

great service to two Members of Congress, as well as the constituents of Kansas' Fourth Congressional District.

I speak for myself and the entire D.C. and district staff when I say we will miss Ralene as she retires from congressional service.

We are excited to see what the future holds for Ralene and wish her many blessings as she enjoys more time with her husband, Kansas State Representative Emil Bergquist, their children, and their grandchildren.

Congratulations on a wonderful career, and thank you from a grateful district.

#### HONORING CANTOR MARTHA NOVICK FOR HER SERVICE

(Mr. MALINOWSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Cantor Martha Novick, who for the last 36 years has filled Temple Emanu-El, in Westfield, New Jersey, with her warmth and her voice.

Over the years, she has brought hundreds of students to Washington, D.C., to introduce them to social justice, advocacy, and action.

She has performed leading roles for the Metropolitan Opera Association and the National Shakespeare Theatre and has appeared as a soloist with the Jerusalem Symphony, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and the Westfield Symphony.

Cantor Novick is a performer and an innovator, creating the Shabbat Hallelu worship service, which has become a national model, and working tirelessly to find a balance between traditional and modern musical styles of worship.

We are grateful to Cantor Novick for all she has done and for her commitment to Temple Emanu-El and its greater community in her new role as Cantor Emeritus.

□ 0915

#### WELCOME HOME CORPORAL LAVERNE "DIRK" VAN DYKE

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

Mr. HUIZENGA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to welcome home Corporal Laverne "Dirk" Van Dyke, who sacrificed his life during World War II, and was finally laid to rest in his and my hometown of Zeeland, Michigan, after nearly 80 years.

U.S. Army Air Force Corporal Dirk Van Dyke served as a flight engineer on a B-25C aircraft in the Pacific theater when his plane went missing. Corporal Van Dyke and six other crewmembers were last seen departing an airport on the reconnaissance mission off the coast of New Guinea on January 18, 1943.

Despite an extensive search, members of the Fifth Air Force were not able to locate the plane or the airmen. Many years later the wreckage was discovered in the mountains of Papua New Guinea, and the remains of Corporal Van Dyke and others were seemingly identified but were inconclusive. However, recently the Department of Defense officially considered Corporal Van Dyke accounted for.

Madam Speaker, we will never forget the selfless actions, sacrifice, and dedication to our country by these servicemembers and what they displayed.

To Corporal Van Dyke's family, our entire Nation holds you in our prayers as we get ready and prepare for Memorial Day, and as you welcome Dirk home as an American hero. Rest easy, Corporal Van Dyke. Rest easy.

#### COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2022

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1097, I call up the bill (H.R. 5129) to amend the Community Services Block Grant Act to reauthorize and modernize the Act, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1097, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Education and Labor printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 117-42, modified by the amendment printed in part E of House Report 117-320, is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 5129

*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 "Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2022".*

#### SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION.

*Subtitle B of title VI of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) is amended to read as follows:*

#### "Subtitle B—Community Services Block Grant Program

##### "SEC. 671. SHORT TITLE.

*"This subtitle may be cited as the 'Community Services Block Grant Act'.*

##### "SEC. 672. PURPOSES.

*"The purposes of this subtitle are—*

*"(1) to reduce poverty in the United States by supporting the activities of community action agencies and other community services network organizations that improve the economic security of low-income individuals and families and create new economic opportunities in the communities where they live; and*

*"(2) to accomplish the purposes described in paragraph (1) by—*

*"(A) strengthening community capabilities for identifying poverty conditions and opportunities to alleviate such conditions;*

*"(B) empowering residents of the low-income communities served to respond to the unique*

*problems and needs in their communities through their maximum feasible participation in advising, planning, and evaluating the programs, projects, and services funded under this subtitle;*

*"(C) using innovative community-based approaches that produce a measurable impact on the causes and effects of poverty, including whole family approaches that create opportunities for, and address the needs of, parents and children together;*

*"(D) coordinating Federal, State, local, and other assistance, including private resources, related to the reduction of poverty so that resources can be used in a manner responsive to local needs and conditions; and*

*"(E) broadening the resources directed to the elimination of poverty, so as to promote partnerships that include—*

*"(i) private, religious, charitable, and neighborhood-based organizations; and*

*"(ii) individuals, businesses, labor organizations, professional organizations, and other organizations engaged in expanding opportunities for all individuals.*

#### "SEC. 673. DEFINITIONS.

*"In this subtitle:*

*"(1) AGENCY-WIDE STRATEGIC PLAN.—The term 'agency-wide strategic plan' means a plan that has been adopted by an eligible entity in the previous 5 years and establishes goals that include meeting needs identified by the entity in consultation with residents of the community through a process of comprehensive community needs assessment.*

*"(2) POVERTY LINE.—The term 'poverty line' means the poverty guideline calculated by the Secretary from the most recent data available from the Bureau of the Census. The Secretary shall revise the poverty line annually (or at any shorter interval the Secretary determines to be feasible and desirable). The required revision shall be accomplished by multiplying the official poverty thresholds from the Bureau of the Census by the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers during the annual or other interval immediately preceding the time at which the revision is made.*

*"(3) COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY.—The term 'community action agency' means an eligible entity (which meets the requirements of paragraph (1) or (2), as appropriate, of section 680(c)) that delivers multiple programs, projects, and services to a variety of low-income individuals and families.*

*"(4) COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN.—The term 'community action plan' means a detailed plan, including a budget, that is adopted by an eligible entity, for expenditures of funds appropriated for a fiscal year under this subtitle for the activities supported directly or indirectly by such funds.*

*"(5) COMMUNITY SERVICES NETWORK ORGANIZATION.—The term 'community services network organization' means any of the following organizations funded under this subtitle:*

*"(A) A grantee.*

*"(B) An eligible entity.*

*"(C) A Tribal grantee.*

*"(D) An association with a membership composed primarily of grantees, eligible entities, Tribal grantees, or associations of grantees, eligible entities, or Tribal grantees.*

*"(6) DEPARTMENT.—The term 'Department' means the Department of Health and Human Services.*

*"(7) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term 'eligible entity' means an entity—*

*"(A) that is an eligible entity described in section 673(1) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (as in effect immediately before the date of the enactment of the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2022) as of the day before such date of enactment, or has been designated by the process described in section 680(a) (including an organization serving migrant or seasonal farmworkers that is so described or designated); and*

“(B) that has a tripartite board described in paragraph (1) or (2), as appropriate, of section 680(c).

“(8) EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE.—The term ‘evidence-based practice’ means an activity, strategy, or intervention that—

“(A) demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving relevant outcomes based on at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental study, or at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias, and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention; or

“(B) demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve relevant outcomes, and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention.

“(9) GRANTEE.—The term ‘grantee’ means a recipient of a grant under section 675 or 676.

“(10) PRIVATE, NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—The term ‘private, nonprofit organization’ means a domestic organization that is—

“(A) described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code; and

“(B) described in paragraph (1) or (2) of section 509(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

“(11) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

“(12) SERVICE AREA.—The term ‘service area’ means the unique geographic area which the State has designated as the area to be served by an eligible entity with funding under section 679(a)(1).

“(13) STATE.—The term ‘State’ means any of the several States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

“(14) TRIBAL GRANTEE.—The term ‘Tribal grantee’ means an Indian Tribe or Tribal organization, as defined in section 677(a), that receives a grant under section 677(c).

**“SEC. 674. AUTHORIZATION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.**

“(a) AUTHORIZATION OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary is authorized to carry out a community services block grant program and to make grants through the program, under sections 675 and 676, to States to support local community action plans carried out by eligible entities to reduce poverty in the communities served by such entities.

“(b) AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY.—The Secretary is authorized to carry out other community programs described in section 690.

**“SEC. 675. GRANTS TO TERRITORIES.**

“(a) APPORTIONMENT.—The Secretary shall apportion the amount reserved under section 691(c)(1) for each fiscal year on the basis of need, based on the most recent applicable data available from the Bureau of the Census to account for poverty, to eligible jurisdictions among Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

“(b) GRANTS.—The Secretary shall make a grant to each eligible jurisdiction to which subsection (a) applies for the amount apportioned under subsection (a).

“(c) PLANS FOR APPORTIONMENT TO TERRITORIES.—No later than six months after the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall make publicly available the Department’s plan for apportioning funds among territories, including factors that contribute to the calculation of need and methodology for calculating the apportionment for each territory. The Secretary must make publicly available any updates or changes to this plan no less frequently than any time new applicable data are available from the Bureau of Census.

**“SEC. 676. ALLOTMENTS AND GRANTS TO STATES.**

“(a) ALLOTMENTS IN GENERAL.—From the amount appropriated under section 691(a) for

each fiscal year and remaining after the Secretary makes the reservations required by section 691(c), the Secretary shall allot to each eligible State, subject to section 677, an amount that bears the same ratio to such remaining amount as the amount received by the State for fiscal year 1981 under section 221 of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 bore to the total amount received by all States for fiscal year 1981 under such section, except as provided in subsection (b).

“(b) MINIMUM ALLOTMENTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall allot to each State not less than ½ of 1 percent of the amount appropriated under section 691(a) for such fiscal year and remaining after the Secretary makes the reservations required by section 691(c).

“(2) YEARS WITH GREATER AVAILABLE FUNDS.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), if the amount appropriated under section 691(a) for a fiscal year and remaining after the Secretary makes the reservations required by section 691(c) exceeds \$900,000,000, no State shall receive under this section less than ¾ of 1 percent of the remaining amount.

“(c) GRANTS AND PAYMENTS.—Subject to section 677, the Secretary shall make grants to eligible States for the allotments described in subsections (a) and (b). The Secretary shall make payments for the grants in accordance with section 6503(a) of title 31, United States Code. The Secretary shall allocate the amounts allotted under subsections (a) and (b) on a quarterly basis at a minimum, notify the States of their respective allocations, and make each State’s first allocation amount in a fiscal year available for expenditure by the State no later than 30 days after receipt of an approved apportionment from the Office of Management and Budget and, for subsequent allocation amounts in the fiscal year, not later than 30 days after the start of the period for which the Secretary is allocating the funds.

“(d) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ‘State’ does not include Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

**“SEC. 677. PAYMENTS TO INDIAN TRIBES.**

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) INDIAN.—The term ‘Indian’ means a member of an Indian Tribe or Tribal organization.

“(2) INDIAN TRIBE OR TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.—The term ‘Indian Tribe or Tribal organization’ means a Tribe, band, or other organized group recognized in the State in which the Tribe, band, or group resides, or considered by the Secretary of the Interior to be an Indian Tribe or an Indian organization for any purpose.

“(b) RESERVATION.—

“(1) APPLICATION.—Paragraph (2) shall apply only if, with respect to any State, the Secretary—

“(A) receives a request from the governing body of an Indian Tribe or Tribal organization in such State that assistance under this subtitle be made available directly to such Indian Tribe or Tribal organization; and

“(B) determines that the members of such Indian Tribe or Tribal organization would be better served by means of grants made directly to such Indian Tribe or Tribal organization to provide benefits under this subtitle.

“(2) AMOUNT.—The Secretary shall reserve from amounts allotted to a State under section 676 for a fiscal year not less than the amount that bears the same ratio to the State allotment for the fiscal year as the population of all eligible Indians in that particular State for whom a determination has been made under paragraph (1) bears to the population of all individuals eligible for assistance through a grant made under section 676 to such State.

“(c) AWARDS.—The amount reserved by the Secretary on the basis of a determination made under subsection (b)(1)(B) shall be made available by grant to the Indian Tribe or Tribal orga-

nization serving the Indians for whom the determination has been made under subsection (b)(1)(B).

“(d) PLAN.—In order for an Indian Tribe or Tribal organization to be eligible for a grant award for a fiscal year under this section, the Indian Tribe or Tribal organization shall submit to the Secretary a plan for such fiscal year that meets such criteria as the Secretary may prescribe by regulation.

“(e) ALTERNATIVE PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT SYSTEM.—The Secretary may implement alternative requirements for implementation by an Indian Tribe or Tribal Organization of the requirements of section 686(a).

**“SEC. 678. STATE PLANS AND APPLICATIONS; COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS AND APPLICATIONS.**

“(a) STATE LEAD AGENCY.—

“(1) DESIGNATION.—The chief executive officer of a State desiring to receive a grant under section 675 or 676 shall designate, in an application submitted to the Secretary under subsection (b), an appropriate State agency that agrees to comply with the requirements of paragraph (2), to act as a lead agency for purposes of carrying out State activities under this subtitle.

“(2) DUTIES OF STATE LEAD AGENCIES.—The State lead agency—

“(A) shall be authorized by the chief executive officer to convene State agencies and coordinate information and activities funded under this subtitle;

“(B) shall develop the State plan to be submitted to the Secretary under subsection (b), which shall be based primarily on the community action plans of eligible entities, submitted to the State as a condition of receiving funding under this subtitle;

“(C) may revise an existing State plan for submission to the Secretary, if considered a major revision under criteria established by the Secretary in regulations required under section 689(a)(1);

“(D) in conjunction with the development or revision of the State plan as required under subsection (b)—

“(i) shall hold at least 1 hearing in the State on the proposed plan or a proposed major revision to a plan to provide to the public an opportunity to comment on the public record on the proposed use and distribution of funds under the plan;

“(ii) not less than 15 days before the hearing, shall distribute notice of the hearing and a copy of the proposed plan or major plan revision statewide to the public and directly to the chief executive officer and the chairperson of the board of each of the eligible entities (or designees) and other community services network organizations; and

“(iii) in the case of any proposed plan revision, without regard to whether it is a major revision, shall notify and distribute a copy of the proposed revision statewide directly to the chief executive officer and the chairperson of the board of each of the eligible entities (or designees) and other community services network organizations, before submission of such proposed revision to the Secretary; and

“(E) at least every 3 years, in conjunction with the development of the State plan, shall hold at least 1 legislative hearing.

“(b) STATE APPLICATION FOR STATE PROGRAM AND STATE PLAN.—Beginning with the first fiscal year following the transition period described in section 3 of the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2022, to be eligible to receive a grant under section 675 or 676, a State shall prepare and submit to the Secretary for approval an application containing a State plan covering a period of not more than 2 fiscal years. The application shall be submitted not later than 60 days before the beginning of the first fiscal year covered by the plan, and shall contain such information as the Secretary shall require, including—

“(1) a description of the manner in which funds made available through the grant under

section 675 or 676 will be used to carry out the State activities described in section 679(b) and the State's community action plans;

“(2) a description summarizing the community action plans of the eligible entities serving the State;

“(3) an assurance that the State and all eligible entities in the State will participate in a performance measurement system under section 686(a)(1)(A);

“(4) a plan for the State's oversight of eligible entities;

“(5) an assurance that the State will make payments to eligible entities in accordance with section 679(a)(2);

“(6) an assurance that no eligible entity in the State that received, in the previous fiscal year, funding through a grant made under section 675 or 676 will have funding reduced below the proportional share of funding the entity received from the State in the previous fiscal year, or eliminated, or its designation as an eligible entity terminated, unless, after providing the affected entity (or entities, as applicable) with notice and an opportunity for a hearing on the record, the State determines that cause exists for the reduction or elimination of funding or for termination of such designation, subject to review by the Secretary as provided in section 684(c); and—

“(A) in the case of failure of an eligible entity to comply with the terms of a corrective action plan relating to correction of a serious deficiency, except according to the procedures set forth in section 684(b); and

“(B) for purposes of this subsection, the term ‘cause’ means—

“(i) the failure of an eligible entity to comply with the terms of a corrective action plan relating to correction of a serious deficiency as described in subsection 684(b); or

“(ii) a statewide proportional distribution of funds provided through a community services block grant under this subtitle to respond to—

“(I) the results of the most recently available census or other appropriate demographic data;

“(II) severe economic dislocation; or

“(III) the designation of an eligible entity to serve a geographic area that has been unserved for at least the previous 5 years;

“(7) an assurance that each eligible entity serving the State has established procedures that permit a low-income individual or organization to petition for adequate representation of such individuals or organizations, respectively, on the board of the eligible entity;

“(8) a description of outcome measures to be used to measure State and eligible entity performance in achieving the goals of the State plan and the community action plans, respectively;

“(9) an assurance that the State will develop a policy on board vacancies in accordance with section 680(c)(3) and provide guidance to assist eligible entities in filling board vacancies; and

“(10) an assurance that the State and the eligible entities in the State will coordinate, and establish linkages between, governmental and other social services programs to assure the effective delivery of such services to low-income individuals and to avoid duplication of such services, and a description of how the State and the eligible entities will coordinate the provision of employment and training activities, as defined in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, in the State and in communities with entities providing activities through statewide and local workforce development systems under such Act.

“(c) APPROVAL.—The Secretary shall notify the chief executive officer of each State submitting an application containing a State plan under this section of the approval, disapproval, or approval in part, of the application, not later than 60 days after receiving the application. In the event of a full or partial disapproval, the Secretary's notification shall include a description of changes necessary for final approval. In

the event of a partial approval, the Secretary may allow grantee use of funds for activities included in the portions of the plan which the Secretary has approved. In the event a State application fails to be approved in whole or in part before the end of the third month of the period covered by such plan the Secretary may award funding as specified in section 684(a)(5)(B).

“(d) PUBLIC INSPECTION.—Each plan and major revision to a State plan prepared under this section shall be distributed for public inspection and comment. A hearing on such plan or major revision shall be held as required under subparagraphs (C) and (D) of subsection (a)(2), but a State application for merger, combination, or privatization of entities under section 680(b) shall not be considered a major revision.

“(e) ELIGIBLE ENTITY APPLICATION AND COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN.—Beginning with the first fiscal year following the transition period described in section 3 of the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2022, to be eligible to receive a subgrant under section 679(a), each eligible entity shall prepare and submit to the State an application containing a community action plan or plans covering a period of not more than 2 fiscal years. Such application shall be submitted in a reasonable and timely manner as required by the State. The application shall contain information on the intended implementation of the eligible entity's activities, including demonstrating how the activities will—

“(1) meet needs identified in the most recent comprehensive community needs assessment which has been conducted in the previous 3 years and which may be coordinated with community needs assessments conducted for other programs; and

“(2) achieve the purposes of this subtitle through programs, projects, and services.

**“SEC. 679. STATE AND LOCAL USES OF FUNDS.**

“(a) STATE SUBGRANTS TO ELIGIBLE ENTITIES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A State that receives a grant under section 675 or 676 shall use not less than 90 percent to make subgrants to eligible entities that enable the entities to implement programs, projects, and services for a purpose described in section 672.

“(2) OBLIGATIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—

“(A) DATE OF OBLIGATION.—The State shall obligate the funds for subgrants described in paragraph (1) and make such subgrants available for expenditure by eligible entities not later than the later of—

“(i) the 30th day after the date on which the State receives from the Secretary a notice of funding availability for the State's application under section 678 for a first or subsequent allocation for a fiscal year; or

“(ii) the first day of the State program year for which funds are to be expended under the State application.

“(B) EXCEPTION.—If funds are appropriated to carry out this subtitle for less than a full fiscal year, a State may request an exception from the Secretary from the requirement to make subgrants available for expenditure by eligible entities in accordance with subparagraph (A), except that a State may not accumulate more than one fiscal quarter's worth of funding without making such funds available for expenditure by eligible entities.

“(C) AVAILABILITY.—Funds allocated to eligible entities through subgrants made under paragraph (1) for a fiscal year shall be available for obligation by the eligible entity during that fiscal year and the succeeding fiscal year.

“(b) STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES.—

“(1) USE OF REMAINDER.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—A State that receives a grant under section 675 or 676 shall, after carrying out subsection (a), use the remainder of the grant funds for activities described in the State's application under section 678(b) as described in subparagraph (B) and for administra-

tive expenses subject to the limitations in paragraph (2).

“(B) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—After applying subsection (a), the State may use the remaining grant funds for the purposes of—

“(i) providing to eligible entities training and technical assistance and resources to respond to statewide or regional conditions that create economic insecurity, including emergency conditions;

“(ii) supporting professional development activities for eligible entities that enhance the skills of their local personnel (including members of the board of directors of such entities) in organizational management, service delivery, and program development and management, giving priority to activities carried out through partnerships of such entities with institutions of higher education;

“(iii) supporting information and communication resources for the comprehensive community needs assessments described in section 678(e)(1);

“(iv) supporting performance measurement systems consistent with the requirements of section 686;

“(v) promoting coordination and cooperation among eligible entities in the State, including supporting activities of a statewide association of community services network organizations;

“(vi) providing training and technical assistance and resources to assist eligible entities in building and using evidence of effectiveness in reducing poverty conditions, including entities participating in or proposing to participate in the Community Action Innovations Program established under section 682(a)(2);

“(vii) supporting efforts of eligible entities to identify and respond to physical and behavioral health challenges (including substance use disorders) experienced by low-income individuals, families, and communities; and

“(viii) analyzing the distribution of funds made available under this subtitle within the State to determine if such funds have been targeted to the areas of greatest need.

“(2) ADMINISTRATIVE CAP.—

“(A) LIMITATION.—Of the amounts remaining after the required funding for subgrants described under subsection (a)(1), a State shall not spend more than 5 percent of its grant under section 675 or 676 for administrative expenses.

“(B) DEFINITION.—In this paragraph, the term ‘administrative expenses’—

“(i) means the costs incurred by the State's lead agency for carrying out planning and management activities, including monitoring, oversight, and reporting as required by this Act; and

“(ii) does not include the cost of activities conducted under paragraph (1)(B) other than monitoring.

“(c) ELIGIBLE ENTITY USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that receives a subgrant under subsection (a)(1) shall use the subgrant funds to carry out a community action plan that shall include—

“(1) programs, projects, and services that provide low-income individuals and families with opportunities—

“(A) to identify and develop strategies to remove obstacles and solve problems that block access to opportunity, economic stability, and achievement of self-sufficiency;

“(B) to secure and retain meaningful employment at a family supporting wage;

“(C) to secure an adequate education, improve literacy and language skills, and obtain job-related skills;

“(D) to make effective use of available income and build assets;

“(E) to obtain and maintain adequate housing and a safe and healthy living environment;

“(F) to address health needs and improve health and well-being;

“(G) to obtain emergency materials or other assistance to meet immediate and urgent needs, including to meet the collective needs of a community, and prevent greater or more prolonged economic instability;

“(H) to secure and identify assistance related to reducing energy expenses and reducing energy consumption; and

“(I) to achieve greater participation in community affairs; and

“(2) activities that develop and maintain—

“(A) partnerships for the purpose of addressing community, economic, and social conditions of poverty and promoting healthy communities, between the eligible entity and—

“(i) State and local public entities; and

“(ii) private partners, including statewide and local businesses, associations of private employers, and private charitable and civic organizations;

“(B) linkages with public and private organizations for coordinating initiatives, services, and investments so as to avoid duplication, and maximize the effective use, of community resources for creating economic opportunity, including developing lasting social and economic assets; and

“(C) new investments in the community to reduce the incidence of poverty, including developing lasting social and economic assets.

“(d) ELIGIBILITY CRITERION.—

“(1) Subject to paragraph (2), 200 percent of the poverty line shall be used as a criterion of eligibility for services, assistance, or resources provided directly to individuals or families through the community services block grant program established under this subtitle.

“(2) A State or Tribal grantee may establish procedures to ensure that a participant in a program, project, or service funded under this subtitle remains eligible to participate as long as the participant is successfully progressing toward achievement of the goals of the program, project, or service, regardless of the income eligibility criteria used to determine the participant's initial eligibility.

