

HONORING THE LIFE OF TAYLOR DeROSA

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

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of my young constituent, Taylor DeRosa.

Taylor made her mark as a student activist at Royal Oak High School. She was beginning her college career at Grand Valley State University when her life was taken so tragically several days ago.

I met Taylor when I was running for Congress in 2018 and she was launching a Students Demand Action chapter. Taylor immediately struck me as a huge flash of sunshine in an unjust world. Her commitment to justice was frank and undeniable. You knew the world would change at least a little because Taylor was present, fighting for sensible gun reform, fighting for everyone to see and cherish Black lives, and fighting to empower women and girls.

Taylor made me feel that every minute we invest in our young people is time well-spent. I feel that now, even as we struggle to cope with her loss, because she inspired me and so many folks young and old all around her.

My heart goes out to Taylor's devoted mother, Cara, and all who knew and loved her in this time of heartbreak and mourning.

CONGRATULATING DR. GLENN DeIBERT

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Glenn Deibert, who will be retiring as Coastal Pines Technical College's president at the end of February.

Dr. Deibert has served 27 years in higher education and has served four of Georgia's technical colleges, including Okefenokee Technical College, Coastal Pines Technical College, Southwest Georgia Technical College, and Southern Technical College, formerly known as Swainsboro Technical College.

Because of his dedication to improving education and the lives of students, he was recently named one of the Top 100 Most Influential Georgians by Georgia Trend's yearly publication. This title recognizes some of the most prestigious folks who have contributed greatly to the State's success.

Dr. Deibert attended Central High School in Thomasville, Georgia, and graduated from Thomas Area Technical School, which later became Southwest Georgia Technical College, so his appreciation for technical colleges is personal.

Dr. Deibert's work to improve Coastal Pines contributed to record enrollment at the college for multiple years.

Madam Speaker, I wish him and his family the best of luck as he begins his

retirement, and I am thankful for his many years of dedication to improving higher education in Georgia's First Congressional District.

SUPPORTING EVICTION RELIEF IN COVID PACKAGE

(Ms. SCANLON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SCANLON. Madam Speaker, I rise in support today of eviction relief, which we expect to see included in the COVID package we vote on soon.

While we need to do more, this bill provides a meaningful start to addressing the eviction crisis caused by the pandemic. In Pennsylvania alone, nearly one-quarter million households are behind on their rent and facing the real threat of eviction.

This bill will allow, as an authorized administrative expense, funds to be sent to civil legal aid organizations to help keep people in their homes. Under this crucial legislation, legal aid organizations, including faith-based groups, can represent tenants in eviction cases, improve access to utilities, and ensure housing conditions meet necessary standards.

Rental assistance alone will not help the thousands of people facing eviction; families often need access to legal advice to protect their rights. Legal counsel should not be a privilege saved for the wealthiest in our country. It is a basic necessity for navigating the difficult problems facing Americans who are on the bottom rungs of our economy.

I will continue advocating for the families hardest hit by the COVID pandemic, and I thank my colleagues for their hard work on this legislation.

ROCKBRIDGE CHRISTMAS BASKETS

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

Mr. CLINE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Rockbridge Christmas Baskets program.

Originally founded as the Santa Clause Truck, the Rockbridge Christmas Baskets program has been a blessing to the Shenandoah Valley since 1948.

This tremendous, all-volunteer organization assembles and delivers thousands of food and toy care packages to struggling families each year.

While the coronavirus may have put a damper on the holiday season for some, it was no match for the generosity and spirit of the folks at the Rockbridge Christmas Baskets program. Moving their packing day to a larger facility and spreading it out over packing week to ensure the health of those involved, the organization will donate a record 68,000 pounds of food and 1,300 toys to families throughout

Lexington, Rockbridge, and Buena Vista this year.

Having worked side by side with this incredible group many times, along with my family, I can tell you it is the overwhelming community effort that makes it such a success—plus the doughnut holes they serve.

