

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCTION OF THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION REAL ESTATE LEASING AUTHORITY REVOCATION ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 3, 2025

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the Securities and Exchange Commission Real Estate Leasing Authority Revocation Act, which would revoke the independent real estate leasing authority of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and direct the Government Accountability Office to update its 2016 report on independent real estate leasing authority in the federal government. The House passed this bill in the 117th and 118th Congresses.

While a number of federal agencies have independent real estate leasing authority, the SEC has a history of egregious real estate practices. In 2005, the SEC disclosed that it had unbudgeted costs of approximately \$48 million for the construction of its headquarters near Union Station. In 2007, after moving into its headquarters, the SEC shuffled its employees to different office space at a cost of over \$3 million without any cost-benefit analysis or justifiable explanation. In 2010, the SEC conducted a deeply flawed analysis to justify the need to lease 900,000 square feet and to commit over \$500 million over 10 years, overestimating its space needs by over 300 percent. In addition, the SEC failed to provide complete and accurate information and prepared a faulty and backdated justification and approval after it had already signed the lease.

In August 2016, the General Services Administration (GSA) and the SEC entered into an occupancy agreement to authorize GSA to secure a new 15-year lease. In December 2016, GSA, with the approval of the SEC, submitted a prospectus to Congress for approximately 1.3 million square feet, which Congress approved in 2018.

By 2019, GSA had received final bids, resolved all protests and even selected a final bidder. A month later, the SEC canceled the occupancy agreement, citing concerns about the value of the purchase option, which the SEC refused to document to Congress. The SEC effectively vetoed the entire three-year procurement process despite not having the authority or funding to exercise the purchase option without GSA's involvement.

Finally, after much back and forth between the two agencies, GSA entered into a lease for a new SEC headquarters in September 2021, which GSA terminated in October 2024. While the SEC has said it will continue to have GSA do its leasing in the future, the SEC's history of egregious leasing conduct, squandering hundreds of millions of dollars, makes this bill necessary.

The SEC's conduct risks undermining the reputation of GSA and the federal government among developers and building owners who

participate in federal lease procurements. The threat of uncertainty ultimately drives up the cost of all GSA real estate procurements.

It is time for Congress to return the SEC's leasing authority to GSA, the federal government's civilian real estate arm. As the SEC has demonstrated over three decades, it is incredibly inefficient, wasteful and redundant to have the SEC do real estate procurements when GSA exists for that very reason. Like other federal agencies, the SEC will continue to have input in the GSA's real estate decision-making process, but GSA would have the ultimate authority.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

REMEMBERING MOUAGE MOUANOUTOUA

HON. VINCE FONG

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 3, 2025

Mr. FONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the life and legacy of Mouage Mouanoutoua.

Mouage Mouanoutoua, of Clovis, California, went home to be with his Lord and savior on December 1, 2024.

Mouage was born on November 15, 1937, in Ban Phou Nong (Mount Lake Village), Xieng Khouang Province, in the Kingdom of Laos, to Noutoua Moua and Xaab Khang. He was one of fifteen children and was the last one of that generation.

His life was a testament to his father Noutoua's teaching: "Xa quas chiv rua txuj kev ua neej, txhaj yuav muaj lub neej zoo nrug luag ua." (Discipline yourself to a life of honor, then you will have a worthy life.) He loved his elders and kept his lineage a focal point of how he lived his life.

He married his love, Rhus Hawj, on January 15, 1959. Together they had ten children, thirty-eight grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. His life was dedicated to making sure everyone was protected, provided for, cared for and loved.

Mouage and his older brother Pang Ger were the first to have formal education in Xieng Khouang City in 1952. He finished with a degree equivalent to a high school diploma. His brother Pang Ger became the Mayor of the province of Vieng Fa, while Mouage became a magistrate of the Justice Department in the Lao government. They fulfilled their father's dream of having educated children. He instilled the importance of education in all of his descendants.

Mouage loved his God and served him faithfully. Ever since his father's conversion to Christianity in December 1953, he never faltered in his belief that Jesus allowed believers to have direct communication with and be with God—both for salvation and blessings. Mouage served the Lao Evangelical Church in Laos and started the first Lao Evangelical Church in the United States. He was a prayer

warrior—communicating with God was his daily purpose.

Mouage had a loving heart and was a beautiful soul. He was a son, brother, husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather and friend. He will be cherished and missed by all who knew him.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF CHRISTOPHER BRINSON

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 3, 2025

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my Chief of Staff, Christopher Brinson.

Christopher Brinson, the son of Al and Lucy, is a proud son of Coastal North Carolina. He jokes he is the second most famous graduate of E A Laney High School, behind Michael Jordan. To my staff and I, he's number one.

Chris started in my office on day 1, January 3, 2003 as my Legislative Director. During this time, he also courageously served our country in the Army Reserves as a Military Police Officer. Chris deployed several times and rose to the rank of Captain.

Chris's influence on my office is immeasurable. My staff in Alabama and DC revere him, and without his help, I would not have successfully run for two Chairmanships. I have some of the longest-serving staff on Capitol Hill, and that's in part to what Chris has done for our team.

Chris's greatest accomplishment in life is not the Army nor is it his tenure on Capitol Hill. His greatest work is his family. Chris raised two smart, and most importantly, successful children, Zoe and Jack. From track practices, to wrestling, to countless apartment moves, he is as present a father as two kids could dream of. He is also lucky enough to share everything with Gina D' Andrea, the love of his life.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Chris Brinson upon his retirement.

INTRODUCTION OF THE WASHINGTON, D.C. ADMISSION ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 3, 2025

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the District of Columbia statehood bill, formally known as the Washington, D.C. Admission Act. This bill, which the House passed in the 116th and 117th Congresses, is the most important bill I introduce each Congress. Senator CHRIS VAN HOLLEN (D-MD) is introducing the companion bill in the Senate.

Over 700,000 D.C. residents, who have all the obligations of American citizenship, including paying all federal taxes and serving in the armed forces, are denied voting representation

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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

in Congress and full local self-government. This bill would give D.C. residents the voting representation in Congress and full local self-government they have been denied for more than 220 years. To be content with less than statehood is to concede the equality of citizenship that is the birthright of D.C. residents as American citizens.

Congress has a moral obligation and the constitutional authority to pass this bill. This country was founded on the principles of no taxation without representation and consent of the governed, but D.C. residents are taxed without representation and cannot consent to the laws under which they, as American citizens, must live.

This bill would admit the State of Washington, Douglass Commonwealth into the Union and reduce the size of the federal district. The state would consist of the residential and commercial portions of present-day D.C., and the reduced federal district, which would remain under Congress' control, would consist of the Capitol Complex, the White House, the Supreme Court, the principal federal monuments and the National Mall.

This bill complies with the Constitution, including the Admissions Clause, the District Clause and the 23rd Amendment.

The Admissions Clause gives Congress the authority to admit new states. All 37 new states were admitted by Congress. No new state was admitted by constitutional amendment. No state would have to consent to the admission of the State of Washington, D.C.

The District Clause gives Congress plenary authority over the federal district and establishes a maximum size of the federal district. It does not establish a minimum size or a location of the federal district. Congress reduced the size of the federal district by 30 percent in 1846.

The 23rd Amendment allows the federal district to participate in the Electoral College. This bill would repeal the enabling act for the 23rd Amendment, and the 23rd Amendment would be repealed quickly. In any event, the 23rd Amendment does not establish a minimum size or a location of the federal district.

The Constitution does not establish any prerequisites for new states, but Congress generally has considered three: population and re-

sources, support for statehood and commitment to democracy. The State of Washington, D.C. would meet each.

D.C.'s population is larger than that of two states, and the new state would be one of six states with a population under one million. D.C. pays more federal taxes per capita than any state and pays more federal taxes than 21 states. D.C.'s gross domestic product is larger than that of 15 states. Eighty-six percent of D.C. residents voted for statehood in 2016. In fact, D.C. residents have been fighting for voting representation in Congress and local autonomy for more than 220 years.

I seek statehood for the Americans I am honored to represent. At the same time, D.C. statehood is deeply personal for me. My great-grandfather Richard Holmes, who escaped slavery in Virginia, made it as far as D.C., a walk to freedom but not to equal citizenship. For generations, my family has been denied the rights other Americans take for granted. There are many other D.C. residents like me.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill.