

supportive of this legislation: Aultman, headquartered in his district in Canton; the Cleveland Clinic, Kettering Health Network in the Dayton area; Mercy Canton Sisters of Charity; MetroHealth System in Cleveland; OhioHealth, headquartered in Columbus; Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center in Columbus; the University of Cincinnati Health System in Cincinnati; and University Hospitals, headquartered in Cleveland. As was mentioned, this legislation passed the Committee on Ways and Means in a bipartisan manner.

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, occasionally we have an extra minute on the floor, and it makes sense to acknowledge some people that we trust and rely upon and we don't ever mention, so I would like to just say thank you to the Democratic staff: Sarah Levin, Melanie Egorin, Daniel Foster, JC Cannon, and Daniel Jackson; on the Republican side: Emily Murry, Lisa Grabert, Nick Uehlecke, Taylor Trott; to the staff at the CMS who helped put this bill together: Ira Burney, Anne Scott, Lisa Yen. And to the staff at legislative counsel: Ed Grossman—Ed has been there for as long as I have been here, so any bill that gets out of here without Ed looking at it is a pretty rare bill—and Jessica Shapiro is his assistant.

The Congressional Budget Office gets in on these deals as well: Tom Bradley, Lori Housman, Kevin McNellis, and Jamease Kowalczyk. I am from Chicago. I should be able to pronounce a Polish name. We appreciate their hard work.

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

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, let me just close by saying thank you to Dr. McDERMOTT. It has been enjoyable to work with his team, led by Amy, and we appreciate the bipartisanship. You mentioned all those names—stole my thunder—Emily and her team, and my staff, Whitney Koch Daffner and Abigail Finn, too, for yeoman's work.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a unanimous vote.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5273, the Helping Hospitals Improve Patient Care Act of 2016.

First, I'd like to thank Chairman TIBERI and Ranking Member McDERMOTT for their leadership on this important legislation.

At the Ways and Means Committee, we are working to deliver health care solutions that will expand access, increase choices, and improve the quality of care for the American people.

The Helping Hospitals Improve Patient Care Act helps advance all three of those goals. And the bill does so in a fiscally responsible manner that helps strengthen and preserve Medicare for the long-term.

At its core, our bipartisan legislation is about supporting the delivery of high-quality, affordable care to families and seniors throughout the country. It will especially help people who live in low-income and rural communities.

Our bill includes straightforward solutions to help hospitals and health care providers transition to—and preserve—the new site-neutral payment policies. This will give providers the certainty they need to best serve their patients, now and into the future.

This bill is an excellent illustration of what we can accomplish through regular order. It's the product of many innovative solutions, proposed by many members on both sides of the aisle.

The solutions in this bill will make a real difference when it comes to the delivery of high-quality care for the people of our districts.

In fact, the University of Texas' MD Anderson Cancer Center located in Houston has already embraced this bill. MD Anderson officials said, "This ensures our ability to continue providing the highest quality and level of cancer care to patients in the communities we serve."

And MD Anderson is just one of many hospitals and cancer treatment centers throughout the country that we help with H.R. 5273.

This bill is particularly personal for me because it builds from the hospital discussion draft I released as Health Subcommittee Chairman back in November 2014.

In the Helping Hospitals Improve Patient Care Act, we push forward two critical building blocks of that discussion draft.

First, Speaker RYAN's crosswalk bill that better coordinates care between inpatient and outpatient settings.

Second, Congressman JIM RENACCI's readmission policy, which helps hospitals in low-income communities serve their patients.

There are still many policies from our hospital discussion draft that are worthy of debate. We'll continue to work with Members and stakeholders to pursue additional reforms that make our health care system work better for patients and providers in our communities.

