

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Mandy Cohen on her appointment as the Director of the CDC. I am confident she will bring the same passion and expertise to this new position that she demonstrated throughout her career in North Carolina.

To Michael Regan and Erik Hooks, I express my deepest appreciation for their invaluable contributions to our Nation. North Carolina is proud to call these exceptional individuals our own, and we look forward to the positive impact they will play and continue to have on our country.

#### HONORING THE SERVICE OF SUE HART

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. GARBARINO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARBARINO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a former teacher on her retirement. Sue Hart was one of the best teachers I ever had. As you can imagine, I probably wasn't the best student she ever had, but I hope I made the top 100.

It wasn't just history that she taught me. It was a lot about life and being a good person. I can honestly say I wouldn't be standing here today if it wasn't for the impact that Mrs. Hart had on me when I was growing up.

I wish her the best in retirement. I am happy that I can still call her a friend, but I think the biggest shame about her retirement is that future Sayville students won't be able to have her as a teacher, including my children.

That being said, I do want to congratulate her and wish her the best. So congratulations, Mrs. Hart. You deserve it.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 25 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

#### PRAYER

Dr. Barry C. Black, Chaplain, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, who alone spreads out the heavens and rules the raging of the sea, on the very day we celebrated the freedoms You have intended for each person, a day when, by the pen stroke of one person in Texas, Juneteenth became the symbol of the last vestiges of

slavery in the United States, on that same day, by the stroke of violence inflicted on the community of Willowbrook, Illinois, and other areas of this land we love, we realize we are all still slaves to sin.

Have mercy on us, O Lord, for the countless times we commit ourselves to bringing good news to the poor and freedom to the oppressed that, despite our best intentions, we, all too often, succumb to the yoke of hatred and prejudice.

As we remember Juneteenth, remind us again that You have freed us from the bondage of our sinful nature. May we offer our whole selves to You, that we would allow ourselves to become slaves to righteousness.

We pray in Your merciful name.  
Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Ms. GARCIA) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. GARCIA of Texas led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Deirdre Kelly, one of his secretaries.

#### RECENT FUNDING FOR TRAIN BLOCKAGES IN HOUSTON AREA

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

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the Federal Railroad Administration's recent funding to reduce train blockages in the Houston area.

Madam Speaker, \$36 million will go to overpasses where trains block roads, intersections, and crossings in the Houston area. Schoolchildren have been crawling under train cars just to get to school. Ambulances and fire trucks are losing precious minutes to detour around trains that are blocking high-traffic areas.

Houston residents have filed more complaints of train obstructions than any other city in the United States.

Our fire chief tells us that, on average, there are 90 instances a month

where emergency responders are delayed by trains, losing time, when lives are at stake.

Enough is enough. We must put people over politics. We must put people over trains.

The funding that we just received, Madam Speaker, is but the first step. There is still a lot more to go to ensure that our roads are safe, our children are safe, and our community is safer.

#### GENDER BILLS

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

Mr. OGLES. Madam Speaker, the hypersexualized left is not satisfied with its month of sexual pride. Instead, they are going after our children, and it is coming to a neighborhood near you.

From drag shows in schools, to gender-affirming care, to hiding sexual orientation and gender identity from parents, the sex-obsessed left knows no bounds; which is why I am introducing two bills to protect children and to affirm God's creation.

First, I am introducing the Keep Our Kids Safe Act of 2023, which will prohibit use of Federal education funding for drag performances or instruction by drag queens in elementary or secondary schools.

Can you believe that in this time that I am having to introduce legislation to protect children from men in dresses?

The second bill I am introducing is the There Are Two Sexes Act of 2023, which prohibits Federal funds from being used to create any Federal form that has anything other than male or female. America should not be funding the radical left's agenda to sexualize children in schools.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. HAGEMAN). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1600

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. VAN ORDEN) at 4 p.m.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under House clause 6 of rule XX.

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

# VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING ACT OF 2023

Mr. ELLZEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1606) to amend the Small Business Act to codify the Boots to Business Program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.  
The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1606

*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 “Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Act of 2023”.

## SEC. 2. BOOTS TO BUSINESS PROGRAM.

Section 32 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 657b) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(h) BOOTS TO BUSINESS PROGRAM.—

“(1) COVERED INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ‘covered individual’ means—

“(A) a member of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard or Reserves;

“(B) an individual who is participating in the Transition Assistance Program established under section 1144 of title 10, United States Code;

“(C) an individual who—

“(i) served on active duty in any branch of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard or Reserves; and

“(ii) was discharged or released from such service under conditions other than dishonorable; and

“(D) a spouse or dependent of an individual described in subparagraph (A), (B), or (C).

“(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—During the period beginning on the date of enactment of this subsection and ending on September 30, 2028, the Administrator shall carry out a program to be known as the ‘Boots to Business Program’ to provide entrepreneurship training to covered individuals.

