

Madam Speaker, Mrs. Johnson worked as the “mother of the environmental justice movement” to address racial injustices and improve environmental protections fundamental to this action.

Therefore, I take pride in introducing legislation to celebrate the month of April as Hazel M. Johnson Environmental Justice Month.

□ 1445

HONORING JAMES RING

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

Mr. SPANO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor U.S. Army veteran James Ring.

After graduating high school, James enlisted in the Army and served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He later joined the Reserve Forces and, at the same time, began a 13-year career as a City of Lakeland police officer.

Now, in addition to serving as CEO for his own small business, James is active with the Lakeland Chamber, promoting issues important to the small business community.

Very soon, James will be returning to Active Duty and deploying again. Now, that is commitment.

People like James make me proud not only to be an American, but proud of my district. The spirit and the drive that propel him to serve our community as a small business owner and our Nation as a uniformed servicemember are unique and invaluable.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you, James. And thank you Ring family for your service and your sacrifice. I know I speak on behalf of the entire district when I say that we are so very proud of you.

WE ARE GETTING THE WORK OF THE PEOPLE DONE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, I am here in the House of Representatives. I have had the honor to have been elected to this incredible body for, now, four terms. But I just want to report to you, Madam Speaker, that we have, in fact, passed 275 bipartisan bills in the last 12 months in these Chambers.

Madam Speaker, I thank my Republican colleagues, my Democratic colleagues, and, yes, the one Independent colleague who is part of every single one of those votes.

I just want to say, that is the business of the House of Representatives. I just want to remind you, Madam Speaker, that we are serious here, from all parties, to make sure that we adhere to the needs of the entire Amer-

ican people and, in some cases, to the world.

We have addressed issues such as reducing drug pricing to all Americans. We have addressed issues when it comes to making sure that children have a safe place to go to school.

We have many issues that we are faced with here in the House of Representatives, and I am proud to say that, although the media says that we just can't get along, and, yes, we disagree at times, but, at the same time, we are, in fact, getting the work of the people done in the House of Representatives.

I pray that we see the same go on in the Senate and, in addition to that, see many of those bills get signed by the President of the United States.

RECOGNIZING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF CANNON LODGE 104

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

Mr. VAN DREW. Madam Speaker, I recognize Cannon Lodge 104, which, on February 26, will be celebrating 150 years as a chartered Masonic lodge.

Cannon Lodge had its first outreach on October 27, 1869, from Henry Cannon, whom the lodge is named after. On February 26, 1870, a Masonic charter was granted, and Cannon Lodge 104 came into existence.

In January 1960, through the generosity of Brother Elmer Smith, the present location of the lodge was donated and dedicated to his father, Captain Charles S. Smith.

In 1995, Sea Isle City Lodge No. 280 was merged with Cannon; and, in 1999, Arbutus Lodge No. 170 of Cape May Court House did the very same thing.

I am a proud member of Cannon Lodge 104, and we live by the motto: “Making Good Men Better.” These men around me there have made me a better man. We are dedicated to the betterment of ourselves, our community, and giving to charity.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to the continued work we will do in the community, and I thank them all for the work my fellow brothers do. They are truly heroes in south Jersey.

REPUBLICAN STUDY COMMITTEE'S GEAR TASK FORCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MCBATH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to hold this Special Order on the Republican Study Committee's GEAR Task Force.

I thank MIKE JOHNSON, chairman of the Republican Study Committee, for his leadership to make this task force possible.

We started GEAR, which stands for Government Efficiency, Accountability, and Reform, to develop a play-book of commonsense, nonpartisan solutions for improving our government. We came up with more than 100 improvements. They are all recorded in our report, which is now available, and I am excited to yield to my colleagues to talk about them here today.

We will start with my good friend from North Dakota, Representative KELLY ARMSTRONG, who was a member of the task force and really led our efforts to find these areas where we could reform.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. ARMSTRONG).

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman JOHNSON and Congressman GIANFORTE for their efforts to make our Federal Government more efficient and accountable with these commonsense reforms.

The Republican Study Committee's GEAR Task Force report is a solutions-based plan to reduce the government's size and inefficiency.

Anyone who has dealt with the Federal Government knows the frustration that the bureaucratic process can bring. Unnecessary government delays to infrastructure projects have a particularly damaging effect on economic growth and job creation.

