

from its funding sources. However, it is clear that more needs to be done.

The new bill will further restrict Hezbollah's ability to recruit and fundraise by targeting foreign state sponsors, including Iran, while also increasing pressure on banks and other international financial institutions that serve Hezbollah.

It is important to remember why it is in America's interest to combat Hezbollah terrorism. Not that anyone here or at home needs a reminder, we all remember, or we have all learned about, the 1983 attacks in Beirut on our Embassy and the Marine Corps barracks that killed hundreds of Americans; the attacks in Argentina on the Israeli Embassy in 1992, and the AMIA Jewish center in 1994 that, in total, killed over 100 more; the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia; and more recent attacks in Europe, including the 2012 bus bombing of Israeli tourists in Bulgaria.

But it has been Hezbollah's support for the horrific Assad regime in Syria that has led even Arab governments in the region to acknowledge Hezbollah's dangerous role as an Iranian terror proxy. Last year, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League took the dynamic step of designating Hezbollah as a terrorist organization.

Yet, even while Hezbollah is focused on the war in Syria, its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, continues to vow Israel's destruction, a threat Israel's leaders don't take lightly, given two previous wars and intelligence suggesting Hezbollah now has over 150,000 missiles and rockets in Lebanon aimed at every corner of Israel's map.

In a future war, Israeli defense officials fear that Hezbollah will launch over a thousand rockets a day with the capacity to hit civilians in Israel's north, across Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, and even in the southernmost city, Eilat.

This is made all the more troubling by reports that Iran, in addition to transferring advanced precision-guided missiles to Hezbollah, is now helping the terror group set up indigenous missile development facilities in both Syria and Lebanon.

These are unacceptable developments. They underscore the importance of today's legislation: cut off Hezbollah's most critical sources of funding and support, including from its primary sponsor, Iran.

I am proud to support this bipartisan legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it as well.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, we have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Florida for her tireless leadership in standing up for all those pushing back against Iran's influence in the region. Iran's support for Hezbollah, and specifically here, cutting off sources of funding for Hezbollah.

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

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

For 30 years, Hezbollah has remained Iran's proxy and Iran remains Hezbollah's primary source of financial support—a cozy relationship.

In April 2015, its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, boasted that, even under sanctions, Iran still funds Hezbollah's terror. He anticipated that "a rich and powerful Iran, which will be open to the world" will be able to do even more.

The Iran nuclear agreement has made it possible for Iran to provide Hezbollah with a windfall. But Tehran is not Hezbollah's only source of income. Since its inception, Hezbollah has developed a broad criminal network involved in a range of illicit activities, from drug trafficking to cigarette smuggling, to money laundering to counterfeiting.

These global terrorists double as global criminals. This is why we must employ a combination of law enforcement, financial, criminal, civil, and regulatory tools to deter, disrupt, and publicly illuminate the global illicit Hezbollah network.

□ 1600

I want to thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for closely collaborating and developing this critical legislation, as well as Senator RUBIO and Senator SHAHEEN in the Senate that have taken the lead on this effort in the Senate. I look forward to continuing to work with them to get this critical legislation signed into law.

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

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3329, the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act. This important legislation builds on the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015. I was pleased to have originally introduced this bill in 2014 with my colleague MARK MEADOWS.

Hizballah at the behest and assistance of Iran is active in Syria and has helped Assad maintain regime control. Hizballah fighters are returning to Lebanon more battle-tested and more capable than ever before.

In Lebanon, again with assistance from Iran, Hizballah has been able to amass more than 150,000 rockets—a ten-fold increase compared to 15,000 in 2006.

Iran uses several means to transfer weapons to Hizballah, including by land, sea, and air and is now reportedly building missile production facilities in Lebanon to enable an indigenous rocket-producing capability for Hizballah.

Hizballah is not only a grave threat to our ally Israel, they are a threat to regional security and America's national security interests. Hizballah will be far more dangerous than ever before with an indigenous rocket-producing capability.

