

When they retire, those Federal employees receive their hard-earned retirement benefits. Currently, the Federal Government issues payments to more than 2 million retirees and more than half a million survivor annuitants each year. Annuitants receive an average of \$2,500 a month.

If a Federal annuitant becomes incapacitated in some way, a representative payee may be appointed. A representative payee is a person who receives and manages benefits on behalf of another person who is not fully capable of managing their own benefits. Certainly, things like mental illness, disability, or long-term illness are just a few examples of situations where a payee may step in and provide that counsel.

Obviously, as we look at this, a representative payee has a duty to use financial benefits to assist with the care and well-being of the intended beneficiary. Surprisingly, though, it is not a crime for a representative payee to commit financial fraud against an incapacitated Federal retiree. However, under the Social Security Act, it is a crime to do so.

I have always assumed that this type of financial abuse of retired Federal employees was also a crime. But right now, under Federal law, it is not.

As the chairwoman from New York mentioned, this is a commonsense piece of legislation. I would like to thank my colleague, Ms. TLAIB, for her leadership on this.

This bill will make it a crime to embezzle Federal retirement benefits as a representative payee. If convicted, the representative payee could be subject to criminal fines and up to 5 years in prison. Obviously, this is a protection for our Federal workforce.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of this particular piece of legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB).

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking Congressman MEADOWS for partnering with me on the bill, as well as our Chairwoman MALONEY and her incredibly strong and talented staff for their leadership and for the continued support of the work that we have to do on behalf of our residents at home.

I also want to thank our forever chairman, the late Chairman Cummings, who is looking down on us from above, for his mentorship and for working with us on this bill that would help some of our most vulnerable retirees.

We all know that no one deserves to be scammed out of their money, but that is especially true for our retirees. This bill, the Representative Payee Fraud Prevention Act, is a bipartisan effort to protect those retirees who are recipients of Federal benefits.

Retirees who have been declared mentally incompetent or have another qualifying disability can have their

monthly benefits paid on their behalf through a representative, frequently referred to as the representative payee. In recent years, what we have seen in our country is there has been a sharp increase in the number of representative payees who have taken advantage of their position and committed fraud, hurting many of our residents.

We need to hold them accountable, and this bill does that. The bill would expand protection to over 2 million workers all across the United States.

In my home State of Michigan, there are nearly 40,000 Federal retirees who are currently unprotected from this crime, impacting their quality of life. They are supposed to be living in peace during their retirement years. They are becoming targets instead, and we need to push back together, in a bipartisan way.

I hear firsthand from our senior residents about their concerns, from feeling neglected in the assisted living facilities to unaffordable drug prices, and I want to ensure that our older Americans have one less worry about financial predators who will misuse their hard-earned money.

For far too long, this lack of Federal protection has left some of our, again, most vulnerable civil servants without legal recourse when they are taken advantage of and their retirement funds are misused. We must ensure that the most impacted communities are protected on every front.

That is what this legislation will do. It will prevent those who have committed representative payee fraud from serving as representative payees in the future and hold them accountable to their victims.

Let's really ensure that our public servants and our civil servants who have dedicated their lives to serving our country are protected against this fraud.

Again, I want to thank my beloved Chairman Cummings for coming to myself and my colleague, Congressman MEADOWS. When he did, we couldn't say no to him, so we worked together in trying to resolve this issue for so many folks, again, 2 million Federal employees across the country who need this protection.

Mr. Speaker, I really do urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I certainly would rise in support of this legislation. I thank the gentlewoman from Michigan for her kind words. Ms. TLAIB has been leading on this.

The gentlewoman is right. Chairman Cummings had an infectious way of bringing people together, and I rise in support of this legislation as a tribute to his leadership and to her leadership.

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

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 5214. I thank Elijah Cummings for his hard work on this bill, too, and my colleagues, Mr. MEADOWS and Ms. TLAIB, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5214.

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.

#### TAXPAYERS RIGHT-TO-KNOW ACT

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3830) to provide taxpayers with an improved understanding of Government programs through the disclosure of cost, performance, and areas of duplication among them, leverage existing data to achieve a functional Federal program inventory, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3830

*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 "Taxpayers Right-To-Know Act".