Madam Speaker, I thank the Republican Study Committee for including my bill, H.R. 3671, the Federal Permitting Reform and Jobs Act, in the report. This bipartisan bill will streamline and modernize the Federal infrastructure permitting process.

The Federal Permitting Reform and Jobs Act will build on the reforms that were included in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act of 2015, otherwise known as FAST-41.

My bill would make permanent the FAST-41 provisions and enact additional reforms, such as a 2-year deadline for the permitting process.

FAST-41 ensures coordination among several Federal agencies to streamline the permitting process for the largest infrastructure projects.

The Federal Permitting Reform and Jobs Act would expand these types of projects that would qualify for this streamlined process: simply put, more projects completed in a shorter period of time at a reduced cost.

This is a win for jobs; this is a win for infrastructure improvements; this is a win for reforming the Federal bureaucracy and providing Americans with a more efficient and effective government.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. ARMSTRONG for his work. Permitting is an area where we can really make advances to make the process more deterministic so we can get projects on the ground going. I thank the gentleman for his leadership there.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan's Seventh District, Representative TIM WALBERG,

and I want to recognize him for his work on the Taxpayers Right-to-Know effort. I thank the gentleman for his leadership.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG).

Mr. WALBERG. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank Chairman JOHNSON, Task Force Chairman GIANFORTE, and my colleagues at RSC for their leadership on this task force and putting together a document that has answers if we are willing to accept them and move them forward. Moving them forward will make an impact for the better of this country and its taxpayers.

Making government more efficient and accountable to the people is something we all should be able to rally behind. It shouldn't be a partisan issue. After all, we are a government of, by, and for the people.

We are here today to talk about a series of commonsense solutions that will return power to the folks back home. I am proud that one of them is my bill, H.R. 3830, the Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act, which unanimously passed the House last week and now is over in the Senate. It is a pretty simple bill.

American taxpayers deserve to know where, when, why, and how the government is spending their hard-earned dollars, and they deserve to have those dollars spent in an efficient, smart manner.

My bipartisan legislation requires Federal agencies to supply online accounting of their program activities in an easily searchable inventory so that Americans can keep tabs on where and how their tax dollars are being spent. All of the information provided for the inventory will be updated regularly to provide for a more realtime accounting of Federal programs and dollars.

The Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act will help cut down on waste, fraud, and abuse in the Federal Government by allowing policymakers to better identify areas where any programs duplicate and put a stop to it.

Congress needs to do more to lighten the load for the next generation. We need to streamline efficiencies, increase effectiveness, institute more transparency, and provide better accounting across the Federal Government.

Madam Speaker, I applaud the GEAR Task Force for highlighting these proposals and working to make our government better serve the people we represent.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership on this.

Taxpayers do have a right to know, and hopefully as that bill moves to the President's desk, it will actually happen.

At this time, I welcome the gentleman from Texas' 27th Congressional District, Representative MICHAEL CLOUD, here today. He was a member of

the GEAR Task Force and really brought a number of ideas to the table, and he is here today to reflect on a number of those.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CLOUD).

Mr. CLOUD. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him for his work and leadership on this task force. It has been a worthwhile project, to say the least.

Madam Speaker, with over \$23 trillion in national debt and annual deficits at \$1 trillion, it is obvious that Washington has a spending problem. We must do something to rein in this problem that we are leaving for our children, and we must do it soon.

Every day, taxpayer dollars are wasted on unnecessary expenses. For example, as part of the "use it or lose it" last-minute spending spree of 2018, Federal agencies spent over \$4 million on lobster tails and crabs, \$673,000 on golf carts, \$308,000 on alcohol, and \$53,000 on china tableware.

Another example is that, despite the efforts to address the issue, the Federal Government makes over \$800 million in payments to people who are no longer on this Earth.

And, finally, right now, there are duplicative programs, including 91 Federal programs that train healthcare workers and more than 40 workforce development programs. Some of these may be good, but consolidating them might be a great idea.

We owe it to the American people to do better with their hard-earned tax dollars, and we owe it to future generations not to borrow against their future.

On the Government Efficiency, Accountability, and Reform Task Force, our aim is to make Washington take real steps toward returning the government to its proper constitutional boundaries.

