

□ 1015

## AIRLINE ACCOUNTABILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the CEO of United Airlines, Oscar Munoz, apologized to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for his company having dragged a passenger off of one of their aircraft. Mr. Munoz highlighted the policy changes the airline has made since the wake of the incident.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Congress should hold the airlines accountable and ensure that the events like what happened to Dr. Dao are prevented.

When United Airlines had Dr. Dao forcibly removed on April 9, the airline more than just created a disruption for him and other passengers; it sparked a national outrage. Dr. Dao was bumped from his flight by a crew member of United in line with the then-airline's policies that crews could book seats on United flights until flights departed.

An airline's lack of preparation for its own staff's travel should not result in the disruption of the lives of its paying customers. Now crew members of United are required to make must-ride bookings at least 1 hour prior to departure, and they are not able to displace customers who are already on board.

However, today, I believe that we need to go further. This still has travelers at risk. So today, I am introducing the Hands Off Passengers Act or the HOP Act. This bill requires the Secretary of Transportation to modify a regulation regarding the involuntary deplaning or the denial of boarding of a flight by any passenger on an oversold flight merely to accommodate a member of the airline flight crew or staff. In other words, it prevents an airline from bumping ticketed passengers of an overbooked flight merely for the travel of one of the airline's crews.

Airlines should be better prepared on the movement of their crew to avoid the disruption of the lives of paying customers.

## OMNIBUS SPENDING BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. ROSELEHTINEN). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my disappointment that, yet again, Congress needs to resort to another omnibus spending bill. We are in a bind right now, finishing fiscal business that should have been completed last year, long before I came to Congress.

At this moment, the choice is stark and binary: We can vote to shut the government down, or we can vote for this massive funding bill. Neither is a good option, but shutting down the government is reckless. It would stall military pay and send a sign of weakness to the world. At a time when

North Korea is becoming increasingly aggressive, Europe is unstable, and Russia is posturing, we cannot afford to shut down.

I have always said, and I believe, that effective leadership needs to say what you mean and do what you say. If I voted "no" on this legislation, it would be disingenuous because I know a shutdown would be disastrous. This is a hard vote to take, but it is unavoidable at this point.

We must continue to pay our troops and other uniformed personnel. We must fund critical programs included in this omnibus. Certainly, the legislation is not perfect and doesn't accomplish everything I want as a conservative, but it does achieve some objectives. It cuts 150 Federal programs. It reduces the EPA bureaucracy to the lowest level since 1989.

The legislation also funds critical programs Republicans have been fighting for: It strengthens our military with an increase in defense spending, enabling the purchase of new warships, aircraft, and weapons. It provides a meaningful increase in salary to our uniform personnel. It provides additional funds to thwart the global war on terror and fight ISIS.

It is part of an overall \$1.52 billion increase in resources for border security, meaning more agents, enhanced technology, updated infrastructure to stem the flow of illegal aliens and drug activity across our border. It includes funds to fight the opioid epidemic, funding grants, treatment, and prevention efforts. It also provides increased funds for the National Institutes of Health to continue disease research that impacts every family.

For Michigan, important programs such as the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative are fully funded. It appropriates \$5.6 million to study the potential invasion of Asian carp into the Great Lakes.

While there are beneficial components in this omnibus, I want to underscore that using an omnibus is not how this body should function. We should be passing targeted, individual spending measures that address each agency, rather than a take-it-or-leave-it massive spending bill.

Going forward, we must change what has become business as usual in Washington. That is why I ran for Congress. There is no doubt, that won't be easy. I am learning every day how much our system needs significant reform. Only four times since 1977 were all appropriations enacted by the start of the fiscal year. That is four times in the last 40 years that the appropriations process has been effectively completed. Given that, it is unsurprising we find ourselves making this unfortunate choice yet again.

Madam Speaker, I stand here to say we can do better; we must do better. I urge this body to come together to address the shortcomings in our appropriations process and develop better solutions for the future. Given today's

options, I am voting to keep our government open, but we must end this series of short-term funding measures. We can do better. Our constituents deserve better.

