

[Roll No. 102]

AYES—218

Aderholt Gaetz Miller (OH)
 Alford Gallagher Miller (WV)
 Allen Garbarino Miller-Meeks
 Amodei Garcia, Mike Mills
 Armstrong Gimenez Molinaro
 Arrington Gonzales, Tony Moonen
 Babin Good (VA) Mooney
 Bacon Gooden (TX) Moore (AL)
 Baird Gosar Moore (UT)
 Balderson Granger Moran
 Banks Graves (LA) Murphy
 Barr Graves (MO) Nehls
 Bean (FL) Green (TN) Newhouse
 Bentz Greene (GA) Norman
 Bergman Griffith Nunn (IA)
 Bice Grothman Obernolte
 Biggs Guest Ogles
 Bilirakis Guthrie Owens
 Bishop (NC) Hageman Palmer
 Boebert Harris Perry
 Bost Harshbarger Pfluger
 Brecheen Hern Posey
 Buchanan Hill Reschenthaler
 Buck Rodgers (WA) Hill
 Bucshon Hinson Rogers (AL)
 Burchett Houchin Rogers (KY)
 Burgess Hudson Rose
 Burlison Huizenga Rosendale
 Calvert Hunt Rouzer
 Cammack Issa Roy
 Carey Jackson (TX) Rutherford
 Carl James Salazar
 Carter (GA) Johnson (LA) Santos
 Carter (TX) Johnson (OH) Scallise
 Chavez-DeRemer Johnson (SD) Schweikert
 Ciscomani Jordan Scott, Austin
 Cline Joyce (OH) Self
 Cloud Joyce (PA) Sessions
 Clyde Kean (NJ) Simpson
 Cole Kelly (MS) Smith (MO)
 Collins Kelly (PA) Smith (NE)
 Comer Kiggans (VA) Smith (NJ)
 Crane Kiley Smucker
 Crawford Kim (CA) Spartz
 Crenshaw Kustoff Stauber
 Curtis LaHood Steel
 D'Esposito LaMalfa Stefanik
 Davidson Lamborn Steil
 De La Cruz Langworthy Stewart
 DesJarlais Latta Strong
 Diaz-Balart LaTurner Tenney
 Donalds Lawler Thompson (PA)
 Duarte Lee (FL) Tiffany
 Duncan Lesko Timmons
 Dunn (FL) Letlow Turner
 Edwards Loudermilk Valadao
 Ellzey Lucas Van Drew
 Emmer Luetkemeyer Van Dуйne
 Estes Luna Van Orden
 Ezell Luttrell Wagner
 Fallon Mace Walberg
 Feenstra Malliotakis Waltz
 Ferguson Mann Weber (TX)
 Finstad Massie Webster (FL)
 Fischbach Mast Wenstrup
 Fitzgerald McCarthy Westerman
 Fitzpatrick McCaul Williams (NY)
 Fleischmann McClain Williams (TX)
 Flood McClintock Wilson (SC)
 Foxx McCormick Wittman
 Franklyn, C. McHenry Womack
 Scott Meuser Yakym
 Fry Miller (IL) Zinke

NOES—209

Adams Cárdenas Craig
 Aguilar Carson Crockett
 Allred Carter (LA) Crow
 Auchincloss Cartwright Cuellar
 Balint Casar Davids (KS)
 Barragán Case Davis (IL)
 Beatty Casten Davis (NC)
 Bera Castor (FL) Dean (PA)
 Beyer Castro (TX) DeGette
 Bishop (GA) Cherfilus-McCormick DeLauro
 Blumenauer DelBene
 Blunt Rochester Chu
 Bonamici Cicilline DeSaulnier
 Bowman Clark (MA) Dingell
 Boyle (PA) Clarke (NY) Doggett
 Brown Cleaver Escobar
 Brownley Clyburn Eshoo
 Budzinski Connolly Espaillet
 Bush Correa Evans
 Caraveo Costa Fletcher
 Carbajal Courtney Foster

Foushee Lofgren Sánchez
 Frankel, Lois Lynch Sarbanes
 Frost Magaziner Scanlon
 Gallego Manning Schakowsky
 Garamendi Matsui Schiff
 Garcia (TX) McBeth Schneider
 Garcia, Robert McCollum Scholten
 Golden (ME) McGarvey Schrier
 Goldman (NY) McGovern Scott (VA)
 Gomez Meeks Scott, David
 Gonzalez, Menendez Sewell
 Vicente Meng Sherman
 Gottheimer Mfume Sherrill
 Green, Al (TX) Moore (WI) Sherrill
 Grijalva Morelle Slotkin
 Harder (CA) Moskowitz Smith (WA)
 Hayes Moulton Sorensen
 Norman Mrvan Soto
 Higgins (NY) Mullin Spanberger
 Himes Nadler Stansbury
 Horsford Houlihan Stanton
 Hoyer Neal Stevens
 Hoyle (OR) Neguse Strickland
 Huffman Nickel Swalwell
 Ivey Norcross Sykes
 Jackson (IL) Ocasio-Cortez Takano
 Jackson (NC) Omar Thanedar
 Jacobs Pallone Thompson (CA)
 Jayapal Panetta Thompson (MS)
 Jeffries Pappas Titus
 Johnson (GA) Pascrell Tlaib
 Kamlager-Dove Payne Tokuda
 Kaptur Pelosi Tonko
 Keating Peltola Torres (CA)
 Kelly (IL) Perez Torres (NY)
 Khanna Peters Trahan
 Kildee Pettersen Trone
 Kilmer Phillips Underwood
 Kim (NJ) Kim (NJ) Pingree
 Krishnamoorthi Pocan Vargas
 Kuster Porter Vasquez
 Landsman Pressley Veasey
 Larsen (WA) Quigley Velázquez
 Larson (CT) Ramirez Wasserman
 Lee (CA) Raskin Schultz
 Lee (NV) Ross Waters
 Lee (PA) Ruiz Watson Coleman
 Leger Fernandez Ruppertsberger Wexton
 Levin Ryan Wild
 Lieu Salinas Williams (GA)
 Wilson (FL)

NOT VOTING—7

Cohen Jackson Lee Steube
 Fulcher LaLota
 Garcia (IL) Pence

□ 1403

Mr. GALLEGRO changed his vote from “aye” to “no.”

So the resolution was agreed to.
 The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STOPPING HOME OFFICE WORK'S UNPRODUCTIVE PROBLEMS ACT OF 2023

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 75, I call up the bill (H.R. 139) to require Executive agencies to submit to Congress a study of the impacts of expanded telework and remote work by agency employees during the COVID-19 pandemic and a plan for the agency's future use of telework and remote work, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.
 The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUSTOFF). Pursuant to House Resolution 75, the bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 139

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Stopping Home Office Work’s Unproductive Problems Act of 2023” or the “SHOW UP Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. REINSTATEMENT OF PRE-PANDEMIC TELEWORK POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND LEVELS FOR EXECUTIVE AGENCIES.

Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, each agency shall reinstate and apply the telework policies, practices, and levels of the agency as in effect on December 31, 2019, and may not expand any such policy, practices, or levels until the date that an agency plan is submitted to Congress with a certification by the Director of the Office of Personnel Management under section 3.

SEC. 3. STUDY, PLAN, AND CERTIFICATION REGARDING EXECUTIVE AGENCY TELEWORK POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND LEVELS FOR EXECUTIVE AGENCIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the head of each agency, in consultation with the Director, shall submit to Congress—

(1) a study on the impacts on the agency and its mission of expanding telework by its employees during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic that commenced in 2019, including an analysis of—

(A) any adverse impacts of that expansion on the agency’s performance of its mission, including the performance of customer service by the agency;

(B) any costs to the agency during that expansion attributable to—

(i) owning, leasing, or maintaining underutilized real property; or

(ii) paying higher rates of locality pay to teleworking employees as a result of incorrectly classifying such employees as teleworkers rather than remote workers;

(C) any degree to which the agency failed during that expansion to provide teleworking employees with secure network capacity, communications tools, necessary and secure access to appropriate agency data assets and Federal records, and equipment sufficient to enable each such employee to be fully productive;

(D) any degree to which that expansion facilitated dispersal of the agency workforce around the Nation; and

(E) any other impacts of that expansion that the agency or the Director considers appropriate;

(2) any agency plan to expand telework policies, practices, or levels beyond those in place as a result of section 2; and

(3) a certification by the Director that such plan will—

(A) have a substantial positive effect on—

(i) the performance of the agency’s mission, including the performance of customer service;

(ii) increasing the level of dispersal of agency personnel throughout the Nation; and

(iii) the reversal of any adverse impact set forth pursuant to paragraph (1)(D);

(B) substantially lower the agency’s costs of owning, leasing, or maintaining real property;

(C) substantially lower the agency’s costs attributable to paying locality pay to agency personnel working from locations outside the pay locality of their position’s official worksite; and

(D) ensure that teleworking employees will be provided with secure network capacity, communications tools, necessary and secure access to appropriate agency data assets and Federal records, and equipment sufficient to enable each such employee to be fully productive, without substantially increasing the

agency's overall costs for secure network capacity, communications tools, and equipment.

(b) LIMITATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An agency may not implement the plan submitted under subsection (a)(2) unless a certification by the Director was issued under subsection (a)(3).

(2) SUBSEQUENT PLANS.—In the event an initial agency plan submitted under subsection (a)(2) fails to receive such certification, the agency may submit to the Director subsequent plans until such certification is received, and submit such plan and certification to Congress.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act—

(1) the term “agency” has the meaning given the term “Executive agency” in section 105 of title 5, United States Code;

(2) the term “Director” means the Director of the Office of Personnel Management;

(3) the term “locality pay” means locality pay provided for under section 5304 or 5304a of such title; and

(4) the terms “telework” and “teleworking” have the meaning given those terms in section 6501 of such title, and include remote work.

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

The gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the measure under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 139, the Stopping Home Office Work's Unproductive Problems Act, or the SHOW UP Act.

This legislation is urgent. The Federal workforce needs to get back to work. Federal agencies are falling short of their missions. They are not carrying out their duties. They are failing the American people.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the Federal workforce stayed home. They relied on telework because they could, but as the rest of America went back to work in person, many Federal workers did not.

The American people have suffered as a result. They have waited for months for their tax refunds from the IRS. They have waited for months for the Social Security Administration to answer their questions and provide them benefits.

Our veterans have even waited for months to get their medical records from the National Archives. The National Archives is responsible for maintaining medical records for our vet-

erans, but our veterans could not get access to these records because the National Archives staff were at home.

This is unacceptable, and it should be downright embarrassing to these agencies.

The American people have struggled with high inflation, scarce goods, prolonged and disruptive lockdowns, and other hardships. Meanwhile, the Biden administration has showered Federal workers with perks and pay increases all while working from home, but Federal employees not being in the workplace hurt the Federal Government's ability to achieve its missions and deliver vital programs.

House Republicans have fought hard to find out just how expanded telework has decreased agencies' ability to deliver services to our constituents. We have tried to get this information from the Biden administration, but to no avail.

During the last Congress, as the House Oversight and Reform Committee ranking member, I wrote to the administration, requesting information on Federal workforce return-to-work policies. The Biden administration failed to provide adequate responses to our inquiries. Instead, it kept expanded telework policies in place long after the pandemic was over, and it used its expanded telework policies not to help our constituents but to help recruit new employees to the Federal Government.

The Federal workforce already enjoys many perks not enjoyed by the private sector, including unparalleled job stability, healthy retirement benefits, and reliable pay-growth expectations. One would have thought that, as the pandemic wound down, Federal workers would have returned to their offices just as private-sector workers across the Nation did. That is not the case.

According to the Office of Personnel Management's most recent report on telework, 47 percent of Federal workers teleworked routinely or situationally in fiscal year 2021. That was a 2 percent increase over fiscal year 2020, the year in which the pandemic struck.

According to a Federal Times report this past October, just one in three Federal workers had returned to their office full time in 2022.

Just last week, The Wall Street Journal reported that a new study by Cushman & Wakefield found only 5 percent of the prepandemic workforce returned to work in federally leased buildings in Washington, D.C., in October and November.

□ 1415

The Federal Government's abuse of telework has gotten so bad that Washington, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser has called on President Biden to suspend the telework policies for Federal workers or turn over Federal buildings in D.C. for conversion to affordable housing.

The current OPM Director has stated that Federal employees are actually

getting transfers to agencies where they can telework more—not so they can serve our constituents and the American citizenry the best.

The SHOW UP Act offers a much-needed solution to the problem of Federal agencies and Federal employees putting their own comfort before our constituents' needs.

It requires Federal agencies to immediately return to prepandemic levels of telework. This ensures that from the day of enactment, priority number one for the Federal workforce will be prompt and effective service to our constituents, not increasing the perks for an already privileged Federal bureaucracy.

The SHOW UP Act also requires a governmentwide review of pandemic-era teleworking policies. This will help Congress see how much expanded telework either improved or harmed agency-by-agency effectiveness, costs, and network security across our vast Federal Government.

The bill would prevent the Biden administration from locking in higher levels of telework until Congress receives detailed plans on how mission performance would be impacted.

If the agencies' plans show increased telework would substantially improve agency performance, lower agency costs, ensure agency network security, and better disperse Federal employees across the Nation, then increased telework can then be considered as an option, but not until increased telework has been proven to better serve our constituents and the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support this vital legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

We strongly oppose this bill, which is an assault on all the progress we have made over the last several years in telework policy. Telework has strengthened private and public workplaces across the land, enhanced productivity, increased efficiency, improved the morale and satisfaction of the workforce, reduced traffic congestion, and made positive environmental changes.

