

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to thank Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. GRAVES, Mr. GIBBS, and Mr. MALONEY for all of the work that they have done to ensure this bill moves forward. It is a bipartisan bill, and I urge adoption.

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Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is a very strong bipartisan bill. We need to support the efforts of our men and women out there who are doing the daily work to protect this country, the Coast Guard.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, just expanding a little bit on the former speaker, Representative GRAVES of Louisiana, I would recommend to people the video that became available last week of the Coast Guard boarding a semisubmersible smuggling drugs. It is an extraordinary video and extraordinary and precarious undertaking by the Coast Guard, jumping from a Zodiac onto the top of this vessel, pounding on the hatch to get the people to open the hatch and surrender.

Again, just reiterating what I said earlier, what they do with drug interdiction far exceeds all of the other Federal agencies combined, and yet they weren't paid during the shutdown doing these dangerous activities, and what they do for Homeland Security, what they do on a daily basis to provide search and rescue activities, keep our mariners safe and maritime safety inspections.

So again, I regret that the technicalities around here didn't allow us to move forward at this time, but I am determined that we will do that.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to raise another issue, and I would hope that the Coast Guard is listening.

I am very concerned. The largest acquisition program—I mentioned earlier about the acquisition budget for recapitalization—is the Offshore Patrol Cutter. Twice now, Representatives and Senators from Florida have attempted to end-run the contracting process. They have a shipyard that claims, that because of the hurricane, they didn't underbid the contract.

No, no, no. They didn't. They didn't. But they need hundreds of millions of dollars more to do the contract without going through a bidding process, without any scrutiny, and without any information being provided to this committee justifying those increases.

In fact, they are saying: Well, we can't get workers because of the hurricane; it is just impossible. Well, we are rebuilding Tyndall Air Force Base. Armed Services hasn't heard anything about that.

And then, also, they say: Well, it is going to take 1.3 million more man-hours.

Well, what does that have to do with not being able to get skilled labor? The allegations by some others in the industry are that they underbid the contract, and now they are trying to come up with a rationale.

It is further disturbing that a former Commandant of the Coast Guard runs this organization. And I am very concerned that the Coast Guard is now contemplating asking Homeland Security to invoke a law they have never used before, claiming national security to renegotiate between the current Commandant of the Coast Guard and the past Commandant of the Coast Guard running this shipyard the terms of this contract.

That is not right. It doesn't protect the taxpayers. It doesn't protect the contracting process. I am going to be pushing very, very hard on this issue.

That said, there are many meritorious things in this bill, and I will yield back the balance of my time after recommending a unanimous vote by the House of Representatives. Hopefully, the Senate won't take 1½ years to get the bill done this time, so actually it will be a 2-year authorization instead of a 2-year/1-year authorization.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the House Committees on the Judiciary, Homeland Security, and Budget, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3409, the "Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2019."

H.R. 3409 is bipartisan legislation that reauthorizes appropriations for the Coast Guard and Federal Maritime Commission through the 2021 Fiscal Year.

This legislation contains improvements to promote the U.S. maritime industry and offshore renewable energy development, authorization of funding for new heavy ice breakers, and provisions to increase diversity at the United States Coast Guard Academy.

Additionally, this legislation will enhance recruitment and retention of merchant vessels, along with advancing new opportunities to strengthen the competitiveness of the U.S. maritime and shipbuilding industries.

Earlier this year the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees the United States Coast Guard, was adversely affected by the Trump Administration's government shutdown.

The shutdown affected the pay of over 40,000 active duty Coast Guard members, 6,000 reservists, and 8,500 civilian employees.

It took 35 days for Congress and the White House to agree on a FY 2019 funding bill.

During this time the brave men and women of the Coast Guard endured the cold winter weather while conducting life-saving rescues, drug interdiction operations, environmental protection missions, and coastal security operations.

This bill will guarantee that the Coast Guard's active duty and civilian personnel are paid in the event of another federal government shutdown.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1649 "Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2019" in order to ensure that the Coast Guard has all of the resources re-

quired to carry out their missions and maintain safety along our coastal borders.

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my support for the Coast Guard Authorization Act and the inclusive and bipartisan agreement that the Members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee have reached.

The robust funding for the Coast Guard in this 2-year authorization is indicative of this body's strong support for the men and women serving in the Coast Guard and the important mission they undertake. I recently visited our Coasties in District 7 to see their professionalism and skills on full display—they make the impossible look routine on a daily basis.

