

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I rise to discuss concerns with S. 47, legislation we will soon be voting on in the House of Representatives.

Madam Speaker, S. 47 has some positive things in it. The legislation provides for expanded recreational opportunities, expanded opportunities to hunt and fish on our public lands, and a lot of things that I very much support.

Madam Speaker, the bill has some pretty profound flaws, one of which being process. This is a 700-page bill—a 700-page bill—that has been held at the desk. It has not gone through the regular committee process.

This isn't some small bill that folks have been exposed to. This is 700 pages of text, and it has not gone through the regular legislative process and, in fact, is being put up under suspension of the rules, where we are not even being provided the opportunity to offer amendments or to represent our constituents, other than just voting "yes" or "no."

Madam Speaker, I want to throw out some statistics on what this bill does and the implications. It provides 1.3 million acres of land being designated as wilderness areas—1.3 million acres; 694 acres of recreation and conservation areas; 370,000 acres of mineral withdrawals; national monument designations of 2,500 acres; 621 miles of wild and scenic rivers; 2,600 miles added to the national trail system; and 42,000 acres added to our national parks.

Now, Madam Speaker, I used to teach outdoor wilderness courses. I have spent hundreds, maybe even thousands of nights of my life in the outdoors, sleeping out in the wilderness areas, national parks, and national forests and others. I love these areas. I enjoy them.

I am not saying that these things shouldn't happen. I am saying that we need to have the ability to go through regular order, just like the Senate did this week when they had the ability to offer amendments to this bill. We are not being afforded that same opportunity.

Madam Speaker, my biggest problem or concern with this legislation is this: The bill permanently reauthorizes the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which, I will say it again: I support the acquisition of lands, the protection of lands, so we can enjoy the ecological productivity and enjoy time in the great outdoors. However, the bill does not address the fact that we have a \$17 billion backlog in national park maintenance—\$17 billion. So we are acquiring more land without a plan for addressing the existing backlog maintenance issues that actually prohibit or prevent people from enjoying some of these same lands that are being acquired.

We are talking about the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and \$9 billion in funds over the next 10 years being deposited into a Treasury receipt account to acquire more land. Guess where this money is coming from,

Madam Speaker. A hundred percent of these funds is coming from the State that I represent and the other five States that produce offshore energy. Every penny of it is coming from the State of Louisiana, which produces perhaps over 80 percent of all the offshore energy of this Nation in Federal waters. It is paying for this fund.

At the same time, we have lost 2,000 square miles—2,000 square miles—of our coast. Guess how much of this bill addresses the problem there? With 2,000 square miles of our coast disappearing, the ecological productivity being lost, the increased vulnerability to the people that I represent, zero, nothing. This bill diverts money for conservation and for protection in other States in other areas and does nothing for my home State of Louisiana, yet it is coming from our revenues that we are producing in our offshore.

This is a flawed process. This is a flawed bill. We need to go through regular order.

I really can't even believe that this is happening. Here we have dozens of hearings on climate change and other things, and the very State that is the canary in the coal mine, the State that is experiencing the worst ecological challenges or losses as a result of sea rise and other challenges, is being completely ignored.

Where are the climate change advocates right now? Where are you?

I strongly urge opposition to this bill. We need to go back through regular order, consider the largest conservation and the largest natural resources bill that we have had since I have been in the Congress, and send it through regular order again.

I urge opposition to this bill.

STATEHOOD FOR DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, tomorrow, our residents who are fortunate to live in our Nation's Capital will come to the Capitol as part of their Lobby Day to ask the Congress to pass the D.C. statehood bill.

Most Americans are unaware that the Americans who live in their Nation's Capital have the fewest rights of any Americans. That is at the same time that those 700,000 residents who live in the Nation's Capital pay the highest taxes per capita, higher than the taxes of the residents of any State.

As you might imagine, the residents of the District of Columbia are seeking to become the 51st State of the Union. I am pleased that already almost 90 percent of Democrats are on our D.C. statehood bill. I am grateful to Senator CARPER, who will soon introduce this same bill on the Senate side.

There are many reasons that no Americans should fail to have equal rights if they pay equal taxes. But

surely, service in every war the Nation has fought, even beyond being first per capita in Federal income taxes, should qualify the 700,000 residents of the District of Columbia for equal treatment as the 51st State.

On this poster, we see why any State would stand for its rights: World War I, more casualties of people who live in the District of Columbia than three States; the Korean war, more casualties than those of eight States; World War II, casualties are more than four States; and the Vietnam war, casualties that outnumber those in 10 States.

The residents of the District of Columbia will be here to say to my colleagues that 200-plus years—it is about 218 years now—without equal rights is 218 years too many.

Nobody who lives in our country and pays taxes should be unrepresented on this floor when votes are taken. I appreciate that I can now vote for the District of Columbia in the Committee of the Whole, where some votes are taken. But District resident have no representation on this floor and none in the Senate at all.

It is past time to right this wrong. We cannot do it for those who have died in war for our country. We can certainly do it in their memory.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 41 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR) at noon.

PRAYER

Pastor A.D. Shaw, Shekinah Glory Cathedral Church of God in Christ, Plant City, Florida, offered the following prayer:

God of infinity and sovereignty and redeemer of humanity, grace us with Your mercy, as this 116th United States Congress forges the future of America.