That is why I am pleased that an amendment I offered during the full committee markup of H.R. 3329 was included in the bill to en-

sure the U.S. Government is focused on this urgent threat. My amendment would require the President to report to Congress on the foreign and domestic supply chain that advances Hizballah's domestic missile capabilities. This includes how Iran is able to transfer goods and technology, a list of those who facilitate missile transfers, and the steps being taken to disrupt the supply chain that advances Hizballah's missile capabilities.

The United States cannot stand by while Israel faces such a grave threat on its northern border. We must decisively act and we deserve to know what exactly the U.S. Government is doing to combat this threat.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3329.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3329, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

URGING EUROPEAN UNION TO DESIGNATE HIZBALLAH AS A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 359) urging the European Union to designate Hizballah in its entirety as a terrorist organization and increase pressure on it and its members, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 359

Whereas in July 2012 a Hizballah terror attack in Bulgaria killed five Israeli tourists and one Bulgarian;

Whereas in March 2013 a Hizballah operative in Cyprus was convicted of planning terror attacks after admitting he was a member of Hizballah, was trained in the use of weapons, and used a dual Swedish-Lebanese passport to travel around Europe on missions as a courier and scout for Hizballah;

Whereas though such Hizballah operative was convicted on criminal-related charges, authorities had to drop terrorism charges against him because Hizballah was not listed as a terrorist organization;

Whereas the European Union (EU) in July 2013 designated Hizballah's so-called "military wing"—but not the organization as a whole—as a terrorist organization;

Whereas despite restrictions put on Hizballah since the designation of its military wing, the group continues to conduct illicit narco-trafficking, money laundering, and weapons trafficking throughout Europe;

Whereas EU designation of Hizballah's military wing has enabled substantial and important cooperation between United States and European authorities aimed at uncovering and thwarting Hizballah's international criminal activities, such as drug trafficking and money laundering, the proceeds of which are used to purchase weapons and advance Hizballah's terrorist aims;

Whereas in December 2015 the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-102) was signed into law

in the United States, broadening financial sector sanctions against Hizballah to compel foreign financial institutions to refrain from supporting the terrorist group;

Whereas in February 2016 the United States Drug Enforcement Administration and U.S. Customs and Border Protection partnered with counterparts in France, Germany, Italy, and Belgium to arrest top leaders of the European cell of Hizballah's External Security Organization Business Affairs Component—a cell that engages in international money laundering and drug trafficking to support Hizballah's terror activities;

Whereas for many years, the Governments of Iran and Syria have been the prime sponsors of Hizballah, harboring, financing, training, and arming the group;

Whereas Department of Defense officials estimate that Iran provides as much as \$200,000,000 per year to Hizballah in the form of financial and logistical support, weapons, and training;

Whereas Hizballah now has an arsenal of approximately 150,000 missiles and rockets, many of which can reach deep into Israel, at a time when Hizballah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah is threatening to attack and invade Israel;

Whereas Hizballah fighters have been supporting the Assad regime in Syria, often leading operations in the conflict which has left more than 465,000 dead;

Whereas Russia has established fusion centers in Syria to coordinate with Iran, the Assad regime, and Hizballah, and Russian air cover has given Hizballah an advantage on the battlefield against Syria rebels;

Whereas Hizballah's destabilizing actions in the conflict in Syria has fueled a migrant crisis that has brought nearly 400,000 migrants and refugees to Europe in 2016 and 2017 alone;

Whereas Lebanon continues to be plagued by instability and violence;

Whereas due to Hizballah's actions in Syria, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant has carried out retaliatory terrorist attacks in Beirut;

Whereas the Lebanese Armed Forces, the legitimate security establishment of the country as set forth in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006), are struggling to control the flow of weapons and Hizballah fighters at its borders;

Whereas Hizballah trains and provides weapons for Shiite militias in Iraq and Yemen, further destabilizing the region and perpetuating violence in those countries;

