

Our kids have had them. Our servicemembers have them. COVID-19 isn't on a list right now of anything that is being required. This seems to me to be superfluous and kind of creates more friction and anxiousness about how we talk about medicine that is being provided. This is medicine that should be optional.

Is this an option that would be available if a servicemember going in said, hey, I want to get the COVID vaccine? I want to have it, and I would like the Department of Defense to provide it to me.

I really think we should leave it up to the medical professionals at the Department of Defense to say what is necessary. Right now they are saying this isn't a mandated vaccine.

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

Mr. ROSENDALE. Madam Chair, we don't have a single problem with this being an option. If any servicemembers want to go and get an experimental vaccination plugged into their arm, they are welcome to do so.

What we are saying is that the dollars that are going to be issued to the Department of Defense should not include any mandate for this experimental vaccination.

In August of 2022, The Washington Post reported that 58 percent of the deaths related to COVID-19 were among vaccinated or boosted persons. This raises serious questions about even the effectiveness of this vaccine.

I would also like to state that the COVID-19 vaccine requirements also continue to ignore natural immunity. As renowned Dr. Marty Makary testified in the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic this year, "Over the past 3 years, over 200 studies have shown that natural immunity is at least as effective as vaccinated immunity. A recent Lancet review . . . natural immunity is at least as effective as vaccinated immunity, and probably better."

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

The Acting CHAIR (Mrs. HOUCHEIN). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Montana (Mr. ROSENDALE).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 173 OFFERED BY MR. ROY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 173 printed in part A of House Report 118-216.

Mr. ROY. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 45, line 10, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$20,000,000) (increased by \$20,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 723, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. ROY. Madam Chair, the amendment that I have offered increases funding for the inspector general by \$20 million for an Office of the Special Inspector General for Ukraine Assistance, if authorized, to enhance the oversight and accountability measures for funds appropriated for Ukraine, increasing the inspector general by \$20 million.

Over the last year and half, Congress has appropriated approximately \$113 billion in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

I am one of these individuals that believes that we did have agreements with Ukraine, and we have got to recognize those from the mid-1990s when we asked them to denuclearize and work with our partners in Eastern Europe.

I also don't believe that we ought to be just providing an endless supply of funds to Ukraine with no clear mission, with no clear accountability of the dollars, and without clear accountability of whether NATO and our European allies are upholding their end of the bargain.

This is a step to try to rectify at least one part of that: by making sure there is a fully empowered inspector general, to make sure that the information that we have is complete, and that we have a full understanding of every dollar that has already been appropriated and might be appropriated in the future, and to make sure that we are tracking it to the level that is necessary.

There have been a number of different issues that we have identified in the past. For example, if you look at other conflicts like Afghanistan, the lead for the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan found at least \$19 billion in U.S. taxpayer funds sent to Afghanistan was lost to waste, fraud, and abuse from 2002 to 2020.

It is critically important that we track this and follow it and understand it.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, I claim time in opposition only to have a discussion.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Minnesota is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, let it be said loud and clear, the chair and I and all the members on the Appropriations Defense Subcommittee have been bird-dogging, asking questions, wanting to have great reports on what is happening with the money.

You are in lockstep with what your ultimate goal is and what we have been doing on the committee. In fact, we fund a lot of this. In general, I support the idea of this amendment, but the bill already includes funding the oversight of all of the dollars we are spending to support Ukraine.

I am kind of a penny-pincher, believe it or not. You are smiling, but I ask

people a lot of questions. I won't get into that. I ask a lot of questions. I am kind of concerned about some duplicity and inefficiencies in here, which I know is something we are striving to make sure that that doesn't happen.

Madam Chair, keeping track of every dollar, especially when it comes to DOD is something that when I was on the Oversight Committee during the Iraq war and the way that we didn't have oversight over equipment and dollars and cold, hard cash that was being delivered there is something that I am very, very interested in and support doing.

I thank the gentleman for the amendment. The committee has it in hand. I want you to know that this is a bipartisan, full Appropriations Defense Subcommittee thing. We are asking these questions every time somebody is in to see us.

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

Mr. ROY. Madam Chair, I thank the gentlewoman for her comments, and I think we have a general agreement on what we are trying to accomplish.

I would note that in the NDAA we passed an authorization for this, and this would be the appropriation necessary to carry it out. That was the desire of our efforts to try to put a birds-eye view on this across agencies to ensure that dollars are being spent the way they are supposed to.

Madam Chair, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WOMACK).

Mr. WOMACK. Madam Chair, I rise in support of the amendment. As the ranking member of the Defense Subcommittee just said, the Defense Subcommittee is united in this entire process to try to bring accountability to the table. It is practical and it is rational that we have complete accountability and oversight.

That is why this bill contains many new oversight provisions, including notification requirements before funds are spent, a GAO review of the Defense Department's execution of Presidential draw-down authority, a reporting requirement on increasing burden-sharing for Ukraine, and a requirement that the inspector general review the Department's end use monitoring program. These are provisions that go directly to the heart of the gentleman's concerns about accountability.

This bill also includes funding for a Special Inspector General for Ukraine, if authorized, in the National Defense Authorization Act. This amendment furthers these efforts.

Madam, I urge a "yes" vote. I think I can speak for a good segment of our Defense Subcommittee, including those on the other side of the aisle, and I encourage a "yes" vote.

Mr. ROY. Madam Chair, may I inquire how much time is remaining.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman has 1½ minutes.

Mr. ROY. Madam Chair, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. SPARTZ).

Mrs. SPARTZ. Madam Chair, I rise in strong support of this amendment. I know that accountability is a foreign concept in Washington, but accountability builds trust. It is very important, considering the track record of this administration, considering the track record of the Department of Defense that hasn't been audited, and considering the track record of the Ukrainian Government, that the American people do have proper accountability.

