

70 percent drop in emergency room visits and cut hospital admissions in half. If all eligible patients received MTMs, studies show that we could save over \$32 billion in the first year alone.

Today, I am reintroducing bipartisan, bicameral legislation with Representatives MALLIOTAKIS, PINGREE, FITZPATRICK, and EVANS and Senators BOOKER, MARSHALL, SMITH, and CASSIDY to pilot the coverage of MTMs in traditional Medicare. Our bill, which expands access to these lifesaving meals, will lead to billions of dollars in savings without adding one dime to the deficit.

I urge my colleagues to join the growing bipartisan Food is Medicine movement and pass our medically tailored meals bill. Let's work together to end hunger now.

□ 1210

HONORING DR. G.V.V. RAO

(Mr. SUBRAMANYAM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Dr. G.V.V. Rao, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and true community leader.

Dr. Rao dedicated his life to service, both here in Virginia and around the world. His career and work on global development took him to the World Bank, the United Nations, and the Asian Development Bank.

In the community, Dr. Rao founded the Balavikas of Fairfax, an organization to promote spiritual values and education for kids in Northern Virginia. His PROCEED Project helped mentor low-income students in India as they pursued higher education.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Rao's legacy lives on in all the lives he touched and the communities that he strengthened. May he rest in peace.

FILLING FIREFIGHTER POSITIONS ON MILITARY INSTALLATIONS

(Ms. ELFRETH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ELFRETH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give voice to an issue that has gone unaddressed for far too long, and it is one this body must take up before it is too late and lives are lost. We must address the alarmingly low staffing levels of firefighters on our military installations.

Recent reports indicate that the military service intends to eliminate vacant firefighter positions, restrict the use of overtime, and interpret requirements in a manner that could lead to station closures.

Let me be clear. While staffing level shortages have been an ongoing challenge, these new actions, coupled with the continued hiring freeze, put our servicemembers in harm's way.

It is why Congresswoman KIGGANS and I wrote to the Secretaries of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force to ensure robust emergency services that maintain safety and mission readiness across the Force.

Across the DOD, more than 8,800 civilian firefighters respond to structural fires, aircraft emergencies, hazardous materials incidents, and other life-threatening events each year.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of a more critical and all-American cause or more of a win-win than having the backs of our fire firefighters and our servicemembers.

DELIVERING FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Mr. WALKINSHAW asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Mr. Speaker, across America, hardworking people are struggling to pay their bills. This includes housing, groceries, healthcare, and more. Hundreds of thousands of jobs have been cut due to the DOGE policies. Our economy is sputtering, and the tariffs are jacking up prices.

The so-called big, beautiful bill will decimate Medicaid, taking healthcare from seniors, children, and working families, while driving up premiums.

The President has told the majority not to negotiate with our side to keep the government open. The budget that has been introduced will drive up everyday costs, including healthcare premiums.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to come together and deliver what the American people need, which is access to affordable healthcare and a government that is funded and functional.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable HAKEEM JEFFRIES, Democratic Leader:

SEPTEMBER 17, 2025.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER JOHNSON: Pursuant to Section 2(b)(4) of P.L. 118-144, the Commission to Study the Potential Transfer of the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History to the Smithsonian Institution Act, I am pleased to appoint the following individual to the Commission to Study the Potential Transfer of the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History to the Smithsonian Institution.

Mr. Philip Darivoff of Short Hills, New Jersey

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

HAKEEM JEFFRIES,
Democratic Leader.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS REFORM ACT

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 707, I call up the bill (H.R. 5125) to amend the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to terminate the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 707, the amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 119-13 is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 5125

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 "District of Columbia Judicial Nominations Reform Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. TERMINATION OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA JUDICIAL NOMINATION COMMISSION.

(a) *TERMINATION.*—The District of Columbia Home Rule Act is amended by striking section 434 (sec. 1-204.34, D.C. Official Code).

(b) *CONFORMING AMENDMENTS RELATING TO APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES.*—

(1) *DESIGNATION OF CHIEF JUDGES BY PRESIDENT.*—Section 431(b) of such Act (sec. 1-204.31(b), D.C. Official Code) is amended by striking "the District of Columbia Judicial Nominating Commission established by section 434" and inserting "the President".

(2) *APPOINTMENT BY PRESIDENT.*—Section 433(a) of such Act (sec. 1-204.33(a), D.C. Official Code) is amended by striking "Except as provided in section 434(d)(1), the President shall nominate, from the list of persons recommended to him by the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission established under section 434," and inserting "The President shall nominate,".

