

on as a cosponsor. Congressman ASHFORD has shown great leadership and tenacity in getting this bill over the finish line. That is what he came here to do, to get things done.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

I want to add some more comments about the legislation that we are about to pass. I concur in and associate myself with the remarks of my colleague from Nebraska, Mr. FORTENBERRY. I certainly want to extend my appreciation to the majority for its generosity of spirit in this particular case. If there is anything that fills me with great hope that we can restore the esteem of this great institution in the eyes of the American people, it is when we pass legislation such as Mr. ASHFORD's bill today. We rose above politics—both sides rose above politics—to do the right thing for veterans. It was our regard for veterans that brought us together. It is fitting that this action is happening in the heartland of our country. This is no small measure today. The American people do not really see the drama. It looks very effortless about what we are going to do because it is going to be voice voted. No real big drama is going to play out in front of everybody, but I am going to tell you that Republicans and Democrats worked together.

I want to congratulate and show my appreciation to my whip, Mr. HOYER. He worked his relationships with some Members on the other side in the Senate, and it showed that we shouldn't be so hasty to move our more senior Members so quickly out of their positions because these relationships matter after so many years. I will go more into detail with anyone who cares to know more about it later. Mr. MCCARTHY, of my home State of California, my own Leader PELOSI, and staff on both sides of the aisle worked tirelessly to bring this bill.

We are about to head home for the holiday season, and I can't think of a greater gift that we can give—well, I can think of a lot of greater gifts, but this is a very important gift that we are going to give. It is truly a potentially transformative piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers at this time. I just want to encourage all of my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation and join me in passing H.R. 5099, as amended.

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

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

I, too, want to associate myself with the remarks of all the speakers and thank Mr. ASHFORD for his perseverance in bringing this, along with Mr. FORTENBERRY on our side and Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member TAKANO. This is the way we are going to have to do this more. There is a finite amount of money we have. There

is a finite amount of money we can provide for services, and looking for public-private partnerships, as my city in Johnson City, Tennessee, is doing right now with other projects. I think this is a model for what could go on in the country.

I have a CBOC in my district where the local mayor provided use at a hospital for a dollar a year for the VA to have the VA facility there. I think that is going on in Nebraska right now. They are trying to see that happen. We need to be thinking about how we can provide these facilities to serve these great veterans who have served our country.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5099, 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.

□ 1445

TO RESEARCH, EVALUATE, ASSESS, AND TREAT ASTRONAUTS ACT

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6076) to require the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to establish a program for the medical monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment of astronauts, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6076

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 “To Research, Evaluate, Assess, and Treat Astronauts Act” or the “TREAT Astronauts Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Human space exploration can pose significant challenges and is full of substantial risk, which has ultimately claimed the lives of 24 National Aeronautics and Space Administration astronauts serving in the line of duty.

(2) As United States government astronauts participate in long-duration and exploration spaceflight missions they may experience increased health risks, such as vision impairment, bone demineralization, and behavioral health and performance risks, and may be exposed to galactic cosmic radiation. Exposure to high levels of radiation and microgravity can result in acute and long-term health consequences that can increase the risk of cancer and tissue degeneration and have potential effects on the musculoskeletal system, central nervous system, cardiovascular system, immune function, and vision.

(3) To advance the goal of long-duration and exploration spaceflight missions, United States government astronaut Scott Kelly participated in a one-year twins study in space while his identical twin brother, former United States government astronaut Mark Kelly, acted as a human control specimen on Earth, providing an understanding of the physical, behavioral, microbiological, and molecular reaction of the human body to an extended period of time in space.

(4) Since the Administration currently provides medical monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment for United States government astronauts during their active employment, given the unknown long-term health consequences of long-duration space exploration, the Administration has requested statutory authority from Congress to provide medical monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment to former United States government astronauts for psychological and medical conditions associated with human space flight.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the United States should continue to seek the unknown and lead the world in space exploration and scientific discovery as the Administration prepares for long-duration and exploration spaceflight in deep space and an eventual mission to Mars;

(2) data relating to the health of astronauts will become increasingly valuable to improving our understanding of many diseases humans face on Earth;

(3) the Administration should provide the type of monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment described in subsection (a) only for conditions the Administration considers unique to the training or exposure to the spaceflight environment of United States government astronauts and should not require any former United States government astronauts to participate in the Administration's monitoring;

(4) such monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment should not replace a former United States government astronaut's private health insurance;

(5) expanded data acquired from such monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment should be used to tailor treatment, inform the requirements for new spaceflight medical hardware, and develop controls in order to prevent disease occurrence in the astronaut corps; and

(6) the 340-day space mission of Scott Kelly aboard the ISS—

(A) was pivotal for the goal of the United States for humans to explore deep space and Mars as the mission generated new insight into how the human body adjusts to weightlessness, isolation, radiation, and the stress of long-duration space flight; and

(B) will help support the physical and mental well-being of astronauts during longer space exploration missions in the future.

