

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

□ 1630

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, this has been a great work of bipartisanship that impacts not only the future of our country but your and my futures, the future of America, and the future of all the young children today watching this take place.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. DE LA CRUZ), my very good friend.

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, we live in an increasingly interconnected world with new and emerging technologies changing how we conduct business with one another and exchange currency.

Blockchain technology and digital assets are a key component of this. This new technology is here to stay and needs an environment in which it can continue to grow and thrive in the United States.

At the same time, Congress needs to ensure that law enforcement has the tools they need to combat new threats arising from this technology. The Financial Technology Protection Act will help accomplish that goal.

H.R. 2969 establishes an independent financial technology working group that is focused on combating illicit finance using financial technologies, including digital assets.

The working group established by this act will conduct research on illicit finance and will use that knowledge to develop legislative and regulatory proposals to counter money laundering, terrorist financing, and other threats to the U.S. so that our families are more secure and money is cut off from illicit enterprises.

This bill is good governance. It is bipartisan. It is a cooperative effort to address real problems in our country, and I am happy to support it and vote in favor of it on the House floor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2969.

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

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. DE LA CRUZ) not only for her incredible work in Texas but for what she is doing on the Financial Services Committee to really help protect our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. NICKEL) has no additional speakers, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

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

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues on the House Committee on Fi-

ancial Services. This has truly been a team effort.

Mr. Speaker, I remind the entire body, as well as my fellow Americans, that blockchain technology, digital assets, and other financial technology products are here to stay, and they will be an intricate part of our future. Together, we need an environment where they can grow safely, right here in America. We must move them smartly, innovatively, and made in the U.S.

At the same time, we must stay one step ahead of bad actors, terrorists, and others who want to exploit our financial system to engage in illicit activity or, worse, terrorism or state-sponsored threats.

Mr. Speaker, this bill moves us in the right direction, and so I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2969.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUNN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2969, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HUD TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2024

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7280) to require the Inspector General of the Department of Housing and Urban Development to testify before the Congress annually, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7280

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 “HUD Transparency Act of 2024”.

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY.

Not later than October 1 of each year, the Inspector General of the Department of Housing and Urban Development shall appear before the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate and present testimony on the Office of Inspector General’s—

- (1) efforts to detect and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse;*
- (2) ability to conduct and supervise audits, investigations, and reviews;*
- (3) actions to identify opportunities for the programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development to progress and succeed;*
- (4) recommendations to improve overall efficiency and public accountability;*
- (5) assessment of the extent to which the Department of Housing and Urban Development has resources sufficient to carry out its statutory mission; and*
- (6) ongoing activities regarding any such additional work, as appropriate.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUNN) and the gentleman

from North Carolina (Mr. NICKEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. DE LA CRUZ) and her bill, H.R. 7280, the HUD Transparency Act.

Mr. Speaker, our country is suffering from an affordable housing crisis, particularly in rural areas, like rural Texas, rural Iowa, and even rural North Carolina. Across the country, there is a shortage of over 7.3 million affordable and available rental homes for low-income renters.

In my home State of Iowa, 10.6 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, and the average household income is no more than \$10,000, or less than the national average.

These housing problems are the result of bad policies at the agency overseeing housing, HUD.

With 8,500 nationwide employees and an annual budget of more than \$75 billion, it is concerning that the HUD inspector general has highlighted many unacceptable problems at the agency, such as substandard housing conditions and even life-threatening issues with HUD-funded units.

It is common sense to require the inspector general of HUD to testify before Congress at least once per year. We owe it to the families served by HUD and to American taxpayers to create the platform required to be able to continue to shine a bright light on these important issues.

Congresswoman DE LA CRUZ’ bill is a positive step forward. It supports the opportunity for the inspector general of HUD to come before us to detail what is happening and help us find those critical solutions.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the HUD Transparency Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7280, the HUD Transparency Act of 2024, sponsored by Representative DE LA CRUZ, which would require the inspector general of the Department of Housing and Urban Development to testify before Congress on an annual basis.

While this bill passed out of committee on, again, a bipartisan basis, House Democrats are working to put people over politics, and we urge our Republican counterparts to support

real solutions to combat our Nation's housing and homelessness crisis, including the Housing Crisis Response Act, the Ending Homelessness Act, and the Downpayment Toward Equity Act offered by Ranking Member MAXINE WATERS earlier this Congress.

This comprehensive package of bills would help spur the development of over a million affordable homes to help bring down rents, curb rising homelessness, and revive the dream of homeownership for all.

These are the types of solutions our constituents are calling on us to advance as they continue to face the crushing blow of housing inflation.

Mr. Speaker, I also note that I recently introduced the Keep Housing Affordable Act, which would bolster the low-income housing tax credit to incentivize developers to maintain the affordability of housing units for extended periods and boost the supply of affordable housing. Mr. Speaker, the high cost of housing is one of the main issues for my constituents in North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, we were supposed to be considering another bill on the floor today, H.R. 7462, the Wildfire Insurance Coverage Study Act of 2024, sponsored by Ranking Member WATERS. This bill is a commonsense measure to direct the Government Accountability Office to study the reasons why insurance companies are exiting States and refusing to provide insurance against wildfire perils.

This bill passed the committee by a broad bipartisan vote of 47-2, but unfortunately, Republican leadership pulled the vote. The majority didn't think Congress should understand why folks are losing their insurance coverage or what we can do about it.

Over the last week, communities across the country have been experiencing record heat waves as wildfires continue to ravage communities from California to Texas, Hawaii, Oklahoma, and Virginia. I hope the Speaker will quickly reconsider this ill-advised decision to pull the bill so we can bring the bill to the floor. Again, it passed 47-2 out of committee.

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

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. NICKEL) for his comments. I associate myself with many of his remarks and recognize there is a great opportunity to continue to work forward in a bipartisan way to help address particularly the rural housing shortage across America.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. DE LA CRUZ).

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUNN) for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge the passage of my bill, H.R. 7280, the HUD Transparency Act of 2024. I thank the bipartisan cosponsors of this commonsense legislation aimed at enhancing

the oversight and efficiency of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Mr. Speaker, for too long now, Congress has been without a formal oversight mechanism for HUD. Specific to the HUD inspector general, prior to the 118th Congress, it had been nearly 5 years since an official from HUD OIG testified.

H.R. 7280 provides long-overdue, consistent oversight by mandating the inspector general of HUD testify annually before Congress.

Given the magnitude of Federal dollars allocated to HUD, we know the housing affordability discussion cannot be had effectively without HUD's commitment to being responsible stewards of our tax dollars.

This is not a partisan issue. It is about ensuring that those who need HUD benefits can receive them. This legislation will enable the inspector general to provide essential insights and recommendations to Congress, facilitating informed decisionmaking and timely adjustments to HUD's programs.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the passage of the HUD Transparency Act.

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I support this bipartisan bill but also remind my Republican colleagues that we must come together to advance real solutions to the worsening housing and homelessness crisis.

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

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize the incredible work of the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. DE LA CRUZ). In only her freshman year, she is already standing on the front line of taking care of not only her constituents but recognizing this threat across the country, the challenges it poses, and offering a real solution that has earned overwhelmingly bipartisan support from the House Financial Services Committee and the team there.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues on the House floor today to support H.R. 7280, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUNN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7280, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VICTIMS' VOICES OUTSIDE AND INSIDE THE COURTROOM EFFECTIVENESS ACT

Ms. HAGEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill

(S. 3706) to amend section 3663A of title 18, United States Code, to clarify that restitution includes necessary and reasonable expenses incurred by a person who has assumed the victim's rights.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3706

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 "Victims' Voices Outside and Inside the Courtroom Effectiveness Act" or the "Victims' VOICES Act".

SEC. 2. RESTITUTION FOR EXPENSES OF PERSONS WHO HAVE ASSUMED THE VICTIM'S RIGHTS.

Section 3663A(a) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(4) CLARIFICATION.—In ordering restitution under this section, a court shall order the defendant to make restitution to a person who has assumed the victim's rights under paragraph (2) to reimburse that person's necessary and reasonable—

"(A) lost income, child care, transportation, and other expenses incurred during and directly related to participation in the investigation or prosecution of the offense or attendance at proceedings related to the offense;

"(B) lost income, transportation, and other expenses incurred that are directly related to transporting the victim for necessary medical and related professional services and devices relating to physical, psychiatric, and psychological care, including nonmedical care and treatment rendered in accordance with a method of healing recognized by the law of the place of treatment; and

"(C) lost income, transportation, and other expenses incurred that are directly related to transporting the victim to receive necessary physical and occupational therapy and rehabilitation."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. HAGEMAN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wyoming.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. HAGEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 3706.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Wyoming?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, the bill we are here today to pass brings much-needed support to crime victims across the country. The bipartisan and bicameral Victims' Voices Outside and Inside the Courtroom Effectiveness Act, or Victims' VOICES Act, passed the Senate through unanimous consent. I am proud to be the House lead on this important legislation.

□ 1645

I thank my friend and colleague across the aisle, Representative LUCY MCBATH, for her work on this legislation and for her continued advocacy on behalf of victims.