#### SEC. 2. INVENTORY OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS.

Section 1122(a) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (2) as paragraphs (2) and (3), respectively;

(2) by inserting before paragraph (2), as so redesignated, the following:

“(1) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection—

“(A) the term ‘Federal financial assistance’ has the meaning given that term under section 7501;

“(B) the term ‘open Government data asset’ has the meaning given that term under section 3502 of title 44;

“(C) the term ‘program’ means a single program activity or an organized set of aggregated, disaggregated, or consolidated program activities by 1 or more agencies directed toward a common purpose or goal; and

“(D) the term ‘program activity’ has the meaning given that term in section 1115(h).”;

(3) in paragraph (2), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking “IN GENERAL.—Not later than October 1, 2012, the Office of Management and Budget shall” and inserting “WEBSITE AND PROGRAM INVENTORY.—The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall”;

(B) in subparagraph (A), by inserting “that includes the information required under subsections (b) and (c)” after “a single website”; and

(C) by striking subparagraphs (B) and (C) and inserting the following:

“(B) include on the website described in subparagraph (A), or another appropriate Federal Government website where related information is made available, as determined by the Director—

“(i) a program inventory that shall identify each program; and

“(ii) for each program identified in the program inventory, the information required under paragraph (3);

“(C) make the information in the program inventory required under subparagraph (B)

available as an open Government data asset; and

“(D) at a minimum—

“(i) update the information required to be included on the single website under subparagraph (A) on a quarterly basis; and

“(ii) update the program inventory required under subparagraph (B) on an annual basis.”;

(4) in paragraph (3), as so redesignated—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking “described under paragraph (1) shall include” and inserting “identified in the program inventory required under paragraph (2)(B) shall include”;

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking “and” at the end;

(C) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end and inserting “and,”; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

“(D) for each program activity that is part of a program—

“(i) a description of the purposes of the program activity and the contribution of the program activity to the mission and goals of the agency;

“(ii) a consolidated view for the current fiscal year and each of the 2 fiscal years before the current fiscal year of—

“(I) the amount appropriated;

“(II) the amount obligated; and

“(III) the amount outlayed;

“(iii) to the extent practicable and permitted by law, links to any related evaluation, assessment, or program performance review by the agency, an inspector general, or the Government Accountability Office (including program performance reports required under section 1116), and other related evidence assembled in response to implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-435; 132 Stat. 5529);

“(iv) an identification of the statutes that authorize the program activity or the authority under which the program activity was created or operates;

“(v) an identification of any major regulations specific to the program activity;

“(vi) any other information that the Director of the Office of Management and Budget determines relevant relating to program activity data in priority areas most relevant to Congress or the public to increase transparency and accountability; and

“(vii) for each assistance listing under which Federal financial assistance is provided, for the current fiscal year and each of the 2 fiscal years before the current fiscal year and consistent with existing law relating to the protection of personally identifiable information—

“(I) a linkage to the relevant program activities that fund Federal financial assistance by assistance listing;

“(II) information on the population intended to be served by the assistance listing based on the language of the solicitation, as required under section 6102;

“(III) to the extent practicable and based on data reported to the agency providing the Federal financial assistance, the results of the Federal financial assistance awards provided by the assistance listing;

“(IV) to the extent practicable, the percentage of the amount appropriated for the assistance listing that is used for management and administration;

“(V) the identification of each award of Federal financial assistance and, to the extent practicable, the name of each direct or indirect recipient of the award; and

“(VI) any information relating to the award of Federal financial assistance that is required to be included on the website established under section 2(b) of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (31 U.S.C. 6101 note).”;

(5) by adding at the end the following:

“(4) ARCHIVING.—The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall—

“(A) archive and preserve the information included in the program inventory required under paragraph (2)(B) after the end of the period during which such information is made available under paragraph (3); and

“(B) make information archived in accordance with subparagraph (A) publicly available as an open Government data asset.”.

### SEC. 3. GUIDANCE, IMPLEMENTATION, REPORTING, AND REVIEW.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term “appropriate congressional committees” means the Committee on Oversight and Reform of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

(2) the term “Director” means the Director of the Office of Management and Budget;

(3) the term “program” has the meaning given that term in section 1122(a)(1) of title 31, United States Code, as amended by section 2 of this Act;

(4) the term “program activity” has the meaning given that term in section 1115(h) of title 31, United States Code; and

(5) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Treasury.

