

But this is about adoption. This is not about anything else. This is not about taking anything away from anybody. This is about giving them the opportunity to understand the options that they do have in an unplanned pregnancy.

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chair, as I close, while this amendment focuses on adoption services, we cannot ignore what is missing from this bill and from this process, and that is an opportunity to vote on the amendment to fund Title X Family Planning. We must restore funding for family planning services; invest in a comprehensive approach that prioritizes health promotion, education, services, and care; and an approach that includes sex education programs, better access to birth control, and reproductive health services.

I am extremely concerned about the cut that this amendment imposes on the Children and Families account at HHS. I oppose this amendment. This is cutting funds from Head Start, Runaway and Homeless Youth grants, and the Community Services Block Grant, among other critical programs.

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

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentlewoman's comments. What this is really about is 2 million couples willing to adopt children in the United States. It is hard for me to stand here today and say that it would be a much different world if people were really given the opportunity to understand what their options are and be able to fulfill the wishes of over 2 million couples in the United States who are looking to adopt a child. I think that is incredibly important, and I don't understand why we couldn't look at something like that and say this is about adoption. That is all it is about.

Now, this is fully endorsed, by the way, by the National Council for Adoption.

At this time, I would also offer my condolences to Ms. DELAURO for the loss of her mother. She is a fine lady, and I am sure that, no matter what, she will look back on the years she spent with her mother and cherish every one of those.

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

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. MITCHELL). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON) having assumed the chair, Mr. MITCHELL, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3354) making appro-

priations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3697, CRIMINAL ALIEN GANG MEMBER REMOVAL ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 15, 2017, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 22, 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-307) on the resolution (H. Res. 513) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3697) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act with respect to aliens associated with criminal gangs, and for other purposes, and providing for proceedings during the period from September 15, 2017, through September 22, 2017, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 504 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 3354.

Will the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) kindly resume the chair.

□ 1922

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 3354) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes, with Mr. MITCHELL (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, amendment No. 156 printed in House Report 155-297, offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) had been disposed of.

AMENDMENT NO. 158 OFFERED BY MS. BONAMICI

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 158 printed in House Report 115-297.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 767, line 24, insert "(increased by \$51,000,000)" after the dollar amount.

Page 770, line 18, insert "(reduced by \$64,000,000)" after the 1st dollar amount.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentlewoman

from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to offer an amendment to increase funding for senior nutrition programs under title III of the Older Americans Act. My amendment funds these programs at levels authorized by the House just last year.

We are in the middle of an unprecedented demographic shift as this country ages. The population of older adults is growing faster than at any point in history. As we grow older, we all want people across the country to be able to age with dignity, health, and independence in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.

For more than 50 years, the Older Americans Act has supported community-based providers that reach more than 11 million seniors and caregivers annually in each and every one of our districts providing person-centered assistance to help people age in place. These critical OAA services include home-delivered and congregate meals to make sure that older adults are getting the nutrition needed to keep them healthy and engaged, which reduces the risk of falls, depression, and other negative outcomes.

Just a few weeks ago, I had the pleasure of joining dedicated volunteers to deliver Meals on Wheels to seniors in northwest Oregon. I highly recommend this to my colleagues. You can see firsthand the value of these programs and how important these meals and visits are to our constituents who rely on them.

The Older Americans Act also covers transportation to get older adults to the doctor, the grocery store, or even to a local senior center to engage with friends and avoid isolation. The OAA funds critical disaster assistance response efforts for seniors and communities like those just devastated by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

Unfortunately, funding for the Older Americans Act has drastically lagged behind the growth in the older adult population, the increasing need for services, and the rising cost of delivering these supports. This stagnant and, in some areas, eroding Federal investment in OAA programs costs us more in the long term. When seniors can't stay healthy at home, they end up in hospitals paid for by Medicare or in institutional long-term care, often funded by Medicaid. Both are far more expensive than adequate investments in the Older Americans Act to keep seniors healthy at home for as long as possible.

Support for the Older American Act is strongly bipartisan. Last year, Congress voted without opposition to reauthorize the Older Americans Act, a bill that included modest increases in authorized funding levels.

Unfortunately, annual appropriations still fall woefully short of these

amounts we clearly and firmly approved. This amendment will increase funding for core OAA programs delivered through title III—which include critical nutrition, home- and community-based support, and caregiver services—to the amounts that were just so broadly supported last year.

These investments in OAA are necessary if we are to provide the person-centered, cost-effective in-home services and supports needed to keep our expanding older population healthy and independent in their homes and communities. This amendment is an essential first step toward rectifying the recent depletion of these important funds for these vital programs.

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

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentlewoman's concern for programs that support vulnerable seniors. Frankly, my committee has provided increases for these programs in prior years because, like her, we understand how valuable and important they are to keeping seniors independent in their homes.

As the gentlewoman knows, our subcommittee received an allocation below last year's level, and we were not in a position to provide another year of increases to these programs. The amendment reduces the administration funds available to the Secretary of Health and Human Services. A reduction of this magnitude would significantly hinder the Secretary's ability to administer the agency.

For this reason, Mr. Chairman, I oppose the amendment. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), who is the ranking member of the Education and the Workforce Committee, and is someone who understands the importance of these investments.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank Ms. BONAMICI, the vice ranking member of the Education and the Workforce Committee, for offering the amendment and for her leadership on issues affecting older Americans.

The Older Americans Act was first passed 50 years ago as part of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. It helps older Americans live with dignity and stay connected with their communities. I am proud that last year we were able to pass a 3-year bipartisan reauthorization that increased funding for the programs. But had our investments in these programs actually kept up with inflation and growing populations, the authorization levels would have been even much more. But, thankfully, the reauthorization moved us in the right direction.

This amendment would bring funding for supportive services, nutrition pro-

grams, and caregiver supports in line with the authorized level. Even though these are not fully adequate to address the total need, it is another step in the right direction. So I support the amendment and our commitment to older Americans. We can maintain that commitment by adopting this amendment, so I thank the gentlewoman for offering it.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chair, may I please inquire as to the remaining time.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Oregon has 1 minute remaining.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chairman, I yield 45 seconds to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), who serves on the Appropriations Committee.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chairman, first, I thank the gentlewoman from Oregon for introducing this amendment. I rise in support of it.

We have to really let our seniors know that we care about them. My mother passed away a couple of years ago. She was 90 years old. I recognized personally the importance of comprehensive services to ensure that our seniors have a quality of life that they so deserve in their senior years. This also helps taxpayers and families avoid paying for more expensive healthcare and long-term care services.

So I thank the gentlewoman again on behalf of our constituents. This will strengthen our communities, and I ask for an "aye" vote.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chair, I urge all of my colleagues to support this important amendment that is a good investment to save in the long term and take care of our seniors.

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

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1930

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI). The amendment was rejected.

AMENDMENT NO. 160 OFFERED BY MR. BEN RAY  
LUJÁN OF NEW MEXICO

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 160 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 770, line 18, after the first dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$2,000,000) (increased by \$2,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico.

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Chairman, my amendment provides \$2 million in dedicated funding for peer

support and paraprofessionals as part of the Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training program.

Ensuring all Americans have access to affordable and high-quality mental health services should not be a partisan issue. It is simply the right thing to do.

The purpose of the Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training program, which this amendment funds, is to add additional training to serve populations especially in rural and medically underserved areas.

The BHWET program helps close the gap in access to behavioral healthcare by establishing partnerships with a broad range of organizations and community partners to ensure a wide recruitment of students, opportunities for field placements, career development, and to provide job placement services.

These efforts will increase the number of able behavioral health providers serving populations across their lifespan, including persons in rural, medically underserved, and vulnerable communities.

Peer support has improved health outcomes while lowering healthcare costs. In fact, there is growing evidence that peer support-related strategies can be used as more engaging and successful solutions than current hospital and emergency room care-related options. Peer support programs provide individualized, managed care to those who need it the most.

Many studies have shown the vast benefits to patients who utilize peer support. For example, a 3-year pilot project called the Peer Health Navigation Intervention, or "The Bridge," showed that peer support, in addition to a variety of other positive outcomes, shifted the focus of healthcare from urgent care and emergency room visits to outpatient primary care.

Furthermore, many studies have shown the potential cost savings that the increased implementation of peer support can deliver. A 2006 study demonstrated that, for patients using day treatment, the use of certified peer specialists led to a \$5,497 cost reduction per person per year.

Another successful program based out of Denver, Colorado, showed a return on investment of \$2.28 for every dollar spent. As evidenced by these and other studies, a small investment in peer support services will greatly reduce healthcare costs in the long run.

The current system for treating behavioral health issues is not sufficient to serve those who need help. It is unacceptable that more than 50 percent of primary care patients with depression go undiagnosed and two-thirds of primary care providers have no ability to prescribe outpatient behavioral health for their patients.

Additionally, dedicated funding for peer support paraprofessionals will be essential in helping address the current lack of access to behavioral health services in our healthcare system.

This modest amount of funding for a community-based partnership program will make an enormous difference for millions of Americans who deserve access to behavioral health services, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentleman's concern. He raises, I think, a genuinely important issue.

Our committee understands the value of the Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training program, which is why we did not accept the administration's budget request which actually canceled the program.

Our committee, as my friend knows, received an allocation that was lower than fiscal year 2017, so we had to make some tough decisions. I want my friend to know we will work with him going forward and see if we can arrive at a solution that he finds more satisfactory in the final bill.

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

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire how much time is remaining.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman has 2 minutes remaining.

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of Mr. LUJÁN's amendment, and I want to thank him for this.

I shared earlier that I, by profession, am a psychiatric social worker. I actually founded a community mental health center. It was called Change, Incorporated.

As part of this community mental health center, we had a program. That program was to train individuals in peer support. This was in the day. I can tell you what Mr. LUJÁN has said about the goals and the successes of peer support services. It can't be overstated. This amendment would close this shortage in services for individuals who need them.

As chair of the Social Work Caucus, again, psychologists, psychiatric social workers, and clinical social workers agree that peer support for individuals who may or may not have earned an advanced degree is extremely important because they can understand and they know what the needs of their clients are. Studies have shown that peer support services help to reduce emergency room visits by individuals suffering from depression.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment. I know from personal experience that it works. It is a cost-saving measure, and it really helps people suffering from mental illness. We should really recognize the need out there. It is still great, even as I reflect upon my community mental health center, Change, Incorporated.

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Mexico will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 161 OFFERED BY MRS. LOWEY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 161 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I rise as the designee of the gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), and I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 794, line 15, after the first dollar amount insert "(increased by \$100,000,000)".

Page 794, line 15, after the second dollar amount insert "(increased by \$100,000,000)".

Page 794, line 19, after the dollar amount insert "(increased by \$100,000,000)".

Page 805, line 25, after the dollar amount insert "(decreased by \$100,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, nearly 1.7 million children, including more than 87,000 in my home State of New York, rely on afterschool programs supported through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers to provide a safe, enriching environment to learn. Yet this bill would cut funding for afterschool programs, leaving tens of thousands of students without educational programs as well as drug and violence prevention counseling, arts, music, recreation, and more.

We should invest more, not less, in our children. This amendment would restore funding to the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program so our students can have access to the safe afterschool enrichment they deserve.

Mr. Chairman, I urge support for my amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN) for working with our good friend who

couldn't be here tonight to make sure that this issue that I know she cares deeply about and I know my friend cares deeply about is raised.

I tell the gentlewoman that I will continue work with her as we move forward in the appropriations process this year. I hope we can reach an agreement, particularly in this area.

I understand the gentlewoman's frustration with finding a large enough offset to accommodate the increase she proposes. However, her amendment would actually reduce resources for the Department of Education by nearly a quarter. I think this would jeopardize the Department's ability to administer the very program she seeks to increase.

So I will reluctantly oppose the amendment at this time. I believe the offset within the Department of Education administrative account is just simply too much.

Again, I want to reiterate to my friend that I look forward to working with her as we go forward and perhaps receiving a different allocation under a House-Senate agreement in the future.