Whereas in October 2012 Hizballah Deputy Secretary General Naim Qassem stated that “[Hizballah does not] have a military wing and a political one . . . Every element of Hizballah, from commanders to members as well as our various capabilities, are in the service of the resistance”;

Whereas the United States, Canada, Israel, and the Netherlands have designated Hizballah in its entirety as a terror organization, while Australia and New Zealand have applied the designation to the organization's so-called military wing;

Whereas in March 2016 the Gulf Cooperation Council, the bloc of six Gulf Arab nations, formally branded Hizballah, in its entirety, a terrorist organization, and the League of Arab States shortly thereafter adopted the same designation;

Whereas in April 2016 the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, denounced Hizballah's “terrorist acts” in the Middle East;

Whereas Hizballah Secretary General Nasrallah said in May 2017 that the conflict in Syria had entered a “new and critical phase” in which Damascus, Moscow, Tehran, and Hezbollah were “in more harmony politically and militarily than at any time”;

Whereas the United States has designated Hizballah's Foreign Relations Department, which has representatives around the world, as a Specially Designated National, subject to United States primary and secondary sanctions;

Whereas the Department of the Treasury has diligently added persons and entities to the list of Specially Designated Global Terrorists who have provided material support to the Hizballah terrorist organization, thereby hampering its financing and logistical capabilities; and

Whereas in May 2017 the United States and Saudi Arabia sanctioned Hashem Saffiedine, a member of Hizballah's executive council which oversees the organization's political, organizational, social and educational activities, for his involvement in terrorist activity; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses appreciation to the European Union (EU) for the progress made in countering Hizballah since the EU designated Hizballah's military wing as a terrorist organization;

(2) applauds and expresses support for the continued, increased cooperation between the United States and the EU in thwarting Hizballah's criminal and terrorist activities;

(3) supports transcontinental efforts within Europe to share intelligence information among police and security services to facilitate greater cooperation in tracking, apprehending, and prosecuting terrorists, foreign fighters, and potential offenders;

(4) encourages the EU to, whenever possible and applicable with due process standards, implement sanctions against Hizballah-affiliated terrorists in tandem with the United States; and

(5) urges the EU to designate Hizballah in its entirety as a terrorist organization and increase pressure on the group, including through—

(A) facilitating better cross-border cooperation between EU members in combating Hizballah;

(B) issuing arrest warrants against members and active supporters of Hizballah;

(C) freezing Hizballah's assets in Europe, including those masquerading as charities; and

(D) prohibiting fundraising activities in support of Hizballah.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Speaker and Chairman ROYCE, as well as Congressman ENGEL, the ranking member, for their help in bringing this important resolution to the floor.

I also want to say how proud our committee is of the great work of

Ranking Member TED DEUTCH of the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, and our Florida colleague, GUS BILIRAKIS, who are the authors of H. Res. 359, urging the European Union to designate Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization. I thank Mr. DEUTCH for his leadership on this.

This notion, Mr. Speaker, that there can be separate wings of a terrorist organization is as absurd as the notion that Iran can be a responsible member of the international community. There is no distinction between Hezbollah members. Anyone who pledges allegiance to this terror group must be labeled accordingly.

One needn't look further than Hezbollah's activities in Syria or its terror attacks against Israel or even the statements coming out of Iran, its patron, and Hezbollah itself to know that if you are Hezbollah, you support terror activities. Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism, and Hezbollah is its proxy.

There is simply no justification at all for our European friends to try to differentiate between a military wing and a political wing of a terrorist organization. They may justify it by saying it will upset the delicate balance in Lebanon and they worry about the fallout, but the sad reality is that it comes down to money.

They will not take any action against Iran, as we have seen since the JCPOA, because members of the EU have signed lucrative business deals with Iran, and they don't want to damage their economic opportunities. It is as simple as that, because even our Gulf allies have labeled Hezbollah, in its entirety, as a terrorist organization.