(3) *QUALIFICATIONS OF JUDGES.*—Section 433(b) of such Act (sec. 1-204.33(b), D.C. Official Code) is amended—

(A) by adding "and" at the end of paragraph (3);

(B) by striking paragraph (4) and redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (4); and

(C) in paragraph (4), as so redesignated, by striking "or of the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission".

(c) *OTHER CONFORMING AMENDMENT.*—Section 11-1528(a)(2), District of Columbia Official Code, is amended by striking subparagraph (C).

(d) *CLERICAL AMENDMENT.*—The table of contents of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act is amended by striking the item relating to section 434.

(e) *EFFECTIVE DATE.*—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to appointments made on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill, as amended, shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GARCIA) each will control 30 minutes.

The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COMER. 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 measure under consideration.

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 support H.R. 5125, the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Reform Act.

This legislation aligns with the appointment of D.C. judges with the constitutional process for appointing members of the Federal judiciary. This bill preserves the President's authority to nominate, with the advice and consent of the U.S. Senate, anyone deemed appropriate to sit on the D.C. court.

The current system, where the President is restricted to nominating only those candidates put forward by the D.C. Judicial Nomination Commission, inappropriately limits the President's authority.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Representative from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) for his leadership on this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I strongly oppose this bill, which would eliminate the D.C. Judicial Nomination Commission and give a President, any President, the sole power to make nominations for D.C. local courts, which deal with municipal issues.

Right now, under the Home Rule Act, the D.C. Judicial Nomination Commission submits a list of three candidates for each judicial vacancy. Of course, then it is considered by the President. This bill would wipe away the commission, and it would allow the President to directly appoint and have full control over the selection of these judges.

This is an absurd level of Federal control over local judges. Every State and territory in the United States selects its own judges. Only in D.C. do Republicans think that President Trump should decide who the local judges are.

Let's also be honest about what the bill is really about. This has nothing to do with public safety. It is a power grab to take away power and authority from over 700,000 residents of this district.

Let's be clear. D.C. does face a judicial vacancy crisis. There are currently 15 open seats across the Superior Court of D.C. and D.C. Court of Appeals. There are 13 on the superior court side and two on the court of appeals. Why do those vacancies actually exist? The commission has submitted names for every single one of those open seats.

The bottleneck is not the commission. It is the slow pace of nominations by the President and confirmations by this Senate. The Senate can solve this tomorrow, and we know who controls the Senate. It is the Republicans.

Let's be honest about what this bill is really about. It is not about the Constitution. It is about partisanship. The House majority wants to give Donald Trump the ability to select judges for local municipal matters for Washington, D.C., and bypass the current commission process that exists.

This is another attempt for Republicans to try to gut D.C.'s nonpartisan judiciary and replace it with partisan rightwing judges.

The legislation does nothing to improve the judicial system. It strips away one of the few tools D.C. residents have to shape their courts, and it erodes judicial independence. The bill isn't necessary. It is undemocratic. It really goes to the independence of our courts.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of our colleagues to oppose it, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS), the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the young chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, what we have heard today is a continuation of this lame excuse of politics and on Donald Trump. The gentleman from California did allude to it but really did not get into much more of the data.

□ 1220

The bottom line is from 9/30/20, 2/25/23, 6/30/23, 7/28/23, 3/22/24, 4/12/24, 10/1/24, each of these people were nominated by the distinguished gentleman, the former President of the United States, Mr. Biden.

This is not political. This is getting the work done that Washington, D.C. needs, and this commission process that we go through does not work.

I know we wanted to hear that this is all related to Donald Trump and Republicans wanting to control the process that goes on so that we can control Washington, D.C.

Mr. Speaker, it is not working is the reason why I am on the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, this bill, H.R. 5125 is about a process that can work. The gentleman from California is correct. A lot of it is political, but what it is to do is to say that if the people of this country have chosen the President of the United States, then that is the direction we will go. We will give that President, whether it be Republican or Democrat, whether it be a man or a woman, we will give that President the opportunity for the control of this nomination and the system here in Washington, D.C.

We have got a lot at risk. Mr. Speaker, we have got a lot at risk which is

the same reason why President Trump finally had the guts—yes, I will call them guts—to call in the National Guard to take on the crime presence that exists in Washington, D.C.

Members of Congress have had their cars stolen. We have had Members of Congress who were assaulted. We have had staff members of this body who were killed. People who come to this town from across the United States want, need, and expect that Washington, D.C. does not become or continue to be a work-free drug zone.

Washington, D.C. should be safe for visitors not just of the United States, but for international visitors who visit also. The basis of that which Chairman COMER is bringing to the floor today is to look at, from top to bottom, not just the judicial system, but really the entire process of the court system.

I have some background in this. My father served as a chief judge of the Western District of Texas in San Antonio. He served as FBI Director for President Reagan, President Bush, and President Clinton. He understood firsthand that control of crime has a lot to do with how you deal with criminals, Mr. Speaker.

This opportunity that we bring today to the floor is to go back to a process that works and is a process that is driven by the President of the United States who also has authority and responsibility over this beautiful city.

Mr. GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind my good friend that in Texas local judges are elected by Texas citizens, not chosen directly by the President. In this case, in this bill, they want to bypass any sort of local control of the selection of judges and have these appointees be chosen directly by Donald Trump. That is wrong, and Members should oppose this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 7 minutes to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly oppose this bill, which eliminates the District of Columbia's already small role in the selection of its local judges.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD letters opposing this bill from D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser, the entire D.C. Council, D.C. Attorney Brian Schwab, and the D.C. Bar.

SEPTEMBER 10, 2025.

Hon. JAMES COMER,
Chairman, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Washington, DC.

Hon. ROBERT GARCIA,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN COMER AND RANKING MEMBER GARCIA: As Mayor and Chief Executive Officer of the District of Columbia, I am proud of the work we have accomplished to invest in our people, strengthen our neighborhoods, and drive down crime. Building on this progress, my Administration established the Safe and Beautiful Emergency Operations Center to coordinate public safety and beautification efforts as the presidential emergency declaration ends. This structure

ensures that DC will remain proactive—bringing together local and federal partners to sustain momentum on reducing crime and improving quality of life for every resident.

We have worked collaboratively with this Committee on shared priorities, including public safety, the federal Return to Work, implementing a DC budget Fiscal Year 2025 fix (which is still pending in the House) and revitalizing the RFK campus; but I write now to ask you to reject 13 of the DC bills before you today that encroach on DC's Home Rule:

Bills like H.R. 5183, the District of Columbia Home Rule Improvement Act, make the District less efficient, competitive, and responsive to the needs of a highly complex unique local government that serves local, county and state functions. Boggling down legislative and executive action only adds costs and uncertainty, making it more difficult to handle the economic headwinds and growth opportunities ahead.

Bills like H.R. 5214, the District of Columbia Cash Bail Reform Act, make DC less safe. Replacing our very effective pre-trial detention regime, which focuses on charged violent offenses and repeat violent offenders, not just on cash bail. I credit recent changes to our laws related to pre-trial detention for helping to drive down violent crime in the last two years.

And the bills to abolish the Judicial Nominations Commission and to convert the elected DC Attorney General to a Presidentially appointed legal officer for the District are both less democratic and untenable for District operations. The Judicial Nomination Commission, with seven members appointed by the Mayor, DC Council, President, US District Court for DC, and the DC Bar, works. As recently as last month, President Trump nominated three federal judicial nominees who were selected from the Commission's candidate pool—a process that demonstrates the value of maintaining local input. DC residents also voted to elect an Attorney General who represents the public interest. Changes to these charter agencies would significantly undercut the already thin ties to autonomy that limited home rule provides.

Finally, I urge you not to up end our three-part education funding SOAR Act. I have long supported the program to expand opportunity for DC students. However, my support has always been contingent on parity among all three education sectors—public, private, and charter—and this approach is working. We will not support changes that tip the scales away from this core principle of fairness for DC families. As the fastest improving urban school system, DC has become a model for urban education. We outpace the national average on all tested subject areas. We boast free, full-day Pre-K access serving more than 13,200 young learners—an investment which supports our children and our workforce. DC ranked top of the nation in parental satisfaction regarding school choice. Mayoral control, council oversight, and deep, targeted investments in our students, teachers, and buildings made these remarkable achievements possible.

I look forward to continuing a productive partnership with the Committee—one that respects the will of DC residents and honors the principles of home rule. Together, we can build on our successes while protecting the autonomy that, as history reflects, has made our city stronger.

Sincerely,

MURIEL BOWSER,
Mayor.

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,
Washington, DC, September 8, 2025.

Hon. JAMES COMER,
Chair, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Washington, DC.

Hon. ROBERT GARCIA,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN COMER AND RANKING MEMBER GARCIA: The Council of the District of Columbia is aware that the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is planning to mark up more than a dozen proposed measures that would severely and negatively impact the operations, public safety, and autonomy of the District of Columbia. We ask that you oppose these measures in full, save one, H.R. 2693, District of Columbia Electronic Transmittal of Legislation Act. While we have not seen the final text of this legislation, the public summary of H.R. 2693 is consistent with the long held request by the District of Columbia to allow the ability to electronically transfer legislative acts to Congress, rather than only allowing physical copies be transferred. The challenge and barriers created by this current requirement were clearly exposed during both the recent COVID pandemic restrictions as well as the Capitol campus restrictions following the January 6, 2021 attacks on the Capitol.

The other 13 measures that have been shared with us would do direct and serious harm to the District of Columbia and we urge you to reject these measures completely. These bills represent an unprecedented attack on the autonomy and home rule of our local government and the more than 700,000 Americans that call it home. The breadth of these bills is remarkable, and if passed, would result in an erosion of accountability and public safety for the District of Columbia. They range from eliminating and replacing our elected and accountable Attorney General for the District of Columbia with a President's hand-picked and unaccountable associate requiring no confirmation by the U.S. Senate and no local ties, to a full repeal of multiple local DC laws that have been in place for many years, if not decades, that are tested, proven, and effective components of our public safety infrastructure and ecosystem. The effect of these Congressional repeals would put our legal and Court system into chaos and directly undermine successful tools that focus on serious accountability and effective rehabilitation when a crime occurs. As always, when revisions or amendments to DC laws are necessary, those changes should only take place within our local legislature which has the best capacity to provide effective oversight and accountable actions for the residents of the District of Columbia.

We respectfully request that all members of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and all members of Congress, reject these harmful measures whether in committee mark up or before the full House of Representatives. Given the breadth of the multiple measures before you, we also request an opportunity to provide a more in-depth discussion of each bill before the Committee's mark-up, especially in light that the Committee will not hold public hearings on these measures.

Sincerely,

Chairman Phil Mendelson; Councilmember Anita Bonds, At-Large; Councilmember Robert White, Jr.; Councilmember Brooke Pinto, Ward 2; Councilmember Janeese Lewis George, Ward 4; Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 6; Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie, At-Large; Councilmember Christina Henderson, At-Large; Councilmember Brianne Nadeau, Ward 1; Councilmember

Matthew Frumin, Ward 3; Councilmember Zachary Parker, Ward 5; Councilmember Wendell Felder, Ward 7; Councilmember Trayon White, Sr, Ward 8.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA, OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY
GENERAL,

September 9, 2025.

Hon. JAMES COMER,
Chairman, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Washington, DC.

Hon. ROBERT GARCIA,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN COMER AND RANKING MEMBER GARCIA: The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is scheduled to markup fourteen bills tomorrow related to the operations of the District of Columbia. With the exception of H.R. 2693, the District of Columbia Electronic Transmittal Act, I write in strong opposition to these bills. They address inherently local issues and laws that were passed after careful consideration by the District's elected representatives, who are directly accountable to District residents. Members of this very Committee have long advocated for the principles of federalism on which this nation was founded. They have consistently condemned federal overreach and fought forcefully and convincingly for the uniquely American values of local control, freedom, and self-governance. These principles should apply to the more than 700,000 people who call Washington, DC home, just as they do for your constituents across the country.

I specifically want to call attention to the significant incursion on local self-governance reflected in two bills, the District of Columbia Attorney General Appointment Reform Act and the District of Columbia Judicial Nominations Reform Act. Both laws would displace the ability of District residents to have a voice in the selection of local leaders who wield significant power over local judicial matters: the judges on our local courts and the Attorney General for the District. The judges on the DC Court of Appeals and DC Superior Court rule on inherently local matters such as criminal prosecutions, landlord-tenant cases, probate proceedings, civil cases, and divorce proceedings, all of which have profoundly important impact on our community. For more than 50 years, the Judicial Nomination Commission (JNC) has successfully allowed DC residents to have a voice in judicial appointments, while also granting the President and Senate a role in confirming our judges. I urge the Committee not to overturn that well-established process.

The DC Attorney General, as the District's chief law officer, is also responsible for local legal issues, namely, protecting the District and its residents in a wide range of matters, such as enforcing child support laws, handling abuse and neglect proceedings in the child welfare system, enforcing our housing code, and defending District agencies and officers when they are sued. In no other place in the United States are such local issues determined by a federally appointed person with no local accountability. The proposed legislation would be especially undemocratic in light of the fact that, in 2010, an overwhelming majority of District voters (76 percent) exercised their right to amend the District Charter to make the DC Attorney General an independent, elected office, rather than a position appointed by and subordinate to the Mayor. With that vote, District residents clearly expressed their desire that the Attorney General should be independent and accountable to them. The pending bill would

displace that choice in favor of installing an Attorney General accountable not to District residents, but to the President. Given that the U.S. Attorney for the District is already appointed by the President, if passed, this bill would concentrate all criminal and civil litigation authority in the President, divesting the District and its residents of any local control over these essential functions.

No one knows or cares more about keeping DC safe than DC residents who work, live and raise their families here. Our democratically elected officials work closely with local law enforcement, policy experts, and community leadership to pass laws that are in the best interests of all Washingtonians. Substituting the will of DC voters with the whim of federal politicians is undemocratic and un-American.

I urge you to reject these measures and uphold the values Congress sought to advance more than 50 years ago when it passed the District of Columbia Home Rule Act: that District residents should enjoy the “powers of local self-government” that all other Americans enjoy. See DC Code § 1–201.02.

Respectfully submitted,

BRIAN L. SCHWALB,
Attorney General for the District of Columbia.

DC BAR,
Washington, DC,
September 12, 2025.

Re: District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission.

JAMES COMER, Chair,
ROBERT GARCIA, Ranking Member,
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN COMER AND RANKING MEMBER GARCIA: I am writing to you on behalf of the District of Columbia Bar (the D.C. Bar) and its Board of Governors in support of the vital work of the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission (JNC or Commission) and its essential role in maintaining the integrity and excellence of the District of Columbia's courts. In particular, the D.C. Bar supports the views presented by members of the Commission in their September 9, 2025, letter, a copy of which is attached here. The continued work of the JNC is important and valuable to D.C. Bar members, District residents, and the administration of justice in the District of Columbia.

Congress created the Commission in 1973 to ensure that the District's local judges are selected based on professional qualifications, experience, judicial temperament, and commitment to justice. Comprised of Commissioners appointed by the President of the United States, the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, the Mayor and Council of the District of Columbia, and the D.C. Bar, the JNC is a hallmark of bipartisan commitment to merit-based judicial selection, and has produced one of the nation's most well-respected local court systems.

The JNC's mission is straightforward: to recommend to the President highly qualified individuals to fill judicial vacancies on the District's local courts, and to select the chief judges of the D.C. Court of Appeals and the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. For more than five decades, through rigorous evaluation of legal experience, integrity, intellectual capacity, and community standing, the Commission has consistently provided the President with a carefully vetted pool of highly qualified nominees.

Despite having numerous vacancies in recent years, our local courts constantly handle demanding caseloads comprising complex matters. The commitment and dedication of our local judges are a testament to the work and value of the Commission.

The D.C. Judicial Nomination Commission represents the best of American democratic institutions: independent, merit-based, and committed to the public good. Its continued effectiveness depends on timely confirmation of nominees and sustained support for its mission and recognition of its vital contribution to the administration of justice in the District of Columbia. We respectfully urge your continued support for this exemplary institution and its critical work in the service of justice in the nation's capital.

Sincerely,

SADINA MONTANI,
President, D.C. Bar.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I also insert into the RECORD a letter on this bill from the D.C. Judicial Nomination Commission.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,
JUDICIAL NOMINATION COMMISSION,
Washington, DC, September 9, 2025.

Re H.R. 5125, District of Columbia Judicial Nominations Reform Act.

JAMES COMER, Chair,
ROBERT GARCIA, Ranking Member,
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN COMER AND RANKING MEMBER GARCIA: Members of the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission respectfully submit this letter to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in response to H.R. 5125, District of Columbia Judicial Nominations Reform Act.

The District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission (JNC or Commission) was established by Congress on December 24, 1973 (Public Law 93–198, 87 Stat. 796). The JNC is composed of seven members—two appointed by the Mayor of the District of Columbia, two by the Board of Governors of the District of Columbia Bar Association (Unified), one by the Council of the District of Columbia, one by the President of the United States, and one judicial member appointed by the Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. Each member is appointed for a six-year term, except for the member appointed by the President, who serves a five-year term.

The JNC solicits, screens, and recommends a panel of three candidates to the President of the United States for each judicial vacancy on the District of Columbia Court of Appeals and the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. From the panel of names recommended by the JNC, the President nominates a person for each vacancy and submits the nominee's name to the United States Senate for confirmation. The JNC also designates the Chief Judges for the District of Columbia courts.

The JNC, using a merit-based selection process, works to provide the citizens of the District of Columbia with the best possible court system by (a) soliciting a diverse and talented pool of applicants for each judicial vacancy; (b) screening applicants to ensure they have the requisite experience, skill, temperament, and qualifications for judicial office; and (c) recommending the three most qualified applicants to the President of the United States for his or her consideration in selecting a nominee to fill each judicial vacancy on the District of Columbia Court of Appeals and the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

Since its first list of applicants was sent to President R. Gerald Ford, Jr. on May 8, 1975, the JNC has recommended more than 93 candidates for 31 vacancies on the District of Columbia Court of Appeals (Court of Appeals) and more than 513 candidates for 171 vacancies on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia (Superior Court). Working with

both Republican and Democratic Presidents for more than 50 years, the Senate has confirmed 29 Presidential nominations to the Court of Appeals and 159 to the Superior Court. To date, the Senate has confirmed more Republican Presidential nominees to both courts—17 of 29 on the Court of Appeals and 83 of 159 on the Superior Court. All the Presidential nominees were selected from lists the JNC sent to the President pursuant to D.C. Code §§ 1–204.31, 1–204.33. Arguably, the judicial nomination process in the District of Columbia is one of the best non-partisan processes in the country, a process that President Trump engaged in during his first term (with 10 confirmations to the local courts) and on September 2, 2025, when he nominated candidates for three vacancies on the Superior Court.

In conclusion, the Commission members are united in expressing our pride in the JNC's lengthy history of proficient service. The Commission process has been effective for over 50 years, working with both Republican and Democratic administrations. Our process is carefully designed to ensure that the over 700,000 residents of our city have a voice in judicial appointments, while also respecting the President's authority in nominating individuals for the critical role of judicial service in the District of Columbia. We stand in support of the JNC's current role and configuration, and we look forward to continuing to serve our city in discharging our critically important responsibilities.

Respectfully Submitted,

For the Commission:
Hon. Marie C. Johns, PPC-Leftwich, Washington, DC.

Benjamin F. Wilson, Esq., Washington, DC.
Addy R. Schmitt, Esq., Kropf Moseley Schmitt, Washington, DC.

Vincent H. Cohen, Jr., Esq., Dechert LLP, Washington, DC.

Yaida O. Ford, Esq., Ford Law Pros PC, Washington, DC.

Hon. Linda W. Cropp, Washington, DC.

Hon. Tanya S. Chutkan, United States District Court for the District of Columbia, United States Courthouse, Washington, DC.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, under the D.C. Home Rule Act, the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate—a chamber in which D.C. has no representation—appoints judges to the local D.C. courts. The President must make a nomination from a list of candidates recommended by the Judicial Nomination Commission. The establishment of the Judicial Nomination Commission provided D.C. with three, albeit limited, roles in the nomination of its local judges. First, members of the commission must be D.C. residents. Second, D.C. appoints three of the seven members of the commission. Third, the commission holds a public comment period on applicants for a vacancy on the local D.C. courts, allowing D.C. residents to express their views on applicants.

Republicans claim the Judicial Nomination Commission is unconstitutional because it limits the President's authority to make nominations. They are wrong. The commission has been in existence for 50 years. Congress, not the President, has plenary authority over D.C.

Congress also has plenary authority over the territories, and Congress has given them authority to select their local judges without any role whatsoever for the President or Congress.

I refer my Republican colleagues to the Supreme Court's decision in 2020 regarding the appointments to the Puerto Rico financial control board, which Congress established pursuant to its plenary authority over Puerto Rico. The court held the appointments clause of the Constitution does not "restrict the appointment of local officers that Congress vests with primarily local duties" pursuant to the territorial or District clauses of the Constitution. Local D.C. judges are local officers that Congress vests with primarily local duties pursuant to the District clause.

The longstanding judicial vacancy crisis on the local D.C. courts is not due to any failure of the Judicial Nomination Commission. The commission always meets its 60-day statutory deadline to submit a list of names for a vacancy to the President. The crisis exists because the President and, to a larger extent, the Senate, regardless of the party in power, do not prioritize local D.C. judges. For example, there has been a vacancy on D.C.'s highest local court since 2013.

Congress should give authority to the over 700,000 D.C. residents to select their local judges in any manner they choose. D.C. residents, the majority of whom are Black and Brown, are capable and worthy of governing themselves.

Since Republicans do not trust D.C. residents with self-government, they should at least address the longstanding vacancy crisis in the local D.C. courts, which is harming public safety and access to justice. A simple solution is to make an appointment to the local D.C. courts effective 30 days after the President makes a nomination, unless Congress enacts a disapproval resolution during that period. That is essentially the same process used for congressional review of legislation enacted by D.C.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on the D.C. Judicial Nominations Reform Act and to grant D.C. statehood instead. Free D.C.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 additional minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS).

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman coming forth, as she does represent the District of Columbia, but I think in the argument it is important to note that these are not just local judges that we are talking about. They don't handle any matter that is related to a ticket or parking ticket, local matters. In fact, they deal with serious matters, and that is why it comes to the attention of the United States Senate and the President of the United States.

This bill does not remove any sitting judges on either the D.C. Superior Court or the D.C. Court of Appeals, but, in fact, we believe it is important. As the gentlewoman noted, since 2013 we still have people who have been hanging out and not approved.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to go through this, because I really did

not do the due diligence to know why there are people here who have not been approved. They are still pending.

What I would tell you, Mr. Speaker, is that we have lots of time since 2013 where Republicans and Democrats who were in charge in the United States Senate could have moved these nominations forward, and they chose not to.

□ 1230

I am simply standing and saying that I believe that today this bill needs to be passed because Washington, D.C., and the sitting courts do need additional judges. They need competent people who would be prepared to move forward.

If there is one President who would nominate and get this done, it would be Donald Trump. Donald Trump deeply believes in the success of Washington, D.C. He believes Washington, D.C., should be a place that is safe and has good judges. This will be an opportunity for us not only to understand a different way to handle this but a way that we can look back and say we have made Washington, D.C., just a little bit better because the Republican Party cares deeply about Washington, its success, and, mostly, the safety of the people who live here.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the young chairman for allowing me to bring this bill together.

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

Mr. Speaker, I just will clarify for the gentleman from Texas that these are not Federal circuit judges. They have the same jurisdiction as State and local judges. That is what actually the bill presented says. These are local judges. They are not circuit judges. They are not Federal judges.

Let's be clear what this is about. This is about allowing Donald Trump to select local judges for D.C. and bypass a commission system that is currently in place where the President still has an ability to select from a panel of different judges. There is no State in the United States, in our country, that allows the President to directly select local judges. This is an outrageous attempt to take away power from 700,000 residents and to hurt our independent judiciary system here in the District.

This bill is not about safety. It is not about the Constitution. It has nothing to do with Federal Circuit court judges. It is a power grab for Donald Trump to self-select judges.

Finally, as I close, I remind all our friends that all of these D.C. bills in front of us are about Donald Trump trying to play Mayor of Washington, D.C. If he wants to be mayor, he should resign from President and run for mayor himself.

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

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

Another day on the House floor where the Republicans try to address

the D.C. crime crisis with serious, substantive solutions and another day where the Democrats try to act like there is no crime problem in Washington, D.C., and reverberate the symptoms of their Trump derangement syndrome.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Sessions legislation which corrects an inappropriate limitation on Presidential authority to appoint judges in the District of Columbia.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 707, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. GARCIA 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 question will be postponed.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA POLICING PROTECTION ACT

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 707, I call up the bill (H.R. 5143) to establish standards for law enforcement officers in the District of Columbia to engage in vehicular pursuits of suspects, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MOOLENAAR). Pursuant to House Resolution 707, the amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 119-11 is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 5143

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 "District of Columbia Policing Protection Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. VEHICULAR PURSUITS BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS IN DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

(a) AMENDMENT.—*The Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Amendment Act of 2022 (D.C. Law 24-345) is amended—*

(1) in subtitle S of title I—

(A) in the heading, by striking "LIMITATIONS ON THE";

(B) in section 127(a) (sec. 5-365.01(a), D.C. Official Code)—

(i) by striking paragraphs (1) through (5);

(ii) in paragraph (6), by striking the period at the end and inserting the following: " , except