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

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentleman's kind and thoughtful words about afterschool programs.

There are over 18 million children whose parents want to take advantage of afterschool programs, but they lack access in the area where they live. That is why we work to fund our national network of afterschool programs through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I just want to say to the distinguished chair that I appreciate his positive comments about this program. I look forward to a better allocation as the process moves forward, and I look forward to having him and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle join me in supporting this very important program.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN).

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Chairman, I want to point something out. I am glad I have a chance to speak on this amendment.

When I was growing up, I spent a lot of time before school, a lot of time after school, and a lot of time in summer school being supervised by my parents. They did a great job.

I think before we fall all over ourselves to make sure the government is the one supervising people all the time, we ought to remember it is good to educate the public that parents are responsible for a little of this as well, and nobody loves their kids like their parents.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman from Oklahoma yield?

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire as to how much time I have remaining.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Oklahoma has 3½ minutes remaining.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY).

Mrs. LOWEY. I thank the distinguished chairman for yielding to me. Again, I look forward to working with him and the other members of our committee as we expand the budget.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say to the distinguished gentleman who spoke before, I grew up in the Bronx, New York. I was fortunate to have my mother not working at the time. She was able to supervise me. I had many wonderful play dates.

I would like to say to the distinguished gentleman, in my community where this program is so essential, many of these people are working two, three jobs. The mother is working two or three jobs; the father is working two or three jobs. For some of these families, there is only one parent.

Perhaps you can come visit my district. I would like you to come to Port Chester, New York. This was one of the first afterschool programs I was fortunate to be able to support with this account. I would love you to come and visit and see what these programs do, which is provide important support for their parents who want to help and want to be supportive of their children, but sometimes these jobs do stand in the way.

These programs are so very important, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in providing more funding.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, having yielded to people on both sides of the debate, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from New York will be postponed.

□ 1945

AMENDMENT NO. 164 OFFERED BY MR. COURTNEY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 164 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 796, line 5, insert after the dollar amount ““(reduced by \$1,184,000) (increased by \$1,184,000)””.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) and

a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Chair, this, I think, is a very modest amendment, which just simply seeks to restore a cut to the existing 2017 level of support for the Magnet Schools Assistance Program, which is a program which has been around for quite a while. It actually was reauthorized in the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015, which was a great bipartisan success for K-12 education.

And again, this program provides support for magnet schools all across the country. There are 4,340 magnet schools in the U.S. 3.5 million students benefit from magnet programs, which again, are administered by local school districts and utilize a variety of academic themes such as STEM, Language Immersion, Career and Technical Education, Visual and Performing Arts, just to name a few.

Again, it is a strategy which also provides a regional structure to the student population and promotes diversity. It has done great things in terms of Connecticut in terms of ending racial isolation. Again, unfortunately, the magnet schools have sort of seen a steady sort of decline from 10 years ago in terms of Federal support for it, and this amendment really is just basically saying enough. I mean, we should, again, restore an amount, which I indicated is very modest, of \$1.1 million to this account, and offset and paid for.

And again, I think it just will allow a lot of school districts and communities to continue the great work that they are doing with magnet programs.

I want to conclude my initial remarks by, again, thanking the chairman and also Congresswoman LEE for their kind remarks about my colleague and neighbor from Connecticut, ROSA DELAURO, who lost her mother, Luisa DeLauro, a 103-year-old amazing woman.

We all marvel at ROSA's energy and passion, but if you have ever met Luisa, you would understand where it came from because she was an amazing woman, just a great inspiration for her daughter who, I think, made her so proud in terms of the great work that she has done in the Congress.

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

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the gentleman, quite sincerely, for his amendment. And again, as I will oft repeat tonight, as the gentleman knows, we had to cut \$5 billion from this bill, and we had to make some genuinely tough choices.

In this case, we accepted the President's recommended funding level for magnet schools, and we were also able to increase charter schools, though not

by as much as the President requested. Charter schools have demonstrated effectiveness in providing a real choice in quality education for millions of students around the country.

If we have a change in our allocation in conference, I will gladly take another look at the magnet school program to evaluate additional funding there. I think my friend makes a very good case on their behalf; however, at this time, simply because of reasons of allocation, I will oppose the amendment because the offset reduces charter school grants, which I strongly support.

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the gentleman for offering this amendment, and I rise in strong support of it. It restores funding to the Magnet Schools Assistance Program.

Now, 60 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, the data shows that many schools and communities continue to suffer from the vestiges of segregation and that many of our Nation's largest school districts remain starkly segregated along racial and economic lines.

Now, I just have to say, when I started elementary school, schools were segregated in El Paso, Texas. Sixty years later, now, it is really something. We have come a long way, but we have a long way to go. This amendment, the Magnet Schools Assistance Program—the amendment helps assist school districts in promoting desegregation long overdue.

I am glad that we increased this program in fiscal 2017 omnibus by \$1 million. That additional funding was intended to allow the program to increase the total number of grantees. I was disappointed to see that the majority took a step back from the progress that we had made and imposed a cut to this program in the underlying bill.

Why in the world would the majority not want to see school segregation ended? This amendment certainly leads us in that direction, and I strongly support it, and I hope you would reconsider your opposition because many of us remember those days.

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

Mr. Chairman, I disagree with my friend about charter schools. Actually, charter schools have provided enormous opportunity for children of every race, every ethnic background. They have been particularly effective, I think, in minority areas, so I reject any suggestion that the decisions we made had anything to do with race or racism or that the charter school movement is involved in that. I just don't think that is the case.

But I do agree in the importance of magnet schools, and if we get a different allocation, we are going to sit down and work with our friends to see

if we can also make some progress in that area. But at this time, I am going to continue to oppose the amendment.

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Chair, may I ask how much time I have left.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania). The gentleman from Connecticut has 2 minutes remaining.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Chair, again, briefly, I appreciate the gentleman's comments. I would just note, though, if you go back 10 years ago, the disparity between charter school funding at the Federal level versus magnet schools was two to one in favor of charters.

We are at a point today where, with this budget, it will be four to one in terms of disparity between the two. I would acknowledge the gentleman's comments that there are some areas where charter schools have provided great benefits, but there is no question that, in terms of breaking down racial isolation, magnet schools have a much better batting average, and that has been studied and reported over the years.

My daughter attended a magnet school in the Hartford area, and again, with a totally diverse population, and again, it is probably the most highly rated high school, secondary school, in the State of Connecticut, according to U.S. News and World Report.

So again, the quality of magnet schools, I think, are high in the record in terms of their goal, which is to break down racial isolation. I think it surpasses charter schools.

This amendment would leave a 7.7 percent increase in funding for charter schools. It is not an attack on charter school funding. It just simply restores last year's level of spending for magnet schools, a very modest measure.

And again, I look forward, hopefully, to working with the gentleman, but I really believe strongly that this is not asking too much to protect magnet school funding, and that is why I would ask the Chamber to support this amendment.

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

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

Mr. Chairman, I want to assure my friend I certainly don't take the amendment as an attack on charter schools any more than I accept the idea that, by funding charter schools, we are involved in promoting racial segregation. That is not what we are trying to do here. We have a genuine debate over the best vehicles to go forward.

I happen to think both these vehicles are good vehicles. I have seen what the charter school movement, frankly, has meant in New Orleans, what it has meant in this city, the opportunities that it has opened to thousands and thousands of students of all racial backgrounds.

And the administration, as my friend knows, has put a particular emphasis

here. And while we increase funding, we are not anywhere close to what the administration wanted to do. So I want to reiterate to my friend from Connecticut that we intend to work with him if we have an allocation change where we can find some additional resources, because I think he makes a very good point, and I very much value the contributions that magnet schools also have made to try to improve educational outcomes across the spectrum for our students.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Connecticut will be postponed.

The Chair understands that amendment No. 165 will not be offered.

AMENDMENT NO. 167 OFFERED BY MR. LEWIS OF MINNESOTA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 167 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 801, line 25, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$70,246,000)".

Page 802, line 25, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$70,246,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. LEWIS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, our Nation is facing a skills gap, a student completion crisis at both the high school and college levels, and record levels of student debt. The status quo is unacceptable. We must do better for our students by truly supporting career and technical education as a pathway to success.

CTE has been shown to dramatically increase high school graduation rates, increase postsecondary access, and, most importantly, get students to a degree and a well paying career. More than 75 percent of CTE concentrators pursued postsecondary education shortly after high school, and four out of five students earned a credential or were enrolled 2 years later.

Dual enrollment allows high school CTE students to earn college credit and significantly increase their likelihood of pursuing and completing college, all the while saving their families money.

The key is that CTE students often don't need an extensive 4-year edu-

cation, as many attend a great 2-year technical college and then head right into the workplace with little debt and skills to excel.

We must fight this narrative—one some of my colleagues are still pushing—that a 2-year technical degree is a lesser educational option. This way of thinking is simply harmful to our Nation's students and our Nation.

My amendment increases funding for CTE State grants by \$70 million, transferring the funding from an increase to TRIO and GEAR UP. It does not cut funding to TRIO and GEAR UP but continues funding these programs at fiscal year 2017 levels, the highest funding levels in program history.

The TRIO and GEAR UP programs received significant funding increases over the past decade, including a \$50 million increase in 2017, leaving the programs with proposed funding \$230 million above their 2007 level.

Instead of an increase for TRIO and GEAR UP this next fiscal year, my amendment makes an overdue investment in career and technical education and in our Nation's students.

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

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I want to begin by thanking my friend from Minnesota for the amendment. I am a big fan of career and technical education, and, frankly, along with the State of Ohio, Oklahoma probably has the most robust and strongest career technical education program of any State in the country. It is actually something we fund ourselves, for the most part. I would recommend other people do the same.

I am also, you know, frankly, as my friend knows, dealing with a cut of \$5 billion from the bill. In this case, the gentleman seeks to cut TRIO funding to pay for his amendment. In my opinion, it is totally misguided.

Since the TRIO program began, it has produced over 5 million college graduates, and those college graduates were almost exclusively from families where no one had ever had the opportunity to go.

This is a proven successful program. It has helped literally millions of first generations of college students, so I strongly support TRIO and will not support cuts in this program; so I, therefore, oppose the amendment.

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

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL).

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the amendment to increase funding for current technical education programs. For some people, pursuing their desired career means securing a college degree.

In my 30-year career in workforce education, I have seen firsthand this

isn't the right path for everyone. Unfortunately, too often, success has been defined by the 4-year-or-bust model, leaving students who would be better served by current technical education behind, out in the cold, and leaving job creators unable to find qualified workers for in-demand jobs.

□ 2000

Democrats and Republicans agree that the skills gap is a serious problem challenging our workforce. More importantly, my constituents, schools, and employers throughout my district recognize this is a crisis that needs to be addressed.

Mr. Chairman, I urge passage of the amendment.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK), a member of the subcommittee.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma for yielding me time.

While this amendment increases career and technical education funding, a worthy goal that I support, it comes at the expense of funding for critical higher education programs that support low-income and minority students.

Career and technical education funds help ensure students are well prepared for further education employment in high-skilled, high-demand jobs in the 21st century economy.

In days before the election, President Trump, in reference to CTE, said: "We're going to start it up big league."

Secretary DeVos, a few months ago, said: "... this administration is committed to supporting and highlighting career and technical education."

Despite these promises, the Trump-DeVos budget cuts CTE by \$168 million, or 15 percent.

I am glad to see my colleagues on the other side of the aisle proposing to increase our investment in this critical area, but I am deeply concerned that the amendment proposes to slash \$70 million in funding.

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN).

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Chairman, I have 30 seconds, so I will give any listeners a suggestion.

I suggest you spend some time at your local tech school or your local trade school and ask the people who teach there how many of their students are former 4-year students who cannot find a job in the field in which they thought.

These people can have a family-supporting job 8 or 9 years earlier if they are directed to a technical education or a trade school. They will be supporting their families and be able to do that when they are 21 or 22 rather than 31 or 32.

You will learn a lot if you talk to your local tech school or trade school.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, this amendment would take money from important college access programs, GEAR UP and TRIO, and use it to increase important funding for career and technical education. Because of the way the amendment is drafted, it would also jeopardize funding for minority-serving institutions to be used to increase that funding. This amendment reduces funding for programs meant to improve college access for low-income students.

First of all, whether it is CTE or TRIO, all of these programs don't have enough money. One should not be stripped for the sake of another. By lifting one program that leads to one opportunity over neglecting another that leads to another opportunity, you limit the choice of future life outcomes at a time when members of the next generation should be able to choose the best opportunity for them.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment and try to fund both more robustly.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Chairman, as the designee of Ranking Member LOWEY, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. MITCHELL). The gentlewoman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Chairman, as the co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional TRIO Caucus, I find this amendment, which would cut \$60 million in funding from TRIO educational services that assist veterans and low-income and first-generation college students, deeply disturbing and misaligned with our national economic interests.

It sends the misguided message that only university education is unnecessary for low-income students. You know, just get a little job training and go straight to work.

I might make the observation that I don't see anybody over there who has less than a bachelor's degree, and I know my good friend has a law degree.

While career and technical education is very, very important, low-income students and our country's economic viability deserve the option of educating some of our students at a 4-year-degree level.

For us to maintain hegemony in the world, we need people like Steve Jobs, who was not a trust fund baby, who was not a legacy kid, but someone who had the talent and ability. We need to provide opportunity to the larger pool of talent in our country in order to be able to create the next iPhone.

I will give you a really good example, Mr. Chairman. There is a student who happens to live in southeastern Minnesota. As a matter of fact, he lives in the Second Congressional District. He was once a homeless student living in poverty, but he participated in a TRIO program at a university in Minnesota's Second District. Now, as a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University,

he is the founder of a biomedical start-up company with the mission of launching technology to innovate a disease diagnostic tool that has been found to be cost effective and will be utilized worldwide.

Hunter Lin could not have benefited from just a 2-year degree. TRIO has given him the chance to get not only out of homelessness, but the ability to really create economic prosperity in our country.

In Minnesota's Second Congressional District, there are 1,521 TRIO students being served at four institutions, including two community colleges.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this harmful amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX).

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from the Education and the Workforce Committee, Mr. LEWIS, for offering this amendment.

At a time when U.S. job openings are at a record 6.2 million, America faces a skills shortage. Employers all over the country tell us they need more employees who are skilled.

I have said this before, and I will say it again for so long as I am here: All education is career education.

I am a former TRIO director. I am not opposed to TRIO.

This is not an effort to diminish access to baccalaureate degrees, but to give priority to programs that are helping Americans learn the skills they need for good, high-paying jobs.

Research has shown that graduates with a technical or applied sciences associate's degree outearn baccalaureate degree holders by between \$2,000 and \$11,000.

Earlier this year, the House passed the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. That bill and this amendment are important steps to make sure all Americans have access to an education that helps them develop the skills they need to have a successful life.

I am proud to support this amendment.

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, it is unfortunate to see some of my colleagues claim that career and technical education is somehow the separate or lesser pathway to a 4-year college degree. These claims are neither factual nor are they very genuine. CTE promotes college access, with 91 percent of high school graduates who earn a 2- to 3-year CTE credit going on to enroll in college.

When partisan politics gets injected into workforce development policy, it is students across the Nation who lose. I can tell you that, throughout the Second District, I have employers and students dying for these opportunities from all backgrounds.

The current bill leaves CTE State grants with funding \$60 million below

what they received 10 years ago, while TRIO receives funding \$110 million above both its authorized level and what the program received just 2 years ago.

My amendment supports all of our students and their diverse ambitions and affirms career and technical education as a viable pathway to success.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment. Our students are waiting for it, our employers are waiting for it, and our country is waiting for it.

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

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

It has been a good and robust debate, but I don't think it has been a particularly partisan debate. As a matter of fact, I see people on both sides of the aisle that actually have both solutions. My friend, Mr. SCOTT, may have the best solution of all: let's plus-up both of these programs because they both do a lot of good.

But, in this case, I don't think you make one the enemy of the other. I have seen TRIO programs work, and I have seen how many jobs they produce. We are not serving anywhere close to the population eligible for TRIO. Somewhere less than 10 percent of the eligible students actually take advantage of the program.

Again, my State invests very heavily, probably more heavily than most other States that I would suggest do the same thing Ohio and Oklahoma have done. And these programs which my friend rightly champions, I have seen people actually raise their own taxes so they could have a career or technical institute.

So I think there is merit to both of these approaches. But I do also think 5 million college graduates from people who did not have the chance to go is something this country ought to think about. The statistics tell us each of those graduates in a lifetime earn \$1 million more than they would have. I promise you, the Federal Government will get its share of that million dollars.

This is a program that has paid for itself over and over again. Perhaps as we go forward, we can find other ways to help both of these programs capitalize on their potential.

So while I agree with the objective my friend is trying to achieve, I don't agree in achieving it at the expense of TRIO or GEAR UP.

Mr. Chairman, I oppose the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. LEWIS).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further pro-

ceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 168 OFFERED BY MR. GROTHMAN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 168 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 802, line 19, after the dollar amount, insert "(decreased by \$33,954,220)".

Page 805, line 25, after the dollar amount, insert "(decreased by \$8,620,000)".

Page 806, line 8, after the dollar amount, insert "(decreased by \$1,185,120)".

Page 856, line 11, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$43,759,340)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

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

I rise in support of an amendment to reduce funding by 2 percent for the Department of Education's Office of Program Administration, Inspector General, and Student Aid Administration.

I say this because, even a month ago, it was apparent that when we wind up doing the appropriations bill or an omnibus bill or wherever we are, we are probably going to be borrowing about 14 percent of that budget. Then in the last month, we have had two hurricanes hit America, and we have already set aside another \$15 billion.

I want to remind people here that we are approaching \$20 trillion in debt—\$60,000 for every man, woman, and child in this country. If you have a family of four, they are \$240,000 in debt.

I think given those numbers, every Congressman, when they look at this appropriation document, ought to make as their primary goal spending less money. And again, we are borrowing like 14 percent.

When I was a State legislator, I dealt several times with people from the Department of Education; and, honestly, the few times I dealt with them, I never felt that their positions or what they were doing helped anybody at all. It looked like they almost had too many people there.

So I think a small reduction of 2 percent is something that we should all be supportive of, make a little bit of a dent on that deficit and a little bit of a dent on that huge sea of money we voted for—including myself—working its way towards Florida and Texas.

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

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman from Wisconsin is a good friend. We serve on the Budget Committee together, and, frankly, I know how sincere his concern about the issues that he lays out is. I know how hard he fought on that committee, and oftentimes we were unlikely allies in a number of places.

□ 2015

So I know this is a passion and a sincere commitment. I remind my friend, he knows I know he would have preferred more, but this bill is \$5 billion less than it was last year. He certainly had some success, and success that I agree with, but in this particular case, if I understand the gentleman's amendment correctly, it would basically cut education administration by \$43 million, a roughly 10 percent cut across the board in the administrative areas.

Or is it just a 2 percent cut in everything?

Mr. GROTHMAN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. COLE. I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. GROTHMAN. No. It is a 2 percent cut in administration, inspector general, and student aid.

Mr. COLE. Okay. But substantial reductions, and in programs that have already been cut. So for that reason, I would oppose my friend's additional cuts, but I would hope to work with him going forward in something that I know he knows is a far greater driver of our debt, and that is entitlement reform. That is where the money is.

We end up fighting every year over discretionary accounts that are relatively minor compared to the behemoths of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and the other so-called mandatory programs. They are only mandatory because Congress doesn't have the courage to pick up the law and actually deal with them. So I am going to work with my friend in that area because I know he is sincere.

In this case, I feel compelled to oppose the amendment.

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

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Chair, I think we have had enough debate, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, one of the agencies affected by this amendment is the Department of Education's Office of Inspector General that is responsible for conducting independent and objective audits and investigations. It is through this agency that we can review offices like the Federal Student Aid office, and Congress can learn about policies and practices that need to be improved. It was just last March that the OIG investigated that department and found that Congress needs to do more to

monitor colleges with unstable finances in order to protect students and taxpayers from abrupt school closures.

Any cuts to this agency will reduce the chances that such findings will be made, and reduce consumer protections. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK), a member of the subcommittee.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, this amendment would decimate the ability of the Department of Education to meet the needs of Americans by indiscriminately transferring \$44 million to the spending reduction account. This does nothing to improve the bill, which is already underfunded. The majority has imposed a \$5 billion cut to the Labor-HHS bill below the 2017 omnibus level. Further cuts are completely unnecessary.

That is not all. This \$5 billion is also below the nondefense levels allowed under the Budget Control Act. We have the resources available, but the majority refuses to allocate them to essential programs funded through this bill. The Department will simply have to do less with less. That is not good for the American people, and it is not good for our constituents.

A Department with fewer resources to oversee the Student Aid portfolio, and as Mr. SCOTT pointed out, the Office of Inspector General's ability to promote efficiencies within the Department and investigate fraud, will be hampered.

Mr. Chair, for these reasons, I oppose the amendment.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin will be postponed.

It is now in order to consider amendment No. 169 printed in House Report 115-297.

AMENDMENT NO. 170 OFFERED BY MR. GROTHMAN  
The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 170 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 817, line 23, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$99,000,000)".

Page 856, line 11, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$99,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman

from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of my amendment, which will reduce funding for the National Labor Relations Board by \$99 million in fiscal year 2018. Since its inception, the NLRB has served as a partisan board that flips in ideology from one administration to the next, often cutting businesses off at the knees and stifling economic growth.

In just the last 8 years of the Obama administration, the NLRB managed to overturn a total of 4,105 collective years of precedent in 90 cases. In cases such as the ambush election rule and the joint employer rule, the board significantly overstepped their bounds and dipped their hands into the day-to-day business operations of hardworking Americans.

Now, let me be clear: I am not here to attack the unions. I wish more people would join unions under the amendment that we just dealt with. I believe that employees should have the right to join a union if they think that joining a union is best for them and their family. But the fact remains, since 1990, the NLRB has received 65 percent fewer election petitions and 40 percent fewer unfair labor practice charges. Meanwhile, while private sector labor representation has decreased in the last 25 years, the NLRB's budget has increased in inflation-adjusted dollars by close to \$50 million.

My amendment would implement a necessary reduction to the NLRB, which will bring their funding in line with their expected workload for the upcoming fiscal year. Specifically, my amendment saves taxpayers close to \$100 million in the upcoming fiscal year and provides private industry with relief that the NLRB will have to focus on the most pressing cases that arise rather than engaging in partisan witch hunts.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support my amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chair, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment, which would cut the NLRB's budget by nearly \$100 million below the House bill, which is already \$25 million below the fiscal year 2017 level.

Under this amendment, the NLRB would be required to furlough 1,500 employees for at least 140 days. That means 1,500 employees across 26 States would be unpaid for nearly 5 months. As a result, the NLRB would develop a backlog of 10,000 to 12,000 cases, which would indefinitely delay the resolution of pending cases of unfair labor practices.

Perhaps my colleagues don't realize that most of the NLRB's work is not controversial. At the regional level, about 21,000 charges are filed every year, and 95 percent of those charges are dismissed or resolved within 60 to 70 days after an investigation of facts. In other words, 19 out of 20 charges filed are resolved without litigation.

For charges at the regional level, 90 percent of the cases with probable merit are settled, which means they are resolved without needing to be heard before the NLRB's five-member board.

For cases taken to the board, about 70 percent of the decisions are unanimous, meaning they are bipartisan. That is how the process is supposed to work.

Why would we cripple an agency that is tasked with enforcing Federal labor laws? Does the majority believe that labor laws should not be enforced? Should a worker who is unlawfully fired for exercising their rights be met with a sign on the door that says, "Closed. Will reopen in 5 months"?

Closing the NLRB for 5 months would exacerbate disputes between employers and employees, and create a harmful disruption to our economy.