Folks coming together from all walks of life to help their neighbors in need truly embodies the spirit of the holiday season, and I thank the Rockbridge Christmas Baskets program for their continued efforts to bring cheer to so many in our area.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

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

SAFEGUARDING TOMORROW THROUGH ONGOING RISK MITIGATION ACT

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3418) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to allow the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide capitalization grants to States to establish revolving funds to provide hazard mitigation assistance to reduce risks from disasters and natural hazards, and other related environmental harm.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3418

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 "Safeguarding Tomorrow through Ongoing Risk Mitigation Act" or the "STORM Act".

SEC. 2. GRANTS TO ENTITIES FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF HAZARD MITIGATION REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS.

Title II of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5131 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 205. GRANTS TO ENTITIES FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF HAZARD MITIGATION REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS.

"(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may enter into agreements with eligible entities to make capitalization grants to such entities for the establishment of hazard mitigation revolving loan funds (referred to in this section as 'entity loan funds') for providing funding assistance to local governments to carry out eligible projects under this section to reduce disaster risks for homeowners, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and communities in order to decrease—

"(A) the loss of life and property;

"(B) the cost of insurance; and

"(C) Federal disaster payments.

"(2) AGREEMENTS.—Any agreement entered into under this section shall require the participating entity to—

“(A) comply with the requirements of this section; and

“(B) use accounting, audit, and fiscal procedures conforming to generally accepted accounting standards.

“(b) APPLICATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive a capitalization grant under this section, an eligible entity shall submit to the Administrator an application that includes the following:

“(A) Project proposals comprised of local government hazard mitigation projects, on the condition that the entity provides public notice not less than 6 weeks prior to the submission of an application.

“(B) An assessment of recurring major disaster vulnerabilities impacting the entity that demonstrates a risk to life and property.

“(C) A description of how the hazard mitigation plan of the entity has or has not taken the vulnerabilities described in subparagraph (B) into account.

“(D) A description about how the projects described in subparagraph (A) could conform with the hazard mitigation plan of the entity and of the unit of local government.

“(E) A proposal of the systematic and regional approach to achieve resilience in a vulnerable area, including impacts to river basins, river corridors, watersheds, estuaries, bays, coastal regions, micro-basins, micro-watersheds, ecosystems, and areas at risk of earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, severe storms, and wildfires, including the wildland-urban interface.

“(2) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Administrator shall provide technical assistance to eligible entities for applications under this section.

“(c) ENTITY LOAN FUND.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT OF FUND.—An entity that receives a capitalization grant under this section shall establish an entity loan fund that complies with the requirements of this subsection.

“(2) FUND MANAGEMENT.—Except as provided in paragraph (3), entity loan funds shall—

“(A) be administered by the agency responsible for emergency management; and

“(B) include only—

“(i) funds provided by a capitalization grant under this section;

“(ii) repayments of loans under this section to the entity loan fund; and

“(iii) interest earned on amounts in the entity loan fund.

“(3) ADMINISTRATION.—A participating entity may combine the financial administration of the entity loan fund of such entity with the financial administration of any other revolving fund established by such entity if the Administrator determines that—

“(A) the capitalization grant, entity share, repayments of loans, and interest earned on amounts in the entity loan fund are accounted for separately from other amounts in the revolving fund; and

“(B) the authority to establish assistance priorities and carry out oversight activities remains in the control of the entity agency responsible for emergency management.

“(4) ENTITY SHARE OF FUNDS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—On or before the date on which a participating entity receives a capitalization grant under this section, the entity shall deposit into the entity loan fund of such entity, an amount equal to not less than 10 percent of the amount of the capitalization grant.

“(B) REDUCED GRANT.—If, with respect to a capitalization grant under this section, a participating entity deposits in the entity loan fund of the entity an amount that is less than 10 percent of the total amount of the capitalization grant that the partici-

pating entity would otherwise receive, the Administrator shall reduce the amount of the capitalization grant received by the entity to the amount that is 10 times the amount so deposited.

“(d) APPORTIONMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, the Administrator shall apportion funds made available to carry out this section to entities that have entered into an agreement under subsection (a)(2) in amounts as determined by the Administrator.