From drug interdictions to search and rescue, the Coast Guard continues to prove its effectiveness while operating with limited resources. The passage of this bill sends the message that every dollar is a dollar well spent with respect to the U.S. Coast Guard.

This important legislation includes provisions that will further strengthen the Coast Guard by expanding the use of unmanned systems and fully integrating new and existing technologies developed both inside and outside of the service.

I am pleased that the bill contains a number of provisions aimed at increasing cultural competence in the Coast Guard and at the Coast Guard Academy. The service will only realize its full potential once it instills a culture that welcomes all people regardless of gender, race, or sexual orientation.

The bill also includes several provisions aimed to bolster the U.S. maritime industry. By clarifying certain requirements on domestic vessels, it sends a strong signal of support for the Jones Act and our coastwise maritime industry. By clarifying cargo preference requirements, we begin to address losses in the internationally trading U.S. fleet and rebuild the American mariner base.

The bill also contains important protections for the Hudson River in my district and will ensure this natural treasure is preserved for future generations to come.

I am proud to be one of the original sponsors of this important legislation and I look forward to ensuring that this important legislation is signed into law.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3409, 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.

DISCLOSING AID SPENT TO ENSURE RELIEF ACT

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1984) to amend chapter 11 of title 31, United States Code, to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to annually submit to Congress a report on all disaster-related assistance provided by the Federal Government.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1984

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 “Disclosing Aid Spent to Ensure Relief Act” or the “DISASTER Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) At a time of constrained budgets, it is fiscally prudent to understand the amount and the scope of the Federal Government’s involvement in providing disaster-related assistance to communities in need.

(2) The Federal Government does not provide a single, publicly available estimate of the amount it is spending on disaster-related assistance.

(3) Because recovery is a long-term process, providing disaster-related assistance requires significant Federal resources to support a multi-agency, multi-year restoration of infrastructure and commerce in affected communities.

(4) Understanding the expenditures of individual Federal agencies for disaster-related assistance will help better inform the congressional appropriations process, as well as presidential budget requests.

(5) Knowledge about disaster-related expenses will illustrate opportunities for reducing these expenses through efforts to reduce vulnerabilities to future natural disasters.

SEC. 3. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to annually submit to Congress a report on all disaster-related assistance provided by the Federal Government.

SEC. 4. REPORTING OF DISASTER-RELATED ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 11 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 1127. Reporting of disaster-related assistance

“(a) IN GENERAL.—On the same day that the President makes the annual budget submission to the Congress under section 1105(a) for a fiscal year, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall submit to Congress a report on Federal disaster-related assistance for the fiscal year ending in the calendar year immediately preceding the calendar year in which the annual budget submission is made. Disaster-related assistance encompasses Federal obligations related to disaster response, recovery, and mitigation efforts, as well as administrative costs associated with these activities, including spending by the following agencies and programs:

“(1) Department of Agriculture:
“(A) Agriculture Research Service.
“(B) Farm Service Agency.
“(C) Food and Nutrition Service.
“(D) Natural Resource Conservation Service.
“(E) Forest Service.
“(F) Rural Housing Service.
“(G) Rural Utilities Service.
“(2) Department of Commerce:
“(A) National Marine Fisheries Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
“(B) Economic Development Administration Economic Adjustment Assistance.
“(3) Army Corps of Engineers of the Department of Defense (Civil).
“(4) Department of Defense (Military):
“(A) Military Personnel.
“(B) Operations and Maintenance.
“(C) Procurement.

“(D) Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation.
“(E) Military Construction (MILCON) and Family Housing.
“(F) Management Funds.
“(G) Other Department of Defense Programs.

“(5) Department of Education:
“(A) Elementary and Secondary Education.
“(B) Higher Education.
“(6) Department of Health and Human Services:
“(A) Administration for Children and Families.
“(B) Public Health and Medical Assistance.
“(C) Public Health Emergency Fund.
“(7) Department of Homeland Security:
“(A) Federal Emergency Management Agency:

“(i) Emergency Declarations.
“(ii) Fire Management Assistance Grants.
“(iii) Major Disaster Declarations.
“(iv) Administrative Assistance.
“(B) FEMA Missions Assignments by Federal Agency.

“(C) Community Disaster Loan Program.
“(8) Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):
“(A) Community Development Block Grants.
“(B) Rental Assistance/Section 8 Vouchers.
“(C) Supportive Housing.
“(D) Public Housing Repair.
“(E) Inspector General.