Mr. Chair, I urge that we reject this amendment.

Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), the distinguished ranking member of the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Chair, as my colleagues have made clear, this amendment would impose a 45 percent cut on the NLRB budget. The NLRB would expect that these cuts could lead to the closure of regional offices in 17 States, but it is really the American workforce and our economy that would suffer.

We benefit from a worker's right to exercise freedom of association. These cuts will delay NLRB-conducted representation or decertification elections and delay democracy for workers who deserve a timely vote.

In the past 3 years, the NLRB has reinstated 7,000 workers who were unlawfully fired by their employers, and the NLRB has awarded over \$191 million to workers in backpay or fees.

Mr. Chairman, justice delayed is justice denied. Delayed justice is what this amendment would inflict.

Mr. Chairman, I urge a "no" vote on this amendment.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Chair, my only other comment is assuming that figure of employees is right, and this is not the total number of employees, just the employees that she envisions being cut, 1,500. I always kind of look at my State, which is about typical in size. That would be 30 employees on a board that I wouldn't think our forefathers would have thought of. So people have to consider for themselves, I guess, whether the average State would even need 30 employees. Here we are just



cutting 30. We are still leaving the bulk of the agency in existence.

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

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, this amendment is an insult to the millions of American workers who deserve to be treated fairly and in a timely manner under the law.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to reject this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin will be postponed.

It is now in order to consider amendment No. 171 printed in House Report 115-297.

AMENDMENT NO. 172 OFFERED BY MR. MEADOWS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 172 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division F (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_ The Coal Mine Safety and Health program area of the Mine Safety and Health Administration, comprising 964 employees, with annual salaries aggregating \$78,970,000, is hereby reduced by 10 percent (comprising 96 employees, with annual salaries aggregating \$7,897,000).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Chairman, I want to start out this evening by recognizing the fine work of Chairman COLE. I can tell you that there are many times in this Chamber that they want to pit members of my conference against appropriators. This is not one of those times. I just want to rise and acknowledge the great work of Chairman COLE and Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN, and, truly, of the entire Appropriations Committee.

Regardless of whether my amendment passes or not, I plan to vote for the underlying bill. Yet, with this commonsense amendment that we put forth, Mr. Chairman, we are really looking to try to make sure that we rightsize a group that has been under attack, and this is all about the coal industry.

What we have found is that under the previous administration, there was an

unbelievable attack on all fossil fuels, but specifically the coal industry.

□ 2030

This actually goes about rightsizing MSHA, which is the mine safety and health group that will inspect the mines. What we found is we have fewer mines to actually inspect. My amendment is real straightforward. It is saying: let's rightsize that particular group. Let's cut the number of employees that we have there by 10 percent. They have less mines to inspect. I can tell you, coming from a State that has mining in every one of the counties that I have the privilege of serving, what we need to understand is that it is not about safety of mine workers, because I am for the safety of mine workers; we really need to look at being responsible with the hardworking American taxpayer dollars. That is what this amendment is about.

Mr. Chairman, the hour is late, so I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LOWEY. Knowing, Mr. Chairman, of the gentleman's commitment to families, and I know that the gentleman's family is committed to their children, I am totally shocked that this amendment will be addressed tonight on the floor of the House.

This amendment, my friend, would cut personnel. Mothers and fathers will be directly affected by this. This amendment will cut the personnel whose responsibility it is to ensure the safety and health of our Nation's coal miners.

The proposed amendment, my friend, would cut the Mine Safety Health Administration coal enforcement personnel by 10 percent, would result in the Mine Safety Health Administration being forced to violate Federal law because it would be unable to fulfill its statutorily mandated duty to inspect underground coal mines every 3 months. We have seen what happens, my friends, when mandatory inspections are cut back and the number of experienced mine inspectors are reduced to coal miners that cut corners on safety.

Following the massive explosion in 2010, at Upper Big Branch, which killed 29 coal miners in the worst coal mine disaster in the country in four decades, investigators found that mine management had consistently violated basic safety standards such as ventilation and rock dusting intended to prevent coal dust explosions. The number of violations at this mine were among the highest in the Nation.

The ultimate responsibility, my friends, for that disaster lays squarely at the feet of mine management, including its CEO Don Blankenship, who was criminally convicted of a misdemeanor and served the maximum of 1 year for conspiring to violate mine safety standards.

It is also clear from the internal review that due to budget cuts during the Bush administration, MSHA, the Mine Safety and Health Administration, became severely short staffed. There were too few inspectors to meet the requirement for mandatory inspections. You cannot underfund mine safety and health and expect to adequately protect the lives of miners. We know what happens when safety takes a back seat to profits. People die.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), the distinguished ranking member of the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, this amendment irresponsibly cuts funding for coal mine safety and health by 10 percent, cuts 96 positions in the Mine Safety and Health Administration, or MSHA. The Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 established MSHA and requires MSHA to conduct four wall-to-wall inspections every year on underground mines and two wall-to-wall inspections for every surface mine. These are mandatory and required for safety in the mines.

MSHA is required to conduct spot inspections every 5 days at those coal mines that release large amounts of combustible methane since those mines have the highest risk of fires and explosions.

In addition to the mandatory and spot inspections, MSHA responds to hazard complaints from miners, investigates discrimination complaints, and provides compliance assistance with standards such as the new rule to prevent the scourge of black lung disease.

If this amendment is enacted, 96 positions will be cut and MSHA will have to choose between the mandatory inspections or meeting its obligation to implement these other essential functions. It can't do both, yet all of these functions are necessary to protect the health and safety of miners.

Mr. Chairman, the preamble of the Mine Act of 1977 states: "The first . . . concern of all in the coal"—or other—"mining industry must be the health and safety of its most precious resource—the miner." This amendment abandons Congress' commitment to America's miners and should be rejected.

Mr. Chairman, I include in the RECORD a letter from Cecil E. Roberts, the International President of the United Mine Workers of America, in opposition to this amendment.

UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA,  
Triangle, VA, September 7, 2017.  
MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
U.S. Congress, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the United Mine Workers of America, I strongly urge you to reject the Amendment offered by Representative Mark Meadows of North Carolina that would reduce the Coal Mine Safety and Health program and workforce at the Mine Safety and Health Administration.

At a time when mining fatalities are on the rise, we should be looking for ways to increase enforcement and oversight of mining

operations, not make it harder to ensure that our miners are safe.

America's miners put their lives and limbs on the line every single day for us. Our government has a responsibility to do all it can do to ensure they come home to their loved ones at the end of their shift. This amendment is a step backward in safety, putting miners at greater risk. I strongly urge that it be rejected.

Sincerely,

CECIL E. ROBERTS,.

Mrs. LOWEY. In closing, this amendment would irresponsibly cut staffing by 10 percent at an agency responsible for the safety and health of our Nation's coal miners. Mr. Chairman, lives are at stake.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly oppose this amendment, I urge my colleagues to reject it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Chairman, I rise to acknowledge my dear friend from New York and her impassioned plea, but we have made news here tonight. All of a sudden, the people on the aisle opposite are all about the coal miners. Where has that debate been for the last 8 years?

We start talking about kids and family. What about the coal miners' kids and families? We have got 35 percent less coal mines that are being actually operated right now, 35 percent. We have 43 percent less coal miners. We are talking about kids and all the things that we need to be doing, and we have cut back on the coal mining. Why don't we cut back on the inspectors who, according to our numbers, have 35 percent less mines to actually inspect?

It is time that we rightsize the government. I strongly encourage my colleagues to support it. I thank the work of the chairman.

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

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chair, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I would like to address a closing remark to my good friend from North Carolina, and I know that my good friend and I have worked together, Mr. Chairman, on many important issues.

I would just like to say again that whether there are 1,000 miners or 50 miners, and I understand the gentleman's concern about the closing of mines, but we have a responsibility to those who are still working in those mines to make sure that they are safe.

I would ask my colleagues to vote against this amendment because it is absolutely vital that we protect those outstanding workers who are supporting their families and make sure they are safe.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from North Carolina will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 173 OFFERED BY MR. WALBERG

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 173 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division F (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement, administer, or enforce the final rule on "Representation—Case Procedures" published in the Federal Register by the National Labor Relations Board on December 15, 2014 (79 Fed. Reg. 74308 et seq.) or any rule of the same substance.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Chairman, I, too, want to thank Chairman COLE for the good effort on this piece of legislation.

I rise to offer an amendment to H.R. 3354 that would block the NLRB from enforcing the extreme and partisan ambush election rule. Under the ambush election rule, workers are being rushed into union elections before they have the opportunity to consider all the consequences.

According to one report, since the ambush election rule took effect, union elections have been organized 38 percent faster. Before this rule took effect, the union election process typically took 38 days. Now, workers may have as few as 11 days to consider whether joining a union is the best decision for themselves. Eleven days is simply not enough time for workers to make an important decision that impacts their job and their paycheck.

In addition to speeding up the process, the NLRB's rule greatly limits an employer's ability to communicate with its employees through the pre-election hearing process.

To make matters worse, employers have as little as 7 days to find legal counsel and appear before an NLRB election officer—7 days. This is a taxing time constraint, especially on small businesses with limited resources and a lawyer team that is nonexistent.

But workers are the ones who are really hurt the most. As a former union worker myself, I respect the right of workers to join a union, but they deserve a real choice in the matter and the opportunity to hear from both sides of the debate. At the very least, they deserve privacy as they come to their decision, but this rule

forces employers to hand over their employees' personal information, including phone numbers, work schedules, home addresses, e-mail addresses, and work locations.

The NLRB should ensure fair and transparent elections. Instead, the board implemented a rule chilling employer free speech and restricting the rights of workers.

By adopting this amendment to block the ambush election rule, we can restore the rights of workers and employers in union elections.

I would note that there is still more to be done beyond blocking funding of this extreme rule. The Workforce Democracy and Fairness Act, which I introduced earlier this year, would amend Federal law to ensure union elections are fair and prevent similar NLRB overreach in the future.

This commonsense bill was approved by the Education and the Workforce Committee, and it is my hope that it will come up for a vote in the House, but today we have an opportunity to take a first step toward putting an end to this radical scheme once and for all.

Mr. Chair, I urge all Members to support this amendment, as well as the underlying bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment which would block the NLRB's election rule, an attempt to undermine collective bargaining rights. The NLRB enacted this rule to modernize and streamline the process for voting on union representation.

To be clear, the NLRB undertook a very deliberative rulemaking process. It was transparent, and it included input from stakeholders and the public.

□ 2045

The majority's claim that this rule enables ambush elections is false. These are commonsense adjustments that eliminate unnecessary delays that have hindered the union election process for decades.

The election rule provides for the timely exchange of information so that issues can be resolved quickly. It improves workers' ability to hear from all sides prior to making a decision, and it reduces frivolous litigation.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), the distinguished ranking member of the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment offered by Mr. WALBERG that

would block the National Labor Relations Board election streamlining rule because this amendment would result in reverting to a previous rule that would result in needless delays in the process for conducting union representation elections.

The election streamlining rule was adopted in 2015, and it has increased transparency, reduced frivolous litigation, and decreased the opportunity for bad actors to improperly delay union elections.

The preelection process previously had been open to manipulation, delay, and drawn-out preelection maneuvering. I point out that the so-called 11-day election that has been referred to can only occur if both sides agree to a consent election.

Another part of the rule requires the employer to provide more modern forms of employee contact information to the union prior to the elections, such as email addresses and phone numbers, as opposed to the previous requirement that the employer only provide home addresses. Under the new rule, employers must provide this electronically within 2 days of ordering an election.

By ensuring that there is a timely transfer of more complete voter contact information, the rule removed another obstacle that had denied workers the opportunity to be more fully informed prior to voting on whether or not to form a union. The employer, of course, already has unfettered and unlimited access to communicate with employees, even on work time.

I also want to point out that the NLRB's election procedures are now settled law. Every court where this rule has been challenged has upheld the rule. The fifth circuit, for example, said that the Board "acted rationally and in furtherance of its congressional mandate in adopting the rule."

