

medics—performed aeromedical evacuations of over 900,000 U.S., Vietnamese, and allied forces from May 1962 to March 1973. Dustoff crews often faced foul weather, mountainous terrain, and intense enemy fire, with crewmembers facing a one-in-three chance of being wounded or killed.

These were heroes who saved lives.

One Dustoff unit, the 54th Medical Detachment, typified the heroism of Dustoff crews. Over 10 months, 40 soldiers equipped with only three helicopters evacuated over 21,000 patients on 8,600 missions over nearly 5,000 hours, earning 78 valor awards.

Awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to the Dustoff crews of the Vietnam war is an important step toward recognizing the pivotal role that these servicemembers played in saving the lives of so many and serving our country so proudly.

Since the American Revolution, Congress has commissioned gold medals as its highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievements and contributions.

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

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. KILMER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Congress has never awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to any group of Vietnam veterans. Today, we can change that by passing this legislation. I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote to do just that.

Madam Speaker, I thank Representative MCMORRIS RODGERS and Senators CORNYN and WARREN for their partnership and leadership on this effort. I also thank our veterans and every family member or friend who has supported a veteran.

Madam Speaker, we honor the service of our Vietnam veterans. Today, we move forward in ensuring that the Dustoff crews are recognized with the Congressional Gold Medal, and I thank them for their service.

May God bless them and this country.

Mrs. KIM of California. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time. I am so pleased and proud to be on this floor today in recognition of Vietnam-era veterans and their service to this country.

As a matter of fact, I have always felt very bad when I encountered Vietnam-era veterans and always apologized to them for the fact that they were not received back to their country in a manner that they should have been and received the resources that they deserved, having served our country.

This is a very important bill that will honor the U.S. Army Dustoff crews of the Vietnam war collectively in recognition of their extraordinary her-

oism, their lifesaving actions in Vietnam, and their direct contribution to the defense of the United States.

I thank Mr. KILMER and all the other sponsors of this bill. Further, I asked my staff as we were sitting here: Were the Dustoff crews a special unit that we are honoring today? Should we be looking at other Vietnam-era veterans?

It is a question I am raising as I make this presentation today.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. KILMER so very much for his comments. I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes," and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I, too, echo all the comments that were said about honoring the Vietnam war-era veterans. I take the challenge that our ranking member has spoken about, identifying and recognizing other Vietnam war veterans, and that is why I have done this.

As I am sure many of my colleagues do, too, in their respective districts, we take the time to identify the Vietnam-era war veterans, and every time we have a community event, we invite them and present them with a token of a lapel pin to show our appreciation. It is a small token of saying thank you. We can never say enough about how we are happy that they are home, so we welcome everybody home, especially from the Vietnam war.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support S. 2825, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARL). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2825.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

BILLIE JEAN KING CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2861) to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Billie Jean King, an American icon, in recognition of a remarkable life devoted to championing equal rights for all, in sports and in society.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2861

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 "Billie Jean King Congressional Gold Medal Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Billie Jean King, born Billie Jean Moffitt on November 22, 1943, in Long Beach, California, demonstrated athletic prowess from a young age. She was introduced to tennis at the age of 11, and soon after, Billie Jean purchased her first tennis racket using money she earned working various jobs in her neighborhood.

(2) Billie Jean broke numerous barriers to become a number one professional tennis player. She dominated women's tennis with 39 Grand Slam singles, doubles, and mixed doubles titles, including a record 20 championships at Wimbledon. She also was a member of 3 World Team Tennis championship teams.

(3) After growing in prominence, Billie Jean used her platform as a celebrity to fight for equal rights and opportunities for equality for all in sports, and society, in the United States.

(4) Billie Jean played an instrumental role in the passage of title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.), a law that mandates equal funding for women's and men's sports programs in schools and colleges. This legislation has unlocked a world of opportunities for girls and women in education and sports.

(5) During Billie Jean's career, the pay difference between prize money for men and women in tennis continued to expand. By the early 1970s, the pay gap in prize money reached ratios of as much as 12 to 1. Fewer and fewer tournaments were hosting women's events. Billie Jean harnessed the energy of the women's rights movement to create a women's tennis tour that would elevate women's tennis and establish pay equity within the sport. Along with 8 other women tennis players, she formed an independent women's professional tennis circuit, the Virginia Slims Series.