I'm grateful to all the members—on and off our committee—who worked hard to craft and advance the Helping Hospitals Improve Patient Care Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TIBERI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5273, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING GOAL OF ENSURING ALL HOLOCAUST VICTIMS LIVE WITH DIGNITY, COMFORT, AND SECURITY

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 129), expressing support for the goal of ensuring that all Holocaust victims live with dignity, comfort, and security in their remaining years, and urging the Federal Republic of Germany to reaffirm its commitment to this goal through a financial commitment to comprehensively address the unique health and welfare needs of vulnerable Holocaust victims, including home care and other medically prescribed needs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 129

Whereas the annihilation of 6,000,000 Jews during the Holocaust and the murder of millions of others by the Nazi German state constitutes one of the most tragic and heinous crimes in human history;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of Jews survived persecution by the Nazi regime despite being imprisoned, subjected to slave labor, moved into ghettos, forced to live in hiding or under false identity, forced to live under curfew, or required to wear the "yellow star";

Whereas in fear of the oncoming Nazi Einsatzgruppen ("Nazi Killing Squads") and the likelihood of extermination, hundreds of thousands of Jewish Nazi victims fled for their lives;

Whereas whatever type of persecution suffered by Jews during the Holocaust, the common thread that binds these Holocaust victims is that they were targeted for extermination and that they lived with a constant fear for their lives and the lives of their loved ones;

Whereas Holocaust victims immigrated to the United States from Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and the former Soviet Union from 1933 to today;

Whereas it is estimated that there are at least 100,000 Holocaust victims living in the United States and approximately 500,000 living around the world today, including child survivors;

Whereas tens of thousands of Holocaust victims are in their 80s or 90s or are more than 100 years in age, and the number of Holocaust victims is diminishing;

Whereas at least 50 percent of Holocaust victims alive today will pass away within the next decade, and those alive are becoming frailer and have increasing health and welfare needs;

Whereas Holocaust victims throughout the world continue to suffer from permanent physical and psychological injuries and disabilities and live with the emotional scars of this systematic genocide against the Jewish people;

Whereas many of the emotional and psychological scars of Holocaust victims are exacerbated in their old age, the past haunts and overwhelms many aspects of their lives when their health fails them;

Whereas Holocaust victims suffer particular trauma when their emotional and physical circumstances force them to leave the security of their own home and enter institutional or other group living residential facilities;

Whereas tens of thousands of Holocaust victims live in poverty, cannot afford and do not receive sufficient medical care, home care, mental health care, medicine, food, transportation, and other vital life-sustaining services that allow them to live their final years with comfort and dignity;

Whereas Holocaust victims often lack family support networks and require social worker-supported case management in order to manage their daily lives and access government funded services;

Whereas in response to a letter sent by Members of Congress to Germany's Minister of Finance in December 2015 regarding increased funding for Holocaust victims, German officials acknowledged that "recent experience has shown that the care financed by the German Government to date is insufficient" and that "it is imperative to expand these assistance measures quickly given the advanced age of many of the affected persons";

Whereas German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer acknowledged in 1951 Germany's responsibility to provide moral and financial compensation to Holocaust victims worldwide;

Whereas every successive German Chancellor has reaffirmed this position, including Chancellor Angela Merkel, who in 2007 reaffirmed that "only by fully accepting its enduring responsibility for this most appalling period and for the cruelest crimes in its history, can Germany shape the future";

Whereas in 2015 Chancellor Merkel's spokesperson again confirmed "all Germans know the history of the murderous race mania of the Nazis that led to the break with civilization that was the Holocaust. . . we know that responsibility for this crime against humanity is German and very much our own"; and

Whereas Congress believes it is Germany's moral and historical responsibility to comprehensively, permanently, and urgently provide the resources for all Holocaust victims' medical, mental health, and long-term care needs: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) acknowledges the financial and moral commitment of the Federal Republic of Germany over the past seven decades to provide a measure of justice for Holocaust victims;

(2) supports the goal of ensuring that all Holocaust victims in the United States and around the world are able to live with dignity, comfort, and security in their remaining years;

(3) applauds the nonprofit organizations and agencies that work tirelessly to honor and assist Holocaust victims in their communities;

(4) acknowledges the ongoing process of negotiations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) in order to secure funding for Holocaust victims and for vital social services provided through nonprofit organizations and agencies around the world;

(5) acknowledges that the Federal Republic of Germany and the Claims Conference have established a new high-level working group that will develop proposals for extensive assistance for home care and other social welfare needs of Holocaust victims;

(6) urges the working group to recognize the imperative of immediately and fully funding victims' medical, mental health, and long-term care needs and to do so with full transparency and accountability to ensure all funds for Holocaust victims from the Federal Republic of Germany are administered efficiently, fairly, and without delay; and