Accountability will be the key to success for the very brave Ukrainian people fighting the fight against evil and winning that fight. I will strongly urge support for this amendment. It is a very, very serious war, and we don't want to have another pull-out like Afghanistan.

Mr. ROY. Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 174 OFFERED BY MR. ROY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 174 printed in part A of House Report 118-216.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. The salary of Cyrus Salazar shall be reduced to \$1.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 723, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. ROY. Madam Chair, the amendment I am offering reduces the salary of Cyrus Salazar, the director of the Department of Defense's Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to \$1. You might ask why we would do that.

It is a power that we have in the House of Representatives under the Holman rule to try to restrain the executive branch, both in terms of expense, dollars and how they are being used, and in terms of what they are being used for.

The American people are frankly getting a little tired of a Department of Defense that is being taken far too often off mission, I hear it all the time. I hear it from veterans. I hear it from Active-Duty servicemembers. I hear it from recruits. With recruiting numbers at low levels, with morale at questionable levels, we need to re-instill in our military a crystal clear focus on mission first.

Importantly, when we are—to use the gentlewoman's term, which I take to heart—pinching pennies and trying to find dollars, we need to stop racking up \$33 trillion in debt when we can't even figure out how to fund the salaries of our rank-and-file men and women in

uniform at the level that we might need to when we are dealing with issues of increasing health costs, when we are dealing with issues of having a fully armed military with the latest and greatest technology to defeat China.

It would seem questionable that, for example, we would have positions like the following: The Air Force is looking for a supervisory Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion accessibility officer in Arlington, Virginia, that will pay between \$155,700 to \$183,500 per year.

Another one, the Air Force is looking for a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion manager to work at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, that pays between \$94,199 to \$122,459 per year. There is another position in Alaska. There is another position in Alabama. I could go down the list, and this is the top of that pyramid.

What we are trying to say is we shouldn't do this. We need to stop this. We need to stop diverting the mission of the military, which is a laudable goal of ensuring you got a workforce that is representative of the population of this country. You don't need an entire bureaucracy within the Pentagon to do it that is then perpetuating a lot of divisive policies.

For example, West Point Academy slides told cadets that "whiteness" is "a location of structural advantage, of race privilege," is "a standpoint or place from which White people look at themselves and the rest of society," and "refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed."

There is another, Kelisa Wing, former chief diversity officer at DOD's schools. "I'm so exhausted at these White folk in these PD [professional development] sessions. This lady actually had the CAUDacity to say that Black people can be racist too."

This is not the kind of thing that should be going on at the United States military and the Pentagon. This is one step of many that we need to take to return the military to its core mission and end this social engineering wrapped in a uniform, rather than doing the job of defending this great country.

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Minnesota is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, Cyrus Salazar, as has been pointed out, is the director of the Department of Defense for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and is charged with promoting diversity within the DOD.

The Department has a responsibility to make sure all Americans are welcome in the service of our Nation and that it reflects America's defense.

I worked in the private sector until basically, I mean, I served part-time in city councils and that, but I worked in

the private sector until I came here to Congress. I still have a lot of friends in the private sector where I represent 3M. Right across the river in Minneapolis, there are General Mills, Target, and I could go on and on with the companies that we have.

These companies are competing for talent, whether it is the person who is helping you at the Target store with the checkout or whether it is the person that is being recruited to go into teaching or a person who is going to become a CEO or a compliance officer or a bank auditor. We are all competing in the workforce right now.

Our labor trades are competing for the workforce. There are fewer and fewer people entering the workforce, so there is a great competition going on. These companies have diversity offices. They are going out and talking to groups that maybe have never been in the industry before. I will use the building trades again.

In our building trades they are knocking down the doors going to our high schools. They have people just working on diversity, saying, these are great paying jobs, let me tell you about them. Maybe nobody in your family has been a plumber, maybe nobody in your family has been an electrician or a pipe fitter, or maybe you never worked road construction. These are great jobs for you. They are going out and they are recruiting these people.

We are up against the same challenge of recruitment and retention that the private sector is. In fact, we are competing for the same workforce. Of course, in my opinion, we need to be doing some of this diversity and inclusion.

The gentleman from Texas, when he quoted what was said at West Point, I totally agree, those are horrific statements and that person is gone and they should be gone. But the DOD is struggling with a challenge. Right now, our civilian workforce doesn't reflect the diversity of other Federal agencies.

We are trying to get more women, more men, more everybody in this country to know that the DOD is a great place to work and that once you are there, you are going to love the job, and we are going to give you the tools in the toolbox to do it.

Madam Chair, I will close with this. One of the things that I have been working on is cybersecurity and IT and linguistics. I come from a culturally rich district. If you come to University Avenue in St. Paul, the diversity of the restaurants and small businesses that are there, it will blow your mind away. It is rich in diversity.

But we still find, even all being in the same neighborhoods and communities, we still have to do outreach to say you are welcome. One of those places is cybersecurity. A lot of these businesses are being hacked. They are having issues with it. We are going to the high schools and to the community colleges, and we are looking at folks like—there is a place for you in cybersecurity. They are like, me? Yeah, you.

Sometimes people need to be welcomed in, they need to have the opportunity to be recruited.

I really think that having someone that oversees opportunity, equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion, making sure that disability programs—we have our servicemembers who come back and sometimes have to be relocated into another position or a job, that is what this office can do.

I know we have gotten down this track of how we can divide ourselves talking about diversity and inclusion. I want us to embrace it in a way to have a more unified workforce and to recruit and retain the best and the brightest to work in the Department of Defense.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time because I think we have had this discussion over and over again today.

Mr. ROY. Madam Chair, the United States military is one of the few institutions in America where the skills of the men or women on either side of you could mean the difference between life and death.

At the end of the day, it embodies I think Dr. King's notion of judging men and women on the content of their character, not the color of their skin. Yet, the Biden administration is infatuated with divvying us up by race, with divvying us up by our immutable characteristics.

