See, instead of carving out or creating a merit review system where the Federal Government determined which companies we were allowed to put our money into, Congress wisely went down the other road and decided that those decisions would be best made where?

Left in the hands of the people, in the hands of the investors themselves, so long as they were provided with a sufficient level of disclosure from publicly traded companies.

Unfortunately, over the last eight decades since the securities laws were first put in place, the quarterly and annual reports filed by the public companies have grown, and they have grown in size tremendously, larger and more complex than ever, to the point where now the most sophisticated of investors have trouble understanding even the most basic operations and risks of these companies. This has come to be known as the phenomenon of information overload.

So to put this in perspective, a recent article in the Wall Street Journal noted that the average annual report from public companies is now 42,000 words, a 40 percent increase just from the year 2000 alone and even longer than the entire Sarbanes-Oxley bill that passed Congress in 2002.

Another recent report out of Stanford University found that only 38 percent of institutional investors view disclosures about executive compensation as ''easy to understand.''

So, if you think about it, if the majority of institutional investors can't understand the disclosure, what chance does the little guy, the mom-and-pop investor, have to understand all this?

They, of course, have very little chance and can even be harmed by the disclosures that too voluminous and complex reports show.

As then-SEC Commissioner Troy Paredes put it way back in 2013, ''If investors are overloaded, more disclosure actually can result in less transparency and worse decisions, in which case capital is allocated less efficiently and market discipline is compromised.''

So what would our bill do today? It would rectify the situation.

How? One, it would require that the SEC eliminate any outdated or duplicative disclosure requirements that are not material to investors and, furthermore, to scale disclosures for emerging growth companies and small issuers.

Two, it will allow issuers to file a summary page of their annual report that will include simply cross-references to the material already included.

Three, it would require the SEC to produce a broad study on how best to, amongst all the other things, utilize technology in order to improve delivery and presentation systems for disclosure and, also, a requirement that the SEC commence a rulemaking in order to implement some of these ideas that come out of the study.

You see, these provisions will help our disclosure regime of the 21st century while at the very same time address the issue of information overload that I mentioned before.

If you go back, as part of the JOBS Act, Congress directed the SEC to review its existing disclosure requirements, and it was told to identify ways to make our current disclosure regime less burdensome for issuers and for people as investors.

While the SEC produced a report a few years ago—2013—that identified a number of obsolete things and duplicative requirements that could be addressed, unfortunately, the agency has yet to act upon them, this despite an ongoing disclosure effectiveness review that has so far only produced a concept release.

So, at the end, it is important that this Congress come here today and act on behalf of all the American investors, all the people in this country, in order to keep the original intent of our securities laws relevant today and ensure that the effective disclosure remains this very centerpiece of the capital markets.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of this bill. I thank Mr. GARRETT for his hard work. We worked together on this in the last Congress, and I added an amendment to improve the bill in the markup last year.

Markets are constantly evolving, and so too must our regulatory regime. This is especially true when it comes to reporting requirements for small public companies.

The process of scaling and streamlining the reporting requirements for these small companies is something that, in order to keep pace with the ever-evolving marketplace, has historically been revisited roughly once every 10 years. It requires vigilance by the SEC and, also, by Congress.

The Disclosure Modernization and Simplification Act directs the SEC to simplify the reporting requirements for small companies in regulation S–K.

First, the SEC would be required to revise regulation S–K to take care of any low-hanging fruit, that is, make any improvements to regulation S–K that they have already identified as helpful for small companies.

Next, the SEC would conduct a study of the best way to simplify and modernize the disclosure requirements in regulation S–K while still providing all the necessary information to investors and to also make specific detailed recommendations to Congress for how to achieve this.

Finally, the bill allows companies to submit a summary page on their form 10–K annual reports in order to make these annual reports easier to understand by investors.

In testimony before the Financial Services Committee last year, Columbia Professor John Coffee called the idea ''simple and unobjectionable'' and said that he ''didn't see how anyone could be opposed to it.''

I agree that this is a commonsense idea that could make lengthy annual reports, which are often hundreds of pages long and difficult to navigate, significantly more investor-friendly.

So I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

I thank my colleague, Mr. GARRETT, for his leadership. He has worked on this for several Congresses.

Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I thank the gentlewoman from New York for working with us today and also working with us over the last several years as well, trying to move this along. As you have said and I have said, this is one of those proverbial commonsense pieces of legislation.

If anyone got confused by all the technical terms that you and I used here, at the end of the day, it means, whether you are a sophisticated institutional investor or whether you are a mom-and-pop-type investor or if you are something in between, you just want to have clarity, you just want to understand what all these voluminous, hundreds-of-pages annual reports and quarterly reports are.