“(2) RESERVATION OF FUNDS.—The Administrator shall reserve not more than 2.5 percent of the amount made available to carry out this section for the Federal Emergency Management Agency for—

“(A) administrative costs incurred in carrying out this section;

“(B) providing technical assistance to participating entities under subsection (b)(2); and

“(C) capitalization grants to insular areas under paragraph (4).

“(3) PRIORITY.—In the apportionment of capitalization grants under this subsection, the Administrator shall give priority to entity applications under subsection (b) that—

“(A) propose projects increasing resilience and reducing risk of harm to natural and built infrastructure;

“(B) involve a partnership between two or more eligible entities to carry out a project or similar projects;

“(C) take into account regional impacts of hazards on river basins, river corridors, micro-watersheds, macro-watersheds, estuaries, lakes, bays, and coastal regions and areas at risk of earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, severe storms, and wildfires, including the wildland-urban interface; or

“(D) propose projects for the resilience of major economic sectors or critical national infrastructure, including ports, global commodity supply chain assets (located within an entity or within the jurisdiction of local governments, insular areas, and Indian tribal governments), power and water production and distribution centers, and bridges and waterways essential to interstate commerce.

“(4) INSULAR AREAS.—

“(A) APPORTIONMENT.—From any amount remaining of funds reserved under paragraph (2), the Administrator may enter into agreements to provide capitalization grants to insular areas.

“(B) REQUIREMENTS.—An insular area receiving a capitalization grant under this section shall comply with the requirements of this section as applied to participating entities.

“(e) ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROJECTS.—The Administrator may delegate to a participating entity all of the responsibilities for environmental review, decision making, and action pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), and other applicable Federal environmental laws including the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq.) that would apply to the Administrator were the Administrator to undertake projects under this section as Federal projects so long as the participating entity carries out such responsibilities in the same manner and subject to the same requirements as if the Administrator carried out such responsibilities.

“(f) USE OF FUNDS.—

“(1) TYPES OF ASSISTANCE.—Amounts deposited in an entity loan fund, including loan repayments and interest earned on such amounts, may be used—

“(A) to make loans, on the condition that—

“(i) such loans are made at an interest rate of not more than 1 percent;

“(ii) annual principal and interest payments will commence not later than 1 year after completion of any project and all loans made under this subparagraph will be fully amortized—

“(I) not later than 20 years after the date on which the project is completed; or

“(II) for projects in a low-income geographic area, not later than 30 years after the date on which the project is completed and not longer than the expected design life of the project;

“(iii) the loan recipient of a loan under this subparagraph establishes a dedicated source of revenue for repayment of the loan;

“(iv) the loan recipient of a loan under this subparagraph has a hazard mitigation plan that has been approved by the Administrator; and

“(v) the entity loan fund will be credited with all payments of principal and interest on all loans made under this subparagraph;

“(B) for mitigation efforts, in addition to mitigation planning under section 322 not to exceed 10 percent of the capitalization grants made to the participating entity in a fiscal year;

“(C) for the reasonable costs of administering the fund and conducting activities under this section, except that such amounts shall not exceed \$100,000 per year, 2 percent of the capitalization grants made to the participating entity in a fiscal year, or 1 percent of the value of the entity loan fund, whichever amount is greatest, plus the amount of any fees collected by the entity for such purpose regardless of the source; and

“(D) to earn interest on the entity loan fund.

“(2) PROHIBITION ON DETERMINATION THAT LOAN IS A DUPLICATION.—In carrying out this section, the Administrator may not determine that a loan is a duplication of assistance or programs under this Act.