(7) urges the Federal Republic of Germany to continue to reaffirm its commitment and fulfill its moral responsibility to Holocaust victims by ensuring that every Holocaust victim receives all of the prescribed medical care, home care, mental health care, and other vital services necessary to live in dignity and by providing, without delay, additional financial resources to address the unique needs of Holocaust victims.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to

include extraneous material on this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank my good friend and south Florida colleague, Mr. TED DEUTCH, for his work on this resolution and for co-introducing it together. It is an important resolution, Mr. Speaker. I also want to thank our chairman, Chairman ROYCE, and the ranking member, Mr. ENGEL, for always working in a bipartisan manner, for recognizing the importance of this resolution, and for moving this bill out of our Committee on Foreign Affairs in an expeditious manner.

This resolution, simply put, Mr. Speaker, urges Germany to honor its moral and historical obligations to Holocaust survivors and to provide for their unmet needs immediately and comprehensively. I know that for Mr. DEUTCH and for me, this is an issue that deeply impacts many of our constituents in south Florida.

There are just over 500,000 Holocaust survivors worldwide. About a quarter of that number live right here in the United States, with over 15,000 living in our south Florida communities, Mr. Speaker. I have had the honor and privilege to work closely with survivors from south Florida, many of whom I have come to call dear friends: my friends David Mermelstein, David Schaefer, Herbie Karliner, Joe Sachs, and Alex Gross; and Jack Rubin, who has testified before Congress on issues related to Holocaust survivors, including a hearing that I chaired alongside Mr. DEUTCH in the year 2014.

There are also many more to thank, those who have made justice for Holocaust survivors their life's work, individuals like Sam Dubbin, Mark Talisman, and the list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

It has been my close relationship with these individuals that has really helped me to understand the realities that survivors have endured during humanity's darkest period and, unfortunately, the sad reality that they face today—today—Mr. Speaker, especially when it comes to their home healthcare needs, to their mental health needs, to their medical care needs.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that nearly half of all survivors worldwide live at or below the poverty level? After going through what is almost indescribable horror, these survivors are living at or below the poverty level. Many survivors are unable to maintain even a modest and dignified standard of living: they lack funds for home care; they don't have the money for medicine; they don't have the funds for food; they can't pay the utilities; and they can't pay their rent. As Jack

Rubin said before our subcommittee in the year 2014: the existing system has fallen tragically short of what survivors need and deserve.

The current funding and care delivery systems are difficult for survivors to access, and they are severely underfunded. That is why it is so important that we pass this resolution and urge our friends in Germany, our good partners in Germany, to honor the obligations and the commitments that they have made to provide for the needs of Holocaust survivors.

German Governments have provided some support through income assistance programs and have doubled funding for home care services in the past 5 years, so they are trying. They want to do better. In fact, even by Germany's own admission, the care financed by the German Government to date has been insufficient for those in need of intensive long-term care.

Mr. Speaker, because of the horrors that these survivors have endured and the emotional and physical scars they continue to carry with them, their medical, mental, and home care needs are far more complex, far more extensive than those of other elderly individuals.

□ 1630

These survivors have endured the torture; they have endured the labor camps, experiments, the loss of loved ones, and even the loss of entire families. We owe these survivors the opportunity to live out the remainder of their days in the dignity and comfort they deserve.

Germany owes it to the survivors to alleviate and end the continuing injuries inflicted by the Nazi regime by finding a way to provide for all of their medical, mental health, and home care needs, directly and without delay.

I urge my colleagues to join Mr. DEUTCH and to join me in urging Germany to do the right thing, because time is of the essence.

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

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

I rise in support of this resolution. And I thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for moving so quickly to pass this resolution through committee and bring it to the floor, because time is, sadly, very much of the essence.

Today we will vote on H. Con. Res. 129, which calls upon Germany to fully fund the needs of aging Holocaust survivors. I want to thank my friend, Chairman Emeritus ROS-LEHTINEN, for her steadfast leadership and for her longstanding commitment to championing the needs of Holocaust survivors.

More than anything else, I want to thank the survivors in south Florida and throughout the Nation. You are my constituents, my friends, and my heroes. This includes Jack Rubin, whose tireless advocacy through trips

to Washington to educate and testify in Congress shaped this very effort; and Norman Frajman, whose dedication to educating students in our own community helped ensure that they will never forget.