The fact is, with all due respect—and I appreciate the gentlewoman's remarks and the tone in which they were offered—corporate America is slashing DEI officers amid a backlash of diversity programs across the country.

There is a story right here about the numbers of how many offices have been slashed over the last year, in part because they don't add much value to the bottom line in which the economy is hurting and people are suffering; and also in part because they are getting a backlash from having so much focus on divvying us up by race and all these characteristics—it is not actually good.

We are seeing this in countless corporations across the country. There is story after story, if you just Google it and see what is going on out there. I think the Department of Defense should be in line with where we are seeing our society recoil at this divvying us up by race. This is one way to accomplish that objective.

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

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. DUARTE). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 175 OFFERED BY MR. ROY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 175 printed in part A of House Report 118-216.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act for the Department of Defense or the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute may be used to carry out the observance of Pride Month as specified in the Cultural Observances and Awareness Events List of the Department of Defense and authorized by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 723, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Chair, the amendment that is being put forward here would say that none of the funds made available by this Act may be used to carry out the observance of Pride Month authorized by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness for the Cultural Observances and Awareness Events list.

First of all, that whole title should give you a little bit of pause. At the end of the day, in line with the amendment that I just offered, the goal here should be to ensure that our military is focused on the mission and building cohesion to accomplish the mission.

□ 1400

Now we have got the Department of Defense focusing on, for example, the Air Force releasing a memo entitled Department of the Air Force Observance of LGBTQ Pride Month which empowered installation commanders to plan and conduct appropriate activities in honor of Pride Month, which they then did. That then resulted in, for example, the Department of the Navy issuing a memo declaring June's month theme, "Peace, Love, Revolution." There was a flyer advertising Robins Air Force Base 2023 Pride Month events, which included information for servicemembers and their families to attend the Pride Night game night and unity and diversity color run. Because some of the colleagues voiced opposition, Nellis Air Force Base approved and then canceled a scheduled drag show to celebrate Pride Month.

What on Earth are we doing? I represent Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. I represent countless veterans attached to or who have served at Joint Base San Antonio or otherwise in central Texas. My constituents come to me, and they just shake their heads, and say: What are we doing? What happened?

We need to beat China. We need to be able to be in a position to carry out multiple-front wars around the globe, if necessary. We need to have the finest fighting force in the world with the best technology and the best training.

Again, it is one thing to respect someone's private life and differences, but to carry out your objective in the office without having the Department of Defense promoting events dividing us up by our various characteristics. That is the reality.

On social media, the marines tweeted a Pride Month image with rainbow-tipped bullets on a marine helmet featuring the words: Proud to serve. I am sure the Chinese military is quaking in its boots with the rainbow-tipped bullets being tweeted around the world.

The Air Force tweeted an image with the silhouette of an airman saluting in front of a Pride flag. The Navy changed their logo on social media to ships and aircraft in front of a rainbow flag.

Again, that is the flag right there: Red, white, and blue. That is the flag—no other flag—when we are talking about what the United States military should be standing in front of and should be projecting.

I have very few constituents who disagree with this sentiment that we should be focused on having a military that is designed to, when called upon, blow stuff up and kill people in defense of this country, as needed, and to be the best fighting force to accomplish that objective in the world. They need to be trained and to have a clear mission. And, oh by the way, side note, while I am sitting here on the floor talking about the Department of Defense appropriations, the military should not be engaged in endless conflict without congressional engagement in terms of authorization of the use of military force, which, by the way, we were supposed to be addressing by the end of this month. I will save that for a different speech.

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I claim the time to oppose this amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Minnesota is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, we honor and celebrate many cultural events. We celebrate Hanukkah on the National Mall. We light a Christmas tree outside in front of the Capitol. When my father was with the DOD, he served in many bases that the gentleman mentioned in Texas. I can tell you about some observations that I had of celebrating Texas pride. Our country has a history of celebrating a lot of things.

Black History Month was first observed in 1976 by President Ford. Yes, we celebrate Pride Month, and we celebrate other cultural awareness months. This is national Hispanic Pride Month. What they do when the DOD does that is they show that they are committed to creating and affirming an inclusive environment and that everybody is welcome with their diversity. Everybody has somebody to offer.

At a time when the LGBTQ community, along with so many other minority groups in this country, are facing attacks and threats—just think of what happened, Mr. Chair, we had a moment of silence on this House floor after what happened at the Pulse nightclub shooting in Florida—it is more important than ever that people know that we have their backs when they are under attack.

Mr. Chair, I was in the chair that you are in when this floor ended Don't Ask, Don't Tell in the NDAA, and that made our military feel open and more inclusive. I think of a dear friend of mine who served in the Navy, who served when he couldn't be who he was openly. He was serving proudly in the Navy, but he had to hide who he was until he was discharged, and then he felt he could come out. It was a burden that he carried with him.

This amendment has no place in the Defense bill. I don't think it has any place in the legislation that we do here. We are about coming together as a country, not trying to fight what divides us. We need to be focused on what unites us. One of the things that unites us is we are a country that, awkwardly at times, not everybody agrees all the time, but we are a diverse community. We celebrate that.

I mean, the people who came here when there were originally Thirteen Colonies came here because they were looking for freedom to be who they were. It was religious freedom at the time, but that is what they were looking for.

The Federal Government recognizes these cultural awareness months. The House of Representatives recognizes many cultural awareness events. We do that because we honor the contributions and services of all communities. Pride Month should be no different.

Mr. Chair, that is why I oppose this amendment, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Chair, I will be brief in the interest of moving things along. The only thing I would note is, with respect to the difference, for example, of talking about Christmas trees and celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and putting up a Pride flag, I would say those things are different.

I would also note that there have been problems at the Department of Defense with people expressing their faith. In fact, there are Christians who are being limited in their ability to have Christian displays in their offices, and we had to have groups like First Liberty go litigate it in court in order to defend their right to be able to display said Christian symbols and statements in their office cubicle.

