

Working Families Flexibility Act, introduced by my friend, the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY). The House will be considering the bill later this week to give private sector employees the same flexibility offered to many local, State, and Federal Government workers that have had it for many years now.

The legislation will give employees the option of choosing to receive compensatory time off from their employers instead of overtime wages. It does not change the 40-hour workweek, and it does not weaken employee protections. We are simply giving American workers more choice.

The bill does not allow for employees to coerce anyone into choosing one option over another. It would be a voluntary decision made between the employer and the employee. Everyone needs flexibility in their schedule to balance between work and personal time, and we should be giving American workers the option to choose what is most important to them: overtime wages or time off. It should be their decision, not the government's.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 1180, the Working Families Flexibility Act.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S BROKEN PROMISES

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, add job creation and infrastructure to the list of President Trump's broken promises. After 102 days in office, the so-called "greatest jobs President that God ever created" has failed to present a single job or infrastructure bill.

At the same time, his slash-and-burn budget would cut investments in job growth and infrastructure, imposing a \$2.4 billion cut on the U.S. Department of Transportation. Included in those cuts are drastic reductions of the Federal support for Amtrak and the outright elimination of the TIGER grant program.

The President's budget proposal also phases out the New Starts grant program, making critical infrastructure projects, including New Jersey and New York's Gateway Program ineligible for Federal funding needed to move forward.

As I speak, New Jersey rail commuters are probably facing massive delays and disruptions to their already nightmarish commute. President Trump's proposed cuts to vital Federal infrastructure programs will only make the problem worse. It has been an ugly 102 days for President Trump, and, unless he tackles jobs and infrastructure, as promised, it is going to get uglier.

HONORING MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to ad-

dress the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on May 1 to recognize Silver Star Service Banner Day. Today is a day when we honor the service and sacrifice of our Active-Duty men and women from all branches of the service from all wars. Silver Star Service Banner Day started in 2007 and is sponsored by the Silver Star Families of America, which is dedicated to supporting and assisting wounded, ill, injured, and dying Active-Duty veterans and their families.

May is also National Military Appreciation Month. All month long, we have the opportunity to honor, remember, recognize, and appreciate those who serve and have served. Our military men and women continue to play a major role in the development of our country documented through a history of uncompromising honor, dedication to duty, and genuine love of country.

Personally, I am a proud military dad, as my son Logan continues to serve in the United States Army and my daughter-in-law, Carley, is now a veteran. Mr. Speaker, we are the home of the free because of the brave, and I want to thank all who serve this great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, only two individuals have ever offered to willingly die for you. One was Jesus Christ and the other was the American soldier. One died for your soul, the other died for your freedom.

THANK YOU TO CONGRESSWOMAN ROS-LEHTINEN

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, as the senior woman in the U.S. House, I wanted to say thank you to Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, the senior Republican woman in the House, and to say with poignance I received her decision recently to retire from our beloved House.

ILEANA has been the first Cuban American elected to Congress, the first Latina elected to Congress, and the first Republican woman from Florida to be elected to Congress. She ably chaired the Committee on Foreign Affairs during her tenure, and there were many sessions when new Speakers were sworn in when she and I tabulated the results of that very important election.

I can remember when her children were born. I can always say she handled her service with great distinction, with great honor, with great humor, and she made friends on both sides of the aisle. I am glad that she is staying through the remainder of this session, but I must say that this House will lose a spark of brilliance and of wit when she chooses to leave us. I will also say that it has been a particular joy to serve with her because no matter what the issue, no matter what the time of year, no matter what the hour of day,

she always approached her position with great professionalism.

I regret her leaving, but I know her service has made a difference. For women across America, since she first arrived in 1989, our numbers have quintupled. We now have over 100 women who serve in this House with distinction, and she has helped blaze that path.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve my opportunity to say more about her in the days ahead.

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ELECTRIC RELIABILITY AND FOREST PROTECTION

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, with all of the wildfires we have in the West each year in the summer and the fall, did you know that if a utility has a right-of-way through Federal forests, through the Forest Service, it can still take months for these utilities to receive Forest Service approval to remove trees from transmission line rights-of-way even if the trees are already in contact with electric transmission lines?

We have had blackouts for large portions of several States that have happened from this; and the power lines, when they contact a tree, can start more wildfires even. Yet, still it takes months sometimes to get the Forest Service to approve the utilities to go out there and do a commonsense removal of these trees and other material.

Well, we have a remedy that passed last week in the Natural Resources Committee. Working with my colleague, Representative KURT SCHRADER from Oregon, we passed H.R. 1873 through committee to streamline the red tape to have preapproval for utilities to be able to do the necessary and commonsense work through these already existing transmission rights-of-way through our forests, preventing fire, preventing blackouts, and just good common sense.

GI INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

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

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to highlight H.R. 758, the GI Internship Program Act. I am a cosponsor of this important legislation with my colleague from Illinois, BRAD SCHNEIDER. If implemented, this bill would expand the use of the existing post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to include internships as an option in place of a traditional degree program.

The GI Internship Program Act would allow veterans to gain practical skills and work experience to help ease

their transition back into the civilian workforce. Under current law, the post-9/11 GI Bill only allocates money to veterans for traditional postsecondary education in the classroom, but for many veterans this is a path not meant for them.

