

Bob recovered by volunteering almost daily at the MD Anderson Hospital in Sugar Land, to make sure that coffee is made at 5:30 in the morning and that the linens are prepared for the 6 a.m. opening of that great facility.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to close with seven words of Texas pride: God bless a true Texan, Bob Schultz.

GALESBURG WATER SAFETY

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, whether you are a mayor, a city council member, or a Member of Congress, it is the job of all elected officials to be problem solvers for the families we serve.

For almost 25 years, the city of Galesburg has had a problem. The majority of water tests there have had lead content exceeding the Federal action level, and the most recent health report shows that more than 14 percent of children tested in Knox County had high lead levels in their small bodies.

When there is a problem, especially a serious problem like this, leaders come together to solve it. They don't point fingers, and they certainly do not deny facts. Government officials at all levels have the responsibility to work constructively to solve the problem and protect our children.

That is why I have assigned a watchdog task force within my office to investigate lead contamination throughout my congressional district and develop comprehensive solutions to overcome this challenge.

We need to work together to solve this problem because that is what leaders do.

LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION

(Mrs. HARTZLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize heroes in our communities who ask for no recognition, too often receive none, and every day are deserving of it: our law enforcement officers.

Their mission is simple: keep our communities safe.

They are often overlooked, yet they are the first ones we call when we need help.

It is a dangerous job. Each day these selfless servants put on a badge symbolic of their unique position to ensure the safety of the families and individuals of their communities, and they go do their duty.

We enjoy the fruits of their labor without knowing of the tireless dedication that makes it happen. Whether they are encouraging a child to make wise decisions, patrolling a neighborhood, or stopping a crime, their tireless dedication is often taken for granted. They sacrifice so we don't have to.

So, Mr. Speaker, to our law enforcement officers around the country and

to their families whose sacrifices are not forgotten, I rise to say thank you. Thank you for protecting us. Thank you for defending us, for being ever vigilant, ever ready, and ever courageous. We appreciate you and stand with you as you serve as the guardians of our communities.

CONGRATULATIONS TO WE THE PEOPLE

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

Mr. MASSIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate an outstanding group of students in my district from Highlands High School in Fort Thomas. These students are members of the We the People team at their high school.

They recently won the State championship and will compete in the national-level program here in Washington, D.C., this weekend, representing the State of Kentucky. This is the 12th consecutive year this team has won this competition in Kentucky.

We the People is a civics education program that promotes teaching and learning about our Nation's history, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. Each year, the program hosts a national competition in Washington, D.C., in which individual State-level winning teams compete and participate in simulated congressional hearings.

I am so proud of these students in my district, their parents, their teachers, and the administration of Highlands High School for their hard work and dedication.

Congratulations again, and I wish you all the best in the National Finals.

A LIFE OF SERVICE

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

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the many accomplishments of the Honorable James Roddey, a dedicated husband, father, and grandfather, successful businessman, public servant, and United States marine. Jim, a native of North Carolina, found opportunity where generations of Americans have—western Pennsylvania.

Last month, Jim stepped down as chairman of the Allegheny County Republican Committee. His tenure as county GOP chairman was the latest act in a career that included his historic election as Allegheny County's first-ever county executive in 1999.

Throughout his successful business career, Jim applied his acumen and heart of service to community development and the nonprofit sector. Undoubtedly, Jim developed many of the values he applied in his career from his Marine Corps days, where he reached the rank of captain.

Jim's peers and colleagues admire him for his ability to get the job done.

He approached his career with exuberance and unmitigated diligence, creating a lasting impact on western Pennsylvania.

I wish him as well as his wife of more than 60 years, Elin, all the best in their future endeavors.

ENSURING INTEGRITY IN THE IRS WORKFORCE ACT OF 2015

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 688, I call up the bill (H.R. 3724) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prohibit the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service from rehiring any employee of the Internal Revenue Service who was involuntarily separated from service for misconduct, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois). Pursuant to House Resolution 688, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 114-48, is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 3724

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 "Ensuring Integrity in the IRS Workforce Act of 2016".