When the chairman says it is time to return to work, I believe this is a misnomer because people who participate in telework are working. They are already working, and so they don't need to return to work.

This bill would take a sledgehammer to Federal telework policy and law, which the sponsors seem completely oblivious to, and you can hardly blame them because the leadership brings this measure forward without the benefit of even a single hearing in the Oversight Committee, which means Congress has not heard from the Office of Personnel Management or any of the Federal agency chiefs, and it has not heard from any Federal workers or their collective bargaining representatives. It hasn't heard from any of the stakeholders other than secondhand, I guess,

through hearsay the Mayor of Washington, D.C., who not surprisingly seems to be resistant, at least according to that report, to telework policy.

This is an arbitrary effort to roll back all of the progress that has been made under legislation and administrative rules over the last decade without any participation at all of the key stakeholders.

The bill falsely equates the development of telework as part of a balanced Federal workplace policy by OPM and the agencies with the sudden and near complete shift to virtual work in certain sectors because of the pandemic. Those are two completely different things.

This conflation produces nothing but confusion, and the bill is a wrecking ball against telework policy, which has been a critical success in so many workplaces.

Colleagues, the workplace is changing because of extraordinary new technology and a new focus on productivity and efficiency as opposed to industrial-age assembly-line seating and command-and-control work relations.

Before the pandemic, hybrid and remote work were already growing far more prevalent across professions, particularly for jobs performed in an office setting. The pandemic accelerated these dynamics not only in the Federal workplace but even more dramatically in the private sector.

From fiscal year 2019 to 2020, as we entered the pandemic, Federal telework doubled from roughly 500,000 people to more than a million. Practically overnight, traditional barriers to telework, such as technological obstacles and management resistance, began to disappear. Federal agencies implemented sweeping new guidelines as an essential tool for the continuity of government operations.

The pandemic, of course, will not last forever. Indeed, the President announced that he plans to end the public health emergency on May 11. The Federal Government will not maintain a pandemic-level telework posture in perpetuity, but we cannot ignore the lessons that we have learned over the last several years.

As OPM put it in its 2021 annual report on the status of telework, “there is no going back.” Enhanced demand in the national workforce and among Federal employees will continue as workers and supervisors report greatly enhanced productivity and focus from flexible work practices that reduce time wasted in endless in-person meetings, watercooler gossip sessions, and the proverbial BS sessions that overcome so many people’s offices.

According to a survey by The Conference Board, 82 percent of companies are going to offer hybrid work options to employees going forward, and the number of private companies willing to let at least some portion of their workforce go fully remote has tripled to an astonishing 36 percent.

In another survey, 63 percent of employees rated the value of 2 to 3 days

being able to work from home as equivalent to a pay raise.

To remain competitive with the private sector with which we compete, the Federal Government must offer reasonable telework options. OPM says it will, observing that we must appreciate the sea change in the American labor market.

Telework saves money, helps the government recruit top talent, reduces traffic gridlock, makes environmental sense, and ensures a continuity of operations at agencies that Americans rely on every single day. It is a lifeline for people who have disabilities or are immunocompromised, and it offers dramatically expanded opportunities for people living in more rural areas to enter and sustain a career in the Federal service.

We cannot enter a time machine and simply wish away the utility of telework in recruiting and retaining new generations of Federal workers. We should embrace telework as part of a balanced workplace policy to promote employee satisfaction and overall mission outcome.

OPM Director Kiran Ahuja offers a clear-eyed vision for the future in her annual report saying, “Federal agencies must continue to embrace workplace flexibilities, such as telework, to remain competitive for top talent. Decisions about telework, however, must be driven by delivery of mission. We all work for the American public, and how we best serve them needs to be the paramount consideration.”

That means telework does not make sense for every worker in every office or every activity. If you are guarding the Capitol, obviously you need to be present. If you are researching groups that were involved in the insurrection against the Capitol, you might be able to work part of that time virtually. Processing paper tax returns at the IRS may indeed require in-person work.

I will note that although people are blaming the problems with IRS responsiveness on telework, that does not make sense to me. Telephone work is something that can be done from the office, home office, or somewhere else, which is why we have been, on our side of the aisle, invested in increasing staff at the IRS because our constituents are so frustrated with being left on the phone and not getting answers returned about when they will be getting their IRS refund.

In the Inflation Reduction Act, we added 5,000 new positions for people on the phones to respond to our constituents. I know that some of our colleagues across the aisle have opposed additional funding for IRS positions, and that is surely a far more likely culprit than whatever telework policies are in place over at the IRS.

The Biden administration’s telework guidance seeks to strike a balance between getting people who need to be in person back in the office safely and helping agencies design their post-pandemic

telework plans to build off the prior successes of this policy.

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

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX).

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, let me state a simple fact that has evidently been forgotten in Washington: The Federal workforce’s primary imperative should always be to promptly serve the American people.

Unfortunately, what the American people have experienced over the past 2 years is the exact opposite of what they deserve. Thanks to the Federal Government’s pandemic-era telework policies which were instituted by bureaucrats in Washington, delay and disarray might as well have become hallmarks of Federal agencies and departments.

According to a Federal Times report from October of last year, just one in three Federal workers has returned to his or her office in a full-time capacity. It is abundantly clear that something must change, and House Republicans have the solution.

Mr. Speaker, I am particularly pleased to serve as a cosponsor of H.R. 139, the SHOW UP Act, that is sponsored by Oversight and Accountability Committee Chairman JAMES COMER. Under this legislation, the Biden administration would be prevented from cementing pandemic-era telework policies for the Federal workforce until it provides Congress with a viable plan to avoid the negative impacts of remote work.

Yet again, House Republicans are acting on our commitment to the American people to ensure a government that is accountable.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that the entire Federal workforce returns to its in-person capacity and fulfills its responsibilities to the American people. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 139.

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

I will tell you a story about a couple that both work for the Federal Government. Earlier this month, the spouse of an Army servicemember, seeking approval to go work overseas for the State Department, contacted the Oversight Committee because she was being forced to decide between quitting her very successful Federal career for the State Department or returning to Washington, D.C., to continue her Federal service without her husband and her two children.

Her agency was fighting desperately to maintain her expertise and was perfectly fine with her performing her duties from overseas with her husband, who is in the Army who was being relocated over there.

Luckily, we were able to help make sure that her overseas telework request was approved.

Now, is that someone who is not really working? Do we want to tell her to get back to work?

Her situation is common for thousands of families in the Federal workforce where you have one member who is in the military who is being relocated, the other who might be working at a site in Washington who is now able to work out the terms of service under the telework policy, but that is precisely an element of the policy that will be crushed by the legislation that has been brought forward without the benefit of a single hearing in the Oversight and Accountability Committee.

