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House of Representatives

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR,
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2024

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 864 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 5894.

Will the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) kindly take the chair.

□ 1757

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 further consideration of the bill (H.R. 5894) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes, with Mr. WITTMAN (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, amendment No. 76 printed in part B of House Report 118-272, offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS), had been disposed of.

AMENDMENT NO. 78 OFFERED BY MR. PERRY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 78 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. PERRY. 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:

Page 162, line 11, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$100,000,000)”.

Page 195, line 9, after the dollar amount, insert “(increased by \$100,000,000)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY) and a

Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Chairman, this amendment halves the funding for the taxpayer-funded activists at the National Labor Relations Board.

The National Labor Relations Board is supposed to act to prevent and remedy unfair labor practices committed by private-sector employers and unions. Unfortunately, under the Biden administration, the NLRB has been filled with labor activists who seek only to empower union bosses at the expense of employees, employers, and consumers.

Moreover, their recent actions represent substantial executive overreach to implement a radical agenda so toxic that it could not be achieved by this administration when they had both Chambers of Congress or by the Obama administration with a filibuster-proof majority.

The fact that this agenda is so radical and out of touch with the American people that it has been routinely rejected by the people's Representatives should be the end of this conversation, but it is not. Instead, the Biden administration seeks, through executive fiat, to impose the PRO Act that failed to pass legislatively.

□ 1800

Just this year, the Biden NLRB has issued the following PRO Act provision by fiat: Joint employers standard, which destroys the franchise model and eliminates independent contractors; ambush elections, which shortens the timelines for elections to prevent employees from making fully informed decisions about whether to unionize or not; and card check, which eliminates secret ballot elections and ensures union bosses can intimidate and lie their way into certification.

Immediately after taking office, President Biden fired the NLRB Gen-

eral Counsel Peter Robb, even though he had 10 months remaining in his term and he was replaced with an Acting General Counsel, an end-around to the constitutional advice and consent process.

This radical acting official rescinded pro-employee memos that: protected employee's rights not to fund union activity; provided injured workers with remedies when they were injured due to union malfeasance; and challenged neutrality agreements as improper efforts by employers to support a union and eliminate the right of its employees to decide whether or not to organize.

These actions laid bare the truth that the NLRB is not living up to its mission, nor is it looking out for the interests of its workers. Instead, it is implementing a radical, deeply unpopular agenda through extraconstitutional means at the behest of leftist special interests. Stand up for the American people and stop this madness.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition to this amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Connecticut is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

The underlying bill already cuts NLRB funding by one-third. That is the lowest nominal appropriation since 1999 and the lowest appropriation in real terms in at least five decades.

A further reduction would mean mass furloughs, reduction in force, and the closure of field offices. In terms of scale, a \$100 million cut equates to total compensation for more than 500 FTEs. That is roughly 40 percent of the NLRB workforce. Combined with the \$99 million cut in the base text, the agency would lose roughly 80 percent of its staff capacity.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Case processing would grind to a halt, even as the agency faces a backlog following last year's 10 percent increase in case intake.

Let's talk about cases. Let's talk about unfair labor practice.

We should ignore unfair labor practices, according to the majority. We should not concern ourselves with employers who ignore collective bargaining rights because, quite frankly, I don't believe the majority believes in collective bargaining rights.

That really thwarts economic policy. That leaves people on their own, people who are living paycheck to paycheck who are fundamentally concerned with their cost of living. We just make it worse for them, but I believe that this follows a Republican philosophy—antiworker, antiunion, antiworking family. That is what sums up this amendment.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Chairman, I do applaud the chairman of this committee for making the cuts to the NLRB that he has made. They should be made. Obviously, the NLRB is running amuck. They must have too much time on their hands or too many resources.

Did my colleague on the other side not hear the list of infractions?

It would be absolutely fine if the NLRB focused on unfair labor practices and dealt with that. That is their mission, but that is not their focus.

Their focus is expanding the force of big labor everywhere that they can and shutting out the little guy and removing the choice of average citizens of how they want to work and how they want to be represented, which is why they need to be hemmed in. That is just the simple fact of it, and if it takes it back to the point where they are only focusing on unfair labor practices, then I think we will have done our job well.

This amendment actually strengthens the chairman's position in negotiations with the Senate when this bill comes to that negotiation.

Mr. Chair, I urge all Members to vote in favor, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I continue to oppose this amendment, but it is really very interesting. We are in the year 2023. We have a budget for this year, and maybe this is news to the gentleman, but in a bipartisan way where the NLRB had been flat funded for decades, we came together and increased the funding for the NLRB.

All of these pejoratives that you are spewing about the NLRB, your Republican colleagues on the committee from last year voted to increase funding for the NLRB.

I don't believe that the Republican majority cares much about the goals; that is, about dealing with worker complaints, dealing with basic, fundamental, collective bargaining rights. I think you believe in thwarting people's

economic opportunity for the future; otherwise, you would not be going down this road. In 2023, in a bipartisan, bicameral basis, we increased the funding for the NLRB to be able to do its job.

I don't know what has happened to folks since last December, but you clearly don't follow what has been happening and what was being done with the NLRB.

Mr. Chair, this amendment really ought to be defeated, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentlewoman. Just because we could increase the funding and there was an agreement to increase funding across the board to some level doesn't mean we have to. I know it is a news flash to everybody in this town, but next month in December we are going to be \$34 trillion in debt. We simply can't afford it.

I don't mean to be pejorative about the NLRB, if my colleague on the other side thinks this is pejorative. These are just the facts. These are things they have done. If the gentlewoman doesn't like them, don't blame me. I am pointing out what they did, which is why we need to take action here and rein this out-of-control agency in.

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

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

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

Ms. DELAURO. 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 Pennsylvania will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 80 OFFERED BY MR. KILEY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 80 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. KILEY. 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:

Page 195, after line 3, insert the following: SEC. 541A. No funds made available under this Act may be used by the Department of Health and Human Services or any grantee to implement a mask mandate for children at Head Start programs.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Chair, throughout the COVID-19 era, the United States was an outlier in many ways, but perhaps most of all when it came to the treatment of young children. A very clear example of that is the policy of forcing toddlers to wear masks.

This is from an article from NPR in January 2022. It says: "The United States is an outlier in recommending masks from the age of 2 years old. The World Health Organization does not recommend masks for children under age 5, while the European equivalent of the CDC doesn't recommend them for children under age 12."

When it came to the Head Start program, not only was it recommended, but it was mandated that children as young as 2 years old, over a million kids in Head Start, had to wear masks up until January 2023.

Now, this flew in the face of not only international norms, but of all scientific evidence. Study after study has shown no public health benefit to forcing young children to wear masks.

For example, a 2022 study by Dr. Ambarish Chandra and Dr. Tracy Beth Hoeg was titled, "Lack of correlation between school mask mandates and pediatric COVID-19 cases. . . ."

At the same time, the evidence continues to pile up as to the harms done to young children when it comes to the disruption of holistic processing, of face perception, of social skills, of emotional development, not to mention the misery that they cause young children having to wear masks for hours on end each day.

Perhaps the need for this amendment was most clearly demonstrated in some truly unbelievable testimony by Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra earlier this year. I asked Secretary Becerra whether the policy of forcing 2-year-olds to wear masks saved lives.

He responded by saying: Who did the forcing? The answer, of course, was him.

When I pointed this out, he said: "We never forced anyone to do anything." That is what he said. "We never forced anyone to do anything."

When, in fact, the relevant regulation stated that there was a requirement for universal masking for all individuals ages 2 and older.

I asked him: Can you point to any public health benefit to forcing young children to wear masks?

He could provide none.

I asked: Do you, as the Secretary of Health and Human Services, can you point to any evidence that there was a public health benefit to forcing young children to wear masks?

The flailing Secretary, unable to come up with anything, simply said that fewer people are dying in 2023 of COVID than were dying in 2020.

What a farce, Mr. Chair. Let's think about the parents who had to send their 2-, 3-, 4-year-old kids to school every day under this policy. And here the Secretary of Health and Human Services doesn't offer an apology, even though he can come up with not a single public health benefit to the policy that was enforced on these families.

We need to make sure with this amendment that this never happens again. This amendment will assure

that Health and Human Services does not dedicate a single dollar to enforcing mask mandates for Head Start.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

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

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

This amendment prohibits the use of funds by HHS or any grantee to implement a mask mandate at Head Start programs.

First, I think we need to be clear about the facts. There is currently no Federal mask requirement in place. There is no Federal mask requirement in place.

This amendment would leave the Federal Government ill-equipped to implement evidence-based policy that protects the health and safety of the public if we face another public health emergency, such as a dangerous new COVID-19 variant.

Preventing diseases reduces healthcare costs, such as hospitalization and pharmaceuticals. Masking is a critical public health tool. New variants are an expected part of the evolution of viruses and can be more aggressive, transmittable, or cause more severe disease than the original strain.

Face masks can protect the wearer and those around them by preventing transmission. Although many people would like to act as if COVID is over, it is not. Over the past 3 years, there were more than 1 million deaths due to COVID in the United States, some of whom the people in this room knew and loved.

We also know that some people infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 can suffer long-term effects from their infection, meaning they can experience health problems that can last for years.

Our Nation's public health officials need to have options to protect our communities as we continue to live with COVID and respond to other public health emergencies in the future.

Why would we politicize something that could help our fellow Americans stay healthy? This sweeping amendment is unnecessary. It puts us all at risk. I think it sets a dangerous precedent for Congress to overrule a scientific process.

We need to follow the science. That is what we need to be doing and not following the politics, the religious beliefs, the philosophies, the ideology of Republican Members of Congress.

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

□ 1815

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Chairman, the gentlewoman from Connecticut referred to evidence-based policies, and yet the Secretary of the U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services could not cite a single piece of evidence in support of this policy. Not only that, this policy has been rejected by the World Health Organization and the European equivalent of the CDC.

I yield back to the gentlewoman and ask if she has come across any evidence that has somehow alluded the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the World Health Organization, and countries and our counterparts in Europe.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I continue to oppose this amendment. I will make the point I made before. Why do we really want to politicize an issue of public health and public safety? We can come together around these issues. It is not a matter of gotcha.

We all experienced a very traumatic period in our lives with COVID-19. Yes, there were masks. We were trying to find our way forward to protect people in this country. That is essentially what it is all about. You can have a disagreement, but why would we prohibit the use of funds by HHS or any grantee to implement a mask mandate at Head Start programs when there is no Federal mask requirement in place?

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

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Chair, to be very clear, I just asked the gentlewoman to provide us with some evidence in support of her position after she, herself, claimed that her position was evidence based, and she could not do so; just like the Secretary of Health and Human Services could provide no evidence for a policy that has been rejected broadly across the world.

Mr. Chair, I strongly urge passage of this amendment. It is past time to restore some sanity in this country and to make sure that the sort of harmful, unevidence-based policies that so many Americans have to live with never again return in this country.

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

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

The amendment was agreed to. Amendment No. 81 Offered by Ms. Boebert

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 81 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Ms. BOEBERT. 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:

On page 145, line 7, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$2,000,000)".

On page 145, line 18, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$2,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Colorado.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I rise today to offer my commonsense amendment to transfer \$2 million from government bureaucracy to the Office of Inspector General to combat waste, fraud, and abuse.

As a proud member of the House Oversight Committee, I am a firm believer in holding our government accountable to the people we serve.

Honest, hardworking American citizens should be able to trust that their tax dollars are being spent responsibly and for their intended purpose.

The Department of Education Office of Inspector General must have adequate resources and funding to uncover waste, fraud, and abuse to ensure that the Department can focus on providing for the education of America's children.

Ever since the passage of the Inspector General Act of 1978, inspectors general have uncovered billions of dollars of fraud and exposed numerous instances of criminal wrongdoing. The Department of Education is no exception.

According to this year's semiannual report, the Department of Education Office of Inspector General "closed 32 investigations involving fraud or corruption and secured more than \$41.92 million in restitution, settlements, fines, savings, recoveries, and forfeitures. As a result of this work, criminal actions were taken against numerous people, including current and former school officials and service providers who cheated students and taxpayers." The inspector general accomplished these feats in only half a year.

In fiscal year 2023, the Department of Education had a budget of a whopping \$271 billion. The American people should be able to trust that these funds are being used to support the education of their children and for no other purpose.

My commonsense amendment will ensure that the inspector general has the funding and resources they need to ensure that the Department's funds are being used responsibly. We have a sacred duty to ensure that Department of Education funds are used to further the education of our children, and we must not tolerate any wrongdoing that defrauds America's children, students, and families.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support my amendment to increase funding for the Department of Education Office of Inspector General, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT).

The amendment was agreed to. Amendment No. 82 Offered by Mr. ALLEN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 82 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. ALLEN. 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—

(1) finalize, implement, or enforce the proposed rule entitled “Retirement Security Rule: Definition of an Investment Advice Fiduciary” (88 Fed. Reg. 75890 (November 3, 2023)) or any substantially similar rule; or

(2) to promulgate or enforce any new regulation, rule, or guidance with respect to the definition or application of the term “fiduciary” under section 3(21) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1002(21)).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I rise today to urge support for my amendment, which would prohibit taxpayer funds from being used to finalize the Biden administration’s destructive proposed fiduciary rule.

I believe saving for retirement is crucial for American families, and access to professional financial advice should not be hindered by burdensome overregulation. However, the Biden Department of Labor’s recently proposed fiduciary rule is nothing more than a recycled Obama-era disaster that does more harm than good to the very people it is claiming to protect, American retirees and savers.

This rule would raise costs and reduce access to financial advice for Americans with low and moderate incomes, as well as small businesses. However, don’t just take my word for it. A Deloitte study demonstrated the damage resulting from the 2016 fiduciary rule, finding that 53 percent of U.S. financial advisers limited or eliminated access to brokerage advice for retirement investors.

Not to mention, having shifted their position on what it means to be an investment advice fiduciary three times in the last 2 years, the Department of Labor has created confusion in the marketplace with their reckless indecisiveness. By requiring financial advisers to adhere to a strict, burdensome, and unworkable regulation, retirement advice will no longer be accessible to those most in need of retirement security.

At a time when inflation is soaring, families’ budgets are shrinking, and our Nation’s credit rating has been cut from stable to negative, I am dismayed as to why President Biden would make it even harder for Americans to receive financial advice to plan for the future, all while blatantly skirting responsibility for the economic turmoil that we are currently experiencing.

This rule is a prime example of regulatory overreach by unelected bureau-

crats in government agencies. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment which would block taxpayer money from going toward a rule that would only threaten their financial well-being.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

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

American families pay into their retirement savings over the course of their working lives so that they can retire with financial security and dignity. Responsible advice providers can help people meet their savings goals and retire with dignity, and they should be paid fairly for this important work. Unfortunately, many retirement savers rely on the financial advice of providers who do not put their interests first, actions that can lead to diminished investment returns or higher transaction costs.

Let me give you an example. Advice rooted in conflicts of interest regarding the sale of just one investment product—that is fixed index annuities—may cost savers as much as \$5 billion per year. This hurts workers, families, and the American economy. Plain and simple, these are a form of junk fees that can erode the retirement savings of hardworking American families. Fortunately, the Department of Labor is proposing to protect retirement investors through a new rule requiring financial advisers to avoid recommendations that pad their pockets at the expense of retirement savers. I don’t know if somebody can tell me, why wouldn’t we want to protect folks in retirement?

This amendment would block the Department’s regulatory efforts to protect retirement savers from junk fees. This would leave the investments of hardworking Americans vulnerable to financial advisers looking out for their own financial gain at their clients’ expense.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Chair, my amendment will help protect the millions of hardworking taxpayers who rely on financial advisers to assist in planning for their future. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this amendment and fight against this administration and unelected bureaucrats who want to grow big government.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I continue to oppose the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 83 OFFERED BY MRS. WAGNER

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 83 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mrs. WAGNER. 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 finalize, implement, or enforce the proposed rules that follow:

(1) The proposed rule entitled “Prohibited Transaction Exemption” (88 Fed. Reg. 75979 (November 3, 2023)).

(2) The proposed rule entitled “Prohibited Transaction Exemption 84-24” (88 Fed. Reg. 76004 (November 3, 2023)).

(3) The proposed rule entitled “Prohibited Transaction Exemptions 75-1, 77-4, 80-83, and 86-128” (88 Fed. Reg. 76032 (November 3, 2023)).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Chair, I rise today with an amendment that would prevent the Department of Labor from finalizing its recently proposed fiduciary rule.

This proposal marks the Department of Labor’s fourth attempt to issue a fiduciary proposal. Each version of this decade-long effort has drawn significant investor as well as bipartisan congressional concern. Most notably, Congress passed a joint resolution I was proud to lead that would have stopped the Obama administration’s 2016 DOL fiduciary rule.

The 2016 version of the rule was vacated by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in 2018 due to DOL’s exceeding its statutory authority under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, ERISA, in writing rules. This court-rejected proposal threatened access to affordable and reliable retirement investment advice for millions of low- and middle-income Americans.

Furthermore, this rule caused major disruptions in the market, created more retirement insecurity, and resulted in fewer product choices for America’s workers and retirees.

The Obama administration’s DOL fiduciary rule would have left Americans who were just starting to build their retirement savings without access to financial advice or paying more for fewer options and decreased service. The Biden administration’s fiduciary rule is no different. As Chairwoman FOXX put it just the other day, the proposal, “is just new lipstick on the same old pig.”

The last time the Department of Labor meddled with the definition of fiduciary, we watched more than 10 million Americans lose access to financial advice.

Do we really want to go down this road again when we know exactly where it leads?

□ 1830

The changes that the Department of Labor is proposing contain overly burdensome requirements that will increase consumer costs, limit choices, and cut off access to financial investment products that are known to provide a secure, guaranteed stream of income for retirees.

At the end of the day, many businesses offering these safe financial solutions will be forced to switch to a fee-based advisory model, which would require customers to meet account minimums or pay a large up-front fee.

Ultimately, this will shut millions of low- and middle-income Americans out of the financial advice market, and we will be left with two classes of investors: those who can afford investment advice and those who cannot.

Mr. Chairman, to put it simply, Americans are worried. They are worried about their future. They are struggling to save for their retirement, to put a child through college, or to one day open their own business. On top of all the existing barriers to saving, the Biden administration wants to make that even more challenging with its—ready for this?—500-page regulation.

We know these regulations do not work. We have seen them fail. We have seen them hurt those who can least afford it during the savings crisis.

Both Chambers of Congress, Republicans and Democrats, have come together in the past to recognize the harm that this rule will have on those looking to save for retirement.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this amendment that protects retail investors and America's savers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I oppose this amendment.

I think the gentlewoman is right. Americans are worried about very serious financial issues. They are living paycheck to paycheck, and they are struggling.

What, in fact, they don't need is irresponsible providers charging them junk fees that take money out of their pockets instead of understanding that they do have some advice and counsel as to where to go and who the bad actors are.

Once again, this amendment would leave retirement savers vulnerable to junk fees.

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

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Chair, the changes the Department of Labor is proposing contain overly burdensome requirements that will increase consumer costs, limit choices, and cut off access to financial investment products that are known to provide a secure, guaranteed stream of income for retirees.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and shut down

the Department of Labor's fourth attempt at a fiduciary rule that will hurt retirees and investment savers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I continue to oppose this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 84 OFFERED BY MR. NORMAN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 84 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. NORMAN. 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 carry out the actions described in the fact sheet released by the White House on October 31, 2023, related to cracking down on junk fees in retirement investment advice.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Chair, my amendment would prohibit funding from being used to carry out the actions described in Biden's October 31 fact sheet regarding cracking down on so-called junk fees that we have heard a lot about tonight.

Specifically, this amendment would prevent funding from being used to implement the Department of Labor's controversial effort to crack down on so-called junk fees in retirement investing that could easily result and will result in higher fees and fewer investment options for hardworking Americans.

Since the beginning of the Biden administration's whole-of-government crusade against so-called junk fees, it has been clear that the President and his officials are just targeting fees and practices that go against their own subjective preferences.

The administration can't even define what a junk fee is. Maybe my good friend on the left could define what a junk fee is.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, the prior speaker talked about families trying to save for college. I understand that. It is tough these days to save for college, to put your kids through college, especially in this economy—thwarted, I might add, by some of the prior amendments that we have seen here tonight.

Why wouldn't we try to protect those folks, allowing them to save and, quite honestly, save them from junk fees?

I didn't really realize that so many of my Republican colleagues support this effort, which would leave retirees susceptible to people who would sell them a bill of goods, a pig in a poke—pick whatever commentary you want to make—and then charge them for it. You deny people a real return on their investment, but you charge them a fee for doing that. That is a junk fee. You are paying for junk—junk advice, junk assistance—and you bear the brunt of that.

I am not saying it is all providers. There are probably lots of good folks who are financial consultants and advisers, but don't tell me there aren't a lot of bad actors in this area who are collecting from the most vulnerable.

Not every person in retirement has all the knowledge to do everything that they need to do to evaluate and investigate a financial planner to make them whole at the end of the day.

As I just mentioned before, this is an amendment that leaves retirement savers vulnerable to these junk fees.

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

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Chair, I still didn't hear the definition of a junk fee. You have a politician and bureaucrats in the Department of Labor restricting what commissions brokers who are in a competitive business can charge willing buyers.

Again, you have government that is trying to restrict commissions on funds and annuities they can provide to savers.

Currently, this compensation practice is disclosed to investors and enables brokers to charge less because of the additional compensation. The White House fact sheet does not dispute that fees may actually increase as a result of this rule.

This proposal is misguided and risks creating confusion in the marketplace, unwarranted compliance expenses, and instability for retirement plans, retirees, and savers.

Again, this is done voluntarily, depending on who you deal with. It is a competitive business. You have politicians who have probably never been in the workforce and bureaucrats trying to dictate what they do.

Don't take my word for it. Listen to the experts who serve in the industry, who actually work in the industry. According to the American Council of Life Insurers, a fiduciary-only regulation would shut off access to important retirement tools and hurt the very people the regulation intends to help.

The National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors is concerned this proposal will have the effect of substantially reducing consumer access to investment and will create a substantial advice gap for potentially millions of individuals who need professional guidance to understand and make investment decisions—

their own decisions, without government interference—on their retirement accounts.

Mr. Chair, I urge passage of my amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I am still in opposition to this amendment.

Let me tell you this tale here. Grant and Dorothy were a retired couple who were both in their seventies when they turned over their retirement funds to their broker. The broker decided it would be appropriate to employ a complex strategy that was geared toward generating growth while hedging against catastrophic bear market losses.

Unfortunately, with the strategy, in just 7 months, the broker lost almost 20 percent of their \$150,000 in retirement funds. During the same time period, the broker earned \$15,000. That is a junk fee. Bad investment advice that denies savers good returns on their investments is a form of a junk fee.

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

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Chair, I close with the fact that my good friend from the left points out one example. What about the millions of people who are profitable, who choose to get into the stock market, who choose their broker, who choose to pay the so-called junk fees that politicians shouldn't get involved with, nor should the government get involved with?

Mr. Chair, I urge passage of my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 85 OFFERED BY MR. BIGGS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 85 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

Mr. BIGGS. 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 by the Department of Health and Human Services to make voluntary contributions to the World Health Organization.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak in support of my amendment, which will prohibit the Department of Health and Human Services from making any voluntary contributions to the World Health Organization.

The World Health Organization failed the world and America with its re-

sponse to COVID-19 and has continued to fail the world and the U.S.

The WHO helped perpetuate the Chinese Government's wholly inaccurate claims and even praised their handling of the outbreak. The WHO Director-General applauded President Xi's very rare leadership and China's transparency. The WHO was complicit in its deception, willfully accepting what China had claimed and spread to the rest of the world instead of doing its job and verifying the claims that were made.

Further, in 2021, the WHO dismissed the COVID lab leak theory as being "extremely unlikely" after a visit to China. The WHO even returned from that trip with the theory that the virus was transmitted to humans through frozen food, which was an absurd claim.

Then, in 2022, 2 years after COVID, the WHO changed its tune and recommended more investigation into the lab leak theory, the same theory that it had so eagerly dismissed as a conspiracy theory because President Trump suspected what was going on back in 2020. It turns out President Trump was right to withdraw funding from the World Health Organization.

In addition, the World Health Organization has allowed North Korea to sit on its executive board. North Korea lacks any qualifications to justify a seat on the board. North Korea lacks any sort of transparency in its management of the COVID-19 outbreak. North Korea's track record of responses to public health issues raises significant concerns that it is able to participate in the WHO's decisionmaking process.

How is it that North Korea, a country that has a well-documented history of human rights abuses and atrocities, is allowed to sit on the World Health Organization's executive board, an executive board that sets and enforces the organization's agenda and policy? The human rights record of North Korea is often considered one of the worst in the world.

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

□ 1845

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, the amendment would prohibit HHS, Health and Human Services, from making any voluntary contributions to the World Health Organization, including contributions from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response.

WHO, the World Health Organization, is an indispensable partner for the CDC and the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response to effectively achieve their missions of protecting America from health, safety, and security threats, both foreign and domestic.

The World Health Organization sets health norms and standards for its 194 member states—for everyday public health concerns, as well as crises and public health emergencies.

Without collaboration with WHO, CDC and the United States would have limited means by which to inform and influence those global norms. As a U.N. organization, the World Health Organization has access to geographies and populations that may be difficult for our CDC, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other bilateral health agencies to reach, and therefore, filling critical needs around the world to address public health threats at their source in a way no other organization can.

CDC uses all the tools at its disposal, including sharing technical expertise and deploying emergency responders, to ensure its resources at the WHO are working to achieve CDC's core mission.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention works with the World Health Organization to address ongoing public health threats and priorities, including polio eradication; routine immunizations and immunization system strengthening; pandemic, seasonal, and avian influenza; and building foundational public health capacities at the country level to strengthen global health security.

In addition, I might add that the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response, ASPR, has an agreement with the World Health Organization to provide smallpox vaccine to respond to an outbreak should one occur. This amendment could jeopardize the containment of an outbreak, and therefore, the health and security of the United States.

This amendment is unnecessary, and it would open the door for other countries to replace our seat at the table. If we are not at the table, then China will claim our place.

Congress must not tolerate any effort to stymie American leadership on global health.

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

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Chair, I have been talking about North Korea. At the same time that we put North Korea on the board, you see North Korea on the executive board of the WHO, Taiwan is excluded. Why? Because China isolates Taiwan.

If you are concerned about China taking our place in WHO, China already has incredible resources and influence over Director Tedros. That is what is going on.

Let's talk about this because I think that what we just heard was a conflation—a conflation, all the things, all the good things the WHO is doing, this and that. Guess what? We paid mandatory fees to them of \$200 million in 2021. In the 2021 report to Congress, the excess amount, or the voluntary amount, was \$99 million.

Since the despicable attack on Israel by Hamas, the World Health Organization and its subsidiary in Gaza has

spent weeks using their platform to advocate for an immediate cease-fire, a position that has been the rallying cry for the Hamas-sympathizing political left right here in the United States.