My friend, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN, mentioned so many of the people that she is so close to. I want to thank her for giving me the opportunity and the blessing of getting to know and spend time with David Schaefer, David Mermelstein, and others.

It breaks my heart that today in the United States there are tens of thousands of survivors who live in poverty and cannot afford, and thus do not receive, sufficient medical care, home care, and other vital life-sustaining services.

Today we have an opportunity to send a clear message that these survivors, who made it through the darkest time in history, deserve to live out their lives with the dignity that they are so worthy of and have long been promised.

Some of my colleagues might wonder: Why is this resolution needed?

It is simple: Holocaust survivors are not receiving the care that they need.

For decades, the German Government has remained committed to funding survivor needs. This is something I know Chancellor Merkel cares a great deal about, as she has reaffirmed that commitment. But the survivor population is aging into their eighties, their nineties, and hundreds. Their needs are greater.

Unfortunately, despite the payments of the German Government over decades, significant gaps in survivor care remain. And German officials have acknowledged that shortfall. Right now there are special negotiations going on with the German Government. In the coming days, decisions will be made in Berlin that will determine whether or not survivors will receive the funding and the care that they so desperately need.

But I am worried. I am worried that time is running out. I am worried that this is our last chance to ensure that, once and for all, survivors have what they need. Every survivor deserves to receive the care needed to live in comfort.

So many survivors are struggling. And, again, while we appreciate the decades-long commitment of the German Government, I am not certain that our ally, Germany, understands the scope of the true need—the needs that Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN and I see in our communities in south Florida every day. That is why passing this resolution here will send a message that is unmistakable; and that is that Congress is fully united.

We stand at a decisive moment in the lives of our aging survivor population. Each month it seems that there is another funeral in my community and another survivor passes. So it is with a heavy heart that we must acknowledge

that these current negotiations are likely the last opportunity for Germany to comprehensively address the unique health and welfare needs of survivors before it is too late.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution before us today urges our German partners to fulfill the moral and financial commitment to the victims of the Holocaust. The shortfall is the most dramatic when it comes to home care. For survivors, the need to stay in their homes as they age is critical. The thought of institutionalized care or being removed from their home is a devastatingly painful reminder of the past. As they age, they rely more on home care services.

Under the current system, home care is capped so that even the most infirmed, isolated, and poor Nazi victims can only receive a maximum of 25 hours of home care per week. That is 5 hours a day for 5 days a week. There is no funding for additional hours.

In committee I spoke about my 91-year-old constituent who survived Bergen-Belsen. He fell and suffered a fracture. He requires assistance with all of the activities of daily living. He now needs round-the-clock care, but the current funding system does not provide it.

Many of those who survived also lack family support to help with transportation to doctors' appointments or help preparing meals. They deserve to have these most basic needs met. They deserve to be able to access care for all of their mental and medical health needs. And they deserve our support.

Today I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the passage of this resolution and for Germany to seize upon this opportunity to alleviate the suffering of survivors. While no amount of money can ever erase the horrors faced by Nazi victims, there is a moral responsibility to ensure that they can receive all of the vital services and medical care necessary to live out the remainder of their days with dignity.

No more limitations on home care hours. Complete the negotiations. And fund the needs now, once and for all.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY), my friend.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, TED DEUTCH, for his leadership, and also my good friend, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, the Florida twins who have so steadfastly brought this matter of conscience and history to the floor of the House of Representatives.

It was said about the Holocaust that "we should never forget" and "never again." What a legacy it would be that those who survived the darkest chapter of human history should live out the remainder of their years in want—in want of basic medical care, in want of home health care and caregiving so

that they can have dignity in their twilight years.

How can we ignore that plight? How can we say to that generation, You should go without?

They are living reminders of the dark side of human nature and of how history can go so terribly wrong. Honoring them with this resolution and engaging our partner, our ally, Germany, in this one last endeavor is a noble cause.

I am pleased to support H. Con. Res. 129, and I applaud the leadership of my colleagues from Florida in reminding this House of the duty still in front of us.