Despite the fact that our colleagues have said that they will only bring legislation to the floor after there has been a hearing—and we are just a few weeks into the session—this legislation comes forward without hearing from anybody like this constituent who was being put in such a tough posture or the Directors of the agencies or the head of the Office of Personnel Management who is in charge of actually supervising and coordinating overall telework policy and making the annual report to Congress.

Telework is a vital tool for the government to recruit and retain and grow the talented workforce we need to make the Federal Government work. It ensures that Federal workers can serve the Nation even during disasters. Again, it was the preexisting telework policy that established the infrastructure that made for such a relatively smooth transition when we got into the pandemic.

I have to say that denials of telework for the spouses of military personnel are still common, and they are consequential, and they would be pervasive if the legislation passed. I hope that all our colleagues will reject this and at the very least send it back to the Oversight Committee for some real hearings so we can talk about what this really means.

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

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FALLON).

□ 1430

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this is about common sense. For 2 years, our constituents have been calling our office and wondering why the IRS, the Social Security Administration, and the VA aren't answering their phones, why can't they get in-person meetings with Federal workers, why they have to talk to a robot on the phone for hours, or wait for months on end just for an email update on their case.

Well, today, Mr. Speaker, House Republicans are going to stop the lackadaisical policies of the Biden administration. The SHOW UP Act is a wonderful bill that I am proud to support. It is going to make an end to COVID an actual reality.

Federal workers should do the same thing that the private sector industry has done, which is they have gotten

back to work for over 18 months, in large measure. It is time the Federal workers get back to work and start serving the American people to their full capacity.

This bill requires Federal agencies to return to the 2019 pre-pandemic telework levels within 30 days; reasonable, commonsense. The bill requires that Federal agencies show Congress how pandemic-era telework impacted their missions. Finally, the bill requires new oversight for agencies that seek to expand telework.

This oversight will help save money and create jobs outside the D.C. beltway. It is important to stress that this bill is not some radical notion. We are not ending all telework. We are just snapping back to 2019 pre-pandemic levels and ensuring a reasonable pathway for agencies to retain telework employees and, under the right conditions, allow for expansion of telework.

The bottom line is the pandemic is over. The American people need Federal Government to function. And in order to do that, we need our workers back. The IRS has failed to give Americans their refunds in a timely manner for 3 years running, and as late as last year, still had 12.4 million returns to process.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding additional time.

Mr. Speaker, the Veterans Affairs Administration has hundreds of thousands of backlogged claims. As for the Social Security Administration, The Washington Post states, "More than 1 million disabled Americans, many of them poor and elderly, are waiting months or years to hear whether they will receive benefits. Processing times have doubled in some States and almost tripled in others."

So long as the American people are not getting the services this government is mandated to provide, we are not operating a government for, by, and of the people.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to address two points. One, let's grab the bull by the horns with this IRS point. The President's budget included \$80 billion to increase staffing and to update technology at the IRS so our constituents can get their calls returned. If you are waiting for your IRS tax refund, that is something that you have planned on. That is part of your family budget. If it is stuck somehow, it is extremely frustrating for people not to be able to get through.

Now they, bizarrely to my mind, blame telework for this, and they oppose the \$80 billion. I think they say that will create 75,000 or 100,000 new IRS agents who will be chasing working-class people around the country.

On the contrary, we have a report showing the \$80 billion will produce

\$200 billion in new revenue and it is rich people who are the ones who are being protected by the refusal of my colleagues to invest in the IRS.

Telework is a complete distraction. It is an absolute red herring. It has nothing to do with whether or not you want to invest in the IRS or not.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. MFUME), my colleague.

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member of the Committee on Oversight and Reform, Mr. RASKIN, for yielding this time.

A couple quick things. H.R. 139 is an overly broad proposal that stretches across the entirety of the Federal Government workplace to say that each and every telework policy, practice, and procedure implemented in response to the global health crisis must end immediately in 30 days because a majority of the House of Representatives says so.

Well, let's remember that in the word "telework," the last four letters are w-o-r-k. People who telework are working. They are working day in and day out. And they have been working through the crisis, working to get us back to where we need to be.

The bill says that the rest of America must then take time to study the majority of our edict today to see if it made sense in the first place.

Now, if that is not a classic case of putting the cart before the horse or the tail wagging the dog, I don't know. I do know that this is not how a deliberative body, particularly this Chamber, should operate. We should at least have a hearing on this, bring in the proper agencies, review this in a real sort of way, and then figure out what we do. To act this way creates a real problem. The solution, I think, is looking for a problem, and this is not the place it ought to be.

We have not talked with OPM. We have not talked with Federal agencies. We have really not talked with the IRS. We just condemn them. You have to remember, the 5,000 IRS agents we were trying to put in place on this side of the aisle were to augment what they were doing. The IRS has been slow in terms of responding. This was an effort to speed that up.

Mr. Speaker, the distinguished gentleman from Kentucky's First District, Mr. COMER, and I, I think, want to get to one thing, and that is the idea of greater productivity, but I would ask that we think about another way to try to do this.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a Department of Defense Inspector General report dated March 30, 2021. The full report can be found at: <https://www.dodig.mil/reports.html/Article/2557812/evaluation-of-access-to-department-of-defense-information-technology-and-commun/>.

[March 30, 2021]

RESULTS IN BRIEF—EVALUATION OF ACCESS TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE-2019 PANDEMIC

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this evaluation was to determine the extent to which DoD Components provided access to DoD information technology and communications during the coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic.

BACKGROUND

In May 2006, the President issued the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza Implementation Plan that requires Federal agencies to develop plans to maintain information technology and communications systems to continue operations during a pandemic. In response, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security (ASD(HD&GS)) issued the DoD Implementation Plan for Pandemic Influenza (DoD Implementation Plan) in August 2006 to ensure the continuity of essential functions in the event of a pandemic. The DoD Implementation Plan states that during a pandemic, special consideration must be given to social distancing in the workplace through teleworking. DoD Components' pandemic plans should include the use of laptops, high-speed telecommunications links, and other systems that enable personnel to perform essential functions while teleworking. The plans should also include the requirement to test telework procedures, the impact of Government-wide mandated telework on internal networks, and backup plans for communications infrastructure.

Apart from DoD pandemic planning, the DoD Telework Policy states that telework will be actively promoted and implemented throughout the DoD in support of emergency preparedness. The policy recognizes that during a pandemic, essential and non-essential personnel and Service members may be asked to telework; therefore, periodic telework exercises are required to ensure its effectiveness in continuing operations and an efficient transition to telework in the event of a pandemic.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DoD Components began transitioning to maximum telework in mid-March 2020. On March 18, 2020, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum stating that DoD Components could execute their pandemic plans, or portions of their plans, at any time to ensure the ability to perform their essential functions.