That is what our bill does. It just makes it a little bit simpler and then directs the SEC to go even the step further to develop other ways to do so as well.

So I look forward to passing this out of this House now for the third time, I believe, send it over to the Senate and, hopefully, get some action in the Senate and put it on the President's desk.

I encourage Members from both sides of the aisle, once again, out of the House and to the Senate.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1525.

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.

REFORMING ACCESS FOR INVESTMENTS IN STARTUP ENTERPRISES ACT OF 2015

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1839) to amend the Securities Act of 1933 to exempt certain transactions involving purchases by accredited investors, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1839

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 ''Reforming Access for Investments in Startup Enterprises Act of 2015'' or the ''RAISE Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. EXEMPTED TRANSACTIONS.

(a) EXEMPTED TRANSACTIONS.—Section 4 of the Securities Act of 1933 (15 U.S.C. 77d) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(7) transactions meeting the requirements of subsection (d).'';

(2) by redesignating the second subsection (b) (relating to securities offered and sold in compliance with Rule 506 of Regulation D) as subsection (c); and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(d) CERTAIN ACCREDITED INVESTOR TRANSACTIONS.—The transactions referred to in subsection (a)(7) are transactions meeting the following requirements:

''(1) ACCREDITED INVESTOR REQUIREMENT.—Each purchaser is an accredited investor, as that term is defined in section 230.501(a) of title 17, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation).

''(2) PROHIBITION ON GENERAL SOLICITATION OR ADVERTISING.—Neither the seller, nor any person acting on the seller's behalf, offers or sells securities by any form of general solicitation or general advertising.

''(3) INFORMATION REQUIREMENT.—In the case of a transaction involving the securities of an issuer that is neither subject to section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78m; 78o(d)), nor exempt from reporting pursuant to section 240.12g3-2(b) of title 17, Code of Federal Regulations, nor a foreign government (as defined in section 230.405 of title 17, Code of Federal Regulations) eligible to register securities under Schedule B, the seller and a prospective purchaser designated by the seller obtain from the issuer, upon request of the seller, and the seller in all cases makes available to a prospective purchaser, the following information (which shall be reasonably current in relation to the date of resale under this section):

''(A) The exact name of the issuer and the issuer's predecessor (if any).

''(B) The address of the issuer's principal executive offices.

''(C) The exact title and class of the security.

''(D) The par or stated value of the security.

''(E) The number of shares or total amount of the securities outstanding as of the end of the issuer's most recent fiscal year.

''(F) The name and address of the transfer agent, corporate secretary, or other person responsible for transferring shares and stock certificates.

''(G) A statement of the nature of the business of the issuer and the products and services it offers, which shall be presumed reasonably current if the statement is as of 12 months before the transaction date.

''(H) The names of the officers and directors of the issuer.

''(I) The names of any persons registered as a broker, dealer, or agent that shall be paid or given, directly or indirectly, any commission or remuneration for such person's participation in the offer or sale of the securities.

''(J) The issuer's most recent balance sheet and profit and loss statement and similar financial statements, which shall—

''(i) be for such part of the two preceding fiscal years as the issuer has been in operation;

''(ii) be prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles or, in the case of a foreign private issuer, be prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles or the International Financial Reporting Standards issued by the International Accounting Standards Board;

''(iii) be presumed reasonably current if—

''(I) with respect to the balance sheet, the balance sheet is as of a date less than 16 months before the transaction date; and

''(II) with respect to the profit and loss statement, such statement is for the 12 months preceding the date of the issuer's balance sheet; and

''(iv) if the balance sheet is not as of a date less than 6 months before the transaction date, be accompanied by additional statements of profit and loss for the period from the date of such balance sheet to a date less than 6 months before the transaction date.

''(K) To the extent that the seller is a control person with respect to the issuer, a brief statement regarding the nature of the affiliation, and a statement certified by such seller that they have no reasonable grounds to believe that the issuer is in violation of the securities laws or regulations.

''(4) ISSUERS DISQUALIFIED.—The transaction is not for the sale of a security where the seller is an issuer or a subsidiary, either directly or indirectly, of the issuer.