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON REHIRING ANY EMPLOYEE OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE WHO WAS INVOLUNTARILY SEPARATED FROM SERVICE FOR MISCONDUCT.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Section 7804 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(d) PROHIBITION ON REHIRING EMPLOYEES INVOLUNTARILY SEPARATED.—The Commissioner may not employ any individual previously employed by the Commissioner who was removed for misconduct under this subchapter or chapter 43 or chapter 75 of title 5, United States Code, or whose employment was terminated under section 1203 of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 (26 U.S.C. 7804 note)."

(b) *EFFECTIVE DATE.*—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to any employee removed from employment before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this Act and the amendments made by this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from South Dakota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to

revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 3724, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bipartisan bill, H.R. 3724, Ensuring Integrity in the IRS Workforce Act.

With tax day just behind us, most Americans have finished their tax returns. They filled out form after form, giving the IRS some of the most sensitive information possible, including their Social Security numbers, their birth dates, wage data, and more.

In 2014, the inspector general for the IRS released a report that raised serious questions about whose hands this information falls into once it arrives at the IRS. More specifically, an audit of the agency's hiring practices found that the IRS rehired hundreds of former employees whom the IRS had previously fired because of conduct problems.

And we are not talking about small infractions. The IRS rehired employees who had falsified documents. They failed to pay their own taxes. They accessed sensitive taxpayer information without permission.

To think that someone could inappropriately access tax information, get fired for doing so, and then be rehired just a few months later is completely unacceptable. But it has happened, and it has happened more than once.

These stories border on the absurd. One employee had been absent without leave for a total of 8 weeks worth of work. As a result, that employee was fired, and the words "do not rehire" were stamped on that personnel file. Still, the IRS rehired that person.

IRS leadership has failed to acknowledge its mistakes or change its processes. Instead, they stuck their heads in the sand. According to the inspector general, the IRS' response to the report was that it believed its current process was good enough. Well, I don't buy it, and if the IRS leadership thinks its current processes are protecting taxpayers, they need a reality check.

□ 0915

The Ensuring Integrity in the IRS Workforce Act is a simple, bipartisan fix to a serious problem. The bill does what the IRS bureaucracy in Washington won't: it stops the IRS from rehiring former employees who had been fired for cause.

Now, my staff and I met with numerous frontline IRS employees from South Dakota who are sincere and hardworking individuals. My bill is not aimed at them.

This legislation is aimed at the IRS bureaucracy in Washington and is intended to address a very real problem that they have refused to fix.

There is no reason that IRS leadership in Washington shouldn't be held to

the same standard to which it holds you, the taxpayers. With this legislation, we can hold the IRS accountable to us for its hiring practices and ensure a high-quality workforce for the agency.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

We all agree that the IRS faces serious consumer service challenges and needs to be more responsive to the American taxpayer, but this bill is not a serious attempt at oversight of the IRS.

In fact, with respect to making the IRS more responsive to taxpayers, this bill is a move in the wrong direction.

But the fact that Republicans are moving in the wrong direction on tax policy really shouldn't be a surprise to any of us.

They are not only starving our entire government of the resources that it needs to operate efficiently for the American public, but they are deliberately standing in the way of actual productive policies.

Forget real tax reform that would bring positive benefits. They aren't even doing anything to fix what is broken in the system today.

For example, the Republicans refuse to crack down on large corporations that seek to avoid paying their fair share of taxes simply by changing their mailing address from the United States to a low-tax foreign country.

We see these stories on TV all the time, corporations renouncing their American citizenship to not have to pay any—any—U.S. taxes.

But congressional Republicans have refused to take any action to stop these corporate tax dodgers and the resulting offshoring of American jobs.

In fact, the Republicans who run Congress have protected these companies not only through their refusal to act to stop these tax inversions, but by also refusing to repeal the tax break that incentivizes U.S. companies to ship jobs overseas.