To determine the extent to which DoD Components provided access to DoD information technology and communications during maximum telework in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we administered a 43-question survey to a sample of DoD military and civilian personnel. In August 2020, we invited 269,282 DoD military and civilian personnel to respond to our survey to share their teleworking experiences from March 15 through August 26, 2020. We received a total of 56,057 responses, comprising 7,323 military and 48,734 civilian personnel, for a 20.8 percent overall response rate. We also conducted interviews with officials from the DoD Office of the Chief Information Officer, the DoD COVID-19 Telework Readiness Task Force, and the Offices of the Chief Information Officer for 10 DoD Components to obtain their perspectives on the infrastructure established to support the increased number of teleworking personnel.

FINDING

According to the 54,665 respondents who reported their telework status, the DoD transitioned 88.2 percent of respondents to

full- or part-time telework from March 15, 2020 through August 26, 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the 11.8 percent of respondents who continued to work on site, the most common reasons provided by survey respondents for not teleworking were that their work could not be performed while teleworking, or they were not eligible to telework. Of those who teleworked, survey respondents reported problems accessing DoD Component networks, voice and video teleconference applications, and identified shortfalls in Government-furnished equipment available to DoD personnel when their Components first transitioned to maximum telework in mid-March 2020. However, the problems cited in survey responses lessened over time as the DoD increased its network availability and capacity, added voice and video conferencing applications, and purchased and distributed computer and communications equipment.

Based on the results of the survey and interviews with DoD officials, the DoD's initial challenges occurred because some DoD Components had not fully tested whether their information systems could support Government-wide mandated telework and had not conducted telework exercises with their personnel before March 2020 as required by the DoD Implementation Plan and the DoD Telework Policy. Therefore, some DoD Components were unprepared for the network and communications limitations, as well as equipment and application shortfalls, uncovered by the transition to maximum telework. While the Marine Corps, Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA), Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA), and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) were able to immediately transition to maximum telework, the Army, Navy, Air Force, Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA), Defense Finance Accounting Service (DFAS), and Defense Health Agency (DHA) faced challenges during the transition.

The ability of DoD personnel to perform essential and non-essential tasks while on maximum telework depends on DoD Components' ability to provide enough network capacity, communication tools, and equipment to enable the DoD's essential and non-essential personnel to stay mission-ready and productive while in a telework status. Some teleworking personnel reported that they found their own alternative solutions including the use of unauthorized video conferencing applications and personal laptops, printers, and cell phones to complete their work because some DoD Components were unprepared for maximum telework. However, using unauthorized applications or sharing DoD information over improperly secured devices, even temporarily, increases the risk of exposing sensitive departmental information that could impact national security and DoD missions.

Overall, DoD Components and the majority of survey respondents expressed positive maximum telework experiences. Specifically, 88.1 percent of survey respondents stated that their productivity level remained the same or increased during maximum telework, regardless of their Component's initial telework challenges. Many survey respondents reported a desire to telework regularly in the future (37,146 responses) and expressed appreciation for commuting less often (27,711 responses), better work-life balance (25,508 responses), and more flexible work hours (22,461 responses).

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the ASD(HD&GS) revise the DoD Implementation Plan for Pandemic Influenza to update planning assumptions with the use of telework for essential and non-essential personnel, align the DoD

Implementation Plan with the DoD Telework Policy, and require DoD Components to update their plans to include revised assumptions regarding telework for personnel and the resources required to support the teleworking workforce.

We recommend that the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)), in coordination with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, establish management oversight procedures to verify that DoD Components have performed the testing, training, and exercise requirements of the DoD Implementation Plan and the DoD Telework Policy. The oversight procedures should assess the ability of DoD Components to support Government-wide mandated telework, including the results of tests of network and communications systems and telework exercises with personnel.

MANAGEMENT COMMENTS AND OUR RESPONSE

The Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (DUSD(P)), responding for the USD(P) and the ASD(HD&GS) did not respond to the recommendation to require DoD Components to update their Pandemic Plans to include revised assumptions regarding telework for personnel and the resources required to support the teleworking workforce. Therefore, the recommendation is unresolved. We request that the ASD(HD&GS) provide comments on the final report.

The DUSD(P) did not agree or disagree with the other two recommendations in the report. However, the DUSD(P) stated that the ASD(HD&GS) would work with the Joint Staff and the U.S. Northern Command to include the use of telework for essential and non-essential personnel in the Functional Campaign Plan—Pandemics and Infectious Diseases, which will replace the DoD Implementation Plan for Pandemic Influenza, and align the plan with the DoD Telework Policy. In addition, the DUSD(P) stated that the ASD(HD&GS) would also work with the Joint Staff to include the use of telework for essential and non-essential personnel in the Global Integration Framework—Pandemics and Infectious Diseases.

Furthermore, the DUSD(P) stated that her office would support and advocate for oversight procedures to verify that DoD Components performed the testing, training, and exercise requirements of the Global Integration Framework—Pandemics and Infectious Diseases, the Functional Campaign Plan—Pandemics and Infectious Diseases, the DoD Telework Policy, and the Pandemic Plans. Therefore, the recommendations are resolved, but will remain open until the ASD(HD&GS) updates the Functional Campaign Plan—Pandemics and Infectious Diseases and the Global Integration Framework—Pandemics and Infectious Diseases to include the use of telework for essential and non-essential personnel and USD(P) provides oversight procedures for verifying that DoD Components performed the required testing, training, and exercises.

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, based on 56,000 respondents to its survey, 88 percent of the Department of Defense respondents found telework accommodations increased their overall productivity. This is not my imagination. This is how thousands and thousands of them responded in the survey.

A similar 2021 survey conducted by the American Federation of Government Employees, which represents 700,000 Federal employees all across the country, found that 62 percent of them surveyed thought significantly that their productivity had been increased while teleworking based on what their previous levels were.

So Federal workers are performing for the American people and have been under the most difficult circumstances even before we got to COVID. I know that because I, like many of you, had a chance to speak to so many of them.

As the chair of the Subcommittee on Government Operations, this particular issue is welcomed before the subcommittee. I will convene hearings next week so that we can figure out where we are in a bipartisan way and move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I would make one point. Federal workers are not here in Washington, D.C., alone. That is the misnomer. Federal workers are in everybody's district in this entire Congress. They are looking to us to try to find a way to help them, not to punish them in 30 days. We are not going to save money on gas. We are not going to save money on energy. We are just going to go back to where we are.

Mr. Speaker, I would strongly urge that this measure be defeated.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DONALDS).

Mr. DONALDS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, in short, the pandemic is over. It is time for Federal employees to go back to the office.

I find it interesting in this debate that one of the things that is occurring right now is that the President's budget is due next week. We are in the middle of this calamity around debt ceiling which the President, by the way, has led us to. His budget is due next week, and he is telling everybody he needs another month.

