

who didn't sign the discharge petition remain focused on truth, accountability, and delivering real justice for Epstein victims.

Again, I will point out that it was under President Trump's Department of Justice that Jeffrey Epstein was arrested and tried. We have not tried to avoid this situation. We want things done the right way. We want maximum justice for these victims and survivors.

Our rule today simply expedites consideration of the Massie-Khanna legislation. As I said, we would have liked to have seen it pass last week when we gave an opportunity for it, but it was blocked by the Democratic minority leader.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for support for this rule and the underlying legislation. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the previous question and "yes" on the rule.

The material previously referred to by Mr. MCGOVERN is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 879 OFFERED BY
MR. MCGOVERN OF MASSACHUSETTS

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

SEC. 9. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution, the House shall proceed to the consideration in the House of the bill (H.R. 6074) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the enhancement of the health care premium tax credit. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 10. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 6074.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

Ms. FOXX. 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 are postponed.

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.

EPSTEIN FILES TRANSPARENCY ACT

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4405) to require the Attorney General to release all documents and records in possession of the Department of Justice relating to Jeffrey Epstein, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4405

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 "Epstein Files Transparency Act".

SEC. 2. RELEASE OF DOCUMENTS RELATING TO JEFFREY EPSTEIN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall, subject to subsection (b), make publicly available in a searchable and downloadable format all unclassified records, documents, communications, and investigative materials in the possession of the Department of Justice, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation and United States Attorneys' Offices, that relate to:

(1) Jeffrey Epstein including all investigations, prosecutions, or custodial matters.

(2) Ghislaine Maxwell.

(3) Flight logs or travel records, including but not limited to manifests, itineraries, pilot records, and customs or immigration documentation, for any aircraft, vessel, or vehicle owned, operated, or used by Jeffrey Epstein or any related entity.

(4) Individuals, including government officials, named or referenced in connection with Epstein's criminal activities, civil settlements, immunity or plea agreements, or investigatory proceedings.

(5) Entities (corporate, nonprofit, academic, or governmental) with known or alleged ties to Epstein's trafficking or financial networks.

(6) Any immunity deals, non-prosecution agreements, plea bargains, or sealed settlements involving Epstein or his associates.

(7) Internal DOJ communications, including emails, memos, meeting notes, concerning decisions to charge, not charge, investigate, or decline to investigate Epstein or his associates.

(8) All communications, memoranda, directives, logs, or metadata concerning the destruction, deletion, alteration, misplacement, or concealment of documents, recordings, or electronic data related to Epstein, his associates, his detention and death, or any investigative files.

(9) Documentation of Epstein's detention or death, including incident reports, witness interviews, medical examiner files, autopsy reports, and written records detailing the circumstances and cause of death.

(b) PROHIBITED GROUNDS FOR WITHHOLDING.—

(1) No record shall be withheld, delayed, or redacted on the basis of embarrassment, reputational harm, or political sensitivity, including to any government official, public figure, or foreign dignitary.

(c) PERMITTED WITHHOLDINGS.—

(1) The Attorney general may withhold or redact the segregable portions of records that—

(A) contain personally identifiable information of victims or victims' personal and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;

(B) depict or contain child sexual abuse materials (CSAM) as defined under 18 U.S.C. 2256 and prohibited under 18 U.S.C. 2252–2252A;

(C) would jeopardize an active federal investigation or ongoing prosecution, provided that such withholding is narrowly tailored and temporary;

(D) depict or contain images of death, physical abuse, or injury of any person; or

(E) contain information specifically authorized under criteria established by an Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy and are in fact properly classified pursuant to such Executive order.

(2) All redactions must be accompanied by a written justification published in the Federal Register and submitted to Congress.

(3) To the extent that any covered information would otherwise be redacted or withheld as classified information under this section, the Attorney General shall declassify that classified information to the maximum extent possible.

(A) If the Attorney General makes a determination that covered information may not be declassified and made available in a manner that protects the national security of the United States, including methods or sources related to national security, the Attorney General shall release an unclassified summary for each of the redacted or withheld classified information.

(4) All decisions to classify any covered information after July 1, 2025 shall be published in the Federal Register and submitted to Congress, including the date of classification, the identity of the classifying authority, and an unclassified summary of the justification.

SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

Within 15 days of completion of the release required under Section 2, the Attorney General shall submit to the House and Senate Committees on the Judiciary a report listing:

(1) All categories of records released and withheld.

(2) A summary of redactions made, including legal basis.

(3) A list of all government officials and politically exposed persons named or referenced in the released materials, with no redactions permitted under subsection (b)(1).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JORDAN) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JORDAN. 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 H.R. 4405.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, we all support holding bad guys accountable, and we are all going to vote for this resolution, but I think a little perspective is important.

Democrats have spent 6 months talking about Epstein, even though they had 4 years to do something about it.

Mr. Speaker, why would they do that? Why would they do that? Maybe

it is to go after President Trump. Never forget that they shut down the government for 43 days. They said: Don't worry about our military. Don't worry about air traffic controllers. Don't worry about our economy. Don't worry about American families. No, no, no. Close the government for 1½ months because it might hurt the President.

□ 1320

For the past decade, there has been one constant for Democrats: Go after Trump.

They spied on his campaign. Then it was Mueller. Then it was impeachment one. Then it was impeachment two. Then it was all the lawfare: Alvin Bragg, Fani Willis, Letitia James. Then it was the Arctic Frost investigation at the Justice Department, surveilling United States Senators and Congressmen and a whole host of other Americans. Then it was Jack Smith and his gag orders and his raiding President Trump's home. Then it was a 43-day shutdown. Now it is Epstein.

By the way, the same party that did all that, they were also the ones who were texting with Mr. Epstein during a hearing where Michael Cohen was their witness in another effort to go after the President.

Americans see through it all and, frankly, it is actually kind of sad. This obsession, this syndrome, this mindset that says, we have to go after President Trump no matter what that they have.

Actually, when I think about it, I think it is because President Trump and Republicans have accomplished so much that they told the voters they were going to accomplish in the 2024 election. We are actually doing what we said we are going to do.

President Trump said he was going to cut taxes, and he did. President Trump said he would secure the border, and he did. President Trump said he would get men out of women's sports, and he did. President Trump said he would make sure Iran doesn't have nuclear capability, and he did. President Trump said he would get the hostages out of Gaza and back into Israel, and he did. He did this all in 9 months. I don't know what causes this mindset, this syndrome that the left has, but I know one thing: It is real.

Which brings me to last week.

Let's think about what the Democrats did last week. The Democrats released an email that the Oversight Committee had obtained from the estate, an email from Mr. Epstein to Ms. Maxwell. When the Democrats released it, they redacted the victim's name. That is something we all support, something everyone supports, except in this case, no court had ordered that name redacted. No agency had redacted it. The estate didn't redact it. The victim had already went public, so why black out a name? Why black out a name? Mr. Speaker, because she had said in her book and had testified

under oath that she never saw any wrongdoing by President Trump.

Let's think about what they did. In an email between two criminals, Mr. Epstein and Ms. Maxwell, they hide the name of an individual who had went public and exonerated the President, and we know why: to distort and twist the message because they thought it might harm the President.

Their position: Cover up the names of people who are already public, but don't worry about other innocent people who the court said should remain private.

Again, I think the American people see through it. They see through what the Democrats are doing. The American people know what this is. They know Democrats have nothing else to run on because of the success of this administration.

Mr. Speaker, I say let's vote "yes" on this resolution, and then let's get focused on making sure we are doing what the American families elected us to do.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, today, 4 months and 3 days after Mr. KHANNA and Mr. MASSIE introduced their discharge petition, perhaps the most famous discharge petition in American history, the people's House unites across party lines to draw a moral line. We draw a line against the rape and sexual violation of children. We draw a line against the global criminal trafficking of girls and young women to service the pleasure of rich and powerful men who believe they are beyond all law and all morality. We draw a line to put the voices of the victims and the survivors first.

We ask the Senate to join us without changes rather than obstruct this bill with dilatory amendments, legislative graffiti, and self-dealing, million-dollar jackpot provisions for lucky Senators.

Just pass the bill.