#### “SEC. 680. ELIGIBLE ENTITIES AND TRIPARTITE BOARDS.

“(a) DESIGNATION AND REDESIGNATION OF ELIGIBLE ENTITIES IN UNSERVED AREAS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—If any geographic area of a State is not, or ceases to be, served by an eligible entity, the State lead agency may, in consultation with local officials and organizations representing the area, solicit one or more applications and designate a new community action agency to provide programs, projects, and services to the area, that is—

“(A) a community action agency that is a private, nonprofit organization and that is geographically located in an area in reasonable proximity of, or contiguous to, the unserved area and that is already providing similar programs, projects, and services, and that has demonstrated financial capacity to manage and account for Federal funds; or

“(B) if no community action agency described in subparagraph (A) is available, a private, nonprofit organization (which may include an eligible entity) that is geographically located in, or is in reasonable proximity to, the unserved area and that is capable of providing a broad range of programs, projects, and services designed to achieve the purposes of this subtitle as stated in section 672.

“(2) REQUIREMENT.—In order to serve as the eligible entity for the service area, an entity described in paragraph (1) shall agree to ensure that the governing board of directors of the entity will meet the requirements of subsection (c).

“(3) COMMUNITY.—A service area referred to in this subsection or a portion thereof shall be treated as a community for purposes of this subtitle.

“(4) INTERIM DESIGNATION.—If no entity that meets the requirements of paragraphs (1) and (2) is available for designation as a permanent eligible entity, the State may designate a private, nonprofit agency (or public agency if a private, nonprofit is not available) on an interim basis for no more than 1 year while the State completes a selection process for a permanent eligible entity that meets the requirements of para-

graphs (1) and (2). An agency designated on an interim basis shall be capable of providing programs, projects, and services designed to achieve the purposes of this subtitle as stated in section 672 and have demonstrated financial capacity to manage and account for Federal funds, and may be designated as a permanent eligible entity only if, by the time of permanent designation, it meets all the requirements of paragraphs (1) and (2).

“(b) MERGER, COMBINATION, OR PRIVATIZATION OF ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—If an eligible entity receiving subgrant funds makes a determination described in paragraph (2) and notifies the State, the State—

“(A) shall assist in developing a plan for implementing such merger, combination, or privatization, including a budget for transitional costs not to exceed 2 years in duration;

“(B) in the case of a merger or combination, shall provide to the merged or combined entity an amount of funding under section 679(a)(1) equal to the sum of amounts the merged or combined entities each received under section 679(a)(1) immediately before the merger or combination.

“(2) COVERED MERGER, COMBINATION, OR PRIVATIZATION.—This subsection applies when—

“(A) 2 or more eligible entities determine that the geographic areas of a State that they serve can be more effectively served under common control or shared management; or

“(B) a public organization that is an eligible entity determines that the area it serves can be more effectively served if it becomes a private, nonprofit organization.

“(3) PLANS.—A State may establish requirements for merger, combination, or privatization plans and for a determination that the merged, combined, or privatized entity, or entities, will be capable of conducting a broad range of programs, projects, and services designed to achieve the purposes of this subtitle as stated in section 672 consistent with the comprehensive community needs assessments for the areas served.

“(4) STATE DETERMINATION.—If a State determines that a merged, combined, or privatized entity or entities will be capable of conducting a broad range of programs, projects, and services as specified in paragraph (3), it shall designate the merged, combined, or privatized entity or entities to serve the area(s) in question without soliciting applications from other entities.

“(c) TRIPARTITE BOARDS.—

“(1) PRIVATE, NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.—

“(A) BOARD.—In order for a private, nonprofit organization to be considered to be an eligible entity for purposes of section 673(7), the entity shall be governed by a tripartite board of directors described in subparagraph (C) that fully participates in the development, planning, implementation, oversight, and evaluation of the programs, projects, and services carried out or provided through the subgrant made under section 679(a)(1) and all activities of the entity.

“(B) SELECTION.—The members of the board referred to in subparagraph (A) shall be selected by the private, nonprofit organization.

“(C) COMPOSITION OF BOARD.—The board shall be composed so as to assure that—

“(i) 1/3 of the members of the board are elected public officials holding office on the date of selection, or their representatives (but if an elected public official chooses not to serve, such official may designate a representative to serve as the voting board member);

“(ii) not fewer than 1/3 of the members are persons chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures adequate to assure that such members are representative of low-income individuals and families in the service area; and if selected to represent a specific geographic area, such member resides in that area; and

“(iii) the remainder of the members may be comprised of representatives from business, industry, labor, religious, educational, charitable, or other significant groups and interests in the community.

“(D) EXPERTISE.—The eligible entity shall ensure that the members of the board are provided resources, which may include contracted services with individuals and organizations with expertise in financial management, accounting, and law, to support the work of the board.

“(E) COMPLIANCE WITH TAX-EXEMPT AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—The board of a private, nonprofit organization shall ensure that the board operates and conducts activities under the subgrant made under section 679(a)(1) in a manner that complies with—

“(i) the requirements for maintaining tax-exempt status under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. 501(a)) regarding the governance of charities under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)); and

“(ii) applicable requirements of State nonprofit law.

“(2) PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS.—

“(A) BOARD.—In order for a local public (governmental) entity to be considered to be an eligible entity for purposes of section 673(7), the entity shall ensure that the programs, projects, and services carried out or provided through the subgrant made under section 679(a)(1) are administered under the supervision of a tripartite board described in subparagraph (C) that fully participates in the development, planning, implementation, oversight, and evaluation of such programs, projects, and services.

“(B) SELECTION.—The members of the board referred to in subparagraph (A) shall be selected by the local public entity.

“(C) COMPOSITION OF BOARD.—The board shall be composed so as to assure that—

“(i) not more than 1/3 of the members of the board are employees or officials, including elected officials, of the unit of government in which the organization is located;

“(ii) not fewer than 1/3 of the members are persons chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures adequate to assure that such members are representative of low-income individuals and families in the service area; and if selected to represent a specific geographic area, such member resides in that area; and

“(iii) the remainder of the members may be comprised of representatives from business, industry, labor, religious, educational, charitable, or other significant groups and interests in the community.

“(D) EXPERTISE.—The eligible entity shall ensure that the members of the board are provided resources, which may include contracted services with individuals and organizations with expertise in financial management, accounting, and law, to support the work of the board.

“(E) COMPLIANCE WITH STATE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICY.—The board of a public organization shall ensure that the board operates in a manner that complies with State requirements for open meetings, financial transparency, and State open records policy.

“(3) BOARD VACANCIES.—To fulfill the requirements under this section, an eligible entity shall fill a board vacancy not later than 6 months after such vacancy arises. In the event that an eligible entity is unable to fill a board vacancy in the 6-month period, the entity shall certify to the State that it is making a good faith effort to fill the vacancy and shall receive 1 additional 6-month period to fill such vacancy.

“(4) SAFEGUARD.—Neither the Federal Government nor a State or local government shall require a religious organization to alter its form of internal governance, except (for purposes of administration of the community services block grant program) as provided in section 680(c).

“(d) OPERATIONS AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD.—The duties of a board described in paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (c) shall include—

“(1) in the case of a board for a private, nonprofit organization that is an eligible entity, having legal and financial responsibility for administering and overseeing the eligible entity, including making proper use of Federal funds;

“(2) establishing terms for officers and adopting a code of ethical conduct, including a conflict of interest policy for board members;

“(3) participating in each comprehensive community needs assessment, developing and adopting for the corresponding eligible entity an agency-wide strategic plan, and preparing the community action plan for the use of funds under this subtitle;

“(4) approving the eligible entity’s operating budget;

“(5) reviewing all major policies such that—

“(A) for private, nonprofit organizations that are eligible entities, a review includes conducting annual performance reviews of the eligible entity’s chief executive officer (or individual holding an equivalent position); and

“(B) for local public entities that are eligible entities, a review includes participating in annual performance reviews of the eligible entity’s chief executive officer (or individual holding an equivalent position);

“(6) performing oversight of the eligible entity to include—

“(A) conducting assessments of the eligible entity’s progress in carrying out programmatic and financial provisions in the community action plan; and

“(B) in the case of any required corrective action, reviewing the eligible entity’s plans and progress in remedying identified deficiencies; and

“(7) concerning personnel policies and procedures—

“(A) in the case of private, nonprofit organizations that are eligible entities, adopting personnel policies and procedures, including for hiring, annual evaluation, compensation, and termination, of the eligible entity’s chief executive officer (or individual holding a similar position); and

“(B) in the case of local public entities that are eligible entities, reviewing personnel policies and procedures, including for hiring, annual evaluation, compensation, and termination, of the eligible entity’s chief executive officer (or individual holding a similar position).

“(e) CONFLICT OF INTEREST.—In establishing the conflict of interest policy described in subsection (d)(2), a board shall ensure that such policy—

“(1) requires a board member to recuse himself from any discussion, deliberations, and votes relating to any contract or transaction from which the following would receive a direct financial benefit from the eligible entity:

“(A) such board member;

“(B) the immediate family member of such board member; or

“(C) an organization or a business from which such board member, or an immediate family of such board member, receives a direct financial benefit;

“(2) prohibits a board member from receiving compensation for serving on the board from the eligible entity other than for reasonable expenses, except that a board member’s receipt of an economic benefit from the eligible entity because such member is eligible to receive benefits and services under this subtitle shall not be considered to be compensation for purposes of this subsection; and

“(3) ensures all activities funded under this subtitle are conducted free of personal or family favoritism.”

#### “SEC. 681. OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES.

“(a) OFFICE.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish an Office of Community Services in the Department to carry out the functions of this subtitle.

“(2) DIRECTOR.—The Office shall be headed by a Director (referred to in this section as the ‘Director’).

“(b) GRANTS, CONTRACTS, AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary, acting through the Director, shall carry out the functions of

this subtitle through grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements.

#### “SEC. 682. TRAINING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND RELATED ACTIVITIES.

“(a) ACTIVITIES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall—

“(A) use amounts reserved under section 691(c)(2) for training, technical assistance, planning, assessment, and performance measurement, as described in this section and in sections 684 and 686, to assist States, eligible entities, Tribal grantees, and other community services network organizations in—

“(i) building and using evidence of effectiveness in reducing poverty conditions, including through development and dissemination of information about clearinghouses and other resources that identify relevant evidence-based initiatives, for use in connection with the Community Action Innovations Program established under paragraph (2);

“(ii) carrying out professional development activities that expand the capacity of eligible entities and Tribal grantees;

“(iii) carrying out performance measurement, data collection, and reporting activities related to programs, projects, and services carried out under this subtitle; and

“(iv) correcting programmatic deficiencies, including such deficiencies of eligible entities or Tribal grantees; and

“(B) distribute the amounts reserved under section 691(c)(2)(A) through grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements with eligible entities, Tribal grantees, and other community services network organizations described in subsection (b) for—

“(i) professional development for key community services network organization personnel;

“(ii) activities to improve community services network organization programs, financial management, compliance, and governance practices (including practices related to performance management information systems);

“(iii) activities that train community services network organizations and their staff and board members to effectively address the needs of low-income families and communities through place-based strategies that address local causes and conditions of poverty through coordinated investment and integrated service delivery; and

“(iv) activities that train community services network organizations in building and using evidence of effectiveness in reducing poverty conditions and that support effective administration of funds under the Community Action Innovations Program established under paragraph (2).

“(2) INNOVATIVE AND EVIDENCE-BASED PROJECTS TO REDUCE POVERTY.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall use amounts reserved under section 691(c)(3) for a Community Action Innovations Program to—

“(i) award grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to eligible entities, Tribal grantees, and other community services network organizations, including consortia of such entities, grantees, or organizations to facilitate innovation and use of evidence-based practice designed to reduce poverty conditions, including through whole family approaches that create opportunities for, and address the needs of, parents and children together; and

“(ii) disseminate results for public use.

“(B) PROJECTS.—The Secretary shall award funds from its Community Action Innovations Program for projects to enable—

“(i) replication or expansion of innovative practices with demonstrated evidence of effectiveness, with priority given to those with the strongest evidence base as determined through a broad review of available studies; or

“(ii) testing of innovative practices to determine their effectiveness, with priority given to those incorporating rigorous, independent evaluation to further build the evidence base.

“(C) USE OF FUNDS.—The funds reserved for use under this paragraph may be used by

awardees for resources or activities necessary to replicate, expand, or test innovative and evidence-based practices, including costs of training and technical assistance, evaluation, data collection, and technology.

“(D) EXPENSES.—The funds reserved for use under this paragraph may be used for reasonable expenses of awardees, associated with administration of projects and dissemination of their results.

“(E) AWARDS AND OBLIGATION.—The Secretary shall award and obligate funds reserved for projects under this paragraph during the first program year for which the funds are appropriated. Grant funds awarded under this paragraph shall remain available for expenditure by the awardee not later than 36 months after the date of award by the Secretary, unless a longer period of availability is approved by the Secretary based on extenuating circumstances and demonstrated evidence of effectiveness.

“(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES, TRIBAL GRANTEES, AND OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICES NETWORK ORGANIZATIONS.—Eligible entities, Tribal grantees, and other community services network organizations referred to in subsection (a)(1)(B) shall include such entities, grantees, and organizations (and their partners, including institutions of higher education) with demonstrated expertise in providing training for individuals and organizations on methods of effectively addressing the needs of low-income families and communities and, if appropriate, expertise in Tribal issues.

“(c) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROCESS.—The process for determining the training and technical assistance to be carried out under subsection (a)(1) shall—

“(1) ensure that the needs of eligible entities, Tribal grantees, and programs relating to improving program quality (including quality of financial management practices) are addressed to the maximum extent feasible; and

“(2) incorporate mechanisms to ensure responsiveness to local needs, including an ongoing procedure for obtaining input from the national and State networks of eligible entities.

#### “SEC. 683. STATE MONITORING OF ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.

“In order to determine whether eligible entities receiving subgrants under this subtitle meet performance goals, administrative standards, financial management requirements, and other requirements under this subtitle, the State shall conduct the following reviews of eligible entities:

“(1) A full onsite review of each eligible entity at least once during each 3-year period.

“(2) An onsite review of each newly designated eligible entity immediately after the completion of the first year in which such entity receives funds through the community services block grant program under this subtitle.

“(3) Followup reviews, including onsite reviews scheduled in a corrective action plan (including return visits), in a calendar quarter for eligible entities with programs, projects, or services that fail to meet the State’s performance criteria, standards, financial management requirements, or other significant requirements established under this subtitle.

“(4) Other reviews as appropriate, including reviews of eligible entities with programs, projects, and services that have had other Federal, State, or local grants (other than assistance provided under this subtitle) terminated for cause.

“(5) In conducting reviews, including as required by paragraph (1), a State may conduct a remote (including virtual) review of an eligible entity in extraordinary circumstances if approved by the Secretary on a case-by-case basis.

#### “SEC. 684. ASSESSMENTS; CORRECTIVE ACTION; REDUCTION OR ELIMINATION OF FUNDING.

“(a) ASSESSMENTS OF STATES BY THE SECRETARY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct, in not fewer than 1/5 of the States in each

fiscal year, assessments (including investigations) of State compliance with this subtitle, including requirements relating to the use of funds received under this subtitle, requirements applicable to State plans submitted under section 678(b), and requirements of section 679(a)(2).

“(2) REPORT TO STATES.—The Secretary shall submit to each State assessed, and make available to the public on the Department’s website, a report containing—

“(A) the results of such assessment; and

“(B)(i) recommendations for improvements designed to enhance the benefit and impact of the activities carried out with such funds; and

“(ii) in the event a serious deficiency is found regarding a State’s compliance with this subtitle, including requirements relating to the use of funds received under this subtitle, a proposed corrective action plan.

“(3) STATE RESPONSE.—Not later than 45 days after receiving a report under paragraph (2)—

“(A) a State that received recommendations under paragraph (2)(B)(i) shall submit to the Secretary and make available to the public on the State lead agency’s website a plan of action in response to the recommendations; and

“(B) a State that received a proposed corrective action plan under paragraph (2)(B)(ii) shall agree to implement the corrective action plan proposed by the Secretary or propose to the Secretary and make available to the public on the State lead agency’s website a different corrective action plan, developed by the State in a timely manner that the State will implement upon approval by the Secretary.

“(4) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary shall submit the results of the assessments annually, as part of the report submitted by the Secretary in accordance with section 686(b)(2).

“(5) ENFORCEMENT.—

“(A) REDUCTION OR ELIMINATION OF FUNDING.—If the Secretary determines, in a final decision based on an assessment conducted under this section, that a State fails to meet the requirements of this subtitle, the Secretary may, after providing adequate notice and an opportunity for a hearing, initiate proceedings to reduce or eliminate the amount of funding apportioned and allocated to the State as described in section 675 or 676, as applicable (and, if necessary, deobligate such funding).

“(B) DIRECT AWARDS TO OTHER ENTITIES.—

“(i) REDUCTION OR ELIMINATION OF STATE FUNDING; LACK OF APPROVED STATE PLAN.—If the Secretary reduces or eliminates funding to a State under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall award funding directly as provided under clauses (ii) and (iii). If, for a particular fiscal year, a State plan is not approved by the Secretary in accordance with section 678(c), the Secretary may award funding directly as provided under clauses (ii) and (iii).

“(ii) DIRECT FUNDING TO ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—If funding specified in section 679(a)(1) is reduced or eliminated due to the Secretary’s reduction or elimination of funding under subparagraph (A), or if the Secretary chooses to award funding directly due to the lack of an approved State plan as authorized in clause (i), the Secretary shall award financial assistance in the amount of such reduced or eliminated funding, or in the amount the State would have received for the purposes specified in section 679(a)(1) had a State plan been approved, directly (by grant or cooperative agreement) to affected eligible entities (provided that any such entity has not had its funding under this subtitle eliminated or its designation as an eligible entity terminated by the State in accordance with subsections (b) and (c) of section 684) to carry out the activities described in section 679(c). In awarding such funding, the Secretary shall ensure that each such affected eligible entity receives the same proportionate share of funding under section 679(a)(1) that it received in the previous fiscal year.

“(iii) STATEWIDE FUNDS.—If funding specified in section 679(b) is reduced or eliminated due to

the Secretary’s reduction or elimination of funding under subparagraph (A), or if the Secretary chooses to award funding directly due to the lack of an approved State plan as authorized in clause (i), the Secretary shall reserve an amount equal to the amount of such reduced or eliminated funds, or to the amount the State would have received for the purposes specified in section 679(b) had a State plan been approved. The Secretary may use such amount for such purposes directly or through a grant or cooperative agreement to community services network organizations (other than the State itself).

“(iv) REDUCTION.—In the case of expenditure as provided in accordance with this subparagraph, the Secretary shall reduce funding the State would otherwise have received under section 675 or 676 (and, if necessary, deobligate such funding) for the appropriate fiscal year by an amount equal to the amount so expended.

“(6) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary, through the Department’s own employees or contractors (rather than under grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements issued under section 682), shall provide training and technical assistance to States with respect to the development or implementation of the States’ corrective action plans.

“(b) DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBLE ENTITY FAILURE TO COMPLY.—

“(1) CORRECTIVE ACTION BY ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—If the State determines, on the basis of a review pursuant to section 683 or section 685, that there is a serious deficiency regarding an eligible entity’s compliance with this subtitle, the State shall inform the entity of the serious deficiencies that shall be corrected and provide technical assistance for the corrective action.

“(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY CORRECTIVE ACTION PLANS.—An eligible entity that is found to have a serious deficiency under paragraph (1) shall develop, in a timely manner, a corrective action plan that shall be subject to the approval of the State, and that shall specify—

“(A) the deficiencies to be corrected;

“(B) the actions to be taken to correct such deficiencies; and

“(C) the timetable for accomplishment of the corrective actions specified.

“(3) FINAL DECISION.—If the State determines, on the basis of a final decision in a review conducted under section 683, that an eligible entity fails to comply with the terms of a corrective action plan under paragraph (2) relating to correction of a serious deficiency for the eligible entity, the State may, after providing adequate notice and an opportunity for a hearing, initiate proceedings to withhold, reduce, or eliminate the funding provided under section 679(a)(1) to the eligible entity (including, in the case of elimination of funding, terminating the designation under this subtitle of the eligible entity) unless the entity corrects the serious deficiency.

“(c) REVIEW.—A State’s decision to withhold, reduce, or eliminate funding, or to terminate the designation of an eligible entity (or eligible entities, as applicable) may be reviewed by the Secretary. Upon request by a community services network organization, the Secretary shall review such a determination. The review shall be completed not later than 60 days after the Secretary receives from the State all necessary documentation relating to the determination. The State shall submit such documentation within a reasonable time frame established by the Secretary.

“(d) DIRECT ASSISTANCE.—Whenever the Secretary determines that a State has violated the State plan described in section 678(b) (including the assurance described in section 678(b)(6)) and the State has reduced or eliminated the funding provided under section 679(a) to any eligible entity or entities or terminated the eligible entity designation of any eligible entity or entities before the completion of the State proceedings described in section 678(b)(6) (including, if applicable, the proceedings required by subsection (b)) and the Secretary’s review as required by

subsection (c), the Secretary may provide financial assistance under this subtitle to the affected eligible entity or entities directly until the violation is corrected by the State. In such a case, the Secretary may reduce funding the State would otherwise have received under section 675 or 676 (and, if necessary, deobligate such funding) for the appropriate fiscal year by an amount equal to the financial assistance provided directly by the Secretary to such eligible entity or entities.

“SEC. 685. STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL CONTROLS AND AUDITS.

“(a) FISCAL CONTROLS, PROCEDURES, AUDITS, AND INSPECTIONS.—A State that receives funds under this subtitle shall—

“(1) establish fiscal control and fund accounting procedures necessary to assure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, Federal funds paid to the State under this subtitle, including procedures for monitoring the funds provided under this subtitle;

“(2) ensure that cost and accounting standards of the Office of Management and Budget apply to a subrecipient of the funds under this subtitle;

“(3) in accordance with subsections (b) and (c), prepare, not less than once each year, an audit of the expenditures of the State of amounts received under this subtitle; and

“(4) make appropriate books, documents, papers, and records available to the Secretary and the Comptroller General of the United States, or any of their duly authorized representatives, for examination, copying, or mechanical reproduction, on or off the premises of the appropriate entity, upon a reasonable request for the items.

“(b) INDEPENDENT ENTITY.—Subject to subsection (c), each audit required by subsection (a)(3) shall be conducted by an entity independent of any agency administering activities or services under this subtitle and shall be conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

“(c) SINGLE AUDIT REQUIREMENTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Any audit under this subsection shall be conducted in the manner and to the extent provided in chapter 75 of title 31, United States Code (commonly known as the ‘Single Audit Act Amendments of 1984’) except in the event a serious financial deficiency is identified.

“(2) SERIOUS FINANCIAL DEFICIENCY.—In the event that such a deficiency is identified, the Secretary shall order—

“(A) an audit conducted as described in subsection (a); or

“(B) an audit of each of the accounts involved, in accordance with subsections (b) and (d).

“(d) SUBMISSION OF COPIES.—Not later than 30 days after the completion of each audit in a State as required in subsection (a)(3), the chief executive officer of the State shall submit copies of such audit, at no charge, to any eligible entity that was the subject of the audit, to the legislature of the State, and to the Secretary.

“(e) REPAYMENTS.—If the Secretary, after review of the audit, finds that a State has not expended an amount of funds in accordance with this subtitle, the Secretary is authorized to withhold funds from a State under this subtitle until the State remedies the improperly expended funds for the original purposes for which the grant funds were intended.

“(f) RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS.—The Secretary shall respond in an expeditious manner to complaints of a substantial or serious nature that a State has failed to use grant funds received under section 675 or 676 or to carry out State activities under this subtitle in accordance with the provisions of this subtitle.

“(g) INVESTIGATIONS.—Whenever the Secretary determines that there is a pattern of complaints regarding failures described in subsection (f) or a complaint of a serious deficiency concerning any State, the Secretary shall conduct an investigation of the use of the funds received under this subtitle by such State in order

to ensure compliance with the provisions of this subtitle.

**“SEC. 686. ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.”**

**“(a) STATE ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—**

**“(1) PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT.—**

**“(A) IN GENERAL.—**Beginning with the first fiscal year following the transition period described in section 3 of the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2022, each State that receives funds under this subtitle shall participate, and shall ensure that all eligible entities in the State participate, in a results-oriented performance measurement system that the Secretary is satisfied meets the requirements of section 689(b)(1).

**“(B) SUBCONTRACTORS.—**The State may elect to have subcontractors of the eligible entities under this subtitle participate in the results-oriented performance measurement system. If the State makes that election, references in this section to eligible entities shall be considered to include such subcontractors.

**“(C) ELIGIBLE ENTITY REPORTS.—**Eligible entities shall provide the results measured by their performance measurement system and such other reports as the State may require.

**“(2) ANNUAL REPORT.—**Each State receiving funds under this subtitle shall annually prepare, and submit to the Secretary by March 31 of each year, a report on the performance of the State and eligible entities in the State, including achievement with respect to performance measurements that were used by community services network organizations in the State for the previous fiscal year. Each State shall also include in the report—

**“(A)** an accounting of the expenditure of funds received by the State through the community services block grant program, including an accounting of funds spent on administrative or indirect costs by the State and the eligible entities and funds spent by the eligible entities on local programs, projects, and services;

**“(B)** information on the number and characteristics of participants served under this subtitle in the State, based on data collected from the eligible entities;

**“(C)** a summary describing the training and technical assistance offered by the State under subparagraph (B) of section 679(b)(1) during the year covered by the report;

**“(D)** information on the total budget and activities of the eligible entities receiving subgrants from the State under this subtitle, including local and private resources available for a purpose described in section 672; and

**“(E)** a report on the manner in which the State and eligible entities and other recipients of funds under this subtitle have implemented results-oriented management practices based on their performance measurement systems.

**“(b) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—**

**“(1) CONTENTS.—**Not later than September 30 of each year, the Secretary shall, directly or by grant or contract, prepare a report including—

**“(A)** the information included in the State annual reports under subsection (a)(2) for the preceding fiscal year;

**“(B)** a report on the performance of the Department in the preceding year regarding carrying out critical roles and responsibilities under this subtitle, including with regard to timeliness in allocating and making appropriated funds available for expenditure to States, approvals or notifications to States concerning State plans and plan revisions, and conducting assessments of States and implementation of State corrective action plans (including status of and follow-up on recommendations made in previous State assessments and corrective action plans);

**“(C)** a description of the training and technical assistance activities funded by the Secretary under section 682 and the results of those activities; and

**“(D)** a report on the Community Action Innovations Program authorized under section

682(a)(2), including a description of training and technical assistance funded by the Secretary, the rationale for projects that received support, a description of funded activities and their results, and a summary of ways in which the Program has expanded use of evidence-based practice or contributed to building the evidence base designed to reduce poverty conditions.

**“(2) SUBMISSION.—**The Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives and to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate the report described in paragraph (1) and any recommendations the Secretary may have with respect to such report.

**“(3) ELECTRONIC DATA SYSTEM FOR REPORTS TO STATES AND ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—**The Secretary, through the Department’s own employees or contractors (rather than under grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements issued under section 682), shall provide technical assistance, including support for the development and maintenance of an electronic data system for the reports under this section, to the States and eligible entities to enhance the quality and timeliness of reports submitted under this subtitle. The system shall be coordinated and consistent with the data systems established for other programs of the Department that are managed by eligible entities, including all programs of the Administration for Children and Families or successor administrative units in which the office is located.

**“SEC. 687. LIMITATIONS ON USE OF FUNDS.”**

**“(a) CONSTRUCTION OF FACILITIES.—**

**“(1) LIMITATIONS.—**Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3) of this subsection and in paragraphs (2) and (3) of section 690(a), grants or subgrants made under this subtitle may not be used for the purchase or improvement of land, or the purchase, construction or permanent improvement of any building or other facility.

**“(2) WAIVER.—**The Secretary may waive the limitation contained in paragraph (1) upon a State request for such a waiver if the Secretary finds that—

**“(A)** the request describes extraordinary circumstances to justify the purchase or improvement of land, or the purchase, construction, or permanent improvement of any building or other facilities; and

**“(B)** permitting the waiver will contribute to the ability of the State and eligible entities to carry out a purpose described in section 672 at substantially reduced costs.

**“(3) ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS TO ACCESSIBILITY.—**Grants or subgrants made under this subtitle may be used by eligible entities or Tribal grantees for making material improvements in the accessibility of the physical structures for individuals with disabilities seeking services of such entities.

**“(b) POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.—**

**“(1) TREATMENT AS A STATE OR LOCAL AGENCY.—**For purposes of chapter 15 of title 5, United States Code, any entity that assumes responsibility for planning, developing, and coordinating activities under this subtitle and receives assistance under this subtitle shall be deemed to be a State or local agency. For purposes of paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1502(a) of such title, any entity receiving assistance under this subtitle shall be deemed to be a State or local agency.

**“(2) PROHIBITIONS.—**A program, project, or service assisted under this subtitle, and any individual employed by, or assigned to or in, such a program, project, or service (during the hours in which the individual is working on behalf of the program, project, or service) shall not engage in—

**“(A)** any partisan or nonpartisan political activity or any political activity associated with a candidate, or contending faction or group, in an election for public or party office; or

**“(B)** any activity to provide voters or prospective voters with transportation to the polls or similar assistance in connection with any election.

**“(3) REGISTRATION.—**None of the funds appropriated to carry out this subtitle may be used to conduct voter registration activities. Nothing in this subtitle prohibits entities receiving assistance under this subtitle from making its facilities available during hours of operation for use by nonpartisan organizations to increase the number of eligible citizens who register to vote in elections for Federal office.

**“(c) NONDISCRIMINATION.—**

**“(1) IN GENERAL.—**No person shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin, or sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under, any program, project, or service funded in whole or in part with funds made available under this subtitle. Any prohibition against discrimination on the basis of age under the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.) or with respect to an otherwise qualified individual with a disability as provided in section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), or title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12131 et seq.), shall also apply to any such program, project, or service.

**“(2) ACTION OF SECRETARY.—**Whenever the Secretary determines that a State that has received a payment under this subtitle has failed to comply with paragraph (1) or an applicable regulation, the Secretary shall notify the chief executive officer of the State and shall request that the officer secure compliance. If within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 60 days, the chief executive officer fails or refuses to secure compliance, the Secretary is authorized to—

**“(A)** refer the matter to the Attorney General with a recommendation that an appropriate civil action be instituted;

**“(B)** exercise the powers and functions provided by title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.), section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), or title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12131 et seq.), as may be applicable; or

**“(C)** take such other action as may be provided by law.

**“(3) ACTION OF ATTORNEY GENERAL.—**When a matter is referred to the Attorney General pursuant to paragraph (2), or whenever the Attorney General has reason to believe that the State is engaged in a pattern or practice of discrimination in violation of the provisions of this subsection, the Attorney General may bring a civil action in any appropriate United States district court for such relief as may be appropriate, including injunctive relief.

**“SEC. 688. CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES AND REFERRALS.”**

**“During each fiscal year for which an eligible entity receives a subgrant under section 679(a), such entity shall—**

**“(1)** inform custodial parents or legal guardians that participate in programs, projects, or services carried out or provided under this subtitle about the availability of child support services; and

**“(2)** refer custodial parents or legal guardians to the child support offices of State and local governments.

**“SEC. 689. REGULATIONS.”**

**“(a) REGULATIONS.—**The Secretary shall promulgate regulations implementing this subtitle, including regulations regarding—

**“(1)** State plans, including the form and information required for State plans submitted to the Secretary, and criteria for determining whether a State plan revision is to be considered a major revision;

**“(2)** community action plans, including the form and information required for community action plans submitted to States;

“(3) State monitoring of eligible entities; and  
“(4) reports to the Secretary described in section 686.

“(b) GUIDANCE.—

“(1) PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT.—The Secretary shall issue guidance regarding State and local performance measurement systems. Guidance may include one or more model performance measurement systems, facilitated by the Secretary, that States and eligible entities may use to measure their performance in carrying out the requirements of this subtitle and in achieving the goals of their community action plans.

“(2) COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF POVERTY CONDITIONS.—The Secretary shall issue guidance (including models) for comprehensive community needs assessments described in section 678(e)(1). The guidance shall include methods for preparing an analysis of all poverty conditions affecting a community and of local and regional assets for alleviating such conditions.

**“SEC. 690. DISCRETIONARY COMMUNITY PROGRAMS.**

“(a) GRANTS, CONTRACTS, ARRANGEMENTS, LOANS, AND GUARANTEES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall, from funds appropriated under section 691(b), make grants, loans, or guarantees to States and public agencies and private, nonprofit organizations, or enter into contracts or jointly financed cooperative arrangements with States and public agencies and private, nonprofit organizations (and for-profit organizations, to the extent specified in paragraph (2)(E)) for each of the objectives described in paragraphs (2) through (4).

“(2) COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.—

“(A) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary shall make grants described in paragraph (1) on a competitive basis to private, nonprofit organizations that are community development corporations to provide technical and financial assistance for economic development activities designed to address the economic needs of low-income individuals and families by creating employment and business development opportunities.

“(B) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall exercise the authority provided under subparagraph (A) after consultation with other relevant Federal officials.

“(C) GOVERNING BOARDS.—For a community development corporation to receive funds to carry out this paragraph, the corporation shall be governed by a board that shall—

“(i) consist of residents of the community and business and civic leaders; and

“(ii) have as a principal purpose planning, developing, or managing low-income housing or community development projects.

“(D) GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION.—In making grants to carry out this paragraph, the Secretary shall take into consideration the geographic distribution of funding among States and the relative proportion of funding among rural and urban areas.

“(E) RESERVATION.—Of the amounts made available to carry out this paragraph, the Secretary may reserve not more than 1 percent for each fiscal year to make grants to private, nonprofit organizations or to enter into contracts with private, nonprofit, or for-profit organizations to provide technical assistance to aid community development corporations in developing or implementing activities funded to carry out this paragraph and to evaluate activities funded to carry out this paragraph.

“(3) RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary shall provide the assistance described in paragraph (1) for rural community development activities, which shall include providing—

“(A) grants to private, nonprofit organizations to enable the organizations to provide assistance concerning home repair to rural low-income families and planning and developing low-income rural rental housing units; and

“(B) grants to multi-State, regional, private, nonprofit organizations to enable the organiza-

tions to provide training and technical assistance to small, rural communities concerning meeting their community facility needs.

“(4) BROADBAND NAVIGATOR PROJECTS.—

“(A) NAVIGATOR PROJECT AUTHORITY.—The Secretary is authorized to provide assistance described in paragraph (1) for broadband navigator projects consistent with the purposes of this Act to address the educational and economic needs of low-income individuals and communities.

“(B) NAVIGATOR GRANTS.—The Secretary shall make grants consistent with subparagraph (A) to community action agencies and Tribal grantees to enable them to provide assistance through trained navigators to low-income individuals and communities to help facilitate access to affordable high-speed broadband service, internet-enabled devices, digital literacy training, technical support, and other services to meet the broadband and digital needs of such individuals and communities.

“(C) PRIORITY.—Priority in the awarding of such grants under paragraph (4) shall be given to community action agencies and Tribal grantees serving underserved areas with the most significant unmet broadband and digital needs.

“(D) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—Of the amounts made available to carry out broadband navigator projects, the Secretary may reserve up to 5 percent for grant review, technical assistance, and evaluation.

“(b) EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall require all activities receiving assistance under this section to be evaluated for their effectiveness. Funding for such evaluations shall be provided as a stated percentage of the assistance or through a separate grant or contract awarded by the Secretary specifically for the purpose of evaluation of a particular activity or group of activities.

“(c) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Secretary shall compile an annual report containing a summary of the evaluations required under subsection (b) and a listing of all activities assisted under this section. The Secretary shall annually submit such report to the chairperson of the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives and the chairperson of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate.

**“SEC. 691. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

“(a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subtitle (excluding section 690)—

“(1) \$1,000,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023 through 2027; and

“(2) such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2028 through 2032.

“(b) DISCRETIONARY PROGRAMS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 690 such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2023 through 2032.

“(c) RESERVATIONS BY THE SECRETARY.—Of the amounts appropriated under subsection (a) for each fiscal year, the Secretary shall reserve—

“(1) ½ of 1 percent for carrying out section 675 (relating to grants to territories);

“(2) 2 percent for activities authorized in section 682(a)(1), of which—

“(A) not less than 50 percent of the amount reserved by the Secretary under this paragraph shall be awarded through grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to eligible entities, Tribal grantees, and other community services network organizations described in section 682(b), for the purpose of carrying out activities described in section 682(a)(1)(B); and

“(B) the remainder of the amount reserved by the Secretary under this paragraph may be awarded through grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to eligible entities, Tribal grantees, and other community services network organizations described in section 682(b), or other entities with demonstrated expertise in providing training for individuals and organiza-

tions on methods of effectively addressing the needs of low-income families and communities and, if appropriate, expertise in Tribal issues;

“(3) 1 percent for the Community Action Innovations Program authorized in section 682(a)(2); and

“(4) up to \$5,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2023, 2024, and 2025, to carry out section 686(b)(3).

**“SEC. 692. REFERENCES.**

“A reference in any provision of law to the poverty line set forth in section 624 or 625 of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 shall be construed to be a reference to the poverty line defined in section 673 of this subtitle. Except as otherwise provided, any reference in any provision of law to any community action agency designated under title II of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 shall be construed to be a reference to an entity eligible to receive funds under the community services block grant program.”

**SEC. 3. TRANSITION PERIOD.**

(a) TRANSITION PERIOD.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall expeditiously announce a transition period for the implementation of any changes in regulations, procedures, guidance, and reporting requirements of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) as amended by this Act, from the regulations, procedures, guidance, and reporting requirements of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) as in effect immediately before the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) FEDERAL TRAINING.—The transition period shall include the availability of Federal training for States and eligible entities regarding compliance with new requirements under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) as amended by this Act.

(c) TIMING.—The transition period described in this section—

(1) may not extend later than the date that is 3 months prior to the start of the second fiscal year after the date of enactment of the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2022;

(2) notwithstanding (1), may not extend later than two years after the date of enactment of the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2022 for the issuance of final regulations implementing this subtitle; and

(3) may require that certain regulations, procedures, and reporting requirements be adopted before other regulations, procedures, or reporting requirements.

**SEC. 4. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**

Section 306(a)(6)(C)(ii) of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3026(a)(6)(C)(ii)) is amended by inserting “or subsequent years” after “fiscal year 1982” and by striking “section 676B of the Community Services Block Grant Act” and inserting “section 680(c) of the Community Services Block Grant Act”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill, as amended, shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and Labor or their respective designees.

The gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Ms. FOX) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5129, the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2022.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my bipartisan legislation, H.R. 5129, the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2022.

In 1964, Congress first established the Community Action Program to support locally driven anti-poverty efforts.

Today, community action agencies, or CAAs, form a network of more than 1,000 organizations with a dedicated mission of assisting people in finding their way out of poverty.

These agencies provide services and programs that meet the unique needs of our local communities by helping individuals and families with low incomes achieve economic stability, secure meaningful employment, and adequate education, gain and improve job-related skills, obtain housing, access childcare, and participate in the community.

During our legislative hearing on updating the community services block grant, Katherine King Galian, the director of Family and Community Resources at Community Action in Washington County, Oregon, told us the story about Patricia.

Patricia lost her job and her home in the fall of 2019. Facing unaffordable rent and a rising risk of homelessness, she turned to Community Action and she got the support she needed.

At Community Action of Washington County, she accessed career coaching, help affording needed materials for her nursing curriculum, and other services that helped Patricia and her family get back on their feet. Patricia's story is just one of many from all across the United States where community action agencies have been helping low-income Americans get back on their feet for decades.

Unfortunately, the community services block grant program, CSBG, has not been reauthorized since 1998, the year Google was founded, and John Glenn flew the Discovery space shuttle mission. We are long overdue for Congress to pass a comprehensive reauthorization of this significant law.

Our bill continues the long tradition of broad bipartisan support for this program and makes important improvements to update CSBG. It will reauthorize CSBG for 10 years—the longest period in its history—which will provide critical stability to our local service providers.

Recognizing that there are many more families like Patricia's who can be served by CSBG, our bill strengthens funding for community action agencies and raises the program's income eligibility threshold to expand access to their important services.

I also highlight a provision championed by my friend and colead, Con-

gressman G.T. THOMPSON, to create broadband navigator projects so community action agencies can assist their clients in accessing internet services and connected devices that are necessary for learning, finding employment, and other basic activities of everyday life.

Finally, the bill will modernize the statute to strengthen accountability and performance requirements, putting CSBG on solid footing so the program can continue to meet the complex and changing needs of low-income individuals in communities without changing the local control that is such an important part of CSBG's success.

I very much appreciate the productive collaboration with my bipartisan partner from the Education and Labor Committee, Congressman THOMPSON, and his staff, in leading this legislation.

I also thank our other Education and Labor Committee coleads, Representatives DESAULNIER, STEFANIK, and COMER for leading us in this effort. I must also acknowledge Congresswoman BETTY MCCOLLUM, who led early iterations of this proposal in prior Congresses and has joined us this session to build on her foundational work to get this across the finish line.

Additionally, David Bradley, the CEO of National Community Action Foundation has been instrumental in offering his expertise to help us bring this bill to the floor today.

Finally, and importantly, I would thank Chairman SCOTT and his dedicated staff, particularly, Theresa Thompson, Jessica Schieder, Emily Hopkins, and Carrie Hughes, for working with us to bring this bill. I also thank my staff, Allison Smith, Jack Arriaga, Andrew Dunn, and Rachael Bornstein, who worked diligently on this bill from drafting and introduction through the committee markup.

I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this important bill to renew our Nation's commitment to reducing poverty through community action.

Additionally, I include in the RECORD letters by the National Community Action Foundation, National Association of Counties, and National Association for State Community Service Programs in support of passing the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2022.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY  
ACTION FOUNDATION,

May 10, 2022.

HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

HON. GLENN THOMPSON,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REP. BONAMICI AND REP. THOMPSON: We are writing to you today to share our enthusiastic endorsement of your bipartisan legislation, HR 5129, the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Modernization Act of 2022.

As you know, CSBG touches virtually every community in the United States. With 90 percent of each state's CSBG allocation

being distributed to local Community Action Agencies (CAAs), our communities rely upon this unique flexible funding. CAAs use it to combat poverty and promote self-sufficiency, respond rapidly to unforeseen crises such as natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic and implement gap-filling activities that address unmet community needs. Additionally, CAAs use CSBG to organize and support other local charities and community-based initiatives, ensuring services are streamlined and not duplicative. Without CSBG, every single community in America would be hurt.

Your bill would codify critical updates to the program. It provides security and reliability to communities across the country by authorizing CSBG for 10 years and ensuring money flows in a timely manner. The crucial modernizations included in HR 5129, such as the new broadband navigator initiative, will increase CAAs' ability to respond to emerging needs. We are also pleased to see the emphasis on quality performance at the federal, state and local level and that the essential nature of CSBG as a locally-controlled program is retained and bolstered.

Because of HR 5129's local impact in almost every county in the country, we join in support of the bill. We hope Congress passes this essential piece of legislation quickly, thereby strengthening each community in America.

Sincerely,

David Bradley, CEO, National Community Action Foundation; Mona Stallins, Financial Specialist, East Missouri Action Agency, Ironton, Missouri; JEAN ANN MILLER, Senior Director, Office for Student Involvement Oakland University, Rochester Hills, Michigan; Esther Shuttles, Family Advocate East, Missouri Action Agency, Cape Girardeau, Missouri; Lisa Straske, Manager, Oakland County Michigan Works! Southfield, Hamtramck, Michigan; Jay Black, Jr., President CEO, Pathway Inc., Toledo, Ohio; James Fox, President/CEO, Community Action Wayne/Medina, Wooster, Ohio; Lisa Schmidtfreerick-Miller, Owner PMT Services, Inc., Jamestown, New York; Myra Lawson, Processor, East Missouri Action Agency, Park Hills, Missouri; Denise Schneider, City Manager, City of Guttenberg, Guttenberg, Iowa; Melissa Skaggs, Receptionist, East Missouri Action Agency, Inc., Bonne Terre, Missouri; Vanessa Gibson, Executive Director, Community Action of South Mississippi, Gautier, Mississippi; Paul Mark, State Representative, District 2, Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Johana Lovig, Vice President of Compliance, Full Circle Services, Oelwein, Iowa; Sandra Twardosz, CAC Board Member, Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee, Knoxville, Tennessee; Michael J Murphy, Sheriff, Livingston County, Howell, Michigan; Amy Kruppe, Superintendent, Hazel Park Schools, Hazel Park, Michigan; Brenda Robbins, Teacher, LCCAA Head Start, Lorain, Ohio; Dawn Godshall, Executive Director, Community Action Lehigh Valley, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Keyon S. Payton, Lead Pastor, New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, Pontiac, Michigan; Yvonne Cherell, CEO, Ohio Urban Resources System, Columbus, Ohio; Denise Schneider, City Manager, City of Guttenberg, Guttenberg, Iowa; Jan Cooley, Head Start Deputy Director, East Missouri Action Agency, Bonne Terre, Missouri; Kris Rowe, Executive Director, Community Action Association of Alabama, Birmingham, Alabama; Mary B. Killian, East Missouri Action Agency, Cape Girardeau, Missouri; Nancy Ann Smith, Program Administrative Assistant, Lorain County Community Action Agency, Lorain, Ohio; Margaret L. Flood, Executive Director, Oberlin Community Services Council, Oberlin, Ohio; Daniel Petersen, Member, Dan's Law Office, PLC, St.

Joseph, Michigan; Sharon Harmon, Apprentice Program Manager, Lorain County Community Action Agency Head Start, Lorain, Ohio; Betty Cantley, Parent Advocate, End Childhood Lead Poisoning, Grafton, Ohio; Teresa Beltran, Assistant Teacher, Lorain County Community Action, Lorain, Ohio; Sherri Hallauer, Finance and Administration Assistant, Lorain County Community Action Agency, Elyria, Ohio; Rena Mellon, Community Integration Coordinator, Imagine the Possibilities, Guttenberg, Iowa; Kenyadah Sullivan, Board Member, CAC, Knoxville, Tennessee; Lynn A. Harden, Executive Director, Brown County Public Library, Mt. Orab, Ohio; Denise Teasley, Site Manager, East Missouri Action Agency Head Start, Park Hills, Missouri; Trisha Wilkins, Executive Director, NEICAC, Decorah, Iowa; Jolene Leon, Admin, Children's Alliance, Pleasanton, Texas; Kim L. Smith Oldham, Executive Director, Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency, Benton Harbor, Michigan; Patricia Kennedy, Family Self-Sufficiency, Coordinator, East Missouri Action Agency, St. Genevieve, Missouri; Deborah L. Rhodes, Board Member, Gallia-Meigs Community Action Agency, Gallipolis, Ohio; Dennis Phelps, Executive Director, Trehab, Montrose, Pennsylvania; David Coulter, County Executive, Oakland County, Michigan; Laura L. Smith, Owner, Asset4You Professional Services, Lorain, Ohio; Mike Mellon, Regional Assoc; Exec; Director, Imagine the Possibilities, Inc.—Northeast Region, Guttenberg, Iowa; Roger McCann, Executive Director, Community Action Kentucky, Frankfort, KY, Kentucky.