“(3) PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES ELIGIBLE FOR ASSISTANCE.—Except as provided in this subsection, a participating entity may use funds in the entity loan fund to provide financial assistance for projects or activities that mitigate the impacts of natural hazards including—

“(A) drought and prolonged episodes of intense heat;

“(B) severe storms, including hurricanes, tornados, wind storms, cyclones, and severe winter storms;

“(C) wildfires;

“(D) earthquakes;

“(E) flooding, including the construction, repair, or replacement of a non-Federal levee or other flood control structure, provided that the Administrator, in consultation with the Army Corps of Engineers (if appropriate), requires an eligible entity to determine that such levee or structure is designed, constructed, and maintained in accordance with sound engineering practices and standards equivalent to the purpose for which such levee or structure is intended;

“(F) shoreline erosion;

“(G) high water levels; and

“(H) storm surges.

“(4) ZONING AND LAND USE PLANNING CHANGES.—A participating entity may use not more than 10 percent of a capitalization grant under this section to enable units of local government to implement zoning and land use planning changes focused on—

“(A) the development and improvement of zoning and land use codes that incentivize and encourage low-impact development, resilient wildland-urban interface land management and development, natural infrastructure, green stormwater management, conservation areas adjacent to floodplains, implementation of watershed or greenway

master plans, and reconnection of floodplains;

“(B) the study and creation of agricultural risk compensation districts where there is a desire to remove or set-back levees protecting highly developed agricultural land to mitigate for flooding, allowing agricultural producers to receive compensation for assuming greater flood risk that would alleviate flood exposure to population centers and areas with critical national infrastructure;

“(C) the study and creation of land use incentives that reward developers for greater reliance on low impact development stormwater best management practices, exchange density increases for increased open space and improvement of neighborhood catch basins to mitigate urban flooding, reward developers for including and augmenting natural infrastructure adjacent to and around building projects without reliance on increased sprawl, and reward developers for addressing wildfire ignition; and

“(D) the study and creation of an erosion response plan that accommodates river, lake, forest, plains, and ocean shoreline retreating or bluff stabilization due to increased flooding and disaster impacts.

“(5) ESTABLISHING AND CARRYING OUT BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT.—A participating entity may use capitalization grants under this section to enable units of local government to establish and carry out the latest published editions of relevant building codes, specifications, and standards for the purpose of protecting the health, safety, and general welfare of the building's users against disasters and natural hazards.

“(6) ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL COSTS.—For each fiscal year, a participating entity may use the amount described in paragraph (1)(C) to—

“(A) pay the reasonable costs of administering the programs under this section, including the cost of establishing an entity loan fund; and

“(B) provide technical assistance to recipients of financial assistance from the entity loan fund, on the condition that such technical assistance does not exceed 5 percent of the capitalization grant made to such entity.

“(7) LIMITATION FOR SINGLE PROJECTS.—A participating entity may not provide an amount equal to or more than \$5,000,000 to a single hazard mitigation project.

“(8) REQUIREMENTS.—For fiscal year 2022 and each fiscal year thereafter, the requirements of subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code, shall apply to the construction of projects carried out in whole or in part with assistance made available by an entity loan fund authorized by this section.

“(g) INTENDED USE PLANS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—After providing for public comment and review, and consultation with appropriate government agencies of the State or Indian tribal government, Federal agencies, and interest groups, each participating entity shall annually prepare and submit to the Administrator a plan identifying the intended uses of the entity loan fund.

“(2) CONTENTS OF PLAN.—An entity intended use plan prepared under paragraph (1) shall include—

“(A) the integration of entity planning efforts, including entity hazard mitigation plans and other programs and initiatives relating to mitigation of major disasters carried out by such entity;

“(B) an explanation of the mitigation and resiliency benefits the entity intends to achieve by—

“(i) reducing future damage and loss associated with hazards;

“(ii) reducing the number of severe repetitive loss structures and repetitive loss structures in the entity;

“(iii) decreasing the number of insurance claims in the entity from injuries resulting from major disasters or other natural hazards; and

“(iv) increasing the rating under the community rating system under section 1315(b) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4022(b)) for communities in the entity;

“(C) information on the availability of, and application process for, financial assistance from the entity loan fund of such entity;

“(D) the criteria and methods established for the distribution of funds;

“(E) the amount of financial assistance that the entity anticipates apportioning;

“(F) the expected terms of the assistance provided from the entity loan fund; and

“(G) a description of the financial status of the entity loan fund, including short-term and long-term goals for the fund.