## OMNIBUS SPENDING BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COMER. Madam Speaker, I rise to address the body about my position on the omnibus spending bill, which funds the government through September 30.

This spending bill does nothing to accomplish my mission to balance the Federal budget, today or any time in the future. I do not like the appropriation process and its lack of transparency in how we got to this point today. I do not like the lack of meaningful debate, nor do I like the inability to file floor amendments to the spending bill. It is inexcusable that Congress continues to wait until the last minute to perform its most important duty, which is to fund the government.

I am a freshman Member. I came to Congress to make a difference. I represent the good people of the First Congressional District of Kentucky, not a political party or any special interest. I will always put my people's best interests above politics. My objective is to fight hard for what I believe is the best for my district and then form a consensus to get things done.

Madam Speaker, I understand that I am 1 of 435 Members of the U.S. House of Representatives. And as I always mention in speeches back home in Kentucky, this is a very diverse body, diverse in ideology, diverse in geography. We all have different ideas, objectives, and goals. I respect this institution and the Constitution.

In the 5 months I have been here, I have advocated for a balanced budget and term limits; and I will continue to fight to see that those two items of my agenda become law.

I have also worked hard to see that some badly needed projects in my district receive funding. I am proud to say that the following projects are funded in this bill: \$270 million for the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant deactivation process, which will keep 1,200 West Kentuckians working in good-paying jobs and continue to prevent illness and environmental issues in McCracken and Ballard Counties.

I am proud to represent Fort Campbell. The bill provides a pay increase for our troops and fully funds health and benefits for them and their families while providing the funding to begin rebuilding our military; language to redesignate the Pennyryle Parkway as I-169 from south of Madisonville to Hopkinsville; funding for much-needed dredging of the Hickman-Fulton Riverport, which is located just off the Mississippi River; language which prohibits the Army Corps of Engineers

from charging the residents of Russell and Clinton Counties for water from Lake Cumberland; and a permanent fix to ensure healthcare benefits for retired coal miners.

Though I am disappointed in many parts of the overall bill and the appropriations process as a whole, I am very happy with the badly needed items successfully addressed for my district in this short-term funding bill. For that reason and because I do not ever want to see a government shutdown, I will vote "yes" on the short-term omnibus.

I will continue to work hard for conservative principles and fiscal discipline. I will continue to demand transparency through the appropriations process. I came here to get things done for the people of my district. I am sure I will never get 100 percent of what I want, but I will always try. At the end of the day, I will try to build consensus and do the things that Congress is supposed to get done, whether it be tax reform, healthcare reform, or to fund the government.

We have many responsibilities in this great body, and I pledge to be one Representative who works with our President and every Member of this body to make America great again.

#### HONORING THE MEMORY OF MIAMI-DADE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MITCHELL). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, as we approach Peace Officers Memorial Day, I would like to honor the service and the sacrifice of law enforcement officers in my south Florida community who bravely lost their lives in the line of duty. On April 29, through the project that is called Project Honoring Every Resting Officer, or Project HERO, the Miami-Dade Police Department embarked upon its annual mission to pay tribute to the memory of each fallen officer in every department.

By placing an American flag and a Blue Line flag at the resting location of these valiant men and women in uniform, we remember their sacrifices and ensure that their memories will be immortalized.

I would like to thank the director of our fine police department, Juan Perez, for spearheading this noble cause on behalf of the families, friends, and colleagues of all of our fallen officers and also for Director Perez's work in making our community a safer place in which to live.

I encourage all south Floridans to also remember the fallen and to attend the Miami-Dade Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Ceremony on May 4 at 7 p.m. at Tropical Park.

#### RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTION OF PORTMIAMI

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I recently visited PortMiami, one of the prime economic engines in Miami-Dade County.