''(5) BAD ACTOR PROHIBITION.—Neither the seller, nor any person that has been or will be paid (directly or indirectly) remuneration or a commission for their participation in the offer or sale of the securities, including solicitation of purchasers for the seller is subject to an event that would disqualify an issuer or other covered person under Rule 506(d)(1) of Regulation D (17 C.F.R. 230.506(d)(1)) or is subject to a statutory disqualification described under section 3(a)(39) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

''(6) BUSINESS REQUIREMENT.—The issuer is engaged in business, is not in the organizational stage or in bankruptcy or receivership, and is not a blank check, blind pool, or shell company that has no specific business plan or purpose or has indicated that the issuer's primary business plan is to engage in a merger or combination of the business with, or an acquisition of, an unidentified person.

''(7) UNDERWRITER PROHIBITION.—The transaction is not with respect to a security that constitutes the whole or part of an unsold allotment to, or a subscription or participation by, a broker or dealer as an underwriter of the security or a redistribution.

''(8) OUTSTANDING CLASS REQUIREMENT.—The transaction is with respect to a security of a class that has been authorized and outstanding for at least 90 days prior to the date of the transaction.

''(e) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—With respect to an exempted transaction described under subsection (a)(7):

''(A) Securities acquired in such transaction shall be deemed to have been acquired in a transaction not involving any public offering.

''(B) Such transaction shall be deemed not to be a distribution for purposes of section 2(a)(11).

''(C) Securities involved in such transaction shall be deemed to be restricted securities within the meaning of Rule 144 (17 C.F.R. 230.144).

''(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—The exemption provided by subsection (a)(7) shall not be the exclusive means for establishing an exemption from the registration requirements of section 5.''.

(b) EXEMPTION IN CONNECTION WITH CERTAIN EXEMPT OFFERINGS.—Section 18(b)(4) of the Securities Act of 1933 (15 U.S.C. 77r(b)(4)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating the second subparagraph (D) and subparagraph (E) as subparagraphs (E) and (F), respectively;

(2) in subparagraph (E), as so redesignated, by striking ''; or'' and inserting a semicolon;

(3) in subparagraph (F), as so redesignated, by striking the period and inserting ''; or''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(G) section 4(a)(7).''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to again commend the sponsor of this bill, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY), who just joined us, for all of his work on this bill and the earlier bills as well and for his continued work on capital formation issues.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the JOBS Act of 2012 has been a tremendous success, a huge success, for the American public and the public marketplace.

The number of companies that have gone public has risen dramatically ever since the barriers to capital formation that existed for several years have been lifted, if you will, helping to make our capital markets more attractive to companies and investors in the United States and all around the world as well.

But the JOBS Act also did something else, somewhat ironically. It included a number of provisions that helped companies to stay private for a longer period of time.

You see, these provisions have allowed pre-IPO companies to expand their investor base, if you will, and have allowed them to open up the doors to capital that were previously shut out to them.

But, you see, as these companies raise more capital and as these companies issue more shares to investors, it can become even more difficult and even more costly for shareholders to find a willing buyer or to exit their position in that company.

That is what this bill is all about. That is where H.R. 1839, the RAISE Act, would come in. The RAISE Act would build upon the success of the JOBS Act of 2012 by creating an environment, if you will, where restricted securities of pre-IPO companies can be traded in a more liquid secondary market, which then could ultimately have the effect of lowering the cost of capital for businesses.

So the RAISE Act does this how? By codifying the longstanding exemption developed by the courts, the SEC, and the securities laws that would provide a means for the resale, if you will, of these private restricted securities.

Now, for those just listening here, this sounds a little bit technical. Maybe it sounds a lot technical to be effective. But, really, it is a simple fix

that could ultimately have the effect of helping literally thousands of businesses all across this country to do what? To raise more capital and put it to use, put it to use to innovating or to hiring more employees.

That is at the end of the day exactly the type of bipartisan solution our constituents are calling on Congress to implement. I urge all of my colleagues, again, on both sides of the aisle to vote in favor of the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of H.R. 1839, which is an excellent example of bipartisan compromise that I think we should do more of in this body.

I would like to thank Mr. MCHENRY and Ranking Member WATERS for all of their work on this bill on which I am pleased to be the lead Democrat.

This bill codifies a longstanding rule that has been recognized in the securities law, known informally as rule 4(1)(½), which allows investors to resell private restricted securities without registering with the SEC.

Rule 4(1)(½) has long been recognized by the SEC and has been recognized by the Federal courts on numerous occasions as well.

But no one has ever bothered to codify this rule, even though everyone is okay with it and supports it, with investors relying on this informal rule.

The reason that the SEC and the courts have long recognized this rule is that it fully complies with the spirit of the Securities Act of 1933. These sales are really just transactions between two sophisticated investors.

As a result, different law firms have different interpretations of what rule 4(1)(½) requires and the market has become very fragmented.