Yes, American companies can claim a tax break for firing American workers and moving their jobs overseas, and my Republican colleagues are doing nothing about that.

The real-world effect of the Republicans' refusal to go after these corporations that invert themselves to avoid paying their share of taxes is a heavier tax burden on the rest of our honest constituents who are playing by the rules.

To address this problem, the Treasury Department recently issued new rules to stop large corporations from simply changing their post office box to avoid paying U.S. taxes.

Could my constituents imagine simply changing their post office box address to eliminate their Federal taxes? Of course not. Because they can't. But somehow multinational companies, which seem to have more rights than American citizens, can.

Now, you would think the American Congress would support the efforts of the American President to stop American companies from not paying the taxes here in America. But, Mr. Speaker, you would be wrong.

The majority is threatening to stop the Treasury from advancing these types of commonsense rules to make multinational corporations pay their fair share of U.S. taxes just like everyone else.

Wouldn't our time be better spent and served if my Republican colleagues held hearings—and passed bills—to stop companies from moving their jobs and profits overseas?

Democrats stand ready to work with them to enact commonsense policies to close the loopholes in our Tax Code that encourage companies to send their profits and their jobs overseas.

Unfortunately, we will have to wait for another day before the majority is serious about working together to make our tax system fairer for working people.

But let me be clear. Americans will not wait any longer. They demand that we act to close these loopholes to ensure that American corporations don't cheat the system to try to avoid paying their fair share of taxes here in the United States, letting the little guy have a greater burden in their absence.

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

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have a gentlemen here to speak on behalf of my bill who has been a strong leader in bringing integrity to the IRS.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, we are at a crossroads with our tax system. Our Tax Code is outdated, overly complicated, and the IRS has proven that it, in and of itself, is in need of serious reform.

Here is an opportunity for us to work together. From the opening remarks of my colleague across the aisle, I am not sure if that is an attitude of cooperation, but certainly this is a bill we can work together on, I would hope.

Our Tax Code was last updated in 1986, a generation ago. It is increasingly burdensome in this global 21st century economy. American taxpayers need a simpler code that they can easily comply with.

Finally, they deserve an accountable and consistent IRS which provides exceptional taxpayer customer service. It is long past time for the status quo to change on these problems. We need tax reform.

This is why I stand in support of my colleague's bill, the Ensuring Integrity in the IRS Workforce Act. The legislation would prohibit the IRS from rehiring any individual who was previously employed by the IRS, but fired for cause. This is inconsistent and unacceptable behavior from an agency which requires the highest standard of tax compliance from taxpayers. The IRS should apply the same rigorous standard inside the agency itself.

Mr. Speaker, I wish we didn't need an act of Congress such as this, but, apparently, we do. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I have a friend and colleague here today who has fought daily for years for hard-working taxpayers across America and for his home district.

I am proud to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS).

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Hamlin County, South Dakota, a very dear friend not only of every Member of Congress, but, in particular, a great Representative representing South Dakota at a time when South Dakota needs not only strong representation, but a strong voice.

I want to thank the young Congresswoman for bringing this legislation to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, today is quite simple. The United States Congress has a say in the matter about how our government is run and the conduct of the government.

The Internal Revenue Service has, for quite some time, been at odds, I believe, not only with their mission statement, but also at odds with their duty to publicly serve, provide information, and to do the things that enable taxpayers, who want to follow the law and need to follow the law, to comply respectfully.

The Internal Revenue Service, over the last few years, has run afoul, I believe, of the American people because the commonsense obligations that they have have not been met.

Today we are here on the floor with Congresswoman NOEM to talk about H.R. 3724 that prohibits the Commissioner of the IRS from rehiring any employee who was involuntarily—that means forced—out or involuntarily separated from service for misconduct at the Internal Revenue Service.

The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration reported in February 2015 that the IRS had rehired those employees who had been fired from the Service for misconduct, hundreds of former employees who were terminated for well-documented conduct or performance issues.

