

the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2302, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### REMOVING RESTRICTIONS FROM A PARCEL OF LAND IN PADUCAH, KENTUCKY

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1276) to remove restrictions from a parcel of land in Paducah, Kentucky, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1276

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. REMOVAL OF RESTRICTION.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—The Secretary of the Interior (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”) shall execute such instruments as may be necessary to remove all deed restrictions from the parcel of land described in subsection (d), subject to the conditions in subsection (c).

(b) *DEED RESTRICTIONS.*—The deed restrictions referred to in subsection (a) are those restrictions, including easements, exceptions, reservations, terms, conditions, and covenants described in the quitclaim deed from the United States to the City of Paducah, Kentucky, executed on April 27, 2012, and recorded by the Clerk of the County Court of McCracken County, Kentucky, on pages 247 through 260 of Deed Book 1229.

(c) *CONDITIONS OF EXTINGUISHMENT.*—In removing the deed restrictions under subsection (a), the Secretary shall include a reservation requiring that—

(1) the City of Paducah, Kentucky, not transfer or sell the parcel of land to any other entity, except the Oscar Cross Boys & Girls Club of Paducah;

(2) if the City of Paducah, Kentucky, transfers or sells such parcel to the Oscar Cross Boys & Girls Club of Paducah, that the Oscar Cross Boys & Girls Club of Paducah offers to convey the parcel of land to the Secretary, without consideration, prior to conveying the property to any other entity; and

(3) any new use or development of the parcel of land continue to be compatible with public use or recreation purposes.

(d) *LAND DESCRIPTION.*—The parcel of land referred to in subsection (a) is the parcel—

(1) comprised of approximately 3.62 acres located at 2956 Park Avenue, on the Paducah Memorial Army Reserve Center, Paducah, McCracken County, Kentucky, including the improvements thereon; and

(2) conveyed by the Secretary to the City of Paducah, Kentucky.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1276, 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, I rise in support of this legislation offered by my good friend and the chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, Representative COMER. This legislation would remove Federal deed restrictions from a building and the surrounding parcel of land in Paducah, Kentucky.

For more than six decades, the Oscar Cross Boys & Girls Club of Paducah has provided a safe place for young people in McCracken County, Kentucky, to learn, grow, and thrive. The club is a model of community service, offering affordable mentorship, recreation, and educational opportunities to hundreds of children each year.

Today, the club is ready to make long-overdue improvements, including renovating and expanding its building, adding new classrooms, and refurbishing its gymnasium so that it can serve even more children and bolster its educational and recreational programming.

To do so, the Boys & Girls Club is hoping to acquire the current building and surrounding land from the city of Paducah. However, these plans are stalled by an outdated Federal deed restriction put in place by the National Park Service on the land where the Boys & Girls Club currently operates.

H.R. 1276 removes that restriction, which would, in turn, allow the city of Paducah to transfer the parcel directly to the club.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative COMER for working with the Natural Resources Committee to amend this bill during our committee’s markup to ensure that this area remains dedicated to public and recreational purposes in perpetuity. This is a commonsense bill that cuts red tape, empowers local leaders, and strengthens a vital community institution. Chairman COMER has played a vital role in leading and representing his community.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1276, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, in 2012, the National Park Service conveyed this 3.62-acre parcel of land in Kentucky to the city of Paducah through the Federal Lands to Parks Program.

This program allows States, counties, and local governments to acquire surplus land for public recreational purposes, an incredibly impactful alternative to the Trump administration’s public lands selloff scheme.

Although the land was conveyed to the city, the National Park Service still retains a deed restriction. Today, the parcel is utilized, as you heard, by the Oscar Cross Boys & Girls Club,

which provides programming for youth in the community. The club is a central part of the community but faces challenges in accepting new members and a growing wait list due to the need for renovations and expansion of facilities.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1276 would remove the National Park Service’s deed restriction, allowing the city of Paducah to transfer the parcel to the club so that they can move forward with the renovations and improvements needed to increase capacity, expand programming, and better serve youth in the community.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority for working with us in the markup to add language that ensures that this property continues to serve a public purpose by the Boys & Girls Club. This is an important assurance and guarantee.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my bill, H.R. 1276, to remove restrictions from a parcel of land in Paducah, Kentucky.

It is an honor to serve the people of Paducah and McCracken County in Congress. One of their community’s most impactful institutions, the Oscar Cross Boys & Girls Club has been a cornerstone of support and opportunity for local youth for over 60 years.

The club is located on land currently owned by the city of Paducah, which has held the property since 2012. For over 60 years, the Oscar Cross Boys & Girls Club has been a force for good in Paducah and has had a positive impact on thousands of children who have come through its doors.

Today, the club is facing unprecedented demand. More than 100 children are currently on the waiting list due to space constraints in the existing facility.

Unfortunately, lingering Federal interest in the property dating back to the city’s involvement in the Federal Lands to Parks Program decades ago has impeded progress on an exciting renovation project for the local Boys & Girls Club.

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Despite strong local support from the city of Paducah and community members, this Federal restriction has hampered efforts to raise funds and begin the renovation process.

