

place June 25 to June 27 in Lowell, Massachusetts: Tessa Anderson of Clarendon, Taylor Grove of Mount Union, Daniel Headrick of Corry, Serena Clarke of Warren, Selena Foster of Sheffield, and Monica Scotto of DuBois.

These outstanding students were required to achieve a 3.5 GPA to be nominated for this prestigious honors-only program by their teachers or the National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists.

The event aims to encourage and guide the top students in our country who hope to become physicians or medical scientists. Chosen delegates at the congress represent all 50 States and Puerto Rico.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate these students on this tremendous accomplishment, and I wish them the best of luck as they continue their path to leading our Nation's medical profession.

HONORING RETIRING TSA DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR ROD ALLISON

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

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Roderick Allison, Acting Deputy Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration, who recently announced his retirement from TSA after 33 years of government service.

Mr. Allison's career began in 1985 with 13 years in the U.S. Army at the National Security Agency and 7th Special Forces Group.

In 1998, Director Allison's career with the Federal Air Marshal Service began when the program was part of the FAA.

Following the events of 9/11, Mr. Allison returned to the Federal Air Marshal Service and has served with distinction in several critical roles throughout TSA, including Acting Administrator, Acting Chief of Staff, and Acting Chief of Operations.

Since becoming Director of the Federal Air Marshal Service in May of 2014, Mr. Allison has been widely recognized for his resolute leadership, integrity, and commitment to the mission of TSA and the Federal Air Marshal Service. He truly is a leader among leaders. He has established a lasting legacy, both through action and mentorship, that will continue to have a positive impact on TSA and Federal Air Marshal Service personnel for many years to come.

Thank you for your service, Mr. Allison.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 9 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1633

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MEADOWS) at 4 o'clock and 33 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS U.S. WORKFORCE ACT OF 2018

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5956) to incentivize the hiring of United States workers in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5956

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act of 2018".

SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to increase the percentage of United States workers (as defined in section 6(i) of the Joint Resolution entitled "A Joint Resolution to approve the 'Covenant To Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America', and for other purposes" (48 U.S.C. 1806)) in the total workforce of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, while maintaining the minimum number of workers who are not United States workers to meet the changing demands of the Northern Mariana Islands' economy;

(2) to encourage the hiring of United States workers into such workforce; and

(3) to ensure that no United States worker—

(A) is at a competitive disadvantage for employment compared to a worker who is not a United States worker; or

(B) is displaced by a worker who is not a United States worker.

SEC. 3. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 6 of the Joint Resolution entitled "A Joint Resolution to approve the 'Covenant To Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America', and for other purposes" (48 U.S.C. 1806) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking "2019" and inserting "2029"; and

(B) by amending paragraph (6) to read as follows:

"(6) FEES FOR TRAINING UNITED STATES WORKERS.—

"(A) SUPPLEMENTAL FEE.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—In addition to fees imposed pursuant to section 286(m) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C.

1356(m)) to recover the full costs of adjudication services, the Secretary shall impose an annual supplemental fee of \$200 per non-immigrant worker on each prospective employer who is issued a permit under subsection (d)(3) during the transition program. A prospective employer that is issued a permit with a validity period of longer than 1 year shall pay the fee for each year of requested validity at the time the permit is requested.

"(ii) INFLATION ADJUSTMENT.—Beginning in fiscal year 2020, the Secretary, through notice in the Federal Register, may annually adjust the supplemental fee imposed under clause (i) by a percentage equal to the annual change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"(iii) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts collected pursuant to clause (i) shall be deposited into the Treasury of the Commonwealth Government for the sole and exclusive purpose of funding vocational education, apprenticeships, or other training programs for United States workers.

"(iv) FRAUD PREVENTION AND DETECTION FEE.—In addition to the fees described in clause (i), the Secretary—

"(I) shall impose, on each prospective employer filing a petition under this subsection for 1 or more nonimmigrant workers, a \$50 fraud prevention and detection fee; and

"(II) shall deposit and use the fees collected under subclause (I) for the sole purpose of preventing and detecting immigration benefit fraud in the Northern Mariana Islands, in accordance with section 286(v)(2)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1356(v)(2)(B)).