Jennifer Patrick, Board Member, ABCAP, Mt. Orab, Ohio; Cheryl Williams, Board Member, Adams Brown Community Action Program, Georgetown, Ohio; Jan F. Demers, VCAP Coordinator, Vermont Community Action Partnership, Burlington, Vermont; Linda Stepp, Board Member, Adams Brown Community Action Agency, Winchester, Ohio; Suzanne Shears, CEO, Niagara Community Action Program, Inc., Niagara Falls, New York; Sharon Daugherty, Staff Accountant, EMAA, Potosi, Missouri; Daniel Wickerham, Executive Director, Adams Brown Community Action Partnership, West Union, Ohio; Amber Coleman, Associate Executive Director, Capital Area Head Start, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Barbara Bilek, Head Start Site Manager, East Missouri Action Agency, Millersville, Missouri; Deana Hageman, Director, Northeast Iowa RSVP, Decorah, Iowa; Desiree Beasley, Board Secretary, Knoxville-Knox County CAC, Knoxville, Tennessee; Brenda S; Wilmer, Executive Director, Avoyelles Progress Action, Committee, Inc., Mansura, LA 71351, Louisiana; Darlene Bigler, CEO, Blueprints, Washington, Pennsylvania; Gale Zalar, Chief Executive Officer, Central Susquehanna Opportunities, Inc., Shamokin, Pennsylvania; Shirley Vermace, Supervisor, District 3, Winneshiek County, Iowa; Lisa Spencer, CEO, SSCAC, Inc., Plymouth, Massachusetts; Lenora Leifheit, Coordinator Health Ministries, Meigs Cooperative Parish, Pomeroy, Ohio; Patricia A. Keys, Low Income Board Member Ohio, Great Lakes Community Action Partnership, Port Clinton, Ohio.

Brenda Fry, Executive, Director, South Central Iowa Community Action Program, Inc., Chariton, Iowa; Cynthia Zwick, Executive Director, Wildfire: Igniting Community Action to End Poverty in Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona; Debbie Myers, Executive Secretary/Administration, Manager, East Missouri Action Agency, Park Hills, Missouri; Florence Greiman; County Supervisor, Hancock County Iowa, Garner, Iowa; Terry L. Barley, Board Member, Emeritus Tri-County Community Action, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania; Rhonda Williamson, Executive Direc-

tor, Safer Path Family Violence Shelter, Inc., Pleasanton, Texas; Eugene M. Brady, Executive Director, Commission on Economic Opportunity, Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania; Kenneth Loy, Veterans Resources Coordinator, Community Council of South-Central Texas, Jourdanton, Texas; Jennifer Wintermyer, Chief Executive Officer, Community Action Commission, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Megan Shreve, CEO, South Central Community Action Programs, Inc., Gettysburg, Pennsylvania Ewing M. Johnson, Board Member; Knoxville-Knox County Community Action, Committee, Knoxville, Tennessee; Janine Robinson, Finance Director/Co-Director, Frontier Community Action Agency, Winnemucca, Nevada; Scott Zahorik, Executive Director, Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, Inc., Virginia, Minnesota; Karen Snair, Executive Director, Allegheny Valley Association of Churches, Natrona Heights, Pennsylvania; Renee Hungerford, Executive Director, Community Action of Orleans and Genesee, Albion, New York; Katherine Riley Harrington, Executive Director, Iowa Community Action Association, Des Moines, Iowa; Joseph Barden, Executive Director, Margert Community Corporation, Far Rockaway, New York.

Tom Heidenwirth, Board Member, North Iowa Community Action Organization, Greene, Iowa; W. Anthony West, COO, Virginia CARES Inc., Roanoke, Virginia; Georjean W. Trinkle, Executive Consultant, Community Action Partnership NJ, Inc., Clinton, New Jersey; Bailey Maulding, President, Casey Chamber of Commerce, Casey, Illinois; Jeriemy Jones, CSR, East Missouri Action Agency, Park Hills, Missouri; Mary Jane, Ostrander, Human Services Division Manager, Carson City Health and Human Services, Carson City, Nevada; Andrea Olson, Executive Director, Community Action Partnership of North Dakota, West Fargo, North Dakota; Jim Schuyler, President & CEO, Virginia Community Action Partnership, Richmond, Virginia; Michele Bautista, Board Member, Chautauqua Opportunities Inc., Dunkirk, New York; Carol L. Kern, Local Income Rep., GLCAP, Tiffin, Ohio; Harold Monroe, CEO, Pennyrile Allied Community Services, Hopkinsville, Kentucky; Melinda Gault, Chief Executive Officer, Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson, County, Inc., Watertown, New York; Amber Freeman, Associate Director, INCA Community Services, Inc., Ardmore, Oklahoma; Patricia McFarland, Executive Director, North Central West Virginia Community Action, Association, Inc., Fairmont, West Virginia; Roger Tjarks, Board Member, District 5, Titonka, Iowa; Brian Mullins, CEO, Kentucky River Foothills Development Council, Inc., Richmond, Kentucky; Joe Pisney, County Supervisor, District 2, Howard County, Iowa; Nicole Laurin, CEO, Joint Council for Economic Opportunity of Clinton and Franklin Counties, Plattsburgh, New York; Yasmin Abdul Ghafu, Outreach Aide, East Missouri Action Agency, Cape Girardeau, Missouri; Marcia Erickson, CEO, GROW South Dakota, Sisseton, South Dakota; Erik Schoen, Executive Director, Community Chest, Inc., Virginia City, Nevada; Megan Sowers, Executive Director, Jackson-Vinton Community Action, Wellston, Ohio; Sharon Price, Executive Director, Community Action Council for Lexington-Fayette, Bourbon, Harrison and Nicholas Counties, Inc. Lexington, Kentucky; Chong-Anna Canfora, Executive Director, Michigan Community Action Association, Okemos, Michigan; Rene Ewing, Board Member, Multi Service Center, Federal Way, Washington; Debbie K. Herndon, Case Manager, Community Action of Laramie County, Inc., Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Brenda L. Fox, Executive Director, Tri-County Community Action Agency, LaGrange, Kentucky; Tom Baker, Executive Director North Hills Community Outreach, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Katie Ecker, Board Member, CAO, Kendall, New York; Gina Ward, Associate Director, Southern Tier Environments for Living Inc., Jamestown, New York; Craig A. Reiter, Board Chair, Menominee-Delta-Schoolcraft Community Action, Gulliver, Michigan; David Knight, Executive Director, California Community Action Partnership Association, Sacramento, California; Josephine M. Howard, Ed. S., Board Member, The Agricultural and Labor Program, Inc, Haines City, Florida; Daniel Brown, Executive Director, Community Action Team, Inc., St. Helens, Oregon; Heather Cole, Director of Advocacy and Public Innovation, United Way of Southwest Michigan, Saint Joseph, Michigan; Duane Yoder, President, Garrett County Community Action Committee, Inc., Swanton, Maryland; David Coplan, Executive Director, Human Services Center Corporation, Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania; Robin Whitaker, Executive Director, Daniel Boone CAA, Inc., Manchester, Kentucky; Robert S. Jones, CEO, Audubon Area Community Services, Inc, Owensboro, Kentucky; Brittany Tonet, Director of Finance & Administration/CFO, North Hills Community Outreach, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Joe Diamond, Executive Director, Massachusetts Association for Community Action, (MASSCAP), Boston, Massachusetts; Pearl L. Barth, Housing Specialist II, East Missouri Action Agency, Park Hills, Missouri; Julie Pearson, Community Service Representative, East Missouri Action Agency, Bismarck, Missouri; Amy Lynn Roark, Vice Chair, Community Action Advisory Board in Clark County, Vancouver, Washington; Heather Wallace, Board Member, Community Action of Skagit County Burlington, Washington; Kimberly Ashley-Pauley, Governing Board Chairwoman, Community Action Program of Central Arkansas, (CAPCA), Conway, Arkansas; Cindy Davis, Executive Director, North Iowa Community Action Organization, Mason City, Iowa; Angela Martin, CEO, Maryland Community Action Partnership, Annapolis, Maryland; Jill Sutton, Executive Director Mid-Michigan Community Action, Farwell, Michigan; Lyndsey Schoelzel, Executive Director, Nevada Community Action Association, Reno, Nevada; Susan L. Carr, Executive Director, Community Services Network of Wyoming, Sheridan, Wyoming; Tara Glover, Executive Director, Lowcountry Community Action Agency, Inc, Waltherboro, South Carolina.

Phil Verges, Board President, WestCAP, Spring Valley, Wisconsin; Alex Fortune, City Councilperson, City of Cresco, Iowa; Philip E. Cole, Executive Director, Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies, Columbus, Ohio; James Fails, Board Member, Great Lakes Community Action Partnership, Fremont, Ohio; Carmen A. Ortega, Board Member, Great Lakes Community Action Partnership (GLCAP), Bowling Green, Ohio;

Ruthann House, President/CEO, Great Lakes Community Action Partnership, Fremont, Ohio; Keri McCrorey, Executive Director, East Missouri Action Agency, Inc., Farmington, Missouri; Michael Crouse, Executive Director, STEP Inc., Rocky Mount, Virginia; Tina Tate, Commissioner, Hospital District 304, Skagit County, Washington; Reshella Hawkins, Executive Director, Emergency Shelter Services INC, Benton Harbor, Michigan; Roseann Marchetti, Commissioner, District 4, Cass County, Michigan; Alyssa Jarrett, Community Services Representative, East Missouri Action Agency, Farmington, Missouri; Myron Gray, Owner

of Service Enterprises LLC, St. Louis, Missouri; Charles Hargitt, Maintenance Supervisor E.M.A.A., Fredericktown, Missouri; Nancy Jones, Board Member and Secretary, Mid-Michigan Community Action Agency, Farwell, Michigan; Patti Hall, Financial Specialist EMAA, Park Hills, Missouri; Amanda Garner, Board Member GLCAP, Fremont, Ohio; Ruth Johnson, Board of Directors, Gladwin County, Gladwin, Michigan; Jacqueline Orr, CEO, New York State Community Action Association, Guilderland, New York; Donna Dodgen, Mayor, City of Seguin, Texas; Karen McCandless, Chief Executive Officer, Community Action Services and Food Bank, Provo, Utah; Maria M. Tracy, Board Member, Multi-Service Center, Federal Way, Washington; C. Shawn Yardley, CEO Community Concepts, Inc., Lewiston, Maine; George T. Simon Jr., Executive Director, TriCounty Community Action, Inc., San Augustine, Texas; Thomas Mainella, Mayor, City of Fairmont, West Virginia; Bill Grant, Executive Director, Minnesota Community Action Partnership (MinnCAP), St. Paul, Minnesota; Elizabeth Jennings, Director of Community Engagement, Community Action of Skagit County, Bellingham, Washington; Roger Pavey, Sr., Chief Executive Officer, Community Action of Eastern Iowa, Davenport, Iowa.

Steven Zittergruen, City Councilperson, Ward 5, City of Decorah, Iowa; Shanna Yount, Community Services Rep, East Missouri Action Agency Inc, Potosi, Missouri; Anita Leis, Section 8 Area Coordinator, East MO Action Agency, Caruthersville, Missouri; Don Munson, Board Chairperson, District 5, Douglas County, Illinois; Clint Cottam, Executive Director, Community Action Partnership of Utah, Layton, Utah; Susan Cooper, Executive Director, Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County, Santa Rosa, California; Daneen Adams, Assistant Executive Director, Open Doors, Clearfield, Utah; Teleda S. Holmes, Board Member, Multi-Service Center, Federal Way, Washington; Michelle Faught, Executive Director ICCAP, Indiana, Pennsylvania; James Hemm, Consultant, New Jersey Association on Correction, Trenton, New Jersey; Deborah Leonczyk, Executive Director, Berkshire Community Action Council, Inc., Pittsfield, Massachusetts; Barbara Kelly, Executive Director, Knoxville Knox County CAC, Knoxville, Tennessee; Kathy DiNolfi, Chief Program Officer, A New Leaf, Mesa, Arizona; Kim Embrey Hill, Executive Director, Multi-Purpose Community Action Agency, Inc., Louisville, Kentucky; Kimberly Skaggs, Housing Administrative Secretary, EMAA, Park Hills, Missouri; Erica Pogue, Associate Director, INCA Community Services, Inc., Atoka, Oklahoma; Patricia F. White, Board Member Community Action Council-Lexington, Lexington, Kentucky; Eva Felix, Director, A New Leaf, MesaCAN, Mesa, Arizona; Robin Corak, CEO, Multi-Service Center, Federal Way, Washington; Kati Ortiz, Board Member, Community Action of Skagit County, Sedro Woolley, Washington; Kenneth Walters, Executive Director, Licking Valley Community Action Program, Flemingsburg, Kentucky; David A. Rumsey, DSS Commissioner CAOG Board, Member, BOD Community Action of Orleans and Genesee, Batavia, New York; Carol A. Mack, Teacher, East Missouri Action Agency Cape, Girardeau, Missouri; John W. Edwards, Jr., Interim Executive Director, Texas Association of Community Action Agencies, Austin, Texas; Chris Berry, Board Member—Treasurer, Multi Service Center, Milton, Washington; Lynne M. Johnson, Board Member, Community Action of Orleans and Genesee Counties, Lyndonville, New York.

Sandra Slade, Coordinator, East Missouri Action Agency, Belgrade, Missouri; Mary L. Chippis, Executive Director, West Virginia Community Action Partnerships, Inc., Charleston, West Virginia; Megan Adkins, Home Care Coordinator, Gallia County Council on Aging, Gallipolis, Ohio; Jennifer Trowbridge, President/CEO, Northwest Indiana Community Action, Crown Point, Indiana; Lisha Whitt, CEO, Pride Community Services, Inc., LOGAN, West Virginia; Hal B. Goode, Executive Director, Central Kentucky Community Action Council, Lebanon, Kentucky; Charlene Engle, CEO, Gateway Community Action, West Liberty, Kentucky; Kristin L. Peterson, Council Member At Large, City of Oberlin, Ohio; Janet Merrell, Executive Director, Community Action Partnership of Oregon, Portland, Oregon; Richard Brocksmith, City Councilperson, District 1, Mount Vernon, Washington; Jimmy Jones, Executive Director, Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency, Salem, Oregon; Rebecca Missey, Cook Aide, EMAA, Bonne Terre, Missouri; Michael Lincoln, White County Judge, White County, Arkansas; Jada Shirriel, CEO, Healthy Start, Inc., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Amanda Ewing, Executive Director, Oklahoma Association of Community Action Agencies, Edmond, Oklahoma; Rebecca N. Brumagin, Town Supervisor, Town of Mina, New York; Drea Padgett, CEO, Mountain Heart Community Services, Inc., Oceana, West Virginia; Barbara Shine, CA Board of Directors Chair, Community Action of Orleans Genesee, Batavia, New York; William Reder, Chairman Board of Directors, Mid-Michigan Community Action Agency, Auburn, Michigan; Janet Keefe, Board Member, Chautauqua Opportunities Inc., Fredonia, New York; Steve Luse, City Councilperson, City of Decorah, Iowa; John L. Hasten, Mayor, City of Marshall, Illinois; Dean King, Board Member, GLCAP, Perrysburg, Ohio; Dean Bellack, Executive Director, United Way of Orleans County, Medina NY, New York; Susan Harding, CEO, OLHSA, Pontiac, Michigan; Paula A. Brown, Head Start Collaboration Director, Oklahoma Head Start Collaboration Office, Stillwater, Oklahoma; Tamara Turner, Board Member, Seneca County, Fostoria, Ohio; Daniel Byrnes, County Supervisor, Allamakee County, Iowa; Randy Weldon, CEO, Southwest Georgia Community Action Council, Inc., Moultrie, Georgia.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
*Speaker, House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*

Hon. KEVIN MCCARTHY,  
*Minority Leader, House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI AND MINORITY LEADER MCCARTHY:

On behalf of the National Association of Counties (NACo), the only organization representing the nation's 3,069 counties, parishes, and boroughs, I write to urge you to pass the bipartisan Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Modernization Act (H.R. 5129) led by Reps. Suzanne Bonamici (D-Ore.), Glenn Thompson (R-Pa.), Betty McCollum (D-Minn.), Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.), Mark DeSaulnier (D-Calif.) and James Comer (R-Ky.). While CSBG continues to receive funding through the annual appropriations process, it has not been reauthorized since 1998, making it overdue for substantive changes that could increase its ability to serve vulnerable county residents. Counties support H.R. 5129, which would strengthen funding and local administration of eligible

anti-poverty programs focused on housing, health, employment, income and civic engagement.

CSBG, which supports local agencies in activities that mitigate the root causes of poverty, represents a unique and effective partnership between counties, states, federal government and community organizations. CSBG-eligible activities vary depending on local needs, but often include services related to educational attainment, accessing and maintaining employment and self-sufficiency, household budget management, obtaining adequate housing and promoting greater community participation. In FY 2019, the CSBG network operated in 99 percent of the nation's counties through over 1,000 eligible public or private entities to serve 10.2 million individuals living in poverty, including 3.2 million children.

The CSBG Modernization Act would strengthen these efforts through both the reauthorization and authorization of appropriations that create more program certainty and allow Congress to provide additional funding to meet our nation's growing needs. The bill specifically reauthorizes the program for 10 years and authorizes appropriations of \$1 billion per year for the first five years and "such sums as necessary" for the following five years. Counties also support the proposed change of H.R. 5129 that would make permanent a COVID-era flexibility that allowed states to use CSBG funding to provide services to individuals earning up to 200 percent of the federal poverty line, allowing the program to reach more people in need.

The CSBG Modernization Act would additionally create a federally administered Community Action Innovations Program to invigorate the CSBG network's ability to test new approaches to reducing poverty. The bill strengthens local control and responsiveness to local needs through strategic plans that set goals and create an action plan for meeting community needs. It would also authorize Broadband Navigator Projects as a new federal discretionary program available to Community Action Agencies. Increased internet access has major implications on socio-economic well-being and service delivery.

NACo supports these efforts to expand public-private partnerships and close the digital divide to provide reliable high-speed broadband services, especially in rural underserved areas.

Passing this bipartisan bill would ensure CSBG is meeting the current needs of counties and local communities through fully funded evidence-based program activities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CSBG has played a key role in providing crucial services for struggling Americans including helping communities access personal protective equipment, vaccines and other health services and school supplies for remote learning. As the nation recovers from the economic impacts of COVID-19, we are long past due for Congress to pass a comprehensive reauthorization of CSBG as it is vital to anti-poverty efforts across the country.

Now that the CSBG Modernization Act (H.R. 5129) was voted out of the U.S. House Education and Labor Committee on a bipartisan basis, NACo strongly urges the U.S. House of Representatives to pass this legislation as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

MATTHEW CHASE,  
*Executive Director.*

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR STATE  
COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAMS,  
May 9, 2022.

Rep. NANCY PELOSI,  
*House Speaker, House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*  
Rep. KEVIN MCCARTHY,  
*Minority Leader, House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*  
Rep. STENY HOYER,  
*Majority Leader, House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*  
Rep. BOBBY SCOTT,  
*Ed & Labor Committee Chairman, House of Rep-*  
*resentatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER PELOSI, MAJORITY LEADER HOYER, MINORITY LEADER MCCARTHY, AND CHAIRMAN SCOTT: My name is Jeannie Chaffin, and I am the Interim Executive Director of the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSF). NASCSF is the sole national association charged with advocating for and enhancing the leadership role of States in the administration of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) across all 50 states, Washington D.C., and five U.S. territories.

As the membership association for all Community Services Block Grant State Offices, we are intimately familiar with the current CSBG Act, how it has helped individuals and communities in all corners of the Nation and how it can be improved upon. We are excited that the CSBG Modernization Act is moving forward and has such strong bipartisan support with more than 125 cosponsors from more than 25 states and the District of Columbia. We are incredibly grateful for such a strong showing of support for CSBG.

I am writing to you today not simply out of gratitude but also to express our support for the CSBG Modernization Act (HR 5129). The Act changes the eligibility criterion from 125% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 200% of the FPL, enabling the funding to reach more households in need, especially as we recover from the nationwide impact of COVID-19. Important language is also included in the Act that provides for the ongoing eligibility of clients so that they do not lose assistance as they work toward achieving their goal. This is critical to households' ability to exit poverty meaningfully and sustainably. The State Offices that are responsible for overseeing this funding and ensuring it is thoughtfully spent fully and enthusiastically support these changes in CSBG.

While our network is excited for and supportive of the aforementioned language, we also have a few concerns and must note our primary concern below. As partners in the work of CSBG, State Offices carry a great deal of responsibility. States provide oversight of CSBG funds via monitoring, contract management, policy development, and evaluation of results. As State Offices fill these various roles, we recognize that there are aspects of the CSBG Modernization Act of 2021 that could be refined to support the efficient and effective implementation of CSBG at the state and local levels.

We recommend revising grant obligational requirements in Section 679 to 'date of obligation' and removing language that refers to 'available for expenditure' as it creates an unrealistic requirement on State Offices to release funding in extremely short periods of time (30 days). We recommend focusing on continuous funding to Eligible Entities over prescriptive timelines (Sec. 679(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 679(a)(2)(A)(i)). We believe this addresses concerns about any gaps in funding while simultaneously acknowledging that each state has its own policies, procedures and regula-

tions that dictate how funding is distributed from the federal to local level.

We are deeply committed to the success of the CSBG and know just what a difference it makes in communities across the country. It is through the cooperation of all stakeholders, from the Federal level to Eligible Entities and, of course, State Offices, that make the great work of CSBG possible, and as such we want to be sure that the Modernization Act enables all to be successful partners. Thank you for your support of CSBG and considering our suggestions for improvements.

Sincerely,

JEANNIE CHAFFIN,

*Interim Executive Director, NASCSF.*

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, today I stand in opposition to H.R. 5129, the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2022, CSBG.

While I recognize that the CSBG program has been serving those in need for decades, I do not believe that this reauthorization bill improves CSBG services or fixes the program's flaws.

As Members of Congress, we have an obligation to ensure that taxpayer dollars are being spent as efficiently and effectively as possible. In that regard, the CSBG program is missing the mark. Spending \$1 billion on a program that has limited accountability is yet another reason why our country is experiencing the biggest inflation crisis we have seen in 41 years.

With our national debt exceeding \$30 trillion, it is time to stop mortgaging the future of the next generation with spending on programs that may not even work. There is little proof that CSBG programs are accomplishing the one goal they were created for: moving Americans out of poverty.

In fact, there is more proof that CSBG has become nothing but another welfare program, which keeps Americans in poverty instead of lifting them into self-sufficiency.

Under current law, CSBG lets States set their own benchmarks for progress, allowing ineffective programs to continue receiving taxpayer dollars despite poor performance. This bill continues that ineffective policy rather than creating commonsense measures to judge the programs' outcomes. This does not help people in need, and it is an irresponsible use of taxpayer dollars.

When creating programs like CSBG, our goal should be self-sufficiency, not government dependence. This is particularly true with some of the changes proposed in H.R. 5129.

For example, the bill raises the income threshold for individuals who can receive services under CSBG programs from 125 percent of the Federal poverty level to 200 percent.

In addition, it will allow individuals in the program to continue receiving services even after they have exceeded the income threshold. This program was created to help individuals most in need, but Democrats are trying to twist it into a permanent welfare pipeline.

H.R. 5129 has other troubling provisions.

Under this bill, organizations would be able to use grantee facilities for voter registration activities. While promoting political participation is important, it is simply not the purpose of this program.

This new provision risks distracting servicers from their primary purpose and opening the door to partisan politics. We must preserve the integrity of CSBG by keeping in place important safeguards that protect against intertwining Federal policy and partisan political activity.

This legislation also adds a new requirement that will allow CSBG funds to be used for vague, undefined "healthcare needs." With Democrats' increasingly radical stance on abortion and attempts to strip the Hyde amendment from Federal legislation, this legislation could open the door for taxpayer-funded abortions and gender transitions. This is an unacceptable risk.

Lastly, one of the most concerning points of this bill is how it got protections for faith-based organizations. Religious workers have been on the front lines serving the poor long before this program began. Instead of honoring their long history of service, this bill would require religious organizations to check their faith at the door to participate in the CSBG program. Faith-based providers deserve an equal opportunity to serve those in need.

Our Founding Fathers wrote the First Amendment to protect the free exercise of religion from interference by the Federal Government. Yet, this bill suggests that faith-based organizations should not be able to hire employees who share the same faith if they are going to participate in a Federal program. This is unacceptable.

The Constitution protects the right of religious organizations to hire in accordance with their beliefs. Congress recognized this right in enacting title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Supreme Court unanimously upheld the constitutionality of a religious employer's staffing exemption in 1987.

The current law protections, which were adopted in a bipartisan manner nearly 25 years ago, should be uncontroversial, but H.R. 5129 makes these provisions controversial because Democrats think religious belief is backward and discriminatory.

□ 0930

Democrats have claimed that these current law protections allow faith-based providers to discriminate against program beneficiaries. But that simply isn't true. Democrats can't point to a single instance of widespread discrimination in the CSBG program. These faith-based organizations exist to serve the neediest among us. The current law protections ensure they can continue to do that. If the purpose of H.R. 5129 was to improve CSBG, then I am afraid the bill has failed miserably. This modernization attempt is a false start.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), who is the chairman of the Education and Labor Committee.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and for her leadership on this legislation.

Today the committee action agencies, or CAAs, form a network of more than 1,000 organizations that meet the unique needs of communities to help lift low-income individuals and families out of poverty. For decades community action agencies have been central pillars to our communities. They administer programs such as Head Start, to provide quality early childhood education for low-income children and support their families; Meals on Wheels, to support seniors experiencing hunger and isolation; and LIHEAP, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program that helps people keep up with their utilities.

In fact, it is the only Federal program whose broad mission is to address poverty conditions and allow community action agencies to tailor services for low-income individuals in their communities, and they do this with the goal of giving a hand up, not a hand-out.

Community action agencies' work is made possible by the community services block grant, the CSBG. Unfortunately, the CSBG program has not been reauthorized since 1998 creating uncertainty in the program.

The bipartisan Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2022 reauthorizes CSBG for 10 years, the longest period in history, and improves the statute to help CAAs expand their work and reduce poverty across the country.

This includes increased authorization levels and raising the CSBG program income eligibility thresholds to expand access to their services. This will put CSBG on solid footing so that the program continues to meet the complex and changing needs of low-income individuals and communities without changing local control to this important program.

I thank the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI), the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON), the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM), the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK), the gentleman from California (Mr. DESAULNIER), and the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) for championing this bipartisan legislation.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BANKS).

Mr. BANKS. Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member for her leadership.

Today I stand in opposition to H.R. 5129 because it removes longstanding

religious protections for community service providers that receive funds through the community service block grant program.

Religious providers all around the country provide food for the hungry, healthcare and hospice programs for the terminally ill, and educational opportunities for the less fortunate. This partisan bill will likely prevent certain religious groups from engaging in charity, simply because of what motivates their charity.

In 2019, the community action agencies partnered with more than 19,000 faith-based organizations around the country. In Indiana, the funds reached 335,000 Hoosiers by providing health services, housing aid, education help, income improvement, and more. If charitable choice language is removed from this bill, religious organizations may be forced to choose between serving their community and honoring their sincerely held faith beliefs. That means more Hoosiers in need. It is shameful to cut religious protections from such an impactful program.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose the bill as it will mean less charity tomorrow for all Americans. We must defend our religious freedom, and this bill is a direct attack on it.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ), who is a member of Education and Labor Committee.

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, last week, I was approached by Larry Martinez who was there when the Community Service Block Grants first started in New Mexico. He told me that my late father worked tirelessly to secure funds so the State of New Mexico could match this new program. He called my late father the conscience of the Senate.

My father knew that these funds would make a real impact in the lives of New Mexicans, and he was right. It has made a difference. The benefits are undeniable. Instead of a family shivering in the cold in northern New Mexico, we have families using LIHEAP to keep their children warm. Instead of a family being turned out of their home because they couldn't afford rising rent, CSBG provides rental assistance. Instead of a promising young man falling into homelessness or despair without an income, we have CSBG programs helping with career training and job searches.

One of my favorite programs is Head Start. I started my academic career as a Head Start baby and fell in love with learning, and we know that an investment in our children at the earliest age is the biggest and best investment we can work; and this provides Head Start.

CSBG touches every aspect of our community because there is not one root cause of poverty. We need to uplift our most vulnerable by meeting them where they are because they have aspi-

rations that we need to help them achieve. The Communities Services Block Grant Modernization Act would strengthen CSBG by increasing its authorization for annual appropriations. The bill would allow the Community Action Network to serve more people by increasing the income eligibility for services.

We should not kick people off a cliff back into poverty when they can rise into the working middle class. These are changes that will strengthen CSBG and strengthen our communities. We must be the conscience of our communities in the House.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member for her work on this important legislation. In fact, you can't miss it. Above our flag here have the words "In God We Trust."

Really?

Our Nation's Founders rightly recognized that every human being has a natural right to religious liberty. This right is so important that, like I said, it is enshrined as the First Amendment to our Constitution.

When language was added to the CSBG program in 1998 to protect the religious character of faith-based organizations, Congress rightly recognized the importance of this fundamental right to religious liberty and the value that religious organizations add to our society. We need to stand by these principles today.

Unfortunately, Democrats do not believe it is important to respect the religious freedom of faith-based organizations to hire according to their religious beliefs or to display religious symbols like a Bible or the Star of David while serving low-income Americans through the CSBG program. The Democrats' removal of this important language—language that has been in the law for over two decades without causing harm to anyone—shines a spotlight on their intolerance of different viewpoints and beliefs.

My colleague from Michigan offered an amendment that would have taken the important and commonsense step to reinstate this longstanding language making clear that faith-based providers should be able to live out their faith while participating in the CSBG program. I was very disappointed that Democrats rejected this amendment during markup and refused to allow a floor vote on it.

All we are asking is that the deeply held religious beliefs of faith-based organizations continue to be accommodated under the law. This approach allows many different viewpoints to exist alongside one another in our diverse country, and it makes sure that faith-based organizations can continue to do the work they do so well, and that is, help low-income Americans.

Madam Speaker, faith-based organizations are important partners to provide vital services, and for this reason I oppose this bill.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON), who is a member of the Education and Labor Committee and a lead cosponsor of the legislation.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Today, we have the great opportunity to move one step closer to reducing poverty across the Nation. The community services block grant is the only Federal program with the explicit and overreaching goal of reducing poverty regardless of its cause.

Originally, created in 1964, the program established local community action agencies to help identify why people were in poverty and how to address it using public and private resources. It was a public-private partnership. Community action agencies are governed by boards that are largely made up of business and industry community leaders in those counties.

Funds for this program help families and individuals achieve self-sufficiency, find and retain meaningful employment, attain an education, make better use of available income, obtain housing, and achieve greater participation in community affairs. Virtually every county in the United States has a community action agency which helps low-income individuals and families move from poverty to independence.

CSBG has not been reauthorized in more than two decades, and today's vote will renew our commitment to reducing poverty and strengthening communities across the country.

H.R. 5129 reauthorizes the community services block grant program for 10 years at an annual level of \$1 billion for the first 5 years. It maintains local control of community action planning and activities. It is largely business and industry leaders that constitute those boards. It authorizes a broadband navigator program to respond to the broadband and digital needs of low-income families and communities to find pathways out of poverty.

Madam Speaker, it does so much more.

CSBG requires some modernization to allow agencies the ability to tap their full potential and better serve families and communities. While this program has a strong history of bipartisan support, some of my colleagues have alleged faith-based organizations will no longer be able to participate in the CSBG program if this bill becomes law. This is simply untrue.

Faith-based organizations are longstanding and essential partners in community action networks. They serve as incredible forces of good in their communities.

Philippians 2:4 tells us, "Let each of you look not only to his interests, but also to the interests of the others."

Madam Speaker, as a man of faith and longtime member of the Congressional Prayer Caucus, the last thing I

would do is support legislation that removes faith-based organizations entirely from actively and equally participating in CSBG. There have been longstanding Federal regulations which were expanded under the George W. Bush administration that allow faith-based organizations to partake in Federal programs without compromising their religious beliefs. These regulations now apply to nine Federal departments and agencies, including HHS.

The Trump administration also reaffirmed these regulations through the final rule titled Equal Participation of Faith-Based Organizations in the Federal Agencies' Programs and Activities.

This bill makes Federal policy clearer, and it maintains the same protections for faith-based providers in CSBG-funded activities.

Madam Speaker, it is time for Congress to reaffirm our Nation's commitment to reducing poverty by reauthorizing the CSBG, and I urge my colleagues to support the passage of this righteous legislation.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG).

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

Madam Speaker, at the appropriate time I will offer an amendment to recommit H.R. 5129 and ask to have my amendment to restore current law protections for faith-based organizations included in the RECORD.

Madam Speaker, religious liberty is foundational to America. It is enshrined as the First Amendment to our Constitution. Given this Nation's dedication to religious liberty, it is so appalling that H.R. 5129 strikes current law protections for faith-based organizations that participate in the CSBG program.

Faith-based providers have a history of leading America's fight to help those in need. From the Salvation Army to Catholic Charities, religious organizations formed the front line in assisting people in poverty. They did so not out of a desire for selfish gain or recognition but because they truly believe it is a calling.

□ 0945

That faith allows them to help those in need in unique ways that the government cannot. But instead of honoring these organizations for their long history of service, this bill suggests that religious organizations should leave their faith behind when they want to serve those in need.

This is ridiculous. More than that, it is un-American. I would also argue it directly contradicts our Constitution.

Madam Speaker, we must give faith-based organizations and providers the same opportunity to serve low-income Americans through the CSBG program that we would give any other organiza-

tion. We must also guarantee faith-based providers' rights to live out and express their faith through their work.

I include in the RECORD a letter from a coalition of religious providers, led by the Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance, which discusses the importance of maintaining current law protections for faith-based organizations—protections, I might add, that President Biden himself supported when he was a Member of the Senate.

MAY 10, 2022.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: As leaders of faith-based service organizations, religious freedom advocates, and people of faith, we strongly implore you and your colleagues to retain the Charitable Choice provisions when reauthorizing the Community Services Block Grant [CSBG]. The current language of H.R. 5129, the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2021, would replace the detailed Charitable Choice provisions with a bare sentence. This would be a negative change that creates a harmful precedent. We ask the House instead to reaffirm Charitable Choice in the CSBG program by retaining the Charitable Choice provisions currently in the CSBG statute.

The Charitable Choice provisions (42 U.S. Code 9920) give faith-based organizations an equal opportunity to compete for CSBG funding and safeguard their religious character while also protecting beneficiary rights by prohibiting the use of CSBG grant funds for explicitly religious activities. The presence of this detailed language in the statute is a billboard announcing a welcome for faith-based organizations to compete for funding.

The provisions were added to the CSBG program in 1998 in a reauthorization bill cosponsored by Republican Senators Dan Coats (IN) and Jim Jeffords (VT) and Democratic Senators Ted Kennedy (MA) and Christopher Dodd (CT). They sought to improve the effectiveness of CSBG spending by prohibiting local governments and Community Action Agencies [CAAs] from marginalizing faith-based organizations. Protecting participation in CSBG funding by faith-based providers and houses of worship ensures that the procurement process is competitive and that CAAs utilize the most effective and accountable service providers.

The Charitable Choice provisions extend to faith-based organizations no novel or unconstitutional rights. Its principles are codified in the Equal Treatment regulations that apply to Department of Health and Human Services funding programs (45 CFR 87), but only partially to CSBG. CSBG has its own regulations, similar but distinct. If Charitable Choice is taken out of the CSBG statute, CAAs would have no guarantee that they will be afforded the same rights and protections due to other faith-based organizations under the Equal Treatment regulations. It would be better to retain the CSBG statutory language and the accompanying regulations. Statutory language provides more certainty over time to Community Action Agencies and to faith-based organizations interested in partnering with them in service.

Some in the CAA movement claim that the Charitable Choice language is dispensable because, despite its presence, few faith-based organizations receive CSBG funding. If participation is truly low, then the remedy is action by Congress and the Office of Community Services in HHS to remove the non-statutory barriers that inhibit more extensive partnerships, not to remove the protections that enable the participation of those few.

The addition of Charitable Choice in 1998 to the CSBG program was the second time that Congress and the Clinton administration added such language to a federal program (Charitable Choice was first added to the TANF program in 1996). These actions launched the faith-based or partnership initiative. The four succeeding administrations of both parties (Bush, Obama, Trump, and Biden) have worked with energy to ensure that federal social programs are maximally effective because they partner with the best non-government organizations, including faith-based organizations, with full protection for the religious freedom of the ultimate beneficiaries.

Senators Coats, Jeffords, Kennedy, and Dodd were right to add Charitable Choice to the CSBG program. Removing it will be detrimental to the participation of faith-based organizations, when it is their greater involvement that will most benefit the communities that CSBG funding is intended to serve. Removing it will create a terrible precedent by signaling that Congress is no longer as boldly committed to equal opportunity for service organizations of every faith or none.

We ask the House to reaffirm Charitable Choice in the CSBG program by amending H.R. 5129 to restore this language before the reauthorization moves forward.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Signed,

[University professors sign in their personal capacities only. Their employing universities take no position on this bill, and are listed only to help identify the individual signers.]

Stanley Carlson-Thies, Senior Director, Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance, Washington, DC; Stephanie Summers, CEO, Center for Public Justice, Washington, DC; His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York, Chairman, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee for Religious Liberty, Washington, DC; Rev. Dr. Galen Carey, Vice President of Government Relations, National Association of Evangelicals, Columbia, MD; Rabbi Abba Cohen, Vice President for Government Affairs and Washington Director, Agudath Israel of America, Washington, DC; Melissa Reid, Director of Government Affairs, Seventh-day Adventist Church—North American Division, Columbia, MD; Rev. Dr. Jo Anne Lyon, General Superintendent Emerita, The Wesleyan Church, Fishers, IN; Yaakov Menken, Managing Director, Coalition for Jewish Values, Baltimore, MD.

Shirley V. Hoogstra, President, CCCU—Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, Washington, DC; Robert C. Andringa, Ph.D. President Emeritus, CCCU, Washington, DC; P. George Tryfiates, Vice President for Public Policy & Legal Affairs, Association of Christian Schools International, Washington, DC; Jedd Medefind, President, Christian Alliance for Orphans, Falls Church, VA; Ronald L. Sider, Founder, Christians for Social Action, Lansdale, PA; Gary W. Blackard, President & CEO, Adult & Teen Challenge USA, Ozark, MO; Ryan Jay VerWys, CEO, ICCF Community Homes, Grand Rapids, MI; Jonathan Bradford, President and CEO Emeritus, ICCF Community Homes, Grand Rapids, MI; Douglas Laycock, Professor of Law, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.

Carl H. Esbeck, R.B. Price Emeritus Professor of Law, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO; Phillip L. McIntosh, Professor of Law, Mississippi College School of Law, Jackson, MS; Paul Marshall, Professor, Baylor University, Washington, DC; Robert Osburn, Ph.D., Senior Fellow, Wilberforce International Institute, Roseville, MN; Jo-

seph M. Knippenberg, Professor of Politics, Oglethorpe University, Brookhaven, GA; Abby M. Foreman, Professor, Dordt University, Sioux Center, IA; Ryan T. Anderson, President, The Ethics and Public Policy Center, Washington, DC; Charles Leslie Glenn Jr., Professor emeritus of Educational Policy, Boston University, Boston, MA; Gail Frances Jansen, Retired Attorney, Former Trustee Center for Public Justice, Tucson, AZ; James W. Skillen, President (retired), Center for Public Justice, Birmingham, AL; Marc Andreas, Professor, Kuyper College, Grand Rapids, MI; Michelle C. Kirtley, Fellow, Center for Public Justice, Chapel Hill, NC; Chelsea Langston Bombino, Fellow, Center for Public Justice, Catonsville, MD; Bruce Rowell, Chief Clinical Officer, Lawndale Christian Health Center, Chicago, IL; Rev. Girien R. Salazar, Minister, Ciudad de Esperanza, Farmers Branch, TX; Rev. Marian Edmonds-Allen, Executive Director, Parity, New York, NY; Mr. Roger Metcalf, Chairman Board of Trustee, Oklahoma Wesleyan University, Gresham, OR; Michael Kozlarek, City Director, The Navigators, San Diego, CA; Mark Rodgers, Principal, Clapham Group, Burke, VA; James B. Bolts, Lead Pastor, Victory Church, Yorktown, VA; Joyce Campbell, Concerned community member, Christian Reformed Church, Greenbelt, MD; Randall Kroll, Executive Consultant, Platinum Group, Minneapolis, MN; Kathryn Vasselkiv, Not for profit board member, St Moses Church, Baltimore, MD.

Deanna Stacy, Former Associate Director, HHS Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, Alexandria, VA; Ashley Weiss, Staff, Youth with A Mission, Lakeside, MT; Greg Enas, Venture Catalyst, Innovatov LLC, Indianapolis, IN; Jerry S. Herbert, Elder, Washington Community Fellowship, Washington, DC; Karyl Savageau, Capitol Hill Pregnancy Center, Washington, DC; Clarke Cochran, Deacon, St. Peter Catholic Church, Charlotte, NC; Carol Veldman Rudie, Board member, Association for Public Justice, Minneapolis, MN; Dr. Paul Wrobel, Head of School, Trinity Oaks Christian Academy, Cary, IL; Bethany Schuttinga, Ph.D., President, Avail Academy, Minneapolis, MN; Steven Groen, Principal, Avail Academy, Edina, MN; Andrew Ryskamp, Christian Reformed Church in North America, Grand Rapids, MI; Perry Recker, Librarian emeritus and Ruling Elder, Eastminster Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, PA; Rev. Dr. Steven J. Koster, Pastor of Congregational Life, Grace Church, Grand Rapids, MI; David E. Campbell, Christian Reformed Church of Washington, DC; Washington, DC; Henry G. Gunnink, Regional Pastor, Classis Lake Superior of the Christian Reformed Church of North America, Inver Grove Heights, MN; Randall Hedman, Donor Relations, World Renew, Bloomington, MN.

Mr. WALBERG. Madam Speaker, I offered an amendment during a markup that would have protected faith-based providers, making sure they don't have to leave their faith at the door when they work to serve America's families in need. This is not only good for the religious organizations serving these families but also for the neediest among us.

Unfortunately, my Democrat colleagues rejected this commonsense amendment. I was further disappointed when they did not make my amendment in order for floor consideration. This is a forthright attack on religious liberty by the Democrats, and we cannot stand for it.

Madam Speaker, if we adopt this motion to recommit, we will instruct the

Committee on Education and Labor to reconsider my amendment to restore these current law provisions.

Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of this amendment in the RECORD immediately prior to the vote on the motion to recommit.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oregon has 18 minutes remaining.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Madam Speaker, we all agree that the inclusion of faith-based organizations and faith leaders is important for the community action network. In fact, they have a long history of being involved with community action since the very beginning of the war on poverty in the 1960s, and I have no doubt that they will continue to do their important work.

In recent years, the Supreme Court has made clear that religious entities cannot be excluded from participation in publicly funded programs because of their religious status. This legislation, despite what the ranking member and others claim, would not change that.

We are here today to reauthorize and modernize the community services block grant program, which is almost 20 years past its authorization expiration.

I also note that the bipartisan bill introduced in the previous Congress, the 116th, also removed the charitable choice provision with broad bipartisan support, and H.R. 5129 reflects the same sensible compromise on this issue.

In fact, some Members would have liked the legislation to go further to expressly address other nondiscrimination issues, but I did not take that approach as we crafted the bill because I wanted to maintain the bipartisan agreement we reached to make real progress toward the much-needed reauthorization of CSBG.

Twenty years is too long for this program, our community action agencies, and the communities they serve. It is too long for them to wait for us to reach an agreement, and we have reached an agreement.

Additionally, Madam Speaker, for 60 years, community action agencies have had relationships with faith-based organizations. The involvement of faith-based organizations in community action programs long predates the charitable choice provision, and their involvement will continue without this controversial provision.

We also know that HHS regulations have existed for nearly 20 years incorporating many of the same principles. Eliminating the duplicative charitable choice provision in CSBG allows us to move forward with a reauthorization that is vital to so many of our agencies

and allows HHS to apply a single set of rules across programs.

This is a distraction that should not prevent us from moving forward with this reauthorization and maintaining the bipartisan consensus we have achieved.

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the Coalition Against Religious Discrimination, a broad and diverse group of leading religious, civil rights, labor, and health organizations supporting the removal of the charitable choice provision from the community services block grant program.

THE COALITION AGAINST  
RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION,  
May 11, 2022.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: As members and allies of the Coalition Against Religious Discrimination (CARD), we write to support the changes in H.R. 5129, the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Modernization Act of 2022, that would remove charitable choice, a highly controversial policy.

CARD is a broad and diverse group of leading religious, civil rights, labor, and health organizations that formed in the 1990s to oppose adding charitable choice to social service program authorizations. Since then, CARD has continued to advocate for strengthening the constitutional and legal safeguards that apply to such partnerships in this and other social service programs. We appreciate the important role that religiously affiliated organizations historically have played in addressing many of our nation's most pressing social needs, including in some cases, with the use of government funds; indeed, many members of CARD know this firsthand. We also recognize that the separation of church and state is the cornerstone of religious freedom.

Contrary to claims of its supporters, charitable choice provisions did not remove any "barriers" to participation for faith-based providers. Faith-based organizations partnered with the government to provide services long before the addition of charitable choice to the Community Services Block Grant programs. Charitable choice instead changed the rules. But faith-based organizations should follow the same rules as all other providers, and effective government collaboration with faith-based entities does not require government-supported discrimination.

Charitable choice removed traditional church-state safeguards that applied to social service providers that accept taxpayer funds. It allows taxpayer-funded faith-based organizations to discriminate in hiring, including by undermining state and local non-discrimination protections, and threatens the rights of beneficiaries when delivering services.

People in need should never be faced with the stark choice between accessing the services they need or retaining their religious freedom protections. And no one should be forced to choose between conforming to a religious litmus test or losing a government-funded job.

Charitable choice does not protect religious freedom, rather it uses the guise of religious freedom to justify discrimination against employees and put people who need government services at risk of harm. Thus, we support the removal of the charitable choice provisions from the CSBG authorization.

Sincerely,

ADL (Anti-Defamation League), African American Ministers in Action, American

Atheists, American Civil Liberties Union, American Federation of Teachers, American Humanist Association, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, B'nai B'rith International, Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty (BJC), Bend the Arc: Jewish Action, Catholics for Choice, Center for Inquiry and the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science, Central Conference of American Rabbis, Disciples Center for Public Witness, Disciples Justice Action Network.

Equal Partners in Faith, Family Equality, Freedom From Religion Foundation, GLSEN, Hindu American Foundation, Human Rights Campaign, Interfaith Alliance, Jewish Women International, Lambda Legal, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, Metropolitan Community Churches, Global Justice Institute, NAACP, NARAL Pro-Choice America.