I wonder if this is because some of his own budget staff aren't in the office. This is something that should have been done long ago. If the President was doing his job being the leader of the executive branch, those employees would have been back. Since Congress is the body responsible for appropriating funds to the executive branch and the President does not do his job of making sure it is working effectively, then Congress does have a responsibility to make sure that these employees come back and get back to work. Life has been happening here in the people's House.

A couple of things: It has already been said about the IRS delays. It is shocking that right now it takes 2 to 4 months to get assigned an agent. If you call the IRS, you won't get a call back for 4 weeks.

It is also important to understand that right now it takes 30 days for USCIS to respond to a Congressional inquiry. There are many backlogs at the VA; some of them almost 2 years, 197,000 backlogs. How is that affecting the men and women who have served our country with honor and with dignity?

Mr. Speaker, this is simple stuff. Most of the American people have gone back to work. All we are saying is let's go back to pre-pandemic protocols

which does have telework provisions throughout all of the Federal agencies. It is clear, looking at the backlogs that have occurred through COVID-19 and continuing, the extended telework situation in the Federal agencies is not working for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues should be supporting this legislation. This is good legislation. It will help all of the American people and, frankly, help the President probably pass his budget on time.

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

Mr. Speaker, they complain about delays at the IRS and then they oppose funding to assist the overwhelmed workforce at the IRS, which is staggering under the weight of all of these obligations.

This is the first time I have heard that telework was the source of the problem, but apparently, that is what it is this week. Of course, we haven't had a real hearing so we have had no witnesses on it; somebody has apparently just dreamed that up.

It has just been linked to the debt ceiling. Interesting that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle has voted to lift the debt ceiling three different times under Donald Trump, who increased the debt of the United States single-handedly by more than 20 percent. All of the debt of the United States under one President. More than 20 percent.

Mr. Speaker, let's get back to the issue at hand.

Members of Congress make very strange opponents of telework policy, not because we don't work hard, because I think we do work hard, but we use telework all the time.

Members of Congress might be in their district office working. They might be at a town hall meeting working. They might be here on the floor. They might be in a committee meeting, a subcommittee meeting. They might be meeting with constituents somewhere else.

And I dare say the vast majority, if not all of us, engage in telework. We wouldn't say to them, "Get back to work and stop teleworking." We understand that that is part of an overall telework policy.

If people have employees who they think are abusing telework, well, they have got a problem with that employee or they have a problem with their supervisor. But to my experience and knowledge, as someone who, I admit, may have been a little curmudgeonly, in the way we are hearing some of the Members are today, when the COVID-19 crisis started, the employees who are super productive at work will be super productive at home.

In my case, that is almost all of them. In fact, I think it is all of them. If you have an employee who blows off their assignments at work and doesn't turn them in, they will do the same thing if they are working from home. That is a question of supervision. The

real issue is, why all of a sudden they want to turn against a decade of progress on telework policy and start affixing to it all of these other problems.

For that, I don't understand, other than people seem to want to blame the Federal workers for everything. Those workers belong to all of our districts. They are all across the country. Eighty percent of Federal workers are not in Washington, D.C., Maryland, or Virginia. They are all over the country, working everywhere from military bases to Indian reservations to public health service. You name it.

These are our people. These are American citizens, and they deserve something a lot more than the implied contempt of suggesting that if they use telework, they are not really working.

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

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN).

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I have been waiting for this day for quite a while. Whenever I go back to my district, I talk to my staff back there. Again and again, we hear stories that they want something done with the VA; they want something done with the IRS. It can't get done. They are behind.

It is time for people to get back to work. When I think of my district, I think the vast majority of people, their work schedule never changed even in the teeth of the epidemic.

Obviously, in Wisconsin, there are a lot of cheese factories in my district. Man, I would go home every night and there would be people there at 11 p.m., 12 a.m., 2 a.m. All of a sudden, we hear how horrible it is for Federal employees to have to go in.

In the current situation, what it tells you is—and this is true of many other programs, as well—the government works for the benefit of the government not the benefit of the people.

□ 1445

That is why people on that side of the aisle are trying so hard, so desperately hard today, not to have people come in.

I talk to a lot of employers all over my district. There were times that any given number of their employees worked from home, but they know it is not the same thing. Why in the world the government should be operating on a separate schedule, I don't know.

I will give you an example. The National Personnel Records Center is an egregious example. The NPRC is a large warehouse containing paper records of military members from before World War I to the 1990s. Veterans need access to these records in order to receive VA healthcare, disability pay, and home loans.

Despite these records existing in paper form only, the NPRC still decided to have its employees work remotely, a perfect example of the employees' interests put ahead of the

public's interest. This time, the public is veterans.

You can't copy paper records from a warehouse if no one is there to pull the records to make copies to satisfy the request.

These employees were paid, but since they were not at the NPRC, they were unable to fulfill their duties, and veterans were forced to wait to receive their benefits.

The SHOW UP Act will require these Federal agencies to return to pre-COVID levels of telework.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. GROTHMAN. By the way, I don't bring this up back home. We are talking about it today, but I think it is such an insult to all the people back home, many of which are whole factories that never took any time off, to be told that they have to wait for the Federal Government because their people are, I mean, my goodness, still at home almost 3 years after this thing.

Do you know any private businesses that are still having their people stay at home?

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY).

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this bill.

We often hear Republicans want to roll back the clock—roll back the clock on abortion rights to 1973 before *Roe v. Wade*, roll back the clock on teaching the history of American slavery to, I don't know when, 1860, 1619?

This bill actually rolls back the clock. It is right there in the text. The bill mandates "each agency shall reinstate and apply the telework policies, practices, and levels of the agency as in effect on December 31, 2019."

Which begs the question: What was the state of Federal telework in 2019? President Trump's administration had across-the-board limitations to telework at major Federal agencies that had made progress before, like the Department of Education and the Department of Agriculture.

The overall telework participation rate had recorded its first drop since the enactment of the Telework Enhancement Act authored by myself and Mr. SARBANES of Maryland.

We had not yet experienced the onset of the global pandemic, which forced us overnight to move the Federal Government to a posture of substantially enhanced hybrid work. We deployed telework as the critical continuity of operations tool it should be. We procured the IT and IT security we needed. Supervisors figured out how to manage hybrid work.

At the height of the pandemic, 75 percent of the Federal workforce was, in fact, working remotely.

Not everybody is going to continue to telework full time, nor should they. Federal telework participation rates

have already decreased substantially as more Federal employees move back in person.

The most recent telework survey showed that 47 percent of Federal employees teleworked in the last fiscal year, but the fact remains that increased availability of telework is here to stay in the private as well as the public sectors.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics found that 80 percent of U.S. businesses expect increased telework levels to continue after the pandemic. That is in the business community.

That is the nature of the workforce of the future. We should be embracing the productivity and employee satisfaction gains realized through telework.

I offered an amendment to this bill that would have done just that, but unfortunately, we are considering this bill under a closed rule.