"(B) PLAN FOR THE EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS.—Not later than 120 days before the first day of fiscal year 2020, and annually thereafter, the Governor of the Commonwealth Government shall submit to the Secretary of Labor—

"(i) a plan for the expenditures of amounts deposited under subparagraph (A)(iii);

"(ii) a projection of the effectiveness of such expenditures in the placement of United States workers into jobs held by non-United States workers; and

"(iii) a report on the changes in employment of United States workers attributable to expenditures of such amounts during the previous year.

"(C) DETERMINATION AND REPORT.—Not later than 120 days after receiving each expenditure plan under subparagraph (B)(i), the Secretary of Labor shall—

"(i) issue a determination on the plan; and

"(ii) submit a report to Congress that describes the effectiveness of the Commonwealth Government at meeting the goals set forth in such plan.

"(D) PAYMENT RESTRICTION.—Payments may not be made in a fiscal year from amounts deposited under subparagraph (A)(iii) before the Secretary of Labor has approved the expenditure plan submitted under subparagraph (B)(i) for that fiscal year.";

(2) in subsection (b), by adding at the end the following:

"(3) REPORT.—Not later than December 1, 2027, the Secretary shall submit a report to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate, the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate, the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives that—

"(A) projects the number of asylum claims the Secretary anticipates following the termination of the transition period; and

"(B) describes the efforts of the Secretary to ensure appropriate interdiction efforts, provide for appropriate treatment of asylum

seekers, and prepare to accept and adjudicate asylum claims in the Commonwealth.”;

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (2) through (5) as paragraphs (3) through (6), respectively;

(B) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

“(2) PROTECTION FOR UNITED STATES WORKERS.—

“(A) TEMPORARY LABOR CERTIFICATION.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Beginning with petitions filed with employment start dates in fiscal year 2020, a petition to import a non-immigrant worker under this subsection may not be approved by the Secretary unless the petitioner has applied to the Secretary of Labor for a temporary labor certification confirming that—

“(I) there are not sufficient United States workers in the Commonwealth who are able, willing, qualified, and available at the time and place needed to perform the services or labor involved in the petition; and

“(II) employment of the nonimmigrant worker will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed United States workers.

“(ii) PETITION.—After receiving a temporary labor certification under clause (i), a prospective employer may submit a petition to the Secretary for a Commonwealth Only Transitional Worker permit on behalf of the nonimmigrant worker.

“(B) PREVAILING WAGE SURVEY.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—In order to effectuate the requirement for a temporary labor certification under subparagraph (A)(i), the Secretary of Labor shall use, or make available to employers, an occupational wage survey conducted by the Governor that the Secretary of Labor has determined meets the statistical standards for determining prevailing wages in the Commonwealth on an annual basis.

“(ii) ALTERNATIVE METHOD FOR DETERMINING THE PREVAILING WAGE.—In the absence of an occupational wage survey approved by the Secretary of Labor under clause (i), the prevailing wage for an occupation in the Commonwealth shall be the arithmetic mean of the wages of workers similarly employed in the territory of Guam according to the wage component of the Occupational Employment Statistics Survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

“(C) MINIMUM WAGE.—An employer shall pay each Commonwealth Only Transitional Worker a wage that is not less than the greater of—

“(i) the statutory minimum wage in the Commonwealth;

“(ii) the Federal minimum wage; or

“(iii) the prevailing wage in the Commonwealth for the occupation in which the worker is employed.”;

(C) by amending paragraph (3), as redesignated, to read as follows:

“(3) PERMITS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish, administer, and enforce a system for allocating and determining terms and conditions of permits to be issued to prospective employers for each nonimmigrant worker described in this subsection who would not otherwise be eligible for admission under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

“(B) NUMERICAL CAP.—The number of permits issued under subparagraph (A) may not exceed—

“(i) 13,000 for fiscal year 2019;

“(ii) 12,500 for fiscal year 2020;

“(iii) 12,000 for fiscal year 2021;

“(iv) 11,500 for fiscal year 2022;

“(v) 11,000 for fiscal year 2023;

“(vi) 10,000 for fiscal year 2024;

“(vii) 9,000 for fiscal year 2025;

“(viii) 8,000 for fiscal year 2026;

“(ix) 7,000 for fiscal year 2027;

“(x) 6,000 for fiscal year 2028;

“(xi) 5,000 for fiscal year 2029; and

“(xii) 1,000 for the first quarter of fiscal year 2030.

“(C) REPORTS REGARDING THE PERCENTAGE OF UNITED STATES WORKERS.—

“(i) BY GOVERNOR.—Not later than 60 days before the end of each calendar year, the Governor shall submit a report to the Secretary that identifies the ratio between United States workers and other workers in the Commonwealth’s workforce based on income tax filings with the Commonwealth for the tax year.

“(ii) BY GAO.—Not later than December 31, 2019, and biennially thereafter, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to the Chair and Ranking Member of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate, the Chair and Ranking Member of the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives, the Chair and Ranking Member of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Chair and Ranking Member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives that identifies the ratio between United States workers and other workers in the Commonwealth’s workforce during each of the previous 5 calendar years.

“(D) PETITION; ISSUANCE OF PERMITS.—

“(i) SUBMISSION.—A prospective employer may submit a petition for a permit under this paragraph not earlier than—

“(I) 120 days before the date on which the prospective employer needs the beneficiary’s services; or

“(II) if the petition is for the renewal of an existing permit, not earlier than 180 days before the expiration of such permit.

“(ii) EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION.—The Secretary shall establish a system for each employer of a Commonwealth Only Transitional Worker to submit a semiannual report to the Secretary and the Secretary of Labor that provides evidence to verify the continuing employment and payment of such worker under the terms and conditions set forth in the permit petition that the employer filed on behalf of such worker.

“(iii) REVOCATION.—

“(I) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in the Secretary’s discretion, may revoke a permit approved under this paragraph for good cause, including if—

“(aa) the employer fails to maintain the continuous employment of the subject worker, fails to pay the subject worker, fails to timely file a semiannual report required under this paragraph, commits any other violation of the terms and conditions of employment, or otherwise ceases to operate as a legitimate business (as defined in clause (iv)(II));

“(bb) the beneficiary of such petition does not apply for admission to the Commonwealth by the date that is 10 days after the period of petition validity begins, if the employer has requested consular processing; or

“(cc) the employer fails to provide a former, current, or prospective Commonwealth Only Transitional Worker, not later than 21 business days after receiving a written request from such worker, with the original (or a certified copy of the original) of all petitions, notices, and other written communication related to the worker (other than sensitive financial or proprietary information of the employer, which may be redacted) that has been exchanged between the employer and the Department of Labor, the Department of Homeland Security, or any other Federal agency or department.

“(II) REALLOCATION OF REVOKED PETITION.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (C), for each permit revoked under subclause (I) in a fiscal year, an additional permit shall be made available for use in the subsequent fiscal year.

“(iv) LEGITIMATE BUSINESS.—

“(I) IN GENERAL.—A permit may not be approved for a prospective employer that is not a legitimate business.

“(II) DEFINED TERM.—In this clause, the term ‘legitimate business’ means a real, active, and operating commercial or entrepreneurial undertaking that the Secretary, in the Secretary’s sole discretion, determines—

“(aa) produces services or goods for profit, or is a governmental, charitable, or other validly recognized nonprofit entity;

“(bb) meets applicable legal requirements for doing business in the Commonwealth;

“(cc) has substantially complied with wage and hour laws, occupational safety and health requirements, and all other Federal, Commonwealth, and local requirements related to employment during the preceding 5 years;

“(dd) does not directly or indirectly engage in, or knowingly benefit from, prostitution, human trafficking, or any other activity that is illegal under Federal, Commonwealth, or local law; and

“(ee) is a participant in good standing in the E-Verify program;

“(ff) does not have, as an owner, investor, manager, operator, or person meaningfully involved with the undertaking, any individual who has been the owner, investor, manager, operator, or otherwise meaningfully involved with an undertaking that does not comply with item (cc) or (dd), or is the agent of such an individual; and

“(gg) is not a successor in interest to an undertaking that does not comply with item (cc) or (dd).