(6) In 1973, Billie Jean founded the Women's Tennis Association, today's principal governing body for women's professional tennis.

(7) Billie Jean helped found womenSports magazine and founded the Women's Sports Foundation. Both have been at the forefront of advancing women's voice in sports.

(8) Billie Jean successfully lobbied for equal prize money for men and women at the 1973 US Open Tennis Championships. It would take another 34 years for the other 3 major tournaments to all offer equal prize money.

(9) In 1973, Billie Jean played a tennis match against Bobby Riggs, a former World Number 1 player who sought to undermine the credibility and prominence of women in sports. Billie Jean defeated Riggs in what became a firm declaration of women's role in sports and society.

(10) Billie Jean King was the first tennis player and woman to be named Sports Illustrated's Sportsperson of the Year, one of the "100 Most Important Americans of the 20th Century" by LIFE magazine, was the recipient of the 1999 Arthur Ashe Award for Courage, and has been admitted to the International Women's Sports Hall of Fame, the International Tennis Hall of Fame, and the National Women's Hall of Fame.

(11) In 2006, the United States Tennis Association recognized Billie Jean's immeasurable impact on the sport of tennis by renaming the site of the US Open in her honor as the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, which is located in Flushing Meadows Corona Park in Queens, New York. This was the first time a major sporting complex was named after a woman.

(12) In 2009, Billie Jean was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States, by President Barack Obama for her impactful work advocating for the rights of women. She was the first female athlete to receive this honor.

(13) In 2014, Billie Jean King founded the Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative to empower companies and individuals to create inclusive work environments that celebrate and promote diversity and equality in the workplace.

(14) In 2020, Fed Cup, the world cup of women's tennis, was renamed the Billie Jean King Cup, making it the first global team competition to be named after a woman.

(15) Billie Jean King's extraordinary courage, leadership, and activism helped propel the women's movement forward, and open doors for countless people in the United States. On and off the court, Billie Jean has served as an inspiration to millions of people the world over. Few women and men have had a greater impact on their sport and on our society than Billie Jean King.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) **PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.**—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the presentation, on behalf of Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design to Billie Jean King, in recognition of her contribution to the United States and her courageous and groundbreaking leadership advancing equal rights for women in athletics, education, and our society.

(b) **DESIGN AND STRIKING.**—For purposes of the presentation described in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the "Secretary") shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the Secretary. The design shall bear an image of, and inscription of the name of, Billie Jean King.

SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3 at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.

(a) **NATIONAL MEDALS.**—Medals struck under this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

(b) **NUMISMATIC ITEMS.**—For purposes of section 5134 and section 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.

(a) **AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.**—There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be necessary to pay for the costs of the medals struck under this Act.

(b) **PROCEEDS OF SALE.**—Amounts received from the sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. KIM of California. 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 gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2861, a bill that would award the Congressional Gold Medal to an American sports icon and champion of women's rights, Billie Jean King.

I will start by thanking Representatives BRIAN FITZPATRICK and MIKIE SHERILL for leading the House version of this bill, H.R. 1831.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be here today to celebrate the historic accomplishments of Ms. Billie Jean King.

Billie Jean is a tennis legend. She was introduced to tennis at 11 years old and dominated the game until her retirement from competition in 1983. She reached number one in the world with 39 Grand Slam singles, doubles, and mixed doubles titles.

We are in awe of her athletic achievements and impact on the game. However, we are not here today just to talk about her accomplishments on the court.

Mr. Speaker, Billie Jean used her notoriety and platform to fight for equal rights and equal opportunities for all, not just in sports, but in American society, as well. She became an advocate for female athletes at a time when female accomplishments were not celebrated or rewarded in the same way as her male counterparts.

Billie Jean had an instrumental hand in shaping the opportunities in education and sports for girls and women. Without her efforts and dedication to the passage of Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, America would look very different today.

After that legislative win, Billie Jean focused her efforts on lobbying for equal prize money for both men and women at the 1973 U.S. Open Tennis Championships. Although it would take another 34 years for the other three major tennis tournaments to offer equal prize money, she started a conversation that continued to push through barriers with her actions.

That same year, Billie Jean did something unprecedented and played a tennis match against former world number one player, male tennis star, Bobby Riggs. She defeated Riggs, and this match became a firm declaration of women's roles in sports.

Through her leadership, bravery, and activism, we owe her a huge debt of gratitude. I can think of no person more deserving to earn this distinguished honor.

S. 2861 would recognize Billie Jean King's tireless efforts to make the world a better and more equitable place. It is only fitting that she be the first female athlete to receive a Congressional Gold Medal for those efforts. It is my hope that her courage will continue to inspire Americans today and every day.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2861, the Billie Jean King Congressional Gold Medal Act, sponsored by Senator GILLIBRAND.

Today, we will vote to honor Billie Jean King's remarkable work in sports and society with the Congressional Gold Medal.

Billie Jean King broke numerous barriers to become a number one tennis player, and after growing in prominence, she used her platform as a celebrity to fight for equal rights and equal opportunities for women in American sports and society.

Notably, Billie Jean King played an instrumental role in the passage of Title IX, the law that mandates equal funding for women's and men's sports in American schools. Title IX unlocked opportunities for girls and women in education and sports.

I cannot help but mention Representative Mink, who served in this body. She authored Title IX, the Early Childhood Education Act, and the Women's Educational Equity Act.

□ 1445

During Billie Jean King's career, the pay difference between men and women for prize money continued to expand. Fewer and fewer tournaments were hosting women's events.

Billie Jean King led many efforts to elevate women's sports. Along with eight other women tennis players, she formed an independent women's professional tennis circuit called the Virginia Slims Series.

She also founded the Women's Tennis Association, which still exists today, the womenSports magazine, and the Women's Sports Foundation. All of these organizations have been instrumental in advancing women's voices in sports.

At the 1973 U.S. Open Tennis Championships, Billie Jean King successfully lobbied for equal prize money between men and women.

Billie Jean King was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009, the highest civilian honor in the United States, by President Barack Obama. The honor recognized her impactful work throughout the years in advocating for the rights of women. She was the first female athlete to receive the honor.

In 2014, Billie Jean King founded the Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative to empower companies and individuals to create inclusive work environments. These inclusive work environments celebrate and promote diversity and equality.

The Fed Cup, the world cup of women's tennis, was renamed to the Billie Jean King Cup in 2020, making it the first global competition to be named after a woman.

Billie Jean King has clearly been recognized for her extraordinary courage, leadership, and activism that helped propel the women's movement forward. Today, Congress will vote to bestow its highest honor as well. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

I want you to know before I close, Billie Jean King attended my alma mater, Cal State University in Los Angeles, and she was there from 1961 to

1964, and we honored her a long time ago.

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

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 2861, the bipartisan, bicameral legislation to award the incomparable and indomitable Billie Jean King, a legendary athlete, ardent advocate, and a trailblazing icon, the Congressional Gold Medal.

Mr. Speaker, last March, I proudly introduced this legislation, which has received overwhelming bipartisan support, standing at just under 300 cosponsors, a remarkable feat in and of itself.

At just 11 years old, Billie Jean set her sights on becoming the greatest tennis player the world has ever seen. Mr. Speaker, she did just that and more.

Billie Jean became a force on the tennis court and a transformative champion for equality, charting new paths for all athletes and spearheading the fight for gender equality in sports and beyond.

Beyond her extraordinary collection of trophies and 39 Grand Slam titles, Billie Jean King leveraged her remarkable achievements and prominent platform to catalyze a seismic shift in the women's movement.

Mr. Speaker, she didn't simply raise the profile of women's tennis—she redefined its very foundation. Through her fearless defiance of the status quo, her staunch advocacy for Title IX and pay equality, and her visionary efforts to expand opportunities for girls and women in sports, Billie Jean's impact has been transformative, and her legacy of advocacy stands unmatched.

Mr. Speaker, this Friday will mark the 51st anniversary of the historic iconic Battle of the Sexes match where Billie Jean triumphantly defeated Bobby Riggs in front of tens of millions of people across America and across the globe, including my own mom who was pregnant with me at the time.

Billie Jean shattered the false narrative of women's inequality, proving that women can not only compete at the highest level, they can dominate at the highest level.

That iconic victory ignited a seismic shift in women's sports, sparking a revolution that empowered generations of women to demand their rights and seek equality in every sphere of life.

Now, five decades later, Billie Jean stands once more at the brink of yet another groundbreaking and trailblazing accomplishment.

Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian honor this legislative body, the United States Congress, can bestow. It is awarded to those who have profoundly impacted our Nation's history. Past recipients

include influential athletes like Roberto Clemente and Arnold Palmer.

Mr. Speaker, with the passage today of S. 2861, the indomitable Billie Jean will become the first female athlete ever in United States' history to receive this prestigious and well-deserved honor.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to my partners in the Senate, Senators GILLIBRAND and CAPITO, and our House colleagues as well, Representatives SHERRILL and MALLIOTAKIS, for their incredible work, doing the hard work of garnering cosponsors on this floor day in and day out for many months.

I thank the U.S. Tennis Association for their support and tireless dedication to preserving and celebrating Billie Jean King's legacy.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to enshrine Billie Jean King's legacy as not only a champion of tennis but a champion of equality whose impact will continue to inspire women and girls and people across America and across the world.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to support this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) wish to reclaim her time?

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to reclaim the time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized.

There was no objection.

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

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from New York, (Ms. MALLIOTAKIS).

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Mr. Speaker, this week marks the 51st anniversary of the Battle of the Sexes, the female versus male tennis match between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs, played on September 20, 1973.

Mr. Speaker, 90 million people in the world tuned in to watch as King made history and defeated Riggs at the Houston Astrodome in three straight sets: 6-4, 6-3, and 6-3.

It was a first, it was groundbreaking, and it forever changed the sport of tennis and brought the issue of women's equality to the forefront of our Nation.

Billie Jean King has inspired generations of American women. She lived the dream for her generation and the women who came before her, who lived during a time when they were restricted from reaching their full potential.

She has empowered young women with the road she paved and the ceiling that she broke. My generation was the first to really benefit from the positive changes made because of her.

I can say that she certainly inspired me to challenge and defeat a man for this seat in the House of Representatives.

To really put in perspective just how courageous and trailblazing Billie Jean

King's actions were, one needs to know what women endured at the time.

In 1973: Women could not get their own credit card or open a bank account without their husband or a male co-signer.

They could not attend a U.S. military service academy.

In some States, they couldn't even serve on a jury.

There were no protections against sexual harassment in the workplace. They could get fired just for being pregnant, and there was no access to birth control.

Women were paid 50 percent less than men, and the sport of tennis was no different. In fact, it was worse. In 1970, Billie Jean and eight other female players created their own tennis circuit to protest men receiving 12 to 1 prize money at an upcoming tournament.

In 1972, when Billie Jean won the U.S. Open singles title and received \$10,000 in prize money while the male winner was awarded \$25,000, she used her platform to further champion the issue of equal prize money and threatened to boycott the U.S. Open unless the disparity was addressed.

She founded the Women's Tennis Association, and she put her reputation, her tennis career, and her title on the line for gender equality, and she never wavered.

Her courage, resolve, and determination pushed the U.S. Tennis Association to make the 1973 U.S. Open the first sporting event to offer equal prize money to female and male competitors.

Billie Jean is also no stranger to the Halls of Congress. She came to Washington to advocate for and testify in support of Title IX, signed by President Nixon in 1972, that prohibited sex discrimination in all federally funded school activities.

Her achievements, both on and off the court, earned Billie Jean King accolades and honors. She became the first female athlete to be named a Sportsperson of the Year by Sports Illustrated.

In 1975, Seventeen Magazine readers named Billie Jean the most admired woman in the world. In 1976, she was Time Magazine's Woman of the Year. In 1990, Life magazine named her one of the 100 Most Important Americans of the 20th century.

She was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 1987. In 2006, the U.S. Tennis Association Tennis Center in my city, New York City, home of the U.S. Open, was renamed in her honor.

In 2009, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. She even has her own song by Elton John in tribute to her 1974 tennis team, Philadelphia Freedoms.

As a Representative of Staten Island, New York, where the sport of tennis was first brought and played by Mary Ewing Outerbridge 150 years ago and where the first national tennis tournament was played in 1880, it gives me

great pride to stand before you and to join Representative FITZPATRICK and my colleagues in honoring the woman who advanced the sport and achieved equal prize money for herself and all the women who followed.

Mr. Speaker, while Congress has awarded a Congressional Gold Medal to prolific male athletes in the past, this body has never awarded a female athlete the highest civilian honor.

Today, we seek to change that and award it to the one woman who advocated, fought, and blazed the trail for equality in sports and won 129 singles titles and 39 Grand Slam titles along the way, Billie Jean King.

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

Mr. Speaker, this important bill will award a Congressional Gold Medal to Billie Jean King in recognition of her remarkable work devoted to championing women's rights in sports and in society. She used her platform to fight for equal rights and opportunities for equality in sports and society.

I am very thankful to Senator GILLIBRAND for her work on this important bill. I cannot help but share with you today, Billie Jean King helped to inspire and also helped to ensure equal opportunities for future tennis players.

Coming from my district, where they were reared and trained to be the champions that they became, Venus and Serena Williams are beneficiaries of all of that work that Billie Jean King did to change the way prize money was equalized and to make sure that women in tennis and women in all aspects of our society have equal opportunities. I thank Billie Jean King.

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

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all my colleagues who spoke in support of this legislation. I believe this was a wonderful time where we got to understand much more than what we knew from the news articles about Billie Jean and her accomplishments, and her legacy will continue on. She will continue to be an inspiration to all of us, especially to girls and women and future athletes.

I urge my colleagues to support S. 2861, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2861.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mrs. KIM of California. 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 motion will be postponed.

□ 1500

BUILDING ON REEMPLOYMENT IMPROVEMENTS TO DELIVER GOOD EMPLOYMENT FOR WORKERS ACT

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5861) to extend reemployment services and eligibility assessments to all claimants for unemployment benefits, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5861

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 "Building on Reemployment Improvements to Deliver Good Employment for Workers Act" or the "BRIDGE for Workers Act".

SEC. 2. ELIGIBILITY FOR REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Section 306(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 506(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking "individuals referred to reemployment services as described in section 303(j)" and inserting "claimants for regular compensation, including claimants referred to reemployment services as described in section 303(j)."; and

(2) by striking "such individuals" and inserting "such claimants".

(b) *EFFECTIVE DATE.*—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the BRIDGE for Workers Act to help more Americans who are out of work find employment faster.

Currently, only those deemed most likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits are eligible for job placement services provided through the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments program. That unfairly limits its resources to a small subset of UI recipients, when thousands of others could be back in the workforce sooner with this assistance. This bill levels the playing field and extends these services to every American on unemployment benefits.

These services are critical for helping Americans find work compatible with their experience and skills to help

them get back to earning a paycheck again.

Members of Congress have heard over and over again about a labor shortage and "help wanted" signs dotting storefronts across the country. This legislation will help address this shortage by helping more unemployed Americans get back into the workforce sooner.

After fraudsters and criminals stole over \$100 billion of unemployment benefits during COVID, the bill before us will also strengthen program integrity by ensuring claimants are complying with eligibility rules. Claimants must be able to work, available to work, and actively seeking work.

This legislation was a bipartisan effort sponsored by the chairman and ranking member of the Ways and Means Work and Welfare Subcommittee, Representatives LaHood and Davis. I thank them both for their leadership in helping the unemployment insurance program fulfill its mission of supporting unemployed Americans who are seeking stable work.

The BRIDGE for Workers Act passed out of committee with every single Republican and Democrat voting for it. I hope we can have a repeat performance of strong bipartisan support in favor of this legislation today.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5861, the BRIDGE for Workers Act. I am glad to see that the House is moving forward to ensure that State reemployment service programs serve the workers who can benefit from most of them, as we intended in our original bipartisan legislation.

The Ways and Means Committee reported out this bill nearly a year ago, and I hope we can work together to finally enact it this year. As you know, this important technical clarification first passed our committee, and then the full House on an overwhelming, bipartisan vote in 2019, and Senate Republicans prevented it from becoming law.

Our economic recovery has been historically strong, both in comparison to past recessions and compared to our peer countries. The right policies in the Biden-Harris American Rescue Plan Act resulted in strong GDP growth. Americans are back at work and earning higher wages than they were before. Inflation, which was always lower than in our peer countries, appears to be leveling off.

American workers are the heart of our strong economy, and the best way to preserve and grow it is to ensure that they can get and keep good jobs while also caring for their families. Research shows one way we can help people go back to work faster is to ensure that they get simple services like job market information or resume help.

This bipartisan legislation, which I was proud to work with the gentleman