

opportunity to take corrective action before the SEC is informed.

Many of these companies want to do the right thing, and if given the opportunity, they will—not all, many. I think we ought to give them an opportunity to do the right thing; and to do so, we would want whistleblowers to report internally before they take this to an external source such as the SEC.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is bipartisan. I am honored to tell you that, among the persons who are the cosponsors, we have the Honorable CAROLYN MALONEY; the Honorable Representative GERALD CONNOLY; the Honorable GREGORY MEEKS; the Honorable JOYCE BEATTY, who is here in this room with us currently; and the Honorable VICENTE GONZALEZ, all of whom support it, along with the Honorable EMANUEL CLEAVER.

I would also add, it is endorsed by the National Whistleblower Center, endorsed by the North American Securities Administrators Association, endorsed by Public Citizen, endorsed by the Government Accountability Project, endorsed by the Project On Government Oversight, and endorsed by the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association.

It is another example of how, under the leadership of the Honorable MAXINE WATERS, we continue to produce bipartisan legislation. I am honored, Mr. Speaker, to have this honorable chairwoman presiding today.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, again, I would thank Congressman GREEN and Congressman HUIZENGA for their leadership on this extending of whistleblower protections, and I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important measure that will increase corporate accountability and help those companies committed to ferreting out wrongdoing to take action without government involvement and protects those workers who help them to do so.

I commend the gentleman from Texas and the gentleman from Michigan for working in a bipartisan manner to bring this bill before the House.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2919, the Whistleblower Protection Reform Act of 2019.

Whistleblowers are an effective means of rooting out bad behavior that harms the market as well as investors.

In fact, Section 922 of Dodd-Frank amended the Securities and Exchange Act of 1934 to afford whistleblowers protection from retaliation by their employers for reporting suspected misconduct.

Additionally, Section 922 allows for the SEC to provide monetary awards to whistleblowers who provide “original information” resulting in monetary sanctions over \$1 million.

However, in February 2018, the Supreme Court held in *Digital Realty v. Somers* that whistleblowers who report alleged misconduct internally to their employer, as opposed to the SEC, are not protected by Dodd-Frank’s anti-retaliation provisions.

A whistleblower who reports directly to their employer about alleged misconduct shouldn’t risk being retaliated against. That’s why this bipartisan bill has been carefully crafted to clarify the application of the anti-retaliation provisions to whistleblowers provided within the Dodd-Frank Act.

By further clarifying the anti-retaliation provisions of section 922 apply to those whistleblowers who report internally will encourage employees to report potential misconduct instead of automatically escalating the issue to the SEC.

Internal reporting may be more efficient and practical in some cases as employers have a chance to correct, self-report, or take other action.

Moreover, by clarifying the application of Dodd-Frank anti-retaliation protections to internal whistleblowers, the bill aligns with similar protections for internal whistleblowers within the Whistleblower Protection Act and Sarbanes-Oxley.

I’d like to thank my colleague, Mr. GREEN for working with me on the Whistleblower Protection Reform Act and I urge my colleagues to vote yes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2515, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

HOUSING FINANCIAL LITERACY ACT OF 2019

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2162) to require the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to discount FHA single-family mortgage insurance premium payments for first-time homebuyers who complete a financial literacy housing counseling program, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2162

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 “Housing Financial Literacy Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. DISCOUNT ON MORTGAGE INSURANCE PREMIUM PAYMENTS FOR FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYERS WHO COMPLETE FINANCIAL LITERACY HOUSING COUNSELING PROGRAMS.

The second sentence of subparagraph (A) of section 203(c)(2) of the National Housing Act (12 U.S.C. 1709(c)(2)(A)) is amended—

(1) by inserting before the comma the following: “and such program is completed before the mortgagor has signed an application for a mortgage to be insured under this title or a sales agreement”; and

(2) by striking “not exceed 2.75 percent of the amount of the original insured principal obligation of the mortgage” and inserting “be 25 basis points lower than the premium payment amount established by the Secretary under the first sentence of this subparagraph”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) and the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material thereon.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H.R. 2162, the Housing Financial Literacy Act, a bipartisan bill authored by Representative BEATTY, the chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion, and cosponsored by Representative STIVERS. This bill will make homeownership more affordable for FHA borrowers who complete a housing counseling program from a HUD-approved housing counseling agency.

While HUD currently has the authority to provide premium discounts to incentivize housing counseling, HUD is not taking advantage of this opportunity to help borrowers and strengthen the FHA. Research has consistently demonstrated that loans made to borrowers who have received prepurchase counseling perform better than loans made to comparable borrowers who did not receive prepurchase counseling.

And when borrowers avoid delinquencies, lenders save money, too. A 2013 study by Freddie Mac found that, when 90-day delinquencies were lowered by 29 percent, lenders saved an average of \$1,000 per loan.

□ 1715

So this bill would not only benefit consumers; it would also help increase the financial health of FHA.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative BEATTY and Representative STIVERS for their work on this commonsense, data-driven bill, and I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on H.R. 2162.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY) for her leadership and her work on H.R. 2162, the Housing Financial Literacy Act of 2019.

The Federal Housing Administration currently provides government-backed mortgage insurance to more than \$1.3 trillion in loans. FHA insurance allows a wide array of borrowers to qualify for mortgages, including many low- and moderate-income families who might not otherwise have access to credit through traditional underwriting.

In fiscal year 2018, the FHA endorsed over 1 million forward mortgages, including over 775,000 purchase loans, nearly 83 percent of which were to first-time home buyers.

Given the large population of first-time home buyers using the FHA, it makes sense to encourage those individuals to seek out ways to strengthen their financial knowledge and better prepare themselves for the challenges of homeownership.

Right now, current law states that FHA has the ability to provide first-time homeowners with a discount on their FHA upfront premiums if they complete an approved homeownership financial counseling course—makes a lot of sense. However, the statute is drafted in such a way that the provision only applies in particular circumstances when FHA upfront premiums exceed 2.75 percent.

Since FHA upfront premiums are currently set at 1.75 percent, a rate that has not been exceeded in a decade, FHA does not currently provide an upfront premium discount to first-time homeowners who complete a financial counseling course.

This bill, H.R. 2162, would amend current law to require FHA to provide a 0.25 percent upfront premium discount from the prevailing rate in effect at the time for other borrowers to first-time home borrowers. This equates to a \$625 savings off the current premium structure on a \$250,000 mortgage.

The hope is, by making such a discount mandatory, more first-time homeowners will seek out financial literacy counseling and produce better outcomes for a traditionally at-risk group of homeowners.

The bottom line is that FHA is a valuable tool to help expand the universe of mortgage credit in our housing system, and we ought to be doing all that we can to make sure that we are using our limited public resources to encourage all borrowers to be well-prepared for the commitment of homeownership through financial counseling or any other effective means of creating more stable and reliable borrowers.

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

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY),

the chair of the Subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion and the sponsor of H.R. 2162.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank Chairwoman WATERS for all of her leadership and her support.

Mr. Speaker, for a majority of American families, buying a home will be the biggest financial purchase in their lifetime. That is why this bill we are considering today is so important.

My bill, the Housing Financial Literacy Act, H.R. 2162, would provide a 25-basis point discount on an FHA upfront mortgage insurance premium to first-time home buyers who complete a HUD-approved housing counseling program.

One of the main barriers to homeownership is saving up for the downpayment. This bill would reduce that barrier by roughly \$500.

The FHA has been utilized by everyday American families to achieve the American Dream of homeownership. Eighty-two percent of all FHA-insured mortgages are used by first-time home buyers, likely since consumers only need to put down 3.5 percent as a downpayment. The downpayment is the number one barrier to homeownership for many first-time home buyers.

This bipartisan bill would incentivize those prospective first-time home buyers to take ahold of their financial futures by taking a financial literacy class, while making it easier and a little cheaper for them to purchase that first home.