(b) PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND RECONCILING PROGRAM DEFINITIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director, in consultation with the Secretary, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that—

(1) includes a plan that—

(A) discusses how making available on a website the information required under subsection (a) of section 1122 of title 31, United States Code, as amended by section 2, will leverage existing data sources while avoiding duplicative or overlapping information in presenting information relating to program activities and programs;

(B) indicates how any gaps in data will be assessed and addressed;

(C) indicates how the Director will display such data; and

(D) discusses how the Director will expand the information collected with respect to program activities to incorporate the information required under the amendments made by section 2;

(2) sets forth details regarding a pilot program, developed in accordance with best practices for effective pilot programs—

(A) to develop and implement a functional program inventory that could be limited in scope; and

(B) under which the information required under the amendments made by section 2 with respect to program activities shall be made available on the website required under section 1122(a) of title 31, United States Code;

(3) establishes an implementation timeline for—

(A) gathering and building program activity information;

(B) developing and implementing the pilot program;

(C) seeking and responding to stakeholder comments;

(D) developing and presenting findings from the pilot program to the appropriate congressional committees;

(E) notifying the appropriate congressional committees regarding how program activities will be aggregated, disaggregated, or consolidated as part of identifying programs; and

(F) implementing a Governmentwide program inventory through an iterative approach; and

(4) includes recommendations, if any, to reconcile the conflicting definitions of the term “program” in relevant Federal statutes, as it relates to the purpose of this Act.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall make available online all information required under the amendments made by section 2 with respect to all programs.

(2) EXTENSIONS.—The Director may, based on an analysis of the costs of implementation, and after submitting to the appropriate congressional committees a notification of the action by the Director, extend the deadline for implementation under paragraph (1) by not more than a total of 1 year.

(d) REPORTING.—Not later than 2 years after the date on which the Director makes available online all information required under the amendments made by section 2 with respect to all programs, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report regarding the implementation of this Act and the amendments made by this Act, which shall—

(1) review how the Director and agencies determined how to aggregate, disaggregate, or consolidate program activities to provide the most useful information for an inventory of Government programs;

(2) evaluate the extent to which the program inventory required under section 1122 of title 31, United States Code, as amended by this Act, provides useful information for transparency, decision-making, and oversight;

(3) evaluate the extent to which the program inventory provides a coherent picture of the scope of Federal investments in particular areas; and

(4) include the recommendations of the Comptroller General, if any, for improving implementation of this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

### SEC. 4. TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1122 of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting “described in subsection (a)(2)(A)” after “the website” each place it appears;

(2) in subsection (c), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting “described in subsection (a)(2)(A)” after “the website”; and

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) in the subsection heading, by striking “ON WEBSITE”; and

(B) in the first sentence, by striking “on the website”.

(b) OTHER AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 1115(a) of title 31, United States Code, is amended in the matter preceding paragraph (1) by striking “the website provided under” and inserting “a website described in”.

(2) Section 10 of the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (31 U.S.C. 1115 note) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)(3), by striking “the website described under” and inserting “a website described in”; and

(B) in subsection (b)—

(i) in paragraph (1), by striking “the website described under” and inserting “a website described in”; and

(ii) in paragraph (3), by striking “the website as required under” and inserting “a website described in”.

(3) Section 1120(a)(5) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking “the website described under” and inserting “a website described in”.

(4) Section 1126(b)(2)(E) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking “the

website of the Office of Management and Budget pursuant to" and inserting "a website described in".

(5) Section 3512(a)(1) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking "the website described under" and inserting "a website described in".

#### SEC. 5. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled "Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation" for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the measure before us.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1500

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill and would like to thank Congressmen WALBERG and COOPER for their hard work on it.

The Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act is a bipartisan and commonsense solution that would help identify areas of inefficiency in the Federal Government. The bill would create an inventory of Federal programs that would be published on a government website and updated regularly. The information in the inventory would also be archived.

Previous attempts at getting information from agencies on Federal programs have yielded incomplete and varied results, since agencies often have different ways of defining Federal programs.

