

This amendment aims to establish a working group that will explore the potential applications of blockchain technology, smart contracts, and a distributed ledger technology to enhance efficiencies and functions within the DOD.

While blockchain technology is a relatively recent innovation, it has already proven its value in both private and public organizations, enabling cost reductions, supply chain optimization, improved traceability efforts, and so much more. DOD can benefit from numerous applications where blockchain or distributed ledger technology can save both time and money.

The proposed working group will consist of officials within the DOD, the Office of Science and Technology Policy, relevant private-sector entities, and academic institutions. By assembling this working group, the DOD will initiate the evaluation of how blockchain, smart contracts, and distributed ledger technologies can be effectively utilized to ultimately yield taxpayer savings.

Mr. Chairman, I thank Chairman ROGERS for his work on the underlying bill, and I urge adoption of this amendment.

□ 1545

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN).

Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of en bloc amendments No. 2.

I thank Chairman ROGERS for including this proposal, and many others, to amend the provision related to former military land in Culebra, which is an island in the archipelago of Puerto Rico, an island municipality to the east of the main island.

In the Military Construction Authorization Act of 1974, some of these lands were transferred for recreational and nature reserve uses. However, this amendment would allow agencies like the Army Corps of Engineers the flexibility to determine and execute environmental cleaning efforts on the island of Culebra to fulfill those recreational and natural reserve uses when it is needed.

Mr. Chair, I urge the House to support the amendment and the en bloc package.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER), my friend and colleague.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of my amendment to the fiscal year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act, which addresses the shocking rise in child sexual abuse and exploitation in the United States and around the world.

Last year, there were over 32 million reports of online child sexual abuse material, an 89 percent increase since 2019.

The Pentagon's Combating Trafficking in Persons Office coordinates vital programs to prevent human trafficking, bring perpetrators to justice, and to protect victims.

My amendment will direct this office to analyze ways that the Department can better combat child sexual abuse and to recommend educational programs for servicemembers to identify and report exploitation, both online and offline, to law enforcement.

I thank the chair and the ranking member for their hard work on this legislation, and I urge all my colleagues to support this commonsense bipartisan amendment.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chair, I once again urge adoption of en bloc package No. 5, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chair, I encourage support of the en bloc package, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendments en bloc No. 5 offered by the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS).

The question was taken; and the Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from Alabama will be postponed.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. STRONG) having assumed the chair, Mr. GOODEN of Texas, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2670) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2024 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

WE MUST SAFEGUARD THE RELIGIOUS LIBERTY FOR OUR TROOPS

(Mrs. MILLER of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, priests and pastors have guided our troops through the darkest days of our toughest battles, and it is imperative that Congress continues to support and defend the religious liberty of our brave servicemen and -women.

This year, on Easter weekend, the Biden administration kicked Catholic priests out of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center through a cease and desist order.

In response to this attack on our servicemembers and their religious liberty rights, I had the honor of leading my colleagues in the House in sending a letter to Biden's Department of Defense demanding answers and accountability.

The Defense Department claims that they are looking into why pastoral care was removed from Walter Reed during Holy Week, but Congress must demand that they correct this wrongdoing to ensure that this never happens again.

We must safeguard religious liberty for our troops by ensuring pastoral care at Department of Defense medical facilities.

TRANSIT BUS MONTH FOR THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate July as Transit Bus Month for the Federal Transit Administration.

Every day, Americans use buses to travel around their communities. Thanks to the Biden administration, now they will be cleaner and more efficient.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes \$1.7 billion to improve bus transit across the country, and it will fund 1,800 zero-emission buses to increase efficiency and decrease pollution.

In July, the FTA is highlighting examples of how this law is helping Americans. One example is the \$47 million grant I helped secure for New Jersey Transit. This grant will install charging equipment for electric buses and modernize the Hilton Bus Garage in Maplewood, New Jersey. It will help New Jersey Transit use 100 new electric buses more efficiently throughout my district. This is part of my commitment to help New Jersey achieve a zero-emissions bus fleet by 2040 and reduce pollution for safer communities across the State.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ROBERT "BOBBY" SMITH

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Robert "Bobby" Smith, a close friend of mine, who was tragically killed in an airplane crash.

I knew Bobby well. In fact, he was my pilot for many years. He also flew for my predecessor, Congressman Jack Kingston.

Bobby's greatest passion was always aviation, and he also served as the chief flight instructor for MidCoast Aviation where he provided flight education for the VA and later served as

vice chairman of the Reidsville Airport Authority board.

Since 2012, Bobby volunteered as an Angel Flight pilot, arranging and piloting free flights for families in need of travel to and from healthcare services.

His generosity, his kindness, and willingness to help others through his passion for flight was unparalleled.

I am deeply saddened by the passing of my friend, but I know his legacy will live on for generations to come. Thank you, Bobby.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 55 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, July 13, 2023, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

EC-1379. A letter from the Alternate OSD FRLO, OUSD (A&S)(A)DPC, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Management of the Procurement Technical Assistance Agreement Program (DFARS Case 2020-D022) [Docket: DARS-2023-0023] (RIN: 0750-AL08) received June 27, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-1380. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's Issuance of Regulatory Guide — Sizing of Large Lead-Acid Storage Batteries, Regulatory Guide 1.212, Revision 2 received June 23, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-1381. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to serious human rights abuse and corruption that was declared in Executive Order 13818 of December 20, 2017, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); Public Law 94-412, Sec. 401(c); (90 Stat. 1257) and 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); Public Law 95-223, Sec. 204(c); (91 Stat. 1627); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-1382. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Mali that was declared in Executive Order 13882 of July 26, 2019, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); Public Law 94-412, Sec. 401(c); (90 Stat. 1257) and 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); Public Law 95-223, Sec. 204(c); (91 Stat. 1627); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-1383. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to significant transnational criminal organizations that was declared in Executive Order 13581 of July 24, 2011, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); Public

Law 94-412, Sec. 401(c); (90 Stat. 1257) and 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); Public Law 95-223, Sec. 204(c); (91 Stat. 1627); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-1384. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 25-156, "Law Enforcement Arrest Authority Technical Correction Temporary Amendment Act of 2023", pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-1385. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 25-157, "Special Education for Young Adults in the Custody of the Department of Corrections Temporary Amendment Act of 2023", pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-1386. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 25-154, "Rent Stabilized Housing Inflation Protection Temporary Amendment Act of 2023", pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-1387. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 25-158, "Office of Administrative Hearings Jurisdiction Temporary Amendment Act of 2023", pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-1388. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 25-155, "Medical Cannabis Manufacturer Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2023", pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-1389. A letter from the Associate General Counsel, Department of Agriculture, transmitting three (3) notifications of a nomination, a designation of acting officer, and a vacancy, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, Sec. 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-1390. A letter from the Administrative Assistant, Branch of Administrative Support Services, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Reclassifying Furbish's Louisewort (*Pedicularis furbishiae*) From Endangered to Threatened Status With a Section 4(d) Rule [Docket No.: FWS-R5-ES-2019-0056; FFO9E22000 FXES11130900000 201] (RIN: 1018-BD65) received June 26, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-1391. A letter from the General Counsel, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Civil Monetary Penalty Inflation Adjustment (RIN: 3133-AF34) received June 27, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1392. A letter from the General Counsel, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Civil Monetary Penalty Inflation Adjustment (RIN: 3133-AF40) received June 27, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1393. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Congressional and Legislative Affairs, Office of Capitol Access, Small Business Administration, transmitting the Administration's direct final rule — Disaster Assistance Loan Program Changes to Maximum Loan Amounts and Miscellaneous Updates (RIN: 3245-AH91) received June 27, 2023,

pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Small Business.

EC-1394. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's Major temporary regulations — Pre-Filing Registration Requirements for Certain Tax Credit Elections [TD 9975] (RIN: 1545-BQ76) received June 26, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

EC-1395. A letter from the Chief Privacy Officer and Chief FOIA Officer, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's fifth and final annual Social Security Number Fraud Prevention Act report; jointly to the Committees on Oversight and Accountability and Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. COLE: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 582. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2670) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2024 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes (Rept. 118-141). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. TAKANO (for himself, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. CORREA, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. RUIZ, Ms. SALAZAR, and Mrs. RADEWAGEN):

H.R. 4569. A bill to provide benefits for noncitizen members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs, and Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BERA (for himself, Mr. PHILLIPS, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Ms. HOULAHAN, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. NORTON, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. TOKUDA, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. KILMER, Ms. TITUS, Mr. HIMES, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. CARSON, and Mr. TRONE):

H.R. 4570. A bill to authorize assistance to support activities relating to the clearance of landmines, unexploded ordnance, and other explosive remnants of war in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, and to recognize the refugee and immigrant communities who supported and defended the Armed Forces during the conflict in Southeast Asia, including Hmong, Cham, Cambodian, Iu-Mien, Khmu, Lao, Montagnard, and Vietnamese Americans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. CARBAJAL (for himself and Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER):

H.R. 4571. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the employer-