“(h) AUDITS, REPORTS, PUBLICATIONS, AND OVERSIGHT.—

“(1) BIENNIAL ENTITY AUDIT AND REPORT.—Beginning not later than the last day of the second fiscal year after the receipt of payments under this section, and biennially thereafter, any participating entity shall—

“(A) conduct an audit of the entity loan fund established under subsection (c); and

“(B) provide to the Administrator a report including—

“(i) the result of any such audit; and

“(ii) a review of the effectiveness of the entity loan fund of the entity with respect to meeting the goals and intended benefits described in the intended use plan submitted by the entity under subsection (g).

“(2) PUBLICATION.—A participating entity shall publish and periodically update information about all projects receiving funding from the entity loan fund of such entity, including—

“(A) the location of the project;

“(B) the type and amount of assistance provided from the entity loan fund;

“(C) the expected funding schedule; and

“(D) the anticipated date of completion of the project.

“(3) OVERSIGHT.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall, at least every 4 years, conduct reviews and audits as may be determined necessary or appropriate by the Administrator to carry out the objectives of this section and determine the effectiveness of the fund in reducing natural hazard risk.

“(B) GAO REQUIREMENTS.—A participating entity shall conduct audits under paragraph (1) in accordance with the auditing procedures of the Government Accountability Office, including generally accepted government auditing standards.

“(C) RECOMMENDATIONS BY ADMINISTRATOR.—The Administrator may at any time make recommendations for or require specific changes to an entity loan fund in order to improve the effectiveness of the fund.

“(i) REGULATIONS OR GUIDANCE.—The Administrator shall issue such regulations or guidance as are necessary to—

“(1) ensure that each participating entity uses funds as efficiently as possible;

“(2) reduce waste, fraud, and abuse to the maximum extent possible; and

“(3) require any party that receives funds directly or indirectly under this section, including a participating entity and a recipient of amounts from an entity loan fund, to use procedures with respect to the management of the funds that conform to generally accepted accounting standards.

“(j) WAIVER AUTHORITY.—Until such time as the Administrator issues final regulations to implement this section, the Administrator may—

“(1) waive notice and comment rule-making, if the Administrator determines the waiver is necessary to expeditiously implement this section; and

“(2) provide capitalization grants under this section as a pilot program.

“(k) LIABILITY PROTECTIONS.—The Agency shall not be liable for any claim based on the exercise or performance of, or the failure to exercise or perform, a discretionary function or duty by the Agency, or an employee of the Agency in carrying out this section.

“(l) GAO REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the first entity loan fund is established under subsection (c), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report that examines—

“(1) the appropriateness of regulations and guidance issued by the Administrator for the program, including any oversight of the program;

“(2) a description of the number of the entity loan funds established, the projects funded from such entity loan funds, and the extent to which projects funded by the loan funds adhere to any applicable hazard mitigation plans;

“(3) the effectiveness of the entity loan funds to lower disaster related costs; and

“(4) recommendations for improving the administration of entity loan funds.

“(m) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the following definitions apply:

“(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term ‘Administrator’ means the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

“(2) AGENCY.—The term ‘Agency’ means the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

“(3) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible entity’ means—

“(A) a State; or

“(B) an Indian tribal government that has received a major disaster declaration during the 5-year period ending on the date of enactment of the STORM Act.

“(4) HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN.—The term ‘hazard mitigation plan’ means a mitigation plan submitted under section 322.

“(5) INSULAR AREA.—The term ‘insular area’ means Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands.

“(6) LOW-INCOME GEOGRAPHIC AREA.—The term ‘low-income geographic area’ means an area described in paragraph (1) or (2) of section 301(a) of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3161(a)).

“(7) PARTICIPATING ENTITY.—The term ‘participating entity’ means an eligible entity that has entered into an agreement under this section.

“(8) REPETITIVE LOSS STRUCTURE.—The term ‘repetitive loss structure’ has the meaning given the term in section 1370 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4121).

