

over \$100 million across 1.7 million acres of State Responsibility Area.

As Placer County Fire Chief, Chief Estes oversaw municipal services across 1,000 square miles and served over 70,000 residents, protecting \$80 billion in assets.

In these capacities, he has been an outstanding force in protecting the quality of life in our region by leading the front line of defense against the all-too-common California wildfires.

Chief Estes is widely respected for his exceptional leadership skills and unwavering commitment to collaboration. Under his guidance, his units operate with greater strength, efficiency, and purpose, reflecting his ability to maximize their potential and bring out the best in those he leads.

A lifelong public servant, Chief Estes is truly a pillar of our community. He is defined by his consistent and active engagement and his deep dedication to those he serves, going above and beyond the regular call of duty.

It has really been a privilege to work alongside Chief Estes throughout my time in office. It is an honor to represent someone held in such high esteem by his friends, family, colleagues, and community.

Therefore, on behalf of the United States House of Representatives and California's Third Congressional District, I wish Chief Estes a happy retirement and thank him for his many years of service.

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

#### ISSUES OF THE DAY

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. GROTHMAN of Wisconsin was recognized for 30 minutes.)

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, as we adjourn for the weekend, I would like to address three issues which affect Americans, these are issues I don't think have been discussed quite as much as we ought to.

The first issue concerns this transgender situation. We spend a lot of time talking about guys in girls' sports. This is a problem that ought to be dealt with. I think it polls very well.

Of even more significant concern is that of our out of control psychiatric profession treating this as a genetic problem in which people should have to have surgeries to deal with this.

They have surgeries on young people, people as young as 16 or 15 or 14 years old. These are surgeries that will affect them for the rest of their lives. Just as bad, they give puberty blockers to these young people, not knowing what the long-term effects will be.

Recently, new information that should have come as a surprise to no one—but perhaps will come as a surprise to the mainstream media—a new study came out showing that the number of young adults identifying as transgender plunged by nearly ½ half in 2 years. It exposed what a lot of us

knew all along. It was largely a social contagion. It was not a genetic disease that required surgeries or permanently changing people's lives.

As I pointed out before, this does not only affect the people themselves who may have puberty blockers and surgeries but it affects the parents. It affects the parents who will never have grandchildren because their children were roped into this by the liberal news media, by the liberal psychiatric and psychological associations, and by hospitals who made money off of this deal.

I am really afraid this is something, since it is a nationwide problem, that should be dealt with in Congress—and I think it will be dealt with soon—in which we begin to refuse this sort of treatment and, even more, refuse these surgeries to people under the age of 21.

Can we honestly say that we would advise someone who is 20 or 19 years old to have surgery, permanently altering their body for the rest of their life? Think how our ideas on life have changed. Think how our opinions on life have changed between when we were 18 or 19 or 20 years old and when we are 45 or 50 years old.

The know-it-alls in the psychiatric and psychological profession are encouraging people to have surgeries. They are giving people puberty blockers. I am afraid the U.S. Congress will have to step forward and say “no.”

I hope our leadership team in the near future puts something forward that says—and it really should be greater than that. A person can't be a Congressman until age 25—it should at least go to age 21. We need to put an end to this and stand up to the psychiatric and psychological associations. That is one issue I think we ought to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, I will now deal with another issue, and this kind of deals with Social Security. Right now, there are older people who make the mistake of retiring and getting Social Security. All of a sudden, they would like to go back to work and make more money, but they are unable to.

Earlier this session we played around with the Social Security trust fund in which—or at the end of the last session in which way too many people voted for giving more Social Security dollars to some governmental employees; it was about \$24 billion a year.

Rather than encouraging more people to retire, if our leadership team wants to encourage more people to work, which we should, we should increase the amount of money that a senior can make before their Social Security is taken away.

Right now, if a person makes more than \$19,500 a year in Social Security, when they get to that point, the government begins to take away a person's Social Security check. Right now, we are in the business of trying to discourage people from working if they are 68 or 69 or 70.

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Let's pass the Senior Independence Act which increases that amount from

\$19,500 to \$30,000 so that the older people who need a little bit more money can earn it. Even more, it is good for people to work. If these older people want to get out of the house and get a little more social stimulation by working, then they are not penalized for doing so.