So I think it is a very good idea to finally codify rule 4(1)(½) so that everyone knows the rules of the road and investors can have confidence that they are complying with the law when they resell private securities to other sophisticated investors.

But this bill doesn't just codify rule 4(1)(½). It actually improves upon it by establishing minimum standards for disclosure, marketing, and a holding period that will protect investors, foster transparency, and make this market even stronger.

□ 1645

This bill addresses several concerns that we heard from investor groups and regulators:

First, it requires that the seller provide the buyer with some basic information about the company, which ensures that buyers have the standard information they need before making an investment decision.

Second, it prohibits bad actors, such as people who have been banned from the securities industry, from taking advantage of the rule.

Third, it prohibits the securities of shell companies from being sold under this new rule, 4(1)(½).

So I am pleased that we were able to work together with the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) on this bill and that we were able to add these important investor protections because now we have a bill that will enjoy strong bipartisan support.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GARRETT. Again, I thank the gentlewoman from New York.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY), the sponsor of the legislation.

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT), the chairman of the Capital Markets and Government Sponsored Enterprises Subcommittee, for yielding time.

I thank the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY), the ranking member of the subcommittee, for working with me on the provisions of the bill we are talking about this afternoon.

I also want to thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS), the ranking member of the full committee, for working with us to craft this compromise we have on the floor here today.

I have joined together with my colleagues from across the aisle to offer a Federal exemption from registering for the resale of private company securities, which is vital for adding liquidity to the secondary markets and driving economic growth.

Today private growth companies are not only disrupting existing industries, but are creating entirely new markets. Thanks to private markets, in particular, the advancement in American technology and entrepreneurship is thriving.

Funding the growth of these private companies, however, has created a paradigm shift. This shift requires our regulatory framework to achieve a balance between encouraging innovation and growth while ensuring that shareholders and investors are protected, and those investor protections need to remain strong.

Unfortunately, as successful entrepreneurs and startup employees look to sell their private shares in the secondary markets, they encounter a regulatory framework that is inefficient. That inefficiency is costly and dries up the liquidity of these securities and is harmful to economic growth.

Most private secondary transactions rely on a broadly accepted exemption known as section 4(1)(½). While widely known and applied, section 4(1)(½) has never been formally codified into securities law. The result has been a disjointed collection of case law and no-action SEC letters that have shaped these private secondary transactions.

Our bill attempts to fix this problem. The bill would provide an exemption for these types of transactions, allowing startup employees the ability to execute trades in a way that is consistent, clear, and certain.

That is why we have Federal securities laws, for that certainty, that clarity, and that consistency. It would allow for private companies to find a much better way to raise capital by opening up the secondary markets.

Although the bill is a technical fix, we have worked hard to seek compromise and find commonsense solutions to this complicated exemption.

While we have negotiated in good faith on this bill, as has the party across the aisle, my goal is to ensure that the language and operation of this compromise will work in the real world.

Further improvements to the bill may be necessary to fully codify existing uses of that authority, and I am committed to working with my colleagues across the aisle as well as folks in the Senate to clarify the intent here.

I look forward to continuing to work with our ranking member of the full Committee on Financial Services, as necessary, to ensure that the law is a useful tool and serves as an example of how policy can meet the demands of a changing marketplace.

The bottom line is this bill is a sensible way forward. This bill will lower costs and provide transparent standards for the issues that are important in the private and secondary transactions. Additionally, the bill will give today's private growth companies a foundation on which they can confidently plan their trajectory through the capital markets, both private and public.

Ultimately, codifying this exemption will ensure the United States remains the best market in the world for the world's innovators to build their businesses here and employ Americans and grow our economy.

I am pleased that this legislation enjoys bipartisan support, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers on the floor. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Again I thank the gentlewoman from New York for her support on this and the prior legislation, and I thank the gentleman from North Carolina.

When the gentleman from North Carolina makes a reference to the regulations of 4(1)(½), then you know there is something wrong out there that there are just too many obscure regulations that are holding back and being impediments to our capital markets.

The gentleman from North Carolina also came up with the right summation of this. It is a technical bill to deal with all of these absurdities and technicalities just to make it easier for

people to be able to start a business, grow a business, sell a business, hire employees, grow capital formation and the number of employees in this country as well.

With that being said, I look forward to strong, bipartisan support, as we have seen in the past on this type of legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1839, 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. GARRETT. 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 motion will be postponed.