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia held that "the Board engaged in comprehensive analysis of a multitude of issues relating to the need for and the propriety of the final rule."

Mr. Chairman, history has shown when workers' rights are respected, the economy benefits. Protecting workers' rights to make their voices heard helped build a strong middle class. Research shows that the erosion of union density has weakened the middle class and exacerbated wage stagnation by breaking the essential link between increasing worker productivity and rising wages.

This amendment undermines workers in their ability to exercise their right to collectively bargain. Plain and simple, the workers have a right to join a union, and if they ask for an election, they should get an election—not a delay, not interference, and not retaliation.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the comments of my colleagues from the Education and the

Workforce Committee. We have debated that very clearly. We have discussed the fact that individuals ought to be able to make a decision and have a full understanding of what is available for them.

But when we talk about a streamlining rule, it only works for the union organizer. It doesn't work for the employee, and certainly not for the small-business person who isn't blessed with having a large lawyer team, attorney team, who can go into all of the background information to find out how, indeed, they even represent themselves and communicate with their employees in relationship to a union that is well-versed in what they will do with their challenge in the lawyered-up situation that they have.

It discourages any comprehensive study by the employee—let me state that again—by the employee of what they are looking at with union representation or without.

Seven days for a businessperson to get their act together is not a streamlining that works for them. It works for the union organizer alone, not the employee or the employer.

Mr. Chairman, I continue to state that, if we truly want our employees to make informed decisions with all of the information that can be available to them and the assistance needed so that both sides are served when they look for a final decision, we must do away with this rule.

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

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS), a member of the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentlewoman.

This is about giving both sides—the workers seeking to organize and the employer—the opportunity to make their case to workers fairly and expeditiously.

Prior to this case, in every case, employers would have access with ways to pester and bug employees at home, through their personal email, through their phone numbers. There was simply no way that there was any equality given to the case for union organizers to make. In fact, union organizers often had to try to find ways that they could reach to simply make the case to workers so that they can make a fair choice.

In addition, I find it ridiculous that this is called, by those on the other side, an ambush when, in fact, the only ambush is when they ambush the right of workers to organize by drawing out the election process to months and years, often beyond when many of the employees involved are even at the same employer because of the adverse working conditions that could have led them to organize in the first place.

This rule was done through a multi-stakeholder process. There was a lot input from all sides, and it was a very

thoughtful rule that gave a level playing field to ensure that workers, should they desire to organize, had a reasonable calendar for doing so and a reasonable way of reaching other workers to tell them the benefits of organizing, just as the company was telling them the downside.

Mr. Chair, I encourage my colleagues to reject this amendment which throws out a very thoughtful rule that levels the playing field in labor relations.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. ARRINGTON). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Michigan will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 174 OFFERED BY MRS. BLACKBURN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 174 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division F (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. Each amount made available by this Act (other than an amount required to be made available by a provision of law) is hereby reduced by 1 percent.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the recognition, and I want to begin by commending Chairman COLE, his staff, and the Appropriations Committee for the fine work that they have done.

As we are looking at the Labor, HHS, and Education appropriations bill, we are looking at \$156 billion for fiscal year 2018. My amendment would cut an additional 1 percent out of that number.

I think it is important to commend the work that they have done over the past couple of years. If you go back and look at the appropriations numbers in 2016, they were at \$163.65 billion; 2017, down to \$162.985 billion; and this year, at \$156 billion.

I think that that work is to be commended. The leadership in this House, the chairman, Chairman COLE, and the work that they are doing is getting us on the right path. It is important that as we as Members of Congress do our job, it is important that we engage the

rank-and-file employees that are there in these various agencies—over at the Department of Education and at Labor and HHS—and make certain that they are saving that one penny out of a dollar, because we hit a pretty dubious marker this week.

Our national debt now is at \$20 trillion, and because of this, because of the responsibility that we have to our children, to our grandchildren, to future generations, because we realize, as Admiral Mullen said on July 6, 2010, the greatest threat to our Nation's security is our Nation's debt, we need to do a little bit more. And, of course, there are always good programs that we can stand here and talk about, and talk about what will not be funded if we do a penny on a dollar.

But the important thing to realize is future generations, my grandchildren that are now 8 and 9 years old, are paying for programs that we are refusing to address the growth in these programs. We are committing money they have not earned, taxes they have not paid, because we are \$20 trillion in debt.

It is time to make these changes, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chair, I want to begin by thanking my friend. We are classmates, we are friends, and we have served on the Budget Committee together. So I know the commitment to fiscal responsibility is serious and continuing and real. I particularly want to thank her for her kind words about the work of the committee in recent years because we genuinely have tried to continuously lower the amounts of money.

My friend makes a very good point about the dangers we face in terms of skyrocketing national debt, but as my friend suggests, we have already cut this more than 1 percent. I am not suggesting there aren't areas that can be cut additionally. There probably are. But as an appropriator, we prefer to look at things individually, one at a time, because there are always areas that could be plussed-up as well.

I don't think anybody here really wants to cut money, even 1 percent, from cancer funding or Alzheimer's research or Pell grants or programs that we think actually help folks have an educational choice, like charter schools, and yet that is always the impact of an across-the-board cut. You cut things that need to be cut, for sure, but you also cut some things that probably shouldn't be.

So we would prefer to continue the approach that my friend has singled out and said that seems to work well, and we will do that, and I know she will be helpful in that.

I also know my friend knows that the real drivers of our debt, frankly, are Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid,

all entitlement programs, our mandatory spending programs. And that is where folks on both sides of the aisle, I think, need to get very, very serious, and the administration. Because we are never going to get to a balanced budget that I know my friend wants to achieve and I want to achieve until we put 70 percent of all spending, which is the entitlement spending, on the table for serious examination to be dealt with.

I don't oppose the goals of my friend. I just have a different method of trying to achieve them. So far, in the last 3 years, we have been able to do that. We are going to continue to try and do that going forward.

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Chairman, we do always hear, well, you would take from this or that if you were doing across-the-board cuts. But just to my colleagues who are in the Chamber tonight and those who are watching, across-the-board cuts work at the local level and the State level because you look at that number that you need to hit and you get inside some programs more than others, and you find that penny on the dollar, and you find a way to yield a savings, and you examine what the priorities of a budget ought to be.

That is the heavy lift. And while we are doing it with the work we do here in this Chamber and that the appropriators do, it is important that, just as Governors in our States—both Democratic and Republican Governors, by the way—just as mayors in towns and cities across this country do on a regular basis, and many are doing right now because fiscal years are beginning October 1, just as they do that work, we need to do it.

□ 2100

Do we need to look at entitlements? Yes, absolutely. I am for putting those issues on the table. I encourage our colleagues and our administration to do that. It is imperative because we are staring \$20 trillion in debt. We are staring that in the face.

How do you look at your children and grandchildren and say, "That is okay. That is okay. Paying for \$20 trillion worth of debt is easy"?

The answer is you don't, because it is not.

What it takes to address it is will. It takes resolve. It takes cutting back more than you have cut back before and examining programs that are essential. It is time to get serious about this. I encourage support of my amendment.

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

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK), who is my good friend.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment. The under-

lying bill is already underfunded. The majority has imposed a \$5 billion cut to the Labor-HHS bill below the 2017 omnibus level.

This cut is as unnecessary as it is indiscriminate because it indiscriminately cuts programs in this bill without thought to the relative merit. For instance, this amendment would result in fewer infants and toddlers receiving Head Start's services, fewer students receiving financial aid to help afford college, fewer biomedical research grants, and cuts to public health emergency response. The list goes on and on.

Investment is what we need to help build and strengthen our middle class, and this amendment threatens that.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly urge Members to oppose this amendment.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Tennessee will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 175 OFFERED BY MR. MURPHY  
OF PENNSYLVANIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 175 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division F (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_ For "Health Resources and Services Administration—Maternal and Child Health" for establishing and carrying out grants to eligible entities to develop, maintain, or enhance infant and early childhood mental health promotion, intervention, and treatment programs for children up to 12 years of age, as authorized by section 399Z-2 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280h-6) there is hereby appropriated, and the amount otherwise provided by this Act for "Health Resources and Services Administration—Program Management" is hereby reduced by \$5,000,000.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, this amendment is for infant and early childhood mental health promotion, intervention, and treatment. It provides \$5 million in grants to develop, maintain, or enhance infant and early childhood mental health promotion, intervention, and treatment

programs, including programs for infants and children at significant risk of developing or showing early signs of or having been diagnosed with mental illness, including serious emotional disturbance. This was passed and authorized in the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act last year in Congress in which it was passed 422-2—near unanimous.

The importance of this is that, across the United States, up to one in five children suffers from a mental disorder in a given year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This equates to more than 17 million young people who meet criteria for disorders that affect their ability to learn, behave, and express emotions. This small \$5 million amount is about 29 cents per child, hardly enough to do much when distributed over that many, but it can do a great deal when distributed for a few.

If you follow the course of children with mental illness, untreated mental illness, of course, leads to very troubled adults and other problems. I might add that this is National Suicide Prevention Week, and among children, suicide rates are climbing. In fact, over the last 20 years, suicide rates have climbed overall in this country. But, tragically and alarmingly, they have grown a great deal among children.

How do we tell families of children who have completed a suicide or attempted a suicide that we couldn't come up with the money for this, and, instead, we thought other programs were more important?

This money comes from the existing programming budget. It does not take away from vital programs. But I want you to know that there has been a 54 percent increase of suicides among children under age 12. Thirty-seven percent of those child suicides are Black children. The rate among African-American children ages 5 to 11 has doubled over the last decade.

This provides critically important services for children. It appears that schools are the most important place where treatment can take place. Only 23 percent of prekindergarten programs have onsite or scheduled visits from psychiatrists and psychologists, according to the Child Mind Institute.

The current workforce consists of approximately 7,500 child and adolescent psychiatrists. We need 32,000. Eighty-five percent of all psychotropic medications for children are written by primary care practitioners, not psychiatrists, so we end up with serious problems here as suicides grow and as mental health problems grow. This small amount of money is taken from existing funds, not from any other programs, to make sure we are providing services for these children.

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

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I want to, again, thank my good friend for, as he always does, raising important issues, and I appreciate his bringing attention to the mental health of children.

The amendment offered—and this is an important point I think many Members in this body don't think about—is actually for a newly authorized program that has not received funding in the past, and our committee actually has a smaller allocation than it had last year. I think most of the public doesn't realize it, and it is sort of helpful, frankly, for my friend to advance this amendment. Just because something moves through an authorizing committee doesn't mean any money comes with it.

Now, in some cases—my friend worked on the Cures bill—they sent money with portions of that on the opioid initiatives, some additional money at NIH, and, of course, every penny of that has moved in. They found a way to fund it. But we can end up in a situation where you just simply pile on authorizations and send us less money and think we will somehow work it out. Sometimes we do. That is why we have been able to steadily increase funding at NIH, steadily increase funding for programs like TRIO and GEAR UP, and steadily increase money for charter schools. There are some areas we have been able to do that, but we can't do it everywhere.

I want to tell my friend that, while I oppose the amendment, I am certainly going to work with him. Actually, I asked him not too long ago to give me the one thing that is the most important thing, and he mentioned the lack of trained and qualified personnel, that we could have a lot of programs, but until we had a bigger pool of people capable of rendering the services, then we simply are going to be moving from program to program. I think that was a very good point, and it is why I accepted my friend's amendment for \$10 million to begin to do that. That is another area. I think we have to pick a few pressure points here.

I agree with what my friend is offering here in terms of the need for emphasis. We just simply have to work harder either getting the funds or finding other places to take the funds from.

So while I oppose the amendment, I want to be very clear that I intend to work with my friend going forward.

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

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman has 1½ minutes remaining.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, let me add to this. Yes, there was money in the Cures bill for opioid abuse for 59,000 people who had died from drug overdoses, but 350,000 people will die this year related to mental health problems.

I want to make sure that Congress is not, once again, in a situation where

we are having another moment of silence for some suicide, for some child or young adult that got violent and shot someone or ran their car into a crowd, or something else. We have got to start putting money into these programs. Five million dollars barely scratches the surface, but it is like that old adage of the man who came across a child throwing a starfish back in the ocean. The person said: "You can never take care of all of them." But the child said: "It will make a difference for this one."

This will make a difference to a few children.

How do we explain this to a parent whose child is suffering, who can't get services, that what we have is we couldn't transfer money within an existing account, it doesn't add any more, and it doesn't eradicate any programs, but it is something there especially at a time when this is so life threatening?

You can't explain that to a mom or a dad.

During all the time in the course of working this bill, we heard from thousands of people telling their horrific and sad stories. I spent the last 42 years of my life working as a psychologist. I have seen the faces of those who have gone to the funerals and seen those wasting away in prisons. I do ask that this amendment be adopted.

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

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK), who is my good friend.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I do not oppose this amendment. In fact, I support my colleague's effort to improve access to early childhood mental health promotion, intervention, and treatment. But I think it is important that we come back to why we are here tonight and why this \$5 million for mental health programs is not included in this Labor-HHS bill under consideration.

The reason is because this bill is being cut by \$5 billion from FY17 levels. This is the end result that we get when the majority's efforts to slash nondefense spending come to fruition. We are forced to choose between life-saving programs, such as mental health and substance abuse programs, and programs that invest in our future, like early childhood education or job training.

We ought to be negotiating a bipartisan budget deal to lift the sequestration caps on both defense and non-defense programs. Then we could begin working on a bipartisan base that will allow us to adequately fund mental health and substance abuse prevention.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 176 OFFERED BY MR. MURPHY OF PENNSYLVANIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 176 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division F (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_ For "Health Resources and Services Administration—Maternal and Child Health" for carrying out the Pediatric Mental Health Care Access grant program, as authorized by section 330M of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254c-19), there is hereby appropriated, and the amount otherwise provided by this Act for "Health Resources and Services Administration—Program Management" is hereby reduced by, \$9,000,000.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, this amendment increases access to pediatric mental healthcare by providing \$9 million in grants to improve access to behavioral integration and pediatric primary care.

I thank the chairman of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee for his agreement to our other amendment to boost the workforce. We have a massive workforce shortage in the field of mental health.

What good is it to have good wishes among Members of Congress for treatment, yet people can't get it?

There is a shortage of child and adolescent psychiatrists for the 17 million children with a mental health condition. We have 9,000. We need over 30,000. There is a shortage of psychologists, and 36 States have a shortage of psychiatric nurses. As a matter of fact, half of the counties in America have no psychiatrists, no psychologists, and no clinical social worker. So for children with primary mental health problems, it is a desert for treatment.

□ 2115

They sit on long waiting lists. Their symptoms worsen.

A study called the RAISE Program—Recovery After an Initial Schizophrenia Episode—found that if we provided treatment initially for those who show their initial psychotic episode, it improves their prognosis over their

lifetime. But delaying treatment actually causes them harm.

When you have no care, you have that harm. For those few psychiatrists and psychologists out there, what are they told to do in rural areas?

Travel from one office to another to try and give them access, with valuable hours of time taken up. They can't provide that care.

This \$9 million helps provide mechanisms by which pediatricians and family practices can have telemental health. We know that when a warm handoff occurs in the office—and that is when the family or the child at that point meets a psychiatrist or that psychologist—the actual follow-up rate is over 99 percent. A large number—over 80 percent—continue follow-up right through treatment.

However, when they are given a referral, that actual follow-up is around 50 percent, and only 11 percent of people complete treatment. That is why you need to have some level of face to face.

This issue of at least providing telemental health gives people that face-to-face approach.

Since 50 percent of serious mental illness cases emerge by age 14, and 75 percent by age 24, this is the critical period in the life of someone who is developing serious mental illness to have care. We can no longer just say that we are going to let pediatricians be the primary providers for mental illness treatment when that is something that they do not have the specialty and training.

The number of psychiatrists there to treat children is declining relative to the needs. The problems among children, as I mentioned previously, continue to go up.

I might also add here that this does not reduce any spending among the critical funded and authorized programs within SAMHSA.

But let me say where some of the money goes in these SAMHSA programs. The GAO did a study and found that 80 percent of the grants are not using it for evidence-based care. SAMHSA, instead, spends their money on ridiculous, embarrassing programs: making fruit smoothies if you are stressed, \$400,000 on a website for toddler sing-along songs, getting in touch with your inner animal workshops, making masks, making collages, a website and crisis hotline for people in the Boston area who had snow anxiety during a snowstorm, teaching people interpretative dancing, \$25,000 for a painting of people sitting on a rock at SAMHSA headquarters, an alternative conference funded by SAMHSA at the luxurious Boston Park Plaza Hotel.

And we can't fund something that will save children's lives?

It makes no sense to me.

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

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, once again, I agree with my friend on the basic point, but this, too, is a program that was authorized with no funding.

The things we got funding for in the 21st Century Cures Act, we funded to the penny. Frankly, things we didn't get funding for, we still authorized.

This is one of those cases where, again, the cause is worthy, and we are willing to work with the gentleman—and we will certainly continue to do that—but a lot of these things that my friend just mentioned are from programs that were authorized by non-appropriations committees. We don't create the programs.

That is where my friends, frankly, on the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Ways and Means Committee need to spend some time. They need to spend some time deauthorizing certain programs that continue.

Again, I will work with my friend if our allocation changes or we can find additional savings. But I can't willy-nilly, particularly when we have already cut these administrative programs, partly in the en bloc amendment, to fund some of the very things, including my friend's amendment, that we felt were very worthy. We will look at this.

The other thing that I would hope we could do is work with our friends on the other side of the aisle. I will just tell you, from a conference standpoint, when you go to a conference with a program that has been authorized but not funded, it is extremely difficult to get the other body to join in with you. That is just the reality.

Every decision involves taking something away. It is always easy to call something administration or nonvital. That is what it looks like in the phrase. That may or may not be what it is in the program. So it is just a more difficult exercise than I think most folks understand.

My friend's point is still the right one. One of the reasons I look very carefully at this one is because I see it as a multiplier, in terms of the professional shortage of people that we have that my friend has pointed to.

Mr. Chairman, again, I reluctantly oppose this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK).

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, again, I rise not in opposition to this amendment, but I support this effort by my colleague as well.

Let's increase behavioral health integration into pediatric primary care, for I, too, have seen the shortages of mental health providers in my home State

and the very real and devastating impact that that has on families.

This is a false crisis. There is \$5 billion that we have cut from the FY17 levels, but this false crisis has very real impacts on the lives of children and their families.

Let's get to the work of negotiating a bipartisan budget to lift sequestration caps on both defense and non-defense, and draft a reasonable Labor-HHS bill that adequately funds mental health and substance abuse prevention programs. We have the opportunity and we need to seize it.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, let me say this: I have got to tell you that this is distressing to me. I know what my colleague meant by false crisis, but this is a crisis for children.

The children in America with mental health problems cannot get care. Members of Congress have an opportunity to put a small amount of money to make a big difference for children who cannot get that care.

What we can do and what my colleague from Oklahoma said is we need to cut some things. One of them is stop the ridiculous wasteful spending at SAMHSA. If they can fund \$400,000 websites and going to luxurious hotels, they can certainly do something that actually puts providers there so children can change the trajectory of their lives.

I have just known too many families who suffer through this. I hope that as Members vote on this, they remember those families in their districts and decide this is a way to send a signal that we can make a big difference in the lives of many.

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

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 178 OFFERED BY MR. MURPHY OF PENNSYLVANIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 178 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division F (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_ For "Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration—Mental Health" for establishing and operating the National Mental Health and Substance Use Policy Laboratory, as authorized by section 501A of the Public Health Service Act (42

U.S.C. 290aa-0), there is hereby appropriated, and the amount otherwise provided by this Act for "Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration—Health Surveillance and Program Support" is hereby reduced by, \$5,000,000.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I want to restate the problems that exist at SAMHSA.

The General Accounting Office, during the multiyear investigation of the subcommittee which I chair, the Oversight and Investigations of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, came back and said that 80 percent of the grants for SAMHSA are not evidence-based. There is a serious problem in that agency.

Instead, they funded absurd programs, such as making fruit smoothies; and a \$400,000 website for toddlers to sing-along songs, which they told us was about prevention.

We asked: What are you preventing?

They said: We will get back to you on that.

They also had workshops on getting in touch with your inner animal, making masks and collages; interpretive dancing; a website and crisis line for people in the New England area when they had heavy a snowfall so they could call in.

They have workshops on how to tell people to get off their medications. They had a \$25,000 oil painting for their office, which graces their hall, of people sitting on a rock, which gives them mental health awareness. I might add, the only thing I am aware of is a total waste of money. And, of course, an alternative conference, which continues this year as well, spending, I think, \$150,000 or so to hold their conference at the luxurious Boston Park Plaza Hotel.

I don't want to hear from that agency that they don't have money. This particular program redirects them so they get reset in terms of evidence-based care. It forms a panel of people with expertise in medical psychiatric areas, including consumers.

It is there to provide direction and guidance for an agency that has been without direction and guidance. It is there to make sure that we redirect the way SAMHSA is going so that it gets in the area of really treating mental illness.

Let me say this—let me use the words of Dr. Elinore McCance-Katz, the current Assistant Secretary of Mental Health and, therefore, the de facto head of SAMHSA.

She said: ". . . SAMHSA does not address the treatment needs of the most vulnerable in our society. Rather, the unit within SAMHSA charged with addressing these disorders, the Center for Mental Health Services, chooses to focus on its own definition of 'recovery,' which generally ignores the treatment of mental disorders, and, as a

major initiative under 'recovery' services, focuses on the development of a 'peer workforce.'

"There is a perceptible hostility toward psychiatric medicine: a resistance to addressing the treatment needs of those with serious mental illness and a questioning by some at SAMHSA as to whether mental disorders even exist."

For example, they state that psychosis is just a different way of thinking for some experiencing stress. They also focus on activities that don't directly assist those who have serious mental illness.

She adds that: "Significant dollars are spent on hotlines for callers who may be experiencing suicidal thinking. . . ."

But I might add that during this whole time, while death rates decline for heart disease, lung disease, AIDS, and accidental deaths, et cetera, they went way up for suicide. They increased steadily for substance abuse.

It is a failed agency, along those lines.

She says that there are pressing needs, but nowhere in SAMHSA's strategic initiatives do they even address psychiatric treatment of mental illness as a priority.

I know we have to change this. I would like to ask of my dear friend, the chairman of the subcommittee, is there a way we can talk more about this and address this in the future to see that this is addressed adequately?

Mr. COLE. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. I yield to the gentleman from Oklahoma.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I thank my friend for yielding and for his excellent work in this area.

Yes, we would look forward to that. Frankly, we have pretty regular exchanges with a lot of the committees under our jurisdiction where they have done the hard work of authorizing an investigation. That can be used to guide appropriations.

So I look forward to working with my friend to make sure we can eliminate the type of abuses that he is talking about and redirect funds where they need to go for the care of patients.

I thank my friend for his work and his kind words, and I certainly pledge that I will work with him going forward, as I have in the past.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Reclaiming my time, knowing that when my friend says something, I consider that a bond.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time, and I withdraw my amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The amendment is withdrawn.

AMENDMENT NO. 179 OFFERED BY MR. MURPHY OF PENNSYLVANIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 179 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division F (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_ For "Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration—Mental Health" for carrying out the Strengthening Community Crisis Response Systems grant program, as authorized by section 520F of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290bb-37), there is hereby appropriated, and the amount otherwise provided by this Act for "Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration—Health Surveillance and Program Support" is hereby reduced by, \$10,000,000.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, this is the last of my amendments on this. Although this House overwhelmingly passed the authorization for these, as did the Senate, money was not allocated towards it.

While I understand there is a priority to treat substance abuse, but even with that, many times there is nowhere for someone to go.