This bill aims to provide streamlined and uniformed insight into the activities of programs governmentwide. The Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act would require agencies to report on the spending, authorization, and purpose of a Federal program's activities. Information would also be required on any awards of financial assistance. Access to enhanced information would result in greater transparency into duplicative or inefficient programs.

This bill would also provide a means to test a way in which this comprehensive inventory of Federal programs would be achieved across the Federal Government. It would require the Of-

fice of Management and Budget to report on how existing agency data would be used to create the program inventory or explain how the data will be presented and the results of a pilot program.

Mr. Speaker, I support this good government measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3830, the Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act.

The Federal Government is a complex and diverse organization. As Members of Congress, we are responsible for ensuring the Federal Government is efficient and effective. However, we lack the tools to understand how the taxpayer dollars are spent. Oftentimes, we lack a detailed list of the programs that are there.

This bipartisan bill will increase transparency and make it easier to see how the Federal Government uses its tax dollars.

May I edit that last statement just a bit? It is not the government's tax dollars. It is the hardworking American people's tax dollars. So this is a critically important additional tool.

In fiscal year 2019, the Federal Government spent nearly \$4.4 trillion. Taxpayers should know where their hard-earned money is going. To follow the money, we need to know what the government is doing, so a comprehensive inventory of Federal programs will help us do that.

In 2010, Congress required the executive branch to develop a comprehensive Federal program inventory. The program inventory Congress envisioned would have given the public insight into the government's organizational structure and provided a comparable list of all Federal programs.

Comparability is key. We need to see how these programs match up. To give you one example, there were 678 duplicative programs in the Federal Government that dealt just with sustainable energy. You can argue the merits of priority or the lack thereof, but, certainly, over 600 programs to deal with one particular issue across the government is something that cannot be efficient.

However, the Government Accountability Office found that the program inventory built for the previous administration in 2013 failed to meet the intent of the law or needs of Congress. Implementing guidance allowed far too much flexibility for agencies to define programs. Each agency used its own definition, which prevented programs to be compared to one another. So the Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act updates the law to require a more consistent definition of Federal programs across all agencies.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a good bill that goes with the intent of Congress as laid out, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from North Carolina has no further speakers, I am prepared to close.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I am sure we have one other speaker who is running in the halls right now, but I may let him speak upon a different bill.

Let me just mention Mr. WALBERG's leadership on this, a real shout-out to him and his leadership on trying to make sure congressional intent was indeed addressed. I thank him for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time, and I urge passage of H.R. 3830, as amended.

Mr. MEADOWS. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Yes, I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. MEADOWS. I appreciate the gentlewoman's flexibility, but if you would let me reclaim my time and yield to the gentleman, who made it in by the hair on his chinny chin chin.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HIMES). Without objection, the gentleman from North Carolina reclaims his time and yields to the gentleman from Michigan.

There was no objection.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and gentlewoman.

Mr. Speaker, I did shave this morning, so there wasn't much hair on the chinny chin chin.

Mr. Speaker, American taxpayers deserve to know where, when, why, and how government is spending their hard-earned dollars. This is why I partnered with my colleague from Tennessee, Representative JIM COOPER, to introduce H.R. 3830, the Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act. This bipartisan legislation requires Federal agencies to supply an 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.

The inventory will account for how funds are allocated, the total amount appropriated, obligated, and outlaid for services and the intended population served by each program. It will also provide performance reviews for each program, including any and all inspector general or Government Accountability Office reports. All of the information provided for the inventory will be updated regularly to provide for a more real-time accounting of Federal program dollars.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for support from my colleagues for this legislation. I think its time has come.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman's courtesy. I urge support for this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 3830, as amended, and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3830, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### USPS FAIRNESS ACT

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2382) to amend title 5, United States Code, to repeal the requirement that the United States Postal Service prepay future retirement benefits, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2382

*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 “USPS Fairness Act”.

#### SEC. 2. REPEAL OF REQUIRED PREPAYMENT OF FUTURE POSTAL SERVICE RETIREMENT BENEFITS.

Subsection (d) of section 8909a of title 5, United States Code, is repealed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the measure before us.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before us, the U.S. Postal Service Fairness Act, which I am a very proud cosponsor, would make a small but very important change to help address the dire financial condition of the Postal Service.