This is what is going on at the Department of Defense, and people don't understand it.

I think this is a commonsense effort to refocus our military on the mission to which it should be focused. Acknowledging that we are a diverse community is great, but the Department of Defense can acknowledge that diversity and bring people together to carry out the mission without perpetuating essentially social engineering at the Department of Defense.

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I will close in just a minute. I mentioned a

friend. I had several friends in high school—I graduated in 1972—who were gay. They hid the fact that they were. They served when recruitment was kind of down after the Vietnam war. They served honorably and had honorable discharges. When we were in markup in the full committee, Mr. POCAN shared this, and it was very moving to me, so I am going to share it. It refers to the sacrifice that our LGBTQ friends made before Don't Ask, Don't Tell. It is a quote on a tombstone of Sergeant Leonard Matlovich. "When I was in the military, they gave me a medal for killing two men and a discharge for loving one."

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

Mr. ROY. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY).

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 176 OFFERED BY MR. ROY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 176 printed in part A of House Report 118-216.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title) insert the following:

SEC. 8155. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for the Reynolds Scholars Program of the Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Future Warfare of Marine Corps University.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 723, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Chair, the amendment that I am offering here would prohibit funds from being available under this act for the Marine Corps University Krulak Center's Reynolds Scholars program.

Now, I was unaware of this, relatively blissfully, I don't know, a couple months ago, but then the Marine Corps University's Reynolds Scholars Program at the Krulak Center is a year-long program for students who wish to explore "gender and security issues." That may not have jumped up onto my radar screen, but I became aware because the official Krulak Center Twitter account publicly criticized the user for calling this program "woke" and calling this individual a stain on the legacy of marines.

Well, it seems inappropriate for a federally funded center, so it caught

my attention. Then it became clear to me when I had a syllabus presented to me about what was being presented. Here are a few examples of the program themes listed in the official syllabus: "Gendering War," "What is gender and how is it different from biological sex?" "How are war narratives constructed through gender discourse?" "How can we imagine nonviolent masculinities and the role they might play in conflict?"

We are pretty darn violent.

"How might the United States Marine Corps strategic narrative be problematic for women, peace and security?"

Again, this is just something that my constituents, and I think a large block of the American electorate—dare I say a very sizable majority—would say, what are you doing?

I mean, again, let's assume we were swimming in money. Let's just assume that we had money coming out of our ears, that we had a \$33 trillion surplus that we had banked up that we were just saving for a rainy day to spend \$33 trillion. I don't know how you do that, by the way. Let's just assume that was the case. Let's assume we had a \$2 trillion surplus this year instead of a \$2 trillion deficit. Let's assume further that our recruiting numbers were excellent. Let's assume further that we had really strong morale. Let's assume further that our healthcare costs in the military were manageable or that our healthcare costs anywhere in this country at all were manageable in the post-Obamacare world in which prices have skyrocketed and insurance companies have made gazillions of dollars. Again, that is another speech for another day.

In that imaginary world where that were the state of things, would this still be a good idea to spend even \$1 or \$10 or \$100,000 or \$5 million or whatever the amount is that might be here, would it be a good idea to spend that money for this: "How are war narratives constructed through gendered discourse?" "How can we imagine non-violent masculinities and the role they might play in conflict?"

Again, the American people just want us to focus on making this government do its core constitutional duty, do it within its fiscal responsibilities; do it in terms of providing a mission to defend this country; secure our borders, provide for the general welfare in the sense that you are allowing the American people to do what they do best if the government gets out of the way. Stop bleeding money, stop racking up debt, defend the United States, stop social engineering, and just do your damn job as Congress. I think that ought to be a pretty simple goal and a bipartisan goal.

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I claim the time to strongly oppose this amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Minnesota is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, this feels to me like another attempt by the majority to go after minority groups in the military.

Here is the history. The Reynolds Scholars Program was designed to study women in the military and was named after Lori Reynolds, a decorated female Marine Corps general.

The program was established to comply with the Peace and Security Act of 2017, the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, the Department of Defense Women, and the Peace and Security Strategic Framework, so this is something that Congress has weighed in on.

Let me read the program description to you. The gentleman from Texas has read some excerpts, and I didn't see them in full context. I will take them at face value that he is upset with this, but I will read some of the descriptions for you. I can cite the sources and put them in the full remarks later for the committee to have.

“ . . . women account for the majority of individuals adversely affected by today's armed conflicts, and it affirms the critical role women play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building.”

“ . . . advocates for the recognition of diverse perspectives that increase military effectiveness, and [b] supports the empowerment of half the world's population as equal partners in preventing and managing conflict.”

Now, I have not been to the scholarship program, but I have traveled with State, and I have been with women who have been adversely affected by armed conflicts—raped, tortured, bullied, harassed—and it is often our military and our military women who sometimes in these conflicts are having conversations with them and trying to get the facts if there have been war crimes committed. It takes a very special person to do that.

It affirms the critical role, as I said, that women play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and peace-keeping. President Bush, the Bush administration, when I was first serving in Congress, actually had me go to Yemen and speak with our military at a graduation of Yemen soldiers that we had been working and training with. Part of the message that the State Department and the Bush administration and our Department of Defense wanted to communicate was the importance of young girls going to school.

In Chad, I witnessed, in the refugee camp after the Janjaweed had attacked an area, not only what had happened to the women there, but our military female leaders interacting with the troops there in Chad that we were working with, peacekeeping troops reinforcing that women needed to be treated with dignity and respect.

I will end this particular part of talking about this by saying: Often when

we go to build peace, whether it is sustaining the peace in Northern Ireland, whether it is looking for peace in conflict in Africa, whether it is working with terrible situations in Latin America, it is the women whom we bring to the table who can get the attention of the community, the community elders, because they talk about their children and the need for peace.

I don't know if these people were graduates from this program, but I have seen where women make a difference. The male members of our military who are part of these programs are indispensable, and they are very important.