The recommendations compiled today are not flashy. They won't lead in the nightly news; they won't dominate your social media feeds; but they are important, and it is incumbent upon us to look past the 15-second sound bites and get serious about the business of governing.

Here are just a handful of solutions: We could sell unused Federal office space;

We can consolidate duplicative programs and agencies;

We can identify programs that are not working and eliminate them.

The President's budget has an entire chapter on highlighting our government's wasteful spending and some of the efforts his administration is making to eliminate it.

All of America understands that we need to balance our budget, but no administration, Republican or Democrat, can do it without that commitment from Congress.

We are elected and given very specific authority under the Constitution to control how taxpayer dollars are spent. We must roll up our sleeves and

do everything we can to rein in this Washington spending machine.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership here in highlighting some of these wasteful programs. Clearly, we can do better, and I thank him for bringing them forward.

At this time, I will yield to the gentlewoman from Arizona's Eighth Congressional District, Representative DEBBIE LESKO. She has brought to us some of the reforms related to improving our immigration system, and I look forward to her sharing that with us.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. LESKO).

Mrs. LESKO. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman, my friend, Mr. GIANFORTE, for giving me the opportunity to speak about this bill.

I am from Arizona, so border security has been for years and still is the number one issue that people in Arizona care about. They welcome legal immigrants, but they also want to make sure that Arizona and our Nation are secure and that illegal drug trafficking is mitigated.

We used to see mostly single male adults crossing our border, and they would evade the Border Patrol officers; but, recently, however, thousands and thousands of illegal migrants are coming from Central America, and they are being coached by the cartels, who charge them \$5,000 to \$8,000 a person. They are saying: Let's go up there and turn yourselves in to the Border Patrol officers, because there is a loophole, and just claim asylum.

And they know that, once they are in, they are in the United States and they can stay.

□ 1500

Instead of running away from Border Patrol, they turn themselves in, claiming asylum, so our immigration courts are overloaded and legitimate asylum claims languish amidst frivolous claims.

This backlog is severe. It is a non-partisan challenge facing our immigration courts. A recent report stated that backlog cases in immigration courts exceeded 1 million claims.

This backlog has rapidly increased over the last decade, and as the backlog increases, so do wait times. Sometimes, it takes years for these cases to proceed through the courts.

We currently have approximately 400 immigration judges. That is about 2,500 cases per judge. This backlog strains housing facilities and prevents judges from granting asylum to legitimate asylum seekers and from swiftly removing those who have frivolous claims and are abusing the loopholes in our laws.

This is a big national security and humanitarian crisis. We need efficiency in the Federal Government, especially when it comes to immigration.

That is why I introduced H.R. 3859 to help reduce the immigration court backlog and help legitimate asylum seekers.

This bill provides an additional 100 immigration judges to reduce the asylum backlog. Adding more judges will allow these cases to be adjudicated faster and help reduce the backlog.

I thank the task force chairman, GREG GIANFORTE, and the Republican Study Committee chairman, MIKE JOHNSON, for their hard work to increase efficiency and accountability in our government, especially when it comes to immigration.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman, especially for bringing attention to this issue of immigration. It is top of mind for so many Americans, and having the judges necessary to pursue these cases to final outcome is so important.

I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN), from the 12th Congressional District, a task force member who helped bring forward many of the ideas that are in this collection of commonsense government efficiency ideas just published recently.

Mr. ALLEN. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Montana, the chairman of this committee. It was a real privilege to serve on this committee.

Over the years, the size of the Federal Government has ballooned. While it excels in some ways, like keeping our Nation safe, oftentimes, it does not serve the American people well, and that keeps my constituent services office very busy back in the district.

As a small business owner, I know how important it is to run effective and efficient operations. If you don't serve your customers well, you won't stay in business. But because the Federal Government is largely unaccountable, the only people who suffer from government inefficiency are the people it is intended to serve: the American people.

For far too long, we have let the executive branch seize authority and empower unelected bureaucrats. I am proud to serve on the Republican Study Committee's Government Efficiency, Accountability, and Reform Task Force, whose goal is to develop reforms to improve the Federal Government in order to better serve American families.

Prior to my service here in Congress, I served as the Georgia co-chair for the Fix the Debt committee, which was a nationwide bipartisan effort to identify ways that we could balance our budget.

Our new report here in the GEAR Task Force highlights strategies to streamline government practices and remove waste, much like the Fix the Debt committee identified.

For example, we all know that Washington has a spending problem. If something isn't working, many of my colleagues would prefer just to throw more money at the problem. But when has that worked? We need serious government reform.

In my business, we emphasize the importance of streamlining processes so we can maximize every dollar. We have a 5-year lookback procedure where we

look at every dollar we spend to make sure that we are using every dollar in an efficient manner so that those who invest—in this case, the American taxpayers—get the most bang for their buck.

Also, in our business, we have a balance sheet, an income statement, where we can actually run ratios that we can compare and see how we are doing against our peers.

I mentioned that to someone on the Budget Committee and they said: I don't think we have seen that in the Federal Government.

I come from the business community, and I came to Washington because we have to get down to business. I have identified, again, working on this task force, on the Budget Committee, and on the RSC, so many areas where, frankly, we can be much more efficient at spending every dollar.

Every taxpayer should be treated like a shareholder. They should know exactly where and how their money is being spent.

That is why I have a big problem with the appropriations process here in Congress. Yes, we kind of go through the motions here on the House floor, but we bog down, and it becomes a four-corner deal where leadership on both sides decides: Okay, these are the caps, and this is how we are going to spend the money.

The appropriators appropriate to that number, and then we are given a 1,200-page spending bill 24 hours before we have to vote on it. That is ridiculous.

I have emphasized to my leadership that I will not vote on a bill like that again, that we should stand right here through the appropriations process and show the American people every place we are spending a dollar.

The GEAR report lays the groundwork for this type of reform. Our report highlights specific ways we can make government more efficient and accountable to the people, including improving metrics to better inform decisionmaking, utilizing excess Federal office space, leveraging duplicative government contracts, consolidating data centers, reducing security clearance processing delays, and much more.

These solutions are common sense, and they should garner bipartisan support. I encourage my colleagues who have not yet read the report to do so. We have highlighted over 100 ways we can improve government and better serve the American people.

We must change the status quo. That is why I came to Washington.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia. I particularly appreciate his business experience here in the House and his participation on this task force.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. TIMMONS), from the Fourth Congressional District. He has also been a task force member, and his fingerprints are on this report.

Mr. TIMMONS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Montana for yielding.

A decade ago, Congress passed a law directing the executive branch to inform them within 2 years of how many Federal programs existed within the Federal Government. We are still waiting for that answer today.

Since 2010, I think we can all agree that the size of the Federal Government has grown exponentially and has overreached in places it should not. This unchecked scope of power and inefficient bureaucracy affects every aspect of our lives and is a threat to our well-being and to the foundation of our Republic.

The Government Efficiency, Accountability, and Reform Task Force, or GEAR, of the Republican Study Committee has worked over the last year on ways to rein in wasteful and unnecessary government overreach and spending, make the Federal Government more transparent and accountable, and get back to the basics of the legislative branch, to be a government that works for the American people.

Today, I would like to speak to the reform aspect of the task force. In order to promote and advance efficiency within the Federal Government, government practices must be reformed.

All Americans want a government that is efficient and that delivers results. One of the ways that we can reform the Federal Government is to address our cybersecurity shortcomings.

Every day, hackers, criminals, terrorists, and foreign countries seek to exploit our cybersecurity systems. Earlier this year, a group of Iranian-affiliated hackers infiltrated a U.S. Government website, wrote pro-Iranian messages, and wrote a message about Iranian cyber capabilities.

The threat landscape is constantly changing, and the cybersecurity needs are evolving along with it. The government must continue to reform and update its cyber practices to best defend against adversaries.

The GAO has made over 3,000 recommendations since 2010 regarding the U.S. Government's cybersecurity policies. As of GAO's last full survey of these concerns in 2017, only 448 recommendations have been implemented. This is unacceptable, and it puts our Nation at unnecessary risk.

I am pleased that the Trump administration has made cybersecurity a priority, recognizing that protecting cyberspace is key to our national security and economic ability. Congress should utilize its oversight authority to support cybersecurity initiatives, including requiring that the outstanding GAO recommendations be implemented.

While I touched briefly on one of the many important ways the Federal Government can work toward reform, there are many crucial steps that Congress can take to ensure it is continuing to work for the people and not the other way around.