We should be using a measured approach to determine where hybrid or remote work might not be the best fit. I know I have done that in advocating for more in-person work at the IRS, processing paper tax returns; at the State Department, responding to passport applications; and at the National Archives, fulfilling veterans' document requests, all of which require in-person functioning. I have supported it, as have my colleagues.

I have also offered a telework legislation bill, the Telework Metrics and Cost Savings Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, this would help measure cost savings and focus on using telework effectively, but this bill is sort of a one size fits all, come back to work no matter what.

Let me say to my friend from Wisconsin that I had a constituent die from COVID because there were no protocols in his Federal workplace.

There ought not to be any more casualties to COVID. We ought to have systematic protocols in place. That is what I think has to precede this kind of legislation we are considering on the floor today.

I thank my friend from Kentucky for introducing this bill.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mrs. BOEBERT).

Mrs. BOEBERT. Mr. Speaker, the pandemic is over. Joe Biden has said so. I don't know why he is waiting until May to do something about it, but the pandemic is over.

It is time for the Federal Government to get back to work. It is far past time for the policies of the Federal Government to reflect this reality and the policies of hardworking Americans and for Federal employees to show up and get the job done.

In my district, the Bureau of Land Management headquarters was a hot

topic of debate because this administration's—one of their first actions, they wanted to take that from my district and move it back to Washington, D.C. Why the haste? Why so fast to do this?

No one is going to work. The building is empty. They didn't have anywhere to bring the employees to a new building here. In fact, the employees that they did relocate to Washington, D.C., still only show up to work 1 day a week.

According to one disturbing report by the Federal Times, just one in three Federal workers has returned to their full-time job.

Equally disturbing, a leaked memo from January 2021 to the then-chief of staff of the Department of Health and Human Services showed that between 20 and 30 percent of the Department's employees did not log in to work on any given day between March and December 2020.

This negatively impacts all of our constituents.

The VA has been incredibly slow to fulfill records requests so that our veterans can get the care that they need, the care that they deserve.

The Social Security Administration faces a massive backlog of appeals.

As of last month, the IRS had a backlog of 2.5 million returns from 2022 that are still unprocessed.

This Republican-led Congress is moving to end Biden's emergency powers. He won't do it at the executive level.

We have created these agencies. We fund these agencies. Now, we are demanding that these Federal employees get back to work.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this legislation, and I strongly support it. I urge adoption.

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

The gentlewoman makes an interesting argument. Of course, if physical presence in Washington is necessary, then that agency never should have been stripped from Washington and relocated in Colorado in the first place.

One could say that entire workforce is calling in or not really working because the entire office has a telework policy.

Obviously, she has carved out an exception for that. She thinks they can be effective, even though they are not in Washington, D.C.

Look, Mr. Speaker, this has been not just a closed rule but a closed process. There was no hearing in the Oversight and Accountability Committee. Despite the fact that those hearings have been promised, there has been no hearing about it.

Let me tell you one of the things we would learn if we actually had a hearing about it. The bill contemplates rolling the clock back to 2019 for every Federal agency. Well, what would that mean for one small agency, the Federal Communications Commission, which has decided upon a plan to reduce its leased office space with a savings of

\$119 million precisely because of the existence of telework, saying we don't need all that space?

Now, since we rolled the clock back and presumptively say you can't do that, we are going to be costing the taxpayers \$119 million a year because they have to go back to their prepandemic plan simply because we have this one-size-fits-all, categorical, cookie-cutter approach undertaken without any hearings.

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office similarly would be forced to abandon its \$12.5 million a year in savings in leasing costs made possible because of reduced consumption of office space by telework.

Do we really want to say that we hate telework so much, that we distrust our own workers so much, even though the studies show that it is yielding benefits in office productivity, that we are going to force the taxpayers to pay more money for more expensive office space in downtown Washington, D.C.?

We haven't even looked at the question because there was no hearing because there was just a rush to get this to the floor so we could tell workers who are already at work to get back to work.

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

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Kentucky has 14 minutes remaining.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON).

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, to my colleague across the aisle, they need to get back to work. Only in Washington, D.C., and only with this President are we operating with COVID as a national emergency.

The only national emergency coming out of Washington is the economic disaster from the failed economic policies and the reckless spending of my colleagues.

It has created an inflationary firestorm, and people can't sustain it. Soaring interest rates, an economy teetering on recession, and \$5 trillion of debt that have us dangerously close to the precipice of a debt crisis is an emergency.

Our constituents across America have to go back to work. They have to take their kids to school. Somebody has to teach them. Somebody has to save a patient or serve a customer. They don't live in this fantasy world of Washington.

My colleagues, unfortunately, have used the public health emergency in large part not to protect the public from COVID but to promote the big spending, Big Government bailout agenda.

What I am talking about is this, in the name of COVID, bailing out student loans that cost taxpayers a tril-

lion dollars, bailing out schools that don't open their doors to their students. Bailout after bailout, that is what this is about.

While Democrats are jamming us with all these bailouts in the name of COVID, taxpayers can't get their Social Security benefits and their tax returns or their passports. You heard the stories.

Here is my question. It is a simple one. How can the people's government serve the people if the people in the government don't come to work? That is the question from my constituents in west Texas. Here is the answer. It can't. It doesn't.

If hardworking Americans don't have the luxury of not coming to work and teleworking for the rest of their lives, then the Biden administration and our government employees should do the same. Get back to work. Do your job. Serve the customer because that is what you signed up to do.

We are here to hold them accountable, with all due respect.

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

Mr. Speaker, some of my colleagues seem to betray no understanding at all of what Federal telework policy is.

To say that the workforce is not going to the office and it is time to get back to work simply suggests they don't know that every agency, every commission, every department makes its own decisions about this as part of the complete workplace policy, going job classification by job classification, defining when it makes sense and when it doesn't make sense.

That is the way that it works, but they want to have a broad-brush, one-size-fits-all, straitjacket policy where they just decapitate a decade of progress, using the pandemic or the end of the pandemic as the excuse for doing that.

To repeat: This is not a Washington problem. The vast majority of the Federal workforce is spread out across the country.

The hardworking people we see in front of us today who work for the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives and for the House are just a small example of the workforce located in Washington, which is a tiny minority of the Federal workforce which is all over America.

That flexibility has been given to Federal workforce supervisors all over the country to deal with. They would clearly try to elevate what I think is a frivolous talking point over the cost savings that have been created because of telework policies. They would elevate it over the increased job performance and job satisfaction that is being demonstrated in studies around the country. They would elevate it over the clear success of telework within the private sector.

□ 1500

Oftentimes, my colleagues will say we have to be more like the private

sector. It is the private sector that has been leading the way here. The Federal workforce has been very much in the rear guard doing it.

In any event, remember that they are conflating two completely different things. One is the Federal telework policy that has evolved over the last decade, and the other is the pandemic.