Common law requires the Postal Service to prefund the healthcare costs of its future retirees decades into the future. We are aware of no other entity, public or private, that faces this type of onerous financial burden. This mandate has cost the Postal Service billions of dollars since it was first imposed 14 years ago. The Postal Service has not made a payment into this fund since 2012.

This bill won't solve all the Postal Service's financial problems. Eliminating the mandate will take some paper liabilities off the books of the Postal Service, but it will do nothing to improve its cash position.

Without major structural reforms, the Postal Service will run out of cash in about 4 years. At that point, it will not be able to pay its own workers, and mail delivery would simply cease.

The Postal Service has taken significant steps to control its costs, including shrinking its workforce by close to 300,000 employees over the past 20 years. Yet, it has incurred net annual losses for 13 straight years.

The Postal Service currently funds universal mail service to nearly 159 million delivery points solely through the sale of postage. It is required to expand its network to deliver mail to approximately 1 million new addresses every year, even as the volume of mail continues to decline by a projected 45 billion mail pieces over the next decade.

So while I support this bill, more must be done to stabilize the finances of this important American institution on which so much of our population relies.

The Committee on Oversight and Reform, and Congressman CONNOLLY in particular, is working on comprehensive legislation to do just that. We will continue to work on comprehensive legislation after this bill passes.

Finally, I thank my good friend, Mr. DEFAZIO, for his tireless, passionate advocacy for this bill. I also thank Mr. REED and Mr. FITZPATRICK, on the other side of the aisle, as well as Ms. TORRES SMALL, for all of their hard work.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and rise in opposition to the bill. No one has invested more time than perhaps Mr. CONNOLLY or myself on postal reform. But I think it was Winston Churchill who said that no matter how beautiful the strategy, we must occasionally look at the results. And the results of this bill will do nothing to stop the post office from hemorrhaging money.

As we look at this prefunding—and I would agree with the gentlewoman—part of our solution, part of the bipartisan solution in the previous Congress, was to look at this prefunding issue and to try to address it. But to do it as a standalone bill, Mr. Speaker, is certainly not what the doctor ordered. Because even with this, the Postal Service continues to lose money each and every day.

I would say that if this was the bomb that solved their problem, it would have already been solved because they haven't been making the payments.

What the American people need to understand is, they are wanting relief from a payment that they are not mak-

ing, and it is going to make zero difference in terms of the viability of the Postal Service.

Now, we can all agree that there need to be major reforms, but this particular bill, and the way that it is being put forth, would actually hurt the potential progress we have in addressing real reforms. With that, I sadly rise in opposition to this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), the author of the legislation.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman.

Mr. Speaker, in a Christmas Eve bill with no legislative consideration, an otherwise noncontroversial bill, a provision was stuck in to say that the Postal Service should prefund 75 years of health benefits for retirees.

Now, think about that. That means people who have not yet been born, who have not yet gone to work for the Postal Service for a career and then might retire, we are paying for their healthcare now. Name one other entity in the United States of America, corporate or government, that does anything like this. It is nuts. And it is a piggybank.

The money isn't being put into a trust fund to pay for their health insurance. It is going into the maw of the Treasury. Who knows where it goes. It maybe makes the debt look a little smaller. That was why President Bush pushed for it. But it is accounting for the majority of the losses at the Postal Service.

□ 1515

So, yes, this will help relieve pressure on the Postal Service and on rates. And I think there are a lot of Americans who would like not to see the postal rates keep going up.

Now, there are 300 bipartisan cosponsors. There aren't too many things around here these days like that because I think many people realize this doesn't make much sense.

And the Postal Service is a critical service. It is not a government-run business to make a profit. It is the U.S. Postal Service.

Star routes don't make money. If you represent a rural area, you can't make money out there. FedEx and UPS won't go out there. They get the Postal Service to take the stuff out there. If we dismantle the Postal Service, then everybody in rural America is out of luck.

And there are a whole heck of a lot of other people who are dependent upon this: newspapers, rural newspapers, small businesses.

Many years ago, when I first started working on this, I posted something on the website: Tell me if you need the Postal Service.

People from all the small towns all around my very large district said: I sell on eBay. That is how I make a living out here in Powers, Oregon, or in