National Center for Transgender Equality, National Council of Jewish Women, National LGBTQ Task Force, National Women's Law Center, People For the American Way, PFLAG National, Presbyterian Church (USA), Secular Coalition for America, Secular Policy Institute, SPLC Action Fund, Union for Reform Judaism, United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries, The United Methodist Church—General Board of Church and Society.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), the chairman of the Education and Labor Committee.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

The chair of the subcommittee has said a lot about the charitable choice provision and the fact that faith-based entities have long participated in community action programs from the very beginning in the 1960s, and there is no evidence that they will stop participating.

Charitable choice purports to advance religious freedom, ensuring participation of faith-based organizations. The fact is, they are going to participate. Some may not because they cannot operate without discriminating. Well, that is their right. But if you are going to take Federal money, you should not discriminate.

This language that is being offered, the language that is not in the bill, authorizes broad religious discrimination against employees and fails to adequately protect religious liberty rights of beneficiaries in taxpayer-funded social services.

Now, when a church runs a program, they can hire whoever they want based on religion with church money. But when you take Federal money, there ought to be equal opportunity in hiring.

So, the charitable choice language, which is not in the bill as it is, requires equal opportunity, so if you apply for a job, you won't be discriminated against.

Unfortunately, this charitable choice thing kind of redefines the victim of discrimination. When somebody applies for a job under charitable choice and is told, "We don't hire your kind because you are the wrong religion," we have

redefined the victim in that as the agency discriminating because if we don't let them discriminate, we are violating their religious liberty.

What about the person who applied for the job? They have been denied a job solely on the basis of religion. It is my view that that is the one who needs the protection. We don't need to protect the right to discriminate.

In fact, that is why a broad coalition of civil rights, labor, and health organizations supports the removal of the language that allows that kind of discrimination, and that is in the letter that the chairwoman has offered.

That letter says, in part: "Charitable choice does not protect religious freedom; rather, it uses the guise of religious freedom to justify discrimination against employees and put people who need government services at risk."

I think it is time that this language be removed, as this bill before us does, so that the real victims of discrimination who are being discriminated against can get the protection of the Federal Government as they have since the 1964 civil rights bill.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, if CSBG programs were fulfilling their statutory purpose, we would be hearing lots of numbers of people lifted out of poverty. But those numbers have been notably absent in the committee debate and here today.

We have been given no proof, no proof at all, that these programs are working as they have been set up. We are asking hardworking taxpayers—let me repeat that—hardworking taxpayers to give money to support these programs that have no accountability.

The goal is to take people out of poverty and have them become hardworking taxpayers to balance out the burden here in this country, but that is not happening, Madam Speaker.

This bill would appropriate \$1 billion. I said in my opening comments that we are \$30 trillion in debt. We are going to add to our debt with this program with no accountability. We should not spend a dime of taxpayer dollars without knowing that those dollars are being spent effectively.

Republicans support commonsense efforts to fight poverty and provide a safety net for Americans truly in need. We want to make our Nation's anti-poverty programs the best they can be, a streamlined network that specifically focuses on aiding those in dire need and helps lift them out of poverty, but that is not what we have here.

H.R. 5129 fails to reform CSBG. In fact, the program widely expands the pool of eligible beneficiaries, leaving those most in need with fewer resources.

It goes along with other programs that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and the Biden administration keep proposing, and that is to put more people in dependency in this country, not make them independent.

It also attacks religious liberty. I believe my colleagues have basically admitted that in the last few minutes.

Over 19,000 vital faith-based organizations work tirelessly to help their communities through the CSBG program. Yet, H.R. 5129 sets a terrible and destructive precedent. Preventing faith-based organizations from competing for grants while remaining true to their religious character means fewer low-income Americans will receive the help they need.

This legislation is another Washington-knows-best approach that will keep Americans dependent on hard-working taxpayers' dollars. My colleagues should reject this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD a Statement of Administration Policy from the Executive Office of the President supporting H.R. 5129 and praising the legislation's commitment to ensuring that communities have the tools they need to address poverty and achieve economic mobility.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY  
H.R. 5129—COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT  
MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2022—REP. BONAMICI,  
D-OR, AND 126 COSPONSORS

The Administration supports the poverty-fighting goals of H.R. 5129, the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2022, to provide states, territories, and Tribes with resources for critical community services. This legislation will reauthorize the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) for a decade and help ensure that communities have the tools they need to fight poverty and build economic mobility.

The CSBG has been supporting tribal and local governments and community organizations across the country for over 50 years with funding to help them serve low-income individuals and families. Local administration of some of the most essential community programs—such as job training and placement, food and nutrition assistance, Head Start, housing and homelessness assistance, and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program—is supported by CSBG funds. While these services and strategies have always been key to helping Americans get ahead and stay ahead, the COVID-19 pandemic underscored just how vital it is to invest in the organizations that deliver them. Faced with unprecedented demand and the operational challenges of the pandemic, the more than 1,000 organizations supported by CSBG continued working to help low-income communities address housing and food insecurity, provide high-quality early childhood education, and support individuals re-entering the workforce. Now, as this Administration works to build a strong and equitable recovery, it is more important than ever to invest in locally based solutions to the causes and conditions of poverty in communities.

The CSBG update proposed by this Act would result in greater equity for Tribes, expanded income eligibility data modernization, strengthened performance management, and support for community-based services and strategies. In addition, this Act would support new broadband navigator efforts and continues critical support for community economic development and rural development activities. And reauthorizing CSBG for the first time since 1998 would provide organizations and the millions of families they serve with the confidence and stability to make the long-term investments communities need.

The Administration looks forward to working with Congress to ensure that this bipartisan legislation achieves its purposes, continues expanding opportunity for all Americans, and ultimately is enacted.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I thank Representative McCOLLUM for supporting H.R. 5129. I am thankful for her leadership in the 116th Congress' legislation to reauthorize CSBG and her continued strong support for this program.

Madam Speaker, I also include in the RECORD letters from various organizations, individuals, and localities supporting this bipartisan legislation to reauthorize this community services block grant.

LOA,

Roanoke, VA, April 19, 2022.

Hon. SUZANNE BONAMICI,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. GLENN THOMPSON,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REP. BONAMICI AND REP. THOMPSON: I am writing to you today to share my endorsement of your bipartisan legislation that supports community action agencies, including Total Action for Progress (TAP). I have the pleasure of serving on TAP's board. H.R. 5129, the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) Modernization Act of 2022 is important to me and our community.

As you know, CSBG touches virtually every community in the United States. With 90 percent of each state's CSBG allocation being distributed to local Community Action Agencies (CAAs), our communities rely upon this unique flexible funding. CAAs, like TAP, use the funds to combat poverty and promote self-sufficiency, respond rapidly to unforeseen crises such as natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic and implement gap-filling activities that address unmet community needs. Additionally, CAAs use CSBG to organize and support other local charities and community-based initiatives, ensuring services are streamlined and not duplicative. Without CSBG, every single community in America would be hurt.

Your bill would codify critical updates to the program. It provides security and reliability to communities across the country by authorizing CSBG for 10 years and ensuring money flows in a timely manner. The crucial modernizations included in H.R. 5129, such as the new broadband navigator initiative, will increase CAAs' ability to respond to emerging needs. We are also pleased to see the emphasis on quality performance at the federal, state, and local level and that the essential nature of CSBG as a locally-controlled program is retained and bolstered.

Because of H.R. 5129's local impact in almost every county in the country, I join in support of the bill. It is hoped that Congress passes this essential piece of legislation quickly, thereby strengthening each community in America.

Sincerely,

RON D. BOYD,  
President & CEO.

RESCUE MISSION MINISTRIES,  
Roanoke, VA, April 19, 2022.

Hon. SUZANNE BONAMICI,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. GLENN THOMPSON,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REP. BONAMICI AND REP. THOMPSON: I am writing to you today to share my endorsement of your bipartisan legislation that

supports community action agencies, including Total Action for Progress (TAP). I have the pleasure of serving on TAP's board. H.R. 5129, the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) Modernization Act of 2022 is important to me and our community.

As you know, CSBG touches virtually every community in the United States. With 90 percent of each state's CSBG allocation being distributed to local Community Action Agencies (CAAs), our communities rely upon this unique flexible funding. CAAs, like TAP, use the funds to combat poverty and promote self-sufficiency, respond rapidly to unforeseen crises such as natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic and implement gap-filling activities that address unmet community needs. Additionally, CAAs use CSBG to organize and support other local charities and community-based initiatives, ensuring services are streamlined and not duplicative. Without CSBG, every single community in America would be hurt.

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Because of H.R. 5129's focal impact in almost every county in the country, I join in support of the bill. It is hoped that Congress passes this essential piece of legislation quickly, thereby strengthening each community in America.

Sincerely,

C. LEE CLARK, CEO.

COUNTY OF ORLEANS,  
OFFICE FOR THE AGING,  
Albion, NY, April 14, 2022.

Hon. SUZANNE BONAMICI,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REP. BONAMICI: We are writing to you today to share our enthusiastic endorsement of your bipartisan legislation, H.R. 5129, the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Modernization Act of 2022.

As you know, CSBG touches virtually every community in the United States. With 90 percent of each state's CSBG allocation being distributed to local Community Action Agencies (CAAs), our communities rely upon this unique flexible funding. CAAs use it to combat poverty and promote self-sufficiency, respond rapidly to unforeseen crises such as natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic and implement gap-filling activities that address unmet community needs. Additionally, CAAs use CSBG to organize and support other local charities and community-based initiatives, ensuring services are streamlined and not duplicative. Without CSBG, every single community in America would be hurt.

Your bill would codify critical updates to the program. It provides security and reliability to communities across the country by authorizing CSBG for 10 years and ensuring money flows in a timely manner. The crucial modernizations included in H.R. 5129, such as the new broadband navigator initiative, will increase CAAs' ability to respond to emerging needs. We are also pleased to see the emphasis on quality performance at the federal, state and local level and that the essential nature of CSBG as a locally-controlled program is retained and bolstered.

Because of H.R. 5129's local impact in almost every county in the country, we join in

support of the bill. We hope Congress passes this essential piece of legislation quickly, thereby strengthening each community in America.

Sincerely,

MELISSA BLANAR,  
*Director.*

—  
CITY OF ROANOKE,  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR,  
*Roanoke, Virginia, April 18, 2022.*

Hon. SUZANNE BONAMICI,  
*House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*

Hon. GLENN THOMPSON,  
*House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE BONAMICI AND THOMPSON: We are writing to you today to share our endorsement of your bipartisan legislation that supports community action agencies, including Total Action for Progress (TAP) which assists citizens in our jurisdiction. HR 5129, the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) Modernization Act of 2022.

As you know, CSBG touches virtually every community in the United States. With 90 percent of each state's CSBG allocation being distributed to local Community Action Agencies (CAAs), our communities rely upon this unique flexible funding. CAAs, like TAP, use the funds to combat poverty and promote self-sufficiency, respond rapidly to unforeseen crises such as natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic and implement gap-filling activities that address unmet community needs. Additionally, CAAs use CSBG to organize and support other local charities and community-based initiatives, ensuring services are streamlined and not duplicative. Without CSBG, every single community in America would be hurt.

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Because of HR 5129's local impact in almost every county in the country, I join in support of the bill. It is hoped that Congress passes this essential piece of legislation quickly, thereby strengthening each community in America.

Sincerely,

Members of Roanoke City Council, Roanoke, Virginia:

MAYOR SHERMAN P. LEA,  
SR.,  
*Mayor.*

PATRICIA WHITE-BOYD,  
*Vice-Mayor.*

WILLIAM BESTPITCH,  
*Council Member.*

VIVIAN SANCHEZ-JONES,  
*Council Member.*

JOSEPH COBB,  
*Council Member.*

STEPHANIE MOON  
REYNOLDS,  
*Council Member.*

Ms. BONAMICI, Madam Speaker, millions of families and individuals across our country benefit from the locally driven antipoverty programs and services backed by the community services block grant program. We are here today to make sure it continues to meet their needs and the unique needs of our communities.

I am pleased that the House is taking up this long-overdue update to the community services block grant program with strong bipartisan support.

CSBG enables community action agencies to be innovative, leverage public and private resources for their communities, and cost-efficiently administer many programs, including Head Start, LIHEAP, nutrition assistance, weatherization, job training, housing, and assistance for those experiencing homelessness.

This bipartisan legislation will strengthen funding for community action agencies, raise the CSBG program's income eligibility threshold to expand its important services; promote innovation in the CAA network through a federally administered community action innovations program; and, importantly, modernizes accountability, which is an important part of the bill, and performance standards.

The bottom line is that this legislation will better help low-income individuals and families achieve economic stability and access housing, childcare, utility assistance, employment, and other services.

I, once again, urge my colleagues to support this important bipartisan bill to renew our Nation's commitment to reducing poverty through community action, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5129, the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2022. This legislation renews the nation's commitment to reducing poverty through an established network of more than 1,000 local Community Action Agencies. Having authored previous iterations of this legislation, and now being an original cosponsor with my good friend Congresswoman BONAMICI, I could not be more excited to advance this bill today. At a time when it seems like Congress can't agree on anything, I am glad that we can show people that there are still issues that bring Democrats and Republicans together. And that's exactly what CSBG has been doing for more than 50 years—bringing Americans together.

For years, these agencies have served as incredible resources to help low-income families escape poverty and better their surrounding communities. These agencies served on the front lines against COVID-19, helping millions of Americans get through the pandemic. Just this past week, I visited the Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties where I saw first-hand the amazing work these people do for my constituents.

H.R. 5129 builds on this success by reinforcing existing efforts to improve the performance and management of Community Action at the federal, state, and local levels.

I would like to thank my friends Congresswoman BONAMICI and Congressman GLENN THOMPSON for advancing this essential legislation. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. SABLAN. Madam Speaker, H.R. 5129, the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act, improves and expands access to the only federal program with the overarching goal of reducing poverty, regardless of

cause or condition. Since Congress established the predecessor of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty," the program has helped people achieve economic stability, secure meaningful employment and education, gain and improve job-related skills, and obtain housing. Such support is particularly crucial for communities in the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa—where poverty rates are significantly higher than in the rest of America. In the Marianas, 52.3 percent of the population is considered low-income, according to census data.

The Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act helps alleviate such poverty by increasing overall funding for the program, updating eligibility guidelines, and eliminating the arbitrary grant allocations to the insular areas. H.R. 5129 provides an increased annual funding level of \$1 billion for the first five years. The bill also permanently raises income eligibility to 200 percent of the poverty line, as temporarily provided in the CARES Act, so more people can get the help they need.

To better align funding allocations to the insular areas to meet its anti-poverty mission, the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act mandates a data-based formula and transparency in how that formula is calculated. Under current law, the Secretary of Health and Human Services possesses total discretion to allocate CSBG funding based on what he or she "believes" the need is in each insular area. This changes under H.R. 5129. Language I included in the bill during the Education and Labor Committee's markup requires the Secretary to base its grant allocations on the most recent census poverty data available. That allocation formula must be published publicly and updated no less frequently than any time new applicable census data are available. Using a regularly updated, poverty-based formula will help ensure communities receive the support necessary to serve individuals and families in need.

At a time when communities nationwide continue to be impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, the improvements to the CSBG program under H.R. 5129 will increase help for the most vulnerable in our communities.

□ 1000

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Each further amendment printed in part F of House Report 117-320 not earlier considered as part of amendments en bloc pursuant to section 11 of House Resolution 1097, shall be considered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, may be withdrawn by the proponent at any time before the question is put thereon, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

It shall be in order at any time after debate for the chair of the Committee on Education and Labor or his designee to offer amendments en bloc consisting of further amendments printed in part F of House Report 117-320, not earlier

disposed of. Amendments en bloc shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and Labor or their respective designees, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENTS EN BLOC NO. 1 OFFERED BY MS. BONAMICI OF OREGON

Ms. BONAMICI, Madam Speaker, pursuant to section 11 of House Resolution 1097, I rise to offer amendments en bloc No. 1.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the amendments en bloc.

Amendments en bloc No. 1 consisting of amendment Nos. 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17, printed in part F of House Report 117-320, offered by Ms. BONAMICI of Oregon:

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MS. ESCOBAR OF TEXAS

Page 27, line 2, strike “and” at the end.  
Page 27, line 6, strike the period at the end, and insert “; and”.

Page 27, after line 6, insert the following: “(iii) if appropriate, entities and organizations that support innovative community-based approaches and research driven responses to poverty.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MS. ADAMS OF NORTH CAROLINA

Page 27, line 2, strike “and” at the end.  
Page 27, line 6, insert “and” at the end.  
Page 27, after line 6, insert the following: “(iii) institutions of higher education, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal colleges and universities, and minority-serving institutions;”.

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MRS. HAYES OF CONNECTICUT

Page 18, line 12, strike “and” at the end.  
Page 18, line 25, strike the period at the end and insert “; and”.

Page 18, after line 25, insert the following: “(1) an assurance that the State will provide on its website—

“(A) a warning notice to caution individuals that services under this subtitle are provided at no cost and that any questions regarding services provided under this subtitle should be directed to the State’s community services block grant coordinator;

“(B) a warning notice about verified scams or fraudulent activities related to the programs administered under this subtitle; and

“(C) information to direct individuals who believe they have been solicited for such a scam, fraudulent activity, or any form of payment to contact the Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) Fraud Hotline.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. HORSFORD OF NEVADA

Beginning on page 41, strike line 19 and all that follows through line 2 on page 42, and insert the following:

“(iii) activities that train community services network organizations, and their staff and board members, to effectively address the needs of low-income families and communities through place-based strategies that address local causes and conditions of poverty (including health inequities) through coordinated investment and integrated service delivery; and.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MS. HOULAHAN OF PENNSYLVANIA

Page 26, line 9, insert “(including behavioral health needs)” after “needs”.

AMENDMENT NO. 9 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON LEE OF TEXAS

Page 62, after line 18, insert the following: “SEC. 686A. GAO STUDY.

“Not later than 180 days after the effective date of the section, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study, and submit to the Secretary of Health and Human Service, and the committees of jurisdiction of the Congress the results of, a study of State usage and allocation of funds received under this subtitle over the previous 10-year period—

“(1) to identify the uses, programs, and activities carried out with such funds that had the greatest impact, effectiveness, and results in achieving the purposes for which such funds were provided;

“(2) to identify best practices of States in implementing State plans and providing assistance to community action agencies to carry out activities, so that such practices can be used as models for States to follow to carry out this subtitle in the future; and

“(3) to determine with respect to such funds—

“(A) the amount of such funds received by each State for a particular fiscal year in such 10-year period to carry out its approved State plan, that was not distributed to community action agencies and other eligible entities, and not obligated for subgrants under this subtitle, during such fiscal year;

“(B) the particular disposition by the State of the funds described in subparagraph (A) received by such State;

“(C) the amount of the funds described in subparagraph (A) received by such State that were retained by such State for allowed purposes (including payment of administrative costs to carry out this subtitle); and

“(D) the amount of the funds described in subparagraph (A) received by such State that were expended by the State for a purpose not authorized under this subtitle and identification of each such purpose.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 11 OFFERED BY MS. MOORE OF WISCONSIN

Page 24, line 14, strike “and” at the end.  
Page 24, line 19, strike the period at the end and insert “; and”.

Page 24, after line 19, insert the following:

“(ix) providing support to eligible entities to identify and respond to food insecurity by assisting them in their efforts—

“(I) to provide nutritious foods to low-income individuals, families, and communities; and

“(II) to support practices that promote healthy living.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 12 OFFERED BY MR. PAYNE OF NEW JERSEY

Page 63, at the end of line 2, insert the following:

“Home repairs needed to ensure the immediate health and safety of eligible low-income individuals, including energy-related or water-related repairs, shall not be considered to be construction or permanent improvement for purposes of this section.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 13 OFFERED BY MR. PAYNE OF NEW JERSEY

Page 26, line 13, insert “(which may include needs that arise due to a national or public health emergency)” after “needs”.

AMENDMENT NO. 14 OFFERED BY MS. PRESSLEY OF MASSACHUSETTS

Page 26, line 25, insert “including through prevention and mitigation of trauma,” before “between”.

AMENDMENT NO. 15 OFFERED BY MS. TLAIB OF MICHIGAN

Page 18, line 12, strike “and” at the end.  
Page 18, line 25, strike the period at the end and insert “; and”.

Page 18, after line 25, insert the following: “(1) a description of how the State, and eligible entities in the State, will coordinate with other programs related to meeting critical household needs that address the purposes of this subtitle, including with resources that reduce the burden of energy and water utility costs.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 16 OFFERED BY MR. TORRES OF NEW YORK

Page 43, line 4, insert “, including analysis of best practices in poverty reduction” before the period at the end.

AMENDMENT NO. 17 OFFERED BY MS. WILD OF PENNSYLVANIA

Page 20, after line 17, insert the following: “(f) TRANSPARENCY.—Each eligible entity shall make available to the public on the eligible entity’s website, the entity-wide strategic plan, community needs assessment, and community action plan.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1097, the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOX) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon.

Ms. BONAMICI, Madam Speaker, these amendments en bloc containing additional Democratic amendments from my colleagues continue to improve the implementation of the community services block grant program and strengthens partnerships with communities served by this program.

Ms. ESCOBAR’s amendment adds entities who support innovative community-based approaches and research-driven responses as partners for community action agencies in their work to broaden the resources directed to eliminating poverty.

Ms. ADAMS’ amendment clarifies that institutions of higher education, including HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs, can be considered as partners for CSBG projects.

Mrs. HAYES’ amendment ensures that States provide notice on their website that CSBG services are offered at no cost and information about fraudulent activity related to CSBG.

Mr. HORSFORD’s amendment adds language regarding Federal activities on place-based poverty alleviating strategies, clarifying that they can address health inequities.

Ms. HOULAHAN’s amendment updates the use of funds to include behavioral health needs that an eligible entity may use CSBG funds for.

Ms. JACKSON LEE’s amendment requires the Comptroller General to conduct a study to identify the uses, programs, and activities that have the greatest impact and uses of funds under the program.

Ms. MOORE’s amendment authorizes States to use their statewide funds to ensure that eligible entities have the necessary supports to address food insecurity needs of low-income individuals, families, and communities.

Mr. PAYNE’s and Ms. TLAIB’s amendments ensure that CSBG funds can be used for home repairs for health and safety, energy, and water for low-income individuals.

Mr. PAYNE's amendment clarifies that CSBG funds can be used to address emergency needs, including emergency needs due to a national or public health emergency.

Ms. PRESSLEY's amendment ensures that eligible entities take into account trauma prevention and mitigation when establishing partnerships to promote healthy communities.

Ms. TLAI'B's, Mr. PAYNE's, Ms. NEWMAN's, Ms. BARRAGAN's, and Mr. TORRES of New York's amendments add a requirement for the State to describe how the State and eligible entities will coordinate programs related to utility and water assistance services.

Mr. TORRES of New York's amendment revises the reporting requirements of the Community Action Innovations Program to include an analysis of best practices for reducing poverty.

And Ms. WILD's amendment requires that eligible entities post their strategic plan, community needs assessment, and community action plan on their website.

These amendments en bloc contain commonsense proposals that strengthen the underlying bill. I thank my colleagues for their contributions. I strongly urge support of the amendments en bloc and the underlying bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

Madam Speaker, while the amendments before us include some positive reforms to improve accountability and transparency in the community services block grant program, there are unfortunately several problematic amendments in the mix that outweigh the improvements and require me to oppose them when considered together. These amendments are duplicative, add additional requirements to the program, and lessen accountability.

It is critical to streamline anti-poverty programs to make them work for low-income Americans. But instead, these amendments layer on duplication and move us in the opposite direction.

I cannot agree to add more inefficiency to an already ineffective program, and therefore, cannot support the Democrat amendments before us today.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD).

Mr. HORSFORD. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of my amendment, which will ensure we address the impacts health inequities have on creating and exacerbating poverty within our communities.

