

I extend special thanks to Ryan Bauman for expertly organizing this event, Lieutenant Commander Charles Michael Wise for prayer, and Rear Admiral John Vann of the United States Coast Guard for his motivating words.

It was an honor to present each enlistee with a copy of the United States Constitution, an important document they have sworn to uphold.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STRONG). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 9 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1500

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. KNOTT) at 3 p.m.

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 a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

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

AERIAL FIREFIGHTING ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2025

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 160) to amend the Wildfire Suppression Aircraft Transfer Act of 1996 to reauthorize the sale by the Department of Defense of aircraft and parts for wildfire suppression purposes, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 160

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 "Aerial Firefighting Enhancement Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. MODIFICATION AND REAUTHORIZATION OF AUTHORITY FOR SALE BY DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OF AIRCRAFT AND PARTS FOR WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION PURPOSES.

Section 2 of the Wildfire Suppression Aircraft Transfer Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-307; 10 U.S.C. 2576 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1)—

(A) by striking "a period" and inserting "the period"; and

(B) by inserting "or water" after "fire retardant";

(2) in subsection (b), by striking "sold under subsection (a)" and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting "sold under subsection (a) may be used only for the provision of aircraft services for wildfire suppression purposes.";

(3) in subsection (c), by inserting "or water" after "fire retardant";

(4) in subsection (d)(1), in the second sentence, by striking "subsection (a)(1)" and inserting "subsection (g)"; and

(5) by striking subsection (g) and inserting the following:

"(g) PERIOD FOR EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY.—The period specified in this subsection is the period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Aerial Firefighting Enhancement Act of 2025 and ending on October 1, 2035."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COMER. 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 measure.

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 am happy to support S. 160, the Aerial Firefighting Enhancement Act.

This bill will amend the Wildfire Suppression Aircraft Transfer Act of 1996 to allow the Department of Defense to, once again, sell excess aircraft and aircraft parts for wildfire suppression.

This will help facilitate the acquisition of excess military aircraft for the aerial wildfire suppression fleet.

This lifesaving authority protects our aerial firefighters and brings in revenue from military aircraft that are not needed. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office anticipates this legislation will reduce government spending.

Our brave first responders work tirelessly on the front lines, fighting wildfires that continue to get more dangerous every year.

This bipartisan, commonsense bill gives these brave men and women access to more equipment that is critical in an emergency.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Senators TIM SHEEHY and MARTIN HEINRICH for introducing this important legislation which passed the Senate unanimously in April.

I also thank Representative DAN NEWHOUSE for introducing the House companion bill and leading the charge in this Chamber. I encourage my colleagues to once again support S. 160.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 160, the Aerial Firefighting Enhancement Act.

This bill amends the Wildfire Suppression Aircraft Transfer Act of 1996 to reauthorize the sale of aircraft and

parts by the Defense Department for wildfire suppression for 10 years.

This bill reauthorizes the Secretary of Defense to sell excess Department of Defense aircraft and aircraft parts, which are acceptable for commercial sale to persons or entities that contract with the government for the delivery of fire retardants or water by air to suppress wildfires. The aircraft and parts could only be used for fire suppression.

This bill will help the U.S. suppress wildfires and recognizes the unfortunate reality that fire season is now year-round and additional resources, including aircraft, are required to effectively suppress catastrophic wildfires.

S. 160 is a bipartisan, commonsense bill that will help the United States maintain a robust fleet of wildfire suppression aircraft. I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, the Aerial Firefighting Enhancement Act.

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

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation, which will protect our brave aerial firefighters across the country.

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 Kentucky (Mr. COMER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 160.

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.

GERALD E. CONNOLLY ESOPHAGEAL CANCER AWARENESS ACT OF 2025

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3490) to require the Government Accountability Office to produce a report on esophageal cancer, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3490

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 "Gerald E. Connolly Esophageal Cancer Awareness Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) esophageal cancer is the fastest increasing cancer among American men;

(2) esophageal cancer is one of the fastest growing cancer diagnoses among all Americans, increasing more than 700 percent in recent decades;

(3) esophageal cancer kills 1 American every 36 minutes every day;

(4) esophageal cancer is among the deadliest of cancers, with only about 1 in 5 patients surviving 5 years;

(5) esophageal cancer has tripled in incidence among younger Americans in recent decades;

(6) esophageal cancer has low survival rates because it is usually discovered at advanced stages when treatment outcomes are poor;

(7) raising awareness about esophageal cancer empowers individuals to seek preventive care, recognize symptoms, and pursue early detection strategies;

(8) survivors, caregivers, medical professionals, and researchers have made tremendous strides in advancing treatment options and improving the quality of life for those affected by the disease;