“(v) CONSTRUCTION OCCUPATIONS.—A permit for Construction and Extraction Occupations (as defined by the Department of Labor as Standard Occupational Classification Group 47-0000) may not be issued for any worker other than a worker described in paragraph (7)(B).”;

(D) in paragraph (4), as redesignated, by inserting “or to Guam for the purpose of transit only” after “except admission to the Commonwealth”;

(E) in paragraph (5), as redesignated, by adding at the end the following: “Approval of a petition filed by the new employer with a start date within the same fiscal year as the current permit shall not count against the numerical limitation for that period.”; and

(F) by adding at the end the following:

“(7) REQUIREMENT TO REMAIN OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B)—

“(i) a permit for a Commonwealth Only Transitional Worker—

“(I) shall remain valid for a period that may not exceed 1 year; and

“(II) may be renewed for not more than 2 consecutive, 1-year periods; and

“(ii) at the expiration of the second renewal period, an alien may not again be eligible for such a permit until after the alien has remained outside of the United States for a continuous period of at least 30 days prior to the submission of a renewal petition on their behalf.

“(B) LONG-TERM WORKERS.—An alien who was admitted to the Commonwealth as a Commonwealth Only Transitional Worker during fiscal year 2015, and during every subsequent fiscal year beginning before the date of the enactment of the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act of 2018, may receive a permit for a Commonwealth Only

Transitional Worker that is valid for a period that may not exceed 3 years and may be renewed for additional 3-year periods during the transition period. A permit issued under this subparagraph shall be counted toward the numerical cap for each fiscal year within the period of petition validity.”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

“(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) COMMONWEALTH.—The term ‘Commonwealth’ means the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

“(2) COMMONWEALTH ONLY TRANSITION WORKER.—The term ‘Commonwealth Only Transition Worker’ means an alien who has been admitted into the Commonwealth under the transition program and is eligible for a permit under subsection (d)(3).

“(3) GOVERNOR.—The term ‘Governor’ means the Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

“(4) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means the Secretary of Homeland Security.

“(5) TAX YEAR.—The term ‘tax year’ means the fiscal year immediately preceding the current fiscal year.

“(6) UNITED STATES WORKER.—The term ‘United States worker’ means any worker who is—

“(A) a citizen or national of the United States;

“(B) an alien who has been lawfully admitted for permanent residence; or

“(C) a citizen of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, or the Republic of Palau (known collectively as the ‘Freely Associated States’) who has been lawfully admitted to the United States pursuant to—

“(i) section 141 of the Compact of Free Association between the Government of the United States and the Governments of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia (48 U.S.C. 1921 note); or

“(ii) section 141 of the Compact of Free Association between the United States and the Government of Palau (48 U.S.C. 1931 note).”.

(b) RULEMAKING.—

(1) SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY.—Notwithstanding the requirements under section 553(b) of title 5, United States Code, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall publish in the Federal Register, not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, an interim final rule that specifies how the Secretary intends to implement the amendments made by subsection (a) that relate to the responsibilities of the Secretary.

(2) SECRETARY OF LABOR.—Notwithstanding the requirements under section 553(b) of title 5, United States Code, the Secretary of Labor shall publish in the Federal Register, not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, an interim final rule that specifies how the Secretary intends to implement the amendments made by subsection (a) that relate to the responsibilities of the Secretary.

(3) RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR.—In developing the interim final rules under paragraphs (1) and (2), the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of Labor—

(A) shall each consider, in good faith, any written public recommendations regarding the implementation of this Act that are submitted by the Governor of the Commonwealth not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(B) may include provisions in such rule that are responsive to any recommendation of the Governor that is not inconsistent with this Act, including a recommendation to reserve a number of permits each year for occupational categories necessary to maintain public health or safety in the Commonwealth.

(c) DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—Not later than October 1, 2019, and biennially thereafter, the Secretary of the Interior shall submit a report to Congress that describes the fulfillment of the Department of the Interior’s responsibilities to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands—

(1) to identify opportunities for economic growth and diversification;

(2) to provide assistance in recruiting, training, and hiring United States workers; and

(3) to provide such other technical assistance and consultation as outlined in section 702(e) of the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 (48 U.S.C. 1807).