Back in the 1950s, we had over half a million psychiatric hospital beds in this country. I think at the time the population of the United State was 150 million. Now, with a population close to 317 million to 318 million, we have about 40,000 hospital beds and a shortage of 100,000. The only State that actually has an adequate number of beds is Mississippi. All the rest are at a critical shortage.

So what happens when a person has a drug overdose and needs to get into treatment? What happens when a person has a psychiatric breakdown?

Well, generally what happens is the police arrive, not the paramedics. They arrest the person. Many States actually say: Let's put these people in a jail cell, because there is no bed.

Or, if they take them to the hospital, the hospital says: Let's just give them some medication to stabilize them and let them back out because we can't hold them. We have no place for them to go.

□ 2130

What happens, many times these people are boarded, that is, they remain in an emergency room bed, which is no place for someone with a psychiatric crisis. Sometimes they will be tied to their gurney; sometimes they are in the hallways; sometimes they are, for days or weeks or several weeks, waiting for a psychiatric bed and nothing opens up.

I thought when Dorothea Dix said let's close down the jail concept, that

was prevalent in our country back then, let's have nice hospitals for them. Historically, they said that was a good move, but what happened is these psych beds closed down starting widely in the 1980s and continuing until now. There simply is no place for them to go.

Let's remember that President Kennedy's last bill he signed before his assassination was to begin this process of closing the beds but having community-based treatment, but America and Congress have not kept that promise.

There is a story of a Senator from Virginia by the name of Creigh Deeds. Some may remember in the news when his son Gus had a crisis and Senator Deeds took his son to a hospital. There they waited hour after hour after hour while the hospital tried to find a hospital bed available for him. Finally, he said they couldn't find any beds: Take young Gus home, and let's see what happens in the future.

When Senator Deeds took his son home, his son stabbed Senator Deeds, trying to kill him; and when Senator Deeds ran to get help, he survived, but his son did not because he shot himself with a bullet—because there were no beds.

Now, this particular amendment doesn't create beds, but what happens is sometimes there are beds available in other communities; but short of a hospital calling hospital after hospital after hospital to find a bed for someone, which may be an hour or two drive away, there is no place for them.

Surely, we understand the idea: Do we continue to put these folks in hospitals and jail cells? Do we dump them back in the street and let them be the forgotten homeless whom we walk over? Do we send them back home and risk further harm to them? Do we have them tied to a gurney and given a chemical sedation, a chemical straight-jacket to wait until something opens up?

What this amendment does is it is \$10 million in grants to develop and maintain or enhance the database of inpatient psychiatric facilities and crisis stabilization units so we can begin to address this bed shortage. Rather than lead people away from care, this is a way of helping hospitals get that care and instill States to put together programs to speed this up.

We still have to work with CMS to create more beds and stop some of the ridiculous rules that they have in there, but what do we continue to tell the mentally ill? "We will get around to it"? "We couldn't do it this time"? "Good luck"? "I am sorry your son died"?

When does this end? Will we hear more excuses that we can't do anything about it because we had a \$5 billion cut? What do we do with Americans who are dying from this over and over?

Thomas Jefferson once said: "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot

sleep forever." We have a chance to make a difference in the justice for the mentally ill, or will we once again turn a blind eye and say we can do nothing?

Mr. Chairman, I ask that Members vote for this amendment to try and save some lives.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in the order to consider amendment No. 180 printed in House Report 115-297.

AMENDMENT NO. 182 OFFERED BY MR. BURGESS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 182 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division F (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_ For "Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration—Substance Abuse Treatment" for the Controlled Substance Monitoring Program, as authorized by section 3990 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280g-3), there is hereby appropriated, and the amount otherwise provided by this Act for "Office of the Secretary—General Departmental Management" is hereby reduced by, \$10,000,000.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Chair, tonight I am proud to introduce an amendment that will fully fund the National All Schedules Prescription Electronic Reporting program, colloquially known as NASPER. NASPER has long provided us with an opportunity to help prevent the spread of opioids across the country; however, until now, we have not funded it.

NASPER funding supports the development and maintenance of a State-run prescription drug monitoring program. These prescription drug monitoring programs allow for doctors and pharmacists to electronically interconnect with one when prescribing opioids, allowing for the providers to confer and ensure that the patient is not receiving a duplicate opioid prescription that the patient may then divert or sell.

Prescription drug monitoring programs work because they engage providers and they successfully prevent individuals from exploiting weaknesses in the healthcare system.

During any epidemic, it is important to first help those in need and provide support to individuals and first responders who were impacted by the epidemic. Last year, the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Subcommittee on Health did exactly this.



We worked to put forth the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act to provide support for those impacted by the opioid epidemic by increasing access to those in need.

No epidemic response, however, is complete without preventative measures, and that is why NASPER is so important to this fight. We must prioritize programs like NASPER that are preventative and can ensure that errant prescribers and bad actors do not fall through the cracks. If we want to end this epidemic, we must commit resources to programs that will promote prevention and encourage safer prescribing of prescription drugs.

As the subcommittee chairman for the authorizing committee that has been tasked with the public health response to a crisis that claimed more than 60,000 American lives last year, I am committed to further working to oversee the implementation of our initial response efforts and to develop any supplemental responses that may be needed to prevent future unnecessary deaths.

I encourage my colleagues to take this opportunity to support the work of the Subcommittee on Health on the Energy and Commerce Committee in authorizing this and allow Congress to approve funding for NASPER.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 183 printed in House report 115–297.

AMENDMENT NO. 184 OFFERED BY MR. SCOTT OF VIRGINIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 184 printed in House Report 115–297.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk made in order under the rule.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division F (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. No funds made available by this Act may be used to undertake any activities to prepare for or facilitate the transfer of responsibilities or functions from the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs of the Department of Labor to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chair, this amendment would prohibit the use of funds in this act to prepare for or facilitate the transfer of the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs into the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The amendment would ensure that these two important agencies charged with distinct missions to enforce workplace discrimination laws are not unduly burdened by the administration's plan to transfer responsibilities of Contract Compliance into the EEOC.

Although both agencies enforce discrimination laws, they differ in their authorities, their scope, and their responsibilities. For example, Contract Compliance only addresses discrimination by Federal contractors, unlike the EEOC, which enforces the laws as they relate to virtually all employees.

Contract Compliance is responsible for ensuring that the Federal contractors and subcontractors take affirmative action to ensure that all individuals have equal opportunity for employment. EEOC was created by title VII of the Civil Rights Act, and its support for affirmative action is voluntary.

Contract Compliance, the focus is on contract compliance, and the ultimate sanction is disbarment of a Federal contractor. It gets its authority through an executive order and accomplishes much of its enforcement through the administrative process. By contrast, EEOC is established by statute and makes and enforces Federal statutes through lawsuits in Federal courts. Other distinctions:

The ultimate client for Contract Compliance is the Federal Government, while EEOC's clients are private employees;

EEOC is complaint driven, unlike the Office of Federal Contract Compliance; Contract Compliance can audit contractors, EEOC cannot;

EEOC has subpoena power, Contract Compliance does not;

Contract Compliance does not have the authority to file lawsuits and get punitive damages, EEOC can seek punitive damages and lawsuits;

Contract Compliance enforces the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Act, the EEOC does not;

EEOC protects employees from genetic discrimination, Contract Compliance does not.

The proposal to transfer the Office of Federal Contract Compliance into the EEOC came about by some ideological groups that want to shrink the Federal Government, but it is unwise because it is opposed by civil rights groups and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

To underscore the collective voice and opposition to this transfer, the Senate Committee on Appropriations adopted language last Thursday that says that the committee rejects the budget's proposal to begin plans to merge the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs with the EEOC.

Mr. Chair, the realignment of responsibilities would ask the EEOC to do considerably more with a lot less in terms of expertise, personnel, and funding. Further, this combination would derail the EEOC's efforts to reduce its backlog of charges while simultaneously trying to collect vital data rel-

evant to the enforcement of civil rights laws.

The enforcement of civil rights laws would be best served if we in Congress would fully fund both the EEOC and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance so that they both can do the vital work of securing the right to work in a place free of harassment, retaliation, and other forms of discrimination.

For these reasons, I ask my colleagues to vote "yes" on this amendment.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 186 OFFERED BY MR. ELLISON

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 186 printed in House Report 115–297.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division F (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to enter into a contract with any person whose disclosures of a proceeding with a disposition listed in section 2313(c)(1) of title 41, United States Code, in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System include the term "Fair Labor Standards Act" and such disposition is listed as "willful" or "repeated".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

□ 2145

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, my amendment is very simple. If you have a contract doing business with the Federal Government, if in your disclosures you have been found designated to have violations of the Federal Labor Relations Act, and those violations are considered to be willful, intentional, and repeated, then you will not be able to take advantage of this particular appropriation.

This kind of amendment is designed to say that the Federal Government believes that a penny earned and a penny worked should be received by the worker. It is as simple as that.

People who do not support this amendment are saying that Federal contractors can engage in wage theft and it is okay with us. And we are simply saying that the hardworking people in the United States expect that the Federal penny that workers earn will be given to them, and that is not too much to ask.

Hardworking people living in America should never worry that an employer will steal their wages, especially if that employer is paid by a government contract. Right now, Federal contractors who repeatedly and intentionally pay subminimum wage, force

their workers to work off the clock, refuse to pay overtime, or make illegal deductions on their employees' pay are still allowed to apply for Federal contracts. They should not be. We should reward workers who treat their workers fairly and not allow firms who willfully and repeatedly profiteer off of their employees by letting them keep their government contracts.

If passed, my amendment will ensure that a business that willfully and repeatedly violates the Fair Labor Standards Act cannot apply for a Federal Government contract until they clean up their act. To be clear, my amendment would not punish a single accidental violation.

If my colleagues across the aisle won't make corporations pay their fair share of their taxes, I hope that they will at least join me in going after employers who refuse to pay taxpayer money to line their pockets by cheating employees repeatedly, and on purpose. This is not a small thing. This is real money out of real people's pockets.

The Economic Policy Institute found that low-wage workers in just the ten most popular States—California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, and others—lose \$8 billion in wages due to wage theft each year.

For example, the corporation General Dynamics Information Technology owns a number of call centers that serve Federal contracts. In the last 10 years, they have agreed to pay \$412,000 in back wages to 921 employees for Fair Labor Standards Act violations. Immigrants and residents of low-income communities are often at the greatest risk for abuse at the hands of employers who do wage theft.

The government should be doing everything it can to protect workers from intimidation and stolen wages. If this amendment passes, companies like General Dynamics Information Technology won't be able to continue to do what they have been doing. They will have to be fair to people, at least after they clean up their act.

We have to demand higher standards, Mr. Chairman. Respecting a fair day's pay for a fair day's work is an American value.

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

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentleman's amendment, and I know the sincerity of his view on the issue.

This amendment, in my view, mirrors, to some degree, the last administration's regulation on so-called Fair Play and Safe Workplaces, also known as a blacklisting rule, which has recently been withdrawn.

There are existing requirements for reporting and addressing violations of labor laws by Federal contractors. In-

deed, hundreds of companies every year are barred from doing business with the Federal Government.

While bad actors certainly should face consequences, I believe blanket prohibitions circumvent proper administrative review under the existing procedures. Agencies already have many requirements related to the award of Federal contracts, and imposing a new across-the-board requirement, in my view, is not the right approach to address this issue.

Mr. Chairman, I oppose the amendment, and I urge its rejection.

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Minnesota has 1½ minutes remaining.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, we know that there are a lot of contractors who have significant wage violations. It should be a privilege to contract with the Federal Government. Taxpayers should not be asked to subsidize companies that engage in willful and repeated wage theft.

This amendment only applies to contractors with repeated willful violations, not technical violations that could result from good faith difference in interpretation of rules and regulations—willful and repeated.

Awarding contracts to those kind of contractors is not only unfair to workers, it is unfair to law-abiding contractors who play by the rules but are forced to compete on an unlevel playing field with those who cut corners.