As a woman who stands up for our women in the military and our allies in the military, I have to tell you, I see nothing woke, I see nothing woke about trying to understand the intersection of women and conflict. I only see it as a benefit.

In my opinion, this amendment is antifemale in what it is purporting to take away from the scholarship program moving forward. I oppose this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I have nothing more to say except that I don't think it is intentional sometimes some of the things that are happening on the floor today, but one of the things that we chant as kids is “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Words hurt; they hurt.

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

Mr. ROY. Mr. Chair, I agree with the gentlewoman that words hurt. The question is, how those words are deployed and what they do for the mission of our United States military. When I see taxpayer dollars going to fund a syllabus which was not something in public view, which then became in public view after an online kind of disagreement with things like, What is gender and how is it different from biological sex? And all of the things that we are focusing on, and we have talked about it in other contexts with funding transgender surgeries and funding other manners of the social engineering currently going on that I believe is ripping apart the fabric of our country, the strength of our military, and the cohesion of the finest fighting force in the world. I believe it is important for us to try to maintain that.

I am enormously proud of the women whom I have nominated for academies. I met with women and men just 2 weeks ago with my staff in a retreat where we went to the United States Naval Academy. I am enormously proud of their service, proud of everybody who has worn the uniform and been honorably discharged for their service, but we need to stand up for a military that is focused on its mission.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 177 OFFERED BY MR. ROY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 177 printed in part A of House Report 118-216.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title) insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds appropriated by this Act may be used to implement any of the following executive orders:

(1) Executive Order 13990, relating to Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science To Tackle the Climate Crisis.

(2) Executive Order 14008, relating to Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad.

(3) Section 6 of Executive Order 14013, relating to Rebuilding and Enhancing Programs To Resettle Refugees and Planning for the Impact of Climate Change on Migration.

(4) Executive Order 14030, relating to Climate-Related Financial Risk.

(5) Executive Order 14057, relating to Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability.

(6) Executive Order 14082, relating to Implementation of the Energy and Infrastructure Provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.

(7) Executive Order 14096, relating to Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 723, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Chair, the amendment before us would prohibit any of the funds in the Defense appropriations bill from being used to carry out President Biden's executive orders on climate change.

Our military should be, as I have stated in these other amendments, focused on deterring and, if necessary, defeating our adversaries. President Biden wants to continue to sacrifice the strength of our defense in deference to the climate cult.

In 2021, Department of Defense spokesman John Kirby refused to say China was a bigger national security threat to the United States than climate change. He called them “equally important” and said it doesn't do anybody good to make a relative assessment of national security issues.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin has said “climate change is an existential threat to our Nation's security.”

Secretary of State John Kerry literally travels to China to discuss climate change, not China's increased aggression against Taiwan, not its expansion in the Pacific, not the oppression of its people.

Biden's executive orders have served as the catalyst for massive reforms in the Department of Defense that compromise and undermine national security to advance a climate fetish.

The Department of Defense's Climate Adaptation Plan includes radical proposals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the expense of our warfighting capabilities. According to the plan, the Department of Defense has identified climate change as a critical national security issue. It contains mandates on "environmental justice" because why miss an opportunity to push such an ideology.

The Department of Defense says it will transition to 100 percent carbon-free electricity, meaning America's war machine will literally depend on the wind and the Sun unless they are going to be moving, I guess, nuclear power, which my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have not been all too quick to help us move.

Meanwhile, China has 1100 coal-fired plants and is building close to 2 a week. We have been building zero. We have been constraining the development of natural gas-fired electricity, and we have only recently finally had one nuclear plant get launched I think for the first time since the mid-1970s.

The DOD has mandated that all non-tactical vehicles be EVs by 2035. It is fair to say the tactical vehicles we need to win wars are not far behind. That means our defense will become wholly dependent on Chinese batteries and other critical minerals. I always wonder why my colleagues are not too bothered by the fact that 80 percent of these batteries are using cobalt, and they are being mined heavily by slave labor, often child labor.

There doesn't seem to be any concern about what that means by continuing to perpetuate a mandate to send us down that road when it won't dent CO₂ production. It is living in a fantasy land. If you eliminated the internal combustion engine in the United States tomorrow you might dent all of worldwide CO₂ production by about 1 percent, 1½ percent. Meanwhile, China and India are pumping it out in mass volumes. Yet we are going to inject this directly into the veins of our national security.

That is why I offered this amendment and believe that it is critically important, so that we can again have our military focused on a core mission of defending this country.

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I claim the time to oppose this amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Minnesota is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, the fact is, our Earth is warming. The fact is, our climate is changing, and it is unprecedented. I have been to Alaska several times. The last time I was on some of our bases in Alaska, they were dealing with permafrost now not being reliable to land planes on the runways that we have constructed. The Army Corps of Engineers is up there trying to figure out what they do about what is happening with the permafrost and the

thawing that they are seeing to make our buildings be resilient and sustainable and how do we build buildings in the future to address this.

That is just in Alaska. I won't even talk about what has been happening with some of our radar facilities sliding off into the ocean.

The start of the hurricane season has begun, and it is historic. Hurricane Hilary brought southern California its first tropical storm watch. That is new. We know that these weather events are worldwide, and we know that they know no boundaries, as evidenced by the recent Canadian wildfires.

The U.S. has already set a new world record for the number of weather disasters this year that could cost \$1 billion or more. We have had 23 so far. I am going to refer again to what I had in my opening remarks. This is Tyndall Air Force Base. We flew planes out of there because we knew it was coming, but we weren't able to protect the infrastructure. We are spending billions and billions and billions of dollars.

The other thing I mentioned was what happened in Guam with the recent storms there. The Air Force alone in Guam is saying \$40 billion. We have to wake up here. We have to wake up and do what we can to mitigate these costs.