On October 18, the Twitter account for the WHO in occupied Palestinian territory—in other words, in Gaza—issued a statement on the explosion in the parking lot of the Al Ahli Arab Hospital, which turned out to be bogus.

We are saying we will keep paying a mandatory amount. We are not going to give up our seat, but we are not going to pay a \$99 million voluntary amount.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I continue to oppose the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Chair, I remind everyone that this is only the voluntary amount that we give above our membership allotment to the World Health Organization.

We should all be in support of this.

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

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. MOYLAN). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 86 OFFERED BY MR. BIGGS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 86 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

Mr. BIGGS. 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 pay the salary and expenses of the position of the Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the Administration for Children and Families at the Department of Health and Human Services, occupied by Robin Dunn Marcos.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Chair, my amendment would prohibit the use of funds to pay for the salary and expenses of the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement, which is currently occupied by Director Robin Dunn Marcos.

ORR's negligence has led to the endangerment of unaccompanied alien children.

In March of 2021, ORR weakened its safety protocols by eliminating the proof of address requirements for sponsors and exempting other household members from submitting to a background check or providing identification.

ORR has prohibited asking whether a sponsor of a UAC is a citizen and

doesn't consider a sponsor with deportation orders as disqualified. In addition to this, criminal history and a refusal to submit to a background check also are not considered disqualifiers for individuals becoming sponsors.

Think of this: Children, unaccompanied minors, who have come into the U.S. that we have placed into the care of ORR are being given to people who may have a criminal history, but those people with a criminal history are not disqualified for being a foster parent for this UAC.

It is an abject failure that the lack of a vetting process is in place to allow for an individual to become a sponsor when they have a criminal history or deportation orders that are not considered.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

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

It really is disgraceful that the Republican majority has shown a proclivity in the 2024 appropriations bills to target dedicated public servants and threaten their livelihoods.

Public servants are doing their jobs, and they carry out the policy of the administration that they serve, Democrat or Republican.

The gentleman may have genuine concerns about the Office of Refugee Resettlement, but Congress should be talking about policy concerns without rhetoric and certainly without personal retribution to the employees devoting their time and talent to the Federal Government.

Ms. Dunn Marcos is extremely qualified. She has worked tirelessly on refugee issues domestically and internationally for years. She has led teams for the International Rescue Committee across the United States and Europe. She has served in the Peace Corps. She stood up the processing services and safe havens for thousands of Afghans during Operation Allies Welcome. She now oversees the care of thousands of vulnerable unaccompanied children.

Ms. Dunn Marcos is a dedicated public servant. Defunding the office of the director position is not how we solve policy differences.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BIGGS. You know what I think is a disgrace? I think it is disgraceful when the person who is in charge of placing those children has lost contact and communication with more than 85,000, according to The New York Times, and that was 7 months ago. The real number now exceeds 100,000. Mr. Chair, that is 100,000 children that this individual has lost contact with—her office and the Department has lost contact with. That is what is disgraceful.

If we are talking about policy and that she is merely carrying out the policy of the administration, are you telling me that it is the policy of this administration to lose contact and not adequately vet people? You know, you have some people who received literally a dozen or more individuals—little children—into that home, and that person was not qualified and not adequately vetted.

Two-thirds of all UACs that leave HHS's care work illegal, full-time jobs, often in factories and in hazardous conditions.

ORR has an agreement that the sponsor is supposed to sign to protect the UAC from being trafficked or exploited, but that doesn't seem to be very effective.

Caseworkers within ORR claim that HHS regularly ignored obvious signs of labor exploitation, such as single sponsors sponsoring multiple UAC, hot spots in the country where many UAC sponsors are not the children's parents, UAC with significant debts, and direct reports of trafficking.

These sponsors that are inadequately vetted by ORR and HHS can be dangerous, and they are sending these children to work in factories and other hazardous work environments.

You want to know what is disgraceful? That is what is disgraceful.

This person should not be in this position. If this is the Biden policy, that is disgraceful. I don't think that is really what this administration wants done.

This amendment would remove this person from office, and let's get somebody in there who is interested in taking care of those kids and making sure they are cared for.

I get down to the border regularly. I go to the border often. I can't tell you how many times I have come upon groups with unaccompanied children, knowing that we have no idea whether they are going to be cared for in our country or not.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I continue to oppose this amendment. It really is pretty disgraceful that this woman is a public servant with an impeccable background in the area of dealing with refugees, International Rescue Committee, Peace Corps, safe haven for Afghans serving with Operation Allies Welcome, caring for thousands of vulnerable children now.

This is beneath our dignity, and I might add it is a little bit about theater of the absurd, and it is disgraceful the direction that this committee has gone in dealing with really dedicated public servants and denigrating them and trying to threaten their livelihoods.

There are policy differences, as I said, and without rhetoric, certainly without personal retribution—nobody out there, if they have differences with us, threatens our livelihoods. Why are we doing that to others?

If we have a policy difference, let's get it sorted out and find another way to deal with policy differences instead of defunding the office of the director position.

Again, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BIGGS. Again, you know what I think is disgraceful? That we are going to start discussing someone's livelihood and say, oh, they have an impeccable background. Do you know who doesn't care about their livelihood and impeccable background? How about the kids that have been misplaced, over 100,000, many working in illegal labor jobs. They don't care about her livelihood. They would like to be cared for humanely. How about the children who have been sex trafficked? They don't care about her livelihood or her impeccable background, and I don't either. I care about those children.

I think it is disgraceful that this administration continues to allow this kind of policy to be implemented if that is their policy. The vetting requirements that this director put in place facilitates this trafficking and abuse of these children. It is disgraceful.

Mr. Chair, I urge people to adopt my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

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

Ms. DELAURO. 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 Arizona will be postponed.

□ 1900

AMENDMENT NO. 87 OFFERED BY MR. BRECHEEN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 87 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. BRECHEEN. 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 finalize, implement, administer, or enforce the proposed rule entitled "Safe and Appropriate Foster Care Placement Requirements for Titles IV-E and IV-B" (88 Fed. Reg. 66752; published September 28, 2023).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. BRECHEEN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

Mr. BRECHEEN. Mr. Chair, before we debate this amendment, I want to start with some important facts. A lot of us,

in our States, including Oklahoma, are facing a foster care home shortage. According to one report, between 2020 and 2021 to 2022, the number of licensed foster homes in Oklahoma decreased by 8 percent.

HHS has reported that in my home State, more than 7,400 children were in foster care as of 2021 and more than 3,700 were awaiting adoption. This reflects a national crisis in our foster care system where more than half of the States, between 2021 and 2022, reported declines in licensed foster homes. Additionally, more than 407,000 children and adolescents were in foster care as of 2021 and 113,000 awaited adoptions.

With these sobering facts in mind, we need to recognize that any new foster care policies have to be directed toward solving a shortage, not making it worse. I sincerely ask my colleagues to keep this idea, which I hope we can all agree on, as you consider this amendment before you.

This amendment would prevent the Department of Health and Human Services from finalizing or enforcing its proposed rule titled: "Safe and Appropriate Foster Care Placement Requirements for Titles IV-E and IV-B," a rule which will worsen our foster care crisis, burden States, and create a hostile environment for faith-based providers, harming children.

If finalized, this rule requires State and Tribal agencies to ensure that children who identify as LGBTQI+ are placed only with providers designated as safe and appropriate. In order to be considered "safe and appropriate," providers seeking to take such a child who identifies as LGBTQ+ must actively affirm the child's identity, use preferred pronouns, and facilitate the child's access to "services and activities" to support the child's identity.

We can infer from this that providers will be required to facilitate giving children puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and other dangerous treatments to be in compliance. This will co-opt State agencies and foster care parents into the radical Biden administration's agenda, which is sexualizing our kids.

This rule also has a glaring federalism concern. As of November 2023, at least 18 States enforced laws that protect children from harmful, irreversible, medical election transition procedures, yet these States would have to violate their own statutes to be in compliance with this rule. Assistance to child welfare agencies should not be contingent on States' willingness to affirm the Biden administration's radical gender ideology aimed squarely at children.

Another federalism concern is that HHS admits this rule would have a "substantial direct impact" on the cost State agencies will incur. The Department estimates that the combined total Federal and State agency costs of this rule between 2025 and 2027 will be almost \$40 million. State agencies are

already barely scraping by with current resources. This will be another burden placed on them from the Federal Government.

This rule could also create an environment of hostility toward faith-based providers. By directing States to enact policies that label providers with basic religious views on human sexuality as unsafe and inappropriate, this rule clearly indicates that the LGBTQ+ affirmation is the only way for a child welfare provider to be deemed legitimate. Besides attacking religious liberty, this is concerning since faith-based providers play an enormous role in the foster care system.

Let me back that up. Pew Research finds that 65 percent of non-kin foster family parents attend religious services weekly compared to 39 percent of the population. Research has also found that practicing Christians are twice as likely to adopt compared to the general population.

Faith-based providers play an important role in the foster care system. This proposed rule will have a chilling effect on the number of providers available to help kiddos. Already HHS acknowledges that "a majority of States would need to expand their efforts to recruit and identify providers and foster families." What HHS is admitting is that this undermines their ability to recruit foster families. This rule undermines foster family recruitment. Why in the world would we want to move forward with this?

Given what I shared at the beginning of my remarks about States facing a crisis in recruiting and retaining foster homes, this will have an effect that will be devastating for young adults in the foster care system. They will be less likely to find homes, and those who do find homes will find longer wait lines.

Protecting our Nation's children should be a bipartisan, nonpolitical issue. Unfortunately, the Biden administration has decided to place thousands of children at risk.

Mr. Chair, I encourage support of this amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment. This amendment attempts to block a proposed rule that would protect LGBTQ youth in foster care.

The foundation of our foster care system is that it must act only in "the best interest of the child." Taking custody of a child is a last resort, a step the government should take only when there is no other way to keep a child safe.

Federal law requires foster care agencies to ensure that each child in foster care receives "safe and proper" care and has a plan that addresses the specific needs of the child while in foster

care to support their health and their well-being.

The administration's proposed rule ensures "safe and proper" care for some of the most vulnerable youth in our foster care system. It would require a foster care agency to place an LGBTQ child in a home that is free of, again, "hostility, abuse, or mistreatment" based on their LGBTQ status and to provide appropriate training to their caregivers. That is all. Why wouldn't we want a child to be in an environment that is free of hostility, abuse, or mistreatment?

Voting for this amendment would be voting to allow children who suffered abuse or neglect to be placed in homes where they are subject to hostility, abuse, or mistreatment.

LGBTQ youth are disproportionately represented in the child welfare system, and they have disproportionately worse outcomes. They are more likely to be abused while in foster care. They are forced to change homes more often. They are more likely to be placed in institutions. They are more likely to run away from foster care. They have a higher suicide rate.

Family and caregiver support is essential for the mental health of LGBTQ youth. To take one example, LGBTQ youth who feel high levels of social support report attempting suicide at less than half the rate of their peers who feel low or moderate levels of social support.

It is unconscionable and disgraceful that anyone would try to make the child welfare system less safe for any youth, let alone the LGBTQ youth we know are especially vulnerable.

Mr. Chair, I strongly urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman has the only time remaining.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I continue my opposition of this amendment. LGBTQ youth in foster care are very vulnerable. Why do we not want them to be provided with safe and proper care, to be in an environment free of hostility, abuse, or mistreatment, based on that status. That is all this signifies. I am opposed to this amendment, which really attempts to block this rule that protects LGBTQ youth in foster care.

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

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

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. CLYDE. Mr. Chair, I rise as the designee of the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER), and I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLYDE. Mr. Chair, just a few weeks ago, the administration issued a proposed rule which imposes radical

sexual orientation and gender identity policy on the child welfare system. I rise in strong support of my colleague Representative BRECHEEN from Oklahoma's amendment which prohibits funding for the finalization of this rule.

By requiring States to deem some foster care providers as safe and appropriate, the administration has created a policy which implies that faith-based providers who have traditional views of marriage and sexuality are incapable of providing a safe environment for children and adolescents.

I vehemently oppose such a notion and strongly believe that faith-based providers often fill gaps in a child welfare system and provide quality, loving care rooted in a deep calling and conviction to care for those in need.

The foster care system in the United States is in a deep crisis, with over 400,000 in the system and over a 100,000 awaiting adoption.

We must stand up and support faith-based providers across this country. We must object to the villainizing of these organizations, and we must defund the imposition of radical political policies in the child welfare system.

Mr. Chair, I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting this amendment by the gentleman from Oklahoma, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The Chair understands that amendment Nos. 88 and 89 will not be offered.

AMENDMENT NO. 90 OFFERED BY MRS. CAMMACK

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 90 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mrs. CAMMACK. 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 finalize any rule or regulation that meets the definition of section 804(2)(A) of title 5, United States Code.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. CAMMACK) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of my amendment, which would restrict funds at Federal agencies, such as the Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and other related agencies, from being used to finalize any rule or regulation that has an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more.

Since President Biden took office over 2 years ago, his administration has added several billion with a b of dollars in new regulatory costs to the economy. Agencies like OSHA, the CDC, and EBSA often impose compliance costs and regulatory hurdles that create mass confusion for businesses and the healthcare industry.

My amendment seeks to prevent these agencies from finalizing new major rules and regulations, which often involve major policy decisions that should be decided by Congress, not nameless, faceless, bureaucrats.

By including my amendment in this bill, we restore Congress' Article I authority by bringing major policy questions back to the elected representatives of the people. We commit ourselves, once again, to open governance rather than allowing the regulatory regime to make decisions behind closed doors.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen where OSHA was issuing burdensome health rules under questionable legal authority. Fifteen months into the pandemic, OSHA issued a mandatory workplace safety rule that required healthcare facilities to develop COVID-19 plans, install barriers between workplaces, and impose mask mandates.

Once OSHA failed to finalize this rule, they sought to impose another rule covering assisted living facilities and other healthcare workers in March of 2022. This rule created even more confusion among the healthcare industry leaders, who then saw overlapping guidance and conflicting guidance within OSHA and the CDC, as well as CMS, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

□ 1915

Outside the burden of compliance with these rules, violating these murky OSHA measures could land a business with financial penalties of up to \$15,000 per violation, and up to over \$150,000 for repeated violations. These penalties, in other words, could completely drown a business in costs.

Furthermore, we have seen where the Department of Labor finalized a rule directing the Federal Government to treat climate change as a threat to workers' retirement savings. Now, sponsors of investment-based employee plans are directed to take ESG factors, like carbon emissions, into their investment decisions instead of strictly applying the fiduciary duties under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act.

This shift to an ESG standard, as it turns out, is not a prudent investing plan at all. According to the Harvard Business Review, assets under management at global exchange-traded sustainability funds have not fared well financially. Even worse, researchers found that U.S. companies and ESG portfolios have had worse compliance records for both environmental and labor rules than companies in non-ESG portfolios. The evidence, however inconvenient for my colleagues on the other side, is overwhelming that hard-working Americans' retirement plans should not be subject to a radical climate agenda at the Department of Labor.

It is simple, Congress should make these major policy decisions here in

the people's House rather than the regulatory regime.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

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

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

This amendment is absurd and would bring the Medicare program to a standstill.

If this amendment were to be enacted, Health and Human Services would be prohibited from finalizing rules for paying physicians, hospitals, nursing homes, or any other healthcare supplier or provider—which would throw the Medicare program into chaos.

I know my colleagues on the other side of the aisle don't really like Medicare, but now they want to throw it into chaos.

By law, Medicare issues annual rules that govern how it runs the programs and pays for services that Medicare beneficiaries need. These rules are always major rules of over \$100 million, and they happen by law several times a year so that Medicare beneficiaries know the rules of the programs and providers know how they will get paid for the upcoming year.

If this amendment were enacted, Medicare would not be able to pay physicians or hospitals for new services. Medicare would not be able to pay for new drugs or devices. Medicare would not be able to pay rural hospitals that depend on Medicare to stay open to serve beneficiaries in rural areas.

These rules always exceed \$100 million because they govern how Medicare pays for services for its 60 million beneficiaries.

In short, this amendment would cause a massive disruption to healthcare for millions of seniors and individuals with disabilities.

The amendment is not a serious policy proposal. It really is a campaign slogan.

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

Mrs. CAMMACK. Mr. Chair, may I inquire as to how much time I have remaining.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman has 1½ minutes remaining.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Mr. Chair, I don't know how else to quite say this, so I am just going to lay it out bluntly. That is a lie what was just spelled out.

The notion that CMS will cease to operate because they do not have the capability to just issue regulations at random or at will is nonsense.

It is absolutely absurd that the Representatives of the people's House do not have a final say in major economic implications for people who utilize Medicare.

It is ridiculous that if you are a physician you have to go through your

Member of Congress to get in touch with CMS. When we talk about nameless, faceless bureaucrats, we are talking about this amendment which would fix not only the financial burden that people have to bear as a result of an overactive regulatory regime but restoring the open accountability process here in Congress.

This is the people's House. We should be absolutely responsible for the impacts that every single one of our constituents has to bear as a result of the work that is being done here on Capitol Hill.

If you pick up the phone and call CMS, you can't find a single person who will answer that phone. You cannot call up OSHA and ask for answers. You cannot get answers out of the Federal Government, which is why half of the team that we employ in Congress is based back home in our districts in order to liaison with these Federal agencies.

We have got to restore accountability and restore Article I authority.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I continue to oppose this.

The information—I just didn't make it up. I don't know where the gentlewoman's information is coming from. This came from the Ways and Means Committee. I am not making it up. It is not anecdotal.

If the amendment would be enacted, Medicare would not be able to pay physicians or hospitals for new services. Medicare would not be able to pay for new drugs and devices. It would not be able to pay rural hospitals that depend on Medicare to stay open to serve beneficiaries in rural areas. These rules exceed \$100 million. They govern how Medicare pays for the services for these 60 million beneficiaries.

We have that information. I do not know where the gentlewoman has received her information. I suspect maybe there is a misunderstanding of the scope and the reach of CMS and its oversight of Medicare beneficiaries and the services that they need.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. CAMMACK).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Chair understands that amendment No. 91 will not be offered.

AMENDMENT NO. 92 OFFERED BY MR. CRANE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 92 printed part B of House Report 118–272.

Mr. CRANE. 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:

Page 145, line 7, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$37,735,000)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CRANE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of my amendment, which reduces Federal education funding by \$37,735,000.

This amendment maintains fiscal responsibility, protecting Americans' hard-earned tax dollars from going to waste at the Department of Education.

According to the Congressional Budget Office's estimation, this amendment would reduce allowances by \$38 million and outlays by \$30 million for fiscal year 2024.

Like many Americans, I don't trust the Biden administration with our tax dollars as they trample on our constitutional protections and allow violations of these protections on college campuses across the U.S.

In Arizona, we are seeing the Department of Education impose a record-setting fine of \$37,735,000 on Grand Canyon University.

Foolishly, this fine is being imposed for something that the university has already been cleared of in a court of law. Adding insult to injury, they are imposing a record fine on GCU that would unjustly impede their ability to operate.

As the largest private Christian university in the Nation, GCU's enrollment has grown to an estimated 118,000 students because of their innovative approach to higher education.

If GCU is forced to pay this fine, I believe the Department of Education should be defunded by the same amount. We the people are sick and tired of the woke indoctrination of our youth.

I find it absurd that the Department of Education would target private Christian schools while ignoring the larger systemic issues within higher education.

The cost of college tuition has skyrocketed 175 percent in the last four decades, far exceeding inflation rates. Meanwhile, the values of these degrees have not kept up.

Despite the Supreme Court establishing that college and university campuses are not immune from the protections of the First Amendment, we are seeing a suppression of free speech rights on college campuses across the Nation.

Mr. Chair, 63 percent of students believe the political and social climate on their campus prevents people from freely expressing their opinions—an increase of almost 10 percent in the past 2 years.

The University of Texas at Austin threatened to fire or penalize a professor who exposed the university's plans to ensure that new hires have uniformly leftwing views on cultural issues.

Virginia Tech and other universities deploy teams that rely on students to

snitch on classmates who express offensive views and then subject those classmates to investigations, reeducation, or even discipline.

Following the recent terror attack against Israel, we have seen anti-Semitism skyrocket at universities, especially at Ivy League institutions, who reap the benefits of billions of taxpayer dollars.

At Columbia, we saw a tenured professor describe the terrorism inflicted by Hamas upon Israelis as awesome and a stunning victory.

We also saw more than 30 student groups at Harvard blame Israel for the terror attacks conducted by Hamas.

To combat this infiltration of woke mind rot in our classrooms, Congress needs to pass a substantial funding reduction for the Education Department for fiscal year 2024.

My amendment is designed to mitigate and thwart the weaponization of the public education system against Americans.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

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

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

The underlying bill already cuts Program Administration at the Department of Education by \$77 million or 18 percent. This amendment would slash another \$38 million from this account, bringing the total cut to \$115 million or a stunning 27 percent.

The Program Administration account funds the Federal civil servants who provide grants to States. If your State is looking for a grant, these are the folks that are going to help you. School districts—if your school district is looking for a grant, these folks are going to help you—and institutes of higher education. These staff answer questions and provide vital funding to communities across the country.

This amendment fits with others like it. Let's face it, the underlying bill where there is a 28 percent cut, the goal is to dismantle public education and higher education in the United States of America so that working people, middle-class families, and vulnerable families have fewer economic opportunities. This denies Americans the opportunity for an education.

This amendment takes glee in breaking the Department of Education by decimating the nonpolitical career staff that administers its vital programs. This is plain wrong.

Vote "no" on this amendment. This is another in the list of what I call the list of particulars taking public education to the graveyard. There is this new one right now by the gentleman from Arizona. He had an earlier one which cuts education—this is it; this is his \$38 million in cuts.

It slashes Pell Grant funding. It eliminates funding to give out Pell

Grants and collect student loans. It eliminates funding for HBCUs, MSIs, Tribal colleges, TRIO, and GEAR UP. It eliminates education research funding and eliminates the salary of the Education Secretary. This is on top of the underlying bill with a 28 percent cut.

Do I make my point?

The Republican majority is looking to eliminate public education in the United States of America. That is not a very noble goal.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Chairman, this issue has already been settled in Federal court. In January, the 11th Circuit Court found GCU innocent of the charges ED is using to impose this record-setting fine.

□ 1930

What right do bureaucrats have to overrule our judicial system?

This is a multimillion-dollar fine we are talking about. It is the largest penalty ever handed down by the Education Department. I want to repeat that. This issue has already been settled in Federal Court.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I continue to be opposed to this amendment. Nevertheless, we keep hearing that Grand Canyon University has 86,000 students online. Once again, let me repeat that they are a nonprofit, but they deal with for-profit companies. What they do is they are ripping off students. They are ripping them off.

That is something that we need to really take a very hard look at because they are predators with young people. They make a ton of money, and they don't provide the services, education, or opportunities for employment after that.

We have people here who are all over these so-called nonprofits that are really in league with profitmaking companies that are raking in tons of dollars at the expense of our students.

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

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Chairman, it is interesting that my colleague on the other side says that Grand Canyon University is ripping people off. If that is the case, then why didn't the 11th Circuit Court find GCU guilty? That is not what happened at all.

My colleague on the other side of the aisle is not the judge or jury. As I said, the 11th Circuit Court has already found GCU innocent.

My colleague also said that there are only 87,000 students at GCU. There are 118,000 students because of their innovative approach to higher education. We are very proud of this college in Arizona.

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

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

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

Ms. DELAURO. 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 Arizona will be postponed.

The Chair understands that amendments No. 93 through 95 will not be offered.

AMENDMENT NO. 96 OFFERED BY MR. GOOD OF VIRGINIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 96 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. 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 require any institution of higher education to require its students or staff to receive a COVID-19 vaccine as a condition of enrollment or employment.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOOD) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, this evening, I rise in support of my amendment to ensure that no funds will be used to require universities to enforce COVID-19 vaccine requirements for students and faculty.

My amendment is important for two reasons. The first is because many universities, unbelievably so, are still actively mandating COVID-19 vaccines for their students. Their students, mind you, Mr. Chairman, were never at any serious risk of the virus.

At the start of the 2023-2024 school year, there were still nearly 100 universities in this country that required a COVID-19 vaccine to attend their universities. Mr. Chairman, think of that. It has been about 4 years since the China virus first came to the United States, and the Federal Government finally, in May of this year, declared the pandemic was over. For many of us, the remediation efforts were over as soon as we realized what we suspected, that the masking up and the vaccine requirements were exploited by a bureaucracy that was trying to impose their will on normal Americans.

Yet, so many universities are still forcing students, who have likely already contracted COVID at this point—everybody has had it by now. Many of them were never sick with symptoms and all have recovered. In the event that there were any serious risks, to begin with, it didn't matter. They were required to take a vaccine that they didn't need and didn't want.

The second reason it is important that my amendment is supported is to

preemptively check the government authority, a government that has, sadly, broken the trust of the American people on this and many other issues. Over the last 3 years, we have seen this government push so many unconstitutional vaccine mandates for healthcare workers who treated us during the height of the virus, government employees, members of the military and Armed Forces who were discharged for not getting a vaccine, law enforcement officers, first responders, and lots of other regular Americans and workers across the country.

In fact, the Biden administration is still spending money to promote the COVID vaccine, and they have a program to pay for the vaccine for uninsured Americans through the end of next year, the end of 2024.

We cannot assume that because the pandemic is officially over, the anti-freedom vaccine agenda will stop. Students should be free to pursue an education without the government violating their most basic personal freedoms.

Mr. Chair, I urge all of my colleagues to support my amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

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

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

This amendment prohibits the use of funds to require any institution of higher education to enforce any COVID-19 vaccine mandate. This is the second and third time I have repeated this.

Let us be clear that there is no Federal requirement that any institution of higher education put a COVID vaccine mandate in place.

Now, the university could easily have its own immunization policy that is part of its immunization strategy. However, no one from the Federal Government is forcing universities to enforce any COVID-19 vaccine mandate. There is no one.

I find what is really interesting here is that I am told all the time, especially with regard to education, that government should not be interfering with education and educational institutions. They should be doing what they want to do, and the Federal Government should stay out. Now, all of a sudden, what we are going to do is prohibit the use of funds to require any institution of higher education to enforce any COVID-19 vaccine amendments where there is no Federal requirement to enforce a vaccine amendment. It really is pretty preposterous here.

Let me just step back. COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective at protecting people from getting seriously ill, being hospitalized, or dying. Vaccination remains a safer strategy for avoiding hospitalizations, long-term health outcomes, and death. COVID vaccination reduces the risk of death

by at least 75 percent. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a safer and more reliable way to build protection than getting sick with COVID-19.

For those who have had COVID, vaccines offer added protection against being hospitalized for a new infection. New variants are an expected part of the evolution of viruses and can be more aggressive and transmittable or cause more severe disease than the original strain.

Vaccines continue to be our best line of defense. Scientific experts have determined the COVID vaccines to be safe and effective, and hundreds of millions of doses have been administered in the United States.