“(3) GOALS.—The goals of the Boots to Business Program are to—

“(A) provide assistance and in-depth training to covered individuals interested in business ownership; and

“(B) provide covered individuals with the tools, skills, and knowledge necessary to identify a business opportunity, draft a business plan, identify sources of capital, connect with local resources for small business concerns, and start up a small business concern.

“(4) PROGRAM COMPONENTS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Boots to Business Program may include—

“(i) a presentation providing exposure to the considerations involved in self-employment and ownership of a small business concern;

“(ii) an online, self-study course focused on the basic skills of entrepreneurship, the language of business, and the considerations involved in self-employment and ownership of a small business concern;

“(iii) an in-person classroom instruction component providing an introduction to the foundations of self employment and ownership of a small business concern; and

“(iv) in-depth training delivered through online instruction, including an online course that leads to the creation of a business plan.

“(B) COLLABORATION.—The Administrator may—

“(i) collaborate with public and private entities to develop course curricula for the Boots to Business Program; and

“(ii) modify program components in coordination with entities participating in a

Warriors in Transition program, as defined in section 738(e) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (10 U.S.C. 1071 note).

“(C) USE OF RESOURCE PARTNERS AND DISTRICT OFFICES.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall—

“(I) ensure that Veteran Business Outreach Centers regularly participate, on a nationwide basis, in the Boots to Business Program; and

“(II) to the maximum extent practicable, use district offices of the Administration and a variety of other resource partners and entities in administering the Boots to Business Program.

“(ii) GRANT AUTHORITY.—In carrying out clause (i), the Administrator may make grants, subject to the availability of appropriations in advance, to Veteran Business Outreach Centers, other resource partners, or other entities to carry out components of the Boots to Business Program.

“(D) AVAILABILITY TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.—The Administrator shall make available to the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Labor information regarding the Boots to Business Program, including all course materials and outreach materials related to the Boots to Business Program, for inclusion on the websites of the Department of Defense and the Department of Labor relating to the Transition Assistance Program, in the Transition Assistance Program manual, and in other relevant materials available for distribution from the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Labor.

“(E) AVAILABILITY TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—In consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Administrator shall make available for distribution and display on the website of the Department of Veterans Affairs and at local facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs outreach materials regarding the Boots to Business Program, which shall, at a minimum—

“(i) describe the Boots to Business Program and the services provided; and

“(ii) include eligibility requirements for participating in the Boots to Business Program.

“(F) AVAILABILITY TO OTHER PARTICIPATING AGENCIES.—The Administrator shall ensure information regarding the Boots to Business program, including all course materials and outreach materials related to the Boots to Business Program, is made available to other participating agencies in the Transition Assistance Program and upon request of other agencies.

“(5) COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCEDURES.—The Administration shall use relevant competitive bidding procedures with respect to any contract or cooperative agreement executed by the Administration under the Boots to Business Program.

“(6) PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY.—Not later than 30 days before the deadline for submitting applications for any funding opportunity under the Boots to Business Program, the Administration shall publish a notice of the funding opportunity.

“(7) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, and not less frequently than annually thereafter, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives a report on the performance and effectiveness of the Boots to Business Program, which—

“(A) may be included as part of another report submitted to such committees by the

Administrator related to the Office of Veterans Business Development; and

“(B) shall summarize available information relating to—

“(i) grants awarded under paragraph (4)(C);

“(ii) the total cost of the Boots to Business Program;

“(iii) the number of program participants using each component of the Boots to Business Program;

“(iv) the completion rates for each component of the Boots to Business Program;

“(v) to the extent possible—

“(I) the demographics of program participants, to include gender, age, race, ethnicity, and relationship to military;

“(II) the number of program participants that connect with a district office of the Administration, a Veteran Business Outreach Center, or another resource partner of the Administration;

“(III) the number of program participants that start a small business concern;

“(IV) the results of the Boots to Business and Boots to Business Reboot course quality surveys conducted by the Office of Veterans Business Development before and after attending each of those courses, including a summary of any comments received from program participants;

“(V) the results of the Boots to Business Program outcome surveys conducted by the Office of Veterans Business Development, including a summary of any comments received from program participants; and

“(VI) the results of other germane participant satisfaction surveys;

“(C) an evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the Boots to Business Program based on each geographic region covered by the Administration during the most recent fiscal year;

“(D) an assessment of additional performance outcome measures for the Boots to Business Program, as identified by the Administrator;

“(E) any recommendations of the Administrator for improvement of the Boots to Business Program, which may include expansion of the types of individuals who are covered individuals;

“(F) an explanation of how the Boots to Business Program has been integrated with other transition programs and related resources of the Administration and other Federal agencies; and

“(G) any additional information the Administrator determines necessary.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ELLZEY) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

## GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to address the American people. I rise in support of H.R. 1606, the Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Act of 2023.

As a veteran, I know that going from military life to civilian life can be