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

Mr. Speaker, today we are talking about the frailest people in our community who have endured the worst, most unimaginable horrors. They are people whose entire families were destroyed.

Mr. Speaker, Hitler tried to destroy them. He succeeded in killing millions, but his goal was genocide. His goal was to wipe the Jewish people from the face of the Earth.

We can't imagine the magnitude of that evil, but we have just a few years left with those who managed to survive, to escape death—sometimes multiple times—to endure concentration camps when everyone around them was sent to the gas chambers, and to flee death squads that roamed the European countryside killing—and mass killings—again and again and again.

For them to live through all of that, to survive all of that, should we tell them that we are sorry, we must cap the amount of care you can receive in your home? Or that the social service agencies and their employees and their volunteers who know what their clients need should tell them to need less?

Mr. Speaker, let's pass this resolution and tell every person sitting at the negotiating table in Berlin that we will not accept half measures. The German Government has reiterated its moral obligation to act. This resolution calls for action. The time to act is now. Survivors of the Holocaust deserve dignity.

I would like to again thank my dear friend and fierce advocate for survivors, Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN. We have stood together on their behalf for years. She is remarkably committed to justice.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, there are Holocaust survivors who are watching us now. When we pass this resolution, many will cry. They told me that. I cannot and I will not go back to south Florida on Friday and look into the eyes of these sweet people whom we are so fortunate to know, so privileged to have in our community, and tell them that Congress passed a resolution to make them feel better. They don't need symbolism.

What I will tell them is that the United States House of Representatives overwhelmingly spoke on their behalf—

a group that 80 years ago had no one speaking for them. And we expect the German Government to hear what we are saying.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank Mr. DEUTCH and Mr. CONNOLLY. What a joy it has been for me to have worked with them, especially with my twin. The poor guy. That was a low blow by Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. DEUTCH might not forgive him for that. But what heartfelt words from Mr. DEUTCH. I thank him for that.

We are indeed fortunate, Mr. Speaker, that we have so many constituents in our districts for whom this issue is so important. We are blessed that we have so many Holocaust survivors in our districts. But, sadly, as Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. CONNOLLY, and I have pointed out, time is of the essence. These survivors are passing away without the urgent care that they have been promised and without the comforts that they need.

So I want to close by saying, Mr. Speaker, just how important this measure is. Mr. DEUTCH talked about how our constituents are watching in south Florida. And it is so true. How important it is that we send a clear message to the German Government that time is of the essence.

For over 70 years, Holocaust survivors have had to live with the painful memories and the toll that their experiences have had on their minds and their bodies.

□ 1645

Successive German Governments have acknowledged Germany's responsibility for the Nazi regime's atrocities. Most recently, Chancellor Merkel's office stated: "We know the responsibility for this crime against humanity is German and very much our own."

I agree with Chancellor Merkel's office. We don't have time for negotiations, Mr. Speaker. How long will those negotiations take while, every day, yet another Holocaust survivor passes away.

We don't need Germany to engage with the bureaucratic nightmare that is the Claims Conference. This was a process that was set up to deal with these issues, but it has not worked out that way. Why add another layer to the process when Germany can and should provide this assistance directly?

The proof that this Claims Conference process has been nothing short of an abject failure is that nearly half of the survivors today, Mr. Speaker, are living at or below the poverty level. Under this current system, many have died well before their time as a result of this current broken system, to say nothing about the fraud, the corruption, and the embezzlement that has been documented.

Mr. Speaker, the Claims Conference has failed to live up to its mandate to

advocate and work on behalf of survivors. The Claims Conference provides artificial caps on survivors' needs. When those caps are reached, good luck.

Just recently, a survivor from our own area right here in D.C. was told by a local service agency that the Claims Conference would no longer fund her Lifeline button. This woman lives alone, Mr. Speaker. She needs this service, but she was cut off.

The Conference stops assistance for many, and many others receive no assistance at all, while their pleas fall on deaf ears.

With the Claims Conference, there is no transparency, little accountability, and a shocking disregard for the actual survivors, themselves; but I believe Chancellor Merkel's heartfelt expression of concern about Germany's responsibility to survivors and her leadership on moral issues, and this will finally resolve this longstanding tragedy for survivors.