These classes are already available across the country, from Homeport and Homes on the Hill in Columbus, Ohio, to Kentucky's Housing Corporation, to the Kenosha Housing Authority in Wisconsin, and the list goes on. These classes are available to first-time home buyers to purchase a home in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Not only is this bill a good deal for first-time home buyers, but it is also a good deal for the American taxpayer. There have been several studies over the past few years that prove not only does prepurchase housing counseling lead to improved mortgage literacy, greater appreciation for communications with lenders, and improved underwriting qualifications, such as higher credit scores, but there are also studies that show, as we have heard, that first-time home buyers who have received housing counseling are nearly one-third, Mr. Speaker, less likely to face delinquencies or foreclosures.

When you consider the average cost to the taxpayer for default within FHA's portfolio is greater than \$65,000, this bill could actually save the taxpayers money. That is something that both my Republican and Democratic colleagues were interested in during the debate on this bill in committee, and both sides of the aisle will be happy to know that, according to the Congressional Budget Office's initial analysis, this bill would not have a cost to the U.S. taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close by thanking my colleague and friend from Ohio, Congressman STEVE STIVERS, for cosponsoring this important bill. STEVE and I have served as the co-chairs of the Financial and Economic Literacy Caucus for the past two Congresses. This is an issue that we care about deeply.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the organizations that came out in support of this bill. I think it is very important for people to know that the National Association of REALTORS, the National Housing Resource Center, the National Association of Real Estate Brokers, the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights, the League of United Latin American Citizens, Credit Unions National Association, National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions, Public Citizen, and National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals all support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I think you get my point. People want this bill. It is the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also thank Congressman BARR for his support.

I urge my colleagues to join us in support of this bill, H.R. 2162, to allow more Americans to reach for that dream of homeownership in a financially responsible way. Please support this bill.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STIVERS), my Republican colleague, who is the co-chairman of the Financial Literacy Caucus in Congress and someone who has worked in a bipartisan way very productively with Congresswoman BEATTY on this important initiative.

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating my good friend and colleague, Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY, for advancing the Housing Financial Literacy Act, H.R. 2162. It is an effort she has championed for years. As co-chair of the Financial Literacy Caucus, I am proud to cosponsor this legislation with her.

Mr. Speaker, for many folks across this country, owning a home is quintessential to the American Dream. While not everyone will always be able to afford a single-family home, we should work to encourage the American Dream of homeownership and make sure that we help people along the way. It is good for individuals, and it is good for communities. Not only does it help individuals build equity over time, but reducing the disparities in homeownership by race has the potential to reduce the racial wealth gap in this country.

However, we must work to ensure consumers are informed and encourage responsible homeownership, and the Housing Financial Literacy Act does just that. By providing a discount of 25 basis points on the upfront FHA insurance premiums for borrowers who complete HUD-approved prepurchase financial counseling, what we are doing is

making those homes more affordable; we are empowering those people with knowledge; and we are helping build the dream of homeownership.

This financial counseling is so important for first-time buyers. It helps them understand the costs associated with homeownership, like taxes, insurance, and maintenance costs. It also helps them factor in household budgeting and recognize high-risk financial products to make sure they can make informed decisions.

For people across this country, including in my district, having a place to raise their family is the American Dream, and I encourage my colleagues to support this bill to help make homeownership a reality for more people.

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to acknowledge my colleague, Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY, for her incredible leadership on H.R. 2162, the Housing Financial Literacy Act. I encourage all of my colleagues to support the bill.

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

Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to commend and applaud my friend, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY), for her leadership on this. What an outstanding list of endorsements of this legislation. It goes to show how much work she has put into this and that Congressman STIVERS and others have put into this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairwoman of the full committee, Congresswoman WATERS, for bringing this forward.

In conclusion, as we look at this legislation, it is really a win-win-win:

It is a win because first-time home buyers are now going to be able to have a more affordable downpayment.

It is a win, in addition, because those first-time homeowners, as the gentlewoman from Ohio and the gentleman from Ohio pointed out, will be more prepared for the responsibility of homeownership, which is what is typically the most significant investment anyone makes in their entire lifetime.

And, finally—and I think this is a point that we do need to underscore as well—when you are talking about federally insured, federally backed, taxpayer-insured, taxpayer-supported mortgages, it is good for the American taxpayer that we make sure that homeowners are prepared for that very important responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues—for homeowners, for taxpayers—to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman and gentleman from Ohio for pushing this bill forward. This bill incentivizes financial literacy that will help avoid delinquencies and may have an impact well beyond the housing area.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this important piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2162, 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.

EMPHASIZING IMPORTANCE OF GRASSROOTS INVESTOR PROTECTION AND INVESTOR EDUCATION MISSIONS OF STATE AND FEDERAL SECURITIES REGULATORS

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 456) emphasizing the importance of grassroots investor protection and the investor education missions of State and Federal securities regulators, calling on the Securities and Exchange Commission to collaborate with State securities regulators in the protection of investors, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 456

Whereas State securities regulators are the original pioneers of regulating the United States capital markets and have protected investors during times of boom and bust, from ticker tape to the block-chain;

Whereas State securities regulators founded the North American Securities Administrators Association (NASAA) as a voluntary association in 1919, 8 years after the first securities laws were enacted in Kansas in 1911;

Whereas NASAA's membership in 2019 includes securities administrators in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Canada, and Mexico;

Whereas the fundamental mission of the State securities regulators is protecting investors who transact in securities and receive investment advice, and their jurisdiction extends to a wide variety of issuers and intermediaries who offer and sell securities to the public;

Whereas State securities regulators are leaders in civil and administrative enforcement actions, as well as criminal prosecutions of securities violators;

Whereas State securities regulators have led efforts resulting in landmark settlements to stop unfair practices in the securities industry, the return of billions of dollars to harmed investors, and thousands of bad actors sitting in jail as the result of their work in investigating and uncovering fraud;

Whereas State securities regulators independently and within the framework of NASAA have also devised innovative ways for small companies to raise investment capital;

Whereas State securities regulators independently and within the framework of NASAA conduct investor education programs throughout the United States, providing important information to main street Americans on investing for a secure future and avoiding scams; and

Whereas State securities regulators are known for their accessibility and accountability to the investing public and have been

willing to push the envelope when it comes to protecting investors: Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) emphasizes the longstanding role of State securities regulators in maintaining investor protection and vibrant capital markets in the United States;

(2) supports the efforts of State securities regulators to educate investors throughout the United States;

(3) supports the efforts of State securities regulators to promote responsible and efficient capital formation for the benefit of small businesses and investors throughout the United States;

(4) urges State securities regulators to continue working independently and within the voluntary framework of NASAA to protect and educate investors and promote capital formation; and

(5) urges the Securities and Exchange Commission to maintain and expand voluntary collaboration with State securities regulators in the interest of the investing public.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) and the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

□ 1730

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material thereon.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Representative PRESSLEY and Representative HUIZENGA for bringing H. Res. 456 to the floor, a bipartisan resolution that highlights the importance of our State securities regulators to protecting investors. This year commemorates the 100th anniversary of the North American Securities Administrators Association, the oldest international investor protection organization with a membership consisting of 67 State, provincial, and territorial securities regulators in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Canada, and Mexico.

The primary mission of both State securities regulators and NASAA is to protect and advocate for the protection of investors, especially the most vulnerable investors, like our Nation's seniors, who may lack the expertise, experience, and resources to protect their own interests.

These grassroots regulators are often the first line of defense against investment fraud and often respond to emerging frauds and investment scams before they are detected at the Federal level.

In 2017 alone, State securities regulators conducted nearly 4,790 investigations, leading to more than 2,100 enforcement actions, including 255 criminal prosecutions. These actions have