(d) OUTREACH AND TRAINING.—Not later than 120 days after the date on which the Secretary of Labor publishes an interim final rule in the Federal Register in accordance with subsection (b)(2), the Secretary shall conduct outreach and training in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for employers and workers on the foreign labor certification process set forth in section 6 of the Joint Resolution entitled “A Joint Resolution to approve the ‘Covenant To Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America’, and for other purposes”, as amended by subsection (b), including the minimum wage requirement set forth in subsection (d)(2)(C) of such section.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as specifically otherwise provided, this Act and the amendments made by this Act—

(A) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(B) shall apply to petitions for Commonwealth Only Transitional Workers filed on or after such date.

(2) AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY.—The Secretary of Homeland Security, in the Secretary’s discretion, may delay the effective date of any provision of this Act relating to Commonwealth Only Transitional Workers until the effective date of the interim final rule described in subsection (b), except for provisions providing annual numerical caps for such workers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) and the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 5956. The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands had a political union with the United States back in 1986. As part of that covenant, which has several different elements that make it unique among all of the territories as well as the other States, it authorized a local level of established programs to permit

foreign workers to enter into the Northern Marianas.

In 2008, I believe it was, Congress established this law to create a standard with the goal of actually trying to reduce the annual number of permits given to foreign workers—eventually, hopefully, to zero—to stabilize so that the workforce became more American.

Three years later, they finally came up with a way of implementing that—relatively quick for U.S. Government standards. But the citizenship program that was established, the CW permit program, unfortunately, it doesn’t quite work as we had thought it might do.

So, in 2017, GAO reported that, since 2013, demand for these permits had doubled, and in fiscal year 2016, the demand exceeded the numerical cap that we have on these particular permits.

The bottom line is simple. This idea of having the American workforce is wonderful, but if you have an area with a small population with a good economy, which means there is low unemployment, and for some reason there is not a whole lot of Americans who want to travel a 15-hour plane ride to get to their work destination, there is a need for a foreign workforce on these particular islands. And in some areas, it is unique.

It was estimated that 80 percent of all the hospitality and construction jobs need to be filled by a foreign workforce. In the hospitals there, if we don’t make a change in this, all of the nurses will no longer be eligible to stay on the island and do that needed service.

And, actually, if we don’t make some kind of adjustments in these caps, it could have a negative impact on the economy of the Northern Marianas, anywhere between 30 and 60 percent, sharply changing their gross domestic product.

The intent of this particular bill in this version is threefold: number one, we want to increase the percentage of U.S. workers in the total workforce in the Marianas while maintaining a certain number of non-U.S. workers to meet the demands of the Northern Marianas economy; number two, encourage the hiring of U.S. workers into the Northern Mariana workforce; and number three—and this is perhaps the important one—to ensure that no U.S. worker is at a competitive disadvantage compared to any non-U.S. worker or is going to be displaced by a non-U.S. worker.

But until that is accomplished, this bill will have some flexibility on those caps, and it will be permitted to extend beyond the 2019 date to 2029 so we can see how it does or does not work.

This bill gives necessary relief to the Northern Marianas. I want to thank the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLAN) for working with us on this bill. I am also grateful to the government of the Northern Mariana Islands. Governor Torres has been in constant communication with us. He is supportive of what we are attempting to do. Oddly enough, I want

to thank our colleagues in the Senate who are also supportive of this particular idea, even if they drafted somewhat of an inartful piece of legislation so we have to come at it one more time.

But there is agreement that this is the proper thing to do so this Commonwealth can actually maintain a steady workforce and maintain an economy that will continue to grow in the future. All the significant players on the island in the territory are in support of what we are attempting to do.

Mr. Speaker, I obviously urge adoption of this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, Chairman BISHOP has just provided an accurate statement of the economic rationale for the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act, H.R. 5956.

The Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act will allow the Marianas economy to continue growing so there is ample opportunity for new business investments and for jobs. I want to use my time simply to emphasize that this bill is about jobs—jobs for U.S. workers in my district.

The bill contains new requirements to ensure that no U.S. worker is ever passed over for a job and that wages and working conditions for U.S. workers are always maintained and protected.