We should not place restrictions like those of this amendment when we say we do not want interference from the Federal Government.

Imagine that we talk about the Federal Government in curricula. We certainly don't want to do that, and we don't. However, the Republican majority now wants to impose a restriction on institutions of higher education regarding the tools that they use in their own best interest to protect the health and safety of their students.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Mr. Chair, it should be chilling to Americans as they watch the resistance to efforts to prevent the Federal Government from funding and enforcing a vaccine requirement.

My friend on the other side said there is no vaccine requirement. Then why would she not support an amendment that says the Federal Government cannot enforce or require a vaccine mandate on a college campus?

For that matter, the Federal Government doesn't require it, so how about we say the Federal Government cannot require it? They cannot require it, not that they don't require it but that they cannot require it. We don't permit the Federal Government to require a vaccine mandate.

Why would we even allow that to be an option?

Over the last few years, Americans watched their most basic, fundamental freedom trampled on by this Federal Government: their right to worship. There is a reason why the beginning of the Bill of Rights starts with the freedom of religion. That is the first one. The right to assemble was trampled upon, and the right to travel, freedom of movement; the right to earn a living, to operate your business; and the right to make basic medical decisions for yourself or even disclose your own medical information, Mr. Chair.

America is done with tyrannical China virus mandates. Our economy is still reeling from how the government crushed it during the COVID virus and the disastrous policies of this administration.

I am sure if they could, the other side would reinstate mask mandates right

here in this Chamber and vaccine mandates all around the country if given the opportunity.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support freedom and to vote in favor of this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I oppose this amendment.

One more time, to be clear, there is no Federal mandate for vaccines. There is no mandate. There is no Federal Government forcing a university to have a vaccine mandate.

If you want to vote for freedom, Mr. Chairman, then allow the university to do what it would like.

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

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, virtually all the universities in this country are subsidized by Federal tax dollars. I encourage my colleagues to join us in ensuring that there will be no vaccine mandate.

Mr. Chairman, I ask all of my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The amendment was agreed to.

The Chair understands that amendments No. 97 and No. 98 will not be offered.

AMENDMENT NO. 99 OFFERED BY MR. GOSAR

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 99 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. GOSAR. 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 fund—

(1) grant R01AI110964 of the National Institutes of Health titled "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence"; or

(2) cooperative agreement U01AI151797 of the Department of Health and Human Services titled "Understanding Risk of Zoonotic Virus Emergence in EID Hotspots of Southeast Asia".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, as recently as fiscal year 2023, the National Institutes of Health has spent more than \$10 million in taxpayer dollars to fund virology research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China. The funding continues through 2027.

This is in direct violation of policy barring funding for such risky research known as gain-of-function research.

Despite being dismissed as a conspiracy theory, mounting evidence proves that the coronavirus originated from a leak at the Wuhan lab. It is estimated that 7 million people across

the globe have died from the coronavirus.

Nearly 3 years have passed since the first case of COVID-19 was detected, yet the NIH continues to fund experiments in the China lab that created the deadly virus. The fact that the United States continues to fund dangerous experimentation in the country of our greatest foreign adversary is unacceptable.

My amendment No. 99 would prohibit funding for virology research by the National Institutes of Health in Southeast Asia. Not another dime of Federal taxpayer dollars should be used to create a bioweapon for our enemies. Even Barack Obama wanted a pause on this.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support my amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

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

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

The amendment would block funding for two research grants funded by the National Institutes of Health. NIH grants are funded after a vigorous peer review process to identify the most promising research proposals. In this case, the Congressman from Arizona has identified research grants to study bat coronavirus as well as zoonotic virus emergence in Southeast Asia.

Given the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, I would argue that we really do need to understand more about bat coronavirus as well as zoonotic virus emergence in Southeast Asia.

□ 1945

I will tell you; I am not in the medical profession. I am not a scientist. I believe in the research. I believe that we need to take a look at things, given what we have heard anyway. Again, I am not a scientist, but I believe in research and we need to understand more about bat coronavirus, zoonotic virus. Coronavirus and zoonotic viruses are not going to disappear if we stop funding research. Why are we research deniers?

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

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chair, I find it absolutely fascinating in regard to the science. I am not a scientist, but I do deal in science quite a bit.

In fact, the Wuhan virology lab didn't even qualify for what it was doing with virology. Didn't even qualify by the standards set by international standards, and yet we are still going to do that. I have got to tell you something is wrong with this deal.

Barack Obama—I want to reiterate this—Barack Obama actually stated that this should take a pause, but he was overrun by people at NIH at the time. Now, I believe that we ought to be looking all the time at different

things but gain of function is totally different. This is building a bioweapon. We have got to stop this.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I continue to oppose this amendment, and I say to my colleague just keep your head in the sand.

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

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chair, once again, I find it very fascinating.

Keep my head in the sand?

What about the science? Hydroxychloroquine, ivermectin weren't going to work. Are you kidding me? The other side has got their head in the sand.

This is very important that we stop this. We shouldn't be dealing with somebody else. If we are going to do something like that, it ought to be done here not in Southeast Asia where we can't control it.

Mr. Chair, once again, I ask for all my colleagues to support this bill.

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

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

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 100 OFFERED BY MR. GRAVES OF LOUISIANA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 100 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. 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 promulgate new rules that the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of the Office of Management and Budget finds has resulted in or is likely to result in—

(1) an annual effect on the economy of \$100,000,000 or more;

(2) a major increase in costs or prices for consumers, individual industries, Federal, State, or local government agencies, or geographic regions; or

(3) significant adverse effects on competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or the ability of United States-based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises in domestic and export markets.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Chair, this amendment is a simple amendment.

Earlier this year, as part of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, we enacted for the first time ever an Administrative Pay-Go. We put a provision in place that said if this administration is

going to try and put regulations in place that cost in excess of \$100 million, then they have to offset those costs, meaning they have to rescind other regulations, to offset that cost on American taxpayers, therefore, the net cost would be zero.

If you are going to put \$100 million in new burden-requiring regulations in place, impacting American households and businesses, you have to rescind \$100 million worth of regulations on American families and American businesses.

This amendment takes it to the next level. When our constituents elect us to office, they expect us to be here representing them, yet during this administration's first 2½ years, they attempted to put additional costs or heap additional burdens to the tune of \$1.5 trillion on American taxpayers.

Mr. Chairman, I want you to think about that for just a minute. It is effectively the President of the United States, one person, unilaterally spending \$1.5 trillion. That is effectively what we are going to spend in discretionary spending this year and it is one person doing it without any action by the Congress.

What this amendment does is, it says it is fine. If you want to put regulations in place, that is fine, but if you are going to propose something that is going to cost over \$100 million, it has to come to Congress. It has to come before the Representatives that were elected by the people to approve it or shut it down.

I think this is a simple amendment. It is complementary to amendments that have passed the three other appropriation bills. It is complementary to what President Biden signed into law earlier this year on the Administrative Pay-Go.

Mr. Chair, I urge adoption of the amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I say to the gentleman, my colleague and friend, I will refer to my earlier remarks on a similar amendment from the Congresswoman from Florida.

This amendment would bring Medicare operations to a standstill. I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment, and I am hoping that the gentleman will make good on a muffledetta.

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

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Chair, certainly being a Representative that represents thousands and thousands of seniors, I would never do anything that would adversely affect Medicare.

As a matter of fact, I would argue that this actually helps to protect Medicare. As we all know, the solvency of the Medicare trust fund is in jeopardy. By being more efficient, being

more judicial with the limited dollars that the trust fund has, this is actually a step in the right direction.

Let me be clear on what I am saying here: If the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is going to try and impose a new regulation that is going to cost additional dollars in excess of \$100 million, all that would happen under this regulation, Mr. Chairman, is that that regulation would then come to Congress for an approval before it would be implemented.

It doesn't stop it from happening. It simply ensures that it is consistent with the wishes of the American people. This does nothing to jeopardize Medicare. It does nothing to impede or prevent services to seniors. We all represent thousands and thousands of seniors, and I certainly would not do anything to jeopardize that care.

Mr. Chair, I urge adoption, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Chair, I just want to reaffirm that Louisiana does have the best muffedettas in the United States. I would be happy to have this conversation in depth with my friend from Connecticut.

Mr. Chair, I am going to say we should support this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, the gentleman and I agree on muffedettas, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 101 OFFERED BY MS. GREENE OF GEORGIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 101 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

Ms. GREENE of Georgia. 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 implement, promote, or enforce the recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to add the COVID–19 vaccine to the child and adolescent immunization schedule of the Advisory Committee of Immunization Practices.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. GREENE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Georgia.

Ms. GREENE of Georgia. Mr. Chair, my amendment prohibits funding for the promotion, implementation, or enforcement of the CDC's recommendation to add the COVID vaccine to the child and adolescent immunization schedule.

In the fall of 2022, the Advisory Committee of Immunization Practices

voted to recommend that the CDC add the COVID vaccine to the child and adolescent immunization schedule, despite having zero scientific evidence for such recommendation.

This decision recommended that children as young as 6 months get the COVID vaccine and accompanying boosters. In direct contradiction to the science, the CDC officially implemented the recommendation earlier this year. All studies show that young children were far less likely to be infected or hospitalized by COVID.

Between August 1, 2020, and August 21 of 2021, the CDC reported that less than 1 percent of kids' hospitalizations for COVID resulted in death, less than 1 percent. Children comprised less than 0.01 percent of COVID hospitalizations and 0.0005 percent of deaths according to the CDC study.

Why would the CDC implement such a recommendation to knowingly inject an experimental shot, especially one that is not even fully FDA approved into kids who have an almost zero percent chance of dying from COVID?

Now, we see that the side effects of the unapproved experimental vaccine are proving to be detrimental to children and are causing irreversible injuries.

Nine days after receiving the vaccine, a 6-foot-9 healthy 17-year-old, Everest Romney, was admitted to the ICU with blood clots in his brain. Anyone who talked about the incident on social media was censored.

Nine months later, he was admitted for a second time. Doctors found another blood clot. A deep vein in his right leg and potentially permanent heart inflammation. Now he can no longer play basketball, and he has to take blood thinners. Thank God he is still alive.

Stephanie De Garay's now 15-year-old daughter was in the Pfizer COVID vaccine trial and is now in a wheelchair with vision problems and a feeding tube. Several groups on Facebook were even taken down after she tried telling her story.

Dr. Cody Meissner, chief of pediatric infectious diseases at the Tufts Children's Hospital in Boston said, "It is hard to deny that there's some event that seems to be occurring in terms of myocarditis."

Although, the CDC does not have the authority to officially mandate the vaccines for kids, the CDC's recommendation to add the vaccine to the child and adolescent immunization schedule is the foundation for all the vaccine mandates for kids in schools, daycares, sports leagues, and extracurriculars.

My amendment would protect children from the experimental shot by blocking the implementation of the baseless CDC recommendation.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

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

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

This amendment prohibits the use of funds to implement, promote, or enforce the recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to add the COVID–19 vaccine to the child and adolescent immunization schedule of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

This amendment would set a dangerous precedent for Congress to overrule the scientific process used in determining eligible vaccines for children.

The amendment would interfere with the work and purpose of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice, CDC's Federal advisory committee, which develops recommendations on the use of vaccines in the civilian population of the United States.

The advisory committee is comprised of medical and public health experts who make recommendations that include the ages when the vaccine should be given, the number of doses needed, the amount of time between doses, and precautions and contraindications.

Before recommending any vaccine, the advisory committee considers many factors, including the safety and the effectiveness of the vaccine. CDC sets the U.S. adult and childhood immunization schedules based on these recommendations. The COVID–19 vaccine has already been added to the CDC immunization schedules based on recommendations from the advisory committee.

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This amendment would undermine CDC's ability to engage in its ongoing immunization work, including the safe and effective COVID–19 vaccines. Kids may be less likely to get COVID, but why wouldn't we want to continue to protect them? For immunity sake, we need to protect the entire population to be able to protect everyone.

I oppose this amendment due to its interference with the scientific process that is used in determining eligible vaccines for children. I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. GREENE).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 102 OFFERED BY MS. GREENE OF GEORGIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 102 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

Ms. GREENE of Georgia. 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 vaccine mandate.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. GREENE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman.

Ms. GREENE of Georgia. Mr. Chair, my amendment prohibits funding for the enforcement of any COVID vaccine mandate. This includes every agency under the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Education.

During COVID, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration implemented unconstitutional, tyrannical vaccine mandates for businesses with more than 100 employees. This mandate applied to 84 million workers.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services implemented the same tyrannical mandates for healthcare workers. Thousands of healthcare workers were unjustly fired for refusing the experimental vaccine, many of whom were from my district in northwest Georgia.

The Department of Education also put out recommendations and guidance for schools to require students to get vaccinated. Furthermore, the Federal Government has spent more than \$30 billion on the COVID vaccines, including incentivizing their development, guaranteeing a market, and ensuring that these unsafe vaccines would be free to the public, but they weren't. The American taxpayers were forced to pay for them.

Big Pharma was the only industry that benefited from these mandates. From 2020 to 2021, Pfizer saw a 95 percent increase in earnings while businesses all over America were shut down and crushed. In 2020, Pfizer's revenues were \$41.6 billion. In 2021, Pfizer's revenues were \$81.3 billion, doubling the year before. In 2022, Pfizer's revenues hit a record of \$100 billion. That is outrageous. Americans suffered, people lost their jobs, and businesses were forced to close.

As we know now, the experimental vaccines have been detrimental to Americans and have caused irreversible injuries, and in some cases death. In just 15 months after the vaccine rollout, approximately 1,400 peer-reviewed articles documented severe adverse events after the COVID-19 vaccinations, a concerning safety signal not even rivaled by combining all other vaccines in the worldwide medical literature over the last century.

There have been approximately 1 million adverse events resulting from the COVID vaccine reported in the VAERS system, which includes everything from myocarditis, blood clots, permanent disability, miscarriages, stillbirths, and menstrual abnormalities.

The following shows significant increases in various diseases and medical conditions among servicemembers who were forced to take the vaccine: hyper-

tension, 2,181 percent increase; disease of the nervous system, 1,048 percent increase; malignant neoplasms of the esophagus, 894 percent increase; breast cancer, 487 percent increase; female infertility, 472 percent increase. These are just to name a few.

Historically, a vaccine is subjected to an average of 10 to 12 years in clinical trials before it is authorized to be administered to the general population. Under an emergency use authorization, these vaccines were available to the public as early as 10 months after development. Mandating such a vaccine is a complete abuse of power, and no American should be forced by the Federal Government to have any experimental shot injected into their body.

Our Secretary of Health and Human Services, Xavier Becerra, said it is absolutely the government's business to know whether and which Americans have not been vaccinated. He also previously said: Absolutely, the message is clear. You are vaccinated, guess what? You get to return to a more normal lifestyle. If you are not vaccinated, you are still a danger, and you are still in danger as well, so get vaccinated.

These vaccines are not as safe and effective as the American people were told. COVID is over. Not only has Congress passed it, the President himself signed it. No one should be forced to take a vaccine.

My amendment prohibits the enforcement of any COVID vaccine mandate, and I urge all of my colleagues to support my amendment.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR (Mrs. KIM of California). The gentlewoman from Connecticut is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment. This amendment prohibits the use of funds to enforce any COVID-19 vaccine mandate. Okay, one more time, let's be clear. There is not a COVID vaccine mandate in place. I will repeat, there is not a COVID vaccine mandate in place.

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective at protecting people from getting seriously ill, being hospitalized, and dying. Vaccination remains the safest strategy for avoiding hospitalizations, long-term health outcomes, and death. COVID vaccination reduces the risk of death by at least 75 percent.

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is safer and a more reliable way to build protection than getting sick with COVID-19. For those who have had COVID, vaccines offer added protection against being hospitalized from a new infection.

There are new variants that are expected as part of the evolution of viruses, and those could be more aggressive, transmittable, or cause more serious or severe disease than the original strain. Vaccines continue to be our best line of defense. Scientific experts

have determined the COVID vaccines to be safe and effective, and hundreds of millions of doses have been administered in the United States.

Our Nation's public health officials need to have options to protect our communities. As we continue to live with COVID, we should not be limiting the use of our most effective public health tool. This amendment would set a dangerous precedent for Congress to overrule the scientific process.

Although many people would like to act like COVID is over, it is not. More than a million people have died due to COVID in the United States. We all have lost someone.

Why isn't it understandable in terms of some of these amendments that there is no COVID vaccine mandate in place? What are we speaking about here?

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. GREENE).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 103 OFFERED BY MS. GREENE OF GEORGIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 103 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Ms. GREENE of Georgia. 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:

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

SEC. ____ The salary of Rachel L. Levine, Assistant Secretary for Health for the Department of Health and Human Services, shall be reduced to \$1.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. GREENE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman.

Ms. GREENE of Georgia. Madam Chair, my amendment uses the Holman Rule to reduce—no, castrate—the salary of Assistant Secretary for Health Richard Levine to \$1, the same way he supports castrating children who suffer from gender dysphoria.

Richard Levine was a diversity hire by the Biden administration to push the demonic gender-affirming care agenda, and he is unfit to serve as the HHS Assistant Secretary for Health. He should never have been hired after he, serving as Pennsylvania's Health Secretary, directed nursing homes and care facilities to take in COVID patients while simultaneously pulling his mother out of her own care facility.

Dr. Levine has spent his career focusing on treating—let's say grooming—children, adolescents, and young adults. He now serves as a top adviser for our Nation's health policy while masquerading as a woman. A mentally

ill man who thinks he is a woman should never be responsible for over-seeing anything in the Department of Health and Human Services, let alone the Office on Women's Health.

This same man who is empowering kids to mutilate and castrate themselves under the guise of so-called gender-affirming care said that he was happy to have waited to transition genders so that he could have kids. What a complete hypocrisy.

He has promised that mutilating and castrating kids will soon be normalized and that it has the highest support of the Biden administration. He has stated that "sex reassignment surgery and puberty blockers for kids is lifesaving, medically necessary, age-appropriate, and a critical tool." He also said there shouldn't be "State laws and actions that dictate principles of transgender medical care by us, pediatric experts," illustrating why we need Federal protections like my bill, the Protect Children's Innocence Act, for our most vulnerable and innocent children.

It is our job to protect our children from sexual groomers like Levine and reducing his salary to \$1 is a strong first step. He has infiltrated our Department of Health and Human Services with guidance and curricula that further his perverted agenda. The Office of Population Affairs, which is directly overseen by Levine, put out guidelines encouraging our youth to seek gender-affirming care. These guidelines discuss how and why our youth should seek puberty blockers, as well as top and bottom reassignment surgeries. Let's be real. That is cutting off their body parts before they are adults.

Other initiatives and guidance he has issued include a cultural competency curricula. This cultural competency curricula is for behavioral health and primary care practitioners to "assess, treat, and refer LGBTQ clients in a culturally appropriate manner." Part of this curricula is for nurses to focus on teaching cultural competency in the care of LGBTQ older adults. Another part of this curricula includes utilizing the National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center for its educational programs on how to best meet the learning styles, needs, and time constraints of LGBTQ people.

A last additional part of this cultural competency curricula includes a training specifically designed to help both administrators and clinicians address the various aspects of providing effective substance abuse treatment to LGBTQ people. Obviously, they shouldn't be cutting off their body parts as children. The training covers such topics as legal issues, the coming out process as it relates to behavioral health, how to make a provider organization more LGBT-welcoming, and more.

Another agenda Levine has been pushing for is the vaccination of children. Just recently he was calling on parents to speak up and defend vaccine

requirements at schools, saying they need to be part of back-to-school checklists of an emergency use vaccine that children do not even need.

□ 2015

Our mentally ill Assistant Secretary for Health is more concerned with woke gender and vaccine agendas than serving the everyday health and needs of the American people.

He deserves to be fired immediately. This man is a danger to all children and should not be serving in our government.

Madam Chair, I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes" to my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment. Public service should be commended and not demonized.

Our Federal Government needs talented, intelligent, hardworking people who are willing to bring their skills, expertise, compassion, and experience to public service.

Proposing to eliminate the salaries of hardworking public servants is petty and beneath the dignity of this body, and it is not how we should solve differences of opinion on policy.

Admiral Levine—I repeat—Admiral Levine is the head of the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. That is one of the eight uniformed services in the United States.

A physician, she completed her training in pediatrics and adolescent health at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City.

The focus of her medical career has been the interaction between mental and physical health, particularly for children and adolescents. Imagine the knowledge, expertise, study, and commitment of Admiral Levine.

Given the ongoing mental health crisis in this country, particularly with children and adolescents, I am grateful and in awe of her expertise and service.

Prior to joining the Biden administration, Admiral Levine served as Pennsylvania physician general and secretary of health. My God, what a background.

She is highly qualified for her position, and I say to her tonight that I commend her efforts to improve the health of Americans across this country.

Let's be honest. The Congresswoman from Georgia submitted this amendment to target the salary of a transgender health official. It is as simple as that.

It is ugly. It is disgraceful. I ask whoever is watching of the American people and everyone in this body to note the date and time when the Republicans in the House of Representatives have hit a new low.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this vindictive amendment offered to target the salary of a qualified transgender health official who has the expertise and knowledge to address health issues in a way that many in this body are unable to do.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. GREENE).

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 104 OFFERED BY MS. GREENE OF GEORGIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 104 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Ms. GREENE of Georgia. 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:

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

SEC. _____. The salary of Miguel Cardona, Secretary of the Department of Education, shall be reduced to \$1.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. GREENE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Georgia.

Ms. GREENE of Georgia. Madam Chair, my amendment uses the Holman rule to reduce the salary of Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona to \$1.

Miguel Cardona is unfit to serve the American people as Secretary of Education. He is complicit in allowing biological men to compete against women, labeling parents as domestic terrorists, and implementing critical race ideology in schools.

His Department of Education issued a proposed rule on Title IX to set out a standard for how schools must adopt sex-related criteria that would limit or deny a student's eligibility to participate on a male or female athletic team consistent with their gender identity.

Under this proposed rule, schools would be prohibited from adopting a policy that directly bans all transgender from participating on athletic teams that correspond to the gender they identify as. If schools were to implement such a ban, they would be subjected to intense litigation.

This Department's proposed rule not only makes a mockery of women's sports. It also perpetuates the radical agenda that biological differences should not be weighed against the emotions of confused men. This proposed rule will destroy women's sports.

He has stated that sports do “more than just put ribbons on the first-, second-, and third-place winner,” fully acknowledging that biological men will dominate women’s sports when they are put on the same playing field as women.

Miguel Cardona is also complicit in Merrick Garland’s memo directing the FBI and DOJ to target parents who were considered domestic terrorists for speaking out at school board meetings.

Internal emails between the National School Boards Association’s secretary-treasurer and a member of a school board in a Washington school district revealed that Secretary Cardona requested the NSBA to write a letter to the White House to provide supporting information for why parents are domestic terrorists.

This letter, sent on September 29, 2021, from the NSBA to the White House, said that disruptions by parents at school board meetings posed a threat of domestic terrorism. Don’t forget, these people are paid by the parents, who are the taxpayers. The letter suggested that parents who object to mask mandates and critical race theory are engaging in a form of domestic terrorism.

A week later, Garland issued a memo directing the FBI and DOJ to target parents, citing the contents of this letter as a reason for such.

Miguel Cardona was one who requested that the National School Boards Association write this letter to the White House.

Prior to serving as the Secretary of the Department of Education, Miguel Cardona implemented the Nation’s first mandated statewide CRT curriculum in Connecticut. Critical race theory is a destructive, racist ideology that promotes Black supremacy and teaches that America is fundamentally racist. It is not.

He is now pushing the same CRT agenda across the Nation’s school system by attempting to implement CRT curriculum in schools and into the grant-making process. After enough pushback, he said that the Department will not dictate or recommend the curriculum to be taught in classrooms. However, the Department is still encouraging projects that incorporate racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse perspectives in classroom instruction.

While the Department claims it no longer requires grant recipients to incorporate CRT into its curriculum, they are still explicitly pushing for it in the grant application process.

Secretary Miguel Cardona’s actions are destroying our Nation’s school systems. He should be fired immediately, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote for this amendment. Protect our kids. This must be done.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment. Again, public servants should be commended and not demonized.

Our Federal Government needs talented, intelligent, hardworking people who are willing to bring their skills to public service. Proposing to eliminate the salaries of hardworking public servants is petty, and it is, yes, beneath the dignity of this body. It is not how we should solve differences of opinion on policy.

I suspect that folks could challenge Members of Congress on their views and opinions, yet they don’t have the ability to threaten our livelihoods. Maybe they should have the ability to threaten our livelihoods. Proposing to eliminate the salaries of hardworking public servants is really a stain on this institution.

I know Secretary Cardona well. Secretary Cardona is well known for a career as an educator with a passion and dedication to students and teachers and a commitment that has now been on full display nationally.

When he first joined the Department, students and families were facing unprecedented change and disruption to their education. With his leadership and investments made by Congress over the past several years, including the American Rescue Plan and the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, schools now have the resources to strengthen teaching and learning in our classrooms.

Under his leadership, schools can better support student academic recovery, address mental health needs, and tackle nationwide teacher shortages. Those are the issues.

We need his steady leadership at the helm of a vital agency that oversees our investments, our Federal investments, in public education.

Let me take a second to make a comment, Madam Chair. We are now less than 4 days away from a government shutdown. Instead of focusing on keeping our government open, we are working on a bill that is going nowhere. This is a bridge to nowhere, for sure.

The harmful funding cuts proposed in this bill and the ugly amendments that demean this body and this institution are on full view.

This is not regular order. What we should be doing now is to have the allocations for each of the appropriations subcommittees. We should do what was agreed to by the former Speaker of the House in a budget agreement. We should be moving toward passing appropriations bills that will provide the services and resources to the American public in agriculture, education, health, and transportation.

We should be dealing with the issues of national security that face us today. We should be dealing with the international crises that face us today, which are going begging, about which we are doing nothing.

This is an unbelievable waste of time and an exercise in futility with the

overview of an ugliness that, once again, demeans this institution. This is the Congress of the United States.

□ 2030

We are here tonight introducing petty and vindictive amendments that demean the individuals who hold these positions and once again demean the dignity, the stature of the United States House of Representatives.

I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on this vindictive amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. GREENE of Georgia. Madam Chair, my Democratic colleague across the aisle, who is 80 years old and has been here over 30 years, just said we are on the verge of a shutdown. She probably just forgot that a few hours ago she voted for the continuing resolution that will extend the budget, and we are not on the verge of a shutdown. So I just wanted to note that for the RECORD.

I also urge my colleagues to vote for my amendment. We should pass this Holman rule. We need to protect our kids. No males belong in women’s sports in schools, and parents are not terrorists and never should be referred to that way.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I rise to strike the last word.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I am very well aware of the vote that we took earlier this evening. It may be that the gentlewoman doesn’t know that there is another body attached to the U.S. Congress called the United States Senate, and they have to vote on the continuing resolution. When they vote on it, we will find out what it is that they do with regard to this continuing resolution passed by the House, which quite frankly, is flawed to a fare-thee-well in meeting our obligations, both domestic and international.