I strongly encourage our leadership team. I realize that they will say that it will encourage more people to retire early and might cost the government a little bit of money, but we had plenty of money to give people who were retired to encourage people to retire last January.

Let's encourage and free up older people and let them work a little bit more.

Of course, we have a labor shortage problem. It will also be good for our economy as we see a few more people going to work, maybe working 30 hours a week instead of working 20 hours a week. As I said, we want to boost our economy a little. There are so many businesses who so desperately looking for some more labor, particularly the retail outlets out there and there are some factories, as well. We are particularly finding now that we are kicking people out of this country who are here illegally and were working, it would be great to have more 60 to 69-year-olds working. I hope our leadership will find a way to pass the Senior Independence Act and allow seniors to make \$30,000 a year.

Now, the third issue I want to deal with comes under 14(c), which is the provision which allows people who are having some physical problems, spina bifida, Down syndrome, and other problems, sometimes paraplegics, to work.

Given the current situation, in order to make it financially viable to have them work, they have to work for under minimum wage. Nobody ever forces people to do this, but they do it to earn a little additional money. Most of these people are on SSI. They don't need the money to pay the mortgage or pay the rent, but they would like to have a little bit more money to buy some of their own clothes, perhaps buy gifts for parents, what have you.

There are really misguided people out there who are trying to get rid of 14(c) certificates, and, in essence, make it against the law to pay somebody \$4 or \$5 or \$6 to work because of problems that are out there. I have right now formed a caucus called the Congressional Disability Employment Caucus, which is dedicated to the preservation of the 14(c) program. It will provide a little bit of structure to the effort to continue to allow people with differing abilities to have the freedom to work for a little bit smaller amount.

I think it is just horrible that some people want to take away this freedom. I believe in counties in which this freedom has been taken away. What happens is people who, right now, are working for \$4 or \$5 an hour wind up in what they call day services, and they sit around and watch television or

maybe they are taken on a trip somewhere, but they miss out on the enjoyment of work. They miss out on being like their siblings in which they are able to work today and some, to a degree, support themselves.

I think it is just tragic when this is done and they are deprived of the freedom to work. I will encourage all of my colleagues to track down 14(c) employers in their district and see how meaningful it is for these people with differing abilities to be able to work and to be able to earn their own money.

It is not just an economic decision, it is a social decision, as well. One of the things that scares parents or guardians who are dealing with people in this situation is: What is going to happen to them when the parents are gone? Are they going to have any friends? Are they going to have any social structure?

Moreover, even more than people in other jobs, the social structure provided by people and employers that use 14(c) certificates does provide these folks with friends. We all to a certain extent socialize with the people we work with, but especially for these people, it is important to have friends outside their immediate family.

When you begin to shut down these employers, Mr. Speaker, you are depriving these people of the friendships that they will form in employers who give 14(c).

First of all, I beg my colleagues—we all like to get reelected—I beg my colleagues to tour facilities with 14(c) certificates, and see how happy the people are who work there. See how important both economically as well as socially it is for these folks to have the freedom to work in these facilities. I hope Congress stands up to the freedom haters who want to deny these folks the ability to work in a little bit different setting that they want to do.

There are three issues that I ask Congress to take up and consider. I want Congress to pass whatever legislation is necessary to make sure we always protect the 14(c) certificates. I ask Congress to take up raising the amount of money a senior can make before we take away their Social Security, both for the good of the overall economy, as well as the financial and social health and social assistance of our senior citizens.

Finally, I ask Congress to do something to make sure these out-of-control, lack of commonsense psychologists, psychiatrists are not able to give puberty blockers or surgeries on people under the age of 21.

As I said, we should ban it, even above that age. I have certainly sat and heard people talk about how they regret their surgeries. It seems in our society when it comes down to drinking and when it comes down to smoking, age 21 is the limit in which we allow people to do more. If any of my colleagues would want to introduce an amendment to age 25, our forefathers didn't feel we were qualified to be Con-

gressmen until we were age 25, I would be happy to go for an age 25 limit, as well. I would like to be debating that in conference next week.

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

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**EXPLANATORY STATEMENT ON  
THE INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION  
ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026,  
SUBMITTED BY MR. CRAWFORD,  
CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE PER-  
MANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
INTELLIGENCE**

The following is the Explanatory Statement to accompany the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (“the Act”), which has been included as Division F of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026. The Explanatory Statement reflects the result of negotiations between the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (together, “the Committees”). The Explanatory Statement shall have the same effect with respect to the implementation of the Act as if it were a joint explanatory statement of a conference committee.

The classified nature of U.S. Intelligence activities prevents the Committees from publicly disclosing many details concerning their final decisions regarding funding levels and policy direction. Therefore, the Committees have prepared a classified annex—referred to here and within the annex itself as “the Agreement”—that contains a classified Schedule of Authorizations and describes in detail the scope and intent of the Committees’ actions.

The Agreement authorizes the Intelligence Community to obligate and expend funds as requested in the President’s budget and as modified by the classified Schedule of Authorizations, subject to applicable reprogramming procedures.

The classified Schedule of Authorizations is incorporated into the Act pursuant to Section 6102 of the Act. It has the status of law. The Agreement supplements and adds detail to clarify the authorization levels found in the Act and in the classified Schedule of Authorizations.

This Explanatory Statement incorporates by reference, and the Executive Branch shall comply with, all direction contained in the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Report to accompany the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (S. Rept. 119-51) and in the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Report to accompany the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (H. Rept. 119-389). The Agreement supersedes all classified direction in the classified annexes to accompany S. Rept. 119-51 and H. Rept. 119-389 related to programs and activities authorized by the Schedule of Authorizations.

The Executive Branch is further directed as follows:

*Counterintelligence Support for Department of the Treasury Networks and Systems*

The Committees direct that the head of the Office of Counterintelligence of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of the Treasury shall implement policies and procedures that ensure counterintelligence support to all entities of the Department of the Treasury responsible for safeguarding networks and systems and for coordinating between counterintelligence threat mitigation activities and cyber network and system defense efforts. The Committees further direct that, not later than

270 days after the date of enactment of the Act, the head of the Office of Counterintelligence shall submit a report to the Committees on the status of the implementation of such policies.

*Report on Director’s Initiatives Group*

The Committees direct that, not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of the Act, the Director of National Intelligence shall provide to the Committees a briefing on personnel matters of the Director’s Initiatives Group, which shall include: (1) a list of personnel of such group, from the date of the creation of the group; and (2) funding sources for personnel of such group.

*Report on Secure Mobile Communications Systems Used To Transmit Classified Information*

The Committees direct that, not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of the Act, each Intelligence Community program head shall submit to the Committees a report on the secure mobile communications systems used for transmission of classified information (excluding systems used for purposes of clandestine or covert communications) and available to employees and officers of the Intelligence Community. The report should include the following information: (1) the name, description, and date of purchase or development of each system; (2) the number of employees using each system; (3) the cost of development and operations of each system; (4) a list of the capabilities and the level of classification of each system; (5) identification of any existing service agreements with other elements of the Intelligence Community for use of a system; and (6) identification, description, and deployment timeline of any secure mobile communications systems that are in development. For purposes of this report, the term “mobile communications systems” means any portable wireless telecommunications equipment utilized for the transmission or reception of classified information.

*Ukraine Lessons Learned Working Group*

Section 6413 of the Fiscal Year 2025 Intelligence Authorization Act (P.L. 118-159) required the Director of National Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense to jointly establish a working group to identify and share lessons learned from the Ukraine conflict in order to strengthen United States national security. Despite the critical importance of this mandate, the Committees note with concern that the working group has not been established and that the Intelligence Community has been unresponsive to repeated congressional inquiries on this matter.

The Committees recognize that various efforts are underway across the Executive Branch that may support the objectives envisioned for the working group. However, the Committees underscore the importance of adhering to statutory requirements and ensuring that lessons from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine are systematically identified, coordinated, and applied.

Accordingly, the Committees direct the Director of National Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense to stand up the Ukraine Lessons Learned Working Group, in compliance with the law, not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of the Act, and to provide a joint briefing to the Committees on the status, scope, and initial findings of the working group not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of the Act.

*Department of State Information Technology Management*

The Committees continue to be concerned with the management of the Department of State’s information technology networks and believe the existing management structure for the networks may no longer meet