It ensures the fees employers pay are put to effective use, providing better training and apprenticeship opportunities for U.S. workers. The bill encourages the continuing conversion of the Marianas economy to one in which, numerically, U.S. workers are predominant. That is why the legislation is titled the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act. That is a statement of our purpose and our goal.

I say “our purpose” because this legislation is the product of a bipartisan and bicameral working group. It included Chairman BISHOP and Ranking Member GRIJALVA, their committee leader counterparts in the other body, the Judiciary Committee representatives, and myself.

We began in late 2016 working first on the legislation that became Public Law 115-53. It was not easy finding common ground among such a diversity of views. But by listening to each other and because we share a common concern to better the lives of Americans—even Americans in the faraway Marianas—we succeeded in agreeing on this second bill, the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act, a very good bill with very good policy.

As a Delegate, Mr. Speaker, I cannot vote for this bill. I can, however, give my vote of thanks to Chairman BISHOP because even a good bill with good policy has to navigate the twists and turns of the legislative process. And without the chairman’s leadership, we might not be here on the floor today considering the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act.

I thank the gentleman and leadership on both sides of the aisle, whose attention and cooperation helped me bring this bill to the floor, and thank all of the working group members who helped the people of the Northern Marianas by working with me to draft this legislation.

Lastly, I thank my constituents. Over the last 10 years, they have shared their own experiences with me and given me their ideas on what Federal policy would best fit our islands. I listened to them and spoke for them, and we have incorporated their experiences and their ideas into the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act. I believe my constituents’ needs are well represented because this legislation has the full support of the Marianas Governor, the legislature, the business community, and the men and women who meet and talked with me in everyday life.

In closing, I ask my colleagues for their support of the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act.

Seeing no other speakers, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands for helping me with this particular bill. I am very grateful also to Governor Torres of the Commonwealth and to the business community there. I think we have found a practical solution to a real problem that could create harm for this Commonwealth.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of that area. I visited it once, and I hope to go back there again and notice the economic growth that continues there in the Northern Marianas.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5956.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NORTH COUNTRY NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL ROUTE ADJUSTMENT ACT

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1026) to revise the authorized route of the North Country National Scenic Trail in northeastern Minnesota and to extend the trail into Vermont to connect with the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1026

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “North Country National Scenic Trail Route Adjustment Act”.

SEC. 2. ROUTE ADJUSTMENT.

Section 5(a)(8) of the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1244(a)(8)) is amended in the first sentence—

(1) by striking “thirty-two hundred miles, extending from eastern New York State” and inserting “4,600 miles, extending from the Appalachian Trail in Vermont”; and

(2) by striking “Proposed North Country Trail” and all that follows through “June 1975.” and inserting “North Country National Scenic Trail, Authorized Route”, dated February 2014, and numbered 649/116870.”.

SEC. 3. LAND ACQUISITION.

Neither the Secretary of Agriculture nor the Secretary of the Interior may acquire for the North Country National Scenic Trail land in Minnesota or Vermont that was obtained through condemnation by a State or local government.

SEC. 4. ENERGY.

Nothing in the amendments made by this Act that change the authorized route of the North Country National Scenic Trail in Minnesota or Vermont shall prohibit the development, production, conveyance, or transmission of energy in those States, with reasonable efforts made to preserve the nature and purpose of the North Country National Scenic Trail, and to mitigate any damage to that trail and its associated resources caused by such activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) and the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The North Country National Scenic Trail is about 4,000 miles and links scenic, national, historic, and cultural areas across seven States. It goes from basically North Dakota through New York and will eventually end up in Vermont.

The issue at hand here is a section in Minnesota which is about 93 miles that has not been built because it is a swamp. You can’t build it there.

□ 1645

So what this would do—and it is strange we have to pass legislation to do it—is simply authorize to build a trail and go around the swamp which may add some additional miles to it, maybe around 400. It also authorizes at the other end about, maybe 66 miles of potential road from Vermont so that they can all connect to the Appalachian Trail which will create one of the most significant trails, the longest trail that we have to be able to use in this country.

I should say the National Park Service has studied this, they have approved it; and nonetheless, it is still a good idea. I urge its adoption, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. NOLAN).

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman BISHOP for his thoughtful