H.R. 1276 is a straightforward, commonsense bill that would lift this outdated restriction and allow the city to fully transfer the land to the Oscar Cross Boys and Girls Club. There is no time to waste in making this commonsense fix to enable this project to move forward.

I was proud to collaborate with the city of Paducah, the National Park

Service, and local stakeholders to develop a legislative solution to this issue. It ensures that the Federal Government's unnecessary involvement no longer stands in the way of progress for the children of Paducah and McCracken County.

I thank Senator PAUL for introducing the Senate companion bill, S. 601, and Senator MCCONNELL for being an original cosponsor of that legislation. I look forward to working with them to get this bill across the finish line and onto President Trump's desk.

I also thank Chairman WESTERMAN for his support and I urge passage of H.R. 1276.

Ms. RANDALL. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

As has been noted, for more than 60 years, the Oscar Cross Boys and Girls Club of Paducah has provided dedicated service to their community.

H.R. 1276 is a straightforward bill that will enhance this legacy of service by removing an unnecessary Federal deed restriction and allowing the city of Paducah to transfer land directly to the club. This will pave the way for long-planned improvements that will directly benefit Kentucky children and families.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support Chairman COMER's legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1276, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL TOURISM AND ACCESS TO RECREATION SITES ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4285) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to designate an entrance-fee free date in 2026 at National Park Service sites in order to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States of America, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4285

*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 "Semiquincentennial Tourism and Access to Recreation Sites Act" or the "STARS Act".*

##### SEC. 2. WAIVED FEES AT PUBLIC RECREATIONAL SITES IN HONOR OF AMERICA'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY.

*(a) IN GENERAL.—In honor of the semiquincentennial of the United States of America—*

*(1) the Secretary of the Interior shall—*

*(A) designate September 17, 2026, as an entrance-fee free date on which admission is free to all visitors with respect to each National Park Service site that charges an entrance fee; and*

*(B) waive standard amenity recreation fees on September 17, 2026, for each visitor to each site managed by the Bureau of Land Management, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, or Bureau of Reclamation that charges a standard amenity recreation fee; and*

*(2) the Secretary of Agriculture shall waive standard amenity recreation fees for September 17, 2026, for each visitor to each site managed by the Forest Service that charges a standard amenity recreation fee.*

*(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:*

*(1) ENTRANCE FEE.—The term "entrance fee" has the meaning given the term in section 802 of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. 6801).*

*(2) STANDARD AMENITY RECREATION FEE.—The term "standard amenity recreation fee" has the meaning given the term in section 802 of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. 6801).*

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 Arkansas.

##### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. 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. 4285, 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, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4285, the Semiquincentennial Tourism and Access to Recreation Sites Act, or STARS Act, led by my colleague, the gentlewoman from Utah (Ms. MALOY).

This bill designates September 17, 2026, as a fee-free day across our national parks and other Federal recreation lands in honor of the 250th anniversary of our Nation's independence.

September 17 was also the date on which the U.S. Constitution was signed 11 years later, bringing together two foundational milestones in American history.

By waiving entrance and recreation fees at more than 400 National Park Service units and thousands of Federal recreation sites, the STARS Act ensures that families across the country can celebrate America 250 by connecting with our natural landscapes and historic places. From our forests and lakeshores to our battlefields and monuments, these sites tell the story of our liberty, resilience, and shared civic values.

This is a simple, bipartisan bill that expands access to our public lands, encourages public participation in the semiquincentennial, and reaffirms the

ideals that continue to guide our Nation.

I commend Representative MALOY, as well as my fellow Arkansan, Senator JOHN BOOZMAN, for leading this bipartisan legislation in the House and the Senate, respectively. I also recognize the work of Representative PETE STAUBER, who offered a thoughtful amendment during our Natural Resources Committee markup to expand this bill to national forests, refuges, and all public lands.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 4285, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, next year our Nation will celebrate its 250th birthday. H.R. 4285, the STARS Act, would mark that milestone on September 17, 2026, by providing free entrance to National Park Service sites and waiving standard amenity recreation fees to sites managed by the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the U.S. Forest Service.

I fully support helping more Americans experience our public lands and will be honored to support this bill. However, it is hard to ignore how hollow this gesture feels when it comes alongside the ongoing Republican effort to undermine access to these very places.

While we may be hearing how treasured our public lands are from my colleagues today, some of their actions paint a different picture.

Republicans are slashing the already underfunded land management agencies' budgets. Republicans are firing hardworking Americans who keep our public lands open and safe. Republicans are trying to sell off our public lands for a quick buck.

Republicans are working to undo protections for national monuments, trying to block updates to outdated resource management plans, and pushing reckless development for extractive industries no matter the public health or environmental consequences.

Republicans are attacking bedrock environmental and historic preservation laws, attempting to erase and rewrite history in our public lands, and working to turn our public lands into prisons and detention centers.

Americans deserve better. They deserve public lands that are open, well cared for, and honest about our history, not just a few symbolic gestures and a free entrance day every now and then.

It is our responsibility to care for our public lands, to support the people who care for them, and to ensure they reflect the full and robust history of everyone who shaped this country. That is how we can honor the past and ensure our public lands remain places that future generations of Americans can learn from and enjoy.

Democrats will continue to stand up for our Federal workforce and to fight to protect Americans' public lands.