SEC. 3. MEDICAL MONITORING AND RESEARCH RELATING TO HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 201 of title 51, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“§ 20148. Medical monitoring and research relating to human space flight

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Administrator may provide for the medical monitoring and diagnosis of a former United States government astronaut or a former payload specialist for conditions that the Administrator considers potentially associated with human space flight, and may provide for the treatment of a former United States government astronaut or a former payload specialist for conditions that the Administrator considers

associated with human space flight, including scientific and medical tests for psychological and medical conditions.

“(b) REQUIREMENTS.—

“(1) NO COST SHARING.—The medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment described in subsection (a) shall be provided without any deductible, copayment, or other cost sharing obligation.

“(2) ACCESS TO LOCAL SERVICES.—The medical monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment described in subsection (a) may be provided by a local health care provider if it is unavoidable due to the health of the applicable former United States government astronaut or former payload specialist for that former United States government astronaut or former payload specialist to travel to the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, as determined by the Administrator.

“(3) SECONDARY PAYMENT.—Payment or reimbursement for the medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment described in subsection (a) shall be secondary to any obligation of the United States government or any third party under any other provision of law or contractual agreement to pay for or provide such medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment. Any costs for items and services that may be provided by the Administrator for medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment under subsection (a) that are not paid for or provided under such other provision of law or contractual agreement, due to the application of deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, other cost sharing, or otherwise, are reimbursable by the Administrator on behalf of the former United States government astronaut or former payload specialist involved to the extent such items or services are authorized to be provided by the Administrator for such medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment under subsection (a).

“(4) CONDITIONAL PAYMENT.—The Administrator may provide for conditional payments for or provide medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment described in subsection (a) that is obligated to be paid for or provided by the United States or any third party under any other provision of law or contractual agreement to pay for or provide such medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment if—

“(A) payment for (or the provision of) such medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment services has not been made (or provided) or cannot reasonably be expected to be made (or provided) promptly by the United States or such third party, respectively; and

“(B) such payment (or such provision of services) by the Administrator is conditioned on reimbursement by the United States or such third party, respectively, for such medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment.

“(c) EXCLUSIONS.—The Administrator may not—

“(1) provide for medical monitoring or diagnosis of a former United States government astronaut or former payload specialist under subsection (a) for any psychological or medical condition that is not potentially associated with human space flight;

“(2) provide for treatment of a former United States government astronaut or former payload specialist under subsection (a) for any psychological or medical condition that is not associated with human space flight; or

“(3) require a former United States government astronaut or former payload specialist to participate in the medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment authorized under subsection (a).

“(d) PRIVACY.—Consistent with applicable provisions of Federal law relating to privacy, the Administrator shall protect the privacy of all medical records generated under subsection (a) and accessible to the Administration.

“(e) REGULATIONS.—The Administrator shall promulgate such regulations as are necessary to carry out this section.

“(f) DEFINITION OF UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ASTRONAUT.—In this section, the term ‘United States government astronaut’ has the meaning given the term ‘government astronaut’ in section 50902, except it does not include an individual who is an international partner astronaut.

“(g) DATA USE AND DISCLOSURE.—The Administrator may use or disclose data acquired in the course of medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment of a former United States government astronaut or a former payload specialist under subsection (a), in accordance with subsection (d). Former United States government astronaut or former payload specialist participation in medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment under subsection (a) shall constitute consent for the Administrator to use or disclose such data.”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for chapter 201 of title 51, United States Code is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 20147 the following:

“20148. Medical monitoring and research relating to human space flight”.

(c) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each fiscal year, not later than the date of submission of the President's annual budget request for that fiscal year under section 1105 of title 31, United States Code, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration shall publish a report, in accordance with applicable Federal privacy laws, on the activities of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration under section 20148 of title 51, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

(2) CONTENTS.—Each report under paragraph (1) shall include a detailed cost accounting of the Administration's activities under such section 20148 of title 51, United States Code, and a 5-year budget estimate.