By the way, it isn’t a law of the land until the President of the United States signs it. That may be a basic lesson in civics. There is the House, there is the Senate, and there is the President.

Quite frankly, the budget agreement that had been signed by the President—for a basic primer in civics—is that the budget agreement passed the House overwhelmingly, and it passed the Senate, and it was signed by the President. It is the law of the land, which my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have dismissed, walked away from, and quite frankly, don’t understand the process of government, an unwillingness to govern and an inability to govern.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. GREENE).

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 105 OFFERED BY MS. HAGEMAN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 105 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Ms. HAGEMAN. 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:

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 by the Secretary of Labor for the climate literacy training described in the "Climate Adaptation Plan Program Report" published by the Department of Labor or collaboration with other Federal agencies to provide such training.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. HAGEMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wyoming.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Madam Chair, I rise today in support of my amendment No. 105, which prohibits the Department of Labor from providing so-called climate literacy training.

In September 2022, the Department of Labor released a "Climate Adaptation Plan." This plan identifies the Department as the agency that developed the climate training and discloses that it is exploring collaboration with other agencies for the purpose of promoting climate literacy training.

Madam Chair, this climate literacy training is yet another example of the extent to which radical climate hysteria has permeated every agency and subagency within the Biden administration.

The Department of Labor's mission statement actually says that it is responsible "To foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners, jobseekers, and retirees of the United States; improve working conditions; advance opportunities for profitable employment; and assure work-related benefits and rights."

Perhaps it would be a surprise to the Department of Labor, but creating a Climate Adaptation Plan is not listed as either part of the agency's mission or priorities, yet here we are.

It is time for the Biden administration to stop catering to a politically radical agenda and actually focus on governing.

It is time for the Department of Labor to focus on its mission of fostering, promoting, and developing the welfare of the wage earners, jobseekers, and retirees.

The purpose of my amendment is to ensure that the Department of Labor does just that, that it focuses on its true mission and leaves the politics of global warming out of it.

I urge my colleagues to support my amendment to send a message to the DOL that we will no longer tolerate its foray into this nonsense.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment.

This amendment blocks a critical aspect of the Biden administration's whole-of-government strategy to build resilience at home and abroad against the impacts of climate change.

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

Ms. HAGEMAN. Madam Chair, since President Biden took office, the American worker has suffered a 3.1 percent pay cut caused in large part by this administration's obsession with all things climate change and its war on affordable energy. The dramatic increases in energy costs have translated into higher costs for everything else, including food, housing, clothing, entertainment, and travel.

This administration's war on affordable, domestic energy has thus dramatically and negatively affected the very people that the DOL was created to serve—the American worker.

In short, American energy independence is good for the American worker, but the converse is also true; dependence on foreign-produced energy is bad for the American worker. Yet, that is the very outcome of these wrongheaded programs such as the DOL's climate literacy training. Such training won't improve the lot of the American worker, it will hurt it.

Last year, U.S. inflation-adjusted household income fell by the most in over a decade. This reduction in income is the direct result of the inflationary pressures caused by the Biden administration's energy and climate policies.

These policies have also impacted our labor force participation rate, which remains low and has never fully recovered since the pandemic.

There are serious labor issues to address in this country, and while I would argue workforce development and job creation are not a role of the Federal Government at all, so long as the Department of Labor exists, it should be focused on how it will work with American industries to foster a strong labor market.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gen-

tlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. HAGEMAN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 106 OFFERED BY MS. HAGEMAN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 106 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Ms. HAGEMAN. 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:

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 carry out the environmental justice grant activities described in the report issued by the Department of Labor in September 2022, entitled "Climate Adaptation Plan".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. HAGEMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wyoming.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Madam Chair, I rise in support of my amendment 106, which prevents the Department of Labor from carrying out the Environmental Justice grant activities described in its 2022 Climate Adaptation Plan.

Similar to my previous amendment on climate literacy training, this is climate change political capture inside the agencies of the Federal Government.

Since taking office, President Biden has issued several executive orders directing Federal agencies to address climate change and environmental justice—whatever that means.

The DOL has been very busy in implementing that directive, and in the process it has deflected resources away from its mission and wasted taxpayer dollars on trying to implement the Green New Deal—with its Climate Adaptation Plan and Environmental Justice grant activities just being part of those efforts.

The fact is that we don't need any such plan, and the justice that the DOL is peddling isn't justice at all. It is government-imposed wretchedness dressed up with nonsensical language, the very purpose of which is to pursue an agenda that has never been approved by this body.

Madam Chair, I encourage my colleagues to vote for my amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment.

This amendment blocks another critical aspect of the Biden administration's whole-of-government strategy to build resilience both at home and abroad against the impacts of climate change. It is my understanding that

this amendment would prohibit—let me give an example. The agency highlighted certain grants provided under the Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities and clean energy sector apprenticeships provided through the bipartisan YouthBuild program, but that would be blocked.

It is wrong to block the Department of Labor from commonsense grantmaking intended to build skills in the clean energy sector for rural workers and for at-risk youth.

I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Madam Chair, while the Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities does fund rural grant opportunities, this amendment would simply prevent the Department of Labor from infusing environmental justice priorities into the program and return its focus to building economic opportunity for rural Americans. In other words, it uses the money the way that it should.

My amendment would block using money for things that it should not be using it for. While the YouthBuild program does on face value sound like a beneficial program for development of vocational skills, the 2022 climate plan outlines how skills can be developed for demand in industries, including the clean energy sector.

The reality is that it is a misapplication of funds, and it is being used inappropriately. When outlining its so-called environmental justice work, the DOL’s climate plan references a strategic investment, but such a waste of resources isn’t an investment at all. It is a colossal waste of taxpayer money.

Madam Chair, the Department of Labor is dedicating limited resources, manpower, and money towards implementing the left’s climate change agenda while the very American citizens on whose behalf it is supposed to be advocating—the working man—lose ground every day, with inflation eating away at their buying power, individuals having to give up on work, and intergenerational government dependency being some of the fallout related to those policies.

A vote for my amendment is a vote for sending a message to the Department of Labor and any Federal agency engaged in pushing radical climate change initiatives. It is time for the DOL to focus on the job the American people expect it to do.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. HAGEMAN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 107 OFFERED BY MS. HAGEMAN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 107 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

Ms. HAGEMAN. 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:

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 implement or carry out the strategies described in the report titled ‘Strategies for Increasing Diversity and Opportunity in Higher Education’ published by the Department of Education in September 2023.”

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. HAGEMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wyoming.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Madam Chair, I rise today in support of my amendment No. 107, which prohibits the Department of Education from carrying out strategies listed in the Department’s report titled: “Strategies for Increasing Diversity and Opportunity in Higher Education.”

In June 2023, the Supreme Court through the decision in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* rightfully ended affirmative action and processes related to the admission of students into higher educational institutions based upon racial factors.

This landmark case has finally ended affirmative action, an agenda that its supporters lauded for maintaining equity and inclusion, was actually founded upon, implemented, and pursued for the purpose of furthering racial discrimination.

□ 2045

As Justice Roberts has previously said: “The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race.” I agree. That, however, is not the way that the Biden administration sees it. The Biden administration and the Federal Department of Education don’t seem to care what the Supreme Court says and have every intention to continue implementing programs that directly violate the Fair Admissions decision.

The current Federal Department of Education has done what agencies like this do best: They release a report that, while having no force or effect of law, provides a roadmap for colleges and universities to effectively continue their race-based admission practices. The Federal Department of Education, in other words, is simply continuing with its race-based discrimination, just calling it by another name.

My amendment is designed to block the Department of Education’s efforts in that regard, and I encourage my colleagues to vote in favor.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to this amendment.

This amendment blocks suggestions and recommendations from a report by the Department of Education to ensure that college is available to all Americans who wish to attend, not just the wealthy, not just the privileged.

In this report, the Department has identified promising practices based on evidence that institutions can consider. Many of these interventions or practices have already been shown to be successful at other institutions or States.

The types of strategies this amendment seeks to undermine are essential to expanding diversity and opportunity in higher education and enjoy broad, bipartisan support, strategies like supporting K–12 college counseling, providing emergency and need-based aid, and supporting transfer and community college partnerships. Why not?

Instead of proposing amendments like this that would harm students, I hope my colleagues across the aisle will join me and the Department of Education in expanding educational opportunity for all Americans. Let’s have a literate, educated society.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Madam Chair, this report, released in September of 2023, describes the strategies that colleges and universities may use to continue their discriminatory diversity, equity, and inclusion agenda by suggesting admission procedures including a holistic review of student candidates emphasizing such factors related to their experiences with hardship, including racial discrimination, sources of inspiration or demonstration of resiliency, and other qualities with clear racial undertones.

Let me be clear. Admission practices and professional recruiting standards are areas in which merit should be the sole and primary focus when selecting new candidates.

My amendment prohibits the Department of Education from carrying out its strategies listed in the Department’s report and ensures compliance with the Supreme Court’s decision.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes,” and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. HAGEMAN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 108 OFFERED BY MS. HAGEMAN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 108 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

Ms. HAGEMAN. 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:

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 carry out the educational priorities, including invitational priorities, for the American History and Civics Education programs proposed by the Department of Education in the Federal Register on April 19, 2021 (86 Fed. Reg. 20348 et seq.).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. HAGEMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wyoming.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Madam Chair, I rise in support of my amendment 108 which prevents the Department of Education from carrying out its “American History and Civics Education” priorities referenced in the Federal Register titled: “Proposed Priorities-American History and Civics Education.”

Under this 2021 proposed rule, the Department of Education sought to institute a variety of priorities under the National Activities program and within American History and Civics Academies seeking to promote a divisive educational curriculum. The real agenda behind these priorities is to attack our Nation’s history and pursue an agenda to allegedly address what it refers to as systemic marginalization, biases, inequities, and discriminatory policy and practice to allegedly help students understand their own biases when reviewing information. What complete and total hogwash and drivel.

While the Department was forced to abandon its efforts to institute its offensive agenda, it has also disclosed its intent to maintain what it refers to as invitational priorities, meaning it will encourage others to do what it cannot.

Madam Chair, our children deserve to be educated on history, mathematics, English, science, and other programs that are accurate, robust, educational, and that will prepare them to join the workforce and be productive members of society. They do not deserve to be indoctrinated into far-left hatred of America.

My amendment would block the Department of Education from instituting these insidious priorities. I encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of it, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to this amendment. It seeks to block priorities for an out-of-date civics competition from 2021.

While my colleague seeks to gin up alarm over the prospect of Federal funding being used to support priorities that alarm her, she failed to mention how the Department ran an entirely new civics competition in 2023 that used different priorities from the 2021 competition. The Department has no current plans to reuse the 2021 priorities that she speaks about.

Let me just tell you: Our children need to know about civics. We have children today who know nothing about government at the local level, the State level, or the Federal level. They don’t know how to interact with one another with differences of opinion. The lack of knowledge about civics has created more division in our society than almost anything else.

We need to invest in civics, and I know that because I have introduced legislation in a bipartisan way on having civics taught. Let’s not create a specter about what civics education is and define it in your terms. It is good to have an educated society that understands what our government is about and how we can interact with one another and have agreements and disagree in an agreeable way with one another.

In the end, this amendment was drafted to conjure up unwarranted fears and concerns. It will have no impact. It is another waste of our time.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Madam Chair, as I have said numerous times before, critical race theory and related programs are simply a mechanism utilized by the radical left to assert their control and to further divide Americans.

Madam Chair, my amendment is one small effort in combating the left’s effort to turn our educational system into indoctrination camps, pushing racist policies that are not grounded in reality.

Once again, my constituents are fed up with the failures of the Department of Education in actually educating our children while using our taxpayer dollars to destroy America from within.

Support for my amendment will send a message to the Department of Education and other Federal agencies who pursue implementation of critical race theory initiatives that their time is up; that we are no longer going to allow them to use our educational system to implement policies that are not only based on lies but that put Americans against Americans.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote for my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. HAGEMAN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 109 OFFERED BY MR. MCCORMICK

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 109 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Madam Chair, as the designee of the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HARRIS), 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 to the National Institutes of Health may be used for facilities and administrative costs that exceed 30 percent of any award.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MCCORMICK) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Chair, I rise to offer amendment No. 109, limiting indirect costs paid by the National Institutes of Health to a maximum of 30 percent of the total grant awarded.

Indirect costs are simply known as overhead costs. These costs are not directly attributable to the specific research project or function. These costs include facilities operation and maintenance, depreciation of buildings, and administrative expenses.

In 2021, the National Institutes of Health spent \$6.7 billion on indirect costs racked up by grant recipients. Meanwhile, the top grant recipients were universities sitting on multibillion-dollar endowments.

Nonprofit organizations that provide research funding, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Alzheimer’s Association, and the American Heart Association, cap indirect costs at 10 percent.

Congress has historically limited indirect costs for agricultural research to a maximum of 30 percent, which is included in the Agriculture appropriations bill.

I propose that we apply this limitation to the National Institutes of Health research to ensure taxpayer dollars are being spent responsibly.

I urge all Members to consider supporting this commonsense amendment, which would dedicate more research dollars to direct research costs.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition to this amendment.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I rise to claim the time in opposition to this amendment.

This amendment would cap the facilities and administrative costs for NIH awards at 30 percent of the cost of the award.

About 6 years ago, in October of 2017, the Labor-HHS subcommittee held a hearing on this topic. In a bipartisan way, we invited four experts who represented research institutions across the country, in Connecticut, Oklahoma, San Francisco, and Seattle.

The consensus from our expert panel that morning was that a proposal by the Trump administration to place a

cap on indirect costs for NIH awards would have a sharply negative impact on research.

Our expert panel outlined the critical importance of indirect costs to their world-renowned research programs and the harsh consequences of establishing an arbitrary cap on indirect costs.

Dr. Bruce Liang, dean of the University of Connecticut School of Medicine, outlined the many research-related costs that are covered under the guise of facilities and expenses, or indirect costs. He described the facilities and administrations cost as the shared expenses related to the building and use of research facilities and the administrative backbone functions that make such places run.

Dr. Liang noted that the facilities and administrative reimbursements pay for building depreciation and maintenance, shared equipment, academic library materials, departmental administration, office supplies, and grant oversight activities, such as preaward applications and hopefully post-award work.

He concluded by saying that F&A costs are absolutely critical funding to keep academic medical centers and research facilities operating efficiently.

Our expert panel noted that the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities, and the Association of American Universities all oppose the proposal to place an arbitrary cap on indirect costs for NIH awards.

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

Mr. MCCORMICK. Madam Chair, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The amendment is withdrawn.

AMENDMENT NO. 110 OFFERED BY MR. HERN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 110 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

Mr. HERN. 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:

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 fund a Confucius Classroom.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. HERN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

□ 2100

Mr. HERN. Madam Chair, through the Belt and Road Initiative, the BRI, the Chinese Communist Party has been

spreading its malign influence over the last decade. This initiative has one goal: to increase China's economic and political dominance over the United States and the world.

Disguised as harmless global infrastructure, transportation, and production networks, the Belt and Road Initiative, or the BRI, is anything but harmless.

Education is one of the primary targets of the BRI. They are succeeding in their mission to indoctrinate American students with their Communist ideals. Chinese state media even brags about the success of Confucius Institutes and other educational initiatives in spreading the CCP's influence.

This doesn't stop on our college campuses. Right now, China is invading our K–12 schools through Confucius Classrooms. Over the last decade or more, the CCP has infiltrated our public school system, setting up Chinese language and cultural programs in primary and secondary schools.

These Confucius Classrooms are funded by the Chinese Government, both directly and through Confucius Institutes and other third parties. Make no mistake, this is not through the kindness of their hearts. The CCP is not interested at all in helping American students learn Mandarin. They want to brainwash our children, plain and simple.

Since 2013, the authoritarian Government of the People's Republic of China has sent curriculum and PRC-trained teachers into hundreds of K–12 schools across America as an unofficial component of its global influence campaign.

The CCP has committed countless violations of human rights, and its authoritarian agenda is antithetical to the democratic principles our country was founded on. Chinese propaganda has no place in our education system.

We have taken important steps toward mitigating Chinese influence at American universities by cracking down on Confucius Institutes. Now that the Chinese Government has directed its attention toward elementary and secondary schools, it is time we do the same and protect our children from the malign influence of the CCP.

My amendment would prevent Federal funding for these Confucius Classrooms.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to this amendment.

In the past few years, most of the institutes targeted, as I understand it, by this amendment, or Confucius Classrooms that are affiliated with them, have closed down. According to the data from the Congressional Research Service and the National Academy of Scholars, we know that compared to

2019, when there were over 100 Confucius Institutes nationwide, there are only a handful that operate in the United States—between 7 and 10. They are not still operating. Given the rate, they may continue to plummet.

I am struck by this amendment. By exaggerating the threat and proliferation of these kinds of classrooms, it seems to be spreading misleading information that creates fear. Fear that is caused by these exaggerations leads to harm toward Asian-American students and teachers.

To be honest, I don't know, and I would like to examine this. Were they teaching the Chinese language and Chinese culture? Maybe it was a learning experience. I don't know the answer to that. I just know that this does not appear to be a difficulty.

I worry about spreading misleading information that creates fear. We have all seen in these areas what happens when fear and misinformation is spread. It has resulted in violence against Asian-American students and Asian-American teachers, which is not something I believe my colleague would foster.

Based on available data, I think we can conclude that this amendment does not address any measurable threat to our system of public education and, quite honestly, is not being offered in good faith.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HERN. Madam Chair, I appreciate the gentlewoman recognizing that these institutions are closing down in record numbers. It must be that the school systems are so successful at identifying these that States have cleansed out a lot of their higher education Confucius Institutes. That tells you right there that the Chinese Government has been very persistent in getting after educating our younger students across America.

We should have more love for our students at our secondary and elementary schools. Again, higher education across America has understood the influence that the Chinese Government has tried to do in making their impact on the American economy.

When you see what they have done across the world, it doesn't take a whole lot of research—look at Wikipedia, if you would like, to see what they have done in nations across the world as they try to express their influence and take over the world.

It would be very naive of us—and I know the chairwoman knows this—to sit back and allow this to happen one school at a time. We have a lot of other issues in America that we need to address in our education system, and not allowing the Chinese Government to take over our elementary schools will simply be a very easy fix for us. That is what my amendment does.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I really am quite troubled with this, and I

need to express this. It seems to me that what is happening here with the amendment is that it seems to incite misinformation and fear.

I don't know, quite frankly, if there is any evaluation or tangible results of what the effect of the institute or the classrooms were and are. They seem to have gone away.

I think of it in these terms. My family members are immigrants from Italy. If they were teaching about Italian culture, teaching the Italian language—again, I don't know. This has really piqued an interest in me in trying to look at and investigate what we are talking about.

Would there be this view that somehow the Italian Government was taking over and somehow brainwashing our kids or taking our kids down a wrong path?

We seem to be casting aspersions with this amendment on Chinese culture and education in the guise of the Chinese Government. I suspect that that has a chilling effect. Quite frankly, you could say this about any cultural group or ethnic group that was working with youngsters in our community.

Madam Chair, I find this amendment to be very troubling, more so than I ever thought. We have discerned no measurable threat to our system of public education.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on this amendment.

□ 2110

Mr. HERN. With all due respect, Madam Chair, Italy is not trying to conquer our Nation.

The Department of Education and the Department of State have sent a letter to schools urging them not to participate in these programs. Confucius Classrooms have been set up in several countries, including Australia and Canada, where state and local governments have canceled their contracts over concern about Chinese propaganda.

With all due respect to the ranking member on the other side, we are not talking about simply teaching language. We are talking about teaching the Chinese way of how to take over a government from the inside out.

We see enough of what is coming across the southern border and not knowing who is here. When we have the ability to control these issues through the legislative process, we should take our time to do that.

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

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

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 111 OFFERED BY MR. HERN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 111 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

Mr. HERN. 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 76, line 20, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. HERN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

Mr. HERN. Madam Chair, I rise in support of my amendment No. 111.

Almost 3 years ago, Congress passed the No Surprises Act to protect patients from surprise medical bills. A key provision in the No Surprises Act is to provide patients with an advanced explanation of their benefits. It is straightforward. It is a cost estimate. If a patient books a healthcare appointment with adequate notice, then they deserve to know a cost estimate for their services before they get care.

This amendment reinforces the need for the Biden administration to implement this provision. We are going on 3 years here, and no progress has been made.

Last week, all of my Republican colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee and I sent the third—third—oversight letter to the Biden administration demanding that they follow the law.

It is an absolute failure of this administration to delay implementation of this technology. Considering American families' current economic struggles, anything to help with financial planning should be a priority.

Knowing how much health services will cost removes some anxiety patients face when seeking medical care. Patients are nervous about their test results. There is no reason for the added anxiety of not knowing how much a service will cost them, too.

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

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

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam 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 Oklahoma will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 112 OFFERED BY MR. HIGGINS OF LOUISIANA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 112 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. 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:

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

SEC. ____ The salary of Christopher Williamson, Assistant Secretary of the Mine Safety and Health Administration, shall be reduced to \$1.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. HIGGINS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Madam Chair, I rise in support of amendment No. 112, which reduces the salary of Mr. Christopher Williamson, Assistant Secretary for Mine Safety and Health Administration, to \$1.

This measure reflects our concern over the leadership under which questionable enforcement actions occurred. This is a call for accountability at the highest levels.

Madam Chair, I encourage my passionate and brilliant colleague from Connecticut to consider my words.

This Chamber was built to reflect the highest ideals of individual rights and freedoms. The birth of our Nation, as envisioned by our Founders, included the balance of powers built throughout our government. This Chamber where we stand in the people's House is one-half of a bicameral Congress. We are the legislative branch. We are held accountable by elections and, in extreme cases, by censure or ejection from Congress.

Our judicial branch is filled with judges who are appointed, reviewed, and confirmed by our Senate and held to the highest standards. Our executive branch at the highest levels is accountable by election and, in egregious or extreme circumstances, by impeachment.

However, the bureaucrats, Madam Chair, and I say it to my colleague across the aisle respectfully, the bureaucrats of the executive branch are hardly accountable, save for by action through the power of the purse by Congress.

We have the right to exercise the power of the purse to do things like contract the salary of a rogue executive employee who has abused their authority and thwarted the will of the people. We have not only the right to do so, but we have the obligation to do so.

Reducing the salary of a bureaucrat regulator who has abused their authority is a shot across the bow of oppression.

I have listened respectfully to my colleague oppose every amendment of the Republican majority, and I ask her to respectfully consider how else, Madam Chair, we might control oppressive actions of rogue and abusive bureaucrats from within the executive branch.

They are implanted within our government. They are an army of bureaucrats who are virtually unreachable by standard business procedures. They are very difficult to fire or dismiss. They are insulated by many layers and levels

of civil protection. Reducing the salary of a regulatory agent employee of the executive branch is an effective and constitutionally sound mechanism to control oppression.

Madam Chair, I rise in support of amendment No. 112, and I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support it.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment. This amendment, once again, demonstrates the lack of seriousness of this process and the lack of seriousness by my Republican colleagues.

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

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Madam Chair, may I inquire as to how much time I have remaining.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman has 45 seconds remaining.

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Madam Chair, do I appear to be anything less than very serious? This is a serious body. I come from a humble background. I know what it is to earn a dollar or not. I rise in support of this action because it is the right thing to do.

Madam Chair, I encourage my colleagues to support my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam 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 Louisiana will be postponed.

□ 2120

AMENDMENT NO. 113 OFFERED BY MR. HIGGINS OF LOUISIANA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 113 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. 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:

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

SEC. _____. The salary of William O'Dell, District Manager in Dallas, Texas, of the Mine Safety and Health Administration, shall be reduced to \$1.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. HIGGINS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Madam Chair, I rise to speak in favor of amendment 113 of House Rules Committee Print of H.R. 5894.

Amendment 113 reduces the salary of Mr. William O'Dell, the district manager in Dallas, Texas, of the Mine Safety and Health Administration.

This action is in direct response to his failure to address the conflict-of-interest concern raised by my constituent, Morton Salt, demonstrating a significant lapse in supervisory responsibility and a willful neglect to perform his duty.

Madam Chair, as I stated earlier, it is our obligation as sworn servants to we the people to protect the individual rights and freedoms of our citizens, and when an executive abuses his authority in our government, he must be held accountable.

This obligation sometimes falls upon the shoulders of Congress and the legal and constitutional mechanism that we have devised in this body, the people's House, to hold a rogue, executive employee, bureaucrat, regulatory agent accountable for actions beyond the pale of defense. The mechanism that we have at our disposal and readily available is the power of the purse.

Every effort by the Republican majority and conservatives amongst our party and our Conference, every effort to employ the Holman rule to contract the salary of an executive employee that has betrayed their oath and abused their authority, every single effort has been thwarted in this House.

It is good, Madam Chair, that the people take note and that the historical record documents the votes of the Members of this body because we, too, shall be held accountable.

The Founders hold us accountable every 2 years by design where a servant in this body could be quickly removed if we do not comply with the will of the people, if we do not always strive to protect the individual rights and freedoms of the people, if we do not uphold the oath that we have sworn.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support amendment 113, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, just to note, this Federal employee is a non-political civil servant, but I will say what I said before: I believe what this amendment demonstrates is a lack of seriousness of this process that we are engaged in here tonight and a lack of seriousness of my Republican colleagues in this House.

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

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

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

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam 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 Louisiana will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 114 OFFERED BY MR. LAWLER

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 114 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. LAWLER. 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:

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 made available to an institution of higher education that authorizes, facilitates, provides funding for, or otherwise supports any event promoting antisemitism (as such term is defined by the working definition of antisemitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance on May 26, 2016, including the contemporary examples of antisemitism cited by the Alliance.) on the campus of such institution.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAWLER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

Mr. LAWLER. Madam Chair, today, I rise to urge the House to adopt my amendment, which would strip colleges and universities of Federal funding if they authorize, facilitate, provide funding for, or otherwise support any event promoting anti-Semitism on their campuses.

In the wake of the horrific October 7 attack on Israel, we have seen a startling rise of anti-Semitism in our country and across the globe.

On college campuses, we have seen students carrying signs, pins, or flags supporting Israel be violently attacked. This kind of behavior, and colleges and universities condoning it, is abhorrent.

As I have said before, the U.S. Constitution grants people the right to say what they want, but that doesn't mean that the taxpayers should be paying for it, especially not at a time when the scourge of anti-Semitism is yet again on the rise.

From 2020 to 2021, anti-Semitic hate crimes increased by 20 percent. From 2021 to 2022, anti-Semitic incidents in the United States rose by 36 percent. This year, anti-Semitic incidents have skyrocketed.

I have people living in my district who are scared to go to their synagogues on the weekend for fear of being attacked. It is wholly and totally unacceptable.