As my constituents and far too many Americans know, unequal access to quality healthcare can be financially crushing.

Whether an individual is too sick to work and cannot receive adequate care or the care they received was very expensive and inadequate, we know health inequity is a root cause of poverty in Nevada and across the country.

We cannot combat poverty without recognizing the role that health inequities play to perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

Through my work coleading the Ways and Means Committee's Racial Equity Initiative, I have seen firsthand just how valuable data can be when we are examining disparities.

In our healthcare system, the data speaks for itself. In my State of Nevada, African Americans and Latinos are twice as likely as their White counterparts to develop asthma. This and other chronic illnesses exacerbate disparities due to their inherently pervasive nature.

To combat this, I urge my colleagues to support my amendment and the CSBG Modernization Act in a bipartisan manner.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HOULAHAN).

Ms. HOULAHAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of my amendment that ensures that States and other eligible entities under the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2022 can utilize funds for behavioral health purposes.

These past 2 years have had a devastating effect on the physical and mental health of people across the Nation, especially those who live in poverty or in under-resourced areas.

In my district, we have seen hospitals shuttered, families suffer, and young people facing unprecedented mental health challenges.

By adding explicit language on behavioral health to this bill, we underscore the heightened need for increased resources to reach those that are underserved and most at risk.

Thankfully, recipients like my home State of Pennsylvania are already receiving funding through this grant program to alleviate the causes of poverty and provide opportunities for employment.

But the community services block grant program must emphasize that in order for States to truly attack the root causes of poverty, they must address the rising rate of mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

Just yesterday, the CDC announced that there were more than 100,000 drug overdoses in 2021, a record high, and a 15 percent increase from 2020. This data shows that something must change.

We all know that for people to participate meaningfully in the workforce and to achieve self-sufficiency, they need the tools, first and foremost, to address their physical, mental, and behavioral health.

As a prior businessowner, I understand the importance of this firsthand, because America thrives when our workers thrive.

Community services block grants have been successful in supporting those who are most underserved across our communities for decades.

Let's, please, build on this mission and ensure that the program meets the needs of our diverse 21st century communities and workers.

I ask my colleagues to vote "yes" on this amendment.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. HAYES), a member of the Committee on Education and Labor.

Mrs. HAYES. Madam Speaker, I rise to offer an amendment to protect communities from malicious scams surrounding the community services block grant program.

The CSBG program is absolutely critical to the empowerment of vulnerable communities. Funding from the CSBG program has helped nine community action agencies in my State serve 107,000 families and 260,000 individuals.

It has helped over 81,000 households avoid crisis with energy assistance and nearly 17,000 people avoid hunger with emergency or supplemental food and enrolled 5,600 children in early childcare services.

Additionally, these agencies have helped nearly 11,000 people file their income taxes, returning \$8.5 million to my State's economy.

CSBG programs empower our communities' most vulnerable, which is why they are always offered free of charge.

However, scammers across the country falsely purport to offer CSBG services for a fee, preying on those in our community when they are most in need of help. We have seen a proliferation of fraud and scams throughout the COVID-19 pandemic when emergency Federal dollars were sent to States.

These scams are illegal and morally reprehensible. It is our responsibility to ensure our communities are properly informed to combat predatory schemes. It is our responsibility to reinforce guardrails to protect the integrity of these programs and ensure they fulfill their promises to our communities.

My amendment would require that States provide easily accessible warnings about verified scams as well as information on where to seek recourse should someone believe they are the victim of a CSBG-related scam.

Making this information available will ensure that CSBG can continue to provide lifesaving services to communities without being subject to greed and mal-intent. This is a simple, commonsense amendment that the Congressional Budget Office has certified as budget neutral.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this amendment and the underlying legislation.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Oregon has 2½ minutes remaining.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I thank the manager of the legislation and chairman of the committee for this important legislation.

The Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act is extremely important. As we all know, this bipartisan bill will bring about an enhanced ability to serve the community.

The CSBG moneys are particularly important not only to rural areas but to urban areas. They are important as they relate to many issues, such as in my community dealing with overcoming disasters. Those dollars are utilized to ensure housing.

I include in the RECORD an article entitled, "Black communities are last in line for disaster planning in Texas" and an article entitled, "5 years after Hurricane Harvey, many in Houston are still waiting for help."

[From the Washington Post, May 12, 2022]

BLACK COMMUNITIES ARE LAST IN LINE FOR DISASTER PLANNING IN TEXAS

HOUSTON.—Lawrence Hester worries every time it rains.

During heavy storms, water overflows the dirt drainage ditch fronting his yard and the bayou at the end of his block—flooding the street, creeping up his front steps, pooling beneath the house, and trapping his family inside.

"We are always underwater here," said Hester, 61.

And yet, the state of Texas allocated none of the \$1 billion in federal funds it received to protect communities from future disasters to neighborhoods in Houston that flood regularly, according to an investigation by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

HUD has now found the exclusion of those majority Black and Hispanic urban communities to be discriminatory. The state "shifted money away from the areas and people that needed it the most," disproportionately benefiting White residents living in smaller towns, the agency concluded.

Houston has faced seven federally declared disasters in the last seven years and suffered an estimated \$2 billion in damage from Hurricane Harvey in 2017. That storm devastated Kashmere Gardens, where Hester has lived his entire life. The floodwaters from Harvey deposited black mold throughout Hester's home and left his daughter chronically short of breath.

The state, which is appealing HUD's findings, denied discriminating, saying the Texas General Land Office administered the federal grant program based on HUD approval.

The situation in Texas illustrates the challenge facing the Biden administration, which has pledged to focus on racial equity but is struggling to protect low-income communities of color from the growing threat of climate change. Even after HUD's finding of discrimination, the agency said it does not have the power at this time to suspend the rest of the \$4.3 billion in disaster mitigation money awarded to the state under criteria approved by the Trump administration.

"What is happening here with these federal dollars going through the state and not one dime coming to the City of Houston post-Hurricane Harvey is absolutely crazy, and it cannot be justified," said Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner. "What do I say to the people in Kashmere Gardens when these storms keep coming, and we are not putting in the

infrastructure that they desperately need to mitigate the risk of future flooding?"

Black and Hispanic communities in northeast Houston, including Kashmere Gardens, are especially vulnerable to the more frequent storms and catastrophic flooding expected due to climate change, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Many of the residential streets lack curbs and gutters—common storm drainage infrastructure in predominantly White neighborhoods in Houston—and rely instead on open ditches dating back to the 1930s.

"Sometimes we can't get out because the water is so high," said Jackie Spradley, Hester's wife. "You're literally trapped until the water starts to subside." She can't get to work. Their 12-year-old daughter can't get to school.

The whoosh of traffic and trains permeates the triangular neighborhood of modest single-family homes penned between two highways and two sets of railroad tracks. During large storms, runoff from impervious highway surfaces flows onto residential streets.

Piles of trash—old tires, mattresses, furniture, home insulation—accumulate for weeks in the drainage ditches along many streets, blocking water from flowing through the ditches to the bayou. Silt and other debris clog many of the culverts beneath narrow driveways and footpaths spanning the ditches. In the summers, standing water breeds mosquitoes.

The city of Houston had hoped to use \$95 million in federal grants to upgrade Kashmere Gardens' storm drainage infrastructure. The proposed improvements, including converting some of the ditches to a curb and gutter system, would have removed the flood risk to nearly 1,400 properties.

But without the money, the city shelved those plans.

Hester's daughter Ashlei was 7 years old in 2017 when Harvey floodwaters breached their family room, lapping at the legs of the card table on which the family played dominoes. Her cough worsened, and doctors prescribed four different medications for asthma. She was hospitalized in 2018 for more than a week. But doctors still did not know what was causing her illness.

It wasn't until December 2019, more than two years after Harvey, when Hester and his wife discovered the black mold that was making their daughter so sick. A city inspector recommended that the house be condemned.

"I was so ashamed," Hester said. "We didn't have nowhere else to go."

His mother had purchased the home in 1960, paying the mortgage with wages from her job flipping burgers 16 hours a day. Hester was born in the house months later.

He had stayed in the house after Hurricane Alicia flooded the home in 1983. And after Ike in 2008. Even after Harvey, Hester stayed, hoping to someday pass the three-bedroom ranch-style home onto his daughter.

But Hester, who is on disability for herniated disks in his back and neck from his years as a long-haul truck driver, and his wife, who sells insurance, never had the money to adequately repair the storm-ravaged roof and mold-covered walls.

Hester said the city informed him after Harvey that he was ineligible for funding to fix the home because of unpaid property taxes.

"It's not just about the storm drainage," Hester said. "It's about everything."

Hester said that the rainbow-hued oily waters he had splashed in while playing in the drainage ditches as a child had been polluted with cancer-causing creosote used to treat wooden railroad ties and utility poles. A 2019 state health department investigation

confirmed elevated cancer rates among residents in the southern end of Kashmere Gardens, located near two Superfund sites. Residents fear that flooding will carry toxic deposits into their yards.

Hester's mother had died of cancer. So had his father. And one of his brothers. "Cancer is killing the whole neighborhood," said Hester, who is too afraid to visit the doctor about his own health problems.

Federal disaster mitigation grants are supposed to improve the inferior flood infrastructure in lower income communities. But the HUD investigation found that competition rules set by the Texas General Land Office unfairly favored smaller towns with less urgent needs and where residents are more likely to be White and less likely to be lower income.

The state knowingly adopted scoring criteria that prioritized lower-density areas and excluded communities that HUD designated as the most impacted by disasters from half the grants, HUD said.

"Because the criteria had these unjustified discriminatory effects, their use failed to comply with HUD's regulations," the agency found.

No other state adopted Texas' method of distributing the funds, according to HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. The agency concluded that without Texas's discriminatory criteria, nearly four times as many Black residents and more than twice as many Hispanic residents would have benefited from the grants.

The General Land Office said in its April 1 appeal that the state "does not discriminate, and the projects it has funded help minority beneficiaries across Texas." The state said more than two-thirds of residents in communities that received awards are Black, Hispanic or Asian. The state pointed out that its plan was approved two years ago and characterized HUD's new objections as "politically motivated."

In addition to Houston and surrounding Harris County, the General Land Office denied grants to the predominantly Black and Hispanic cities of Port Arthur, Beaumont and Corpus Christi as well as Jefferson and Nueces counties—all of which experienced significant flooding from Harvey, according to the civil rights complaint. Texas Housers, a nonprofit focused on housing in low-income communities, and Northeast Action Collective, a grassroots advocacy group of Houston residents, filed the complaint with HUD last year.

Instead, funds were steered toward inland, Whiter communities that were far less severely impacted by hurricanes and used to fund routine infrastructure, the complaint said. That includes \$17.5 million for a new community center in Caldwell County that is supposed to double as an evacuation center; \$10.8 million to install a sewage system in the 379-person town of Iola; \$6 million for a new sheriff's department radio tower and radios for Gonzales County; and \$4.2 million for a 2,000-foot-long road in Bastrop County to connect a Walmart parking lot and a Home Depot, justified as an alternate path for emergency vehicles in case the adjacent freeway is clogged with hurricane evacuees from the Gulf Coast 161 miles away.

"These mitigation funds are a strategy to undo the systemic racism of the past, but that's not what we're seeing Texas interested in at all," said John Henneberger, co-director of Texas Housers. "This is a test of how serious HUD and the Biden administration are in enforcing civil rights."

HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development, which oversees disaster mitigation aid, wrote to the Texas General Land Office in March expressing "grave concerns" over the distribution of the first round of

grants. “The State has not identified a plan to protect communities while guarding against competition criteria that could disadvantage minority residents,” HUD wrote. If a voluntary resolution cannot be reached, HUD said it could refer the matter to the Department of Justice for enforcement.

But advocates worry that could come too late for communities like Kashmere Gardens.

While HUD said it cannot stop the state from awarding the rest of the grants “due to prior decisions,” it would begin monitoring how the money is distributed and warned it could claw back the funds if necessary.

“Texas has a history of sending money to those who are politically connected,” said Shannon Van And, a professor of urban planning at Texas A.M. University whose research focuses on hazard reduction and housing. She noted that racial disparities occurred with the distribution of disaster funds after Hurricane Ike in 2008.

Civil rights advocates say HUD has the authority to suspend Texas’s ability to spend federal grant money; it has done so under previous administrations. But Sara Pratt, former deputy assistant secretary in HUD’s fair housing office who is now representing Texas Housers as an attorney, said there is longstanding division among HUD staff over enforcing civil rights violations when making funding decisions.

“There is deep disagreement internally,” Pratt said. “The secretary’s job is to resolve disputes like this.”

HUD Secretary Marcia L. Fudge declined to comment because the Texas investigation remains open, HUD spokesman Michael Burns said.

“Her commitment to civil rights and fair housing is well documented and unwavering, and she is committed to ensuring that all HUD funds are used in compliance with all relevant laws and program requirements,” Burns said.

In response to widespread criticism over how the first \$1 billion in Harvey disaster grants was distributed, Texas now plans to allocate \$750 million to Harris County. Houston is due to receive an additional \$9 million out of \$488 million that the state plans to send to the Houston-Galveston region.

City officials point out that the \$9 million amounts to less than one tenth of the cost of its proposed improvements to Kashmere Gardens.

In Kashmere Gardens on a recent morning after a thunderstorm inundated streetside drainage ditches, bulldozers and dump trucks worked to widen and deepen Hunting Bayou to absorb runoff from future storms.

The work is a small portion of a \$2.5 billion flood protection bond that Harris County passed in 2018. The bulk of the bond money was directed to wealthier neighborhoods because the county expected to receive federal disaster funds for poorer ones, according to county commissioner Rodney Ellis.

But without money to upgrade the ditch system to drain storm water from neighborhood streets, it’s unclear if the bayou expansion will be effective.

“This is the Texas two-step in Houston. You have to get the water from the neighborhoods to the bayous. And then you have to get the water from the bayous to the Gulf of Mexico,” said Ellis, who represents the area.

Residents, too, remain skeptical.

“It’s a wait and see situation,” said Dorothy Wanza, another Kashmere Gardens resident whose street turned into a river during Harvey and flooded her home with more than a foot of water. The experience left the 80-year-old so traumatized that “every time it rains, I get the hell out of dodge.”

She spent the previous night fully dressed, prepared to evacuate to one of her children’s

homes. “The ditches overflow, and once they are full, the water comes back on you,” Wanza said.

On the other side of the bayou, Hester said the city had recently cleaned out part of a ditch lining his street for the first time he could recall in more than a decade. Dirt and bricks still block some of the culverts.

“Right up under there, look,” he said, pointing beneath the concrete walkway leading from the street to his front yard. “It’s stopped up on both sides.”

He nodded farther down the street to another culvert: “That whole drain hole was flooded.” He and his next door neighbor had removed as many bricks as they could to move the water through. “If we don’t do things around here, ain’t nothing going to get done. I have to go around here and try to help, and I’m in bad shape myself.”

Hester limped around the perimeter of his home and pointed two feet up the siding where Harvey floodwaters had reached—a reminder of the catastrophe he says he failed to protect his daughter from.

A nonprofit had removed the mold inside when it fixed up the house in 2020, installing new cabinets, a new roof and laminate flooring.

But the entryway still slopes. The floor joists need to be repaired. The porch is lopsided, its wood rotted.

Hester is stooped from years of pain. Yet he remains intent on doing what he can to make things right.

“It’s not my life I’m worried about. It’s my daughter’s,” Hester said. “I’m half dead.”

[From Grist, April 14, 2022]

#### 5 YEARS AFTER HURRICANE HARVEY, MANY IN HOUSTON ARE STILL WAITING FOR HELP

In Billy Guevara’s neighborhood on the northeast side of Houston, people get nervous when it rains. Old ditches strain under the deluge of a Gulf storm, and mud and water fill the streets. Guevara, a writer who is blind, once had a seeing-eye dog that would navigate around the ankle-deep puddles and lingering muck. “It became unsafe because I ended up having to walk almost in the middle of the street,” he said. “It stays there for days.”

Guevara is a member of the Northeast Action Collective, a community group pushing the city and Harris County for equitable investments in flood control. He says drainage in his neighborhood of Lakewood is outdated: “It cannot handle the type of rain that we see now.” When Hurricane Harvey hit in 2017, homes across many of northeast Houston’s Black and Hispanic neighborhoods flooded, swamped under 30 inches of rain in what was the country’s costliest disaster that year. Under the rush of water, one of the walls in Guevara’s home began to bulge out.

Years after Harvey, little aid has made it to the people of Houston. The federal government budgeted some \$9.3 billion so that communities could not only rebuild, but also better prepare for the next storm. But city and regional governments have delivered little of those funds, and a state agency’s “competition” has held back aid that the Department of Housing and Urban Development designated for post-Harvey mitigation, money which would have helped upgrade drainage systems. As a result, low-income communities like Guevara’s have been left out of much-needed infrastructure improvements.

Without their fair share of aid, communities struggling to rebuild will be just as vulnerable when the next storm comes, advocates say. These obstacles also expose weaknesses in HUD’s recently created mitigation program, which aims to help reduce risks from future climate disasters.

Hurricane Harvey flooded nearly 100,000 homes in Houston, inflicting \$16 billion in residential damage. Guevara had growing mold, damaged floors, and a leaking pipe. With a small FEMA grant and the help of local nonprofits, he was eventually able to repair his home.

But today, thousands in Houston still wait for funds to rebuild. Disaster recovery aid through HUD often comes with significant delays since the program is ad hoc, requiring Congress to approve spending for each disaster. In 2018, HUD allocated \$5 billion to Texas through its Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery program, which is designed to help with long-term rebuilding.

HUD had sent the money to the Texas General Land Office, or GLO, the state agency run by George P. Bush, grandson of former President George H. W. Bush, which is responsible for public lands, mineral rights, and the Alamo historical site, as well as disaster recovery. In turn, the state agency gave Houston’s share to the city, but didn’t entirely relinquish control, continuing to oversee how funds were doled out. The city and state agency squabbled over how to run things, and when HUD began an audit of the program, the fight escalated, eventually making its way to the Texas Supreme Court. In October 2020, the feud ended with the state seizing control of the program.

All the while, many residents remained in dangerous living conditions, stuck in homes with leaking roofs and mold-filled walls, said Becky Selle, a codirector at the grassroots group West Street Recovery. It’s unclear whether those waiting will ever get assistance. In January, when HUD published its audit, only 297 of nearly 8,800 applicants had received funds. (The state has until August 2025 to use the money.)

The struggle to access federal aid extended far beyond homeowner’s assistance. Harvey was among the first disasters for which HUD’s Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery program made money available for mitigation projects like widening bayous, upgrading water and sewer systems, or buying out flood-prone homes. This marked a major shift: While disaster recovery funds had to be tied to damage from a specific disaster, the \$4.3 billion mitigation fund could be used to improve conditions, making communities safer.

Houston and Harris County accounted for more than half of Texas’ damage from Hurricane Harvey, but when the GLO released its spending plan in December 2019, city officials feared Houston wouldn’t get its fair share.

Because there weren’t enough funds for every proposed project, the state’s land office set up a competition in which jurisdictions would apply for a slice of the \$1 billion in the initial round. HUD identified 20 mainly coastal counties, including Harris County, that were most distressed by Hurricane Harvey and would be eligible for funds. The land office then expanded the list, adding counties that fell under the umbrella of the original FEMA disaster declaration in 2017. That more than doubled the list with more rural, inland counties like Milam, 200 miles from the coast.

When results from the competition came out last May, Houston didn’t get a cent. The city’s requests for \$470 million worth of projects, like flood control in the majority-Black neighborhoods Sunnyside and Kashmere Gardens, were rejected. So was the \$200 million watershed improvement plan for the flood-prone Halls Bayou, which is surrounded by some of Houston’s poorest neighborhoods. “For the State GLO not to give one dime in the initial distribution to the city and a very small portion to Harris County shows a callous disregard to the people of

Houston and Harris County,” Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said in a statement at the time.

Instead, funds largely went to smaller, whiter, inland towns. They went to drainage upgrades in Rockdale, a two-hour drive northwest of Houston, and sewage improvements in Nixon, a small town outside San Antonio that emerged from Harvey unscathed and sheltered evacuees fleeing the storm. “The more that we’re giving this money to inland counties and jurisdictions, we are actually taking away from where we truly need the money and where the money was originally intended to assist communities,” said Julia Orduña, the southeast Texas regional director at Texas Housers, a low-income housing group.

After the snub, the city of Houston hoped for a second chance when the Houston-Galveston Area Council, a regional council spanning 13 counties, planned to deal out its own pool of the funds. But in February, the council granted just 2 percent of its \$488 million to the city, which represents around 30 percent of the council’s population.

According to the council, Houston and Harris County didn’t need much more than that because the GLO planned to grant the county a direct payment of \$750 million—a promise only made after the first competition received intense criticism. But that wasn’t a fair consideration, according to Mayor Turner, since that grant had yet to be approved.

Last June, the Northeast Action Collective and Texas Housers filed a civil rights complaint with HUD, alleging that the GLO discriminated against Black and Hispanic residents. In a recent letter sharing the findings of its investigation, the federal agency sided with the organizations, saying the competition “substantially and predictably disadvantaged minority residents, with particularly disparate outcomes for Black residents.”

A major issue, according to HUD, was that the state agency split the competition in two. Half the funds were reserved for counties that the federal government had identified as hardest hit by Harvey—where Black and Hispanic residents were most likely to live—while the other half went to more rural, inland counties included on the state’s expanded list, which tended to be whiter.

At minimum, HUD required that half of the funds would go to communities on its list of hardest-hit counties. While the state agency met that requirement, dividing the competition in two also meant awards to those counties would be capped at 50 percent. But those counties represented 90 percent of the population in the entire competition, amounting to much less money available for Black and Hispanic residents.

After the winners were announced in May 2021, GLO spokeswoman Brittany Eck backed the results in a statement to the Houston Chronicle. “It is important that Texas inland counties are resilient as they provide vital assistance to our coastal communities during events such as asset staging, evacuations, sheltering, and emergency response/recovery,” she said.

The competition favored smaller communities. A flood control project in Houston’s mostly Black and Hispanic neighborhood of Kashmere Gardens, HUD’s letter explained, would have helped 8,845 residents. But Houston’s total population is 2.3 million, so the project scored less than 1 out of 10 points because it would help only a small percentage of residents. On the other hand, the city of Iola applied for a wastewater project that all 379 of its residents would gain from. It scored 10 out of 10, and the project was funded.

In an email to Grist, Eck accused the federal agency of “blatant political theater.”

She said GLO has complied with HUD’s requirements, and now it’s being faulted for not “going above and beyond” to benefit even more minority residents than it already has. Eck said the land office is appealing HUD’s findings.

“GLO did not engage in discrimination, and HUD’s allegations amount to nothing more than unlawful attempts to ‘second-guess’ GLO’s open and transparent competition process, which was approved by HUD,” Eck said.

When the state agency’s spending plan was still a draft, Madison Sloan, director of the disaster recovery and fair housing project at Texas Appleseed, a public interest justice center, sent a letter detailing concerns that its scoring system would divert money from the hardest-hit areas. “I don’t want to deny that communities all over the state need mitigation,” she said. “But when you look at where the damage was, where people are most vulnerable, it is the coast. What this represents is a missed opportunity to do some really largescale, meaningful mitigation on the coast that’s going to protect a lot of people.”

These problems aren’t limited to Houston. Along the coast, other cities hit hard by Hurricane Harvey, like Beaumont, Corpus Christi, and Port Arthur, lost out in the competition. In Port Arthur, where the poverty rate is twice the national average, floods propelled by nearly 50 inches of rain devastated the housing stock. Decades of underinvestment have eroded residents’ ability to recover from disasters, said Michelle Smith, marketing director at the Community In-Power and Development Association, Inc., an environmental justice group in the city. Some decided to leave Port Arthur entirely because “they had nothing to come back to,” she said. So it stung when the city’s proposal for a \$97 million drainage project was rejected.