We are finally voting today because a bipartisan discharge petition, led by Representatives MASSIE and KHANNA and signed by 218 of us, overthrew the determined obstruction of the Speaker. This forced vote means the House will no longer acquiesce in this astonishing real-time coverup of a multibillion-dollar global sex trafficking and child rape ring that has ravaged the lives of more than a thousand girls and young women.

We are here today because these victims, these survivors, these citizens, these inspiring women who have come to Washington are demanding nothing less than justice and the complete truth about who is responsible for their vicious abuse, including those responsible for enabling it, ignoring it, bankrolling it, and covering it up.

We join them today in rejecting any more dangerous lies about the crimes they suffered. No, child sex abuse is not a hoax. It is a crime. Human trafficking is not a hoax. It is a crime.

These crimes are a curse on children and young people across America, in universities and elementary schools, in churches and mosques and synagogues, in Boy Scout troops and college sports teams, in summer camps, anywhere the powerful and the rich believe they have the opportunity and the impunity to exploit the young, the poor, the powerless, and the vulnerable.

We must face the truth and find the coconspirators still at large in one of America's most extensive and sophisticated sex trafficking and child abuse rings in history.

Release of the file will expose the role of everybody who facilitated and covered up these crimes like JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Deutsche Bank, and Bank of New York Mellon, which executed billions of dollars in transactions related to these offenses, as well as any bank executives who participated in the sexual abuse of girls and young women.

We must expose everyone who covered up these crimes like Alex Acosta, the former U.S. attorney in Miami, Donald Trump's Labor Secretary, who gave Jeffrey Epstein an unbelievable sweetheart plea deal, immunized unnamed conspirators, and killed an investigation into Epstein's financial crimes that could have brought down the entire criminal network.

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

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER), the distinguished chair of the House Oversight Committee.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the House Oversight Committee, I have always believed that sunshine is the best disinfectant. For years, the American people have demanded transparency about Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell's horrific crimes and about the Federal Government's failure to protect the victims.

The House Oversight Committee is conducting a thorough review of the Federal Government's investigation into Epstein. Our work goes far beyond the legislation before us today. We are committed to accountability, transparency, and justice for the American people and for the survivors of these appalling crimes.

To date, the Oversight Committee has released more than 65,000 pages of documents, issued 13 subpoenas, and conducted interviews with two key witnesses, both of whom were Republicans.

The Trump administration has provided us with Department of Justice materials and access to suspicious activity reports. Unfortunately, throughout this investigation, Democrats have chosen to manufacture yet another anti-Trump hoax instead of pursuing justice. They have mischaracterized witness testimony and selectively released documents, complete with targeted redactions in an effort to smear President Trump.

For example, former U.S. Attorney General Bill Barr, who oversaw the 2019 Epstein investigation, stated clearly under oath that the prosecution team found no evidence that President Trump committed wrongdoing.

Despite this simple and straightforward fact, Ranking Member ROBERT GARCIA moments after that deposition, tiptoed out and publicly claimed that “Barr could not clear Trump of wrongdoing.”

That was a lie, and we have the transcript to prove it. I invite the media to read the transcript.

When the Oversight Committee interviewed former U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida Alex Acosta, Democrats whipped themselves into a frenzy trying to manufacture a “gotcha” moment, but they failed.

Mr. Acosta dismantled the Democrats’ narrative. His testimony confirmed there was no contact between President Trump and Mr. Acosta and no connection between President Trump in the Epstein case.

□ 1330

Next, Democrats resorted to selective leaks and doctored documents to mislead the American people.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Republicans have posted 65,000 pages of documents we have received to date. Democrats, by contrast, have released fewer than one dozen.

In their latest selective leak, Democrats released just 3 of the 23,000 pages of documents from the Epstein estate, and they made redactions to two of those emails that changed both the context and meaning of the three pages they released.

When CNN called them out for their deceptive redactions, Representatives STANSBURY and CROCKETT tried to blame Republicans for their own edits, for the Democrat Committee on Oversight and Government Reform edits.

After Democrats released only 3 emails, Republicans released over 23,000 pages. What did Democrats say in response when we released every single document that we got? They claimed full transparency was meant to “disorient” or “distract” from their manufactured narrative. These are the same Democrats who chanted “release the files” every day—until the files contradict the story they want to tell. That is the definition of hypocrisy.

In contrast, full transparency exposed how Epstein appears to be TDS Patient Zero. The emails reveal that a journalist coached Epstein to blackmail then-Presidential candidate Donald Trump.

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

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Kentucky.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, the files also show that a House Democrat colluded with Epstein during the 2019 Committee on Oversight and Govern-

ment Reform hearing with a discredited witness with a vendetta against President Trump. Unsurprisingly, Democrats have been silent about their colleague’s coordination with Epstein.

Another email shows Democrat fundraisers invited Epstein to an event or to meet privately with HAKEEM JEFFRIES as part of their 2013 effort to win a majority. HAKEEM JEFFRIES’ campaign solicited money from Jeffrey Epstein. That is what we found in the last document batch.

The files underscore why former President Bill Clinton must appear for his deposition. We have subpoenaed him. To date, the Democrats have done nothing to help us secure his appearance.

I support full transparency. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform will continue to work to get the truth to the American people and to get justice for the victims. That is our goal of this investigation.

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

Mr. Speaker, I should just point out that we have heard now from the two distinguished chairmen of the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and they have spoken almost exclusively to denounce Democrats.

We have a bipartisan coalition here demanding the truth about the largest child sex abuse and trafficking ring perhaps in American history, certainly in this century, and they want to just throw stones at the Democrats. What a remarkable failure of leadership we are seeing from the other side.

I imagine that the chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform will follow up his spectacular failure in trying to impeach President Biden with his spectacular failure in trying to block the resolution we brought to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. GARCIA), the very distinguished minority leader on the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Mr. GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to hear Republicans, and certainly the chairman of our committee, finally want transparency on this issue. It is time to end this White House coverup now.

We know that Donald Trump has tried everything to kill our Jeffrey Epstein investigation. He has failed, and now he is panicking. He is about to lose this Epstein vote to force the Department of Justice to release the files.

Let’s be crystal clear. Trump has the power to release the files today. He does not even need a vote. He continues to defy the subpoena of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform to release all the files. What is Donald Trump hiding? What is Pam Bondi, the Attorney General, hiding? Why won’t they release the Epstein files right now?

He must explain to the public why he moved sex trafficker and monster

Ghislaine Maxwell to a cushy, low-security prison after her interview with Trump’s personal lawyer. He should declare, and every Republican should say, that she does not deserve a pardon or commutation.

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 20 seconds to the gentleman from California.

Mr. GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, we don’t care how much money you have, what party you are in, or how powerful you are. We should get justice for the survivors of Jeffrey Epstein.

Our work on the committee is not over. Next steps are the bank and financial records to follow and expose Epstein’s network.

Today, there should be a unanimous vote on releasing the files, and we will get justice.

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY), a member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I have consistently called for the maximum possible level of transparency when it comes to the heinous crimes of Jeffrey Epstein. That is why I have consistently said that I am inclined to vote for this bill, and it is why I will be doing so today.

The victims deserve the truth. They deserve justice. They deserve closure.

For months, they have had to wake up every day to see the name of their tormentor on the front page of every newspaper, on every TV channel, as has the broader American public.

This issue has been so politicized by so many people in so many ways, which is deeply unfortunate when we are talking about matters of the highest sensitivity and untold suffering.

It is my hope that the passage of this resolution today, together with the work of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, will lead to the expeditious release of all pertinent material so that we can move on.

Let’s get accountability. Let’s get answers. Let’s get this over with.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL), a member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, thousands of girls, children, were abused by Jeffrey Epstein and his massive and powerful ring of pedophiles and protectors of pedophiles. We can’t say all their names here. We don’t have time. Let’s at least bring a few of the courageous survivors and their names onto the House floor right here as we debate this: Haley Robson, Jena-Lisa Jones, Michelle Licata, Ashley Rubright, Annie Farmer, Marina Lacerda, and Rachel Benavidez.

These women have carried a burden that they never should have had to bear. Today, they demand, we demand, and the American people demand that we answer their clarion call to justice.

Today, despite all the giant coverup attempts by this administration and this Speaker of the House, we will vote to release all the Epstein files.

To be clear, there is no protection for pedophiles, no protection for the rich and powerful men of either party who participated, who turned a blind eye, and who winked and grinned while witnessing the horrific abuses of young children. Release all the damn files now.

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. KNOTT), a member of our committee.

Mr. KNOTT. Mr. Speaker, I have been very supportive of this effort, specifically to bring justice to the victims of this horrific series of crimes. However, I have worked behind the scenes to raise concerns with this petition as it is currently drafted.

Specifically, I believe that there is a grave risk of harming innocent people, and I repeat, harming innocent people. When innocent people are harmed, that is not furthering justice.

With an investigation of this size and a file that is as large as the Epstein files and as poorly defined as that is in this petition, there will invariably be people who are released, pursuant to this discharge petition, who had nothing to do with criminal activity. Imagine, if you will, a bellman, a waiter, some type of doorman, a mere social attendee who had no impact whatsoever on the criminal activities of Jeffrey Epstein, no participation. Their lives are forever ruined.

I am reading specifically from the petition's language that "prohibited grounds for withholding" information in this file are "embarrassment, reputational harm, or political sensitivity."

I would just submit that if you were going to be embarrassed, if you were going to suffer social harm, and that is all the encompassed activity that you were a part of, you will be named in this petition.

I resent that. Innocent people should not be harmed when we are pursuing justice.

I understand the political nature of this petition. I resent the fact that there was not room for good faith amendments, and I urge the Senate to protect innocent people.

□ 1340

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from California (Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE).

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Mr. Speaker, one in three women and girls around the world are physically and sexually assaulted each year. Of the 152 women in this body, that means 51 women. It includes your daughters, your sisters, your nieces, your mothers.

With the Epstein files, we have a chance to change that. However, real talk: The administration doesn't need

a discharge petition. It has not complied with the subpoena, and it has the power to release the files today.

Instead, the man in the most powerful position in the world has used the full weight of the government to block, obfuscate, and deflect the full release of the files. It is the same person who intimidated female Members of Congress to withdraw their names from the petition, who responded "Quiet, piggy" to a female reporter who asked about the files, and who nominated an alleged sexual predator to be our AG. It is the same person whose name appears more than any other in the Epstein emails.

In the pantheon of violence, a sexual predator is the worst of the worst, so why protect him? It is also curious that the Judiciary Committee is managing this debate and has not even had this come before the committee. I wonder why. Release the files now.

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY), chairman of the Constitution and Limited Government Subcommittee.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, today a united Republican Party and a bipartisan supermajority is going to pass a bill to increase transparency regarding the egregious abuses by Jeffrey Epstein, a goal that anyone of conscience desires. That is in totality an important statement to check the rich and powerful.

Remember how we got here. After decades, it was President Trump's Department of Justice that indicted Jeffrey Epstein in July 2019. It was President Trump's DOJ that arrested and indicted Ms. Maxwell. It was the Republican-led Oversight Committee, through 13 subpoenas, that has released 65,000 pages of files in just 10 months.

Meanwhile, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have largely ignored this issue. It was Democrats who redacted an email to mislead the American people about the truth of a witness that exonerated President Trump. It was a Democrat, Representative PLASKETT, who literally texted with Jeffrey Epstein as we questioned Michael Cohen. It was Democrats who shut down the government, resulting in the delay of swearing in of Members.

As we vote to pass this legislation—and it will pass—it is impossible, however, to avoid problems with its politicization. One colleague has offensively gone so far as to say that to oppose this bill means you support pedophiles. Yet, I know good public servants, former law enforcement, and former prosecutors who never knew Epstein and never knew any visitors to his criminal enterprise who have genuine concerns about supporting this bill out of fear of creating new victims or harming existing victims or both.

That is what we have reduced Congress to, inserting itself into the prosecutorial process for political motivations, driven heavily by hatred of President Trump.

We should be concerned about victim privacy, risking disclosure of noncred-

ible allegations of child sexual abuse materials, and future investigations. However, here is the deal: The leaders of this Nation must expose abuses by the rich and powerful. That is why President Trump and the House have been working for full transparency, but we should be motivated by truth and justice for all, not politics.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK), the minority whip.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, this should be an easy vote. This is about justice for the victims and survivors of Jeffrey Epstein. This is about every victim of trafficking and sexual abuse, monstrous crimes that thrive in secrecy and fear.

Yet, instead of shining a light on that darkness, just moments ago, Donald Trump defended the continued obstruction of releasing these files. Even as House Republicans prepared to vote "yes" today, Speaker JOHNSON is calling this a show vote. He is calling it dangerous. He is signaling the U.S. Senate to block it.

Republicans continue to use their power to shield rich pedophiles from justice. If you can't stand up for these survivors, how can anyone trust you to stand up for them?

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

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

Just very quickly, what happened under the Biden administration? Well, under the Biden administration, Ghislaine Maxwell was prosecuted for conspiring to sexually abuse and traffic girls in 2020. In 2021, she was convicted, in December of 2021, after a month-long trial in Judge Nathan's courtroom. In 2022, Maxwell was sentenced to 20 years in prison under the Biden administration for sex trafficking and sexual abuse of minors.

When President Trump took office in January of 2025, they killed the investigation. They assembled all the materials, they got all the prosecutors together, and they terminated the investigation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY).

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support to release the Epstein files. First, this issue is beyond party. It is a question of justice. Survivors have waited too long. Stop the delay. This is not a hoax. Release the files.

Second, we must face a hard truth. Silence that shields the powerful is a betrayal of those they hurt. Congress must reject any attempt, including a Presidential pardon or any form of clemency for Ghislaine Maxwell. This cannot be done. This would be a cover-up. We cannot allow clemency of any kind for Maxwell, not now, not ever.

Survivors deserve justice. I urge a strong "yes" vote.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his eloquent remarks. Pardons are for people who are

contrite. Pardons are for people who are repentant. Pardons are not for people who lie. Every Member of this body should immediately, verbally, vocally denounce the idea of clemency, commutation, or pardon for Ghislaine Maxwell.

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

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ).

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Mr. Speaker, there were thousands of girls and young women abused, trafficked, and used by Epstein and the elite and the powerful who believed they could get away with it.

Epstein told the young victims that he controlled the banks and the government.

Those women refused to be silenced. Today, they have pierced the dark with their light.

Anytime any girl is trafficked, molested, or abused, the world must stand up. Today, the House proves Jeffrey Epstein wrong. The Senate must do the same tomorrow.

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA).

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, a minute and a half or an hour, the words would still have to be the same. We have all said that this will pass the House, perhaps unanimously, today.

I think all of us who have looked at the details of this particular bill know that it is flawed and that before it goes to the President's desk it has to be amended, as it can be amended in the Senate. We call on the Senate to amend it so that we protect the innocent, so that we have the provisions that were intended, perhaps, to be in this bill but are not properly written.

With that, President Trump has said get it to his desk, and he will sign it. President Trump has said he will do it. However, I am going to say to all of us: It is also important that we remember that Epstein is dead, but people live on, people who were innocent, people who, in fact, should not be named.

We are not talking about the rich and the powerful. We are talking about the very victims. That is what we need to make sure is amended before it goes to the President's desk.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his time. I think no more needs to be said. This body will vote for it all. But let's not kid ourselves, it has to be changed so that it properly protects both the tradition of the grand jury and, clearly, those innocent people that would otherwise be swept up.

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

This whole bill is about protecting the innocent. Mr. Speaker, the Senate must pass the bill, as we are passing it today and as the President has said he would sign it, after changing his position on the bill over the weekend when

he could see the tidal wave of public opinion moving against him. Let's pass this bill. Pass it in the Senate. Sign the bill, and let's go ahead and release the complete file.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the distinguished gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. ANSARI).

□ 1350

Ms. ANSARI. Mr. Speaker, the walls are closing in on Donald Trump and his rich and powerful friends who either abused or raped children or who were enabling and complicit in these heinous crimes for decades.

This vote today matters, but here is the truth: Donald Trump could direct the Department of Justice to release the files today. He is choosing not to. Led by Oversight and Government Reform Democrats, they are already under subpoena and have refused. This is an ongoing cover-up by the Trump White House. MIKE JOHNSON and the White House have been complicit.

Mr. Speaker, what is Trump hiding? Why not release the files today? Release the files today.

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. VAN DREW).

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about hypocrisy. Let me be clear. I was a cosponsor of this very bill from the beginning, from jump start, because we should never protect pedophiles.

For months, my Democratic colleagues have done what they think is politically convenient through all the yelling, through all the tears, and through all the sadness.

They say releasing the Epstein list is of grave concern to them. If that was true, where were they during the 4 years of the Biden Presidency? Why didn't they demand the release of these files from jump start in year one? Mr. Speaker, why didn't they ask for them in year two? If that wasn't good enough, why didn't they ask for them maybe in year three? They had control. They didn't even ask in his final year of office.

Other than a single letter the ranking member wrote in 2019, a single letter, not one Democrat on the committee spoke out about Epstein or his victims of this very terrible tragedy, other than to say he didn't like the plea deal.

Mr. Speaker, let me say this: When they stand here today, insisting how badly they want these files released, why didn't they do it? Yet they stayed silent for year after year after year under Joe Biden.

It is impossible. Mr. Speaker, it is impossible to see that as genuine. What I see is a group more focused on scoring political points and drama than protecting abused children.

Mr. Speaker, the record is clear. Under Republicans, far more information has been released in the last 6 months than was done during all 4

years of the previous Presidency under Joe Biden. We have actually been the party of transparency. We have released the information. We have told the truth. Unfortunately, and I am sad to say it, they have been the party of hypocrisy.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I have never heard a more defensive presentation in my life than we are hearing from over there. The gentleman should spend a little less time pointing out hypocrisy and a little more time trying to ferret out cruelty, humiliation, and rape. That is what we are working on.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. MIN).

Mr. MIN. Mr. Speaker, I want to remind my colleagues we are all here voting on the bill because President Trump, who has the power to release the Epstein files at any time, has refused to do so. He called this a hoax.

We are here because Speaker MIKE JOHNSON and President Trump have gone to extraordinary lengths to try to kill and delay the discharge petition, including refusing to seat ADELITA GRIJALVA for over 40 days and threatening House Republicans who signed on.

Several of my Republican colleagues have accused us who support justice here of having Trump derangement syndrome. They suffer from something much worse, which is pedophile protection syndrome.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to stop protecting pedophiles. Release the Epstein files. The victims deserve justice.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their comments to the Chair.

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WALKINSHAW).

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Mr. Speaker, for years, we have watched dangerous conspiracies like Pizzagate and QAnon shape our political landscape. They helped fuel the rise of President Trump and were built on baseless claims about secret pedophile rings, while the real documented case of child sex trafficking involving Jeffrey Epstein remains shrouded in secrecy because President Trump refuses to release the files.

Mr. Speaker, what is President Trump hiding? Why won't he release the files? The House finally has the opportunity to act. Release the files, and let the American people see the truth.

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the very distinguished gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. GRIJALVA), who is finally with us, the Representative from Arizona's Seventh Congressional District.

Mrs. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the survivors, family members, and advocates who are here today and have never given up.

The legislation in front of us at its core is about something very simple. The survivors deserve justice. The American people deserve the truth.

To every survivor watching, their courage is inspiring. They are the reason why this vote is happening today. Protecting women and children from pedophiles should not be a Democratic issue. It should not be a Republican issue. It should be a human rights issue and a matter of justice.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the Epstein File Transparency Act.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, they are here as honored guests of the House. We are delighted they are here.

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

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. LOIS FRANKEL).

Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for far too long, the survivors of Jeffrey Epstein's abuse were failed by a justice system that minimized their suffering and prosecutors who treated young girls as if they were criminals. That was wrong.

I am here with my colleagues to promise that we will get to the bottom of why the Epstein survivors were treated so badly, who made those decisions, and who they were protecting. There will be no more secrecy and no more excuses.

Mr. Speaker, we all deserve the truth, and I thank the survivors for their courage and perseverance. Their voices are being heard.

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from the great State of Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON), the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for doing such an extraordinary job on all of this.

Mr. Speaker, for 43 long days, the Democrats held this House and the entire country hostage. Finally, with the lights back on, this body is returning to our regular legislative session. We have a lot of work to do.

My colleagues on this side of the Chamber are ready and eager to get back to our urgent legislative work we promised the American people we would do.

Just to name a few of those priorities, we have to continue lowering the cost of healthcare. We have to bring down prices for American families. We

have to finish the regular appropriations process.

I wish I could say that our first order of business would be to get to those urgent priorities. However, of course, we are spending time on the floor about something else. This is something we could have resolved last week when we brought a unanimous consent to pass this discharge with the full support of the body.

Mr. Speaker, our friends over here, who are arguing today, stalled that. They objected to it. They wanted to have this exercise instead. That is why we say that this is a "show" vote. That is what this is. They are making a show of it, and it really is a shame.

Mr. Speaker, we have some heroic women in the Chamber today. I met with many of them a while back. They are here in the gallery. They have come forward. They have shown their faces. They have used their names to share the unspeakable tragedies that many of them were subjected to, some of them when they were very young. It is a heroic service to the country.

They are seeking justice, and justice has been delayed for too long. The Department of Justice many years ago should have brought these charges. It took too long to do it.

□ 1400

Now we are in this process of making sure all the American people get the information, but we have to do it in the right way.

After 4 years of Democratic control under President Biden, they were not truthful with us about a lot of things. The Democrats insisted the border was secure. We knew it wasn't. They insisted that inflation was transitory. We knew it wouldn't be. They misled the American people about the obvious mental and physical decline of the previous Commander in Chief. Now those same Democrats are demanding transparency. Suddenly transparency is their new word.

Out of nowhere, they have taken a curious concern in the Epstein investigation, all in the name of transparency.

However, the question has been asked here many times during the debate on the floor and everybody is questioning why it is that the Democrats have done this right now. We have to look at the obvious facts.

The Democrats had all the Epstein files in their possession for 4 long years under the Biden Presidency. The Biden Department of Justice had these files, and no one on this side, who is breathless today about the urgency of this release, ever said a word about it. It was the Democrats who could have urged President Biden's Department of Justice to go beyond prosecuting just Epstein and Gislaine Maxwell, but they didn't do it. It is a fair question to ask today: Why now? Why the sudden urgent interest in Jeffrey Epstein?

We know why. It is because the Democrats were never interested in

transparency or executing justice or protecting the victims of this unspeakable tragedy before. The simple truth is obvious for everybody to see. This is a political exercise for Democrats. It pains me to say it. I wish that was not the truth, but it is, and it is undeniable. This is as deceitful and dishonest as their pointless stunt was to shut the government down.

Democrats are using the Epstein tragedy, the unspeakable evils that this guy committed with his trafficking ring and all of the abuses that they made these young women go through, they are using that as a political weapon to try to distract from their failures as a party and to try their best to try to tie President Trump somehow into this wretched scandal.

The President had nothing to do with it. He has been very clear. He has nothing to hide. That is why he endorsed the vote today. I suspect this vote will be probably unanimous.

Here is the important point that everybody needs to understand: We have been advocates of maximum transparency, but we have also insisted that the victims be carefully protected. The Oversight Committee has been doing extraordinary work. We have got some of the most vigorous advocates on the Republican and Democrat side on the Oversight Committee. They have been working in earnest to deliver transparency for the American people and to do it in a responsible manner.

What do we mean by that?

The bipartisan effort over there is already producing all the results that the discharge petition seeks and much, much more. Chairman COMER and all of these advocates over there have been releasing thousands of documents, for example, from the Epstein estate. By the way, in my view, that has been the greatest treasure trove of information because it has yielded for us Epstein's own personal flight logs, his financial records, his daily calendars, and so much more.

Importantly, none of that was addressed or is addressed in the legislation that is being voted on today. The estate files wouldn't even have been encompassed in that. It goes to show that the Oversight Committee is doing it in the right way.

From the very beginning, we have been insistent that this matter be handled carefully and with the utmost caution and care for the people who have been harmed. They should not be made to suffer any longer.

We are talking about real people's lives at stake here and young victims who don't want to be dragged into this political game who could get hurt further. However, the Democrats are rushing to release the thousands of unsubstantiated documents that may be included in this that may be in the public domain with the passage of this bill.

There are serious deficiencies in the legislation that I have noted at length,