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2078) to reauthorize the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2078

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 ''United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Reauthorization Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of the Congress that the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom—

(1) was created by Congress to independently assess and to accurately and unflinchingly describe threats to religious freedom around the world; and

(2) in carrying out its prescribed duties, should use its authorized powers to ensure that efforts by the United States to advance religious freedom abroad are timely, appropriate to the circumstances, prudent, and effective.

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY.

Section 209 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6436) is amended by striking ''September 30, 2015'' and inserting ''September 30, 2019''.

SEC. 4. STRATEGIC PLAN.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives;

(C) the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(D) the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(2) COMMISSION.—The term ''Commission'' means the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom established under section 201 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6431).

(3) COMMISSIONER.—The term ''Commissioner'' means a member of the Commission.

(4) VICE CHAIR.—The term ''Vice Chair'' means the Vice Chair of the Commission who was appointed to such position by an elected official from the political party that is different from the political party of the elected official who appointed the Chair of the Commission.

(b) STRATEGIC POLICY AND ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW PLANNING PROCESS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less frequently than biennially thereafter, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission, in coordination with the Commissioners, the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, Commission staff, and others jointly selected by the Chair and Vice Chair, shall carry out a strategic policy and organizational review planning process that includes—

(1) a review of the duties set forth in section 202 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6432) and the powers set forth in section 203 of such Act (22 U.S.C. 6432a);

(2) the preparation of a written description of prioritized actions that the Commission is required to complete to fulfill the strategic plan required under subsection (d);

(3) a review of the scope, content, and timing of the Commission's annual report and any required changes; and

(4) a review of the personnel policies set forth in section 204 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6432b) and any required changes to such policies.

(c) UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To the greatest extent possible, the Chair, Vice Chair, and all of the Commissioners shall ensure that this section is implemented in a manner that results in unanimous agreement among the Commissioners with regard to—

(A) the strategic policy and organizational review planning process required under subsection (b); and

(B) the strategic plan required under subsection (d).

(2) ALTERNATIVE APPROVAL PROCESS.—If unanimous agreement under paragraph (1) is not possible, items for inclusion in the strategic plan may, at the joint discretion of the Chair and Vice Chair, be approved by an affirmative vote of—

(A) a majority of Commissioners appointed by an elected official from the political party of the President; and

(B) a majority of Commissioners appointed by an elected official from the political party that is not the party of the President.

(d) SUBMISSION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Act, and not less frequently than biennially thereafter, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission shall jointly submit, to the appropriate congressional committees, a written strategic plan that includes—

(1) a description of prioritized actions for the Commission for a period of time to be specified by the Commissioners;

(2) a description of any changes the Commission considers necessary with regard to the scope, content, and timing of the Commission's annual report;

(3) a description of any changes the Commission considers necessary with regard to personnel matters; and

(4) the Commission's funding requirements for the period covered by the strategic plan.

(e) PENDING ISSUES.—The strategic plan required under subsection (d) may identify any issues or proposals that have not yet been resolved by the Commission.

(f) IMPLEMENTATION OF PERSONNEL PROVISIONS AND ANNUAL REPORT.—Notwithstanding section 204(a) and 205(a) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6432b(a) and 6533(a)), the Commission is authorized to implement provisions related to personnel and the Commission's annual report that are included in the strategic plan submitted pursuant to this section.

(g) CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT.—Upon request, the Commission shall—

(1) make available for inspection any information and documents requested by the appropriate congressional committees; and

(2) respond to any requests to provide testimony before the appropriate congressional committees.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 207 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6435) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 207. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Commission $3,500,000 for each of the fiscal years 2016 to 2019 to carry out the provisions of this Act and section 4 of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Reauthorization Act of 2015.

''(b) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Amounts authorized to be appropriated under subsection (a) shall remain available until the earlier of—

''(1) the date on which they have been expended; or

''(2) the date on which the Commission is terminated under section 209.

''(c) LIMITATION.—In each fiscal year, the Commission shall only be authorized to expend amounts that have been appropriated pursuant to subsection (a) if the Commission—

''(1) complies with the requirements set forth in section 4 of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Reauthorization Act of 2015; and

''(2) submits the annual financial report required under section 208(e) to the appropriate congressional committees.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) 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 days to revise and extend and to include any extraneous material in the RECORD.

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, tragically, religious persecution around the world continues. I thought I would give one example that we heard in our committee last week, the Foreign Affairs Committee, from ''Bozi,'' who is a young 20-year-old Yazidi woman from Iraq. She told us the story.

She very bravely recounted her brutal captivity and the abuse she faced at the hands of ISIS. As we are talking about religious freedom, she explained that, in her village, the 700 men and boys were killed, including several of