai on June 14.

This new government will have a chance to start anew, tackling corruption—the kind of corruption that has jeopardized the success of international aid efforts there. This resolution urges the Government of Afghanistan to lessen the risk of fraud, to improve electoral transparency, enhance security efforts, and increase voter participation during the upcoming runoff.

Importantly, it has also been the case that we need to recognize the sacrifices of members of the Armed Forces, and this resolution does that. It recognizes those in our Armed Forces and underscores that this election will contribute to the security and stability interests of both Afghanistan and the United States.

This is an historic opportunity to bolster the Afghan-led electoral process, and I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan resolution, which demonstrates our commitment to a legitimate and democratic transition to power in Afghanistan.

Also, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) has reminded me that, as Afghanistan walks down this road, it might behoove the new government there to look at local elections as part of the solution, rather than to have people perennially appointed from the center of the country, empower people locally to elect their own local mayors, their own local leaders.

They will certainly have that opportunity next year in the parliamentary elections.

With that said, again, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GRAYSON) for this resolution.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of New York). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 600, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2014

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the

bill (H.R. 4412) to authorize the programs of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4412

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2014”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Definitions.

TITLE I—AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

- Sec. 101. Fiscal year 2014.

TITLE II—HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT

Subtitle A—Exploration

- Sec. 201. Space exploration policy.
- Sec. 202. Stepping stone approach to exploration.
- Sec. 203. Space Launch System.
- Sec. 204. Orion crew capsule.
- Sec. 205. Space radiation.
- Sec. 206. Planetary protection for human exploration missions.

Subtitle B—Space Operations

- Sec. 211. International Space Station.
- Sec. 212. Barriers impeding enhanced utilization of the ISS's National Laboratory by commercial companies.
- Sec. 213. Utilization of International Space Station for science missions.
- Sec. 214. International Space Station cargo resupply services lessons learned.
- Sec. 215. Commercial crew program.
- Sec. 216. Space communications.

TITLE III—SCIENCE

Subtitle A—General

- Sec. 301. Science portfolio.
- Sec. 302. Radioisotope power systems.
- Sec. 303. Congressional declaration of policy and purpose.
- Sec. 304. University class science missions.
- Sec. 305. Assessment of science mission extensions.

Subtitle B—Astrophysics

- Sec. 311. Decadal cadence.
- Sec. 312. Extrasolar planet exploration strategy.
- Sec. 313. James Webb Space Telescope.
- Sec. 314. National Reconnaissance Office telescope donation.
- Sec. 315. Wide-Field Infrared Survey Telescope.
- Sec. 316. Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy.

Subtitle C—Planetary Science

- Sec. 321. Decadal cadence.
- Sec. 322. Near-Earth objects.
- Sec. 323. Near-Earth objects public-private partnerships.
- Sec. 324. Research on near-earth object tsunami effects.
- Sec. 325. Astrobiology strategy.
- Sec. 326. Astrobiology public-private partnerships.
- Sec. 327. Assessment of Mars architecture.

Subtitle D—Heliophysics

- Sec. 331. Decadal cadence.
- Sec. 332. Review of space weather.

Subtitle E—Earth Science

- Sec. 341. Goal.
- Sec. 342. Decadal cadence.