The European Union needs to wake up, and we must urge it and its member states to designate the whole of Hezbollah as the terrorists that they are, and it must realize that doing so would be in their best interest and in the best interest of Israel, a nation that shares their values and their ideals, unlike Iran, a regime that benefits by the lack of a full designation of Hezbollah.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 359.

I would first like to thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their leadership on the committee in bringing this resolution forward. I would like to thank my friend from Florida, Congressman BILIRAKIS, for working with me on this resolution. I thank as well Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN for her leadership on the subcommittee and ensuring that we have the opportunity to move forward together.

Mr. Speaker, in 2013, almost exactly 1 year after a Hezbollah suicide bomber blew up a bus in Bulgaria, killing mostly Israeli tourists, the European Union took action to finally designate

Hezbollah a terrorist organization. However, they only designated what they called Hezbollah's military wing as a terror group and not its political wing.

The United States has been clear that this was a false distinction then and it remains a false distinction today. Hezbollah is one unified terrorist organization, and it is led by the terrorist, Hassan Nasrallah. It is one unified Hezbollah that is responsible for the horrific acts of terror against Europeans, Americans, Israelis, and others across the Middle East and around the globe.

It is one unified Hezbollah that has helped prop up the Assad regime, and it is complicit in the death of half a million Syrians and the dissolving of a once thriving nation. So this one unified Hezbollah should be designated as a terrorist organization so we can increase international cooperation to isolate and dismantle this group.

This morning, Mr. Speaker, the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee held a hearing on next steps for our Iran policy. There, I noted that 2 days ago we marked a solemn anniversary, because 34 years ago, on October 23, two Hezbollah suicide bombers blew themselves up at the Marine Corps barracks in Beirut, killing over 300 U.S. and French servicemembers, peacekeepers, and civilians. That attack, like so many of Hezbollah's deadly terrorist activities over the past several decades, was sponsored and directed by Iran.

While our Nation built a memorial honoring the victims of that attack, Tehran built a monument honoring the perpetrators of that attack. A full EU designation of Hezbollah now would help demonstrate Europe's commitment to cracking down on Iran's use of proxy terror groups, destabilizing the region, and attacking Western interests.

Now, I understand that the EU has legal concerns about this designation since Hezbollah has infiltrated Lebanon's political system. However, I would just offer this observation. The terrorist organization Hamas operates as a political party in Gaza, yet the EU still rightly lists the entirety of Hamas as a terror organization. That has not impacted their ability to support Gaza reconstruction, just as designating Hezbollah would not prevent them from supporting Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Last year, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League both designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. They made no distinction between the military and political wing, despite Lebanon being a member of the Arab League. I hope the EU took note of that.

I thank the Speaker for bringing this resolution to the floor so that my colleagues can join me in sending an important message to our European friends and allies. More can be done to counter the Iranian proxy Hezbollah,

and that begins with calling them what they are, a terrorist organization committed to the destruction of Israel and undermining the values and interests of the United States.

Our EU friends must acknowledge as well the values and interests of Europe. The world knows that Hezbollah is a terrorist group. It is time for the European Union to end its false distinction and join us in designating all of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution and to send them that message.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, so I will wait for Mr. DEUTCH to close on his time. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to Chairman ROYCE, Ranking Member ENGEL, Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN, Congressman BILIRAKIS, and to my colleagues on the Foreign Affairs Committee and other Members for their work on the three measures today aimed at curbing the terrorist group Hezbollah.

The measures that we are advancing today represent smart and tough approaches that will respond to Hezbollah and its enablers, and will build stronger international support for this important effort. This measure and the others that we have considered today are a great example of the way that we can work across the aisle to help keep our country safe. I urge a "yes" vote on this resolution.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Florida, Ranking Member DEUTCH, for authoring this resolution and bringing it to the floor today.

Hezbollah has a single leadership, fungible finances, and a single hostile mission. All branches and operations serve its terrorist activities, and it is a deadly mistake to attempt to distinguish among its arms.

I again want to thank Mr. DEUTCH, Chairman ROYCE, Ranking Member ENGEL for their work on this important resolution, which calls for our European allies to designate all branches of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. This is a critical step that our partners across the Atlantic must take to protect our citizens and allies from a highly organized, capable, and increasingly battle-trained terror group that operates networks in countries around the world.

We must work together to deprive this organization of its support. I, therefore, urge my colleagues to join me in support of this resolution. I thank the gentleman from Florida for his authorship.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), the chairman of the House Committee on

Small Business and a senior member of our Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Chairman ROYCE, and all the other folks that have worked on a number of bills here today.

I rise in strong support of H. Res. 359; H.R. 3329; H.R. 3342; and H.R. 1698, that one, in particular, aims to prevent Iran from acquiring ballistic missiles because they have the capability or soon will have the capability not just to target the Middle East and Europe, but also target us here on our soil right here in the United States if we don't do something about this, with ultimately a nuclear device.

Iran is determined to be the dominant power in the Middle East. The Iranian regime hopes to achieve this by exporting terrorism, destabilizing its neighbors, and promising death to America and to our allies.

Bearing this in mind, Iran's nuclear ambitions and ballistic missiles program are not only a direct threat to the United States and our allies, but they are a direct threat to the peace and stability of the entire world.

When the Iran deal was signed, I said back then and believed back then that this was a bad deal, it would ultimately lead to nuclear weapons, and that they weren't going to meet their commitments. And we are seeing here today the backsliding by Iran to these commitments.

Ten years ago, Russia agreed to sell a number of S-300 surface-to-air missile systems to Iran. The Russians suspended the deal in 2010, but renewed it after the Iran deal, the JCPOA was agreed to. Now Moscow has delivered multiple S-300 systems.

While the S-300 missile platforms strengthens Iran's conventional capabilities, it also fundamentally complicates the United States' strategy for eliminating a potential nuclear threat against us or against our allies. Iran displayed this surface-to-air missile system to the public late last month, so we know it is there and it is dangerous.

That is exactly why H.R. 1698 is so important. It will help combat Iran's ongoing nuclear ambitions by requiring the President to report on the Iranian ballistic missiles program and to oppose targeted sanctions on Iranian Government entities and foreign actors that aid Iran in its nuclear development.

I also want to speak briefly relative to the threat that Hezbollah poses to the Middle East and the entire world. I, again, want to thank Congressman ROYCE and Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN and Ranking Member ENGEL and many others for their hard work on this.

Hezbollah's mission is to destroy Israel. It is backed by Iran. It poses a constant threat to the Middle East peace. We have designated it as a terrorist organization due to its routine attacks, especially rocket attacks on

Israel that have led to war, and its brutal tactics.

□ 1615

For years, Hezbollah has continued to accumulate larger rocket stockpiles, grow their presence, and develop even more unimaginable barbaric strategies.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for these, and I urge my colleagues to support these.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Because the gentlewoman from Florida did not close as expected, the gentleman from Florida will, without objection, be allowed to reclaim his time.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, that is very kind, but I am happy to yield to my friend from Florida, so I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Florida is now recognized to close debate.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, with that, I also yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this measure.

Let me thank my good friend and colleague from Florida, Representative DEUTCH, the Ranking Member of the Foreign Affairs Middle East Subcommittee, for bringing forward this measure.

This measure represents another part of a good congressional strategy for combatting Hezbollah, and that's rallying support among friends and partners . . . making sure that around the world everyone sees Hezbollah for what it is: a terrorist group.

This has been a bit of a stumbling block with our friends in the European Union. Make no mistake: Hezbollah has waged its campaign of violence in Europe over the years, such as 2012, when a Hezbollah terrorist killed five Israelis in Bulgaria.

Yet in 2013, the EU announced it would consider only the "military wing" of Hezbollah to be a terrorist organization, drawing a distinction with the so-called political wing.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a distinction without a difference. Hezbollah is a terrorist organization, and that's all there is to it. The more shades of grey clouding this issue, the harder it's going to be to work with our EU allies to stop Hezbollah's violent activities.

So this measure lays out the facts about Hezbollah's presence in Europe and the other groups that have labeled Hezbollah a terrorist organization. It commends the work we're already doing with our EU allies to push back against Hezbollah. And it says that it's time for the EU to stop the hairsplitting. It calls on the EU to designate all of Hezbollah for what it is: a terrorist organization.

I'm glad to support this measure. It sends such an important signal to our friends across the Atlantic.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 359, which I am proud to co-lead and cosponsor with my colleagues. This important resolution urges the European Union to designate Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization.

There is no distinction between the military and political wings of Hezbollah. They are part and parcel of the same entity, that is a terrorist organization that threatens the United

States and our allies, and contributes to instability and violence in the Middle East.

The EU designated Hezbollah's military wing as a terrorist organization in 2013, and has made notable progress in countering Hezbollah activities, but more must be done. This resolution urges the EU to take practical and tangible steps to reduce the terrorist threat posed to the United States, Europe, Israel, and our other allies in the Middle East by Hezbollah. For example, increasing cross-border intelligence sharing, freezing Hezbollah assets, prohibiting Hezbollah fundraising activities, and issuing arrest warrants for Hezbollah members and supporters in Europe would not only send a strong message, but would have a concrete impact inhibiting the ability of Hezbollah to operate with impunity.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 359.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 359, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUNSHINE FOR REGULATIONS AND REGULATORY DECREES AND SETTLEMENTS ACT OF 2017

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 469.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NORMAN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 577 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 469.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1621

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 consideration of the bill (H.R. 469) to impose certain limitations on consent decrees and settlement agreements by agencies that require the agencies to take regulatory action in accordance with the terms thereof, and for other purposes, with Mr. DUNCAN from Tennessee in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) and the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I am glad to be here on H.R. 469. We have had the opportunity, through rule debate yesterday, to discuss this.

What we are coming forward with today is a bill that I have introduced that basically breaks down to what we know is a sue and settlement ban on this part of my bill. There are other parts that we are going to get to as we go forward in this.

But I think I want to start off this debate today by simply stating some of the foundational issues—things that we come here and talk about many times on the floor of the House have to do with bills and discussions. But one of the things I think that has been very disturbing for me—and I know many of our colleagues as we have come up here—is the disturbing trend of moving away from Congress relieving its powers and taking ownership of its Article I authority, and doing the oversight, doing the planning, doing the budgeting, and then sort of moving that more toward the executive branch or letting the judicial system take responsibility.

And I think one of the things that we are starting out with today in these bills, that we have taken up over the past 2 days, is a general discussion to move back toward Article I authority, which Congress is doing the legislating and the oversight that it is supposed to be, and the executive branch is following through in their role of actually executing the laws that are made, judicial, of course, being the interpretive branch.

What we are seeing in this bill—and one of the reasons for our sue and settlement legislation, which is my part of this bill, and I want to start here, and we will continue as we go through this through the other parts as we go—is really a fairness issue. And this is not specific to one party in the executive branch. I stated this yesterday. Sometimes it gets mixed up. But hear me clearly: I don't care the party of the resident at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. I do not care who they may be in the sense of what they do in that job. What I want to know is: Are they fulfilling the executive branch role and not overstepping Congress' role?

What we have seen over previous administrations, including the last one and the previous administration, especially under this area of sue and settlement that increased greatly during the last administration, was this idea of taking a law that we have passed, having the regulatory agency's job to execute that law; but, at the same point in time, being sued by a friendly party, or another party, on a deadline of the bill, or something that they want to, they go into, say, with EPA or another agency, and they discuss this lawsuit. They come to an agreement, and they