This disturbing trend cannot be allowed to continue, and it is incumbent upon each of us to speak out and denounce anti-Semitism wherever it rears its ugly head. That starts by refusing to subsidize this hate on college campuses.

It is a simple concept: If you want to maintain your Federal funding or student aid, don't hold events that peddle in the same anti-Semitic tropes embraced by the enemies of Israel and America throughout the world who want nothing short of the destruction of both.

People chanting "glory to the martyrs" and praising the resistance of Hamas are objectively partaking in horrific anti-Semitism, praising the largest slaughter of Jews since the Holocaust. Chanting "from the river to the sea" is calling for the eradication of Israel. It is vile. It is wrong. It is unacceptable. This amendment serves colleges and universities notice that it will not be tolerated.

Madam Chair, this morning we watched a video that was the raw footage of the terrorist attack on October 7—women, children, babies were slaughtered. Hamas terrorists were joyful with glee. One terrorist called their parents to brag about slaughtering 10 Jews with their bare hands.

Why?

Because at a young age in Gaza, in the West Bank, they are taught to hate Jews, taught that killing Jews is acceptable.

Here in the United States of America, college campuses, universities are teaching that anti-Semitism is okay, that calling for the eradication of Israel is okay.

□ 2130

Anti-Semitic hate is at the root of the terrorism that we are seeing, and it must stop. People have the right to free speech. They have the right to voice their opinions, but we do not have to pay for it. If colleges and universities don't have the courage to crack down on this crap, then they should be defunded.

Frankly, I question the judgment of anybody who would vote against this. Taxpayer money should never be used to fund hate.

Madam Chair, I encourage all of my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAWLER).

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

Mr. LAWLER. Madam 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 New York will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 115 OFFERED BY MR. MASSIE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 115 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. MASSIE. 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:

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 fund any grant related to any transgenic edible vaccine.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MASSIE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

Mr. MASSIE. Madam Chair, I rise in support of my amendment, which states: "None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to fund any grant related to any transgenic edible vaccine."

Madam Chair, does the term transgenic edible vaccine sound like something out of a science fiction dystopian novel? Does the term transgenic edible vaccine sound like something out of a horror film? Well, it is not.

It is the scientific term that is used for research that we are funding with U.S. taxpayer dollars. This concept that we would inject RNA or DNA into our food supply, that we would encourage plants to grow vaccines within them, and that we would then encourage animals or people to consume these vaccines by consuming the food. Yes, we are funding this, but we should not, and there are several reasons that we should not be funding this.

One is, you can't control where the pollen goes from a plant. Many of these experiments happen outside of a greenhouse, outside of controlled facilities. In fact, we saw an incident where a transgenic edible vaccine was being grown in corn many years ago. What happened the next year when they grew soybeans on the same plot where this transgenic edible vaccine was grown?

By the way, this vaccine was for pigs. It was to keep them from getting diarrhea. It was never meant for humans. The next year they grew soybeans on that same plot of land, and some of the corn sprouted on its own and was mixed with these soybeans. Five hundred bushels of soybeans were harvested that had to be destroyed because they were commingled. This transgenic edible vaccine that was meant for pigs was commingled with soybeans that could have gone into human food consumption.

The offending researchers had to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines. However, do we know if we caught all of the instances of these escapes of this pollen? In fact, this happened not just once, but it happened again and in a different way. The pollen wafted over to a different field, and it pollinated corn in a different field. Over 150 acres of corn had to be destroyed in that instance because they

were experimenting with transgenic edible vaccines. In that case, those vaccines were meant for animals.

Here recently, however, we have been funding transgenic plant vaccines, edible plant vaccines for human research at University of California, Riverside. They are right now trying to grow spinach and lettuce with the idea that humans would then consume this at a salad bar or something.

How do you know the dosage? What does it mean to have informed consent when you don't know what is in your food? What does it mean to have informed consent when you don't know when you are being served medication for dinner?

This is such a ridiculous concept that we shouldn't even have to debate it, but here we are. We funded it through the National Institutes of Health, the USDA, and NSF.

I will close by saying this: I offered this amendment on the Agriculture appropriations bill to prevent the USDA from funding this type of research. I am offering it on this appropriations bill to prevent it being funded in this appropriations bill, as well.

This amendment passed by a voice vote on the Agriculture appropriations bill. I hope that we will see the wisdom in this amendment today and pass this also with unanimous support.

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

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

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 116 OFFERED BY MR. MASSIE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 116 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. MASSIE. 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 190, beginning on line 16, strike "by any country" and all that follows through "Maduro Moros".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MASSIE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

Mr. MASSIE. Madam Chair, I rise in support of my amendment which essentially prohibits funds from being made available to conduct or support gain-of-function research.

Section 533 of the underlying bill says that none of the funds in the bill can be used for gain-of-function research in China or Cuba or North Korea or Russia. The problem is that it doesn't prohibit this dangerous type of research anywhere else in the world.

Why should we be funding it in France or Great Britain? In fact, why should we be funding it here? I will argue later that we shouldn't, that the risks far outweigh the benefits and that we should have learned our lesson.

Madam Chair, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS).

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Iowa is recognized for 1½ minutes.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Madam Chair, I rise in support of amendment No. 116 with Mr. MASSIE to ban the funding of gain-of-function research.

For decades, scientists have been warning that gain-of-function research with potential pandemic pathogens could cause an outbreak. From 2014 to 2017, we had paused funding for gain-of-function research after a series of lab accidents and due to fear of a lab-caused pandemic.

However, Dr. Fauci and others recommended that the prohibition be removed, and unfortunately our worst fears came true. Among many others, the FBI, Department of Energy, and a majority of Americans now believe that a laboratory in Wuhan, China, that was conducting NIH-funded gain-of-function research on bat coronaviruses caused the COVID-19 pandemic. This was a wake-up call.

Last month, during a Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic hearing, Dr. Gerald Parker, former commander of the United States Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases and the current head of the Federal committee that oversees gain-of-function and biosecurity testified to Congress that gain-of-function research with potential pandemic pathogens has not contributed significantly to biodefense and that its benefits have been exaggerated. Dr. Parker also stated there are safer alternatives available.

Fortunately, last year Congress passed and enacted commonsense language in the Labor-HHS bill to prohibit gain-of-function research with pathogens in hostile foreign nations, including Russia and China. We must now expand that effort and prohibit taxpayer funding for this dangerous research on U.S. soil and other nations where oversight is lacking. Prohibiting taxpayer funding of dangerous gain-of-function research with potential pandemic pathogens is a commonsense solution to protect public health and national security.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on this amendment.

□ 2140

Mr. MASSIE. Madam Chair, I think it would be useful at this point to define gain-of-function research. I will use the written testimony of Richard Ebright, Board of Governors Professor of Chemistry and Chemical Biology at Rutgers University and laboratory director of Waksman Institute of Microbiology.

In his testimony in a Senate hearing, he said that gain-of-function research is defined as “research activities reasonably anticipated to increase a potential pandemic pathogen’s transmissibility, pathogenesis, ability to

overcome immune response, or ability to overcome a vaccine or drug.”

Why would you want to do this? Why would you want to do gain-of-function research? It is a seductive idea that you can take one of hundreds of thousands of viruses that exist in the animal kingdom outside of humans and try to predict, poke and prod on the virus, encourage it to be transmissible among humans so that you could then predict the next virus that might come into existence among humans, and then come up with a vaccine for it.

Statistically, there is no way you are going to predict what the next natural virus is going to be. What you will do, though, in the process of this research is create a cookbook, a blueprint for the next pandemic.

Part of the danger in this research lies in the fact that you are uncovering secrets that will then be published and that can be used to create a pandemic of existential proportions.

It creates new health threats, health threats through 10,000 years of evolution that may never come into existence but in 10 days of research could come into existence in a lab, threats that don’t exist in nature.

Why are we still doing this research right now? In 2014, this research was put on pause, from 2014 to 2017—wisely, I would say. The pause was suspended in 2018.

By the way, the projects that were paused did not include the projects at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, unfortunately.

When the pause was removed, this research began again in earnest, creating tremendous risk for the human race.

Why would we do this to ourselves? We shouldn’t be doing this to ourselves, and we shouldn’t be doing it with taxpayer dollars.

There is no practical application of this outside of the curiosity of a government lab. This research will not continue in private labs because it is just not profitable. We should stop it here.

Madam Chair, I urge adoption of the amendment. I think it is common sense. Let’s protect America by not funding this research.

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

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

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 117 OFFERED BY MR.

MCCORMICK

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 117 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. MCCORMICK. 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:

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

SEC. ____ The salary of Xavier Becerra, Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall be reduced to \$1.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MCCORMICK) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Madam Chair, I rise to offer my amendment No. 117 to H.R. 5894, the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024.

My amendment No. 117 reduces the salary of Xavier Becerra, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to \$1.

Secretary Becerra has chosen special interest groups over the American people and blatantly undermined congressional legislative intent with his implementation of the No Surprises Act.

The No Surprises Act, passed in 2021, was a bipartisan legislative effort to prevent unexpected medical bills from crushing Americans across the country, which over 50 percent of all Americans have experienced.

Unfortunately, the Biden administration and Secretary Becerra have not implemented the bill as Congress intended, leading to huge backlogs, unpaid claims to healthcare providers, and patients having less access to quality healthcare.

This is unacceptable, but it shouldn’t be a surprise that the Biden administration appointed a lawyer to take on healthcare challenges, resulting in dismal failure.

There have been four court cases in Texas alone to address the abysmal implementation of this law, and Secretary Becerra and the Biden administration have lost all four court cases.

Patients’ protection from surprise medical bills should not compromise their access to hospitals and the doctors they need. They shouldn’t have the worst experience of their lives to add to the worst experience of their lives.

The solution to this is simple: Align the Federal Government regulations with what Congress intended for the bill to do and make the process for resolving disputes fair for all parties.

The solution is not only the right thing but will also avoid all the negative consequences that Congress sought to prevent for patients in the first place.

I have personally discussed this with Secretary Becerra to no avail. He continues to choose profiteers rather than patients.

America’s hospitals and doctors worked hard with Congress to ensure the dispute resolution process was fair and avoided these negative consequences.

Secretary Becerra and his Federal bureaucrats have failed to honor those promises to patients and caregivers and have instead continued to ignore Congress’ legislative intent.

The reason I originally ran for Congress was because of the issue of surprise billing. My first taste in politics

was going down to the State capitol with the Medical Association of Georgia, a bipartisan group of doctors, trying to resolve this problem.

I brought the fight here to D.C. to push the Federal Government to begin prioritizing and doing the right thing for patients instead of prioritizing the profit of special interest groups.

My amendment is not about political cheap shots or agendas. It is about protecting the people from a public servant who is no longer keeping their best interests at heart.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment.

Secretary Xavier Becerra is a lifelong public servant. He is also a very dear friend, and I suspect he is a personal friend of many Members here today on both sides of the aisle.

Xavier Becerra spent 24 years in the U.S. House of Representatives, including as a senior member of the Ways and Means Committee and as a member of the House leadership, serving as assistant to the Speaker and as chairman of the House Democratic Caucus.

As Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, Xavier Becerra leads one of the most important departments in the Federal Government, including world-leading biomedical research, public health, and drug development.

Health and Human Services is responsible for mental health, substance use prevention and treatment, community health centers, LIHEAP, Head Start, childcare and development block grants, and emergency preparedness and response.

As Secretary of HHS, he is responsible for Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act's health insurance marketplace, which together provide healthcare coverage to 160 million Americans, or nearly half of our country.

During his tenure at HHS, Secretary Becerra has overseen record-breaking enrollment in health coverage under the Affordable Care Act, as more than 16 million people selected a marketplace health plan in 2023.

Secretary Becerra's accomplishments are too numerous to list here. He has served his country honorably for more than 30 years, and he deserves better than this deplorable amendment.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this vindictive amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 2150

Mr. MCCORMICK. Madam Chair, obviously I am not a lawyer. I am a doctor. With all the experience that Mr. Becerra has, you would think he would know better.

You would think that as a Member of the House, supposedly serving the American people, who has watched bipartisan bills pass with almost unanimous consent, that he would know better. You would think as a lawyer he would know how to carry on a case and win a case when it has to do with serving the people.

Clearly, he has misrepresented something that we passed as a body, something that we agreed to as a body to serve the people. That is why he should be ashamed, and that is why the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Xavier Becerra's salary should be reduced to \$1 for being derelict in his duty and failing the American people.

I ask my colleagues for their support in passing this amendment.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I oppose this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam 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 Georgia will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 118 OFFERED BY MRS. MILLER
OF ILLINOIS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 118 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. 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:

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

SEC. ____ The salary of Catherine E. Lhamon, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education, shall be reduced to \$1.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Madam Chair, I rise today in support of my amendment to cut the salary of Assistant Secretary for the Office of Civil Rights at the Department of Education to \$1.

The Assistant Secretary has continually refused to enforce current Title IX law, which puts our young girls in danger. Under current statute, the Department of Education is required to protect young women and girls from being forced to compete against biological men in athletics, but the Biden administration's Department of Edu-

cation is ignoring the law to impose their radical political agenda on our daughters by forcing them to compete against biological males.

The Assistant Secretary's office has proposed two Title IX rules that violate congressional intent for Title IX.

Title IX was created to protect girls' sports and girls' spaces, including bathrooms and locker rooms, not to promote a radical leftwing political ideology.

The Assistant Secretary for the Office of Civil Rights at the Department of Education is not following congressional intent.

Please join me in standing up for our daughters and all female athletes by supporting this amendment.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment. Proposing to eliminate the salaries of the hardworking public servants, as I have said earlier, is really petty. It is very, very petty, and it is beneath the dignity of this body. It demonstrates a lack of seriousness in the process that we are now engaged in and the road on which we should be traveling to really put together appropriations bills that meet the needs of the American people and our international obligations. This is really not how we should solve differences of opinion.

The mission of the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the Nation through vigorous enforcement of civil rights.

OCR's mission includes areas of concern that the Labor-HHS-Education Committee has prioritized, again, over the years on a bipartisan basis, including stronger enforcement to protect the rights of students with disabilities.

Currently, there is bipartisan support for continuing OCR's enforcement of civil rights laws as outlined in President Biden's and the Biden administration's U.S. National Strategy to Counter Anti-Semitism, something that we are—just the flood of anti-Semitism today, and on a bipartisan basis we are supporting OCR's enforcement of the civil rights laws to counter anti-Semitism.

At a time when so many student populations are feeling vulnerable and in need of support, it really is irresponsible, and it is reckless to take out the Department of Education's top civil rights official. Once again, it demonstrates a lack of seriousness in the process that we are engaged in here on this floor at 10 o'clock at night.

I believe again, as I said earlier, it demonstrates a lack of seriousness on behalf of my Republican colleagues in the House of Representatives.

Vote “no” on what is a vindictive amendment.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Madam Chair, I am being very serious, and this is not petty. We want to reduce her salary to what she is worth.

Title IX was specifically established to give girls and women opportunities in education and athletics, and “sex” in Title IX clearly was meant to be biologic and genetic, not sexual identity.

This is dangerous for our girls both emotionally and physically to have biological men participating in their athletics and entering their locker rooms and bathrooms.

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

Ms. DELAURO. I am opposed to the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER).

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 119 OFFERED BY MRS. MILLER
OF ILLINOIS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 119 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. 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:

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

SEC. _____. The salary of Douglas L. Parker, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health, shall be reduced to \$1.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Madam Chair, I rise in support of my amendment to cut the salary of Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health Douglas Parker to \$1.

Under Joe Biden, OSHA attempted to fire 84 million Americans if they didn’t take an experimental COVID vaccine or show their private medical documents to their employer.

Assistant Secretary Parker is an unelected bureaucrat. He does not have the power to force 84 million people to take an experimental vaccine or lose their job.

Thankfully, the Supreme Court stopped OSHA from implementing

their rule because it was illegal and unconstitutional.

It shouldn’t take the Supreme Court to stop OSHA from attempting to force an experimental vaccine on 84 million Americans.

When I questioned Assistant Secretary Parker during an Education and the Workforce Committee hearing, he refused to agree with the court decision and would not commit to never again attempting to force a vaccine mandate on the American people.

We must rein in Assistant Secretary Parker and the entire bloated bureaucracy that is targeting the American people.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 2200

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment. This is really pretty extraordinary.

What is the mission of the Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration? It is to assure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education, and assistance.

OSHA is responsible for making sure employers provide safe workplaces. This is really just consistent with an earlier amendment that the gentlewoman offered which was to eliminate all funding for OSHA. Clearly, she doesn’t have very much concern about creating a safe workplace for employees.

Since OSHA was created in 1971, the number of workplace deaths and the rate of on-the-job injuries has declined by 65 percent, with a workforce twice as large.

Why do we not want to protect workers on the job? What is wrong with that concept?

My mother worked in the garment industry, and all those years ago, she was not protected. None of the women in that sweatshop were protected. We have moved forward to protect our workers. That is what OSHA does.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on this misplaced amendment.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Madam Chair, I urge support of this amendment to hold the Biden administration accountable for their illegal and unconstitutional COVID vaccine mandate, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, there isn’t a COVID vaccine mandate. I think we have established that over and over and over again. Apparently, it just doesn’t come through.

The long and the short of it, what this amendment would do is really hurt a public servant at the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Madam Chair, I am opposed to the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER).

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 120 OFFERED BY MRS. MILLER
OF ILLINOIS

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. MAST). It is now in order to consider amendment No. 120 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. 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 made available to the World Health Organization.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of my amendment to cease all funding to the corrupt World Health Organization because they lied repeatedly about COVID’s origin and then defended communist China after the outbreak.

Last year alone, Congress approved \$434 million for the WHO, and the Biden administration has been actively working to circumvent the Senate’s constitutional authority to approve treaties that would give the WHO control over pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response.

This would be a complete surrender of our national sovereignty to an unaccountable, unelected, and corrupt international bureaucracy. It would also supercharge the WHO’s power and authority to promote leftist agendas like abortion, gender identity ideology, climate change, and more.

The nightmare scenario is the Biden administration surrendering our sovereignty to the WHO to institute global vaccine mandates.

The WHO has gone far beyond its initial purpose of being a health advisory organization and has transformed itself into a tyrannical governing body.

We must cease funding to the WHO and not give in to this power grab.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The amendment would prohibit funding to the World Health Organization.

This prohibition would remove the United States from an indispensable partner in protecting America against everyday public health concerns, as well as crises and public health emergencies.

Disease does not recognize borders. The United States is not an island. If you have an outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, you can bet that that is a plane ride away from the United States. Understand that this is the world that we function in and that we need to have partners in what we are doing to be able to control public health emergencies overseas and in the United States.

This amendment is unnecessary. It opens the door for other countries to replace us in our seat at the table. We cannot tolerate any effort to stymie American leadership on global health.

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

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, there is nothing more to do but continue to oppose this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 121 OFFERED BY MRS. MILLER OF ILLINOIS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 121 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. 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 made available to the Office of Population Affairs in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of my amendment to prohibit funding of Biden's Office of Population Affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services.

This office is used by Assistant Secretary for Health Rachel Levine to promote gender transition procedures for children and title X abortion resources with taxpayer dollars.

The Office of Population Affairs released a guide called Gender-Affirming Care and Young People to sidestep parents and provide children with information on chemical castration drugs and surgical castration procedures.

Federal tax dollars are used by the Office of Population Affairs to run a website called Find a Family Planning Clinic that links to abortion providers, including Planned Parenthood.

The Biden administration uses the Office of Population Affairs to promote the radical transgender agenda while preying on vulnerable children.

□ 2210

My amendment to the HHS appropriations bill would defund this deeply political office.

Mr. Chair, I urge everyone to support this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

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

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

This amendment would block funding to the Office of Population Affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The two most significant grant programs administered by the Office of Population Affairs are the Title X Family Planning program and the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program.

I might add that the Republican Labor-HHS bill introduced today already eliminates both of these programs.

In 2022, 2.6 million people in the United States received healthcare services through Title X health clinics, including in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and eight territories. The majority of patients live at or below the Federal poverty line.

More than a million people rely on Title X-funded providers as their sole or primary source of healthcare. This healthcare includes access to contraception, cancer screenings, sexually transmitted infections, testing, and treatment, and other preventive services.

In 2022, Title X-funded providers administered close to 500,000 cervical cancer screenings and more than 3.5 million STI and HIV tests. Let us take those healthcare opportunities away from people who use these clinics as their primary source of care.

Given the push by Republicans to ban abortion, since the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, it is more important now than it has ever been in 50 years for people to have access to birth control.

In addition, the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program supports evidence-based comprehensive sex education programs, which have been proven to reduce pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections among teens.

The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program is vital—now more than ever.

Young people need access to honest and accurate sex education programs that give them the knowledge to prevent unintended pregnancies, avoid sexually transmitted infections, and the ability to develop healthy relationships.

But again, the Labor-HHS bill introduced today eliminates funding for both Title X Family Planning and the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program. It is appalling.

The Republican majority will stop at nothing to attack women's reproductive health at all levels.

As we have seen across the States, Republicans will continue their efforts to ban abortion.

As this amendment shows, their preoccupation with women's reproductive health is not limited to abortion but extends to eliminating access to contraception and comprehensive sex education.

Mr. Chair, I will give a note about cervical cancer, if I can. Every year almost 4,000 women die from cervical cancer in this country. The ability to get people screened—and a lot happens with young women—their ability to get screened and to be diagnosed and get the treatment that they need is essential for them to survive.

Why in God's name would we deny them the opportunity for a screening and treatment in order to be able to survive? Why?

I don't understand my Republican colleagues' preoccupation with women's reproductive health. It is not limited to abortion. You would eliminate contraception, comprehensive sex education, and the ability for people to get screenings and treatment that they need in order to be able to survive.

Again, saving lives is the most important effort that we can make as Members of Congress. That is our job.

Let us oppose this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Mr. Chairman, the American taxpayer is weary of their money being squandered on programs like this.

The Office of Population Affairs is a complete waste of taxpayer dollars. Parents should be deciding what is best for their children, not the Federal Government.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER).

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

Ms. DELAURO. 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 gentlewoman from Illinois will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 122 OFFERED BY MR. MURPHY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 122 printed part B of House Report 118–272.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Chair, I rise as the designee for the gentlewoman from

West Virginia (Mrs. MILLER), and 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 finalize, implement, or enforce the proposed rule published by the Department of Health and Human Services entitled “Medicaid Program; Misclassification of Drugs, Program Administration and Program Integrity Updates Under the Medicaid Drug Rebate Program” (88 Fed. Reg. 34238 (May, 26, 2023)).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MURPHY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of amendment No. 122, which will prevent funds from being used to finalize or implement the proposed HHS Medicaid Drug Rebate Program rule.

This rule makes unnecessary changes to the MDRP that have been in place for decades.

If implemented, the proposed MDRP rule will discourage research and the development of medicines while jeopardizing Medicaid beneficiaries’ access to affordable drugs. This change would be bad for patients, bad for doctors, and bad for manufacturers.

This rule is yet another overreach by unelected bureaucrats trying to make health decisions for our constituents without any statutory authority to do so.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and stop this rule from taking effect, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

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

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

The amendment would block the Biden-Harris administration’s proposed rule that would ensure the Federal Government and States get the most bang for their buck from the Medicaid Drug Rebate Program by closing loopholes that drug manufacturers were taking advantage of—and we do know that drug manufacturers can take advantage of individuals.

By opposing this rule, Republicans just want to hand money to their drug manufacturer friends to take advantage of taxpayers’ dollars.

The proposed rule would help States more effectively operate their Medicaid pharmacy programs and approve access to necessary prescription drugs for people covered by Medicaid.

In particular, the proposed rule would help States obtain drug rebates required under the Medicaid Drug Rebate Program. The proposed rule would

enhance the Medicaid Drug Rebate Program integrity by assuring greater consistency and accuracy of drug information reporting, strengthen data collection, and efficient operation of the program.

This amendment would make it more difficult to understand manufacturers’ pricing—a big issue today is the cost of the prescription drugs, the manufacturers’ pricing. What a sop to the industry. It tells you where the majority’s priorities are—so a State is unable to increase its leverage in negotiating larger supplemental rebates for high-cost drugs.

This amendment would increase costs for the Federal Government and for the States.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MURPHY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 123 OFFERED BY MRS. MILLER-MEEKS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 123 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. 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 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct or support any firearm injury and mortality prevention research.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Iowa.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of my amendment No. 123, which seeks to ban funding from going towards funding the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s firearm injury and mortality prevention research.

President Biden requested \$35 million for this program in his fiscal year 2024 budget request, which is a \$22.5 million increase from fiscal year 2023.

□ 2220

Mr. Chair, I was the director of public health in the great State of Iowa before coming to Congress and was a practicing physician for decades. Not only have I served in public health, but I also value public health and believe that robust public health infrastructure nationwide is crucial to the health and well-being of our country.

That is why I released a request for information earlier this year on how to strengthen and reform the CDC to ensure that our Nation’s leading public

health agency is performing as it should.

Part of evaluating our public health departments is realizing when there are programs that do not add value or belong in the public health landscape.

The CDC was originally created in 1946 as the Communicable Disease Center with the mission of preventing the spread of malaria or other communicable diseases. Since then, the agency has grown into a massive bureaucracy, and it now is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with a \$9 billion budget that supports research and initiatives that are not within the communicable diseases landscape.

As we saw, there were failures of this institution in both the initial testing for COVID–19 and the response to COVID–19.

My amendment is an important first step in eliminating costly programs at the CDC and urges the CDC to get back to its main mission to help prevent a pandemic in the future.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

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

The amendment would prohibit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from conducting or supporting any firearm injury and mortality prevention research.

Firearm injury is among the five leading causes of death for people aged 1 through 44 in the United States and the leading cause of death among children and teens aged 1 through 19.

I have to repeat the last statement: Firearm injury is the leading cause of death among children and teens aged 1 through 19.

The gentlewoman said that this is not about public health. It is the leading cause of death among children and teens aged 1 through 19. This is all about public health unless we don’t believe that causes of death are a part of public health. Maybe that is true.

This amendment to prohibit the CDC from conducting research on the leading cause of death of our young people would be added to a bill that already removed the funding for this research.

This amendment is absurd.

Mr. Chair, read the bill. Collecting timely data, addressing the gaps in knowledge around this issue, and identifying effective prevention strategies are needed to keep individuals, families, schools, and communities safe from firearm injury and death and to enhance safe firearm practices.

The CDC is supporting a diverse portfolio of research projects to advance our understanding of the characteristics, risks, and protective factors of firearm violence, suicide, and unintentional injury, and the effectiveness of interventions to prevent firearm-related injuries and death—injuries and death, public health.

Many funded research projects focus specifically on youth or will have implications for youth while others are relevant for specific populations at elevated risk for firearm violence and suicide like our veterans and those who have been victims of violence.

I fought to establish this funding line in fiscal year 2020, and I will continue to fight to ensure that this funding is included.