“(9) SEVERE REPETITIVE LOSS STRUCTURE.—The term ‘severe repetitive loss structure’ has the meaning given the term in section 1366(h) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4104c(h)).

“(10) STATE.—The term ‘State’ means any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

“(11) WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE.—The term ‘wildland-urban interface’ has the meaning given the term in section 101 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511).

“(n) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated \$100,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2023 to carry out this section.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Madam 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 S. 3418.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia? There was no objection.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of S. 3418, the Safeguarding Tomorrow through Ongoing Risk Mitigation Act, or STORM Act.

This bipartisan and bicameral bill introduced in the Senate by Senators GARY PETERS and RON JOHNSON, and in the House by Representatives ANGIE CRAIG, RODNEY DAVIS, and RICK CRAWFORD, would amend the Stafford Act to provide another opening for local governments to fund mitigation and resilience projects.

Modeled after the highly successful Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds managed by the Environmental Protection Agency, this bill would allow States and Tribal governments to apply for capitalization grants to establish revolving funds that would then be used to fund a variety of infrastructure projects.

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The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure under both Democratic and Republican majorities has examined the rising cost of disasters and reforms necessary to address them.

Time and again, we have arrived at the similar conclusion: Investments in mitigation have a quantifiable and significant return on investment in reducing disaster response and recovery costs.

The current sources of Federal funding available for pre-disaster mitigation are highly competitive and extremely limited due to the backlog of worthwhile projects identified across the Nation.

The State revolving loan funds will be established by this legislation and would allow States to offer low-interest loans to cities and counties for projects to mitigate a wide variety of hazards.

Since 2000, there have only been 3 years during which we have seen fewer than 100 Presidentially declared events under the Stafford Act, and there is no indication that the frequency or severity of these disasters is on the decline. The record-setting year we just endured points to the contrary.

Madam Speaker, while future disasters will inevitably cause large-scale

damage and require costly recoveries, by providing new opportunities for investments in pre-disaster mitigation, this bill encourages resilience at the community level and will contribute to a considerable reduction in the cost of future recoveries.

Madam Speaker, I support S. 3418, and urge my colleagues to do the same, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, thank you to the chair of the Highways and Transit Subcommittee, Ms. Holmes Norton, for her support for this bill.

I also really thank my good friend and colleague from the great State of Minnesota, Congresswoman ANGIE CRAIG, with whom I was happy and proud to be the colead of H.R. 3779, the Resilience Revolving Loan Fund Act of 2019. This is the House companion bill to the bill that we are now debating, S. 3418, the STORM Act. I thank Congresswoman CRAIG for her leadership on this legislation and for allowing me to be the colead on this bill with her that ensures that much-needed support is available to our rural communities.

This bill will prevent catastrophes across the country before disaster strikes, saving lives, livelihoods, and heartache for many Americans.

Madam Speaker, imagine this: Communities that are prone to consistent disasters on an annual basis can now have a pot of money to make their community safer before disasters hit, thus, investing on the front end to save taxpayer dollars on the back end. This bill is going to establish that revolving loan fund to support these important disaster mitigation efforts, and in most areas in my district, that usually means my rural communities.

Upfront investment, as I just mentioned, in mitigation has been proven to reduce disaster costs and save lives, and that is why this bill is so important.

While Congress has worked in the past to increase support for mitigation, many local projects still go unfunded. Unfortunately, localized disasters that hit communities like those in my district, while devastating, may never receive a major disaster declaration. We have passed reforms to address this issue, including my bill, the Disaster Declaration Improvement Act, but more reforms are obviously needed.

S. 3418 will provide these communities more options in mitigating the impact of disasters that have left so many communities without relief. And with the flexibilities built into the bill, this bill will ensure key projects will be eligible for these loans.

I also take this opportunity to thank one of my constituents for his advocacy on this bill, and that is Mayor Rick Eberlin of Grafton, Illinois. Grafton, Illinois—the Key West to the Mississippi, I like to call it—is a prime example of a community that would benefit greatly from this piece of legislation.