It is true that the pandemic response was made far more efficient because there was an infrastructure in place in order to make telework possible. Those pandemic policies can be reversed without destroying all the policies that have developed over the last decade.

There are an incredible number of unintended consequences that are exacerbated by the fact we have not had a single hearing on this question, which is of fundamental importance to hundreds of thousands and millions of people across the country.

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

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further Members to debate. I am prepared to close whenever the gentleman is prepared. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The title of this bill, the SHOW UP Act, consists of the Stopping Home Office Work's Unproductive Problems Act. I understand that in Washington—this really is a Washington problem—there is always a search for the perfect acronym over the actual meaning of the language, but this title does some real violence to the English language.

I don't know what an "unproductive problem" is. I certainly don't know what a "productive problem" is. I wonder whether the person who wrote that was working on telework or wrote it at the office. To me, it makes no difference. Somebody should have said that doesn't really make any sense for a title for Federal legislation.

In any event, the point is that Members of Congress, as everyone should know, are able to be very effective, often being in two places at the same time. You might be at your district office, or you might be at a townhall meeting in your district, but you call into a meeting with your chief of staff and your legislative staff, or you call in to have a meeting with subcommittee staff or what have you. I don't understand the sudden effort to demonize technology and all the advances that we have made.

I don't take this to be serious legislation. There was no hearing on it. There seems to be no effort to convince anyone that it is serious. I hope we can do better in the days ahead.

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

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE), the majority leader.

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Kentucky for yielding and for bringing this important legislation to the floor.

When you look across the country, people have worked hard to get their lives back in order, to get their small businesses back up and running. States pushed to open up again because they knew that the health of their people, the mental health, the ability for kids to get back in school, was so critical.

Of course, data is out there all around but especially amongst our young kids. Many millions of young kids in America lost a year-plus of learning because of virtual learning. Not being in the classroom just wasn't the same. Those communities that made the effort to open back up again were able to provide a much higher level of education than those schools that went out of their way to shut down. Damage was caused to so many.

As you see most of the country now back at work, they look at Congress and say: Why isn't Washington back at work?

When you look at Federal agencies that are there to provide a service for the 330-plus million people all across this great Nation, Mr. Speaker, those people expect that when they pick up the phone and call those agencies—if you are a military veteran who served this Nation, you surely showed up for work. You showed up, in fact, overseas, in some cases, risking your life, receiving injuries. You want to get your military record so you can be eligible to go get the healthcare you deserve. When you call the VA and they can't get your healthcare records because there are still people not at the office—those are things you can't do remotely—those veterans wait for help. That hurts people.

You have millions of people who are trying to get basic services like a passport. Maybe they are trying to go on their honeymoon; or they are waiting for a loved one to come back home that they haven't seen who lives overseas, and they have been waiting for years; or they want to go visit a relative and have waited 6 months in some cases. We get calls to our offices on these problems, people who have been waiting over 6 months to get a passport renewed.

That is something you cannot do remotely. If you call that office and somebody is at home, they are not able to process your passport from their home, so you have to wait and wait and miss dates and deadlines.

When you see what is happening with so many other people who are counting on the Federal Government to take care of their needs, they wonder why they haven't gone back to work when they have had to go back to work.

You saw the President wanting to hire 87,000 more IRS agents. There are many IRS agents that aren't showing up for work. We still get calls to this day from constituents, hardworking people who live paycheck to paycheck who filed their tax returns in 2021 who still haven't gotten their checks back. They are wondering why somebody is sitting at home not able to process

that payment. Why do they have to wait over a year to get their money back from their government?

The answer is not to double the agency and hire another 87,000 people. It is to let people go back to work.

This bill just says to show up to work to do your job, to serve those millions of people who are paying your salaries and counting on you to get the job done.

This should have been done a long time ago. I am glad we finally are getting this bill brought to the floor. I thank the gentleman for bringing it.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

This legislation asks every Member to answer a simple question: Do you put the needs of your constituents first, or do you put the preferences of Federal bureaucrats first?

We know that expanded telework during the COVID-19 pandemic harmed agency service to our constituents across multiple vital agencies. Instead of fixing those problems and making sure they never happen again if increased telework needs to continue in certain cases, the Biden administration is just blindly doubling down on Federal telework across the board—not to improve service to our constituents, but to dangle a shiny perk in front of existing Federal workers and prospective new Federal hires.

My bill ensures that a new expectation is set for our Federal Government's workforce: that you need to return to your agencies and get the job done for the American people.

Federal telework should only be utilized when it has been proven to improve agency performance, lower agency costs, ensure agency network security, and better disperse the Federal workforce across the Nation.

In the meantime, it requires Federal agencies to reimplement pre-pandemic policies, which were working just fine.

Under this bill, we will know that, whether we have increased Federal telework or not, it will only be to ensure that Federal agencies and their employees provide the best quality of service to our constituents and our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this much-needed bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 139, the SHOW UP Act, which was introduced by my good friend from Kentucky, the Chairman of the Oversight and Accountability Committee, Mr. Comer.

Millions of Tennesseans show up to work every day. However, more than half of federal government workers, who are expected to serve the American people, still aren't showing up for work. This has led to extremely long wait times and delays in services.

Veterans who showed up to work and served our country can't get their proper VA benefits. Families are waiting months for their passports. And in my district, a father waited for more than 8 months to receive his tax return. The entire time, he was left in the dark by the IRS.

Tennesseans deserve better, Mr. Speaker. The pandemic is over, and it's time to get back to work. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on the SHOW UP Act.

Mr. SANTOS. Resolving casework is one of the most important services provided by our offices.

I was shocked to learn that my predecessor left behind numerous unresolved cases—but, in retrospect, perhaps I shouldn't be so critical. Maybe the simple reason is they were unable to solve constituent issues because he and his staff were hampered by the fact that agency personnel, were either unavailable, or, those who were, simply didn't have the resources available for them to process requests. Why? Because they are working from home.

Our functional system of government, how we get things done, was built to support a government workforce where our people come into an office, work together, in one place, face to face.

Around that infrastructure, we have businesses (or perhaps I should say we had businesses) that were built to support that workforce—small businesses, such as coffee shops, restaurants, dry cleaners, etc.

Most industries, who instituted telework policies during the pandemic have returned or have begun to return to their respective workplaces. And like the government, those businesses were designed around an in-office workforce.

This bill does not eliminate telework; it simply returns the workforce to the policies that were in place in 2019.

And perhaps, with the report, that this bill requests from the OPM, there is a good chance some agencies will show that telework or other arrangements make sense.

Fine.

But as of today; we the oversight body, do not have that data.

Let's reset—analyze where we've been and then move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R.139.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 75, the previous question is ordered on the bill.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RELATING TO A NATIONAL EMERGENCY DECLARED BY THE PRESIDENT ON MARCH 13, 2020

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 75, I call up the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 7) relating to a national emergency declared by the President on March 13, 2020, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.