In fact, the IRS rehired 141 former employees who had substantial tax issues. That means they were not paying their own tax bills.

Mr. Speaker, if we were going to hire a person in our office, we would attempt to gain information about that employee.

Yesterday, as we were talking about this on the rule, a fellow colleague said: What about your own employees? Do you make sure they pay their taxes?

I said: That would be a good question.

No, I don't ask that question. But I would not have any idea what the real

answer was—the truth—if an employee did not tell me the truth.

The IRS does have the answer. They know who is paying their taxes, and they know why they fired an employee, Mr. Speaker.

We are here saying that the Internal Revenue Service should not rehire these employees who were unfaithful, unfaithful to their job and unfaithful to the American taxpayer.

One hundred forty-one employees who substantially did not pay their taxes represent 60 percent of all terminated for misconduct.

I think I know why: because the Internal Revenue Service at the highest levels allows this to go on, and then they rehire the employees who didn't even follow the law.

Mr. Speaker, that is not just misconduct. That is another level giving them an opportunity that a normal taxpayer would not have to get away with not paying their own taxes.

Other misconduct issues of rehiring employees include accessing taxpayer information improperly without authorization, falsification of official forms, unacceptable behavior and performance, and abuse of IRS leave and property policies while on public time.

Mr. Speaker, Congresswoman NOEM is doing the right thing and so is the House of Representatives. I would like to see this be a bipartisan issue, not a partisan issue.

We need the IRS. We need them to do a good job. But if this were at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, would we allow that to happen? If this were at the CIA, would we allow that to happen?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Texas an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. SESSIONS. If this were at the Department of Justice, would we allow that to happen? Why is this not a bipartisan issue?

Why can't we get together and say: Mr. Koskinen, you are the Commissioner of the IRS. We respectfully would like to see you correct what you are doing.

We are not on a witch hunt. We have the facts of the case, and we believe the right thing to do is to offer some remedy.

That is why Republicans are on the floor today, and that is why our young Congresswoman is leading this charge.

I stand behind her. I voted for the rule, and I am going to vote for this. It does the right thing.

I thank the gentlewoman for the time.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. SESSIONS. I would just add to that list of the gentleman from Texas: If it were Congress, would we allow this to happen?

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

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, we have another colleague here on the floor

today who serves on the Ways and Means Committee and has diligently worked on IRS issues and has been a leader on bringing some clarity to the situations that we deal with in trying to bring integrity to the IRS.

I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RENACCI).

Mr. RENACCI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3724, the Ensuring Integrity in the IRS Workforce Act of 2015, a bill sponsored by my good friend and colleague, Representative KRISTI NOEM of South Dakota. As the previous colleague said, this should be a bipartisan issue. This is an American issue.

I spent most of my life in the business world. I have owned and operated over 60 different businesses, employed over 3,000 people, and created thousands of new jobs. Throughout my 30-year business career, I have had the privilege of hiring many new, talented individuals.

When it comes to hiring at the IRS, the Treasury inspector general stated, "Selecting the best candidates for employment is essential to providing the best service to America's taxpayers, maintaining public trust in tax administration, and safeguarding taxpayer's rights and privacy."

However, the inspector general report from December 2014 found that the IRS fell short of that standard. Last year the IRS hired hundreds of employees who were terminated for misconduct. Those serious offenses included willful failure to file tax returns, unauthorized access to taxpayer information, falsification of official forms, and abuse of IRS leave and property policies.

□ 0930

As a businessman, but more importantly as a representative of the American taxpayer, I find this IG report inexcusable. It seems obvious to me, but not once did I rehire someone in the real world—in the real world—who I had previously fired for misconduct.

The IRS needs to earn the trust of hardworking American taxpayers. Rehiring employees who were fired for these serious offenses further erodes that trust.

H.R. 3724 directly addresses this issue. It prohibits the IRS from rehiring employees that were fired for misconduct. This is common sense.

As a former businessowner, I know it is a very difficult decision to let someone go, but rehiring an individual who was asked to leave due to gross misconduct would be insulting to other employees who have faithfully served the business, and would present a significant risk to the health of the organization and its customers.

The IG report found the IRS doesn't take those risks seriously. In fact, "IRS officials stated that prior conduct and performance issues do not play a significant role in deciding the candidates who are best qualified for hiring." Because the IRS hasn't taken

those risks seriously, this straightforward, commonsense legislation is needed to restore accountability and trust in the IRS.

I would like to commend Mrs. NOEM for her leadership on this legislation.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in support.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, it appears that America will have to continue to wait for action to stop companies from shifting American jobs overseas and stopping corporate tax dodgers.

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

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY).

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3724.

I would think as we look around the country right now, the integrity of what our government is and how our voters are represented and our citizens are represented, is really the case here.

I thank the gentlewoman for bringing such a commonsense piece of legislation forward because we know in this town there is nothing less common than common sense.

The faith and trust of the American people is based on their belief that the people who work for them are acting in their best interest, always acting in their best interest—the interest of the American people. Not in their personal interest, but in the interest of the American people. We find out that there are folks who are working on behalf of the American people, but they have somehow betrayed that faith and that trust. And folks have lost confidence in their government. They have lost confidence because of things that happened, not things that were imagined, not some whimsical idea that somehow we can get at somebody for doing this.

There is no agency that is feared more in this country than the IRS. The question is: Why would they be so feared? Because they can completely shut you down, they can freeze your bank account, they can make you stay up late at night worrying about what is going to happen.

When you get that letter from the IRS, the next thing you do is contact an attorney to represent you because you don't want to make a mistake, you just don't want to do it. But then you find out that within the IRS, people working for that agency, but, more importantly, working for the people of the United States, have violated that trust.

These are substantiated results. This is not somebody's idea or way of getting back at somebody. This is removing bad apples and saying: you have violated, you have betrayed the trust of the American people, you are going to leave the agency, but, more importantly, you are never coming back in.

This isn't any way to somehow get back at a political party or get back at

anybody. This is a fact that if we cannot restore the confidence the American people have in us—their faith and their trust—why are we here? Why do we go through elections?

I don't come here to represent my ideas and my beliefs. I come here to represent the values and beliefs of Pennsylvania's Third Congressional District. That is 705,687 Americans, not Republicans, not Democrats, not Libertarians, not Independents, but Americans.

This piece of legislation takes into account that these are wrongdoers. These are not people who we want to associate ourselves with. These are people who have used the power of their office or of their position to somehow work against the very people who employ them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. I would just say, at this moment in our history, I thank the gentlewoman for standing up for every hardworking American taxpayer and doing the best we can to restore the faith and confidence of the American people that they can trust who it is that they elect to represent them and they can trust us to make sure that wrongdoers are punished and, once are asked to leave, are not allowed to come back in.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I would inquire how much time is remaining on both sides.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York has 24½ minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from South Dakota has 15½ minutes remaining.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ).

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Mrs. NOEM and her drive to address this very important issue.

I believe that the overwhelming majority of the people who work at the IRS are good, hardworking, patriotic people who want to do the right thing. I have a serious problem with management and I have a serious problem with the head of the IRS, but on this issue, this is just unbelievable that we can't come to a conclusive and absolute 100 percent agreement.

All we are asking for is that the bad apples, the people who will disturb what is going on in the workplace, who aren't going to act in the best interest of the United States of America, that they be excluded from participation.

One of the things that is fascinating, Mr. Speaker, as we look at this, is in response to the independent review that was done of the IRS and their hiring practices. And the question here is: Should we go back and review the personnel employment file prior to rehiring somebody?

This is what they said: "Additionally, while it did find that a review of performance and conduct issues could be accomplished earlier in the process, the Department of Treasury, the Office of Personnel Management, and the Internal Revenue Service believed that it was not feasible to move the review of these issues earlier in the hiring process. This action would greatly increase the cost of hiring, likely increase cycle time beyond the Presidential mandate of 80 days, require additional resources, and not likely yield a reasonable return on investment."

Come on. Come on. Are you kidding me? How long could it possibly take to actually go back and review somebody's performance reviews, look back at their employment history, and see if they have been acting in the best interest of the United States of America?

Clearly, in the examples that are there, there are people that willfully don't even file their own tax returns, there are people that are doing some bad, stupid stuff.

They don't think they have the time and resources to look at it in advance; we have to actually pass a piece of legislation requiring this?

That seems entirely reasonable. It is not overly burdensome. Here you have an organization, the IRS, that can actually destroy somebody's life by a mere letter showing up in your mailbox, and they can't even take the time to look at somebody's employment history, somebody who has already worked at the IRS?

That is how absurd this organization is, and that is why this piece of legislation is so easy to understand, it is so easy to vote for. It is not a partisan issue. This is just saying: Do you know what? For all the good people who work at the IRS, let's make sure that the new people who come on, or the rehires who come on, in this case, are actually addressed and we look at their information prior to hiring.

It is that simple. That is why I am in favor of this bill.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 10 seconds.

I am still waiting for a bill to keep American jobs in America and not export them overseas through the Tax Code. I will continue to wait for that bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, today, we are talking about a bill that will bring integrity to the IRS, which will better serve our taxpayers into the future.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE).

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I really want to thank the gentlewoman from South Dakota for her leadership in bringing this bill forward.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is about restoring trust. This bill is about holding the IRS accountable. Here we are, in a week where Americans had to file their tax returns. And so often, just the letters I-R-S send a chilling effect through people when they hear those

letters. Yet, you look at the arrogance over at the IRS, just the attitude that they have and the disdain it seems that they have towards the very people who pay their bills—the taxpayers.

Here you have a case where people who have been fired by the IRS for abusing their positions are actually being rehired back to the IRS. Again, this is the kind of disdain that disgusts people as they fear the IRS. The IRS ought to have the same fear towards the people who pay their salaries as people get when they get that letter from the IRS.

Mr. Speaker, we have had inspector general reports in the Treasury Department. The inspector general found over 140 IRS agents aren't even accurate in their taxes. The very people who are responsible for auditing American citizens aren't even paying their own taxes.

This is the kind of disregard for the American people that we are seeing over at the IRS, and it is time to rein it in. It is time to bring some accountability and transparency back to the IRS.

Who is afraid of that? What is so wrong with saying: If somebody has been fired for cause over at the IRS, with the access they have to such sensitive personal information of taxpayers, why should they be rehired back?

It is just basic common sense that if somebody has abused their position at the IRS, enough is enough, and they shouldn't be able to return and have access to that sensitive information anymore.

I want to applaud, again, the gentlewoman from South Dakota for bringing this commonsense bill forward. I would urge adoption later on when we have this vote on the House floor.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my friend from South Dakota for her leadership in holding the IRS accountable for what we are seeing today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3724, the Ensuring Integrity in the IRS Workforce Act, to join in the outrage with my colleagues today on what we are seeing at the IRS. With tax day hitting earlier this week, I think this is an ideal time to highlight the need for continued oversight and, perhaps, ramped-up oversight of the Internal Revenue Service.

Last February, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration reported that the IRS had a tendency to rehire former employees with serious misconduct and performance issues. In their review, they found more than 100 former employees were rehired by the IRS despite having significant performance and misconduct problems, like willfully failing to file tax returns: a

rather important thing for most of us, but apparently not for IRS employees.

Mr. Speaker, the families in my district and I are 100 percent fed up with adhering to a standard that the IRS doesn't even hold their own employees to. We simply will not tolerate the rehiring of incompetent individuals who fail to do their job in the first place. It is time to put a leash on the IRS and prevent taxpayers from further double standards and further abuse.

I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in voting for H.R. 3724.

Again, I thank my colleague from South Dakota for her excellent leadership on this. I look forward to open debate and voting on this matter as soon as possible.

□ 0945

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

No disrespect to the sponsor of this bill whatsoever. I have great admiration for her, as she knows, but I believe that this bill could have been taken up on the consent calendar, quite frankly, with all of this discussion about the support on both sides.

The reality is, though, that we are using precious time here on the floor on an issue that, as I say, could have been on the consent calendar. We are not addressing the real issue of concern to the American people, which is of the continuing loss of jobs here in America because of our Tax Code, which we refuse to fix, that is shifting jobs and American corporations overseas to inversion and also shifting American jobs overseas because of those inversions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CROWLEY. I yield myself an additional 15 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, we are not having a hearing on this. We are not doing anything here on the floor to address this issue. Instead, we are taking up issues that, quite frankly, could have been on the consent calendar.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I am ready to close.

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

I believe this should be the beginning and not the end of a discussion on how to best plug the giant corporate loopholes that are allowing companies to skip out on paying the same taxes that all of our constituents have to pay. This is one of the many major issues this Congress should undertake; but, instead, we are all too busy governing by press releases.

This Congress has done nothing to address the Zika virus, which could be a threat to all women who are pregnant or who are looking to become pregnant; but we have this consent bill here on the floor for debate.

This Congress has done nothing to address the crisis of lead in our drinking water—a crisis vividly on display in Flint but one that lurks in the pipes of

hundreds of cities and towns across our great land; yet we have this consent bill here on the calendar for debate.

This Congress hasn't even attempted to pass a budget for our country—the majority has not proposed a budget for our country—which is one of the most basic functions we can do as an institution to make sure we make the necessary investments possible while also getting our economic house in order; yet we have what I would consider to be a consent calendar bill here on the floor today, taking up an hour's debate.

But we will always have time for message bills. Sure, they don't create a job for an unemployed person in New York or in Flint or in Houston or in L.A., and they don't increase the take-home pay of any underpaid worker or make college more affordable for middle class kids or strengthen Social Security for our seniors of today and tomorrow, but they will sound great on talk radio tonight and over the weekend—we are going after the IRS again. They don't even deal with the Tax Code even though this bill is advertised as the Republicans' idea of tax reform. It does not reform the Tax Code in any way, shape, or form, but that is what they portray it as.

Let me explain something about the Tax Code to my Republican colleagues.

Our Tax Code is inefficient. You see that when large corporations are paying less tax than the employees who work for them. It is overly complicated. You see that when multinational corporations avoid paying the same taxes as our constituents back home have to pay simply by their hiring expensive lawyers that our constituents, quite frankly, cannot afford. It is unfair. You see that when corporations can dodge paying their fair share of taxes by simply switching their post office boxes to foreign countries—something our neighbors back home, if they attempted to do, would be arrested for, for tax evasion, but not corporations. Individuals, if you do that, you are arrested for tax evasion, but not an American corporation; yet my Republican colleagues continue to refuse to address this issue.

Maybe more importantly than anything else, it does not promote job growth here in the United States. You see this when Congress refuses to repeal the tax breaks for companies to fire their workers here and move their jobs overseas.

This Congress must tackle these serious issues, but we are not doing that today. We continue to wait for legislation—for a hearing—on these important issues.

Democrats stand ready to work with you all, my Republican colleagues, on commonsense legislation that plugs the corporate tax loopholes that are literally draining the funds our country needs in order to function properly. Democrats stand ready to work with you to fix the Tax Code that is not only inefficient, not only complicated, not

only unfair, but that does not promote job growth here in the United States. That is something we want to work with you on in a bipartisan way. Unfortunately, we have to continue to wait for another day before the majority is serious about working together, in a bipartisan way, to make our tax system fairer for all working men and women in the United States. Let me be clear, once again, that the American people will not wait any longer.

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

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

We have heard repeatedly from my colleague on the other side of the aisle about why we should not be spending time on this topic today, about why we shouldn't have dedicated an hour's worth of debate to making sure that we talk about H.R. 3724, Ensuring Integrity in the IRS Workforce Act.