Mayor Eberlin has tirelessly fought for the people of Grafton and was the individual who brought this partnership and this legislation to my attention. I have no doubt that the funds made available under this bill will ensure Grafton and its surrounding communities are better protected during the next flood season.

Madam Speaker, I urge support of this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT), my friend.

Ms. PLASKETT. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues, and while I am happy to support measures to improve resiliency in the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, a committee on which I serve, I am disappointed that this bill is not inclusive of U.S. territories other than Puerto Rico in the normal operation of this new resiliency program.

Under the Stafford Act, the Virgin Islands and all other U.S. territories and the District of Columbia are defined and treated as States. This legislative amendment to the Stafford Act should be no different. That is why the House version of this bill was amended in committee, so that this new program is equally inclusive of all jurisdictions that are already treated as States by the Stafford Act. That was not what was approved by the committee but passed by this House in H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act.

Madam Speaker, the Virgin Islands and the other smaller territories have been devastated by unprecedented natural disasters in recent years. All of these American jurisdictions have tremendous need for hazard mitigation projects that reduce risks for homeowners, businesses, nonprofits, the cost of insurance claims, and Federal relief payments from extreme weather-related disasters.

I believe it is unfair to have a program that first makes grants to Indian Tribes, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia to improve resiliency, and then tells the four remaining smaller jurisdictions, defined as States already, that they get to have what amounts to pennies maybe left over from the 2 percent set aside of funding that first is going to be spent on administrative costs and technical assistance to give the resiliency program to everyone else.

Madam Speaker, as a practical matter, of course, that will amount to nothing left for the people of my district, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Marianas, and the smaller territories.

Madam Speaker, I understand and have been told that the committee is willing to work and try to find a technical fix to this both in the House and the Senate. I urge that that occurs. While I support this measure, once again, you cannot continue to forget the smaller territories.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I do say, first off, I truly appreciate the words and the passion from my good friend from the U.S. Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT). I am disappointed to see that this bill came back from the Senate without the provisions that we supported on her behalf in the committee.

Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to echo to the Senate and to the House as we move into the future: Let's address this concern. There is bipartisan support for what Ms. PLASKETT is asking for.

These are the types of bipartisan issues that we usually try and solve in the House, but, unfortunately, we got this from the Senate. We will let them be the ones to admit they screwed this up with a technical error.

But let's fix it. That is the key. Let's work together to make that happen.

Madam Speaker, in closing, S. 3418 will help support critical mitigation projects in local communities, including rural communities that are hit and devastated by these natural disasters. This will save lives and prevent damage and loss to farmers, businesses, and homeowners across the country, and it is also going to save, long term, billions upon billions of taxpayer dollars that are going, time and time again, to help communities recover from events we know are going to happen.

Let's do something on the front end and save taxpayer dollars for the next generation on the back end.

Madam Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't thank the staff on both sides of the aisle for their work to get this bill to a good place and with the Senate: on the majority side, Aaron Davis; on our own side, Johanna Hardy; and in my office, Jimmy Ballard. I really appreciate all these folks and what they have done to help districts like mine.

I also thank some folks who really worked hard on this bill, too, that are with me here today from the committee: Corey Cooke and her number one fan, her puppy, Coda Cooke; and also Tara Hupman and her number one fan, her puppy, Chester Hupman. I certainly hope my number one fans, when I get home, Rider and Julia Davis, one day get a chance to meet theirs.

But it takes people working together to get things done, and these are the types of issues that show our success in this institution.

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

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, first of all, I appreciate the words of my colleague on the other side of the aisle with respect to Ms. PLASKETT's notion. I don't know why the notion of pennywise and pound foolish—if that is the reason why this bipartisan bill that was sent to the Senate was sent back to us absent some Americans. I understand they

will be working to try to fix this, but we don't fix it when we allow disasters to move forward in the part of our country where disasters are more likely to affect. They are not most likely to take effect in places like the District of Columbia where we just had a snowstorm and hardly a little bit of snow. They are far more likely to take effect in Ms. PLASKETT's district in the Virgin Islands.