Without these funds, communities that were poorly equipped for Harvey are just as vulnerable to the next storm. “This is an ongoing thing,” Smith said. “With each hurricane, we continue to suffer because we’re not able to recover. The little bit that we can salvage is then taken away again and again and again.”

Sloan thinks the whole situation exposes fissures in HUD’s mitigation program. It’s largely up to states to decide how to divvy up funds, but studies are needed in advance to ensure fair distribution, she said. That doesn’t just benefit the vulnerable; it could make the coast, as a whole, more resilient.

“Funding to areas where vulnerable people of color live is going to benefit plenty of white people, plenty of higher-income people who also live in those areas,” she said. “In this case, in general, equity means everyone wins.”

After backlash followed the first competition, the state’s land office announced that it would give the remaining funds to regional bodies like the Houston-Galveston Area Council to distribute—the same entity that offered Houston a minuscule amount of federal aid. “The GLO’s solution to not doing a second competition was pushing the responsibility to local jurisdictions,” said Orduña, who felt the new plan does not rectify HUD’s allegations of discrimination.

There will be other storms to come, and Congress will eventually allocate more money to rebuild from them. When that happens, Billy Guevara, of the Northeast Action Collective, worries all the talk and reports will have been just that. “That’s our biggest fear,” he said. “Being overlooked again.”

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, my amendment is extremely important. Very quickly, it deals with ac-

countability and performance improvement. These are the objectives of my amendment.

My amendment also deals with making sure, through a GAO study, that CSBG has performed well; which programmatic activities, services, and other uses of funds were the most effective and had the greatest positive impact; which administrative, organizational, structural, and operational strategies and tactics that were deployed were most successful; how much of the CSBG funds were allocated to States for distribution to and use by community action agencies; and whether these grants retained by each State exceeded the percentage of such funds that were allowed to be retained.

In effect, the GAO would be conducting a performance audit of this program to position it for a fresh start by determining the extent to which these funds reached their intended beneficiaries. Many times, minorities, though it was directed for them, are disadvantaged because of the agency.

Finally, the net result will be transparency and improvement so that others will be served and helped. I thank you for including it in the amendments en bloc.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5129, the “Community Service Block Grant Modernization Act of 2022.” I applaud Leadership for bringing H.R. 5129—which has strong bipartisan support—to the Floor for consideration and votes.

For decades, the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) has fueled a wide range of anti-poverty programs, activities, and services across the country. It has been profoundly beneficial, improving countless lives by helping Americans who are most in need of an assist, enabling them to rise up and access the path to a better quality-of-life.

H.R. 5129 not only provides a long-overdue reauthorization of the program; it also improves the CSBG in many ways, including by adding systems that will enhance the program’s transparency, accountability, and evaluations in the future.

Accountability and performance improvement are also the objectives of the Jackson Lee amendment, through additional mechanisms. My amendment would direct the Comptroller General of the GAO to study how the CSBG has performed over the past ten years, focusing on:

which programmatic activities, services, and other uses of funds were the most effective and had the greatest positive impact on individuals and communities that the CSBG was designed to serve;

which administrative, organizational, structural, and operational strategies and tactics that were deployed by states were the most productive, efficient, and successful, such that they should be considered as “best practices” for replication by other states going forward;

how much of CSBG funds that were allocated to states for distribution to, and use by, Community Action Agencies and other eligible entities were not fully disbursed by states to those intended recipients; and

whether CSBG funds retained by each state exceeded the percentage of such funds that were allowed to be retained by the state for

administrative and other permissible purposes, the amount that was retained in excess of what was allowed, and to what other uses those funds were applied or to what other account were they transmitted.

In effect, the GAO would be conducting a "performance audit" of the CSBG program to position it for a fresh start, citing its strengths and shortcomings, and making recommendations that will help states optimize their efforts in the years ahead.

By determining the extent to which CSBG funds reached their intended beneficiaries and fulfilled their intended purpose, we will see which states have been conscientiously administering the program, which could help calibrate future strategies to structure and monitor the program.

The net result is that the GAO study and report provided by the Jackson Lee amendment will provide transparency and accountability to the program's recent past performance. The findings will enable the program, and the states that administer it, to learn from the past, adjust their programs to maximize results, and revitalize their efforts for each state's next chapter of CSBG performance.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for bringing this very important bipartisan legislation to the Floor today.

I urge all my colleagues to support the bill, including the Jackson Lee amendment and the entire en bloc amendment.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1015

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Madam Speaker, once again, I reiterate that these amendments en bloc contain commonsense proposals that strengthen the underlying bill. I appreciate my colleagues for their contributions and their strong support of improving access to services, combating poverty, and uplifting low-income people in our communities.

I strongly urge support of the amendments en bloc and the underlying bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

My friends at home tell me all the time that they believe common sense is in short supply in Washington. I completely agree with them. It is practically nonexistent on the other side.

Madam Speaker, we can exercise common sense by focusing on reforming the Federal safety net so that programs pull people out of poverty and into self-sufficiency and not encouraging them to stay in dependency on the Federal Government. Adding more duplication and bureaucracy to the CSBG program will not accomplish that goal.

I urge my colleagues to oppose these amendments and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1097, the previous question is ordered on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

The question is on the amendments en bloc.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

AMENDMENTS EN BLOC NO. 2 OFFERED BY MS. BONAMICI OF OREGON

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, pursuant to section 11 of House Resolution 1097, I rise to offer amendments en bloc No. 2.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the amendments en bloc.

Amendments en bloc No. 2 consisting of amendment Nos. 3, 5, and 10, printed in part F of House Report 117-320, offered by Ms. BONAMICI of Oregon:

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. GOOD OF VIRGINIA

Page 28, after line 6, insert the following:

"(e) PROHIBITION.—Funds made available to carry out this subtitle shall not be used to provide direct payment or reimbursement for any health care services."

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MR. GROTHMAN OF WISCONSIN

Page 27, line 18, strike "200 percent of".

Beginning on page 27, strike line 24 and all that follows through line 6 on page 28, and insert the following:

"(2) Whenever a State determines that it serves the objectives of the block grant program established under this subtitle, the State may revise the poverty line not to exceed 125 percent of the poverty line otherwise applicable under this paragraph."

AMENDMENT NO. 10 OFFERED BY MRS. MCCLAIN OF MICHIGAN

Page 64 line 17, strike "or" at the end.

Page 64, line 21, strike the period at the end and insert "; or".

Page 64, after line 21, insert the following:

(C) any voter registration activity.

Page 65, line 5, strike "(c)" and insert "(d)".

Page 65, after line 4, insert the following:

"(c) PROHIBITION ON LOBBYING.—No funds available to carry out this subtitle shall be used, directly or indirectly, to influence the issuance, amendment, or revocation of any executive order or similar promulgation by any Federal, State, or local agency, or to undertake to influence the passage or defeat of any legislation by Congress, or by any State or local legislative body, or State proposals by initiative petition, except that the representatives of the entity may testify or make other appropriate communication—

"(1) when formally requested to do so by a legislative body, a committee, or a member of the body or committee; or

"(2) in connection with legislation or appropriations directly affecting the activities of the entity."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1097, the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, this en bloc includes several amendments that I believe would vastly improve the underlying legislation.

First, one of the included amendments will address a critical concern. I cannot support any legislation that opens the door for taxpayer funding of abortion, and this bill opens that door. The legislation includes vague language allowing program funds to address health needs and improve health and well-being. While this might sound nice at first blush, it hides a huge problem. I am concerned that instead of helping people receive high-quality healthcare, it will lead to taxpayer dollars funding abortions.

The majority of Americans oppose seeing their hard-earned dollars go to pay for abortions, and we must do all in our power to stop that from ever happening. This amendment will make sure that no taxpayer dollars are used to reimburse healthcare services. It will also ensure that taxpayer dollars are not used for experimental gender hormone medications or other harmful gender medical interventions.

Additionally, this amendment takes the commonsense steps to prohibit taxpayer dollars from funding lobbying activities and voter registration activities. H.R. 5129 would allow program funds to be used for voter registration efforts. While getting more eligible individuals registered to vote is a worthy goal, we should not jeopardize the integrity of this program or let the next election distract from serving low-income Americans.

Finally, this amendment ensures that limited Federal funds are spent on those Americans most in need by maintaining the poverty threshold that exists in current law. Increasing this threshold will just expand the pool of eligible participants and stretch resources thinner. We need to tailor the program to ensure that Federal dollars serve those most in need.

Madam Speaker, I hope my colleagues will support this group of amendments, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to these amendments en bloc. The amendments contained in this en bloc are either a distraction from the bipartisan work we are doing today or fundamentally undermine the improvements we are putting forth in this legislation. Notably, this en bloc includes yet another Republican attack on women's rights and liberty.

Instead of focusing on what we have accomplished together to strengthen this program in a bipartisan way, some of my colleagues across the aisle are trying to further divide us. Madam Speaker, it has been 24 years since the last reauthorization of the community services block grant program in 1998.

Our communities need a comprehensive reauthorization, not a partisan controversy that will delay the urgent need to renew this program.

From the beginning of the program, community action agencies have addressed the health needs of low-income individuals in their communities, particularly important to rural communities. The 1964 Economic Opportunity Act, which first authorized the community action program, the predecessor to CSBG, specifies that such program shall be conducted in those fields with the purposes of this part, including employment, job training and counseling, and health, indicating that health has always been and continues to be a core part of addressing poverty conditions that is the central mission of these agencies.

Additionally, this en bloc would seek to strip out language from H.R. 5129 allowing CAAs, community action agencies, to serve individuals up to 200 percent of the Federal poverty line.

Congress supported, in a bipartisan manner, allowing community action agencies to serve individuals up to 200 percent of the poverty line to provide flexibility during the COVID-19 pandemic. The CARES Act, for example, the FY 2022 Labor/HHS appropriations bill, and the recently passed omnibus all included an allowance for CAAs to serve individuals up to 200 percent of the poverty line.

The CSBG statute, which we know now is more than 20 years out of date, sets the income eligibility for CSBG services at 100 percent of the official poverty line or 125 percent if the State chooses. Currently, the very low-income eligibility criteria—this is equivalent to about \$27,180 for a single person in 2022—for CSBG creates a cliff. Individuals will be cut off from public assistance and services as soon as they make a dime over the income threshold.

We must remember that community action agencies are unique, as they do not operate a single program. Rather, CAAs operate and often coordinate an array of Federal, State, and local programs, all with varying eligibility requirements. For example, more than half of community action agencies operate the Weatherization Assistance Program. That uses 200 percent of the poverty income guidance as the eligibility criteria.

I will share a story of Daniel from North Dakota. When the pandemic struck, Daniel was working in a fast-food restaurant, and his hours were reduced. With his employment income, he is above the statutory 125 percent, but below the 200 percent flexibility Congress has provided with bipartisan support. Unfortunately, Daniel's housing was unstable, and he was couch surfing. He received case management to assist with his housing search. Through CSBG funds provided under the CARES Act, he received assistance with a security deposit in February of 2021. With this assistance, Daniel has

maintained stable housing for over a year.

Madam Speaker, Daniel's story is just one example of why raising the Federal poverty level eligibility to 200 percent is so critical to this legislation. Unlike the underlying legislation, these amendments en bloc would weaken CSBG, or it offers solutions in search of problems.

One of the needless proposals in this en bloc actually duplicates the current funding restriction in the bill and statute for voter registration activities which, of course, are nonpartisan activities.

Madam Speaker, we are here today to support a bipartisan CSBG reauthorization and the important work of community action agencies in our communities. These amendments en bloc would move us backward. I strongly urge my colleagues to reject these amendments in this en bloc and support the underlying bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOOD).

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Madam Speaker, the Supreme Court seems poised to finally, mercifully, reverse the only decision in the history of the Court that has cost more than 60 million precious innocent lives which, by the way, beyond the moral travesty, has contributed massively to our labor shortages and Social Security and Medicare being on the verge of bankruptcy.

In typical fashion, Democrats are revealing who they are with their response, and their unlawful protests and intimidation tactics at the homes of the Justices, while the administration and their allies in this body cheer them on.

Democrats can't win at the ballot box or through the legislative process, so they try to eliminate the electoral college, rig election laws, eliminate the filibuster, pack the Supreme Court, pack the Senate, give statehood to D.C. and Puerto Rico, and now threaten Justices at their homes.

This is because Democrats are the radical extremists on abortion. They have become the party of death. Their position is abortion at any time, for any reason, up to and beyond the moment of birth, with taxpayers being forced to fund it.

I didn't hear any Democrats criticize the former Governor of Virginia when he said a couple of years ago that a mother and her doctor can have a conversation after a baby is born and decide whether or not to kill it.

I say, let's have this fight in this Congress.

We had an election 6 months ago in purple Virginia when everyone knew that the Supreme Court would be reviewing *Roe v. Wade*, and the party of death got trounced in that election.

Republicans must embrace this moment and stand for life, expose Democrats for the radical extremists they are, and work to end the brutal, hor-

rific practice of abortion. To Democrats, I say bring it on. Let Democrats defend piercing a baby's skull and sucking out its brains, tearing an infant limb from limb, or burning it alive with a saline injection. Call it what it is and call them out for supporting abortion with no restrictions whatsoever.

Just this week, Democrats pushed another failed abortion-on-demand vote in the Senate, a bill that passed this House with no Republican votes but, sadly, all but one Democrat supporting it, as they try to ensure that America remains among the most extreme nations in the world with the most radical laws on abortion.

Now, this current piece of legislation will permit Federal dollars to be used to harm the unborn, as it includes a provision that allows taxpayer dollars to be used to "address health needs and improve health and well-being" and "to identify and respond to physical and behavioral health challenges."

However, a recent Marist poll found that 54 percent of Americans oppose using taxpayer dollars to fund abortions.

My amendment would protect taxpayers from being forced to pay for abortions, even if Hyde were repealed. If this bill is not intended to fund abortion, then accept and pass my amendment.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I have a lot to say in response to the gentleman, but I am going to take a deep breath and say, this is a bill about helping to lift low-income Americans out of poverty. It is a bipartisan bill we have been working on for many years. It is time to update the community services block grant program and help lift low-income Americans in Oregon and across the country out of poverty.

I oppose these amendments en bloc, and I encourage my colleagues to oppose them. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. McCLAIN.)

Mrs. McCLAIN. Madam Speaker, I would agree with my colleague across the aisle, this bill should be about lifting families out of poverty and providing hope to underserved communities. Let's do that, and let's actually for once in agreement, let's put our money where our mouth is and let's actually make sure that the dollars are actually used for what the bill intends them to be used for.

We should not be blurring lines between workforce issues and political campaigns. This isn't a political campaign, correct? Facilities used for community service block grants should not be open to political activities during operation hours. Sadly, this is exactly what my colleagues on the other side want, and they are notorious for talking about a bill and then packing it full of something that has nothing to do with the bill. So let's do what we say we are going to do and actually help the communities.

□ 1030

Where does this end? This is the foot in the door to allow real partisan action to be commingled with Federal programs. We have a clear example of this that is happening today.

Need I remind everyone about ACORN? That should be example enough to illustrate why this is a terrible idea but, apparently, not for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

My amendment is simple. It would remove the troubling language in this bill that allows taxpayer-funded community action centers to be used to increase voting registration.

Let's keep the bill to what you say it is going to be. It would also prohibit community service block grant funds from any lobbying activities. Again, let's actually use the funds for the people in the community, not the politics.

We all want eligible Americans to register to vote and actually get to the polls on election day. But that is not the purpose of the community block grants. This bill should not blur the lines between educational and political activities.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN).

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, there are certainly many concerns over this bill. The one that I would like to highlight today is that they are greatly increasing the expansion of eligibility for the bill.

Now, that doesn't necessarily mean the bill is going to make things more expensive, but you know very well if we are going to bring a whole lot of new areas into the bill, if we don't increase the spending, the areas that are currently part of the community services block grant are going to go down.

I don't believe the majority party is going to let anybody go down, which means this bill anticipates a significant increase in spending on this program. This is one of many programs that I would argue, under the Constitution, really even should not be a Federal concern. It should be a local concern.

To double the eligibility to 200 percent and make that permanent is resulting at a time when our spending is just completely out of control, setting up a situation in which there will be dramatic spending on another government program.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, my colleagues have presented many good arguments against this bill in general and why we should be voting for these amendments that are in this en bloc. These amendments will provide needed improve-

ments to the underlying legislation and make sure that program funds are spent on the program's original goal, serving low-income Americans and helping them get out of poverty.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this en bloc amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, again, I reiterate my strong opposition to this en bloc amendment and support for the underlying bill.

This bipartisan bill is about improving services for our communities through community action, and these efforts are long overdue.

Unlike the underlying bill that enjoys broad bipartisan support and reflects the input of stakeholders who represent these agencies and their vital work in our communities, this en bloc amendment ignores what we have accomplished together to strengthen this program and seeks to further divide us.

Rather than addressing the real needs of low-income individuals, this en bloc amendment attacks women's reproductive rights at a time when they are under attack nationally.

The sponsors of this en bloc amendment have injected controversy into a policy on voter registration, which is nonpartisan. Head Start has had a nearly identical policy for the last 40 years with little evidence of a problem.

Together, these amendments all failed in our bipartisan committee markup, and they should again.

Madam Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to reject this en bloc amendment and support the underlying bill. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1097, the previous question is ordered on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

The question is on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MR. GOTTHEIMER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 4 printed in part F of House Report 117-320.

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Madam Speaker, pursuant to section 10 of House Resolution 1097, I rise to offer an amendment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 24, line 14, strike "and" at the end.

Page 24 line 19, strike the period at the end and insert "and".

Page 24, after line 19, insert the following: "(ix) providing support to eligible entities to address the needs of veterans, particularly homeless veterans."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1097, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GOTTHEIMER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of my amendment to the bipartisan Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act.

Before I begin, I thank all the veterans back in my home district in northern New Jersey and nationwide from the bottom of my heart for putting your lives on the line to defend our freedom, our families, and the greatest democracy the world has ever known.

Please know this: After sacrificing so much, no veteran should ever struggle to get the care or recognition he or she has earned. We should always get their backs.

My amendment to the legislation we are considering today will do just that. It will add critical support for our brave veterans, particularly homeless veterans, to the list of allowable purposes on which State governments, including my State of New Jersey, may deploy Federal community services block grant program investments.

The bipartisan community services block grant program helps to reduce poverty, revitalize communities, and empower families and individuals to become fully self-sufficient. It helps individuals, like veterans, to get and keep a good job, a good education, housing, healthcare, and emergency assistance and, above all, to participate more actively in their communities.

In New Jersey, the program annually serves more than 200,000 individuals and 130,000 families through the work of 25 community action agencies. These agencies are typically private non-profit organizations, public agencies, or local government entities, like Greater Bergen County Community Action, which provides education and training, financial counseling, and more; or Bergen County's government, where our county executive and commissioners have focused like a laser beam on successfully helping combat veteran homelessness.

The bipartisan legislation on the floor today will make important updates to the community services block grant program. My amendment will add support for veterans and, in particular, as I said, homeless veterans to the list of investments States like New Jersey can make through the program.

With this amendment, community action agencies will work alongside State and local agencies to raise

awareness among veterans of housing programs and help those who bravely served our country to secure the housing they need. Once stable housing is secured, community action agencies will work with veterans and other eligible individuals to ensure the full range of community resources, including workforce training, health resources, and opportunities for peer support, are available to those veterans who need it most.

Supporting our Nation's veterans with the community services block grant program is the least we can do. After serving our country and putting their lives on the line to defend our freedom and democracy, our Nation's veterans should not struggle to get the resources they have earned. But far too often, our veterans face issues finding housing and employment. It is unacceptable.

On any given night, the Federal Government estimates that more than 40,000 veterans are homeless. On top of that, data shows that the unemployment rate of veterans ages 18 to 65 is higher than the unemployment rate of nonveterans.

Today's amendment builds on the work I helped lead, working with both sides of the aisle in recent months and since I was elected, to support our servicemembers, veterans, and veteran families.

The first piece of legislation I passed in Congress was to expand hiring of post-9/11 veterans. Just weeks ago, I was proud to join my colleagues in passing a 2.7 percent pay raise for members of the military to ensure we are getting the backs of those who bravely have ours.

Late last year, the House passed the bipartisan Student Veterans Counseling Centers Eligibility Act, which will expand access to mental health services for veterans utilizing their GI benefits at colleges and universities through established vet centers.

In March, we passed the bipartisan Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act to help expand access to GI benefits for members of our military who serve in the National Guard and Reserves, as they don't receive the same access to vital GI benefits that they deserve as well.

Also in March, working with the members of the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus, we passed the Honoring our PACT Act here in the House to help veterans exposed to burn pits, covering veterans dating back to 1991 and Operation Desert Storm and through our more recent post-9/11 conflicts.

This included my key provisions to address the mental health impacts for toxic exposure for veterans and to ensure VA information on toxic exposure illnesses is published in multiple languages, like Korean and Spanish, to help even more of our veterans.

Back home in New Jersey, I have been fighting for expanded access to healthcare services, and I helped estab-

lish the mental health services at the VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic in Newton in Sussex County, New Jersey. I am working to cut through red tape with the VA Community Care Network to ensure eligible north Jersey veterans are able to receive referrals for community care at ImageCare Centers across the Fifth District. We have made critical progress on that front. Now, more veterans in my district have greater access to healthcare that they deserve.

Let me just say, these are not Democratic or Republican issues. They are red, white, and blue issues. They are issues core to protecting our great democracy, the ones our veterans have always fought for.

There is nothing more important in this job than our responsibility to have the backs of those who have served our great Nation, whether that is at the VA, a mental health issue, or helping veterans find housing or get jobs when they come back home.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote in favor of my amendment to add support for veterans to the list of eligible community services block grant investments.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I claim the time in opposition, but I am not opposed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, we owe our military veterans a huge debt of gratitude, and we must make sure they are well supported as they transition back into the civilian workforce.

This amendment encourages the CSBG program to meet the needs of low-income veterans, especially homeless veterans. It is surprising to me that we need to put such an amendment in this bill because we would think that the CSBG program would already be doing it. But since this is a worthy goal and one that I support, I will support this amendment.

In fact, Madam Speaker, I wear a pin every day with the United States flag, the North Carolina flag, and a banner under it that says: "I support veterans." Therefore, I must support an amendment that would support veterans.

While I have concerns with the underlying bill, I think this is a good amendment, and I appreciate the gentleman offering it.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member for her comments and for the support of veterans.

Madam Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I thank Representative GOTTHEIMER for his amendment and for his leadership in addressing the needs of our country's veterans.

Madam Speaker, this amendment will help community action agencies meet the needs of veterans, particularly homeless veterans.

Although many community action agencies already implement other Federal programs serving veterans, this amendment will emphasize that all eligible entities are able and equipped to serve veterans and their communities.

Again, I thank my colleague for offering this amendment, and I thank the ranking member for supporting it as well.

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

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, we must do all we can to make sure we help low-income and homeless veterans. I think this amendment furthers that effort.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1097, the previous question is ordered on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GOTTHEIMER).

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GOTTHEIMER).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. CLYDE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays. The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

- Amendments en bloc No. 1;
- Amendments en bloc No. 2;
- Amendment No. 4;

Motion to recommit, if offered; and  
Passage of the bill, if ordered.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

#### AMENDMENTS EN BLOC NO. 1 OFFERED BY MS. BONAMICI OF OREGON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the question on the adoption of amendments en bloc No. 1, printed in part F of House Report 117-320, on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendments en bloc.

The Clerk redesignated the amendments en bloc.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the amendments en bloc