Mr. Chairman, I include in the RECORD a letter from the American Civil Liberties Union.

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION,  
Washington, DC, September 7, 2017.

VOTE YES ON AMENDMENTS NO. 113, NO. 184, AND NO. 186 TO H.R. 3354, THE MAKE AMERICA SECURE AND PROSPEROUS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union and our more than two million members and supporters, we urge you to support the following amendments that may be offered during floor consideration of H.R. 3354, the Make America Secure and Prosperous Appropriations Act, 2018:

1. AMENDMENT NO. 113 (PRESERVING FUNDING FOR THE EEOC/EEO-1 EQUAL PAY DATA COLLECTION)

In July, the House Appropriations Committee adopted the Harris Amendment to defund implementation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) revised Employer Information Report (EEO-1). Amendment No. 113, offered by Representatives DeLauro, Frankel, and Scott to the FY18 CJS appropriations bill, would preserve funding for that critical equal pay initiative.

The data collection at issue, through the EEO-1 that employers already must use to document the demographics of their workforces, is a critical tool to lift the cloak of secrecy that shrouds pay decisions in this country. Without such transparency, the

pernicious gender and race wage gaps, and the discrimination that causes them, will continue to flourish. The new EEO-1 revision was adopted after extensive public comment and would have deterred intentional pay disparities, facilitated employers' good faith efforts to comply with equal pay laws, and identified appropriate targets for federal enforcement of nondiscrimination law.

Instead of supporting this measured approach to eliminate the pay gap, the EEO-1 has been undermined by members of Congress and the Trump Administration's Office of Management and Budget, which recently halted implementation of the EEO-1 equal pay data collection. Because OMB has ordered a review and requested that the EEOC undertake a new effort, the Harris amendment could unnecessarily tie the agency's hands. Members should vote in favor of the DeLauro-Frankel-Scott amendment in order to preserve the ability of the EEOC to continue to make meaningful progress on equal pay. A vote against this amendment is a vote against equal pay.

2. AMENDMENT NO. 184 (NO FUNDING TO ELIMINATE OFCCP AND TRANSFER DUTIES TO EEOC)

The Trump administration's FY2018 budget submission to Congress recommended the elimination of the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) and the transfer of its functions to the EEOC. This amendment, offered by Representatives Conyers and Scott to the FY18 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill, would withhold federal funding in order to prevent implementation of this ill-advised proposal.

These vital and distinct agencies have different missions and different areas of expertise. The EEOC seeks to remedy complaints of discrimination in employment. The OFCCP more broadly oversees the employment practices of federal contractors who are required to proactively monitor workplace diversity and pay equity, make meaningful efforts to recruit qualified applicants from under-represented groups, and eliminate barriers to equal opportunity for various disadvantaged groups, including veterans and individuals with disabilities. The administration's proposal would jeopardize the uniquely important missions of each agency and weakens our government's ability to effectively enforce our nation's civil rights laws. It would also place an extraordinary burden on the EEOC which already has an excessive workload and a well-known backlog. Finally, numerous organizations that work with these agencies—from civil rights, women's rights, and workers' rights groups along with business groups such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—oppose the administration's proposal.

For these reasons, we urge members of the House to support Amendment No. 184 that would prevent the elimination of OFCCP.

3. AMENDMENT NO. 186 (NO FUNDING TO FEDERAL CONTRACTORS WHO REPEATEDLY AND WILLFULLY VIOLATE FLSA)

This amendment, offered by Representatives Ellison, Grijalva and Pocan to the FY18 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill, would ensure that no federal contracts are entered into with entities that willfully and repeatedly violate the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Employers that have the privilege of doing business with the federal government also have a responsibility to comply with our laws. This amendment would provide a strong protection against our government doing business with employers that commit labor violations.

Should you have any questions, please contact Vania Leveille.

Sincerely,

FAIZ SHAKIR,  
Director, Washington  
Legislative Office.  
VANIA LEVEILLE,  
Senior Legislative  
Counsel.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I support the amendment, and I urge its adoption.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 187 OFFERED BY MR. GIBBS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 187 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division F (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_ None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement, administer, or enforce the final regulations on "Improve Tracking of Workplace Injuries and Illnesses" published by the Department of Labor in the Federal Register on May 12, 2016 (81 Fed. Reg. 29624 et seq.).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GIBBS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chairman, my amendment prohibits the Department of Labor and OSHA from implementing a burdensome rule dealing with reporting workplace injuries and illness.

The OSHA rule requires all businesses with more than 250 employees to file all illness and injury reports in a publicly available database. It would also be a requirement for any business with more than 20 employees in certain industries such as manufacturing or agriculture.

This online filing requirement raises serious privacy concerns. While employers were previously required to collect this information, it was never open and available to the public.

The rule risks the confidentiality of personally identifiable information for those injured on the job.

Additionally, a provision in the final rule declaring automatic postaccident drug testing is now considered an unreasonable procedure, a provision that conflicts with multiple States' workers' compensation laws.

While the Trump administration has wisely delayed the implementation of

the regulation, it is important to prevent any future development of this rule.

I encourage my colleagues to adopt this amendment, which rolls back another one-size-fits-all regulation from Washington, D.C., that potentially interferes with the privacy of employers and employees for the entirety of fiscal year 2018.

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

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment, which would remove protections for workers who report workplace injuries and prevent OSHA from collecting data necessary to identify and target the most hazardous workplaces and serious safety and health problems.

Let's look at 2015. There were nearly 5,000 workers killed on the job by traumatic injuries and an estimated 50,000 deaths from occupational diseases. Each day, 150 workers in this country died because of exposure to workplace hazards.

In 2015, there were 3.7 million workplace injuries reported, with more than half of them serious, but these numbers don't show the whole problem. Studies have shown that up to half of all workplace injuries are not reported on the OSHA injury log. One of the reasons is that some workers fear that they will be retaliated against or fired if they report an injury.

The new OSHA rule strengthens protections for workers who report injuries, which will allow workers to report them more freely and result in more complete reporting.

OSHA's injury tracking rule is an important worker protection measure that does three things. First, it prohibits employers from retaliating against workers who report workplace injuries. Second, it continues longstanding requirements that certain employers in high-risk industries submit summary injury and illness data to OSHA, which now must be done electronically. And, third, it requires large employers in high-risk injuries to submit more detailed injury and illness data to OSHA.

These are critical protections for workers. They should not be overturned.

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

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chairman, employers will still be required to keep this information on record. Any OSHA inspector can come in and inspect those records. So the idea that there is no documentation of any workplace injuries or illnesses is still there.

The problem here is that it is put on a website, that could have issues with FOIA requests, also publicly available. Businesses will be forced to sensitive

information and confidential information that will be public information that risks the identity of many employees out there.

OSHA has historically recognized the sensitive nature of this data and sought to protect this information being released on, as I said, the Freedom of Information Act request.

Furthermore, OSHA has failed to demonstrate any evidence that this rule will effectively reduce workplace injuries and illnesses. I think the point to remember here is that employers are required to keep the records of that, and OSHA inspectors can see that. So when OSHA comes in and inspects a business entity, they can look at those records and see what the workplace injuries are and red flag them, and they have that ability. But personal information should not be at risk to the public and risk people's identities and their personal health issues for illness and work injuries.

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

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), my friend, the distinguished ranking member of the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to this amendment, which blocks OSHA's ability to improve tracking of injuries and illnesses in workplaces across the country.

One of the problems we have is that Federal OSHA and State OSHA plans have less than 2,000 inspectors to cover 8 million workplaces nationally. If you do the arithmetic, each Federal OSHA inspector can inspect a workplace about once every 159 years. State OSHA might be able to do it once a century. So the fact that you have something on site that is there for them to see if they ever get there, the problem is they never get there.

We need to make sure they have the information to know which ones to go to, which ones are the dangerous sites. The scarce resources that OSHA needs to precisely target those resources is a result of these reports. For large employers, and each illness with summary information from smaller employers, that is how they figure out where to visit.

This rule also protects workers against discrimination if they report injuries. GAO has found that workers fear reporting injuries, especially where employers impose sanctions or reduce bonuses for work-related injuries.

This amendment would upend this important rule which allows OSHA to target their resources to inspect those that really need inspecting. This amendment would upend the rule and compromise its transparency and worker protections.

The information is not individually identifiable. People are protected. But

the courts have said that this information is not confidential.

This amendment would rig the system against worker safety by depriving OSHA of the information they need to target the workplaces, so I request a "no" vote on this amendment.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chairman, I ask support of my amendment to make sure that we protect the private health records of our employees at the work site and any illnesses that they might have. I don't think we should risk that.

As I said earlier, I think OSHA inspectors have the ability to come in and inspect those records on the workplace site. Putting it out on the internet doesn't make a lot of sense.

Mr. Chairman, I urge support of the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 2200

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, Congress should support OSHA's efforts to protect workers and use their data to target safety and health efforts to the most dangerous workplaces.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to reject this rider and to move forward with the underlying bill.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GIBBS).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Ohio will be postponed.

It is now in order to consider amendment No. 188 printed in House Report 115-297.

It is now in order to consider amendment No. 189 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GIBBS) having assumed the chair, Mr. ARRINGTON, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3354) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

#### SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS PROGRAM

(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, I rise this evening to highlight the impor-

tance of the Secure Rural Schools program. It was created to fill a void in the economics left by restrictive forest management practices and regulations that have basically cut off our Federal forests and left many rural communities without the forests that once drove their economy: timber harvest.

The program was established in 2000 as only a temporary program to help rural America until we could restore active forest management, which would allow communities to then be self-sufficient, create jobs, work the land, and keep their schools running.

Indeed, the temporary program has not seen the practices towards forest management, towards timber harvest that is needed, as we see the West up in smoke once again.

We need, in Congress, to put policies in place that allow for timber harvest, for better air quality, for the safety of the habitat, for the economy, and for secure rural schools so they will see funding they need, and for counties as well that rely on that for road money.

In Modoc County, they are afraid they may have to close one of their high schools, which means another 50-mile drive through bad weather over a ridge for some of the students there.

Congress must implement common-sense forest management for a myriad of reasons: again, forest health, school funding, jobs, all the things that make sense for the West. We need to pass Secure Rural Schools funding.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CURBELO of Florida (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of assisting his family and constituents in recovery efforts from Hurricane Irma.

Mr. MARINO (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of personal reasons.

#### SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 1311. An act to provide assistance in abolishing human trafficking in the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary; in addition, to the Committee on Foreign Affairs; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce; and to the Committee on Homeland Security for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

S. 1312. An act to prioritize the fight against human trafficking in the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary; in addition, to the Committee on Education and the Workforce; and to the Committee on Foreign Affairs for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

#### ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 3732. An act to amend section 1113 of the Social Security Act to provide authority for increased fiscal year 2017 and 2018 payments for temporary assistance to United States citizens returned from foreign countries.

#### BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on September 11, 2017, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill:

H.R. 3732. To amend section 1113 of the Social Security Act to provide authority for increased fiscal year 2017 and 2018 payments for temporary assistance to United States citizens returned from foreign countries.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, September 13, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

2461. A letter from the Acting Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service; Livestock, Poultry, and Seed Program, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Rules of Practice Governing Formal Adjudicatory Proceedings Instituted by the Secretary Under Various Statutes [Docket No.: AMS-LPS-16-0051] (RIN: 0581-AD58) received August 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

2462. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Importation of Hass Avocados From Colombia [Docket No.: APHIS-2016-0022] (RIN: 0579-AE29) received August 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

2463. A letter from the Under Secretary, Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department of Defense Chemical Demilitarization Program Semi-Annual Report to Congress for September 2017, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1521(j); Public Law 99-145, Sec. 1412 (as amended by Public Law 112-239, Sec. 1421(a)); (126 Stat. 204); to the Committee on Armed Services.

2464. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel, Division of Regulatory Services, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — Teacher Preparation Issues [Docket ID: ED-2014-OPE-0057] (RIN: 1840-