I think he has forgotten about what kind of information the people of this country turn over to the IRS. They turn over their Social Security numbers, their financial information; a lot of the security that they have for their families, their homes, and their businesses they completely trust the IRS to take care of, to protect, and to make sure that they use in the correct manner so that they might abide by the law and pay their taxes like honest, hardworking Americans do. To say that we shouldn't spend time in making sure that criminals and people who are fired for misconduct don't have access to that information, to me, is silly. That is exactly what our job is. The IRS needs integrity, and we are here to bring it today.

Mr. Speaker, the White House has issued a veto threat against this bill. They said that the IRS would be forced to fire people, because of this bill, if it were signed into law. I read the White House's Statement of Administration Policy on my bill, and the statement reads that it is unnecessary because current IRS processes already ensure that the agency does not rehire former employees who have significant conduct issues.

I guess the White House didn't read the report, for the inspector general expressed concerns that the IRS continues to hire individuals who have significant prior conduct and performance issues even after the agency supposedly made upgrades to its hiring practices.

I remind you, Mr. Speaker, that the inspector general's review of former employees who were fired for serious misconduct and who were then rehired included employees with histories of fraud, a falsification of documents, workplace disruption, absence, and an unauthorized accessing of taxpayer information. The inspector general identified approximately 140 individuals who are currently, today, with the IRS who had been previously fired for cause. We are talking about an agency that employs 80,000 people. Surely, it can find 140 people who haven't committed fraud or falsified documents.

Mr. Speaker, the inspector general recommended that the IRS reassess its hiring practices to determine in what part of the process it should fully vet candidates in terms of their prior performance. In fact, the IRS was given an opportunity to fully respond to the inspector general's report. In its response, the agency insisted its processes were sufficient. Yet, Mr. Speaker, the agency still only begins to vet the candidates for employment only after the entire hiring process is completed and after a formal offer of employment has been extended. So, regardless of any changes the IRS has made to its hiring practices, the inspector general said he remains very concerned because IRS documents indicate it is hiring individuals who have significant prior conduct and performance issues.

Mr. Speaker, because the IRS hasn't taken action is why we are here today. This bill is simple. It just says that the IRS cannot rehire employees who have been fired for misconduct. It is something the IRS should have taken action on; and because they didn't, that is why we are here today. It is our job to protect the taxpayers and to make sure their information is safe with the agency that they, by law, need to turn over to the IRS.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 688, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

BAN ON IRS BONUSES UNTIL SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY DEVELOPS COMPREHENSIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials on H.R. 4890.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Michigan). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 688 and rule

XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4890.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 0957

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 4890) to impose a ban on the payment of bonuses to employees of the Internal Revenue Service until the Secretary of the Treasury develops and implements a comprehensive customer service strategy, with Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEEHAN) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

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

I am before the House today—really, before the Nation—on behalf of all of those frustrated taxpayers who have spent a great part of the last month, if not months before, in preparing their taxes in what is an increasingly complex Code. While we have a mission to simplify that Code, the fact of the matter is they have to deal with the challenges that they face today.

One of the agencies that they interact with or hope to interact with when they have questions is something called the Internal Revenue Service. I want to focus on that third word—"service"—because the idea here is we don't have some oversight agency, and we don't have some agency whose obligation and purpose in life is to make it harder on the average hardworking taxpayers, who are supporting the government with the money that they earn; it is to be a service—to use their resources to help the hardworking Americans who must pay taxes—and to simplify the process, particularly when they have questions of a very, very complex Code and its requirements that are being put on each and every one of them. When we talk about service, what we need to see is a pattern; and what we see is a pattern by which, unfortunately, the service of the IRS is deteriorating rapidly.

Let me give you the facts, and I am talking about what they call the answer time.

When an individual gets on the telephone because he is frustrated and he calls the IRS and says, "I have a question," this year, the IRS estimates it will receive 48.4 million calls with people asking for assistance. Do you know how many they will answer? Sixteen million. That means that 32 million