(9) esophageal cancer can be prevented through early detection of its precursor, Barrett's esophagus, which can be eliminated with curative outpatient techniques;

(10) research indicates that patients diagnosed with early-stage esophageal cancer have a significantly higher 5-year survival rate (as high as 49 percent) compared to those diagnosed at later stages, underscoring the critical need for enhanced screening and awareness; and

(11) as of December 2022, the American Gastroenterological Association recommends screening with a standard upper endoscopy in individuals with 3 or more established risk factors for Barrett's Esophagus and esophageal adenocarcinoma, including—

(A) male sex;

(B) non-Hispanic white ethnicity;

(C) age of 50 years or older;

(D) a history of smoking, chronic gastrointestinal reflux disease, or obesity; and

(E) a family history of Barrett's Esophagus or esophageal adenocarcinoma.

SEC. 3. GAO REPORT.

Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to Congress that includes an evaluation of—

(1) the total impact of esophageal cancer-related health care spending under the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program for Federal employees and retirees diagnosed with esophageal cancer; and

(2) how often individuals covered under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program with medical records indicating such individuals are high-risk for esophageal cancer undergo screening according to the established guidelines.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COMER. 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 measure.

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, the House of Representatives has lost a true statesman.

Gerry Connolly was a father, a husband, friend, and a lifelong public servant that dedicated his life to his constituents, his community, and his country. I was deeply saddened to hear about his sudden passing.

From the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to 16 years in the U.S. House of Representatives, Gerry Connolly was a devoted public servant from Virginia's 11th Congressional District.

In Congress, Gerry Connolly was a friend to many of us. He was steadfast in fighting for what he believed in, but he was always committed to bipartisanship where he thought we could agree.

Over his tenure on this committee, I am proud to say we cosponsored eight bills together, including the Mail Traffic Deaths Reporting Act, the FedRAMP Authorization Act, and the Federal AI Governance and Transparency Act.

Mr. Speaker, I know I am not alone in that.

Many of my Republican committee colleagues found Gerry Connolly to be a partner and a friend. I extend my condolences to his family and also to the members of his staff. We lost our colleague after a short but courageous fight against esophageal cancer, one of the deadliest and fastest growing cancer diagnoses among Americans today.

The symptoms of this cancer are often overlooked or misdiagnosed, leading to late detection and limited treatment options.

Through this legislation, we hope to raise awareness about esophageal cancer to improve the odds for those who contract this disease. I am proud to have joined Ranking Member Gerry Connolly in cosponsoring the Gerald E. Connolly Esophageal Cancer Awareness Act and look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on its passage into law.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I also thank the majority for their courtesy in moving this bill expeditiously to the floor.

The Esophageal Cancer Awareness Act was introduced by our dear friend, the late Ranking Member Gerry Connolly and by a bipartisan and unanimous vote of our committee, the bill was renamed in his honor.

First of all, I acknowledge Gerry's wife, Smitty, and his daughter, Caitlin Rose, who are in the gallery, along with many of Gerry's current and former staff to witness the debate on this bill.

Our Ranking Member, Mr. Connolly, lived his life serving others and making our country a better place. He was a steadfast advocate of the disadvantaged and the voiceless, and he stood up for what was right and what was just.

Gerry was a skilled statesman, an accomplished legislator, and a fierce defender of democracy. I am sure he would want everyone here to continue fighting like hell to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves, to defend the rights of every American, and bring accountability and transparency to power.

Esophageal cancer is the fastest increasing cancer among American men. It is also one of the deadliest. This bill would direct the GAO to report on key issues relating to esophageal cancer, including Federal spending for it under the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program and the screening rates among high-risk individuals within that program. This bill will hopefully offer some significant amount of help in the fight against esophageal cancer.

Mr. Connolly was the epitome of a public servant and will be deeply missed. It is our job now to continue this fight in his memory.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds Members not to refer to persons in the gallery.

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

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. GARCIA) for his remarks.

Mr. GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank our acting ranking member for his leadership here and to honor our incredible ranking member.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this bill, which of course, supports our fight against cancer and to improve healthcare for all Federal workers.

This is such an important way to honor the legacy of our colleague, our Ranking Member Gerry Connolly.

Gerry was a dedicated public servant, a fighter, and a mentor to all of us on the Oversight Committee. Gerry worked to hold our government accountable for over 30 years and was dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans.

He was a champion of our Federal workforce, of transparency, and in making government work for all the people that we serve.

He believed in the power of Congress and in fighting tirelessly for the constituents that he served and, of course, for the rule of law and our Constitution.

He served as a county executive where he fought to expand affordable housing and to invest in infrastructure, and he always supported public workers. He delivered for his community. He delivered for the country, and he left a proud legacy.

Now, Gerry represented the best among us in public service, which is why we strongly support this bill. We all miss him greatly, and I know every single member of our committee will work to carry on his legacy.

Mr. Speaker, I urge every Member to honor Gerry by supporting this bill.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I urge all Members to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill honoring the legacy of our friend and colleague, Gerry Connolly. I hope that this legislation can shed some light on the impact of esophageal cancer on Federal Government public servants.

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 Kentucky (Mr. COMER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3490, 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Avery M. Stringer, one of his secretaries.

CONNECTING SMALL BUSINESSES WITH CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION GRADUATES ACT OF 2025

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1642) to amend the Small Business Act to include requirements relating to graduates of career and technical education programs for small business development centers and women's business centers, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1642

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 "Connecting Small Businesses with Career and Technical Education Graduates Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. INCLUSION OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

(a) DEFINITION.—Section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(gg) CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION.—The term ‘career and technical education’ has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302).”.

(b) SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS.—Section 21(c)(3) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648(c)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (T), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in clause (v) of the first subparagraph (U) (relating to succession planning), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(3) in second subparagraph (U) (relating to training on domestic and international intellectual property protections)—

(A) in clause (ii)(II), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(B) by redesignating such subparagraph as subparagraph (V); and

(4) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(W) providing educational information to small businesses on—

“(i) hiring graduates from career and technical education programs; and

“(ii) career and technical education programs relevant to such businesses, including how to use such programs to satisfy hiring needs of such businesses;

“(X) providing information to career and technical education programs about how students and graduates of such programs can access resources and services of small business development centers to start and expand a small business concern; and

“(Y) as appropriate, connecting small businesses with career and technical education programs to assist students and graduates of such programs with identifying career opportunities.”.

(c) WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTERS.—Section 29(b) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(4) providing educational information to small business concerns owned and controlled by women on—

“(A) hiring graduates from career and technical education programs; and

“(B) career and technical education programs relevant to such concerns, including how to use such programs to satisfy hiring needs of such concerns;

“(5) providing information to career and technical education programs about how students and graduates of such programs can access resources and services of women's business centers to start and expand a small business concern; and

“(6) as appropriate, connecting small business concerns owned and controlled by women with career and technical education programs to assist students and graduates of such programs with identifying career opportunities.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MCGARVEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. 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 the bill.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1515

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my bill, H.R. 1642, the Connecting Small Businesses with Career and Technical Education Graduates Act of 2025. Earlier this year, I introduced this bill alongside the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. OLSZEWSKI), my friend.

Across America, the skilled labor shortage, particularly in trades, is a growing concern. Industries like construction, healthcare, and manufacturing are struggling to find qualified workers. At the same time, thousands of career and technical education graduates are entering the workforce with the hands-on skills employers desperately need.

This bipartisan legislation offers a commonsense solution. H.R. 1642 requires the Small Business Administration's resource partners to provide small businesses with vital information on how to hire graduates of career and technical education programs.

In addition, it ensures that students and graduates of these programs know about the business counseling resources available through SBA resource partners to help them start and grow their own small businesses.

Solving the skilled workforce shortage will take an all-hands-on-deck approach, and I am proud to lead this important step forward. I thank Representative OLSZEWSKI for joining me in introducing this bipartisan bill. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1642.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here today as we consider bills that will strengthen the SBA and work to broaden services available to small businesses. These firms employ roughly half of the private workforce, create two-thirds of all new jobs, and generate almost half of our Nation's economic activity.

These aren't just statistics. They are the foundation of our local economies, providing essential services, from plumbers and electricians to physicians, and making towns and cities across the country attractive places to live and work.

They don't work on just their own behalf. They create millions of neighborhood jobs and reinvest in their local communities, from funding Little League teams to engaging in philanthropy.

Over the past 4 years under the Biden administration, we saw a surge in startups, as over 21 million new small businesses were created, the vast majority of which were created by women, including women of color. These acts of hope for the future make our economy stronger and give us reason to celebrate.

Unfortunately, the past few months have caused extreme uncertainty in the small business community. With so many new businesses starting, there is much more we could do on Capitol Hill to support their growth and flourishing.

That is why I am pleased we are here to consider seven bipartisan bills that aim to strengthen SBA services, restore trust and accountability, and expand resources for disabled entrepreneurs.

Turning to our first bill, while college affords opportunity for so many of our students, it isn't the only path to success. For students who are looking for in-demand skills that prepare them directly for the workforce, career and technical education programs can offer viable alternatives. These programs collaborate directly with local private-