Located in my congressional district, PortMiami is known as the cruise capital of the world. With its exclusive geographic location, the port is accessible to many international markets. In 2016, it handled an impressive 9 million tons of cargo and close to 5 million passengers.

With such large numbers, we can already imagine the powerful impact of PortMiami. It grows our economy. It creates jobs in Miami-Dade County and, indeed, throughout our great State of Florida.

Recent investments in infrastructure have been instrumental in guaranteeing that PortMiami remains a world class cargo and cruise port.

Throughout my years in Congress, I have been a strong supporter of our port. A project to dredge the channel to accommodate megacontainer vessels was completed in 2015. Also, four gantry cranes were purchased in order to operate the higher cargo volume. The completion of a tunnel has also accelerated the port's capacity to increase the volume of trucks that travel to and from the marine terminals, further strengthening the competitiveness of PortMiami.

PortMiami is currently undergoing some additional infrastructure projects, such as a new cruise terminal, security enhancements, and cargo yard-related improvements, all very important so that PortMiami continues to be a world class cargo and cruise port.

The Port of Miami is very important to my congressional district, to our south Florida economy, and I will continue to embrace this enterprise and economic force for our residents.

#### LUPUS AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, May is Lupus Awareness Month. Lupus is an autoimmune illness that has the ability to attack any part of the body and unfortunately has no cure yet.

According to the Lupus Foundation of America, more than 1.5 million Americans, including my lovely stepdaughter Katharine, are living with lupus; and millions have already sadly lost their battle with this terrible disease.

So this month, we raise awareness and educate our communities about lupus; and we also thank the researchers, doctors, and scientists who work around the clock to research, diagnose, treat, and eventually cure this disease.

I would like to highlight the wonderful work that the Sylvester Cancer Center at my alma mater, the University of Miami, is doing to get closer to finding safer and more effective treatments.

I have been honored to join forces with the Lupus Foundation and my colleagues in the Congressional Lupus Caucus to secure new Federal funding to advance lupus research, education, and awareness. These funds will help foster new scientific breakthroughs to better understand the disease and to help patients living with lupus.

Finally, I want to recognize the hard work and the dedication of caregivers and advocates who raise awareness for lupus who create a better life for those impacted by this terrible disease.

In particular, I want to highlight the Florida Chapter of the Lupus Foundation. From their local Walks to End Lupus to their tireless advocacy on behalf of patients and caregivers, they have been an instrumental source of hope, guidance, and comfort to those living who have been transformed by this disease.

So I invite our entire south Florida community to join them and the Miami Marlins on May 10 at Marlins Park for Lupus Awareness Night.

Mr. Speaker, this month, let us remember those who we have lost and those who are currently impacted by this terrible disease. Let us thank the advocates and caregivers, empower researchers, and, most importantly, let us work together for the day when no one will be diagnosed with lupus.

□ 1030

#### VENEZUELA REFUGEE ASSISTANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COMER). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CURBELO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for over a decade, thousands of Venezuelans were forced to flee the brutal Chavez dictatorship, and the situation has only worsened under his hand-picked successor, Nicolas Maduro.

Over the last several years, the people of Venezuela have increasingly spoken out against the Maduro regime, and time and time again he has attempted to silence them. In the last few weeks alone, the world has seen countless examples of the regime's thuggish tactics, unethical behavior, and lethal force against innocent civilians.

Top opposition leaders like Leopoldo Lopez remain locked up in Maduro's prisons, while the dictator continues to stop at nothing to try and control all branches of government. Thousands of opposition protesters have been arrested and dozens have been left for dead or killed.

So in response to this continued political crisis, I have joined with my colleagues DARREN SOTO, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, and DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ to introduce bipartisan legislation allowing Venezuelan nationals who have made a new home in the United States to remain here if they choose to do so, since it is too dangerous to return to their home country.

Instead of returning to the instability and uncertainty in Venezuela, these individuals would be granted legal permanent residency, so long as they do not have a criminal record and have never been involved in the persecution of others, eliminating any possibility of human rights violators or