The work of the GEAR Task Force is important, and I hope that every Member will take some time to read through the report. We all made a promise to our constituents to come to Washington to work for them and prioritize their needs.

This report is not meant to be Republican or Democratic. This report is something that all Members of Congress, regardless of party, should be able to get behind. It is a blueprint for good government, the kind of governing that was intended by our Founding Fathers.

Let's work together to make Congress and the Federal Government, as a whole, work for the people. We can start by enacting necessary reforms to make the government more efficient and accountable.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Carolina for his leadership on the GEAR Task Force.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA), from the First Congressional District, for his thoughts on government efficiency and reform.

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) for his leadership on this.

It is really a commonsense issue, isn't it? Government efficiency, accountability, and reform is something that all Americans can get behind because, let's remember for just a moment, who pays for all of this? Who pays to keep the lights on here, all of these buildings in Washington, D.C., all of the people working in them, all of them out in the districts, all of them out there in the forests, what have you? It is the American taxpayer.

What is the American taxpayer faced with? Trying to take care of their own business, their home, their family, their mortgage, car payments, saving for college, whatever their priorities are, maybe going on a vacation once in a while, saving up so they can have a week or two off.

What is it that we are doing with their money in Washington, D.C., or my home State of California in Sacramento? How are we respecting what they earn? How are we respecting that by the priorities we are putting on spending what they earn?

And it isn't a contribution, like sometimes it is talked about. I love to hear the talk around here: the contributions you make, and the investments we are going to make. No, tax dollars are not voluntary. They are taken from you per a formula.

So, how are we treating them? That is an important charge to me.

This is a big place, and there are a lot of Members, and there is a lot of government, after 230-plus years of layers. So getting back to just a little more efficiency, I think, tells those hardworking folks that there is somebody in Washington, D.C., like this GEAR committee, like these folks, who are trying to somehow work toward balancing the budget someday.

The President's budget that he is talking about, he is going to take a lot of hits for that right now. At least he is putting the concept out there that is trying to work toward balance instead of deficit spending. We will be consumed one day by the service on the debt if interest rates go wild. It will eclipse our spending.

Let me just break it down, in my couple of minutes here, on a couple of things that I think are important about this more locally, more for the Western States that myself, Mr. GIANFORTE, and others share.

The RSC plan lays out more than 100 solutions for GEAR reform, including modernizing NEPA and the Endangered Species Act, especially important in my State, as well as the West.

□ 1515

NEPA is Big Government at its best. It has been manipulated into something that is a monster and that it should never have been as far as protecting the environment. It is often the largest hindrance on forest management, water management, water storage, and for simple power line clearing projects; like are so desperately needed in my district since the town of Paradise burned a little over a year ago, and we are trying to rebuild. There are more towns I could name in the district that that same catastrophe could happen to because of overcrowded forests, and in some cases proximity to power lines.

According to this report, the NEPA review can take nearly 6 years on average to get a NEPA report.

We are talking about forestry, Madam Speaker.

How long does it take to study replacing a simple culvert in a Forest Service road?

Why does that even need a study?

If you built the thing to begin with, just replace it. No. We have got to study it to death. We have to study and get permits to clear trees around power lines that might be hazardous, a leaning tree or a dead tree.

Now, thankfully, we got bipartisan legislation, me and Mr. SCHRADER from Oregon, to help speed that process up, and we are going to work on another bill to speed it up even more so we can do a simple, basic, commonsense thing like that.

Californians don't have a lot of time to wait for the government to do the forest management on its lands and infrastructure overhauls needed to protect them from wildfires and droughts. Indeed, when the Pacific Gas & Electric Company says that it might be up to 10 years before we can get out of this power shutoff situation that we are facing because of other issues that they are battling through with green power mandates and getting permission to do the lines.

Ten years of power shutoffs for my constituents?

Are you kidding me?

We need to narrow that down to almost nothing, because we can't have another year like that.

So I applaud the Trump administration for recently proposing reforms to NEPA, but we should not have had to wait 40 years for the executive branch to act. This executive branch is doing so.

Congress should be in the business of addressing inefficiency in government, having much more oversight, like GEAR, like my colleagues are all working on here as well, including ending the cumulative effects and indirect impact statements required by NEPA.

The Endangered Species Act also poses a unique set of problems to California, specifically with critical habitat designations.

Take the valley elderberry longhorn beetle. Fish and Wildlife recommended, I think about 15 years ago, to finally delist that. Here we still are waiting to delist that and all the habitat issues with elderberry plants that inhibit the ability to fix flood control projects and to fix levees, because you have to plant back 15 to 1 for every elderberry bush you might disturb because it is possible critical habitat, even if you have never seen an elderberry beetle land there.

The Shasta Dam project would raise the dam 18 feet and supply about 650,000 more acre-feet of water for Californians, whether it is for agriculture, people, habitat or whatever—18 more feet. That is a lot of water to an existing dam. It has been halted due to a lawsuit calling for the protection of the Shasta salamander. The 3-inch long salamander makes its home on the banks of Lake Shasta which has been designated as a critical habitat.

Now, when there is a lot of rain coming into Lake Shasta, the fastest the lake can rise is about one-quarter inch per hour during heavy rain. So all the salamander has to do is be able to move at one-quarter inch per hour to stay ahead of the lake level.

Where is the sense here?

Eighteen feet above an already existing lake which the salamander already thinks is pretty cool to live next to.

Critical habitats unnecessarily delay critical infrastructure projects like the Shasta Dam, and their designation standards need to be reformed for whatever habitat is.

The RSC GEAR report has done an excellent job at addressing these necessary changes, including reforms to NEPA and the ESA. I sincerely hope Congress—both sides of the aisle—will take these suggestions and hold bureaucracy more accountable to the American people who pay for all this.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for his remarks.

I agree we have seen the impacts of an overly lengthy NEPA process that just ties projects in knots, and the weaponization of the Endangered Species Act has allowed it to drift away from its original intent of protecting species. So I appreciate the gentleman's leadership on this.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the 21st District of Texas (Mr. ROY) for his thoughts on government efficiency and reform and also his leadership on national emergency reform.

Mr. ROY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Montana for his leadership on this and my colleagues who have been working together on this important effort.

Madam Speaker, things like government efficiency, accountability, and reform are things you would think we would all be able to get behind. I am certainly of the belief that the American people who are watching—even if it is just a handful in their living rooms—are a lot more than are watching here in the Chamber.

I am also interested, when you look at the C-SPAN cameras, if you pan back, nobody is here to talk about what I am about to talk about. Yet we saw last week a Senate Chamber with 100 Senators sitting there debating what?

They were debating failed Articles of Impeachment.

Here we are trying to figure out how to make our government accountable, make it efficient, and make it effective. Reclaiming power from elected bureaucrats, reforming government practices to curb inefficiency and waste, and reemphasizing and rewarding innovation is something I think all Americans could get behind.

But I would like to talk about something that I think is critically important, which is restoring Article I and restoring the primacy of this body and the Senate in governing our Nation.

We shouldn't be looking to the executive branch, no matter who is in power, to be making decisions that should be reserved to the Members of this body and the Senate.

Congress ceded some of our power in 1976 with the passage of the National Emergencies Act, which pulled together a number of different powers contained in the 130 different statutes at the time giving the President unilateral authority to declare emergencies.

Madam Speaker, there are currently 33 emergencies in effect, some of them dating back to the Carter administration. Now, think about that. It is an emergency. It is an emergency, and it dates back to the Carter administration. This is no way to govern.

I learned this how?

Well, last spring when we were having a robust debate about securing the border of the United States—by the way, a sovereign nation should not need to have a debate about ensuring that our border is secure when you have 900,000 individuals being apprehended on our southern border last fiscal year alone, 900,000—600,000 of whom were caught and released into our country. The President of the United States is working to secure our border, to put up physical barriers, to build a wall, and to build a fence which is des-

perately needed. And it is working where it is being implemented.

The President is right to do so. He is right that there is an emergency at our southern border, and he is right that the Members of this body led by Democrats refuse to acknowledge the crisis at our southern border. He was right to defend our southern border.

But the question that popped into my head is: All right, we have an emergency. Now what?

This body, Article I, should do its job. It is incumbent upon Congress to act. We shouldn't allow an emergency to be declared and then operate our policies under it, even if I agree with the policy, and I do. I do agree with the policy of what the President is doing.

So I implore my Democrat colleagues, who are not in the Chamber, to come have a debate about restoring Article I and about all of the different issues that may occur.

I introduced H.R. 1755 which is the companion legislation to that which was offered by my friend, Senator MIKE LEE of Utah, in the U.S. Senate, and that bill would take a President's emergency declaration and terminate it after 30 days unless Congress affirmatively authorizes an extension. The bill would also terminate the emergency declaration after 1 year unless a new resolution of approval is enacted. It requires the President to report to Congress on how the President is exercising emergency powers.

Senator LEE's bill has been passed out of committee, but we have had nary a debate here in the body about restoring Article I. We have had a lot of speeches and a lot of complaints about the President of the United States and a lot of complaints about what is happening at our border, but not one serious debate about restoring Article I.

Let's do it. Let's come together right now and let's stand up as a body in Congress and say: Do you know what? If there is an emergency, great, Mr. President, go act in the emergency; but 30 days later we can agree it is time for Congress to decide how money is going to be appropriated and how we are going to enforce and implement the laws that we think are important for this body.

This is critical to government reform. This is critical to making sure we are making government more efficient and more accountable. This body is the body, this House is the people's House and most responsive to the American people.

I would beg, literally, my Democratic colleagues to engage in debate, as we sit here in an empty Chamber, about the kinds of things that I know the American people would love for us to debate.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Montana for yielding to me and for organizing this activity.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas, particularly for reminding us of the need

to rebalance and reclaim our Article I authority from the runaway bureaucracy that we have here in Washington.

Madam Speaker, we started the Government Efficiency Accountability and Reform Task Force for one simple reason: only 17 percent of Americans today say they can trust the government in Washington. We have to get the government working for the people again.

Madam Speaker, I was in Billings, Montana, and a gentleman who has been drilling natural gas wells for 30 years told me a story. He said 30 years ago when he wanted a permit to drill a well, he would go into the field with a clipboard, a single piece of paper, and a ballpoint pen. He would fill out that application. The government official would review it in the field and say: That will be all right.

Today, Madam Speaker, that same form is 48 pages long, requires an engineer and a lawyer to fill it out, tens of thousands of dollars, and months to process.

Clearly, we can do better.

Our three branches of government have drifted from their original purpose to cultivating a culture of waste. That is why we have produced this playbook of 100 commonsense, non-partisan solutions for efficiency, accountability, and reform of our Federal Government.

Over this last year, the Republican Study Committee GEAR Task Force has been meeting with outside experts and the administration and internally to produce a playbook of commonsense solutions for efficiency, accountability, and reform of our Federal Government.

I want to thank the task force members, the chairman of the RSC, MIKE JOHNSON; BARRY LOUDERMILK; DOUG COLLINS; BRUCE WESTERMAN; RICK ALLEN; JOHN CURTIS; MICHAEL CLOUD; KELLY ARMSTRONG; WILLIAM TIMMONS; and DENVER RIGGLEMAN for their engagement and their leadership in pulling together this playbook through which we hope to run these commonsense ideas.

The report is broken into three sections. The first section refers to the comments made by my colleague who just finished on the Article I power in the Constitution to restore the people's control over an unchecked bureaucracy by returning the constitutional balance between the branches of government.

Our Founding Fathers never anticipated the size of the bureaucracy we have today. That is why we need provisions like the REINS Act, so that the statutes passed in this House get reflected in rules consistent with our intent.

The second section of the report has to do with government practices to streamline Federal programs and operations to promote efficiency and eliminate waste.

Madam Speaker, in 2015 the Social Security Administration told us we had sent benefit checks to over 6 million Americans who were over the age

of 112. Now, either they are drinking some special elixir of life or they are not with us anymore. That is why I have introduced a piece of legislation titled stop paying dead people. I think that would be a good reform. It would save American taxpayers and make sure the benefits are there for those who do need Social Security.

The third section of the report is on personnel, to transition government personnel accountability and compensation toward more of a merit-based system. I operated a number of businesses in the private sector, and there are many HR practices in the Federal Government which are very different than they are in the private sector, things like merit-based pay, the way we do performance reviews, and making sure we have market-based pay for our good, dedicated Federal workers. Those are contained in the third section.