Cover the distressed and despondent, too often forgotten and manipulated, with unceasing care.

Shelter the children of this Nation from the destructive silence and sins of their predecessors. Grant unto them courage and fortitude to be affirming and inclusive of all.

Reclaim us to Your peace and unity, that we may truly be one Nation under God, the Nation known as the melting pot of the world.

Therefore, redeem the soul of this Nation, and bequeath unto us wisdom, mercy, and love, that we may all encounter heaven on Earth.

With the spirit of the “20 and odd Negroes” who arrived in this Nation 400 years ago, may we serve this present age.

In the name of our Lord, amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WALBERG led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING PASTOR A.D. SHAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SPANO) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. SPANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor A.D. Shaw, founder and pastor of Shekinah Glory Cathedral located in Plant City, Florida, and who most gracefully offered this morning's opening prayer. He is also my brother and my friend.

Pastor Shaw's dedication to family, friends, and community serves as an example to many. His over 15 years of hard work in the ministry without expecting anything in return embodies the definition of unity and the best of the human spirit.

As I listened to his prayer, I thought of the many distinguished men and women who have stood in this Chamber, at that podium, preaching the importance of unity in our great Nation.

One such man was Abraham Lincoln, who said: “A house divided against itself cannot stand.”

In our fast-moving society, it is easy to focus on those things that divide us over those things that bring us together. It is why, Mr. Speaker, I stand here today calling for greater unity among all who serve in this Chamber, among the American people and for the thousands of communities across our great land.

Only together can we withstand adversity, not just as individuals, but as a Nation. This does not mean that we will always agree. It does mean we should seek unity in those disagreements.

We do not need to see eye to eye to walk hand in hand.

If, as a Nation, we seek to remain strong into the 21st century, we must stand united through our differences.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

ACTION AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

(Mr. HIGGINS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of action in the fight against gun violence. Congress is finally acting.

Over the last decade, we have witnessed gun violence take the lives of innocent children in our schools, terrorize our neighborhoods, and harm our fellow colleagues in Congress.

Each event invoked a moment of silence. We can no longer remain silent.

This week we have the opportunity to vote on two pieces of legislation that close loopholes in the gun purchase background check process.

These aren't radical or partisan policies. Background checks are supported by 97 percent of Americans, including 97 percent of gun owners.

On behalf of the families who have lost someone to gun violence and those who we long to keep safe from future gun violence, I stand proudly in support of congressional action to protect our communities from gun violence and urge my colleagues to do the same.

REASSURING EUROPEAN ALLIES

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week I was grateful to join Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM on a delegation for the Munich Security Conference. A highlight was Vice President MIKE PENCE reaffirming America's commitment to the Transatlantic Alliance.

I then joined the delegation led by Congressmen GERRY CONNOLLY and RICK LARSEN for the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

House Speaker NANCY PELOSI reassured our allies of bipartisan support for NATO's continued success. Congressman MIKE TURNER ably presided as vice president of the assembly.

Another highlight in Brussels was to meet with U.S. Ambassador Ronald Gidwitz and his wife, Christina, whose enthusiasm for service is extraordinary.

The ambassador is promoting the restoration of the Mardasson Memorial, honoring American servicemembers in the Battle of the Bulge.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

ETHYLENE OXIDE

(Mr. SCHNEIDER asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, every parent deserves to have confidence that the air they and their children breathe is safe. That is why we have environmental standards and why we have an Environmental Protection Agency to monitor, update, and enforce the rules.

So, when communities face a known public risk, new or recently reclassified, we rightly expect the EPA to act—quickly, comprehensively, and transparently.

In the Chicago area, this, sadly, has not been the case. Ethylene oxide, or EtO, was reclassified as a known carcinogen more than 2 years ago, yet we just recently learned facilities around Chicago could be emitting it at elevated levels.

The EPA has been unacceptably slow to respond and has failed to keep affected communities informed.

This month, I partnered with Senators DURBIN and DUCKWORTH and other colleagues in my delegation to introduce legislation that would require the EPA to immediately revise and update its EtO standards and to keep the public fully informed.

We are also demanding that EPA evaluate ambient levels of EtO in these communities immediately, something it should be doing already.

Our communities deserve more from the EPA. This is about our families and their public health.

RECOGNIZING LENAWEE COUNTY SHERIFF JACK WELSH

(Mr. WALBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lenawee County Sheriff Jack Welsh as he retires after 43½ years of service to Lenawee County, Michigan.

Sheriff Welsh has served in many roles during his law enforcement career, beginning as a volunteer reserve deputy and eventually working his way up to captain.

After his initial retirement from the sheriff's department in 2007, he went on to become an emergency management regional planner.

Then, in 2008, he accepted the call to run for sheriff, where he has served ever since.

Law enforcement officers like Sheriff Welsh are the fabric of our community. Day in and day out, they answer the call to serve and protect.

Over the years, Sheriff Welsh has been one of the very best. He is a man of integrity, a dedicated public servant, and a trusted friend to many. He has been instrumental in making Lenawee County a better and safer place to call home.

I thank Sheriff Welsh for his decades of distinguished service, and I wish him nothing but the best as he begins his retirement.