“(9) Department of the Interior:
“(A) Bureau of Indian Affairs.
“(B) United States Fish and Wildlife Service.
“(C) National Park Service.
“(D) Wildland Fire Management.
“(10) Department of Justice:
“(A) Legal Activities.
“(B) United States Marshals Service.
“(C) Federal Bureau of Investigation.
“(D) Drug Enforcement Administration.
“(E) Bureau of Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.

“(F) Federal Prison System (Bureau of Prisons).
“(G) Office of Justice Programs.
“(11) Department of Labor:
“(A) National Emergency Grants for Dislocation Events.
“(B) Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Dislocated Worker Program.

“(12) Department of Transportation:
“(A) Federal Highway Administration Emergency Relief Program (ER).
“(B) Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
“(C) Federal Transit Administration (FTA).
“(13) Department of the Treasury: Internal Revenue Service.
“(14) Department of Veterans Affairs.
“(15) Corporation for National and Community Service.
“(16) Environmental Protection Agency:
“(A) Hurricane Emergency Response Authorities.
“(B) EPA Hurricane Response.
“(C) EPA Regular Appropriations.

“(17) The Federal Judiciary.
“(18) Disaster Assistance Program of the Small Business Administration.
“(19) Department of Energy:
“(A) Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response.
“(B) Office of Petroleum Services.
“(20) General Services Administration.
“(21) Other authorities as appropriate.

“(b) CONTENT.—The report shall detail the following:
“(1) Overall amount of disaster-related assistance obligations during the fiscal year.
“(2) Disaster-related assistance obligations by agency and account.

“(3) Disaster for which the spending was obligated.
“(4) Obligations by disaster.
“(5) Disaster-related assistance by disaster type.

“(6) Response and recovery spending.
“(7) Mitigation spending.
“(8) Spending in the form of loans.
“(9) Spending in the form of grants.
“(C) AVAILABILITY OF REPORT.—The report shall be made publicly available on the website of the Office of Management and Budget and should be searchable, sortable and downloadable.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of chapters for chapter 11 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“1127. Reporting of disaster-related assistance.”.

SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The reporting requirement under the amendment made by section 3(a) shall take effect with the budget submission of the President under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, for fiscal year 2022.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1984.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1984, the Disclosing Aid Spent to Ensure Relief, or DISASTER Act, introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS).

In 2018 alone, there were 14 natural disasters that each resulted in more than \$1 billion in losses. Already in 2019, the President has granted over 50 major disaster emergency or fire management declarations under the authorities of the Stafford Act.

While insurance partially covers the cost of disaster recovery, the Federal Government, along with State, local, Tribal, and territorial partners, is spending billions of dollars annually to respond to and recover from these events across more than three dozen departments and agencies. That results in the fact that there is no clear and consolidated information regarding Federal spending on disasters.

The DISASTER Act would change that by requiring the Office of Management and Budget to annually compile and publicly release a report on disaster-related spending across the Federal Government.

I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS) for introducing this bill so that we can obtain, in the future, this vital consolidated information and have it also be available to taxpayers of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this commonsense measure. It will do more to shed light on how limited taxpayer resources are being spent. Doing so will help better inform how we prioritize policies and spending to drive down disaster-related expenditures in the future and more effectively provide relief.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this bill. I urge my colleagues to join me in support, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1984, the DISASTER Act, is a bipartisan piece of legislation that requires the Federal agencies across the government to report on how much they simply spend on disasters.

I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS) for their work on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, you would think that we would know how much the Federal Government spends, actually spends, on disasters. We have estimates, but we simply don't know what the actual costs are across the Federal Government.

This bill is going to help us get some real numbers. It is going to help us increase transparency for the taxpayer. It is going to help Congress make some much better-informed decisions.

Mr. Speaker, I do support this legislation. I would encourage my colleagues to do the same, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS), the author of this excellent legislation.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, as we in California and the West prepare for more scorching wildfires, the Southeast is in the heart of hurricane season, and the Midwest is still drying out from historic flooding. Across the country, natural disasters have taken the lives of loved ones, destroyed livelihoods, and caused irreparable damage to communities and businesses.

Disasters are becoming larger, more dangerous and frequent, and significantly more expensive. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, there have been more than 2,400 federally declared disasters since 2000, totaling hundreds of billions of dollars in relief aid.

