

Mr. Speaker, 22 bills have been signed into law. At about this point in the last Congress, 81 bills had been signed into law. At this point in the 116th Congress, the Congress just before that, 107 bills had been signed into law.

Mr. Speaker, what have we accomplished for the American people? I will tell you what: Virtually nothing.

We have just 4 legislative days left this year, and we have very little to show for it. We have passed two CRs and raised the debt ceiling, but that is really about it.

To this date, we have been defined by the chaos and confusion in the Republican Congress and the 19 votes for the Speaker of the House so far this year. We are truly the do-nothing Congress.

We haven't passed funding for Israel or Ukraine. We haven't passed a farm bill or reauthorized the FAA. Border security and immigration reform are top-of-mind issues that need to be resolved. Yet, we will be facing another government shutdown when we come back in January.

Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking, and the American people are counting on us to do what we were sent here to do—to vote, to get things done. The world is at a critical juncture, and our inaction speaks volumes.

In Ukraine, we have heard from our diplomatic and defense leaders about the precarious situation in Ukraine and in Israel. Right now, we risk Ukraine literally running out of bullets. If we do nothing by the end of the year, Vladimir Putin will win.

The silence in this Chamber is easily mistaken around the world as support for Moscow, and we cannot let that happen.

The majority of the Republican Conference, I believe, supports standing with Ukraine, but the vocal minority in the Republican Conference has been able to block all action so far this year. It is the tail wagging the dog, and it is disgraceful.

Let's talk about the cost. If we gift wrap Ukraine for Vladimir Putin this holiday season, we will spend 100 times more money down the road containing an aggressive Russia all over the world.

This is a national security issue for the American people. Support for Ukraine is in our national interest.

Let's talk about Israel. Like Russia, Hamas poses an existential threat to democracy. It is our duty to firmly stand with our democratic allies.

The majority of the Members of this Chamber support a clean security and humanitarian aid package to Israel, yet nothing has happened. It is shameful that our new Speaker has chosen to play partisan political games with support for Israel.

Listen, Mr. Speaker. Something has got to give in this Congress. Democrats have a narrow majority in the Senate; Republicans have a very narrow—soon to be even more narrow—majority in the House; and Democrats have the White House. We have to work together if we are going to get anything done.

Until the Republican Conference begins to understand that, we will continue to accomplish nothing for the American people.

I believe we can work together. I believe we can pass a bill to support Israel and Ukraine, strengthen our southern border, and pass immigration reform, but only if we do it together.

That is the challenge we have, Mr. Speaker. There is still time to act. There is still time to vote. There is still time to come back next week to pass support for Israel and Ukraine. We need to do it. We need to get things done. We do not want to be defined as the do-nothing Congress.

I am here to get to work, and I encourage all of my colleagues to join me in reaching across the aisle and working together to get these things done.

HONORING CORDELL WALKER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. KUSTOFF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUSTOFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Cordell Walker for his work caring for veterans in the Memphis area.

I first met Cordell probably more than 20 years ago through current Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland. Mr. Walker is retiring as executive director of Alpha Omega Veterans Services later this month after several decades of service to our community and to our veterans.

Cordell Walker said that after seeing his friends return home from Vietnam a shell of who they were, he decided that he wanted to dedicate his life to serving our Nation's veterans, and he has done exactly that.

This past Veterans Day, just a month or so ago, Cordell Walker was honored in a ceremony to open the new Cordell Walker Veterans Center in Memphis.

I believe—I think we probably all believe—that answering the call to service in the United States military is about the most admirable thing that a person can do.

Cordell Walker recognized that our veterans sacrificed so much for all of our freedom and that they deserve the best care after they retire from our military.

I thank Cordell Walker for his service caring for veterans in the Memphis area and throughout west Tennessee.

I am really proud to know Cordell, and I congratulate Cordell Walker on a job well done. Roberta and I wish him the best in his future endeavors.

HONORING JUSTIN HUNTER

Mr. KUSTOFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a good friend, Justin Hunter, who left us way too soon on September 16 of this year, 2023.

Originally from the bootheel of Missouri, just north of my district in west Tennessee, Justin Hunter had a big impact in west Tennessee. He served our community many years ago by working for former Congressman Ed Bryant.

It was in west Tennessee that Justin met his wife, Caroline. Together, they

attended law school at the University of Memphis.

Later, while working for Encompass Health, Justin put his experience to work to help improve access to rehabilitation hospital care.

Justin Hunter was a really strong and passionate advocate for rehabilitation hospitals. Justin used his understanding of the laws governing Medicare programs to help improve the quality of healthcare available to Americans across our Nation.

I know I just used the word "passion," but Justin was very passionate about everything he did and believed in. If he was in, he was in 100 percent on everything.

Justin Hunter will be remembered not only for his dedication to healthcare and to the law but also as an avid hunter and barbecue master and for his tremendous devotion to his family.

For both Roberta and me, our thoughts are with Justin's wife, Caroline, and with their two daughters, Helena and Vivian.

Justin is truly and sorely missed by so many, and I will always have good and fond memories of our friendship together.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 14 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. VALADAO) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

Rear Admiral Gregory Todd, Chief of Chaplains, United States Navy, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

Eternal Father, ruler of wind and wave, You establish the heavens and order all of creation.

Behold Your humble people, seeking only to serve and not to be served. Grant all who labor in this House a heart of humble service.

Lord, in Your wisdom, You led the predecessor to this Congress, the Continental Congress of 1775, out of concern for the souls of sailors serving in the Continental Navy, to mandate that divine services be held on all Navy ships, thus giving rise 248 years ago to the Navy Chaplain Corps.

Inspired by the insight of our forebears, we seek Your divine hand to raise up more religious ministry professionals to serve as United States Navy chaplains.

In our day, Lord, grant us an increase of Navy chaplains to care for the souls

of sailors, marines, coast guardsmen, and their families as they navigate the daily challenges of military service.

Lord, empower our Nation to send Navy chaplains to care for its greatest treasure: our sons and daughters.

Into Your divine hands we commit our prayer, trusting in Your divine mercy.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MORAN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MORAN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would now entertain requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

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

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVISTS DEBT RELIEF EXTENSION ACT OF 2023

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3315) to exempt for an additional 4-year period, from the application of the means-test presumption of abuse under chapter 7, qualifying members of reserve components of the Armed Forces and members of the National Guard who, after September 11, 2001, are called to active duty or to perform a homeland defense activity for not less than 90 days.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3315

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 "National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Extension Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVISTS DEBT RELIEF AMENDMENT.

Section 4(b) of the National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-438; 122 Stat. 5000) is amended by striking "15-year" and inserting "19-year".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MORAN) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 3315.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3315, the National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Extension Act of 2023.

The bill before us today is an important piece of legislation. It will help National Guard members and Armed Services reservists who serve our country.

Some of these individuals face financial hardships during or after Active Duty. Bankruptcy may be needed to resolve these hardships.

In 2008, Congress recognized that guardsmen and reservists sometimes confront unique financial challenges when returning home from Active Duty.

Congress enacted the National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Act in 2008 to respond to these challenges and has extended its protection several times since. Those protections are set to expire later this month.

Under current law, certain guardsmen and reservists are exempt from the Bankruptcy Code's means test. This test helps decide whether a debtor is eligible for debt forgiveness under chapter 7 of the Bankruptcy Code.

The test looks at recent income and expense data to gauge a consumer's ability to repay their debt, but the means test can be an obstacle to debt forgiveness for guardsmen and reservists. Their income and expenses can change dramatically when transitioning from civilian life to Active Duty and back.

The means test does not account for these changes in income and expenses due to Active-Duty service.

The National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Extension Act of 2023 responds to this concern. This bill would extend for an additional 4 years the existing means test exemption for certain qualifying National Guard members and Armed Services reservists.

We continue to call on our guardsmen and our reservists to put their careers on hold to serve our country. We should ensure that those military per-

sonnel who fall on hard times are not denied access to bankruptcy because of their Active-Duty status.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, according to a 2022 lifestyle survey of servicemembers and veterans, financial issues were the top lifestyle stressor, and unfortunately, bankruptcy sometimes is the best answer for those in financial distress.

Under current law, National Guard members and reservists who serve on Active Duty are, like other active servicemembers, exempt from the Bankruptcy Code means test which determines whether a debtor's income is too high to have all of his or her debts erased in bankruptcy. This critical protection for National Guard members and reservists has to be extended every 4 years, and this is the time to do it.

Unless otherwise exempted, these servicemembers and veterans must complete the required forms and submit the specified paperwork to satisfy the Bankruptcy Code's means test.

This burdensome requirement would even apply to National Guard and reservists who have returned to the United States from active service and thus no longer receive combat pay.

Under the means test, such servicemember must calculate his or her income based on the average monthly income that he or she received during the 6-month period preceding the filing date of the bankruptcy case, rather than the debtor's actual income, which may be less because of the debtor's noncombat status.

Without this exemption, some servicemembers and veterans may be prevented from seeking the financial relief that they need and deserve. We should not deny the reservists and the National Guard these benefits.

This extension is an immediate concern. The bill would extend for 4 years the temporary authorization exempting certain qualifying reserve component members of the Armed Services and National Guard members from this means test.

I am proud to have led the effort to exempt the National Guard and reservists from the means test in 2008 and the extensions of this successful program in 2015 and 2019. If we do not act today, this critical protection for National Guard members and reservists will expire in a matter of weeks.

I hope we can act on a bipartisan basis, as we have always done, to extend the authority.

I thank my cosponsors Representatives BEN CLINE, MADELEINE DEAN, TIM BURCHETT, and leaders of the companion effort in the Senate, Senators DURBIN and GRAHAM.

This is truly a bipartisan, bicameral effort.

I thank Chairman JORDAN, who moved this bill through the Judiciary Committee and advocated for its quick