We should be united in finding ways to save lives and end gun violence, not play partisan games with this critical research.

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

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Chair, again, let me say that the mission of the CDC should be to combat communicable diseases.

As we saw during the COVID-19 pandemic, the agency lost part of its focus and has been distracted. There are multiple agencies that collect data on gun violence and also intervention strategy and research. I think that we can refocus the CDC on its true mission so that another 1 million American lives are not lost in the next pandemic.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, let me make one point. I am opposed to this amendment, obviously, because it is an absurd amendment.

Firearm injury is the leading cause of death among children and teens aged 1 through 19. This is all about public health. Let us not turn it into a debate or a discussion on anything else.

What this says to me is there really isn't a desire or the understanding of what we try to do to save the lives of teens, adults, veterans, or anything else that falls into the litany of amendments that we have seen here tonight that would put people's lives in danger and don't use the resources we have through this Labor-HHS bill that we have used on a bipartisan basis in prior years to save lives.

This is one more example of how we believe that maybe the lives are not worth saving.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS).

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

Ms. DELAURO. 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 gentlewoman from Iowa will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 124 OFFERED BY MR. MOORE OF UTAH

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 124 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. 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:

Page 55, line 18, after the first dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$215,088,000) (increased by \$215,088,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MOORE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of my bipartisan amendment urging the Health Resources and Services Administration, or HRSA, to provide a complete accounting of unpaid and partially paid claims by the COVID-19 Uninsured Program, as well as an accounting of how funding from various pandemic-era laws have been used to pay claims generated by providers under this program since it began. The amendment also presses HRSA to provide a plan for the payment of remaining legitimate claims that were made under this program.

The COVID-19 Uninsured Program provided reimbursement for claims submitted by healthcare providers who provided testing, treatment, and vaccination services for uninsured individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the spring of 2022, HRSA closed the program and provided little notice or time to submit claims for services already provided under that program.

I have heard from providers in my home State of Utah who are owed funds by the administration for services performed prior to the program's closure. Providers that submitted legitimate claims should be compensated for these medical services.

I also believe that Congress must continue to provide robust oversight on this program and other pandemic-era laws to ensure funds were used appropriately and in line with congressional intent.

For example, a July 2023 HHS OIG report estimated that nearly 19 percent of the uninsured program payments made on behalf of 3.7 million patients were improper.

A full accounting of HHS' use of pandemic funding will ensure Congress has the tools and information necessary to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

I have been supportive of efforts to address improper payments by Federal agencies more broadly and to ensure that our government operates efficiently and effectively. Understanding how these dollars have been utilized by the Department would build on these efforts.

The administration has continued to provide funding for other testing, treatment, and vaccination initiatives following the program's closure. In addition, the Fiscal Responsibility Act rescinded billions in funding for the provider relief fund because that

money sat unused for well over a year following HRSA's closure of the uninsured program. PRF funds had been intended, in part, to reimburse providers for services provided to uninsured patients.

I strongly encourage the administration and HSRA to work with Congress and provide an accounting of the funding for the uninsured program. The American people deserve accountability and cooperation from the executive branch.

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

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

The amendment was agreed to.

The Chair understands that amendment No. 125 will not be offered.

□ 2230

AMENDMENT NO. 126 OFFERED BY MR. MURPHY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 126 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. MURPHY. 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 implement, enforce, or otherwise give effect to the proposed rule issued by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services titled "Medicare and Medicaid Programs: Minimum Staffing Standards for Long-Term Care Facilities and Medicaid Institutional Payment Transparency Reporting" (88 Fed. Reg. 61352 (September 6, 2023)).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MURPHY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Chair, I rise this evening to try to correct a grave error made by CMS.

My amendment would prohibit funds from being used to finalize, implement, or enforce CMS's proposed nursing home staffing mandate rule.

It is insane.

The proposed rule would require nursing homes to provide 24/7 onsite registered nurse coverage and a minimum of 0.55 RN and 2.45 nurse aide hours per resident day.

As CMS noted in the proposed rule, the proposed NA and RN requirements exceed those in nearly all States, and if finalized, these new floors would increase staffing in more than 75 percent of nursing homes nationwide.

In other words, more than three-quarters of nursing homes in America today would not be compliant if the proposal went into effect.

To comply with the hours per resident day requirement, urban facilities would be required to hire an additional

10,495 RNs and 61,348 NAs, while rural facilities would be required to hire an additional 2,100 RNs, 15,000 NAs.

Likewise, to comply with the 24/7 RN requirement, an additional 1,900 RNs would be needed in urban areas, 1,300 in rural areas.

Collectively, the nationwide compliance cost for nursing homes is estimated to be \$40 billion over the next 10 years. Those are CMS's own estimates.

Additionally, the rule requires States to collect and report on compensation for workers as a percentage of Medicaid payments for those working in nursing homes and intermediate care facilities, but for providers alone, implementation costs would be \$9 million per year for 4 years, or \$36 million over 4 years, and once the rule goes into effect in year 5, an additional \$18 million per year for 6 years, totaling \$144 million over the decade.

Mr. Chairman, I recognize the need to ensure that patients receive high-quality healthcare service. I have been doing it for 35 years. However, this rule as proposed would exacerbate existing workforce constraints throughout the Nation, particularly in rural communities, increase burdensome reporting requirements, and substantially impact the finances of nursing homes, ultimately limiting seniors' access to critical healthcare services.

It is an unfunded mandate on under-resourced facilities, and it is absolutely out of touch with reality.

In a study released just last week, more than 60 percent of nursing students today in nursing school don't even plan to treat patients after graduation.

We have a massive shortage now. We are not going to have ones coming in the future. How in the hell are we going to implement this going forward? Where are the nurses going to come from?

The ranking member of Connecticut said earlier today during general debate that we have a shortage of nurses today. I absolutely agree. This is not a partisan issue.

I would encourage CMS to work with Congress on reforms needed to ensure seniors receive the highest quality care. I encourage Members to vote "yes" on this amendment.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I rise in strong opposition to the amendment. The amendment would block the Department of Health and Human Services from requiring minimum staffing levels at long-term care facilities.

Understaffing in nursing homes is in a full-blown crisis.

To address the staffing crisis, the proposed rule would require a minimum number of certified nursing assistants, who provide the bulk of per-

sonalized care for our loved ones, as well as registered nurses.

Staffing minimums will ensure that high-quality care and patient safety are prioritized, as decades of research demonstrate a clear association between higher staffing levels and a higher quality of care.

In contrast, low staffing levels have been linked to increased cases of abuse and the overuse of antipsychotics and psychotropic drugs.

In addition, minimum staffing levels are needed to support a long-term care workforce that has relied for too long on the sacrifice of underpaid caregivers who often earn below 200 percent of the poverty level.

This workforce is disproportionately comprised of women, particularly women of color, whose hard work, dedication, and skill has never been properly valued.

Underpaid long-term care workers face physical and emotional burnout, which also leads to high turnover rates which further exacerbates staffing shortages.

Furthermore, let us be clear: The long-term care industry is making record profits in Medicare. Billions of taxpayer dollars are being diverted from patient care to profits. Private equity firms are buying nursing homes because of their potential for profit.

If the majority was serious about supporting the nursing workforce, they would have provided increased investments in the Nursing Workforce Development program at the Health Resources Services Administration, which helps to develop the pipeline of nurses.

Instead, the majority has cut nearly \$20 million from this program and has the audacity to then include report language that says that the committee remains concerned over workforce shortages among healthcare professionals, including the nursing workforce.

Concerned would be great without cutting \$20 million from the program.

I strongly support the Biden administration's proposed rule to strengthen minimum staffing levels at our long-term care facilities.

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

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Chair, even the ranking member said earlier today—let's roll back the film—there is a nursing shortage. There is a nursing shortage in our country.

While the rule may be well-intentioned and it makes you feel good, the nurses aren't there. They can't just come out of the middle of nowhere. They just can't. I would love for there to be more nurses. We could open up more beds at our hospitals and take care of more patients.

They are not there. They are not there, and this is where the Democrats are just so out of touch. I get that it makes them feel great. I am happy, but when reality strikes, it is hard. We don't have the nurses. Then you man-

date these nursing homes to have nurses that they don't have, so guess what? They close.

Now, where are your parents going to stay? Where are your grandparents going to stay? Nowhere. It is absolutely out of mind that this is being proposed because CMS is absolutely out of touch with reality for the day.

Mr. Chairman, I ask my colleagues to vote for this amendment. It actually makes sense where the rule does not, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I oppose this amendment, and I would just say to the gentleman that if you really cared about the nursing shortage—and we have a serious nursing shortage—there wouldn't be this \$20 million cut that is there. There wouldn't be less pay for nurses. There wouldn't be the cutting of the programs that recruit and train nurses.

We would have a program that dealt with the cancellation of student debt for nurses. We would make investment in nurses so they would want to be on the job, but no. You cut every piece that, in fact, assists nurses in being recruited, trained, get better wages, get better hours, get better opportunity to get their training and get indemnity on their student debt in that regard.

No. This is a profit motive. This is a profit motive for nursing homes and the industry that protects them. There are private equity firms that are buying the nursing homes because of their potential for profit.

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

□ 2240

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MURPHY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 127 OFFERED BY MR. OGLES

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 127 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. OGLES. 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 864, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. OGLES) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. OGLES. Mr. Chair, my amendment prohibits the funds appropriated by this act from being used to enforce any COVID-19 mask mandates.

I have been proud to introduce this amendment in previous appropriations

bills where they passed on a voice vote, and I am happy to do so here again.

Policies involving mandatory mask implementation are about control, not about science. Tom Jefferson, not to be confused with Thomas Jefferson, is a leading epidemiologist who coauthored what The New York Times opinion section called—and again this is The New York Times—the “most rigorous and comprehensive analysis of scientific studies conducted on the efficacy of masks for reducing the spread of respiratory illnesses—including COVID-19,” and found there was no evidence that masks made any difference. It found that wearing masks in public places “probably makes little or no difference” in the number of infections.

It should be noted that mask mandates included any and all masks. This study looked at the gold standard of masks, the N-95, and even they didn't make a difference. When you paired masks with preventative measures, there was no difference.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to this amendment. This amendment prohibits the use of funds to enforce any COVID-19 mask mandate. I don't know how many times I have said it here this evening, there is currently no Federal mask requirement in place.

What is it that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle don't understand? No Federal mask requirement in place. Is that not the Queen's English? It is there.

I will just say that masks have been used in medical settings to prevent respiratory infections for decades. Healthcare professionals wear masks for a simple reason: They work.

Let me repeat one more time: There currently is no Federal mask requirement in place, so let's not continue to waste more time when we need to proceed with getting appropriations bills funded.

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

Mr. OGLES. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate my colleague's comments. I would agree to her point that there currently is no mask mandate and the fact that the COVID-19 emergency is over. However, what this does is prevent future administrations, Republican or Democrat, from taking and impinging on the freedom and liberty of individuals.

Going back to Dr. Jefferson and his study that was quoted by the New York Times, it noted that the so-called science that infringed on the liberty by forcing masks was based off of non-scientific, nonrandomized trials, that the data was flawed.

We allowed ourselves and our freedoms and our liberties to be infringed.

Our Founding Fathers warned us that it is in times of crisis that the Constitution and the rule of law are most in jeopardy. I lost friends to COVID. I am not saying that COVID wasn't serious, but what I am saying is this does not give the government the right to infringe on your liberty. You have a choice. It is up to you to make it.

Mr. Chairman, I urge adoption of my amendment. I thank my colleagues, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 128 OFFERED BY MR. OGLES

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 128 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. OGLES. 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 made available by this Act may be made available to carry out the provisions of the guidance “Gender Identity Non-Discrimination and Inclusion Policy for Employees and Applicants”, signed by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Xavier Becerra, on October 11, 2023.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. OGLES) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. OGLES. Mr. Chairman, I rise to offer an amendment that prohibits funds for the enforcement of the recommendation, the guidance regarding mandated use of preferred pronouns.

On October 11, the Secretary of HHS issued guidance that would, among other things, compel employees to call other people by their so-called preferred pronouns.

I think I speak for most Americans when I say that the concept of choosing your own pronouns, which is based on biological sex, just doesn't make sense.

That is not what this amendment is about. This amendment is about a clear and present danger to the principle of free speech. Mr. Chairman, you have a right to be you. I have a right to be me. However, your choices should not infringe on my rights.

Not only does the First Amendment protect against censorship, it also has been long understood to protect against compelled speech. Perhaps one of the most egregious forms of infringement and violation of the First Amendment is compelled speech, and I rise to stand against said egregious guidance in trying to get Federal employees to buy into this nonsense.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment. This amendment would block implementation of guidance issued by Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra in October to apply to all employees and applicants of HHS agencies.

The guidance simply says that HHS is a workplace that does not allow for discrimination against employees based on gender, including gender identity. It is the policy of the Federal Government to treat all of its applicants and employees with dignity and respect and to provide a workplace that is free from discrimination and intolerance. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation.

The HHS guidance issued in October follows guidance issued by the Office of Personnel Management, OPM, in March of this year.

The Federal Government needs to set an example. We have a responsibility to ensure that all employees are able to work in a safe environment free from discrimination, from intolerance, from bullying, all of those things, and I would add that all Federal employees should be guaranteed a respectful environment. This is basic human decency.

We cannot—and we should not—stand for discrimination in any form, and this amendment would seek to promote discrimination. Please, I strongly urge my colleagues to vote “no” on this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OGLES. Mr. Chairman, guidance. I think Ronald Reagan—and I will paraphrase—said the scariest phrase in the American language is, “I am from the government and I am here to help.” The last thing I want is more guidance from the Federal Government.

Mr. Chairman, you can bark like a dog, but I am not going to call you Fido. I am going to call you Mr. Chairman. That is what this is about. This is about infringement of speech.

This is about the Federal Government trying to compel employees to buy into the fantasies of other employees, and that is not the role of government. Bark like a dog if you want, but you are still Mr. Chairman.

Writing for the majority in the West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette, Justice Robert Jackson affirmed this basic idea. He wrote, “No official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein.”

Forcing employees to call people by their preferred pronouns compels those employees to affirm that it is possible for a person to change his or her gender, to buy into this fantasy even if it

does contradict science and/or their faith.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, again, basic human decency. Let's embrace people wherever they are, whoever they are. Let's not allow for a workplace, particularly at the Federal level, that allows discrimination, intolerance, bullying or making people feel they are less than a human being, less than an individual who deserves love and respect. That has to be starting from the top at the Federal level. We need to set an example.

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

□ 2250

Mr. OGLES. Mr. Chairman, people have a right to practice their religion fully. They are not told to confine their faith to an hour on Sunday mornings.

In fact, most major religions in the United States hold as a matter of doctrine that a person cannot change his or her gender.

I go back to George Washington before the Constitutional Convention in 1789 pointedly attending a Catholic mass. He reached out to the Jewish community and proclaimed religious freedom, the choices of blessings, that unwavering commitment to religious liberty, to freedom, is what we should be honoring.

Our word as a Member of Congress should mean something. If we will not stand up for the Constitution, for your right to freedom of speech, for the rights of Americans, we have no business being here.

Compelling speech, Mr. Chairman, is an infringement of the most egregious nature. It must not be tolerated.

This idea of not having a hostile workplace goes both ways, Mr. Chairman. Again, bark like a dog if you want to. You are still Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chair, I urge adoption of my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 129 OFFERED BY MR. PERRY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 129 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. PERRY. 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 finalize, implement, or enforce the proposed rule entitled "Lowering Miners' Exposure to Respirable Crystalline Silica and Improving Respiratory Protection" published by the Mine Safety and Health Administration on July 13, 2023 (88 Fed. Reg. 44852).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Chairman, this amendment prohibits the use of funds for the Mine Safety and Health Administration to finalize, implement, or enforce its proposed silica rule.

The Mine Safety and Health Administration's proposed silica rule is overly broad and fails to account for the differences among facilities that fall within MSHA's jurisdiction. It is the old one size does all, fits all, whether you like it or not.

While this silica rule may make sense for certain types of mines, the across-the-board application of this proposed rule threatens to impose significant regulatory burdens on an industry that is vital to our Nation's economic health.

Companies throughout the industry have worked proactively to address these issues through various measures that ensure employee safety while limiting the cost to producers. Unfortunately, the one-size-fits-all approach taken by MSHA fails to include an applicability threshold, which would ensure it only applies where it is necessary to improve safety. It fails to ensure that the medical surveillance provisions are employed on a risk-based basis.

These drafting failures by MSHA ensure maximum regulatory burdens while minimizing the safety impact of the rule, something one would expect from an administration that is hell-bent on ending mining in America.

Let's leave no doubt among anybody who is listening or viewing: That is exactly what the administration wants to do.

We call them rare earth minerals. Mr. Chairman, they are not rare. They are from the earth, but they are not rare. We are just not allowed to go get them in America. We have to import them from China or let China use slave labor in the Congo to bring them to the United States of America because we won't get them ourselves. We are then bound by China.

Most concerning, MSHA's reported economic analysis falsely claims that it will not have a significant economic impact—as usual, the normal lies from the Federal Government.

The cost estimate so vastly understates or underestimates the cost to operators that it calls into question the abilities and motives of those doing MSHA's economic analysis.

According to the National Sandstone and Gravel Association, MSHA's estimates of exposure control costs in particular are vastly inaccurate. Significantly, one member company's 2023 budget for exposure controls is approximately equal to the MSHA annual estimate for all metal/nonmetal operators. Based on communications with 13

member companies, costs for exposure controls will vary widely but on average are \$920,000 annually, with a median of \$225,000.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

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

The Department of Labor first started working to prevent silica-related diseases in the 1930s. The Secretary of Labor, Frances Perkins, the first woman Secretary of Labor in the United States, launched a major campaign to stop silicosis deaths in this country.

In 2016, the Department issued a long-needed standard to protect workers against deadly silica dust, which causes silicosis and leads to a very painful death. Silica dust causes silicosis and lung cancer.

Unfortunately, the exposures, deaths, and diseases continue, which is why the Mine Safety and Health Administration proposed new rules to strengthen miners' protection from silica.

Once again, this is about workers' lives, but it would appear that: Who cares? The miners are expendable.

The new rule lowers exposure limits from breathable crystalline silica in coal, metal, and nonmetal mines. In addition, the rule would provide the same medical surveillance protection that coal miners receive to all miners in metal and nonmetal mines.

Unfortunately, this amendment would halt our country's steady progress in combating silicosis and other fatal health conditions by blocking the Department of Labor's efforts to save miners' lives—again, a theme throughout the amendments that we have heard on this floor tonight. All put at risk the lives of men, women, and children in this country. Hard to believe that my colleagues would not be interested in saving lives rather than making these lives expendable.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 2300

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Chairman, I talked to you about the true cost of the rule. Given the true cost of the proposed rule, it will put mines out of business, which is really the intent of this rule-making by the MSHA.

The absurdity of this cost estimate necessitates that MSHA stop its rule-making process until it gets it right. This amendment would do this and prevent MSHA's assault on American mining.

The gentlewoman, my colleague, says it is about workers' lives. It is also about their livelihoods, which are going to be taken from them.

People in America have the right to make a choice. They have a right to

make a choice, and when faced with the facts, the fact is that this rule-making underestimates the cost vastly and is intended to put mines out of business—put mines out of business. We don't mine much coal in America anymore.

I come from Pennsylvania. It used to be a great coal mining State, but not only is that happening, the opposition—my friends on the other side of the aisle—is demanding everybody electrify their lives, electric vehicles only. That is what is coming. They are shutting down copper mines in the United States of America.

When was the last time a new mine opened up? They are not going to allow it, Mr. Chairman. They are not going to allow it, which is why this amendment is necessary.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I continue to oppose this amendment. I think one of the pieces of information I just found out is that miners will die a lot younger from silicosis.

I have to think about the logic that my colleague mentioned, that if we put this rule into effect that the mines will close, but having dead miners will somehow keep the mines open? The miners are not there. It would just seem to me that it is a cost-benefit analysis here.

Let's put the rule into place, let's save miners, and let's let the mine thrive, instead of no rule, no miners, closed mines. There's no logic.

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

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Chairman, my friend from the other side would like you to believe that mining companies want to kill all their employees. I assure you they do not. I also assure you that we won't go to a position where there will be no regulations. We will have appropriate regulations with the appropriate costs assigned to them. That is why this amendment is necessary. That is why it is needed.

I urge Members to vote in favor of this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 130 OFFERED BY MR. PERRY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 130 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

Mr. PERRY. 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 implement, administer, or enforce the final rule entitled "Representation-Case Procedures" published by the National Labor Relations Board in

the Federal Register on August 25, 2023 (88 Fed Reg. 58076).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Chairman, this amendment prohibits the use of funds for the National Labor Relations Board to implement, administer, or enforce its representation case procedures rule, which imposes ambush elections for unionization.

This rule imposes ambush elections, which significantly shorten the times between the filing of a petition for a union election and the election itself.

This limits the ability of the employer to spread the truth about what unionization truly means and prevents employees from going into the election with enough time to truly consider their vote.

This rule was attempted by the NLRB in 2014 under the Obama administration, which was litigated for years before being remedied by the Trump administration in 2019.

This rule seeks to return to the 2014 election schedule along with other concerning provisions. Among the concerning provisions that would return is a requirement that within 2 days of the issuance of a direction of election, employers provide personal contact information of prospective voters to the unions.

This requirement that employers provide employee information to the union subjects the employees and their families to intimidation, coercion, and threats. What if the employees don't want their information given out? Well, too bad. The unions are going to get it. They will be visiting your home.

These provisions were also included in the PRO Act, a bill that failed legislatively when Democrats had the White House and control of both Chambers, and like the Obama administration, this administration seeks an end around, to end around the legislative branch and impose an agenda too unpopular to become law. They want to just do it by executive fiat. We don't have a king in this country. That is why we have a legislature.

More fundamentally, this is yet another example and a disturbing trend of the NLRB—the activist, the left-wing, radical activist NLRB—trying to remove the rights of employees to determine their own fate by rigging the game in favor of leftist Democrat special interests.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

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

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

This amendment is yet another effort by the House Republican majority to

curtail the rights of workers, many of whom are living paycheck-to-paycheck in order to enrich the big businesses and corporations that they serve.

The amendment blocks the National Labor Relations Board's new election rules, which will reduce unnecessary delays in the union election process. This allows employees to realize their free choice of representation more quickly, and if a majority supports the union, get parties to the bargaining table, and it does not subject employees to intimidation by employers.

The previous board, which answered to their allies at big corporations, drafted election rules in 2019 that were struck down by the D.C. circuit. So those unlawful rules were already struck down under the current board.

This amendment would prevent the board from finishing the process of restoring the prior rules that have already been held up by the Federal courts.

A point to be made: It is the unions who created the middle class in this country. It is the unions that have provided a work week, a safe workplace, increased wages, and I might add that unions benefit nonunion workers, as well. It has been demonstrated in the auto industry in terms of salary.

This is just another attempt to deny people the ability to form a union, to have collective bargaining rights, and to be able to determine what kind of representation they need and that they want in the workplace. It is about getting to the bargaining table and making sure that workers' rights are respected and honored in this country.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Chairman, as I said, the ambush election simply shortens the time between the filing of a petition for a union election and the election itself.

Nobody on this side of the aisle has any issue or problem with collective bargaining or the ability to unionize, but unfortunately, my friends on the other side of the aisle just want to move more quickly. I would characterize it this way: You have to vote for it to find out what is in it. We are used to that from my friends on the other side.

We want people to understand and have the time to understand and to know what the election is about. There is no reason to rush into it. There is no reason.

What is the reason to rush into it? Learn the facts, and then decide what is best for yourself. The people should decide, not the union bosses, and certainly not this place jamming it down their throat.

Unions are associated with creating the middle class, and they have done a great job at doing that. Unfortunately, in some cases, the NLRB has outlived its usefulness, and this is one of them. This is one of them. People have every right in the United States of America

to unionize. They don't have to do it in 2 days, though, and that is what my friends on the other side of the aisle wish they could force and impose upon us. We are Americans. We can figure it out.

We are Americans. We can figure it out. We are not dummies. We don't need to vote for it to find out what is in it.

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

□ 2310

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I think it was the National Labor Relations Act, and I think it may have been Franklin Roosevelt who dealt with the National Labor Relations Board.

Do you know how many union elections—I will tell you about one in the city of New Haven. The graduate students at Yale University, who I worked with for several years, were shot down by the NLRB year after year after year, maybe for 6 or 7 years, until finally last year, they were able to be able to form the union. Now the issue is how are they going to be able to deal with the first contract and bargaining.

It has been a slow walk to get unions recognized and give people the opportunity to be represented by a labor union. It only takes grit and tenacity to get through it in order to be able to get the opportunity to be represented by a union.

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

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Chair, maybe, just maybe, I don't know—this might be a foreign concept to my friends on the other side of the aisle, but maybe employees are pretty darn happy with the work environment they are in. If they are not, they have a choice to go somewhere else and be treated better. Maybe the market is working, and maybe that is why unionization is at one of the lowest levels in history.

But because they want those union dues—let's get right down to it. Because my friends on the other side of the aisle want those union dues so they can funnel them into campaigns for elections, they are going to try and force these elections, these ambush elections, on our employers to increase union participation where it is not needed, it is not wanted, and it is not helping anything.

Mr. Chair, it is an easy vote to vote "yes" for this, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 131 OFFERED BY MR. PERRY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 131 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

Mr. PERRY. 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 implement or enforce the decision entitled "Cemex Construction Materials Pacific, LLC" issued by the National Labor Relations Board on August 25, 2023 (372 NLRB No. 130).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Chair, this amendment prohibits the use of funds for the National Labor Relations Board to implement or enforce the Cemex decision, which imposes a backdoor card-check scheme. This ruling threatens to take away secret ballot elections for unionization, including requiring an employer to recognize a union if the NLRB alleges unfair labor practices in the lead-up to the election.

Just think about that, because I am sure there are a bunch of antiunion people working at the NLRB. Card check allows for a union to be certified once a certain number of employees sign cards in favor of petitioning for a union election.

Rarely do unions garner as much support in secret ballot elections as they do with signature cards. Part of the difference in support is that the employers hear competing arguments about the merits of unionization. More concerning, the signature card process exposes workers to mob-like tactics to pressure employees into signing unionization cards.

During an organization drive at the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee, employees alleged that the UAW used misrepresentation, coercion, threats, and promises to get card signatures. Say it isn't so. It never happens, of course not, because there is no money involved.

Secret ballots insulate employees from these despicable tactics and allow them to express their true desire regarding the union question without concerns for the safety of themselves and their families.

Fundamentally, we all understand the importance of secret ballots and protecting elections from coercion, threats, and corruption. That is why we hold secret ballot elections for public office. For whatever reason, the minority feels it is important to exempt their special interests in the unions from this fundamental truth to rig the game in their favor to make up for plummeting unionization rates around the country.

