

NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

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

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of National School Choice Week. I have traveled all across northern Michigan, and I have been blessed to visit all kinds of schools in my district. I have met with hard-working kids, parents, and teachers who are trying to achieve a better future.

Our education system should not be a one-size-fits-all model. School choice programs provide a way for parents to help their children succeed. Choice promotes competition in our educational system, which will improve the educational outcome for all students.

While many students are able to prosper by attending their local public school, many others are bogged down by outdated rules that prevent parents from choosing the best educational fit for their children. In order to succeed, parents need options and flexibility, not more regulations.

Michigan has enacted the popular Schools of Choice program, which allows parents to send their children to any school in a participating district. These are the types of programs that empower parents and students instead of teachers' unions and bureaucrats.

School choice will help to ensure that every child has a chance to flourish, and that is why I am a proud supporter of National School Choice Week.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call this House to action. In the opening weeks of the 114th Congress, this Chamber has voted to deport DREAMers and the parents of American citizens. And the House majority continues to put our national security at risk by threatening to shut down the Department of Homeland Security just because they object to the administration's efforts to keep immigrant families together and to deport violent criminals.

No matter how you feel about the administration's efforts, we should all recognize that it is time to set aside these partisan games and take substantive action to pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill. It is not just the moral thing to do for so many of our friends and neighbors; it is the right thing to do for our economy, for our public safety, and for our country.

I will urge House leadership to bring a comprehensive immigration reform bill to the floor for a vote. It is the right thing to do.

COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

(Mr. DOLD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the importance of the legislation that we passed this week on human trafficking.

Sadly, my district is no stranger to this despicable crime. In both Lake and Cook Counties, we seem to have too many cases of human trafficking. In the Chicagoland area, up to 25,000 women and girls are victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

According to the Justice Department, as many as 300,000 American youths are at risk of becoming victims of sexual trafficking. The average age for girls that first become victims is between 12 and 14 years of age.

This legislation will protect our youth by establishing programs to help runaways and homeless children who are at the highest risk for becoming victims. The bills will also help address the issue by giving tools to health care professionals and law enforcement to identify and help victims of human trafficking, and to create programs to deter and prevent human trafficking in the first place.

Human trafficking for sexual exploitation is an epidemic that needs to be stopped. This is a first step, and we must remain focused to end human trafficking altogether.

PASS LEGISLATION THAT MATTERS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would just ask that the Republican leadership begin to bring legislation to the floor that would actually make a difference for America, certainly addressing the economy and job creation and increasing wages, which are so important to my constituents and, I believe, to all Americans.

It just seems like all the Republican leadership is doing here is rehashing the same old legislation that is going nowhere either because it won't pass the Senate or because the President won't sign it.

Today, after the 1-minute speeches, we are going to have the third pipeline bill that essentially tries to strait-jacket Federal agencies—again, not going anywhere. It is pretty likely the President would veto any of them if they come to his desk.

I understand that on Tuesday the leadership is going to bring up another Affordable Care Act repeal. This will be like the 56th or 57th effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which is actually working well. More Americans than ever have signed up during this second enrollment period. We had another effort to weaken the Affordable Care Act just a couple of weeks ago.

It is time to do the things that people want, talk about the economy, and bring legislation that matters to the American people.

REVERSE SEQUESTRATION CUTS

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

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on my colleagues to join me in stopping the sequester's impact on our military.

I want Members to hear what General Martin Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, had to say. He directly advises the President and Congress, and these are his words:

The combination of the Budget Control Act and the sequestration mechanism will make it impossible for us to meet our global responsibilities.

Again from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs:

The readiness hole is still the readiness hole. The global security environment is more dangerous and sequestration is still on the books as the law. It's absolutely crazy for this country.

Since the President promised the sequestration would not happen but then he said he would veto changes to it, some Members of this House seem to have accepted that the sequestration must go into effect.

National security is an essential part of our job, and with growing threats both domestic and abroad, Members of this House must come together to end the sequester cuts that reduce the capabilities of our armed services.

We—the Members of Congress, the President, and General Dempsey—all swore the same oath to defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. We as Members of Congress have a duty to provide a military to protect the American people.

These challenges hit close to home for me. As a Georgia Republican on the Armed Services Committee, I am going to continue to fight on behalf of the men and women at Robins and Moody Air Force Bases and the warfighters of this country who protect us.

FEDERAL SPENDING AND THE SAVE ACT

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

Mr. ASHFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Federal spending.

In my home State of Nebraska, we are mandated by the State constitution to balance the budget. This is something that we are sorely in need of here in Washington.

The Congressional Budget Office just released a report that indicated that deficits are projected to balloon over the next several years, topping \$1 trillion by 2025. The national debt will grow to over \$21 trillion by the same year.

Mr. Speaker, we all know these are unsustainable trends. That is why I am very proud to be a cosponsor of the Savings Accountability Value and Efficiency Act, or SAVE Act. This bill, introduced by my good friend and colleague Congressman PATRICK MURPHY,

would save the Federal Government nearly \$480 billion over the next 10 years.

I applaud my colleague for his efforts in working to put our country on a more sustainable fiscal path. I hope that we can come together in a bipartisanship manner towards that end.

NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, this week Americans from all 50 States will gather at over 11,000 events nationwide to celebrate National School Choice Week. These are not partisan gatherings focused on a particular piece of legislation, nor are the attendees advocating for one type of school over another; rather, these gatherings will highlight the importance of providing parents with diverse choices when it comes to the education of their children.

Far too often America's children are given educational opportunities dictated by what best serves someone else's economic interest or is focused on their own economic status or where they live. This is inappropriate. We need a better way.

I have supported legislation to expand charter schools. That is a bipartisanship thing that we can all agree on. That empowers parents. At the State level, Republican legislators and Governors have passed open enrollment laws and funding portability for education.

National School Choice Week is a great reminder that we must continue to pursue these vital reforms, ensuring all parents have freedom when deciding how to educate their children.

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LNG PERMITTING CERTAINTY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 48, I call up the bill (H.R. 351) to provide for expedited approval of exportation of natural gas, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 351

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 "LNG Permitting Certainty and Transparency Act".

SEC. 2. ACTION ON APPLICATIONS.

(a) DECISION DEADLINE.—For proposals that must also obtain authorization from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission or the United States Maritime Administration to site, construct, expand, or operate LNG export facilities, the Department of Energy shall issue a final decision on any application for the authorization to export natural gas under section 3 of the Natural Gas Act

(15 U.S.C. 717b) not later than 30 days after the later of—

(1) the conclusion of the review to site, construct, expand, or operate the LNG facilities required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S. C. 4321 et seq.); or

(2) the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) CONCLUSION OF REVIEW.—For purposes of subsection (a), review required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 shall be considered concluded—

(1) for a project requiring an Environmental Impact Statement, 30 days after publication of a Final Environmental Impact Statement;

(2) for a project for which an Environmental Assessment has been prepared, 30 days after publication by the Department of Energy of a Finding of No Significant Impact; and

(3) upon a determination by the lead agency that an application is eligible for a categorical exclusion pursuant National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 implementing regulations.

(c) JUDICIAL ACTION.—(1) The United States Court of Appeals for the circuit in which the export facility will be located pursuant to an application described in subsection (a) shall have original and exclusive jurisdiction over any civil action for the review of—

(A) an order issued by the Department of Energy with respect to such application; or

(B) the Department of Energy's failure to issue a final decision on such application.

(2) If the Court in a civil action described in paragraph (1) finds that the Department of Energy has failed to issue a final decision on the application as required under subsection (a), the Court shall order the Department of Energy to issue such final decision not later than 30 days after the Court's order.

(3) The Court shall set any civil action brought under this subsection for expedited consideration and shall set the matter on the docket as soon as practical after the filing date of the initial pleading.

SEC. 3. PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF EXPORT DESTINATIONS.

Section 3 of the Natural Gas Act (15 U.S.C. 717b) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(g) PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF LNG EXPORT DESTINATIONS.—As a condition for approval of any authorization to export LNG, the Secretary of Energy shall require the applicant to publicly disclose the specific destination or destinations of any such authorized LNG exports."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 48, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WHITFIELD. 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. 351.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 351, the LNG Permitting Certainty and Transparency Act sponsored by Congressman BILL JOHNSON of Ohio.

All of us recognize that the economy in the U.S. has been sputtering. We have had great advancements in technology, however, and innovation in hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling have led America to become the number one natural gas producing nation in the world.

Our natural gas output has rapidly increased since 2005 and is expected to continue rising in the decades ahead in response to growing demand. Plentiful natural gas is helping many domestic energy producers and manufacturers and is spurring new investment and job growth here in America.

The Committee on Energy and Commerce has held multiple hearings and forums to discuss the domestic growth in natural gas production and its potential impact on trade, geopolitics, and energy production and consumption in America.

We now have the opportunity to bring more of this critical energy resource to other parts of the world while stimulating our energy security, economic growth, and foreign policy.

I might add that over the last year, many of us have been really surprised by the number of representatives from other countries in Europe and around the world who are pleading with America to export their natural gas so that those countries are not as dependent upon countries like Russia and others.

I might also add that, in 2012, the Department of Energy commissioned a report by NERA Economic Consulting to assess the economic impacts of LNG exports. NERA recently updated this study to include the most current projections from the Energy Information Administration.

Like the 2012 study, the update found that U.S. LNG exports will bring widespread economic benefits, touching many parts of our economy, and that those benefits would consistently increase as exports increase.

The NERA study also found that the construction of new LNG export projects is estimated to put up to 45,000 unemployed Americans back to work. I might also add that this legislation does not in any way change anything that FERC has responsibility for in approving siting of these natural gas pipelines and facilities for export, so we are not affecting in any way any environmental aspects of it.

I might also say that the reason this bill is being introduced is because we think that the Department of Energy has been dragging its feet a little bit. They have responsibility over the commodity of the natural gas, and they have to go through a process. This legislation also applies only to non-free trade agreements that the U.S. deals with.

Since 2010, the Department of Energy has issued a final decision on five of the 37 applications to export LNG to countries where the U.S. does not have a free trade agreement.