The Department of Defense is the largest and most wide-reaching government agency. It can make a huge difference by climate-friendly changes in the way that they operate. I am proud of the fact that we have worked on them in the Defense bill.

This amendment is needless, and it makes it difficult for the Department of Defense to achieve its climate goals. It jeopardizes our military readiness when we have bases like the one I just showed on Tyndall and what has happened in Guam.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Milley, testified that climate change is a serious threat that is facing our country and one that the military must take into account. He went on to say that climate change has a significant effect on military operations: "Climate change is going to impact natural resources. It is going to impact the increased instability in various parts of the world, and it is going to impact migrations."

Yes, it is a problem not only here at home on our bases with resilience, but it is a problem with people fleeing climate change and what has happened in their lives and in their countries.

Each of these situations increases the instability in different regions, which could trigger more hostilities that we have to respond to to protect ourselves. Each of these situations can impact different regions in very, very different ways, even in our own hemisphere, so we need to ensure that our military is aware of the problems climate change can cause, and if they can play a role in either resilience of buildings or different energy sources that they use so we are not burning as much fossil fuel, I think we should do that.

Now, obviously, the gentleman disagrees, but I am looking to the future. I am not looking to the past. I am looking for a stronger, more flexible, more resilient and more economically empowered United States because the dollars that we put into much of this climate resilience and that is also transferrable into the private sector. The work that the Department of Defense is doing to reduce its energy costs, whether it is in materials that it is building, whether it is in use with all the equipment that our soldiers are having to carry, ways in which we can solar power some of the equipment that they use so we are not bringing these huge oil trucks in that we all watched every night for how many weeks of our soldiers, many of them dying in front of our own eyes transporting fuel.

I think it can be a win-win, and we need to look at it as a win-win. We can't always be looking at it as a loss-loss.

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

□ 1430

Mr. ROY. Mr. Chair, I note that recently China's military sent 103 warplanes toward Taiwan in a 24-hour period in what the island's Defense Ministry called a recent new high. Forty of these planes crossed the symbolic median line between mainland China and Taiwan.

There is a lot going on in the world. We are going to have debates about Ukraine. I am hopeful we will have a debate about Ukraine rather than just tacking on a continuing resolution and jamming it through to the American people, but that is a debate for another day.

The question here is whether or not we are going to have, in the gentlewoman's words, a strong military, a resilient military, and a strong economy on the back of that or wrapped around that when, in fact, what we are doing through the Inflation Reduction Act is spending almost a trillion dollars, according to The Wall Street Journal, in massive subsidies, 90 percent to billion-dollar corporations, heavily to the most elite, rich, frankly, usually White liberals in this country, driving around their EV-powered cars. We are subsidizing the crud out of that while we are decimating the natural gas strength of this country, which puts us in a much stronger position from a national security perspective vis-a-vis Russia, vis-a-vis China, rather than empowering China by saying, sure, let us please buy all of your solar panels and all of your batteries so that we can transfer our military to something that isn't even remotely ready to be transferred to.

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 178 OFFERED BY MR. TIFFANY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 178 printed in part A of House Report 118-216.

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be expended to create, procure, or display any map that depicts Taiwan, Kinmen, Matsu, Penghu, Wuciu, Green Island, or Orchid Island as part of the territory of the People's Republic of China.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 723, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. TIFFANY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Chair, my amendment would prohibit the Department of Defense from creating, procuring, or displaying any map which depicts Taiwan as part of the territory of the People's Republic of China.

This should not be a problem since all of us know that Taiwan is not, nor has it ever been, part of Communist China. Any claims to the contrary are simply false.

Since the 1970s, America's so-called One China policy has acknowledged Beijing's bogus claims over Taiwan. This is an antiquated and dishonest policy, and it is one that we should abandon.

While my amendment will not end that misguided policy, it will at least require that the maps that we use reflect a simple reality: China is China; Taiwan is Taiwan.

Mr. Chair, I ask for a "yes" vote on my honest maps amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to this amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Minnesota is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to this amendment, oddly enough, as a social studies teacher who taught some geography. The Department of Defense, the administration, and this Congress have been pretty clear in its opposition to the unwelcomed Chinese assertions of control over Taiwan.

This amendment will do nothing to prevent the Chinese aggression in the Indo-Pacific, but it would prevent the Department of Defense from buying or displaying a map on how China views the world. Now, if you are going to have a discussion with students about geography and China's ambitions, China has maps. China has maps which rewrite history.

Whether they rewrite history including Taiwan, or whether they rewrite

history as they have done in Tibet or what they are looking at doing in other parts of the world with their Belt and Road Initiative, they have maps. We can't be blinded or not acknowledge how they view the world physically and what the world really is.

This would force the Department to put its head in the sand or obtain intelligence or something on what the Chinese have labeled as theirs.

Mr. Chair, I think we can all agree that it is important to know what our allies and adversaries are thinking, and sometimes we have to physically look at it.

Instead, I believe Congress and the Department should focus our time and energy on being clear with China about the respect for international boundaries and the rule of law. One way you can show that is the international boundaries and the rule of law on a map that we can all agree on that is correct and showing how China is coming up with their own maps, reinterpreting the boundaries themselves.

Mr. Chair, I oppose this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Chair, I am stunned. This is the type of appeasement that gets the world in trouble. We have a long history of this, and our country is very familiar with it, going back to probably the most classic example that is taught in our history books from the 1930s, where there isn't this clear demarcation, where you do not have definitive language, like President Reagan when he said, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall."

There are times when you have to be very clear with your adversaries about where you stand. This is one of them in regard to Taiwan because Communist China would like to take over that island nation, an island nation that they never controlled. It was never under their control.

We can appease, and we will continue to see dozens, perhaps hundreds, of sorties being flown over Taiwan as aggression comes from that appeasement.

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I am certain that the gentleman from Wisconsin does not think I appease China. I don't. I do not.

In fact, China, when we went to visit Taiwan at one point while I was on a delegation, they were going to refuse us entry because they see us as hostiles.

China doesn't see me as an appeaser. I want to be really clear. Maybe it is not the intention of this gentleman, but I am going to say it again: You are in a military college situation. You are talking about how China views the world. You put up the real map and somehow or another the Department of Defense can't even procure, create, or display a map that shows how China sees themselves viewing the world.

We are in conflict with China right now in the South China Sea. Not to show how China sees these islands as

theirs when we are sending our Navy in there to protect freedom of seas, a map which shows the freedom of seas that they are protecting, that just doesn't make any sense to me.

Mr. Chair, I am at a loss for words why we can't show how China views the world when we are getting ready to defend our democracy, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Chair, I will take the point in good faith from the gentlewoman on the other side. If you have a good instructor, they can clearly explain how China views the world. If you have a good instructor in the Department of Defense, perhaps in the military college, they can explain very clearly how China views the world. This does not preclude that in any way, but when we make a trip like I did recently with the Natural Resources Committee, and we have a map that is put before us that shows Taiwan as part of Communist China, that is just simply not the truth. That is what we were getting at.

I think this legislation is going to have strong bipartisan support, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. TIFFANY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 179 OFFERED BY MR. TIFFANY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 179 printed in part A of House Report 118-216.

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be made available to enforce the restrictions outlined under the headings "Visits and Travel" (regarding limitations on "Travel to Taiwan") and "Communications" (regarding limitations on "Name", "Symbols of Sovereignty", and "Correspondence") in the Department of State's June 29, 2021, Memorandum for All Department and Agency Executive Secretaries entitled "Revised Guidelines on Interacting with Taiwan".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 723, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. TIFFANY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Chair, my amendment would prevent the enforcement of several arbitrary State Department restrictions that limit communication and cooperation between U.S. officials and their counterparts in Taiwan.

These restrictions, which are imposed at the behest of Communist China, are not only counterproductive, but they actually conflict with existing U.S. law. They prevent high-ranking officials from traveling to Taiwan, which makes it more difficult for us to coordinate with military planners in Taipei.

They police language, warning American officials not to refer to Taiwan as a country or its elected leaders as a government. They even impose degrading restrictions that serve no reasonable purpose, such as a ban on displaying Taiwan's flag and the playing of Taiwan's national anthem at functions held on U.S. Government property. In essence, they are designed to prevent and limit high-level interaction between U.S. and Taiwanese officials.

Despite the fact that it has been official U.S. policy since 2018 to encourage and facilitate them, Mr. Chair, these rules do not help the United States and do not help Taiwan. The only country they help is Communist China.

These Taiwan rules, like so many elements of our failed One China policy, simply perpetuate Beijing's lies and reward their bad behavior. America does not need a permission slip from Communist China to talk to our friends and allies, and that policy should end today.

Mr. Chair, I ask for a "yes" vote on this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Minnesota is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, the executive branch has the ability to determine how the United States engages and manages our relationship with Taiwan, just as, at times, this Congress has decided when and where to travel. It is because Congress has left it to the executive branch, however, to conduct the diplomacy and the recognition or nonrecognition of foreign states and governments in this case.

Now, I believe, Mr. Chair, if we want to legislate on how the executive branch should engage with Taiwan, then what we should do is mark it up in a separate bill in the Foreign Affairs Committee that deals just with that, either have the authorization handle it or if we are going to have the Foreign Affairs appropriations bill on the floor at some point, I hope.

In the absence of that, the executive branch needs to determine how to handle diplomatic engagements abroad. It is their job to weigh multiple equities and balance delicate factors that are simply not considered by this amendment today.

The gentleman knows and understands that Taiwan is a sensitive geopolitical subject with respect to our relations with the People's Republic of China, and I appreciate that. However, Mr. Chair, we have a select committee in this House, and I think it is something that we should allow them, in a bipartisan fashion, to examine.

There is just too much at stake, in my opinion, to have this amendment decide what guidelines of engagement will be here today on the House floor.

Mr. Chair, I oppose this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Chair, America has always done best in regard to foreign policy when we are strong and resolute. This is anything but strong and resolute.

Let me read to you from an unclassified document from the State Department: You should not refer to Taiwan as a country or to the authorities on Taiwan as a government. Instead, refer to Taiwan authorities or Taiwan counterparts. Please avoid the public display or use of any ROC symbols of sovereignty. Taiwan authorities should not wear their uniforms on U.S. Government premises unless necessary for safety reasons.

In other words, in effect, you are almost saying to them we need you to grovel. You are second-class citizens when you are interacting with the United States of America.

We should never treat a friend like that, in particular a friend like Taiwan where you see the Communist Chinese Government is working day after day and have been successful in some places, like the Solomon Islands in Central America, where they have undermined support for Taiwan.

We should be standing resolutely with Taiwan and send a very clear message. When we send a clear message to Communist China, it is important for them to hear that, but our partners, our allies around the world, also see that clear message and are more likely to be resolute, also.

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, the Department of Defense appropriation bill, we are sending a message, a clear message, and I support that message. What the gentleman from Wisconsin is talking about, Mr. Chair, is the Department of State, and that is not germane to this bill.

There are bills on the floor where it will be germane, and that is my biggest concern with this amendment. I don't want to be a party to not respecting the chairs of the authorizing committees or the chairs and ranking members of the Appropriations Committee that oversees that funding.

That is not what this bill is about today. For that reason alone, to respect the different roles that we have in this body, this amendment, although well-intentioned by my colleague from Wisconsin, is not germane to this bill. We should not overstep our jurisdiction. We should stay with what we are doing with China and Taiwan in the Defense bill, which the chair has marked out clearly.

I support that, but I do not support starting to dictate what the authorizing committee and the Appropriations Committee for State-Foreign Ops should be doing.

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

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Chair, if there is a point of order that is being raised here, my amendment does not change any existing law or require any new duty or

determination on the part of any employee of the Department of Homeland Security. It simply prohibits the expenditure of funds in contravention of a longstanding existing law, which the Department ought to comply with already.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. TIFFANY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 180 OFFERED BY MR. ROSENDALE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 180 printed in part A of House Report 118-216.

Mr. ROSENDALE. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enforce any COVID-19 mask mandates.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 723, the gentleman from Montana (Mr. ROSENDALE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Montana.

Mr. ROSENDALE. Mr. Chair, my amendment No. 180 would prohibit the use of funds being made available by this act from enforcing any COVID-19 mask mandates.

Now, I want to make sure that everyone understands there is a huge difference between a COVID-19 mask mandate and having a section of a medical facility that is quarantined off because of highly contagious diseases or folks that are immune deficient. That has nothing to do with the COVID-19 mandate. This is only about COVID-19 mandates.

Last month, Morris Brown College in Atlanta reinstated its COVID-19 mask mandate. They eventually rescinded the mandate, in large part due to public outcry, but make no mistake, tyrants will go out of their way to control our lives if we allow them to.

The simple fact is that masks don't work. A recent study confirmed this fact, stating: "Wearing masks in the community probably makes little or no difference to the outcome of influenza-like illness/COVID-19-like illness compared to not wearing masks."

This was obvious to anyone with common sense, but our experts lied to us for the past 3 years about everything.

There are also negative consequences and potential safety concerns for children being forced to wear a mask. There are almost 70,000 children that attend Department of Defense Education Activity schools. We have seen the negative consequences of children masking, and children of our service-members who are risking their lives

overseas should not be subject to this cruel treatment.

Nobody should be turned away for refusing to wear a mask, but the real purpose of the mask mandate is for unelected bureaucrats to control our behavior, which is unacceptable and something that I will not tolerate.

Moreover, a potential mask mandate based on vaccination status would create a division among servicemembers. There has been a lot of discussion on enacting police policies that create cohesion among members of the Armed Forces and stigmatizing some servicemembers by forcing them to wear masks that would create a group of second-class citizens. This would, ultimately, create division among enlisted members.

The American people are sick of COVID-19 hysteria by unelected bureaucrats and will not comply with any more unscientific edicts.

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Minnesota is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I appreciate what the gentleman from Montana said about protecting medical facilities, but I am going to read the amendment: “At the end of the bill, before the short title, insert the following: Section,” and the section will be numbered, “None of the funds made available by this act may be used to enforce any COVID-19 mask mandate.” It says “any.”

So, at a DOD facility or at a hospital or something like that, they would not be able to enforce a mask mandate if they felt one was necessary in a certain section of a hospital or clinic.

To the amendment in general, if this was enacted, the Department, as I pointed out, would be limited in what they could do, but they couldn’t even purchase any masks in case of a COVID surge. The CDC and the World Health Organization have recommended using a mask as a tool to protect people, especially the vulnerable, in cases of a COVID-19 surge.

Here is why an option is necessary in the military, and I mentioned this earlier, Mr. Chair. I, once again, ask you and my colleagues to consider life in a submarine—the close quarters, the lack of privacy. Think what would happen if there is a COVID outbreak in a submarine. It would have the potential of impacting the ability of that submarine to stay on station or deploy, putting our national security at risk.

If enacted, this amendment would take away a safety tool for the commander, a tool that they have in their toolbox.

One person tests positive for COVID on a submarine. They are all breathing the same air. They are in tight quarters. They are all going to have to put a mask on so they can complete their mission.

Our commanders deserve our trust. They deserve our respect that they are going to act in the best interest of their crew so they can execute their mission.

I don’t want to take any tools away from people in that circumstance, and this amendment would do exactly that.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROSENDALE. Mr. Chair, I am glad that the gentlewoman from Minnesota brought up the bill, the actual bill. “None of the funds made available by this act may be used to enforce any COVID-19 mask mandates.”

Again, let me reiterate: Highly contagious diseases or folks that are immune deficient have nothing to do with the COVID-19 mandate.

Here is the other thing. If someone is concerned or chooses to virtue signal by wearing a mask, they are free to do so. They are absolutely free to do so. If they have an immune deficiency and want to wear a mask, they are free to do so, but do not impose the mandates on us freedom-loving individuals who don’t want to walk around covering our faces up just to let someone else feel a little better about things.

We have problems right now with recruitment. The numbers are down as much as 35 percent. We are missing goals dramatically. Approving arbitrary mandates that don’t help the military mission to be the most effective fighting force on Earth is not the way that we are going to get those numbers up.

Mr. Chair, this is a good amendment. It is going to help us with recruiting efforts. It is going to help us make sure that our team works together better, and I ask everyone in here to support it.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Montana (Mr. ROSENDALE).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. CALVERT. 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. TIFANY) having assumed the chair, Mr. DUARTE, Acting 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. 4365) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2024

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JOYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to re-

vise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 4367, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 723 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4367.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. FULCHER) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1459

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 4367) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes, with Mr. FULCHER in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOYCE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

□ 1500

Mr. JOYCE of Ohio. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I begin by thanking the chairwoman of the full committee, Ms. GRANGER, for her leadership and her tireless efforts to bring these appropriation bills to the floor.

I also thank the ranking member of the subcommittee, my good friend, Mr. CUELLAR, who has worked with us in good faith on the bill despite some disagreements on policy.

Lastly, I have enjoyed my time sitting next to the ranking member of the full committee, the gentlewoman from Connecticut, not once, but twice in the last few days.

The bill before us today provides \$62.8 billion for the Department of Homeland Security, an increase of \$2.1 billion above the fiscal year 2023 level.

In addition, the bill also includes \$20.3 billion for disaster response and recovery activities, including to support communities after the devastating wildfires in Maui and Hurricane Idalia.

One of the most pressing challenges this country faces is a border security crisis that has raged under the Biden administration. Two million migrants illegally crossed the border in each of