Moreover, this move by the NLRB is a usurpation of legislative power under both the Obama administration and the Biden administration. Democrats have attempted and failed to pursue card check legislatively because they can't win it.

Rejected by the elected representatives, the unions and their lackeys on the NLRB are attempting to pursue this by executive fiat. Again, we don't have a king in this country.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I was surprised. The gentleman earlier said he was for unions and collective bargaining, and all of a sudden we are talking about union lackeys.

The Cemex decision blocked by this amendment has already been implemented and is now the legal framework that determines when and why employers may be required to recognize and bargain with unions.

Cemex preserves the employer's discretion to voluntarily recognize unions based on a demonstration of majority support. Many employers are doing so, but employers are always free instead to timely request an election to test a union's support.

The NLRB is already conducting these elections, and parties are seeking remedies where there is election interference.

Blocking enforcement of the rule would create legal uncertainty for employees, employers, and unions. Since the board decided Cemex, employers—this is not just workers—but employers have filed almost 100 petitions for such elections. This amendment would put many of those employer-filed petitions in limbo.

The amendment would also block the board's current standard for when an employer's illegal conduct prevents a fair election and necessitates a bargaining order.

Employees would lose clear protections for their right to have a free and fair choice on union representation.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Chair, allowing for secret ballot union elections free of coercion, intimidation, and threats should be a pretty easy concept to support, regardless of your party or union status.

Now, my good friend from the other side says blocking enforcement will equal uncertainty. No, it will not equal uncertainty. We will keep going just like we are going right now. Unions are sometimes being elected in businesses and sometimes are not. That is what is occurring right now.

What won't be happening is that there won't be the coercion and the intimidation and the showing up at the home and the showing up when you pull into the place of business demanding that you fill out the card because they know who you are and they just demand you do it by card as opposed to secret ballot.

Americans understand secret ballot, because it preserves the anonymity and

saves them from the coercive tactics that we saw in the unions back in the 1970s. I remember it. I remember watching it on TV, the murders and the coercion. I watched it and so did she.

There is no reason that we can't use a secret ballot. It has worked for this long. It continues to work well, and that is what we should stick with.

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

□ 2320

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I oppose this amendment.

I think one has to try to take a look at the labor history in our country in a very serious way to understand that the birthing of the unions, the struggle for workers' rights, and the violence against workers who have tried to form unions in this country. It has been not an acceptance of the collective bargaining rights of workers in this Nation.

Workers have sacrificed. Some sacrificed their lives to get the creation of a union in this Nation.

What are we talking about?

The delays and the delays and the delays to recognize workers' rights; to study labor history in this Nation and what a difficult time it has been for workers to be able to be represented by a union of their choice and not have to fight over and over and over again for their rights.

It can't be that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle don't understand the labor history and what has happened, and the forces that have tried to keep labor unions from forming.

I think we have a point of agreement. Labor unions created the middle class of this Nation. Thank God, once again, they are on the rise. They are winning elections against some of the major corporations in this Nation who have tried to trodden down on them for many, many years.

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

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Chair, the chairwoman talks about the violence against workers from trying to form unions. Of course, we know the labor history, but this isn't the 1800s. It is not 1910. It is not the Pinkertons and the Vanderbilts and the Carnegies. It is 2023.

Mr. Chairman, for goodness' sake, do all the States that have right-to-work laws—are all those people so miserable that they are leaving those States for States that force almost unionization unilaterally?

No, it is the other way around. Oh, by the way, if you know labor law, you know that labor unions are actually allowed to break the law with impunity. That is the reality. That is the truth. Read the law. They are allowed to do it.

There is no reason that we can't have a secret ballot to unionize.

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

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

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 132 OFFERED BY MR. PFLUGER

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 132 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. PFLUGER. 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 finalize, implement, enforce, or otherwise give effect to—

(1) the policies included in the informational bulletin issued by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services entitled "Health Care-Related Taxes and Hold Harmless Arrangements Involving the Redistribution of Medicaid Payments" (February 17, 2023); or

(2) any limit on expenditures with respect to State-directed payments as proposed in the preamble to the proposed rule, issued by the Department of Health and Human Services entitled "Medicaid Program; Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Managed Care Access, Finance, and Quality" (88 Fed. Reg. 28092 (May 3, 2023)) insofar as such rule makes changes to paragraphs (G) and (H) of section 438.6(c)(2)(ii) of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PFLUGER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Chair, thank you for joining me today as I bring forth a matter of great concern and shed light on recently proposed regulatory changes that will severely impact Medicaid programs across the country, including Texas, and have profound consequences on the 90 million Americans who rely on Medicaid to access healthcare.

This year, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS, introduced materials that challenge the statutory language governing States' longstanding methods to fund the non-Federal share of the Medicaid payments.

Two documents, in particular, have raised significant concerns: the information bulletin on healthcare-related taxes and hold-harmless arrangements and specific provisions of CMS's proposed rule titled "Medicaid and CHIP Managed Care Access, Finance, and Quality."

The amendment I am proposing to the fiscal year 2024 Labor, Health, and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill will protect the safety net in Texas and many other States and ensure that Medicaid beneficiaries continue to receive the essential care by prohibiting Federal funds from being used to finalize, implement, and enforce harmful policies that will se-

verely limit States' ability to draw down critical Federal Medicaid payments.

For the most part, I applaud CMS for pushing forward with a comprehensive regulation to overhaul the structure of Medicaid-managed care programs.

I acknowledge the potential positive impact of certain provisions that could enhance access to coverage and care, if implemented. However, there are legitimate concerns that specific policies within this framework will compromise States' access to vital financial resources, undermining the intended improvements.

Firstly, CMS's recently proposed changes directly contradict the understanding that Texas and other States have relied on for years to operate their Medicaid programs.

As Judge Kernodle recently stated in his ruling enjoining CMS from using their unsupported interpretation: "CMS may not rewrite clear statutory terms to suit its own sense of how the statute should operate."

Secondly, the proposed rule expands CMS's authority over State-directed payments by granting the agency the power to withhold approval or retroactively deny already approved State directed payments if it believes they are financed with impermissible non-Federal dollars.

This newfound discretion may introduce uncertainties into States' Medicaid financing structures, potentially hindering their ability to implement and maintain State-directed payments that contribute to the welfare of Medicaid beneficiaries.

To sum it up, these proposed policies are an overreach and the latest efforts in a series of Federal actions seeking to erode States' flexibility, increase oversight, and curtail arrangements that help hospitals draw down Federal funds and provide much-needed access to care for not only Texas patients but patients in many other States.

If enacted, policies of this kind would accelerate hospital closures, limit access to care for low-income Americans, and leave States with a more significant financial Medicaid burden.

Mr. Chair, I urge each of my colleagues to support this amendment and recognize the gravity of this situation. My amendment aims to safeguard consistent, predictable, and adequate funding, ensuring access to care for all Americans, especially those in vulnerable situations.

Your support is crucial in protecting the stability of our hospitals and ensuring that Medicaid beneficiaries continue to receive the care that they deserve.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

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

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

This amendment would prevent millions of Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries from accessing critically necessary care.

The Biden-Harris administration's proposed rule seeks to strengthen access to coverage for children and adults covered by Medicaid and CHIP. To access the healthcare providers and services they not only need but that they are entitled to.

The proposed rule would set a national standard for maximum wait times for routine medical appointments for primary care and obstetrics/gynecology. An appointment would need to be provided within 15 days, and for outpatient behavioral health services, 10 days.

□ 2330

The proposed rule would require greater transparency on provider rates. The rule would require rate transparency to, once again, ensure an adequate network of providers. The proposed rule would require home care agencies to allocate at least 80 percent of the Medicaid payment to direct care workers' compensation.

Once again, this Republican amendment would hurt our economy's children, seniors, people with disabilities, and the most vulnerable.

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

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Chair, I appreciate my colleague from Connecticut, and I think we probably have the same aim, which is to have care and access to that care.

For States like Texas that chose not to expand Medicaid, this rule is particularly damaging. Again, I can't stress enough how the risk of the overreach of the Federal Government will hurt those who want to access care.

The proposed rule expands the authority of our State directed payments and has the ability to withhold the approval or retroactively deny already approved State directed payments. In reality, the access to care really is at stake.

I agree. We are both probably talking about a similar level of access. This rule will negatively impact that.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I oppose this amendment.

I will make a suggestion to the gentleman that Texas ought to expand Medicaid.

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. PFLUGER).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 133 OFFERED BY MR.
ROSENDALE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 133 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

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 appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be made available to conduct or support any gain-of-function research involving a potential pandemic pathogen by Rocky Mountain Laboratories.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, 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. Chairman, my amendment No. 133 would prohibit funds made available by this act from conducting or supporting any gain-of-function research involving a potential pandemic pathogen by the Rocky Mountain Laboratories.

We have heard a lot of conversations and debate about gain-of-function research as we went through the pandemic, and we are going to hear a little bit more about it this evening.

I am pleased that the base text of this legislation has a provision that prevents dangerous gain-of-function research in any country determined to be a foreign adversary. However, gain-of-function research can potentially be dangerous no matter where the research is conducted.

My amendment would ensure that this dangerous research does not take place at the laboratory located in Hamilton, Montana.

Evidence points out that the COVID-19 pandemic was likely caused by gain-of-function research that took place at the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

During his tenure as the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Anthony Fauci expanded Rocky Mountain Laboratories to include a biosafety level 4 laboratory for research and experiments on deadly pathogens with pandemic potential.

The laboratory spent millions to infect bats with a coronavirus obtained directly from the Wuhan lab 1 year before COVID. Specifically, under Dr. Fauci's tenure, Rocky Mountain Laboratories infected Egyptian fruit bats with coronavirus obtained from China's Wuhan Institute of Virology.

Gain-of-function research is a broad area of scientific inquiry where an organism gains a new property or an existing property is altered. Many experts warn these practices could lead to widespread community infections and death, which is exactly what we saw during the 2020 pandemic.

Taxpayers in Montana and across the Nation should not be funding unnecessarily dangerous animal research that can spark another pandemic.

My amendment would undo some of the damage done by Anthony Fauci by defunding NIH research programs he

supported that put public health and national security at risk.

Mr. Chair, I appreciate everyone supporting this amendment, and 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 134 OFFERED BY MR.
ROSENDALE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 134 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

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. ____ The salary of Vincent Munster, Chief, Virus Ecology Section, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, shall be reduced to \$1.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, 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. Chairman, my amendment No. 134 reduces the salary of Vincent Munster, chief of the Virus Ecology Section of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, to \$1.

This is going to be on the same subject matter and, actually, in the same location, unfortunately. Specifically, he was the lead researcher on the 2018 project to infect Egyptian fruit bats with a coronavirus obtained from China's Wuhan Institute of Virology. He also actively collaborates on projects with the disgraced EcoHealth Alliance.

I am pleased that the base text of this legislation prohibits any funds from going toward the EcoHealth Alliance. EcoHealth was first investigated for its involvement in mismanaging NIH-funded gain-of-function research. The Department of Health and Human Services inspector general confirmed that EcoHealth mismanaged the grant to the Wuhan laboratory, didn't properly report the gain-of-function experiments, and misspent taxpayer funds.

Furthermore, Munster is trying to help EcoHealth establish a new bat lab in the United States with bats shipped from Asia. Specifically, on April 1, 2020, Munster wrote a letter of support for the Colorado State University bat research center.

Munster showed a major lack of judgment in endorsing an EcoHealth-led project to import and experiment on bats when the entire world was learning that a bat virus from Asia caused COVID-19.

Additionally, Vincent Munster has collaborated with the Wuhan Institute of Virology and Shi Zhengli, commonly known as the bat lady. She led the

team of researchers where the COVID-19 virus most likely emerged from.

It is unacceptable that shoddy research practices by deep state bureaucrats shut down our country, closed our schools, forced businesses to close, and caused deaths and despair. Accountability is absolutely needed and demanded.

While the vast majority of the employees at the Rocky Mountain Laboratories are committed to excellence, tax dollars should not go to an employee who was negligent and irresponsible in his duties.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

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

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

Mr. Chair, our Federal Government needs brilliant and talented scientists who are willing to bring their skills to public service.

Dr. Munster is chief of the Viral Ecology Section at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, NIAID, an important component of the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Munster is a leading expert in how viruses emerge and infect human populations and how we can best address these public health threats.

Dr. Munster's laboratory aims to understand how emerging viral pathogens cross the species barrier so we can identify risks to humans and prevent disease outbreaks. He and his colleagues, in collaboration with the University of Oxford, helped to pioneer a vaccine approach that was used to develop a COVID-19 vaccine in partnership with AstraZeneca. The vaccine was widely used in the United Kingdom to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nevertheless, Mr. Chair, apparently no good deed goes unpunished. Dr. Munster should be celebrated for his contributions to science and his dedication to protecting people from deadly public health threats.

This is another amendment that really just demonstrates the lack of seriousness in this process and a lack of seriousness on behalf of my House Republican colleagues.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 2340

Mr. ROSENDALE. Mr. Chairman, no good deed goes unpunished.

I will tell you; I have held the hands of crying widows when their husbands passed away and they were not allowed to visit them in the hospital because of all the mandates from COVID-19 that bureaucrats had put in place.

Our public health experts, Mr. Chair, have been wrong about everything from the beginning on COVID-19. They told us that masks would work. They told us that vaccines would prevent

transmission. They told us that shutting down our country was necessary in order to keep COVID-19 from spreading. They were all wrong.

They were wrong for bringing the virus to our country and experimenting on gain of function anyway, so excuse me if I don't take the recommendations of the experts.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, this lack of pursuing scientific knowledge, scientific research—and the gentleman earlier spoke about Dr. Anthony Fauci.

Dr. Fauci, his contributions to HIV/AIDS research for over 50 years and other immunodeficiency diseases is heralded in the annals of Discovery to Cure. This basic view that the pursuit of the answers to chronic illnesses, to diseases, to pandemics somehow is not understood for what its potential is and what it can do to save lives.

I get the impression that some of my colleagues would shut down the NIH and the basic research, the scientific research that we do, the biomedical research that we do, collapse the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, not allow them to function, to deal with illness and disease and pandemics.

It is really kind of staggering that we would just see this unbelievable denial of science, pioneering vaccines in partnership with AstraZeneca used in the United Kingdom to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, expertise in how viruses emerge, which we are looking at, how they infect human populations. Why don't we want to know that?

Why? Why don't we want to understand that?

Then what we can do, if we understand it, is figure out how to treat these public health threats. What do we need to do to deal with the public health threats?

It is stunning to me that we would retreat to a backwater in science and research if my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have their way.

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

Mr. ROSENDALE. Mr. Chair, the Representative from Connecticut spends a lot of time giving accolades to Anthony Fauci. I would like to tell you that we gladly would reduce his compensation to zero and I would have tens of millions of Americans join me in making sure that that happens, but he was smart enough to get out of town while the getting was good.

He resigned. He retired. Unfortunately, we are going to be paying compensation to him for quite some time, but the subject this evening is the compensation of Vincent Munster, who acted in a negligent and reckless manner, and I would request the right to reduce his salary to zero with this amendment.

Mr. Chair, I ask all my colleagues to support the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gen-

tleman from Montana (Mr. ROSENDALE).

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

Ms. DELAURO. 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 Montana will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 135 OFFERED BY MR. ROSENDALE

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. DUARTE). It is now in order to consider amendment No. 135 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

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 finalize, implement, or enforce the rule titled "Unaccompanied Children Program Foundational Rule" published in the Federal Register on October 4, 2023 (88 Fed. Reg. 68908).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, 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. 135 would prohibit funds from being used to implement the Office of Refugee Resettlement's proposed rule which allows for the use of taxpayer dollars to fund abortions for unaccompanied minors.

This proposed rule is a flagrant violation of the Hyde amendment, which prohibits the use of Federal tax dollars from paying for abortions and completely ignores the crisis at our border.

The southern border, under the Biden administration, is wide-open, with up to 10 million illegal aliens encountered at our borders in fiscal year 2023.

Due to these failed policies, fentanyl deaths are up a staggering 1,425 percent from just 6 years ago in my home State of Montana.

It is appalling that Joe Biden and his Department of Health and Human Services are demanding Americans fund abortions for migrant children. These are the kinds of policies being pushed by the Biden administration, instead of closing our border and providing relief to the countless communities ravaged by these disastrous open border policies.

Regrettably, this President is far more concerned with advancing a far-left abortion agenda instead of securing our border and saving American lives.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I am unclear because it says that the amendment offered by Mr. ROSENDALE of Montana: None of the funds made available by this act may be used to finalize, implement, or enforce the rule titled, “Unaccompanied Children Program Foundational Rule,” published in the Federal Register on October 4.

I think what the gentleman is speaking about, if there is another amendment that he is making reference to, that what he is talking about is providing abortions to unaccompanied children. That isn't the basis of his amendment at all here.

Mr. Chair, can we get some clarity on the gentleman's amendments? My understanding is that it is about the Unaccompanied Children Program Foundational Rule. Is that what this amendment is about?

□ 2350

Mr. ROSENDALE. Mr. Chair, this is for Labor-HHS amendment No. 135, abortions for unaccompanied minors, disallowing taxpayer dollars to be used for abortions on unaccompanied minors.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, it says amendment No. 135, and I think we need to—do you have an amendment that deals with the unaccompanied children program foundational rule?

I yield time to the gentleman to talk about what amendment we are speaking about. I yield time to the gentleman on his amendment.

Mr. ROSENDALE. Mr. Chair, what we are saying is that none of the funds that are going to be allocated to the Office of Refugee Resettlement proposed rule would allow any of those dollars to be used for abortions for unaccompanied minors.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, one more time, I yield time to the gentleman to clarify, but the amendment that was submitted, confirmed by the majority, is “none of the funds made available by this act may be used to finalize, implement, or enforce the rule titled Unaccompanied Children Program Foundational Rule.” The gentleman is speaking about something else altogether different than the proposed amendment. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROSENDALE. Mr. Chair, apparently, we don't have good clarification here. Rather than to go on through this debate this evening, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw this amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Montana?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The amendment is withdrawn.

AMENDMENT NO. 136 OFFERED BY MR. ROY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 136 printed in part B of House Report 118–272.

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 864, 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 prohibits any of the funds in the Labor-HHS appropriations bill from being used to carry out President Biden's executive orders on climate change.

Now, I have been offering this amendment to each of the appropriations bills. They have happily been accepted for virtually all of them, either by voice vote or on a roll call vote, and I think it is because particularly colleagues on my side of the aisle understand the absurdity of the President's orders and its impact on the American citizens, who are struggling to be able to make ends meet, be able to afford their cars, be able to afford their energy.

In this instance, these executive orders were responsible for the creation of the Office of Climate Change and Health Equity within HHS. When we are sitting here with \$2 trillion deficits each year and \$34 trillion of debt, and we have created an Office of Climate Change and Health Equity within HHS, it just tells you the absurdity of this administration.

In September of 2021, I sent a letter in opposition to the creation of this office highlighting how absurd it is, and among its responsibilities were “regulatory efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and criteria air pollution throughout the health sector, including participating suppliers and providers.”

The vast majority of emissions in the healthcare sector stem from the hospital electricity consumption. It seems to follow that where this office would focus its regulatory efforts would be on that.

Does this administration want to make hospitals dependent on intermittent wind and solar for their energy? Will it ban the backup generators they depend on which run on diesel and natural gas? On a windless, cloudy day, you still need to have a hospital function. That is the whole point.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle seem to dismiss the whole notion of having reliable energy. Meanwhile, China has 1,100 coal-fired plants. America only has 250. China is building two coal-fired plants a week. We are building none. We are building no nuclear power, which would actually be reliable power so that we could actually have zero-emission reliable power, but FERC, the regulators, and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to stand in the way of that.

Here we are wanting wind and solar to be the unicorn power of the future, in which we can just live with hospitals not being able to function. That is the whole point. We are more concerned about “health equity” in an Office of Climate Change than ensuring that people don't die because hospitals don't have the power that they need.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment. I think this amendment is a good example of the Republican approach to appropriations bills. It is an overreaching effort to block seven separate executive orders related to climate change. Many of these executive orders have nothing to do with the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill.

We are here to protect the welfare of the American public, and we cannot close our eyes to the impacts of climate change, such as the recurring drought, flooding, severe storms, and wildfire events that have been pummeling our country and, for that matter, the world.

As of last month, the United States has experienced 24 confirmed weather/climate disaster events exceeding \$1 billion in damages each—each one. That is \$24 billion; a new record.

However, instead of addressing climate change, this amendment would block funding to develop more resilient communities, mitigate the impacts of climate change, and protect future generations.

This amendment would ensure that we continue to pay billions of dollars more each year for disaster relief—though we don't seem to be able to get a supplemental bill that includes disaster relief for people who are struggling—rather than invest in strategies that minimize and prevent the acceleration of climate change or mitigate against its disastrous effects.

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

Mr. ROY. Mr. Chair, the gentlewoman and a number of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle raise issues about the fact that we are using appropriations bills to address some of these issues.

First of all, my constituents and most Americans I know of care how taxpayer dollars are used. They want these dollars to be used efficiently and effectively, particularly when we are running \$2 trillion deficits. They don't want us to fund things like health equity offices, when, in fact, we are bleeding money out of every pore of our body, and we have got a diminishment of our debt.

We have Moody's last week saying, oh, wait, we are going to just reduce America's debt rating. We have got the Treasury unable to carry out an auction last week because our debt is so high that people are starting to question investing in American debt.

Why? Because we are irresponsibly spending money we don't have for utter nonsense and garbage. That is what the American people see every single day, why are you spending money on these absurd things, these absurd programs? That is the truth. The American people are sick of it.

How about we actually authorize something, by the way, instead of just doing stuff in appropriations? We haven't even authorized DHS since we created it 20 years ago. It is absolutely absurd.

□ 0000

I can't even tell you the last time we authorized HHS. It is not even clear-cut because there are so many programs in HHS.

The reality here is that we have programs the American people don't want us to continue to fund. We are trying to put forward commonsense ways to strip down and focus on the actual bare necessities of what the American people need us to fund. That is the point. That is what we are trying to accomplish.

Look, I have to say something. I appreciate in the underlying bill that we defend the ESG rule and requirements.

Let me remind you, it is the President's executive orders and the Department of Labor that allow ESG to creep into Americans' 401(k)'s, which is undermining performance and undermining the ability of the American people to earn a return on their investments because of all of these ridiculous ESG requirements.

Meanwhile, we are making people suffer. The head of the Department of Transportation, the Secretary of Transportation, literally was on record this year saying the American people need to feel pain. I have gotten the same answer from every Democratic colleague, that they want the American people to suffer so they can push forward this radical, nonsensical agenda.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support the amendment to stop it, and 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. 137 OFFERED BY MR. SANTOS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 137 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. SANTOS. 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:

Insert at the end (before the short title) the following:

SEC. ____ None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to establish, implement, or enforce any vaccine mandate.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SANTOS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

Mr. SANTOS. Mr. Chair, one of the biggest infringements on the American people's rights happened shortly after the Chinese Communist Party unleashed a genetically modified coronavirus across the globe, infecting and killing millions.

To combat the virus and save the most vulnerable, President Trump initiated Operation Warp Speed, which put on display American exceptionalism when it successfully created a COVID-19 vaccine in under a year. However, what ensued thereafter was far more un-American than anything. It actually resembled more authoritarianism.

States and Federal agencies made continued employment contingent on vaccine status. Businesses that did not comply were fined. Churches that did not comply were shut down. People who did not comply were fired.

Some States were freer than others, but the Federal Government was the most draconian of them all. Federal workers, including over 8,400 United States servicemembers, lost their jobs because they refused to take a novel vaccine with minimal testing.

I am not standing here before you today questioning the legitimacy of the vaccine or calling the creation of the vaccine a net negative. Actually, I am doing the complete opposite. In fact, it was a net positive for society to give vulnerable individuals with autoimmune diseases an extra layer of protection against COVID-19. However, I am standing before you today raging against the government overreach that is vaccine mandates.

The American people were given freedoms not guaranteed to other populations across the globe. We have the freedom to choose what vaccines we get. Millions of other Americans and I think it is immoral and un-American to force a person to get a vaccine in order to pay their rent or mortgage or feed their families, Mr. Chair.

What my amendment will do is ensure that the funds in the Departments

of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act be barred from getting allocated to establishing, implementing, or enforcing any vaccine mandate within those agencies.

Mr. Chair, to be clear, I am not standing here spewing and spreading anti-vax talking points. In fact, I am standing up for the working men and women of this great country, giving power back to the people, and taking it out of the clutches of government and government mandates.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

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

Over and over again, I have said tonight there is no vaccine mandate. Understand it. Get it into your head.

My only response is let's not waste any more time. Tutto finito.

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

Mr. SANTOS. Mr. Chair, there might not be any vaccination mandates today, but what is stopping my colleagues on the other side of the aisle or the President of the United States from wanting to institute those same draconian mandates tomorrow?

If we believe and take the word of my colleague that they don't exist today, they didn't exist prior to 2020 but miraculously appeared and destroyed lives and destroyed careers.

The reality is we need this to guarantee protection for the American people so that they are not lambasted yet again with more draconian rules coming out of the Federal Government.

Mr. Chair, I strongly ask my colleagues to support my amendment and support the working class by never again forcing them to choose between a vaccine they do not feel convicted to get and feeding their families.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. SANTOS).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 138 OFFERED BY MR.

SCHWEIKERT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 138 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. 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:

Page 65, line 11, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$5,000,000)".

Page 94, line 14, after the first dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$5,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Chairman, to the chairman and ranking member, their stamina is impressive while going through all of this. I still think we should change the House rules and allow us to drink coffee on the floor.

Mr. Chairman, the first amendment here is basically just shifting some money to diabetic retinopathy. The reason for this is that we have a fixation about diabetes and cures and procedures that are actually now making a difference. In the last couple of years, there are now a couple of drugs but also a laser procedure.

What is important about this is if you are 40 years old with diabetes, one out of three people is going to start to suffer this disease of the eye where the veins are being traumatized by the diabetes.

All I am trying to do here is move some money because there is progress being made, and I would like it to continue being made in this category.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, even though I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Connecticut is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I congratulate the gentleman on his amendment. I think one of the places where we haven't really put in resources for a while is the National Eye Institute, and I am always interested in making sure that all the institutes are being plugged up.

I have tried to do that in the 4 years that I served as chair of this committee because some of the smaller institutes do not get the resources that they need.

Mr. Chair, I support my colleague's amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Chairman, to the gentlewoman, I am trying to be just an honest actor on this one. It is something we have spent a lot of time on.

The reality is that diabetes itself is something I wish as a body we would actually have a much more honest and, in some ways, brutal conversation.

We expect it to be about 33 percent of all healthcare spent, 31 percent of Medicare. It turns out if we were willing to talk about diabetes and even the more difficult discussion of obesity and the cursors, it could be the single biggest effect on U.S. debt but also in labor force participation. Let's be honest. We are taking on misery.

Where this partially also came to us is the new procedures partially pioneered and advocated by these is now a diabetic retinopathy eye laser surgery and trying to get these more into the field.

□ 0010

So this is a shift. We actually believe it is reasonably well-vetted.

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

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

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 139 OFFERED BY MR. SCHWEIKERT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 139 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. 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:

Page 57, line 2, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$2,000,000)".

Page 94, line 14, after the first dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$2,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Chairman, this is actually one of the occasions where we as Members of Congress actually should take a little bit of a victory lap.

For those of us in the desert Southwest we have something called Valley fever. It is a fungus in the soil. For most people it causes a little bit of scarring in the lung. It may seem like you have a flu for a few days. For some people—and I always mispronounce this—there is a differentiated version where it breaks out of the lung. I have a neighbor who is a former Vietnam helicopter pilot that within his hands he has to have the Valley fever carved out of his bones. It is horrible. I met someone at the National Institutes of Health a few years ago, a young African-American male that was just traveling through the Southwest, picked up these fungi, picked up a spore, and it was dissolving his spine. They were wiring him back together.

Well, guess what has happened? Almost 8 years ago KEVIN MCCARTHY, who is also in one of the pandemic areas, as I am, myself, in the Maricopa County area, we actually started to do this. We moved some resources around. We are on the cusp of the vaccine. The canine vaccine is out, we believe, this December, and it turns out they believe that basically the same formulary will work with humans, and the phase I trials in humans, I actually believe, begins this coming year.

What is miraculous about this is the concept of a vaccine for a fungus, and it may actually cover much more than what we call Valley fever. This is a big deal. This is actually in some ways a small amount of money, considering the amounts that are spent on this particular disease, but it is partially because as we are getting ready to head to the human trials now, it just seemed rational to sort of keep the progress going.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Connecticut is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I guess this is kind of kumbaya here. I rise in support of the amendment.

The amendment would add \$2 million to the funding already provided to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to address Valley fever.

CDC's Valley fever efforts received annual increases while I was chair of this subcommittee, and the bill before us includes an additional \$10 million increase.

The intention of offering this amendment is to highlight that even more should be done, given the growing impact of this fungus. To me, this amendment highlights the significant need to support the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention overall.

The CDC has a wide range of programs. Each one does not operate in a vacuum. Core activities of public health data, infrastructure, workforce, health statistics, laboratory science at CDC must be supported to raise the tide for all programs.

The majority of CDC's funding is provided to State, local, Tribal, and territorial public health partners. CDC is supporting efforts in each of our communities, and this amendment highlights the needs of public health efforts are growing.

I urge my colleagues to support the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Chairman, should I be creeped out that we are about to have a group hug? It is late at night.

Look, for those of us that refer to this often as cocci, this is more than just the desert Southwest. Do you understand we are now actually seeing versions of these fungi in northern Minnesota, Wisconsin, and other parts as it moves through the country.

Why this one is important, instead of just plussing up something to just continue to maintain services, this is actually moving some resources around because we are on the cusp of the cure. For those of us who have ever tolerated my evening diatribes, I believe the morality is in the cure, in the misery, in the cost.

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

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

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 140 OFFERED BY MR. SCHWEIKERT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 140 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. 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. ____ . Each amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act that is not required to be appropriated or made by a provision of law is hereby reduced by 26.2 percent.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Chairman, look, this is actually a just an amendment I have introduced on a number of these bills to make a point. I am not going to ask for a vote on it, but I do want us to conceptually think about something, and I have been trying to find forms to say it over and over and over.

We borrow every dime we as Members of Congress vote on. Every dime of defense is now borrowed. Every dime of nondefense discretionary now is borrowed. Last fiscal year we had, what, 300 billion, maybe 400 billion of let's call it Medicare, but in mandatory, that was borrowed.

In this piece of legislation 26.2 percent is our best calculation of the resources here—and many of them are really good programs, but we are borrowing it to send it to entities that do have their own taxing authority.

It is an uncomfortable conversation, but I do want us to think about it as we get more and more of our financial stresses, as our borrowing costs now—we saw Treasury yesterday basically released an update saying gross interest this fiscal year will top a trillion dollars.

Do you know what that means? Social Security is our number one spend; interest just became our number two spend; Medicare is our number three spend; and defense now is our number four spend. We are not going to balance the budget through discretionary, but somewhere here—I don't know how to get it into our lexicon and our culture that everything we now vote on as Members of Congress comes off of borrowed money.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, our luck ran out. I rise in strong opposition to the amendment.

This amendment would further cut funding by 26 percent for important programs and services that provide opportunities for working families.

The underlying bill already cuts tens of billions of dollars from programs that help families and low-income

workers. This amendment would cut an additional \$38 billion from education, health, job training, worker protection, and the Social Security Administration's operating budget.

For instance, this amendment would cut Head Start by another \$2.9 billion, almost \$3.7 billion below this year 2023, leading to over 250,000 children losing access to high-quality early learning programs.

It would cut the Childcare and Development Block Grant by \$2.1 billion. This is amidst a childcare crisis when parents want to work, but they cannot find affordable childcare for their kids.

□ 0020

It would cut the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP, which is a bipartisan priority, by more than \$1 billion.

It would cut senior nutrition, including Meals on Wheels, by \$277 million, resulting in more than 1 million low-income seniors losing access to home-delivered or prepackaged meals.

It would cut biomedical research at the National Institutes of Health by more than \$11 billion, resulting in a reduction of more than 10,000 new grants for potentially lifesaving research.

It would cut nearly \$2 billion from mental health and substance use disorder services, when CDC data shows nearly 110,000 deaths in 2022 related to drug overdoses, the highest number ever.

It would cut title I funding for low-income public schools by \$3.2 billion, reducing needed resources for 25 million low-income students.

It would cut special education grants to States by \$3.8 billion, reducing support for services for 7.5 million students with disabilities.

It would cut Pell grants by \$5.8 billion for students and families in need.

Yes, it would cut the Social Security Administration's operating budget by more than \$3 billion. It would shutter field offices and eliminate services for seniors.

It is interesting to me that when it comes to the programs that are encompassed in the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bills, that there is a great worry about a deficit, there is a great worry about borrowing, but when we did \$2 trillion for the richest one-tenth of 1 percent of the people in this country and the biggest corporations who pay no taxes, no one batted an eyelash.

We continue on that road of looking at the biggest corporations who pay no taxes, and we will continue to make sure that they profit and that working families, middle-class families, the most vulnerable families, are at risk because someone has decided that it is no time to borrow and it is no time to make public investments in their lives.

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

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Chair, I am not going to go into correcting the TCJA math, but I would point out

Democrats functionally, through the Biden administration, have borrowed \$4.8 trillion in functionally 3 years. The 1.7, actually the multiplier, if you look at the tax receipts, being on Ways and Means.

I do want to go to a point. The gentlewoman actually just made my morality argument. These are important programs. They serve a purpose, but yet our failure to actually address the debt, because the fact of the matter is the primary driver of U.S. debt is our demographics, something we don't like to say. We got old. Today, and the 30 years forward, 100 percent of the growth of debt—and our office now is calculating \$130 billion to \$140 billion during that time, particularly if we start to calculate in the new interest rate regime. Medicare, and if we back-fill Social Security in 9 years when the trust fund is gone, it is going to consume every available dollar. You are going to see programs like this that we care about squeezed.

Actually, my point is, if these are moral, if they serve a purpose, our inability to have an honest conversation about the debt is immoral. I have come here today—and even last night, I spent 1 hour showing Democrat tax hikes, fine, but the tax hikes that have been proposed for every category on \$400,000 and up only brought in about 1.5 percent of GDP when adjusted. We borrowed 8.4 last year.

We have a math problem, and I am saddened because it will always break down to Republican versus Democrat. It is demographics.

I think the reason I do this amendment is to force a little bit of contemplation of the reality we are at, that if we don't do this, these are the sort of cuts that are in our future.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, we have a revenue problem. We have a serious revenue problem, and the majority looks for every excuse to cut back the opportunity for increased revenues.

Why do I say that? We are told that we leave \$1 trillion on the table every year because we do not enforce our tax laws on the wealthiest, the billionaires, the Amazons, the Hewlett-Packards, the corporations who pay no tax. We cut the heart and soul out of the IRS when they are collecting millions of dollars from tax cheats.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

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

The amendment was rejected.

AMENDMENT NO. 142 OFFERED BY MR. SMUCKER

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 142 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. SMUCKER. 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 implement, administer, or enforce section 668.14(b)(26)(ii) of title 34, Code of Federal Regulations, (relating to limiting excessive GE program length), as amended by the final regulations published by the Department of Education in the Federal Register on October 31, 2023 (88 Fed. Reg. 74568 et seq.).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Chair, I rise today to ask for my colleagues' support for this amendment No. 142 which would protect students' access to programs that prepare them for the workforce, for a great career.

Specifically, this amendment would prohibit the Department of Education from implementing, administering, or enforcing one narrow provision of the newly finalized rule on financial responsibility regulations which unfairly limits Federal financial aid from being accessed by clock-hour programs.

What are clock-hour programs? Career-oriented programs in some community colleges use clock hours to measure a student's progress rather than the credit-based system that traditional colleges use.

Each State establishes their own licensure requirements and minimum number of clock hours for programs like cosmetology, massage therapy, barbering, nursing and allied health, trucking, and others before students can apply for their State licenses.

Many programs at facilities and schools that offer these programs go beyond the State's minimum number of clock hours. There are a number of good reasons for that. They may allow students more time to practice the trade to increase their speed and income when they get to the job or it may be necessary to have more hours of instruction time because of new techniques and practices in instruction to ensure that students are prepared to pass the licensure exams.

The Department of Education has traditionally allowed career-oriented programs and some community college programs to go above 150 percent of a State's minimum number of clock hours and still be eligible for Federal financial aid. That changes in their new rule.

□ 0030

They would now eliminate from Federal financial aid any program that goes above 150 percent of the minimum hours. That means that schools will need to redesign and recertify their programs, which is a very time-consuming process, or students will now have to pay cash or private loans for the entire program rather than receiving the financial aid.

It is estimated today that more than 3 million skilled trades jobs remain

open. At a time when our Nation is struggling to fill these roles, and employers can't find skilled workers, this is not the time for the Department to make it harder for a student to access programs that prepare them for the workforce.

This amendment would ensure that the Department cannot fund the provision regarding program length in its final rule and would allow students to continue to use the Federal financial aid they are eligible for to fund their studies.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

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

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

This amendment would block the Department of Education's commonsense provision that prevents colleges from stretching out the length of their post-secondary training programs just to rake in more of the students' and taxpayers' money because the students will have to take out more loans.

When a student goes to a higher education training program, they shouldn't have to complete 1½ times the training the State requires just to graduate and get a job, all so their college can make a few extra bucks.

This provision of the Department's regulation rights a longstanding wrong that allowed colleges to exploit students and abuse taxpayer dollars by dragging out the time it takes to graduate from a program.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Chairman, I have schools in my district that are providing great instruction. These schools are working well, and the students are taking advantage of them. They have great careers as a result of the instruction.

As I mentioned, there are good reasons that these programs, in some cases, need to go beyond the minimum hours. They may help a student to qualify to do well on the exam.

Again, there is no mistaking that our workforce is in a dire state. There are 9.6 million open jobs across the country right now and only 5.4 million individuals looking for jobs. There are not enough people to fill all of these open positions.

Employers in my area are keenly aware of this. This is a message I hear over and over again in my district.

This is a huge disservice to students. This will mean fewer students will be able to use that pathway for a great career because they may not have the resources to pay for it.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I continue to oppose this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 143 OFFERED BY MS. TENNEY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 143 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Ms. TENNEY. 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 under this Act may be used to implement Executive Order 14019 (86 Federal Register 13623).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to offer my amendment to prohibit funding for President Biden's Executive Order No. 14019, titled: "Executive Order on Promoting Access to Voting."

This executive order requires Federal agencies to use their power, influence, resources, and funding to enter into agreements with nongovernmental organizations to conduct voter registration and other questionable mobilization activities.

Mr. Chair, this executive order is nothing but a thinly veiled attempt to transform the Federal Government into a partisan get-out-the-vote machine for Democrats.

America's civil service should be nonpartisan, and Federal agencies should not be using taxpayer funds to actively engage in get-out-the-vote operations that have nothing to do with the agency's core missions.

Mr. Chair, President Biden should not be weaponizing the Federal Government by using American taxpayer dollars to manipulate our elections.

To protect the integrity of our elections, this unilateral executive action must be stopped.

As the founder and chair of the Election Integrity Caucus, it is my privilege to introduce this amendment to restore transparency and confidence in our democratic process while keeping Federal bureaucrats and the swamp from deliberately tipping the balance at the ballot box.

While I wholeheartedly support the right of every American citizen to vote, I do not support this blatantly partisan mobilization of the Federal Government for political purposes. No citizen should have their vote diluted by Federal bureaucrats.

Mr. Chair, let me highlight a few other amendments I submitted that I was disappointed were not made in order that are worthy of mention.

First, my amendment No. 93 would insert the text of the Susan Muffley Act into this bill. This amendment would have righted a grave injustice against over 20,000 Delphi salaried retirees. While I am disappointed it was not made in order, I will continue to push tirelessly to make my constituents and all the Delphi salaried employees whole.

Second, my amendment No. 97 would have required the Secretary of Labor to report on the efficacy of spending on technical and compliance assistance to avoid heat-related illnesses. This report was first proposed by the Timothy J. Barber Act, which I introduced in honor of my late constituent, Timothy Barber, who passed away from heat-related illnesses.

Finally, Representative BISHOP's amendment No. 150, which I cosponsored, to restore Job Corps funding—while I am very disappointed that Job Corps was left unfunded in this bill, I hope that Congress can find a way to restore Job Corps funding through conference committees.

Mr. Chair, I urge all of my colleagues to vote in support of my election integrity amendment to stop the Biden administration from turning our Federal Government into a get-out-the-vote machine for the Democrats.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment.

Let me highlight the first sentence of this executive order: "The right to vote is the foundation of American democracy." Amen. I agree.

I find it really pretty extraordinary to say that we are weaponizing to protect the right to vote. The right to vote is enshrined. People have died for the right to vote in this Nation.

This executive order recognizes that there are too many obstacles to voting. Unfortunately, those obstacles disproportionately exist for people of color, people with disabilities, and people who speak English as a second language. Members of our military serving overseas as well as other American citizens living abroad also face challenges to exercising their fundamental right to vote.

Simply put, the Biden administration is trying to expand access to voter registration and election information. This order directs agencies to ensure that the online Federal voter registration form is accessible to people with disabilities. They have a right to vote.

This order directs the Secretary of Defense to establish procedures consistent with the applicable law to offer each member of the Armed Forces the opportunity to register to vote in Federal elections.

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

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Chairman, with all due respect to the gentlewoman from Connecticut, none of the specious political falsities that she just described have anything to do with enhancing the right of each citizen to vote in each election.

This is an inappropriate and unconstitutional federalization of elections, something that is prohibited by the Constitution that every single person in this room has taken an oath to uphold.

Nothing has been more devastating to election integrity than the kind of interference and mission creep that we are seeing by this weaponized Biden administration to try to take our elections and try to manipulate the vote.

One citizen, one vote is the most sacred honor that we have as citizens. This needs to be protected under our Constitution. Election integrity is definitely considered under the purview of the States.

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

□ 0040

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, it really is quite amazing that when the States have their purview. We have just been through an extraordinary time where States have legitimized the election of the President of the United States, and we have a whole bunch of folks here who deny what the States have said about the legitimate election of the President of the United States.

Again, the right to vote is the foundation of American democracy. That is what this is about. We need to continue to enshrine the public's right to vote whether they are able, disabled, people of color, everyone, a veteran overseas, and Americans who are abroad who are allowed to vote. We need to make it possible for people to exercise their right to vote in the United States and not continue to circumscribe that right, as my colleagues on the other side have been doing for a very long time, and oppressing and suppressing a vote.

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

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Chair, quickly, with all due respect, this amendment has nothing to do with what the gentlewoman is talking about. It has nothing to do with whether our military personnel, including my own son, have the right to vote in elections.

This has to do with the weaponization and use of taxpayer dollars to interfere with and manipulate elections. It should not be part of our Federal spending. It should not be something that should be used by partisans in the bureaucracy to try to prime the pump to get more Democrats out to vote and to use it as a get-out-the-vote scheme. It is totally inappropriate.

This amendment should be passed by my colleagues, and this executive order should be stricken.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 144 OFFERED BY MS. VAN DUYNE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 144 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. 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. _____. No funds appropriated under this Act may be used to enforce the requirement for ambulatory surgical centers to submit information with respect to the ASC-20 measure under the ambulatory surgical center quality reporting program established pursuant to section 1833(t)(17) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l(t)(17)).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. VAN DUYNE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Chair, my amendment No. 144 prohibits funds from being used to enforce unnecessary reporting requirements from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on ambulatory surgical centers.

I was first made aware of this requirement by my constituents when I toured a local outpatient facility back home in north Texas. As they pointed out, this forces ambulatory surgical centers to report the COVID-19 vaccination status of each employee every quarter or punish them with a payment reduction.

Mr. Chairman, I am sure my colleagues on both sides of the aisle hear the same thing when we return to our districts. Healthcare facilities are struggling to find workers at every single level, yet CMS does not hold every facility to the same standard.

CMS removed COVID-19 vaccination and testing requirements for hospitals on May 31, which was 20 days after the President declared the public health emergency was over. Meanwhile, CMS continues to require ambulatory surgery centers to report their workers' vaccination status or face a sharp cut in payment.

To be clear, my amendment is not meant to dissuade individuals from choosing to receive a vaccine. Rather, it will give them a choice similar to every other healthcare worker who wants the freedom to choose what is best for their health.

Mr. Chair, I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this amendment and to support our healthcare workers who not only serve our communities but also support thousands of small ambulatory surgical center businesses.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, the amendment would block a reporting requirement related to COVID-19 vaccination coverage among healthcare personnel, which is submitted quarterly via a web-based tool.

Mr. Chair, we know vaccines work. In the case of the COVID vaccine, we know they help to prevent illness as well as mitigate the severity of illness for those who get sick.

For healthcare workers, being vaccinated is not only a matter of their own health. It is also good for the health of their patients.

When healthcare workers get sick, they can unknowingly infect their patients, and patients who come to ambulatory surgical centers are already recovering from an illness or injury and cannot afford additional exposure or the risk of COVID.

Vaccines help to keep workers healthy. Higher vaccination rates for healthcare workers mean fewer days of missed work because of illness, which is good for healthcare facilities, particularly facilities already struggling with staff shortages. It is good for patients, who do not have to worry about canceled appointments because healthcare workers are out sick.

That is why healthcare staff vaccination rates are a useful measure in the quality reporting program.

Mr. Chair, I urge a “no” vote on the amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Chairman, I urge the gentlewoman from Connecticut to actually read the amendment. I am in no way saying that people should not get a vaccine. What this does is it allows them the freedom to choose.

If the gentlewoman believes that healthcare workers should all be vaccinated, then tell me why that does not extend to hospital workers. We know a lot of people go to an ER when they need help, yet this is potentially calling out just workers at ambulatory surgical centers.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I oppose this amendment for the reasons that I have stated, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. VAN DUYNE).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. The Chair understands that amendment No. 145 will not be offered.

AMENDMENT NO. 146 OFFERED BY MR. LAWLER

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 146 printed in part B of House Report 118-272.

Mr. LAWLER. 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:

Page 83, line 24, after the dollar amount, insert “(increased by \$100,000,000)”.

Page 84, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert “(increased by \$100,000,000)”.

Page 145, line 7 after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$100,000,000)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 864, the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAWLER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Chair, today, I rise in support of my amendment No. 146 to the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill, which increases funding for the Head Start program.

Head Start is a critical program that provides comprehensive early childhood education, health nutrition, and parental involvement services to low-income children and families.

My district alone has almost a dozen Head Start locations, each providing crucial services to families in Rockland, Westchester, Putnam, and Dutchess Counties, which is why it is so critical that we continue to provide robust funding for Head Start.

My amendment does just that, increasing funding to the Head Start program by \$100 million and ensuring that this critical service has the support that it needs.

As a father of a young daughter, I am seeing just how inquisitive and curious she is, and I know that there are tens of thousands of children like her in my district who would benefit from an early childhood development program. That doesn't even include the tens of millions of children who have benefited from the program's existence across the Nation.

Mr. Chair, I ask my colleagues to support amendment No. 146 and show the American people that we want to build on the successes of Head Start.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to this amendment even though I strongly support the gentleman's interest in Head Start. Frankly, I thank my colleague for his interest in Head Start and his willingness to acknowledge the devastating cuts to the program in the current bill. The Head Start program was cut by \$750 million.

□ 0050

In real terms, that means roughly 80,000 Head Start and early Head Start children would no longer be able to receive services under the proposed Republican House appropriations bill.

In Mr. LAWLER's district alone, 1,400 low-income children and their families are benefiting from the education, health, and nutrition services provided by Head Start. Mr. Chair, 140 of these children, a tenth of those in his district, will lose services and support with the shameful cut in the bill that we are dealing with right now.

Do I appreciate and support a \$100 million increase to the program? Yes, but \$750 million was cut. \$100 million is a fraction of what is necessary. The whole cut needs to be restored, and Head Start needs additional resources so that none of the children currently lose their opportunity for Head Start, not just in Mr. LAWLER's district, but the 1,600 children in Mr. ADERHOLT's district, as well as the 1,300 kids in my district, and the 1,000 children in Chair GRANGER's district.

Now, let's talk about the offset. The gentleman wants to take from the Department of Education. Here we go again traveling down the road of eliminating public education in the United States.

House Republicans don't support the Department of Education. We get it, but the Departmental Management Account has already been cut 18 percent. This amendment would slash another \$100 million from this account, bringing the total cut to \$177 million, or a stunning 41 percent.

The Program Administration account funds the Federal civil servants who provide grants to States. You need a grant for your State, this is where you go. School districts need a grant, this is where they go. Institutes of higher education need a grant, this is where they go.

These staff answer the questions. They provide vital funding to communities across the country. Head Start is critical for fostering school readiness, family development, and creating lifelong learners, and when these opportunities are taken from children, all of us in every community suffer.

I appreciate my colleague's intent to increase Head Start, and I appreciate that another colleague on the other side of the aisle is willing to stand up and acknowledge how inadequate the funding level in this bill is, but we cannot destroy the Department of Education by decimating the nonpolitical career staff that administer its vital programs.

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

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Chair, I would remind the gentlewoman from Connecticut there is a reason she is the ranking member and not the chair, and it is because when her party was in complete control of Washington, they spent \$5 trillion in new spending in just 2 years. The American people elected a House Republican majority to govern, to rein in much of the spending that occurred in the prior 2 years.

I believe the Head Start program is critical, which is why I have put forth an amendment to increase the funding

by \$100 million. According to the gentlewoman's statements, she is opposed to taking \$100 million from the management account of the Department of Education because we need to make sure that we have bureaucrats, rather than providing the funding for disadvantaged children across this country.

My objective is to make sure that the money that we spend actually goes into our communities rather than Washington, D.C., and the bureaucracy that has been created here.

I think this amendment is important. I thank the gentlewoman for acknowledging she does not believe we should increase the funding further by opposing this amendment. She thinks we should spend the \$100 million on bureaucrats rather than the children. I thank her for acknowledging that.

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I think as chair of this committee for 4 years, in a bipartisan way, we increased Head Start funding in higher numbers than had been dealt with in the recent past.

I applaud the bipartisanship of that effort to deal with Head Start funding because of how critically important Head Start is, but it is stunning to me that we could look at a \$750 million cut in Head Start with this bill.

You mentioned spending. I will get back to you on revenue. Let's collect revenue, so we can make the public investments in Head Start and in education and other areas that have been begging. Let me assure the gentleman I will work along with all of my colleagues. I will fight against cuts to Head Start. Head Start will always be a priority for me.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Chair, clearly the gentlewoman hasn't met a dollar that she doesn't like to spend.

We don't have a revenue problem in Washington, D.C. In fact, our revenue is at its highest levels ever.

This is not an issue of revenue; it is an issue of spending.

In the prior 2 years, in the prior Congress, the Democrat majority increased spending by \$5 trillion in 2 years in new spending. It is unsustainable. It is why we have dealt with record inflation under this administration. It is why energy costs have skyrocketed; grocery costs have skyrocketed.

The gentlewoman would like to continue down that path and just keep spending money we don't have. This appropriations process that we are going through, we have to make decisions. We have to make cuts that actually bring our government into size.

If it was up to her, not only would we spend everything they have spent over the last 2 years, they would probably increase it another \$5 trillion because who cares? It is not their money; it is the American peoples' money. It is the taxpayers' money.

We have to make decisions. That is why we were elected, to govern.

I felt this amendment appropriate because I do think the Head Start program is important. I do think it provides valuable opportunities for underprivileged children across this country, and we need to continue to fund it, but the gentlewoman would just like to spend money we don't have, make it up out of thin air. It doesn't work that way.

Mr. Chair, I would encourage all of my colleagues to support this amendment, to increase funding for this critical program, and pay for it by eliminating funding for bureaucrats in Washington and spending that money on the children.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAWLER).

The amendment was agreed to.

□ 0100

Mr. ADERHOLT. 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. LAWLER) 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. 5894) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

PROTECTION OF CERTAIN FACILITIES AND ASSETS FROM UNMANNED AIRCRAFT—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 118-82)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and referred to the Committees on Armed Services and Transportation and Infrastructure and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to subsection (i)(2) of section 130i of title 10, United States Code, I certify that it is in the national security interests of the United States to extend the partial termination date specified in subsection (i)(1) of section 130i of title 10, United States Code, by 180 days.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.
THE WHITE HOUSE, November 14, 2023.

HOURLY MEETING ON TODAY

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. today.

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

There was no objection.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Kevin F. McCumber, Acting Clerk of the House, reported that on November 9, 2023, the following bill was presented to the President of the United States for approval:

H.R. 1226. To amend title 38, United States Code, to allow for the electronic request of certain records, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 1 minute a.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until today, Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

EC-2365. A letter from the Deputy Secretary, Division of Trading and Markets, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Security-Based Swap Execution and Registration and Regulation of Security-Based Swap Execution Facilities [Release No.: 34-98845; File No.: S7-14-22] (RIN: 3235-AK93) received November 8, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

EC-2366. A letter from the President, transmitting a letter informing congress of action taken consistent with the War Powers Resolution, Pub. Law 93-148, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1543(c); Public Law 93-148, Sec. 4(c); (87 Stat. 555) (H. Doc. No. 118-81); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed.

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. MASSIE: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 869. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5893) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5961) to freeze certain Iranian funds involved in the 2023 hostage deal between the United States and Iran, and for other purposes (Rept. 118-273). 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:

[Submitted November 13, 2023]

By Mr. LAMALFA (for himself, Mrs. PELTOLA, Mrs. TORRES of California, Mr. COLE, and Mr. OBERNOLTE);