In total, there are over 100 commonsense ideas in this report that we will run as plays here in the House to make the government start working for the people again.

I appreciate the opportunity for the Members of the task force and others who have engaged on this issue to come today and share their commonsense ideas. I look forward to partnering to put these ideas into practice to get government working for the people again.

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

□ 1530

REQUIRING AN AFFIRMATIVE VOTE OF A MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS PRESENT AND VOTING, A QUORUM BEING PRESENT, ON FINAL PASSAGE OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 79

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the adoption of House Resolution 844 earlier today, House Resolution 842 is considered as adopted.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 842

Resolved, That an affirmative vote of a majority of the Members present and voting, a quorum being present, shall be required on final passage of House Joint Resolution 79.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GIANFORTE. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, February 12, 2020, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3761. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of The President, transmitting the Office's Final Sequestration Report to the President and Congress for Fiscal Year 2020, pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 904(f)(1); Public Law 99-177, Sec. 254(f)(1); (99 Stat. 1078); to the Committee on Appropriations.

3762. A letter from the Program Specialist, Chief Counsel's Office, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Regulatory Capital Rule: Revisions to the Supplementary Leverage Ratio To Exclude Certain Central Bank Deposits of Banking Organizations Predominantly Engaged in Custody, Safekeeping, and Asset Servicing Activities [Docket ID: OCC-2019-0001] (RIN: 1557-AE60) received February 6, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3763. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval and Designation of Areas; FL; Source-Specific SO2 Permit Limits and Redesignation of the Hillsborough-Polk 2010 1-Hr SO2 Nonattainment Area to Attainment and Mulberry Unclassifiable Area to Attainment/Unclassifiable [EPA-R04-OAR-2018-0510; FRL-10005-23-Region 4] received February 7, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3764. A letter from the Program Specialist, Chief Counsel's Office, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Other Real Estate Owned and Technical Amendments; Amendment of Effective Date and Correction [Docket ID: OCC-2019-0004] (RIN: 1557-AE50) received February 6, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3765. A letter from the Regulatory Specialist, Chief Counsel's Office, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standardized Approach for Calculating the Exposure Amount of Derivative Contracts [Docket ID: OCC-2018-0030] (RIN: 1557-AE44) received February 6, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3766. A letter from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's guidance — Commission Guidance on Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations [Release Nos.: 33-10751; 34-88094; FR-87] received February 7, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3767. A letter from the Senior Legislative Officer, OCIA, Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule — Nondisplacement of Qualified Workers Under Service Contracts; Rescission of Regulations (RIN: 1235-AA02; 1235-AA33) received February 7, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

3768. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Guidelines for Determining the Probability of Causation under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000; Technical Amendments [Docket Number: CDC-2019-0050;

NIOSH-329] (RIN: 0920-AA74) received February 6, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3769. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; Georgia: Revisions to Cross-State Air Pollution Rule [EPA-R04-OAR-2019-0462; FRL-10005-28-Region 4] received February 7, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3770. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; ID: Idaho Portion of the Logan UT-ID 2006 24-Hour PM2.5 Nonattainment Area; Moderate Plan Elements [EPA-R10-OAR-2018-0597; FRL-10005-17-Region 10] received February 7, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3771. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; Revisions to the State Implementation Plan Approved by EPA Through Letter [EPA-R04-OAR-2019-0391; FRL-10005-22-Region 4] received February 7, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3772. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of State Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; Delaware; Control of Emissions from Existing Municipal Solid Waste Landfills [EPA-R03-OAR-2019-0160; FRL-9999-79-Region 3] received February 7, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3773. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of State Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; Pinal County Air Quality Control District; Control of Emissions from Existing Municipal Solid Waste Landfills [EPA-R09-OAR-2019-0345; FRL-10001-02-Region 9] received February 7, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3774. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's final rule — International Traffic in Arms Regulations: U.S. Munitions List Categories I, II, and III [Public Notice: 10603] (RIN: 1400-AE30) received February 7, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3775. A letter from the Secretary, American Battle Monuments Commission, transmitting the Commission's FY 2019 No FEAR Act Report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 3242); to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

3776. A letter from the Director, Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, Department of Labor, transmitting a letter written in response to the Office of the Ombudsman's 2018 Annual Report, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 7385s-15(e)(2); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

3777. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of