For example, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were over 300,000 unfilled manufacturing jobs at the end of 2016. This gap could be filled by the veterans who use their post-9/11 GI benefits as a stipend to support them while receiving on-the-job training as high-skilled technical workers.

Further, these jobs can be filled at no additional cost to the employer because the cost would be covered by the preexisting GI Bill. This bill would allow businesses all over the U.S., both large and small, to meet their employment needs and help our skilled veterans to enter the civilian workforce.

As long as employers comply with the program and intend to hire the veterans after the internship is over, the veterans will continue to receive funding. This bill is a win for American job growth and, most importantly, a win for our veterans.

I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense measure.

JOB FLEXIBILITY FOR WORKING FAMILIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RUTHERFORD). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. ROBY. 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 materials on the topic of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1180, the Working Families Flexibility Act.

I would love to take credit for this idea. It is not my own. It is a bill that has been carried by other Members on several occasions. I have had the privilege to carry this bill the last few Congresses, and I am excited that we are going to debate this bill tomorrow and, God willing, have a vote on it.

The Working Families Flexibility Act is a simple amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act. The Fair Labor Standards Act has been the law of the land since 1938.

In 1985, the Fair Labor Standards Act was amended to allow compensatory time. That is paid time off in lieu of cash wages for overtime for public sector employees. But, oddly enough, private sector employees were left out of the equation.

This bill, H.R. 1180, simply provides that the private sector can have access

to compensatory time in lieu of cash wages for overtime. This doesn't eliminate overtime, but, rather, gives flexibility in the workplace for hardworking Americans to make a decision about how to use their time.

Every time an hourly wage employee works an hour of overtime, they would be eligible for an hour and a half of paid leave only if the employer first offers this as a benefit, but, most importantly, that the employee elects voluntarily to choose compensatory time over cash payments for overtime.

Congress cannot legislate another hour in the day, but what we can do is provide flexibility for hardworking moms and dads all over this country that may want to use their accrued overtime to coach a soccer game, help with an aging parent, take their child to the pediatrician, or, quite frankly, accrue the time to go on a mission trip somewhere. But this is an opportunity for us to provide this benefit for employees all over this country, like I said, hardworking men and women that just want flexibility.

It is voluntary. It must be done through a written agreement between the employer and the employee. But, most importantly, outside of being voluntary, the employee can opt out at any time. The employee can cash out, so to speak. There are cash-out provisions in this bill.

So if the arrangement between the employer and the employee is not working out, meaning the employee can't find the appropriate time to utilize the compensatory time, the employee can say: Do you know what? I would rather have my cash payments for overtime.

And within 30 days the employer must provide those cash payments that that employee has rightfully earned.

I just think this is a great opportunity for us to provide this benefit to so many folks out there who are just trying to balance their life and work, their children, their parents, and all of the things that come with that. As a working mom, I certainly can relate to all of the pushes and pulls that parents have on them in wanting to just provide for their family. Again, at the end of the day, this time belongs to that individual, therefore, he or she ought to be able to make a decision about how to use their time.

I have several Members who are here tonight that are going to speak on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER). I thank her so much for her willingness to speak on this issue.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Alabama for yielding, my good friend, MARTHA ROBY, who has been such a leader on this issue. It has been my great privilege to be a sponsor of the Working Families Flexibility Act in the 113th Congress, in the 114th Congress, and now again in the 115th Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Working Families Flexibility Act of

2017, which will remove a Federal restriction on private sector employees who would like the option of comp time compensation in lieu of cash for their overtime work, the same as public sector employees. Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a voluntary choice made by employees for cash overtime or for comp time.

The last thing our Federal Government should be doing is dictating how our small-business employees and entrepreneur compensation operates. Mr. Speaker, in November, Missourians and many Americans spoke loud and clear: it is time to get government out of the pocketbooks and off of the backs of hardworking Americans.

Americans are also desperate for job flexibility. I know I was also as a working mom when I worked at Ralston Purina in St. Louis, Missouri. They want to have a better balance of obligations of their day-to-day jobs while taking care of family and family matters.

The Working Families Flexibility Act will help us do just that. For the past 30 years, public sector employees have enjoyed the benefit of choosing voluntary paid time off, or comp time, instead of cash wages as compensation for working overtime hours. Private sector workers, who make up an incredibly large portion of our economy, should also reap this benefit. It is simply common sense.

Amending this overtime restriction through this legislation will help bring our workforce standards into the 21st century and allow our workers to do their jobs while still providing them with the voluntary flexibility to raise a family, pursue a college degree, care for aging parents, or tend to the day-to-day obligations that come their way.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Working Families Flexibility Act, as it safeguards workers' time and wages, and protects their use of the comp time they have earned. Most importantly, as we work each day to get our economy back on track, this legislation empowers the American worker with more options and flexibility that will ultimately lead to a better quality of life.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for taking the time to speak on this bill. I appreciate her willingness to speak on behalf of the Working Families Flexibility Act. In doing so, she is speaking on behalf of so many hardworking American families.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure. And I must say, since we do have time, that her being a champion of this in the last three Congresses that I have had the pleasure of working—and my constituents in Missouri's Second District have sent me—it is wonderful to see a working mom like her, who is juggling all of those day-to-day needs, to stand up for private sector workers who deserve the same kinds of options and flexibility that our public service has enjoyed for some 30 years. So I thank her for being a