However, when the Federal Government helps communities recover from these disasters, it does not calculate one comprehensive number of how much we spend on disasters per year. Those funds could come from 29 different accounts across 11 different agencies, which exacerbates delays in disaster recovery and hinders future planning and future accountability.

That is why I introduced the bipartisan Disclosing Aid Spent to Ensure Relief, or DISASTER Act with Representative MARK MEADOWS of North Carolina.

This transparency bill is common sense. It requires the Office of Management and Budget, OMB, to publish an annual total of disaster-related assistance categorized by disaster type, location, and purpose.

With this and other smart reforms Congress is considering today, taxpayers will know where their dollars are going, and the Federal Government can be a better steward of those resources and will be better able to plan for the next disasters.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass this legislation today before the next big natural disaster hits.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN).

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I want to thank Representative PETERS and Ranking Member MEADOWS of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management for working on this critical legislation.

As coming from one of those places that actually was impacted by a hurricane, I think this is one of the best ways to be accountable for the money that has been approved.

I am a cosponsor of H.R. 1984, the DISASTER Act, which requires the Office of Management and Budget to submit an annual report to Congress on all disaster-related assistance provided by the Federal Government. The report must include all Federal obligations related to disaster response recovery, mitigation efforts, and administrative costs associated with these activities for specified agencies and programs.

A lot has been said about how much money has been allocated to many jurisdictions across the different Federal agencies, so having this tool will help us understand how much in funds have been approved and where that money is going.

To date, Puerto Rico has been appropriated \$42 billion in disaster funding; \$20.6 billion has been obligated; and only \$13.6 billion has been outlaid or reached the island's needs.

Having this information in a single report will help Congress and the public better understand the real cost of natural disasters and the benefits of investing in mitigation and adaptation efforts as well.

This legislation will also provide transparency and accountability when it comes to disaster relief costs. That is the reason I am a proud cosponsor.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative PETERS and Ranking Member MEADOWS.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers at this time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, again, you would think that we would have a better idea of what we actually spend on disasters. We obviously don't. This legislation is going to provide the transparency.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is a good piece of legislation. I urge my colleagues to support it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1984, the Disclosing Aid Spent to Ensure Relief Act, or "DISASTER Act", which directs the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to submit to Congress a report on all disaster-related assistance provided by the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is not only a reasonable exercise of Congress' power of oversight but it is also fiscally prudent.

To understand the scope of disaster-related spending and expenditures by the Federal Government, Congress must have a comprehensive understanding of the various multi-agency and multiyear efforts in helping disaster-stricken areas recover.

Additionally, having estimates of these expenditures for individual Federal agencies will also help inform the congressional appropriations process as well as presidential budget requests.

Mr. Speaker, knowledge about disaster-related expenses will also yield opportunities for reducing these expenses through mitigative and preventative efforts.

Because transparency and open government are important, it is essential that Congress has a single, publicly available estimate of spending on disaster-related assistance.

The American people deserve to know how their tax dollars are being spent and how these dollars are being used to help them when disaster strikes.

This report would also be crucial in helping educate the public about the numerous agencies involved in disaster relief efforts.

While many would immediately recognize agencies such as FEMA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, less conspicuous agencies such as NOAA, EPA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, play a crucial role in disaster relief.

In short, H.R. 1984 will better inform both Congress and the public about what the Federal Government is doing to help those affected by disaster.

I strongly urge all members to support this necessary and vital legislation.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1984.

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.

RESTORE THE HARMONY WAY
BRIDGE ACT

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3245) to transfer a bridge over the Wabash River to the New Harmony River Bridge Authority and the New Harmony and Wabash River Bridge Authority, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3245

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 “Restore the Harmony Way Bridge Act”.

SEC. 2. TRANSFER OF BRIDGE AND LAND.

Notwithstanding any provision of the Act of April 12, 1941 (55 Stat. 140, chapter 71), not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the White County Bridge Commission shall convey, without consideration, to the New Harmony River Bridge Authority and the New Harmony and Wabash River Bridge Authority, any and all right, title, and interest of such Commission in and to the bridge across the Wabash River at or near New Harmony, Indiana, in the approaches thereto, and in land underneath or adjacent to such bridge and its approaches.

SEC. 3. REPEAL.

The Act of April 12, 1941 (55 Stat. 140, chapter 71) is repealed effective on the date that the White County Bridge Commission completes the conveyance described in section 2.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3245.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3245, introduced by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON).

The legislation is very similar to a bill, H.R. 6793, which passed the House by unanimous consent during the 115th Congress but failed to achieve the consideration of the United States Senate.

H.R. 3245 conveys the Harmony Way Bridge to the New Harmony River Bridge Authority in Illinois and the New Harmony and Wabash River Bridge Authority in Indiana.

The bridge currently remains owned by the Federal Government under the White County Bridge Commission, but the commission is no longer active.

The bridge, which was constructed in 1930, connects White County, Illinois, with Posey County, Indiana, across the Wabash River. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2007 but has been closed since 2012 when

an engineer’s inspection discovered structural integrity issues, which made the bridge unsafe for vehicular traffic.

This legislation allows the States of Indiana and Illinois to jointly work together to restore the Harmony Way Bridge and determine the future of this historic landmark.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in passing this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman DEFAZIO for helping make this bill a bipartisan success, and I rise in support of H.R. 3245.

I really want to thank my colleague, the ranking member of the committee, Mr. GRAVES, and also our other colleague, my former boss, Congressman JOHN SHIMKUS, who allowed me to work on this project as one of his staff members back in the early 2000s.

To be able to stand on the House floor and see this solution be put forth by my other colleague from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON), with the support of Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. GRAVES, and the Illinois and Indiana delegations in a very bipartisan way, it is a privilege for me to be able to manage this bill today.

Who would have thought that two kids from Christian County, Illinois, would one day stand here on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives and have a bipartisan bill that is going to help both the constituents of Indiana and Illinois, but that is exactly where we are today with my good friend Mr. BUCSHON, who grew up about 8 miles from where I grew up.

This bill is a long time coming. It is going to convey the Harmony Way Bridge from the Federal Government to the designated entities within the States of Illinois and Indiana. This is what the States of Illinois and Indiana have asked us for.

The bridge is currently managed by the White County Bridge Commission, which was created by Federal legislation in 1941. In 2012, this bridge was closed because of the inability of that commission to support its safety measures and to support the improvements that were necessary.

By conveying this bridge and repealing the 1941 legislation, the two States are going to work together for a new vision, which serves as a very important link between Illinois and Indiana as it crosses the Wabash River.

A companion bill has already been introduced by the four Senators from Illinois and Indiana. Last week, that bill, S. 1833, was approved by unanimous consent. Additionally, the House passed a similar bill last Congress by unanimous consent.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3245, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to

the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES), my good friend and the ranking member.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3245, and I thank Representative BUCSHON for his hard work on this important issue.

H.R. 3245 is going to enable entities within the States of Illinois and Indiana to chart a whole new course for the Harmony Way Bridge, which is closed currently.

The bridge is not only a critical link between these States, but it is also representative of that strong bond between the people of Illinois and Indiana. That connection is further demonstrated by the fact that all members of the Indiana and Illinois delegations cosponsored this bill.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3245.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, again, this bill is a bipartisan success story and a bistate success story.

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE).

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3245, legislation sponsored by my colleague, friend, and fellow Hoosier, Dr. LARRY BUCSHON.

The Harmony Way Bridge connects Indiana to Illinois over the Wabash River. The bridge is currently managed by the White County Bridge Commission, which was created by Federal legislation in 1941.

The bridge closed in 2012 due to structural deficiencies, and current Federal law blocks local officials from taking action to repair the bridge.

I am proud to join my colleagues in both the Indiana and Illinois delegations as a cosponsor on this critical legislation.

H.R. 3245 would allow the two States to determine the future of the bridge.

Madam Speaker, supporting this bill is common sense.

A companion bill, S. 1833, was introduced by the four Senators from Indiana and Illinois and passed by unanimous consent.

Last year, the House passed a similar bill overwhelmingly. In addition, both Indiana and Illinois created State commissions to manage the bridge, and now it is our responsibility to complete the transfer.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3245 and allow the States of Illinois and Indiana, and the community residents surrounding the Harmony Way Bridge, to determine the future of this treasured landmark.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, again, I am proud to stand here next to my good friend Dr. BUCSHON, who was born in my hometown of Taylorville, Illinois, raised in Kincaid, Illinois, and went on to become a heart surgeon.

I don’t know if I would trust him operating on me, but, hey, I know a lot of patients in Indiana did.