(3) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—The Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress each report under paragraph (1) not later than the date of submission of the President's annual budget request for that fiscal year under section 1105 of title 31, United States Code.

(d) COST ESTIMATE.—

(1) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration shall enter into an arrangement with an independent external organization to undertake an independent cost estimate of the cost to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Federal Government to implement and administer the activities of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration under section 20148 of title 51, United States Code, as added by subsection (a). The independent external organization may not be an entity of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, such as the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance.

(2) SUBMITTAL TO CONGRESS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit the independent cost estimate undertaken pursuant to paragraph (1) to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(e) PRIVACY STUDY.—

(1) STUDY.—The Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration shall carry out a study on any potential privacy or legal issues related to the possible

sharing beyond the Federal Government of data acquired under the activities of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration under section 20148 of title 51, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report containing the results of the study carried out under paragraph (1).

(f) INSPECTOR GENERAL AUDIT.—The Inspector General of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration shall periodically audit or review, as the Inspector General considers necessary to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse, the activities of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration under section 20148 of title 51, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 6076, the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, for over 50 years, the United States of America has asked its bravest to travel to space in service of their country. From the dynamic launch environment to the unforgiving vacuum of space, to the energetic reentry of Earth, human spaceflight places astronauts in challenging environments. Even training for spaceflight carries significant risks. I am very proud to say that I represent a great number of these astronauts who call Houston their home.

As a nation, we have an obligation to those whom we put in harm's way. As a Congress, we have a responsibility to provide for the treatment of conditions caused by Federal service. As a healthcare professional myself, and as their Representative, you can say it is my duty to make sure that these folks are taken care of properly. This is why I have sponsored H.R. 6076, the TREAT Astronauts Act, a very commonsense, fiscally responsible, bipartisan bill that makes sure that our brave men and women who venture into space receive the support for medical issues associated with their service.

The psychological and medical data associated with an astronaut's human spaceflight service is very important for our future space endeavors. The TREAT Astronauts Act will provide this additional data and will enable NASA to better understand the medical risks of spaceflight, minimize

these risks, and enable future long-duration missions to Mars and even beyond.

I am very thankful to Chairman LAMAR SMITH for his support of the TREAT Astronauts Act and for his leadership as chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. I am also very glad that my colleague, Ms. EDWARDS, is an original cosponsor and that the bill was reported out of committee by a voice vote with broad bipartisan support.

The amendment before us today represents compromise language agreed upon with the Senate in good faith that this language will be included and passed in a NASA Authorization Act before the 114th Congress recesses. The program established under this compromise language is very similar to the program that passed out of the committee.

In developing this bill, my staff and I had extensive discussions with former astronauts, NASA, and a number of other Federal agencies. The TREAT Astronauts Act is also informed by a hearing the Space Subcommittee held back in June, at which a number of former astronauts testified, including Captain Scott Kelly, who spent a year on the International Space Station.

Under existing statutes, NASA has the authority to collect voluntary astronaut medical data for research. It exercises that authority through the Lifetime Surveillance of Astronaut Health program, or LSAH. However, there are limitations on the usefulness of the LSAH program. Former astronaut participation is only 61 percent and the existing LSAH program only affords NASA access to yearly checkup data, not the entirety of the former astronauts' medical records.

Furthermore, NASA is unable to provide for the appropriate diagnosis and treatment under the existing authority to conduct research. The TREAT Astronauts Act solves this problem by supplementing existing authorities.

Congress would be remiss not to ensure that the TREAT Astronauts Act is fiscally responsible. The TREAT Astronauts Act is not a mandate and is subject to existing discretionary appropriations.

In order to address cost risks, the bill establishes NASA as a secondary payer to existing obligations of the United States or third parties, ensuring that the cost to NASA is minimal. Establishing NASA as a secondary payer is not unprecedented. For example, the Department of Defense is a secondary payer to veteran and civilian healthcare programs.

Allow me to make this clear for the record. Although NASA is a secondary payer, the TREAT Astronauts Act provides that no participating former astronaut or payload specialist will have to pay for anything out of pocket, including deductibles and copayments associated with the primary payer.

There are a number of reporting requirements, including an independent

cost estimate and an annual fiscal report. These reports will ensure that Congress is well informed and able to conduct appropriate oversight.

Participation in the program is voluntary. No astronaut should be forced or coerced to participate in this program. In the event that an astronaut chooses not to participate in the program, there are still other occupational healthcare options available to them. But if they do participate, the astronauts have consented that NASA can use and disclose the data they collect, subject to protecting their personally identifiable health information.

In conclusion, I strongly support the TREAT Astronauts Act, and I urge my colleagues to support this common-sense, fiscally responsible, bipartisan bill that makes sure that our brave men and women who venture into space receive the support for medical issues associated with their service.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6076, as amended, the TREAT Astronauts Act.

The House-passed, bipartisan NASA Authorization Act of 2015 set the long-term goal of sending humans to the surface of Mars. The amendments to the TREAT Astronauts Act being considered today will help provide the research results needed to achieve this goal. As Chairman BABIN noted, the amendment reflects compromise language agreed upon with the Senate in good faith.

Committee Ranking Member JOHNSON and I thank Space Subcommittee Chairman BABIN and his staff for working together to achieve bipartisan and bicameral consensus on this amendment.

Chairman BABIN and I both want to do the right thing for the health of our current and future astronauts. That is why I was pleased to be a cosponsor of this act to provide for monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment of former astronauts.

Our astronauts are heroes. They serve this Nation in the face of extreme risks. Some of those risks involve the potential for medical conditions that may not reveal themselves for years or even decades after an astronaut's service.

It is our responsibility to ensure that we, as a nation, acknowledge the risks that these heroes have taken and, in return, provide our astronauts with the medical monitoring and treatment they need.

It is also our responsibility to mitigate the risks for future NASA explorers, especially as we put in place the systems and missions to prepare the way for human exploration to Mars. Such risk mitigation requires data about astronauts' mental and psychological health.

H.R. 6076, as amended, maintains the three principles I identified as critical to this legislation in the original bill.

The first principle is getting care to former astronauts under this program as soon as possible. NASA has indicated that some former astronauts could already benefit from this new authority.

As Chairman BABIN noted, this bill provides NASA with supplementary authority. As such, I would expect that monitoring provided by NASA's Lifetime Surveillance of Astronaut Health program will continue to be made available to any former astronaut or payload specialist electing not to participate in the program being established by this legislation.

The second principle is being respectful of astronaut rights and privacy. As we expand the amount of data collected on former astronaut health, it is important that we place a priority on ensuring the privacy of the data. NASA is tasked to report on how the agency will ensure the privacy of astronauts in the program when data is shared beyond the Federal Government.

The third principle is ensuring that the program is in sync with the goal of sending humans to Mars. Expanded data acquired from the monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment of former astronauts and former shuttle payload specialists will be invaluable for informing the requirements for new spaceflight medical hardware and developing controls to prevent disease occurrence in the astronaut corps.

Mr. Speaker, it is also my hope that Congress and the administration will enable NASA to get to Mars sooner rather than later. As part of that effort, we must establish the safeguards that will get our astronauts there and back safely. Supporting this bill will allow us to stay on that vector.

I ask my colleagues to support the bill.

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

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the full committee.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Texas, the author of this bill, for yielding. I also want to say that Congressman BRIAN BABIN is an excellent chairman of the Space Subcommittee of the full Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

Mr. Speaker, since NASA selected the first group of astronauts in 1959, more than 300 brave American astronauts have ventured into the cosmos as explorers. In an age when spaceflight has come to seem almost routine, it is easy to overlook how dangerous it is and how little we know about its long-term health effects.

H.R. 6076, the TREAT Astronauts Act, ensures that our courageous men and women who venture into space receive support for medical issues associated with their service.

The TREAT Astronauts Act also will help us better understand the medical science of human spaceflight, enabling

next generation of explorers to literally go where no man has gone before. I should say where no man or woman has gone before.

The TREAT Astronauts Act builds upon NASA's existing Lifetime Surveillance of Astronaut Health program and will operate within existing NASA resources. It provides for enhanced monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment of conditions associated with spaceflight service.

I thank Space Subcommittee Chairman BRIAN BABIN again for introducing this legislation and for his persistence in getting us to the point of passage. We wouldn't be here today without him.

I urge my colleagues to support the TREAT Astronauts Act.

Before I conclude, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take a moment to thank the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS), who is a friend and has been the ranking member of the Space Subcommittee for the last 2 years, for her outstanding service to Congress and for being a wonderful contributor to the Science Committee as a whole, and in particular the Space Subcommittee. To almost any subject, she always brings enthusiasm, knowledge, and in this case, an almost unequal dedication to space exploration, which we will continue to appreciate both now and in the future. I just thank her again for, as I said, her many contributions to the committee and the subcommittee and say that I hope she stays in touch with us. She will always be a friend of the committee and many members of this side of the aisle.

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I want to share with Chairman SMITH that I am so grateful for his remarks today on the floor. He beat me to the punch, but it has been a pleasure both to work on the committee since the beginning of my time here in the Congress. It is the most fun I think that I have ever had, and I have truly enjoyed the collegial working relationship and friendship that we have shared on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) the ranking member of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6076, as amended, To Research, Evaluate, Assess, and Treat Astronauts Act, or the TREAT Astronauts Act.

Long-duration exposure to microgravity and space radiation can lead to chronic health effects such as muscle atrophy, bone loss, permanent vision impairment, and cancer. However, there is much we still need to understand regarding how the space environment relates to these effects and other critical biological functions, such as immunity and tissue healing, so that appropriate countermeasures can be developed.

□ 1500

This bill, as amended, would provide NASA with the statutory authority to

perform monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment for former astronauts for medical or psychological conditions associated with human spaceflight.

Through this authorization, NASA would be able to acquire data from a larger set of participants, and the data acquired on former astronauts would be more comprehensive.

This bill, as amended, reflects several changes that strengthen and improve the bipartisan bill that passed out of committee in September. In particular, the provision that would sunset the monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment program for former astronauts after 10 years has been removed.

In addition, the current version of the bill removes a provision that would have denied a fiscal year's authorization of appropriations for the program if NASA did not submit an annual report on time.

Mr. Speaker, NASA's astronauts are some of the most accomplished, highly trained, and courageous individuals who serve our Nation in the pursuit of furthering our exploration of outer space. We owe them a debt of gratitude for their willingness to risk their health and their lives in the furtherance of space exploration. I would urge all of the House Members to vote for and pass H.R. 6076, as amended.

I too want to join the chairman to express my appreciation and thanks for the services of Congresswoman DONNA EDWARDS for her leadership in bringing this measure to this point and to her overall leadership as subcommittee ranking member of the Space Subcommittee. She has made many efforts, has led the committee with much understanding, and we certainly will miss her.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I hope that my colleagues will join us in this bipartisan effort to make sure that we can get signed into law the TREAT Act for our current, former, and future astronauts.

I would like to close by expressing my gratitude to Chairman LAMAR SMITH, to Ranking Member EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, and to our Subcommittee Chair BABIN for their graciousness and for their leadership. It has truly been a joy to work on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. It is one of the few places in the United States House of Representatives where our charge is really to think about the future, and it is in this spirit that this legislation is in front of us today.

I hadn't anticipated, Mr. Speaker, that I would have a moment on the floor of the House, my last moment on the floor of the House before I depart my service to the United States House of Representatives, but I am grateful for that.

As I reflect on the last 8½ years, it has really been a pleasure, particu-

larly, to work on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, and to do that in what seems like a contentious environment sometimes but has been a lot of collegiality.

As I close my service in the Congress, I am, Mr. Speaker, reminded that, as a little girl, I used to picnic with my father and my mother and my siblings on the west front of the Capitol. My dad was in his Air Force uniform, prepared to go back to work after we had had our little picnic.

As little girls, we would run around to the east front of the Capitol, Mr. Speaker, and climb the steps, when you could climb the steps. And we would sit there in between my father and look out on the United States Supreme Court and the Library of Congress.

I never would have imagined, Mr. Speaker, that I would have an opportunity to serve in the House of Representatives; and it has been a great privilege and a joy to represent the people of the Fourth Congressional District of Maryland.

I wish for my colleagues here in the Congress that, as we approach the 115th Congress, and in the spirit of service to this great Nation, that we work together in service to the Nation.

When we come to work every day, Mr. Speaker, people think about things that are big and small; but for a lot of people out there, a lot of our constituents, it is about their health and their life, their safety and their security, the ability of them to raise their children, and to move forward. And I wish that, in the upcoming Congress, that we have an opportunity to do those things together, and that you do.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the staff of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, and the Space Subcommittee, Allen Li, Pam Whitney, Dick Obermann; Anne Nelson on the minority staff, and the majority staff for all of their work; to the people who serve in this institution and serve us tremendously, from the Parliamentarians to the stenographers and the Clerk's staff, and the Marshals Service and the Capitol Police, and all of it, because it makes the trains run, and it means that we can get the job done of the people of the United States.

God bless the United States of America.

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

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to thank our full committee chairman, LAMAR SMITH; our ranking subcommittee member, Ms. EDWARDS from Maryland; and also our ranking member of the full committee, EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON from Texas as well.

I would also like to thank my staff and the staff of the full committee, as well as the subcommittee, who have worked so hard to make this bill happen. It was so badly needed for our astronauts.

Mr. Speaker, I include a letter from the American Association of Space Explorers into the RECORD. This is signed

by the president of the American Association of Space Explorers, astronaut Michael Lopez-Alegria.

ASSOCIATION OF SPACE
EXPLORERS—USA,
Webster, TX, 7 December 2016.

Hon. BRIAN BABIN,
Chair, Subcommittee on Space, House Committee
on Science, Space and Technology, Wash-
ington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BABIN: I am writing on be-
half of the U.S. chapter of the international
Association of Space Explorers (ASE-USA)
to strongly endorse H.R. 6076, the “To Re-
search, Evaluate, Assess, and Treat Astro-
nauts” (TREAT) Act, that is under consider-
ation by the House of Representatives.

Our organization counts over 210 American
current and former flown astronauts as its
members. Our mission is to provide a forum
for professional dialogue among individuals
who have flown in space, to promote edu-
cation in science and mathematics and in-
spire in students a lifelong commitment to
learning, to foster environmental awareness
and encourage planetary stewardship, to pro-
mote the benefits of space science and explo-
ration and to advocate for international co-
operation and operational compatibility in
current and future space exploration endeav-
ors.

We in the astronaut community applaud
your Committee for recognizing the risks in-
herent in traveling to and exploring space,
and for ensuring that the men and women
who do so on behalf of our nation receive
support for medical issues associated with
their service.

I urge the House to pass the TREAT Act so
that my colleagues and future generations of
Americans can continue to explore and ex-
pand the frontiers of space and human
knowledge, and can return home to Earth
suitably protected from the potential med-
ical consequences of those endeavors on be-
half of the United States.

Sincerely,
MICHAEL LOPEZ-ALEGRIA,
President.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr.
DUNCAN of Tennessee). The question is
on the motion offered by the gen-
tleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN) that
the House suspend the rules and pass
the bill, H.R. 6076, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the
opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being
in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. BABIN. 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 pro-
ceedings on this motion will be post-
poned.

NATIONAL URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE RESPONSE SYSTEM ACT OF 2016

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I move
to suspend the rules and pass the bill
(S. 2971) to authorize the National
Urban Search and Rescue Response
System, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2971

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Rep-
resentatives of the United States of America in
Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “National
Urban Search and Rescue Response System
Act of 2016”.

SEC. 2. NATIONAL URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE RESPONSE SYSTEM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title III of the Robert T.
Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency As-
sistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5141 et seq.) is amend-
ed by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 327. NATIONAL URBAN SEARCH AND RES- CUE RESPONSE SYSTEM.

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the fol-
lowing definitions shall apply:

“(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term ‘Adminis-
trator’ means the Administrator of the Fed-
eral Emergency Management Agency.

“(2) AGENCY.—The term ‘Agency’ means
the Federal Emergency Management Agen-
cy.

“(3) HAZARD.—The term ‘hazard’ has the
meaning given the term in section 602.

“(4) NONEMPLOYEE SYSTEM MEMBER.—The
term ‘nonemployee System member’ means
a System member not employed by a spon-
soring agency or participating agency.

“(5) PARTICIPATING AGENCY.—The term
‘participating agency’ means a State or local
government, nonprofit organization, or pri-
vate organization that has executed an
agreement with a sponsoring agency to par-
ticipate in the System.

“(6) SPONSORING AGENCY.—The term ‘spon-
soring agency’ means a State or local gov-
ernment that is the sponsor of a task force
designated by the Administrator to partici-
pate in the System.

“(7) SYSTEM.—The term ‘System’ means
the National Urban Search and Rescue Re-
sponse System to be administered under this
section.

“(8) SYSTEM MEMBER.—The term ‘System
member’ means an individual who is not a
full-time employee of the Federal Govern-
ment and who serves on a task force or on a
System management or other technical
team.

“(9) TASK FORCE.—The term ‘task force’
means an urban search and rescue team de-
signed by the Administrator to participate
in the System.

“(b) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—Subject to the
requirements of this section, the Adminis-
trator shall continue to administer the
emergency response system known as the
National Urban Search and Rescue Response
System.

“(c) FUNCTIONS.—In administering the Sys-
tem, the Administrator shall provide for a
national network of standardized search and
rescue resources to assist States and local
governments in responding to hazards.

“(d) TASK FORCES.—

“(1) DESIGNATION.—The Administrator
shall designate task forces to participate in
the System. The Administration shall deter-
mine the criteria for such participation.

“(2) SPONSORING AGENCIES.—Each task
force shall have a sponsoring agency. The
Administrator shall enter into an agreement
with the sponsoring agency with respect to
the participation of each task force in the
System.

“(3) COMPOSITION.—

“(A) PARTICIPATING AGENCIES.—A task
force may include, at the discretion of the
sponsoring agency, 1 or more participating
agencies. The sponsoring agency shall enter
into an agreement with each participating
agency with respect to the participation of
the participating agency on the task force.

“(B) OTHER INDIVIDUALS.—A task force may
also include, at the discretion of the spon-
soring agency, other individuals not other-
wise associated with the sponsoring agency
or a participating agency. The sponsoring
agency of a task force may enter into a sepa-

rate agreement with each such individual
with respect to the participation of the indi-
vidual on the task force.

“(e) MANAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL TEAMS.—
The Administrator shall maintain such man-
agement teams and other technical teams as
the Administrator determines are necessary
to administer the System.

“(f) APPOINTMENT OF SYSTEM MEMBERS
INTO FEDERAL SERVICE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may
appoint a System member into Federal ser-
vice for a period of service to provide for the
participation of the System member in exer-
cises, preincident staging, major disaster and
emergency response activities, and training
events sponsored or sanctioned by the Ad-
ministrator.

“(2) NONAPPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN CIVIL
SERVICE LAWS.—The Administrator may
make appointments under paragraph (1)
without regard to the provisions of title 5,
United States Code, governing appointments
in the competitive service.

“(3) RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER AUTHORITIES.—
The authority of the Administrator to make
appointments under this subsection shall not
affect any other authority of the Adminis-
trator under this Act.

“(4) LIMITATION.—A System member who is
appointed into Federal service under para-
graph (1) shall not be considered an employee
of the United States for purposes other than
those specifically set forth in this section.

“(g) COMPENSATION.—

“(1) PAY OF SYSTEM MEMBERS.—Subject to
such terms and conditions as the Adminis-
trator may impose by regulation, the Admin-
istrator shall make payments to the spon-
soring agency of a task force—

“(A) to reimburse each employer of a Sys-
tem member on the task force for compensa-
tion paid by the employer to the System
member for any period during which the Sys-
tem member is appointed into Federal ser-
vice under subsection (f)(1); and

“(B) to make payments directly to a non-
employee System member on the task force
for any period during which the nonemployee
System member is appointed into Federal
service under subsection (f)(1).

“(2) REIMBURSEMENT FOR EMPLOYEES FILL-
ING POSITIONS OF SYSTEM MEMBERS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to such terms
and conditions as the Administrator may im-
pose by regulation, the Administrator shall
make payments to the sponsoring agency of
a task force to be used to reimburse each em-
ployer of a System member on the task force
for compensation paid by the employer to an
employee filling a position normally filled
by the System member for any period during
which the System member is appointed into
Federal service under subsection (f)(1).

“(B) LIMITATION.—Costs incurred by an em-
ployer shall be eligible for reimbursement
under subparagraph (A) only to the extent
that the costs are in excess of the costs that
would have been incurred by the employer
had the System member not been appointed
into Federal service under subsection (f)(1).

“(3) METHOD OF PAYMENT.—A System mem-
ber shall not be entitled to pay directly from
the Agency for a period during which the
System member is appointed into Federal
Service under subsection (f)(1).

“(h) PERSONAL INJURY, ILLNESS, DIS-
ABILITY, OR DEATH.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A System member who is
appointed into Federal service under sub-
section (f)(1) and who suffers personal injury,
illness, disability, or death as a result of a
personal injury sustained while acting in the
scope of such appointment, shall, for the pur-
poses of subchapter I of chapter 81 of title 5,
United States Code, be treated as though the