Madam Speaker, I pledge with my good friend on the other side, with whom I have worked closely in the past, to do everything I can to make sure that all of us, including all of our territories, not only Puerto Rico, are included in this bill, as the House intended.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, notwithstanding the issues that both sides here in the House have with it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. CRAIG. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 3418, the Safeguarding Tomorrow through Ongoing Risk Mitigation Act or the STORM Act, as amended.

I want to thank Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman PETER DEFAZIO, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management Chair DINA TITUS and Ranking Members SAM GRAVES and JOHN KATKO for their work on this bill to get us to where we are today.

I also want to thank fellow T&I Member RODNEY DAVIS for being a strong partner with me on this from the outset. I am also grateful to Majority Leader HOYER for scheduling a vote on this bill.

Finally, I also want to thank the diligent members of the Committee's staff, particularly Aaron Davis, for helping us reach this historic milestone. I also want to thank a former member of my staff, Natalie Martinez, for helping to lead the introduction of this bill and my Legislative Director Will Mitchell for helping to bring the bill across the finish line.

Madam Speaker, by way of background, the original version of the STORM Act was introduced last July as H.R.3779, the Resilience Revolving Loan Fund Act of 2019 following a catastrophic spring where Minnesota experienced one of the most devastating flood seasons on record.

In response, I worked closely with local mayors in Minnesota dealing with the aftermath of this flooding to develop the concept of a resilience fund and establish a low-interest loan program for states to fund pre-disaster mitigation projects which greatly reduce the risks and costs of natural disasters. Revolving fund loans will be available for projects that minimize the risks of wildfires, earthquakes, floods, storm surges, tornadoes, and other events deemed catastrophic by FEMA.

The revolving fund concept is modeled after similar state revolving funds authorized and funded by Congress for projects that have resulted in a significant increase in the capacity and capabilities of water infrastructure in communities across the nation.

It is our hope that our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee will see the wisdom in the revolving fund concept and fully capitalize this program starting in Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023 so that disaster mitigation can see that same significant return on investment.

Madam Speaker, another benefit of this bill is that it opens up mitigation funds to a new set of eligible folks. Currently, most FEMA hazard mitigation programs restrict Public Assistance mitigation funds if projects may accrue to the benefit of homeowners and businesses—which can create challenges, particularly in rural areas of my Congressional District with lower populations and large areas of farmland. The revolving loan fund before us today is specifically intended to reduce risks for homeowners, businesses, nonprofit organizations and communities.

As a matter of process, Madam Speaker, I'm pleased that our bill, like the STORM Act, moved through regular order on the Committee and attracted bipartisan, unanimous support when it passed the House. Since March of this year when the STORM Act was introduced, staff members on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee worked closely together to iron out technical differences and present a final bill that can be signed into law by the President.

Throughout the process, we attracted and maintained the support of a number of groups that partnered together to build the political will necessary to pass this bill. In particular, I want to thank the American Council of Engineering Companies, The American Institute of Architects, American Society of Civil Engineers, American Society of Landscape Architects, City Parks Alliance, Ecological Restoration Business Association, Interstate Council on Water Policy, Mississippi Rivers Cities and Towns Initiative, National Recreation and Park Association, The Nature Conservancy and U.S. Chamber of Commerce for their support.

As part of the Mississippi Rivers Cities and Towns Initiative, I want to give special thanks to Executive Director Colin Wellenkamp and outgoing Red Wing Mayor Sean Dowse—who were also instrumental in this effort.

Madam Speaker, in closing, passage of the STORM Act will be an important step in making our towns and cities more resilient. I'm thrilled to be leading the bipartisan effort for smart, proactive investments in disaster-resilient infrastructure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3418.

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.

FEDERAL ADVANCE CONTRACTS ENHANCEMENT ACT

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 979) to amend the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 to incorporate the recommendations made by the Government Accountability Office relating to advance contracts, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows: