

Syria has a real promise of stability benefiting all the Middle East, including change in Tehran. That is why both of us, a Democrat and Republican, appreciate so much the repeal of the Caesar Act, which is sanctions on the Assad regime with the full support of President Donald Trump.

In conclusion, God bless our troops as the global war on terrorism continues. Trump is reinstituting peace through strength, revealing war criminal Putin lies, insulting and mocking Trump, speaking lovely in the morning and conducting mass murder in the evening.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

(Mr. WALBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA.

We all know a strong education can unlock a lifetime of possibilities. Yet for students with disabilities, sometimes even going to school can be challenging. Thankfully, IDEA changed all of that.

At its core, IDEA is about providing a tailored education that meets a student's unique needs. As chairman of the Education and Workforce Committee, I am committed to expanding strong, personalized educational opportunities so every student can succeed.

IDEA was an incredible first step in making education possible for our Nation's students. As we look to the future, we must maintain and remain steadfast in our commitment to making high-quality, tailored education possible for every American student.

Here is to another 50 years of IDEA.

YOU CAN'T RUN A FARM OR BUSINESS OR HOUSEHOLD ON SLOGANS

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, once again, we are hearing this word "affordability" tossed around a lot these days as an election line. It seems to be used to cover up the ideals of the bad policy that is driving up the costs and making everything unaffordable.

You see it in every speech and every press release. The buzzwords aren't really the important part. It is the policies that are driving the high cost of everything.

Let's start with energy, once again. In my home State of California, our electricity prices are higher than most other States except maybe Hawaii. You can slap the word "affordable" on this policy, but it isn't. You can't run a farm or a business or a household on slogans.

Then there is Washington's spending habits. When we saw "affordability" being tossed around again, massive government spending is part of vacuuming all available money out and supply out and driving inflation. It is amazing how quickly these talking points lose that.

Then there is the regulatory stack. Folks love to preach "affordability" While burying projects under NEPA delays. In my home State of California, car regulations are taking away our vehicles and forcing everything into an electricity grid that can't handle it. Affordability doesn't come from a policy like that.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Ferrari, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2950. An act to require the Secretary of State and relevant executive branch agencies to address international scam compounds defrauding people in the United States, to hold significant transnational criminal organizations accountable, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 94-304, as amended by Public Law 99-7, the Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, appoints the following Senator as a member of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission) during the 119th Congress:

The Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGOS) vice the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH).

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 105-292, as amended by Public Law 106-55, Public Law 107-228, and Public Law 112-75, the Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, upon the recommendation of the Democratic Leader, appoints the following individual to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom:

Rachel K. Laser of the District of Columbia vice Ariela Ruth Dubler of New York.

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.

SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2025

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 356) to extend the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 356

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 "Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT OF 2000.

(a) SECURE PAYMENTS FOR STATES AND COUNTIES CONTAINING FEDERAL LAND.—

(1) SECURE PAYMENTS.—Section 101 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7111) is amended—

(A) in subsections (a) and (b), by striking "2023" each place it appears and inserting "2026"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

"(e) SPECIAL RULE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 AND 2025 PAYMENTS.—

"(1) STATE PAYMENT.—If an eligible county in a State that will receive a share of the State payment for fiscal year 2024 or 2025 has already received, or will receive, a share of the 25-percent payment for that fiscal year distributed to the State before the date of enactment of this subsection, the amount of the State payment shall be reduced by the amount of the share of the eligible county of the 25-percent payment.

"(2) COUNTY PAYMENT.—If an eligible county that will receive a county payment for fiscal year 2024 or 2025 has already received a 50-percent payment for that fiscal year, the amount of the county payment shall be reduced by the amount of the 50-percent payment.

"(3) PROMPT PAYMENT.—Not later than 45 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Secretary of the Treasury shall make all payments under this title for each of fiscal years 2024 and 2025."

(2) DISTRIBUTION OF PAYMENTS TO ELIGIBLE COUNTIES.—Section 103(d)(2) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7113(d)(2)) is amended by striking "2023" and inserting "2026".

(b) PAYMENTS TO STATES AND COUNTIES.—Section 102 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7112) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by adding at the end the following:

"(E) PAYMENTS FOR EACH OF FISCAL YEARS 2024 AND 2025.—The election otherwise required by subparagraph (A) shall not apply for each of fiscal years 2024 and 2025."; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the following:

"(C) FISCAL YEARS 2024 AND 2025.—The election described in paragraph (1)(A) applicable to a county in fiscal year 2023 shall be effective for each of fiscal years 2024 and 2025."; and

(2) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by adding at the end the following:

"(G) PAYMENTS FOR EACH OF FISCAL YEARS 2024 AND 2025.—The election made by an eligible county under subparagraph (B), (C), or (D) for fiscal year 2023, or deemed to be made by the county under paragraph (3)(B) for that fiscal year, shall be effective for each of fiscal years 2024 and 2025."; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by adding at the end the following:

"(E) PAYMENTS FOR EACH OF FISCAL YEARS 2024 AND 2025.—This paragraph does not apply for each of fiscal years 2024 and 2025."

(c) EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT SPECIAL PROJECTS ON FEDERAL LAND.—

(1) COMMITTEE COMPOSITION WAIVER AUTHORITY.—Section 205(d)(6)(C) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7125(d)(6)(C)) is amended by striking “2023” and inserting “2026”.

(2) EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY.—Section 208 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7128) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking “2025” and inserting “2028”; and

(B) in subsection (b), by striking “2026” and inserting “2029”.

(d) EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO EXPEND COUNTY FUNDS.—Section 305 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7144) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking “2025” and inserting “2028”; and

(2) in subsection (b), by striking “2026” and inserting “2029”.

SEC. 3. RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE PILOT PROGRAM EXTENSION.

Section 205(g) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7125(g)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (5), by striking “2023” and inserting “2026”; and

(2) by striking paragraph (6).

SEC. 4. TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.

(a) RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEES.—Section 205 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7125) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “concerned,” and inserting “concerned”; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking “the date of the enactment of this Act” and inserting “October 3, 2008”; and

(2) in subsection (d)(4), by striking “to extent” and inserting “to the extent”.

(b) USE OF PROJECT FUNDS.—Section 206(b)(2) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7126(b)(2)) is amended by striking “concerned,” and inserting “concerned”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) and the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. VASQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

□ 1410

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased and honored to be able to stand here today in support of the bipartisan Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2025, which we are considering under suspension of the rules.

This important bill would reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools program, also known as SRS, which is really a lifeline for many rural communities in my home of northern California, my neighboring States, and across the Nation.

In counties with large swaths of national forests, the SRS program makes essential payments to county governments that help ensure schools stay open, county roads stay maintained, and emergency services remain available.

Previously, counties received a portion of timber sale proceeds from projects on our national forests, as Federal lands are not subject to State or local property taxes. However, as timber sales have decreased over the years, something I am working with Chairman GT THOMPSON, Chairman WESTERMAN, and the administration to reverse, Congress created the SRS program to make up for that shortfall in timber receipts.

This program expired in fiscal year 2023, and the last payments went out in 2024. For many counties and many schools, the lapse in the SRS program means an abrupt and devastating cut of roughly 80 percent of that portion of funding that they would normally receive, which is unacceptable.

It hurts local governments' ability to provide basic educational, public safety, and other services. Schools would close, and jobs would be eliminated due to this delay. In this case, it might even be just in time for Christmas.

In 2024 alone, my home State of California received \$33.7 million through this program.

The Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2025 helps ensure the more than 700 rural counties that receive these SRS payments have the resources they need for schools, roads, and wildfire mitigation by reauthorizing this program. This bill not only ensures that SRS payments can go out in 2025 and 2026 but also makes retroactive payments for those missed in 2024 when the program expired.

Reauthorizing the SRS program means that schools, public works, and county services will not be forced to lay off dozens of employees who do the essential work for rural counties and schools—again, right before Christmas in some cases. Those who have already been let go due to the lapse in funding should be able to be brought back to continue the important work they do for their areas.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank my great colleagues, Chairman GT THOMPSON of the Committee on Agriculture and Chairman BRUCE WESTERMAN of the Committee on Natural Resources, for their work on reauthorizing the SRS program.

I also thank my colleagues for making this a bipartisan bill, my co-lead on the issue, Colorado Representative JOE NEGUSE, for coming in with me on this for the House version of the bill, and Senators CRAPO and WYDEN for their work on that side.

I urge my colleagues to support this. Let's get this out and get the delay over with to help these local counties and schools.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of New Mexico's Second Congressional District to celebrate a long-awaited victory for rural America, the imminent passage of the bipartisan Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act.

I preface my remarks by thanking Representatives LAMALFA and NEGUSE, who introduced this bill, and Chairman THOMPSON and Ranking Member CRAIG. We would not be standing here today without their leadership and outpouring of strong, bipartisan support that we have seen for this bill both here in Congress and on the ground in our communities.

For decades, SRS has been more than an abstract Federal program. It has been a promise, a promise that when Federal lands limit local tax revenue, Congress will stand with rural communities and school districts so that they continue to provide the basic essential services that every American family deserves.

Rural communities across the country and in New Mexico know this story well. In Catron, Grant, Sierra, and Otero Counties in my district, national forests define our landscape, and they define who we are. They are the treasures that we value and protect. Yet, those beautiful lands also mean fewer taxable acres, fewer revenue streams for public schools, and fewer resources to maintain the roads that our families travel every day.

For more than 20 years, SRS helped close that gap. It ensured that public schools could keep teachers in the classroom, that buses could run safe routes on rural roads, and that county governments could plan long-term budgets with certainty.

It ensures that children growing up in frontier communities receive the same shot at a quality education as anyone in major cities in my district, like Albuquerque or Las Cruces. It ensures that when there was a medical emergency in the middle of the night, emergency medical services had the roads that they needed to save lives.

That stability vanished when SRS expired in 2024. Rural counties across the West, including mine, were forced to make impossible decisions.

In New Mexico alone, our communities lost more than \$9 million in a single year. That \$9 million loss meant school districts had to consider laying off teachers and reading specialists and cutting back to a 4-day school week in a place like Quemado because they could no longer afford to operate a 5-day school week.

County commissions were forced to take a hard look at their budgets, looking line by line at what vital services they could cut to ensure their communities could maintain their roads.

This past August, I met with a bipartisan group of county officials, educators, and Tribal leaders back home to discuss SRS and the need for reauthorization. Their message didn't

waver: Rural communities needed Congress to act. They needed certainty. They needed this lifeline to their communities restored.

Today, after months of fighting for reauthorization, we are delivering on a bipartisan basis. Today, we are sending a clear message to rural communities across New Mexico and across the country that they are not invisible, not expendable, and not expected to bear the weight of this lapse alone.

The Senate has already passed this reauthorization, and I urge my colleagues to help us finish the job and send the bill to the President's desk for his signature.

This is the kind of win that New Mexicans sent me to Washington, D.C., to deliver, and it is worth celebrating.

This legislation represents the best of what Congress can achieve when we put aside partisanship and focus on the people we serve. It reflects both Democrats' and Republicans' shared understanding that rural counties take on an enormous responsibility in managing and stewarding our national forests, and their kids should not be left behind because of it.

It is a recognition that public lands benefit our entire Nation, and the cost of maintaining essential services like schools and roads should not fall solely on the shoulders of rural families.

For New Mexico's Second Congressional District, this bill means stability. It means that school districts can retain teachers, hire staff, and keep programs in place that enrich our children's futures. It means that our sheriffs, firefighters, and first responders have reliable funding for the roads and infrastructure that they depend on when every second counts.

Passing SRS reauthorization also honors the frontier spirit that defines rural New Mexico. Communities like Silver City, Cloudcroft, Quemado, and many others throughout New Mexico continue to lead in forest conservation, outdoor recreation, wildfire resilience, and natural resource management. They deserve a Federal partner that matches their commitment, and today, they are getting that.

Mr. Speaker, both New Mexico and I thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who worked tirelessly to bring this legislation to the finish line. I also thank the local leaders, our county commissioners, school superintendents, teachers, parents, and firefighters, just like these folks here in Fence Lake, who raised their voices and never let this issue slip from their attention.

As this bill is signed into law, I look forward to witnessing the relief that it will bring across New Mexico in time for Christmas. I look forward to seeing teachers stay in their classrooms, rural roads being repaired and maintained, and families in these rural counties finally receiving the stability that they have been promised but denied for too long.

Today is a good day for rural America. Today is a good day for New Mexico.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to vote in favor of the SRS Reauthorization Act, and I urge my colleagues to join me in its passage. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. VASQUEZ from New Mexico for driving this forward on his side of the aisle, both sides of the aisle. I appreciate being able to get this over the line here soon, as we both know too much about wildfires in our respective States, as well. This will go a long way toward helping that issue.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BENTZ), my colleague from my north border.

□ 1420

Mr. BENTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 356, the Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2025.

Mr. Speaker, in 1990, the spotted owl was listed under the Endangered Species Act as a threatened species. Almost immediately, timber production from Federal forests in the Western United States plummeted by 80 percent.

The economic and societal costs of timber-dependent States and their timber-reliant counties was appalling. Demand for SNAP and Medicaid shot up. Alcoholism and meth addictions became routine. County tax revenues were decimated.

A belated but needed response was the Secure Rural Schools Act first passed in 2000, 10 years after the listing of the owl. This law, and the funding it provides, was designed to partially offset the massive decline in Federal timber revenue. It provides a modest amount of funding for critical services, including: infrastructure maintenance, search and rescue, fire prevention, and, most importantly, money for children's education.

As this chart shows, all of those billions did nothing to help recover the owl. The population has declined from 1,200 pairs in 1980 to around 200 pairs today. When society enacts laws that seemingly benefit the broader public but end up harming small communities, society must assume responsibility for that harm. That is what this bill partially accomplishes.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues. I thank the leaders of the committees that helped put this bill together. I thank Speaker JOHNSON for this bill and the funding my counties so desperately need. I urge my colleagues to support S. 356.

Mr. VASQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. SALINAS), my distinguished colleague.

Ms. SALINAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative VASQUEZ for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 356, the Secure Rural Schools Reau-

thorization Act, my bipartisan legislation with Representatives LAMALFA and NEGUSE in the House and Senators CRAPO and WYDEN in the Senate.

In central and southern Oregon, my district, the Federal Government owns over 3 million acres of forestland that pays no taxes to our local government. Generations of families built their lives and livelihood around Federal timber harvest, and counties relied on revenue shares from those sales to fund public services. When the timber industry collapsed, the revenue shares also disappeared.

Congress made a commitment to support rural communities and the critical infrastructure to make sure they did not get left behind. However, in the Republican budget bill, H.R. 1, the timber revenues from Federal lands to counties were eliminated, adding insult to injury.

The Secure Rural Schools program has been a lifeline for our rural communities. It supports basic public services like keeping roads paved, schools open, and emergency services running. Secure Rural Schools was meant to be a bridge and not the final answer for our rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, we still have a long way to go to deliver on the investments and job opportunities that rural America needs and deserves. I know it is one of my top priorities in Congress, along with many of my colleagues.

Letting this program expire and pulling the rug out from under our rural counties is simply not an option. We owe it to our rural communities and our timber-dependent counties to keep this commitment.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it, as well.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague from Oregon (Ms. SALINAS). It took a while for all of us to get here, but I appreciate her help, as well.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER).

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, as a former county commissioner, I rise in strong support of the Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2025.

Since the National Forest System was created, nearly 200 million acres of rural America have been put aside for conservation, recreation, and responsible natural resource development, like mining and timber harvesting.

When these acres were put aside, rural communities lost their access to this land for settlement and economic development. To compensate these communities, they were supposed to receive a portion of the revenue the Federal Government generated from responsible resource development to help fund things like schools and rural roads.

Today, thanks to endless litigation and opposition from environmental groups, responsible development like mining and timber harvesting is nearly

impossible. Our rural communities are losing jobs, economic activity, and their share of Federal revenues from this development.

The Secure Rural Schools program was created to help offset that. Today, the Secure Rural Schools program provides nearly \$7 million a year to rural communities across Minnesota's Eighth Congressional District.

While we should really be taking action to encourage and allow responsible mining and timber harvesting within our national forests, providing this relief is the next best thing. This is a vital lifeline for rural America that the American people owe to them. We must reauthorize it.

Mr. Speaker, rural Minnesota and rural America matter, and I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. HAGEMAN).

Ms. HAGEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 356 to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools program.

Mr. Speaker, with such a large percentage of Wyoming's resources historically locked up in Federal lands, including national forests, communities across my State have long weathered challenges associated with reduced flexibility and a decreased tax base.

While a percentage of revenue from timber sales previously alleviated tax shortfalls, shifting land management priorities in Washington, D.C., have led to significant declines in timber harvest.

The Secure Rural Schools program was created to bridge the gap for our rural communities that continue to be impacted by decades of agency mismanagement, Federal overregulations, and harmful lawsuits.

Since its creation, Wyoming communities have received vital funding to support infrastructure projects, public education, search and rescue operations, and other critical emergency services. The program's lapse in authorization has since threatened these essential functions, and its successful reauthorization will assist countless Wyoming communities that are uniquely and disproportionately impacted by bureaucratic decisionmaking beyond their control.

Lastly, we must not lose sight of the underlying problem and continue to prioritize policies that restore timber production and the original intent of our Federal land management agencies: supporting multiple use and healthy forests through proactive management strategies while meeting the needs of surrounding communities.

I appreciate all of the Wyoming stakeholders who brought this issue to my attention and have remained engaged on this legislation throughout its consideration in Congress. I also thank Representative LAMALFA and Chairman WESTERMAN, as well as

Chairman THOMPSON, for their steadfast leadership on this legislation to resolve these issues and support our rural Wyoming communities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support S. 356.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight two particularly important projects in my district that sit in the Gila National Forest and are surrounded by the rural communities of Glenwood, New Mexico; Quemado; and Reserve. These are two incredibly important projects that have helped diversify rural economies and helped support the outdoor recreation economy: the Catwalk historic trail and the Cosmic Campground.

These two projects on Federal public lands have brought in very important economic revenue to these communities. They have brought in tours from all across the country to see the darkest skies in the country in what is an International Dark Skies Sanctuary and one of the most breathtaking trails that one can experience in our Nation's first wilderness.

Regardless, SRS is incredibly important to help ensure that our schools and our roads continue to function as we expand New Mexico's outdoor recreation economy.

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY).

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor of the Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act, I am very glad and relieved this day has finally come.

Mr. Speaker, seven of the counties in my district rely on this program to assure every child has access to a quality education and to provide important public services.

Throughout the period in which this fund has lapsed, I have met with many of the leaders in these schools who have talked about the tradeoffs they have had to make. I met with the students who have seen opportunities taken from them, extracurriculars and other programs that have been limited because of this lapse in funding.

I thank all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle here today and in the committees of jurisdiction for their tireless efforts in overcoming the inertia of this institution and getting this bill to the floor for a vote today.

I look forward to it passing in a resounding bipartisan way and in a way that I hope will assure that, going forward, we don't allow for this sort of lapse to happen again where for 1½ years these schools and counties were going without these vitally needed payments.

This is a measure that has broad bipartisan support. It is a very popular program. It is an important program. There is no reason that Congress should fail to pass its reauthorization in a timely manner.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this passing on the floor today. We need to make sure that in the future we don't keep our schools and our students in limbo.

□ 1430

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN), who is the hardest working man on this issue. My colleague is the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 356, the Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2025, which is a lifeline for rural school districts that have experienced severe budget impacts since 2023 when the program was not reauthorized. This bill is vital to restoring critical funding, preventing further school closures, and ensuring rural students have access to quality education that can compete with urban communities.

However, this is not just an education issue. This is about investing in the future of rural America and supporting communities surrounded by Federal forests.

It is something I hear about regularly from the men and women of the Fourth District of Arkansas who share my understanding that our schools must be supported in a way that allows them to play a role as a community hub while also supporting our timber industry that is the lifeblood for many of our communities.

For generations, Arkansas counties with large swaths of Federal forest land have received a share of Federal timber harvest revenue on Federal land. Unfortunately, reduced timber revenue since the 1990s, as a result of declining rates of timber harvesting, litigation, and misguided environmental regulations, has drastically affected county revenue, creating very real economic impacts in its wake.

Franklin, Garland, Hot Spring, Howard, Johnson, Logan, Montgomery, Newton, Pike, Polk, Pope, Scott, and Yell Counties have lost millions of their SRS funding while waiting for this legislation to be reauthorized. Communities across Arkansas and the United States are sounding the alarm, and it is time for Congress to listen.

This bill not only shines a light on an educational issue but underscores the need for an increase in responsible forest management. That is why I introduced the Fix Our Forests Act earlier this year, which passed the House with overwhelming bipartisan support. FOFA would not only result in more stable funding for working families, but it would also mitigate the devastation of wildfires in our wildland-urban interfaces through the restoration of forest health and commonsense management. I hope the Senate will act soon so we can send FOFA to the President's desk quickly to help our rural communities throughout Arkansas and the Nation.

It is time to restore revenue, revitalize resilience, and reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools legislation for our rural timber communities. This will be for our rural timber communities all across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague, Mr. LAMALFA, for the work that he has done on this, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Utah (Ms. MALOY), who is also from the Congressional Western Caucus.

Ms. MALOY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2025.

The Secure Rural Schools program, or SRS, is a lifeline for rural Utah communities.

When timber revenues from Federal lands declined, it threatened the ability of counties to fund their schools, roads, and emergency services.

Counties are responsible for providing these basic services, but what if they can't?

SRS steps in to fill that gap in counties with overwhelming Federal land ownership, counties that previously benefited from timber sales. With the majority of Utah's land federally managed, our counties cannot simply tax their way out of budgeting shortfalls.

The elected county commissioners in my district spend a lot of time getting creative and stretching the dollars they have as far as they can, and that includes working to get Congress to fund SRS. Kane County is 87 percent federally owned. Garfield County is about 94 percent federally owned, and Piute County is about 75 percent.

SRS recognizes that the Federal Government has an obligation to be part of the communities surrounded by the land it manages. Replacing lost funding is a step toward being part of those local communities.

This funding keeps schools staffed and keeps roads maintained. Our rural counties need the stability and fairness that comes with reauthorizing SRS. It matters a lot for Utah.

To be clear, rural counties, timber counties, would rather have the jobs that come with timber production and sound forest management, management for resource production. However, in the meantime, while we are fixing the policies that prevented that, SRS is essential for the rural counties.

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

Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank Chair WESTERMAN for his support of the Fix Our Forests Act, introducing that bill, and I hope that it does make it to the Senate.

I think as we talk about the longevity of rural communities and sustainability of rural communities, we have to have good forest management and a diversified economy that includes the timber industry, cattle growing, and outdoor recreation. So

much of that depends on the health of our public lands.

I am encouraged by the bipartisan support shown on this bill today. I hope we can have more conversations and we can pass SRS out of the House today so that we can ensure that these rural communities have a future that is not dependent on Federal funding but that has a diversified economy that uses our natural resources wisely.

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON). I greatly appreciate my colleague's strong work in our Agriculture Committee and the Subcommittee on Forestry.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the distinguished chairman of the Agriculture Committee Subcommittee on Forestry for his great work, for his leadership, and for his tireless work on this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 356, the Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2025.

Actively managing our national forests is critical for both forest health and the economic health of our rural communities. Congress has long recognized that responsible timber harvesting is essential for encouraging that stewardship.

Since many communities throughout the United States, including Pennsylvania's 15th Congressional District, are located within national forest lands, declining timber harvests can lead to chronic underfunding of local schools, emergency services, and other projects that rely on a strong tax base. As a result, Congress made a commitment to provide resources to rural communities and schools that have tracts of land managed by the U.S. Forest Service.

Since 1908, Federal law has required that 25 percent of the revenue generated through timber sales in national forests is returned to the local county. These funds are then used by local governments to provide critical support services for schools, roads, and other essential needs.

Timber harvesting in the national forest system reached its peak in the late 1980s, then dramatically declined in the early 1990s. This decline led to significantly reduced payments to counties, notably impacting rural schools. This trend continued throughout the decade, and harvesting levels have since remained only a fraction of their historical highs.

To offset this lost revenue, Congress created the Secure Rural Schools program in 2000 to offer an alternative funding formula that takes historic production levels into account. This program has been a lifeline to hundreds of rural counties and school districts across the country who have seen their budgets slashed through no fault of their own.

The program expired in the fall of 2023, resulting in county payments re-

verting to the rate under permanent law, which equates to a nearly 70 percent reduction.

Today's legislation will extend Secure Rural Schools for 3 years and make adjustments to payments already made for fiscal years 2024 and 2025. Without this critical reauthorization, these rural school districts will not receive any additional funding this year, and payments scheduled for distribution in the spring of 2026 and beyond will remain at significantly reduced levels.

I represent many communities that receive funding through the Secure Rural Schools program, and I remain committed to seeing the program operate consistently and successfully. We must ensure that Congress continues to fulfill our obligation to our rural counties and schools.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to vote favorably.

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

I think we can all recognize what a special moment this is for our rural communities. These days, Democrats and Republicans don't often see eye to eye long enough to get a piece of legislation like this all the way to the President's desk. The fact that we will today shows just how important we all know it is to stand up for our rural communities.

For New Mexico, this is real money with real impact. Our rural communities have been missing more than \$9 million that should have been supporting schools, roads, and essential services. I am proud to be bringing that money back to the families and communities that have waited for far too long.

I also want to take a moment to recognize some of the incredible New Mexican advocates who helped make today possible. This is not a full list, but it is a long one, so bear with me. Our Secure Rural Schools champions in New Mexico's Second District include: Kayli Ortiz, Amber Vaughn, Randall Earwood, Charlene Webb, William Hawkins, Kate Fletcher, Joy Esparsen, David Lackey, and Deborah Mahler. These are the folks who showed up, spoke out, organized their neighbors, and never let us forget what was at stake.

I thank every constituent who wrote, called, and shared their stories with our office. Their advocacy drove much of this effort. Their persistence is why we are passing this bill into law today.

Again, I thank my Republican colleagues for working on this piece of legislation with me and other members of the committee.

I am proud of my community. I am grateful for their trust. Once again, they proved something that we all know back home: Don't mess with rural New Mexicans.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

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

In closing, I thank once again Mr. VASQUEZ for our ability to work on these issues. We should use this ability for a lot more success going forward on forestry, fire, and keeping these schools funded as we go.

Mr. Speaker, I also thank Mr. NEGUSE of Colorado for working with me on the House version of this bill to get where we got today. I thank Speaker JOHNSON and our leader, Mr. SCALISE, as well, for helping get this shepherded for us today and get past some of our other issues that have taken a while to get through. Let's just not have this happen again in this fashion, as it has taken a while to get here. I am very grateful that we have come together and that everybody has seen the importance of this legislation.

Lastly, I really want to thank the folks in our districts for their patience and good cheer. In New Mexico and my part of northern California, as well, I am thankful for the patience people have shown with us trying to get through this process and for the good cheer, again, they have brought.

Our colleagues from Trinity County and Shasta County, some of them are in the audience here today. I am going to especially point out a couple of Modoc County supervisors who are always in my ear in a good way on this: Supervisor Coe and Supervisor Geri Byrne. I thank them for their consistency and persistence in helping get this over the line.

I am very happy we have gotten here today. With broad bipartisan support, let's do more of this.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2025, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 356, the Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2025.

This bill would reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Self-Determination Program (SRS) through Fiscal Year 2026 and provide lapsed payments for 2024 and 2025.

Administered by the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management, SRS funding goes to counties to help maintain schools, infrastructure, and other essential community services for many rural counties that contain federal lands exempt from federal property taxes. The SRS program is certainly a critical program for my home state of Idaho. Nearly two-thirds of Idaho is public land, which means a vast majority of rural counties throughout the state depend on this funding. In fact, Idaho ranks third nationally in SRS funding, behind only Oregon and California.

I want to thank my colleagues, especially Representative LAMALFA from California and Representative FULCHER from Idaho, for working diligently to get this bill across the finish line. I am also grateful to Speaker JOHNSON, House Leadership, and my colleagues for supporting this bill.

As a long-time supporter of the SRS program, and a cosponsor of the House bill, I

look forward to seeing this lifeline benefit local communities throughout Idaho.

Mr. FULCHER. Mr. Speaker, the Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act provides critical funding for rural communities.

This measure is of particular importance for my home state of Idaho, as 62 percent of our land is owned by the federal government.

Every year, Idaho loses revenue in timber sales due to wildfires fueled by federal land mismanagement. In fact, in 2024 alone, a staggering one million acres of the Gem State went up in flames.

Rural counties in Idaho are impacted even more so by extensive federal ownership, as they are unable to tax large portions of land in their jurisdiction.

With this funding reauthorization, rural communities across Idaho will be able to keep classrooms open, roads maintained, and emergency services operating. However, a long-term solution is necessary, and I will continue to advocate for one in Congress that ensures Idahoans dictate Idaho affairs—not the federal government.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 356.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SHINGLE SPRINGS BAND OF MIWOK INDIANS LAND TRANSFER ACT OF 2025

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2302) to take certain Federal land in the State of California into trust for the benefit of the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2302

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 "Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians Land Transfer Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. REVOCATION OF PUBLIC LAND ORDER; LANDS TO BE TAKEN INTO TRUST.

(a) REVOCATION OF PUBLIC LAND ORDER.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law—

(1) Public Land Order 3309 (Sacramento 071209), dated January 17, 1964 (29 Fed. Reg. 609), is revoked; and

(2) jurisdiction over the land described in the public land order referred to in paragraph (1) is transferred to the Secretary.

(b) TRUST TRANSFER.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, subject to valid existing rights, the Secretary shall place the following land into trust for the benefit of the Tribe:

(1) The approximately 80 acres of land generally depicted as "BLM Land-Proposed Transfer into Trust" on the Map.

(2) The approximately 185 acres of land generally depicted as "Indian Creek Ranch-Proposed Transfer into Trust Land Status" on the Map.

(c) REVIEW; SURVEY.—

(1) REVIEW.—Before the deadline described in subsection (b), the Secretary shall conduct a review of the land described in that subsection to determine if a survey of the land is required.

(2) SURVEY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary determines that a survey is required under paragraph (1) after conducting the review required under that paragraph, the Secretary—

(i) shall perform a survey of the land taken into trust under subsection (b); and

(ii) may make minor corrections to the survey and legal land description of the land described in that subsection as the Secretary determines to be necessary to correct clerical, typographical, and surveying errors.

(B) AVAILABILITY.—A survey conducted under subparagraph (A) shall be kept on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

(d) LANDS PART OF RESERVATION; ADMINISTRATION.—The land taken into trust under subsection (b)—

(1) is hereby declared to be part of the Reservation; and

(2) shall be administered by the Secretary in accordance with the laws and regulations generally applicable to property held in trust by the United States for an Indian Tribe.

(e) GAMING PROHIBITED.—Land taken into trust under subsection (b) shall not be used for any class II gaming or class III gaming under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.) (as those terms are defined in section 4 of that Act (25 U.S.C. 2703)).

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) MAP.—The term "Map" means the map prepared by the Bureau of Land Management titled "Proposed Bureau of Land Management Land Transfer to Shingle Springs Rancheria" and dated May 2, 2025.

(2) RESERVATION.—The term "Reservation" means the reservation of the Tribe.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(4) TRIBE.—The term "Tribe" means the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, Shingle Springs Rancheria (Verona Tract), California.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. RANDALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 2302, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2302, the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians Land Transfer Act of 2025, introduced by Congressman MCCLINTOCK, would place approximately 80 acres of BLM land and 185 acres of fee land into trust for the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians.

Descendants of the Miwok Indians once lived throughout north central