That is why our resolution, Mr. Speaker, to fund, directly, survivors' needs is so important. We have seen what happens when the Claims Conference gets involved. Survivors are just not afforded the assistance they desperately need.

So I urge my colleagues to join Mr. DEUTCH and me in urging Germany to fund, directly and comprehensively, all of the needs of survivors like it has pledged. There is no time to waste.

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

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN and Ranking Member DEUTCH for their work on this resolution, and their continued work on Holocaust issues.

The horrors wrought by the Nazi regime did not end when prisoners finally walked out from behind the barbed wire fences in 1945. Today, the after-effects of Hitler's death camps still haunt the lives of those who survived.

Tens of thousands of Holocaust survivors throughout the world live in poverty, forced to choose between feeding themselves and purchasing necessary medication.

The problem is staggering. Five hundred thousand survivors remain—most of them in their 80s. Today, more than one in four lack sufficient access to the care they need to live their final years in comfort and in dignity.

For decades, Germany has instituted and funded a number of aid programs in recognition of its obligation to these survivors. However, Germany's own evaluations made clear that more needs to be done.

We urge the German government to immediately and fully fund programming for victims' medical, mental health, and long-term care needs.

Time is of the essence. Every day that decisions are stalled, we lose another survivor, another story, another chance to show our respect for these individuals who have already endured what no one should.

Today's resolution recognizes the moral imperative for us—all of us—to work to ensure a life of dignity, security, and comfort for Holocaust survivors.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 129,

urging the Federal Republic of Germany to further fulfill its commitment to support the welfare of Holocaust survivors by ensuring that they receive the medical, mental health, and long-term care they require.

In 1952, the West German government concluded an agreement with representatives from major Jewish national and international organizations and the State of Israel to provide indemnification and restitution directly to survivors of the Holocaust. This agreement reflected an overdue but basic recognition at the time by many, including then-German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer who saw such restitution as, quote, "easing the way to the spiritual settlement of infinite suffering."

Mr. Speaker, that infinite suffering inflicted by the genocidal Nazi regime continues to this day. It is a daily reality for the aging survivors of that infamous crime who live with the mental and sometimes physical consequences of being tortured and abused.

There are over 500,000 Holocaust survivors living around the world today, and over 100,000 live here in the United States—witnesses to both the stunning evil and miraculous resilience of which humanity is capable. Their quiet presence in our midst is a treasure seldom sufficiently cherished. Today, as they age, they are increasingly in need of support and assistance that will allow them to live their remaining days with access to quality care and the peace that comes with it.

Mr. Speaker, I support H. Con. Res. 129 because I think it is right that the Federal Republic of Germany deliver direct support to Holocaust survivors to guarantee that they live the rest of their lives with the dignity, comfort, and security that was deprived them decades ago.

The resolution calls on the German government to make every effort—whether through direct assistance or negotiated arrangements—to support the medical, mental health, and long-term care needs of Holocaust victims. This support would be fully consistent with the German government's longstanding commitment to Holocaust survivors and it cannot wait.

It is important, Mr. Speaker, to also note the important steps already taken by the Federal Republic of Germany and the tremendous efforts and achievements it has made in making amends for the genocide committed under the Nazi dictatorship. H. Con. Res. 129 urges Germany to continue on this path and as such deserves our support in the House.

Finally, I would like to thank my friend and colleague Rep. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for introducing this laudable resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 129, 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.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. 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.

CLARIFYING ELIGIBILITY OF
LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY
TIME-LIMITED EMPLOYEES FOR
PERMANENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4906) to amend title 5, United States Code, to clarify the eligibility of employees of a land management agency in a time-limited appointment to compete for a permanent appointment at any Federal agency, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4906

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

SECTION 1. ELIGIBILITY OF EMPLOYEES IN A TIME-LIMITED APPOINTMENT TO COMPETE FOR A PERMANENT APPOINTMENT AT ANY FEDERAL AGENCY.

Section 9602 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a) by striking “any land management agency or any other agency (as defined in section 101 of title 31) under the internal merit promotion procedures of the applicable agency” and inserting “such land management agency when such agency is accepting applications from individuals within the agency’s workforce under merit promotion procedures, or any agency, including a land management agency, when the agency is accepting applications from individuals outside its own workforce under the merit promotion procedures of the applicable agency”; and

(2) in subsection (d) by inserting “of the agency from which the former employee was most recently separated” after “deemed a time-limited employee”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, the Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act enacted last year removed a barrier to the career advancement opportunities of long-serving temporary and seasonal employees of land management agencies across the Federal Government.

I want to thank my friend from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for his companion work in the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. I am proud to not only support it, but I authored a similar measure in the national defense authorization.

The bill we are considering today makes a technical correction that is

necessary due to recent guidance of the Office of Personnel Management, or OPM. H.R. 4906 clarifies that Congress intended to remove restrictions on temporary seasonal employees that would otherwise hinder their ability to compete for merit promotion vacancies open to other Federal employees.

Seasonal work of land management agencies is accomplished by a mix of both permanent and temporary employees. Before the Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act, regardless of how many seasons served, temporary employees could not compete for permanent jobs under the merit promotion procedures available to other Federal employees. Under the bill enacted last year, long-serving temporary employees were given this opportunity, and their employing agencies are provided with better applicant pools as a result.

For instance, experienced seasonal wildland firefighters are well qualified for permanent leadership roles within agencies that work to combat wildfires. Mr. Speaker, the Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act recognized their service as employees and afforded them opportunities for promotion.

However, recent guidance from the Office of Personnel Management severely limits temporary employees’ ability to compete for permanent jobs. OPM’s guidance declares temporary employees eligible to compete for permanent jobs only in situations where the hiring agency plans to prepare a list of candidates under merit promotion procedures and accepts applications only from individuals inside its own workforce.

This bill today makes a technical correction to clarify the temporary seasonal employees of land management agencies are eligible for the same opportunities for consideration under merit promotion procedures that apply to other Federal employees.

The bill also makes clear that eligible former employees are deemed to be employees of the agency from which they were most recently separated for instances where the position is limited to employees of the hiring agency.

Mr. Speaker, this straightforward bill will help to establish a more effective, efficient, and qualified Federal workforce.

I thank the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Government Operations, my friend, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY), for authoring this key legislation.

I would also like to highlight the great work of the chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Operations, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS), who is an original cosponsor of H.R. 4906 and cares deeply about remedying this situation.

I support this bill.

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

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

I thank my friend and colleague from Oklahoma for his leadership and his support on this important bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of a bipartisan bill, H.R. 4906, which I am pleased to cosponsor with Chairman MEADOWS of the Government Operations Subcommittee.

This simple bill makes, as my friend indicated, a technical correction to bipartisan legislation known as the Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act, on which I was pleased to work with the committee in passing into law just last year. That bill originally passed the House by a voice vote and then went on to pass the Senate by unanimous consent. As my colleagues will recall, that bill was intended to give temporary seasonal employees an opportunity to compete for permanent full-time employment within all agencies across the entire Federal Government.

Merit promotion procedures provide an important career advancement path for Federal employees, and many nonentry-level jobs are filled using this process. Yet, no matter how long an individual has served, temporary seasonal employees never get access to merit promotion procedures.

Now, who are those people? Those are men and women on the front line of wildfires in the West, who put their lives on the line to contain forest fires during the fire season out west—dangerous work, arduous work. We are simply trying to give them a fair shake, a fair shake that is available to all other Federal employees. This was intended to put them on an equal footing for vacant jobs in the civil service, including permanent seasonal jobs.

God knoweth why, but the Office of Personnel Management recently issued guidance to the agency, based on a narrow reading never intended by our committee or by this Congress, of the legislative language that would actually limit the positions to which these temporary employees may apply to just those within the current agency. That was never the intent of this Congress, and I, frankly, feel, if you looked at the legislative history both in committee and on the floor, that would have been clear.

Our bill, which reflects a collaborative effort with the majority and minority, as well as with OPM and employee groups such as the National Federation of Federal Employees, clarifies the intent, I hope, once and for all.

The barrier to merit promotion faced by our temporary seasonal employees demoralizes the dedicated and courageous corps that serves in land management agencies, contributes to increased attrition, and ultimately leads to higher training costs and a less-experienced, capable workforce.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, a record 10 million acres burned across these United States, about 4 million more than average. In Arizona alone, 294 fires burned in the first quarter of this