

for Federal student aid has been hindered by policies that count their land and equipment as financial assets, despite the fact that these are essential for their livelihoods and not readily available for educational expenses.

I am proud to cosponsor the Farm Family and Small Business Exemption Act, which would ensure that farm families and small business owners are no longer penalized for owning the tools and property that sustain their work.

By preventing these assets from being counted against financial aid eligibility, we are leveling the playing field and assuring that the children of farmers and small business owners have the same opportunities to pursue higher education as their peers.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representatives MANN and PANETTA for leading this commonsense solution. Investing in the future of farm families strengthens rural communities and our country.

SOUTH CAROLINA'S STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Governor Henry McMaster just gave the South Carolina State of the State address. I am grateful that under his leadership, the Palmetto State has achieved a historic year, with over \$8 billion in capital investment creating 5,500 new jobs.

Additionally, his goal 3 years ago to drop the State personal income tax rate has exceeded expectations. The tax rate continues to be reduced, helping taxpayers.

I am appreciative to be working with Governor McMaster and the Republican supermajorities, for the first time in 150 years, in the State senate led by President Thomas Alexander; in the house with Speaker Murrell Smith; my colleagues in the Republican Congress; and President Donald Trump are all working to make America great again.

In conclusion, God bless our troops as the global war on terrorism continues. Open borders for dictators put all Americans at risk of more 9/11 attacks imminent as warned by the FBI. Trump is reinstituting existing laws to protect American families with peace through strength.

I thank President Trump for removing the academy boards to restore duty, honor, and country.

REPUBLICAN BAIT AND SWITCH

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

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the Republican bait and switch that has been taking place throughout the 119th Congress.

The Republican bait and switch has three elements:

Part 1: Talk about lowering the high cost of living but do nothing about it.

Part 2: Enact massive tax cuts for billionaires and wealthy corporations that will do nothing to improve the quality of life of everyday Americans.

Part 3: Stick working-class Americans with the bill for those massive tax cuts for billionaires and wealthy corporations by destroying Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid as we know it.

House Democrats want nothing to do with the Republican bait and switch, and we will do everything possible to stop it.

The cost of living in the United States of America is far too high. Housing costs are too high. Grocery costs are too high. Insurance costs are too high. Utility costs are too high. Childcare costs are too high. America is too expensive.

It is not acceptable, in the wealthiest country in the history of the world, that far too many everyday Americans are struggling to live paycheck to paycheck. It is time for us to do something about the high cost of living and to build an affordable economy for hard-working American taxpayers.

House Democrats hear you. We see you. We feel you when it comes to the pain being experienced by the American people, and we are determined to do something to make life better for you.

The Republican bait and switch has a very different plan. Last year, all we heard from our Republican colleagues was the need to do something about the high cost of living, while at the same time they ran away from Project 2025 as if it didn't exist.

This year, Republicans have spent all of their time implementing the most extreme parts of Project 2025 that have done nothing to lower the high cost of living. There has not been a single thing, a single bill, a single idea, or a single proposal from my House Republican colleagues to do anything about the high cost of living in the United States of America. Why? It is a Republican bait and switch.

Part 2 of the Republican bait and switch is that their true objective is to enact massive tax cuts for billionaires and wealthy corporations just like they did in 2017 when the GOP tax scam was passed where they set in motion legislation where 83 percent of the benefits would go to the wealthiest 1 percent.

My House Republican colleagues are back at it. There they go again with the same plan but nothing to drive down the high cost of living. Everything is about massive tax cuts for billionaires and wealthy corporations, who in many cases aren't even asking for it. They certainly don't need the relief that everyday Americans need, that working-class Americans need, that middle-class Americans need, and that all those people who aspire to be part of the middle class need. It is a Republican bait and switch.

What is the final element of the Republican bait and switch? Enact these massive tax cuts for billionaires and wealthy corporations and stick working-class Americans with the bill.

The nerve of this group of people who spent all last year lecturing the country about how they were going to do something to drive down the high cost of living, do nothing about it, are planning to enact massive tax cuts for their billionaire buddies, and then, as the final element of the Republican bait and switch, stick working-class Americans with the bill.

House Republicans have no plan to love and cherish Medicaid. Let's be very clear about that. They have no plan to love and cherish Medicaid. Their plan is to destroy Social Security, destroy Medicare, and destroy Medicaid as we know it.

With Republicans controlling the House, the Senate, and the Presidency, it is their intention to try and do it. Just watch what happens at the Republican budget hearing that is upcoming in terms of what is proposed. The cuts to Medicaid will be devastating. Hospitals will close, including in rural America and urban America and in the heartland of America.

Nursing homes will be shut down. Everyday Americans, children, seniors, and those who are suffering with disabilities will be hurt as part of the Republican effort to target earned benefits like Social Security and Medicare and to destroy Medicaid as we know it. It is the Republican bait and switch.

We will continue to expose it to the American people. House Democrats want nothing to do with it, and we are going to do everything in our power to stop it.

HONORING MAJOR GENERAL MASON M. PATRICK

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

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late, great Major General Mason M. Patrick.

General Patrick, a West Virginia native, West Point graduate, and World War I veteran, honorably served our Nation for 41 years.

In 1921, General Patrick oversaw the creation of the United States Army Air Corps, the precursor to our modern-day Air Force.

Recognizing that true leadership comes from experience, he learned to fly at the age of 59.

His vision to place air power in its own branch was instrumental in building the world's first formidable Air Force.

In 1950, Patrick Air Force Base, in my district, was named in his honor, recognizing his historic contributions to military aviation.

Today, this base is known as Patrick Space Force Base, a testament to how America's leadership in the skies has evolved to dominate new frontiers.

His vision for America's air power laid the groundwork for today's advances in space exploration and defense.

May we always remember General Patrick's contribution to our Nation.

□ 1415

COMMUNICATION FROM THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

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

February 7, 2025.

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

DEAR SPEAKER JOHNSON: Pursuant to section 803(a) of the Congressional Recognition for Excellence in Arts Education Act (2 U.S.C. 803 (a)), I am pleased to appoint the Honorable David Trone of Potomac, Maryland to the Congressional Award Board.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

HAKEEM JEFFRIES,
Democratic Leader.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1600

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas) at 4 p.m.

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.

DISABLED VETERANS HOUSING SUPPORT ACT

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 224) to amend section 102(a)(20) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 to require the exclusion of service-connected disability compensation when determining whether a person is a person of low and moderate income, a person of low income, or a person of moderate income, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 224

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 "Disabled Veterans Housing Support Act".

SEC. 2. SERVICE CONNECTED DISABILITY COMPENSATION.

Section 102(a)(20) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5302(a)(20)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(C) SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY COMPENSATION.—When determining whether a person is a person of low and moderate income, a person of low income, or a person of moderate income under this paragraph, a State, unit of general local government, or Indian tribe shall exclude any service-connected disability compensation received by such person from the Department of Veterans Affairs."

SEC. 3. REPORT.

The Comptroller General of the United States shall, not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, submit to the Congress a report that—

(1) examines how service-connected disability compensation is treated for the purposes of determining eligibility for all programs administered by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development;

(2) identifies any instances where service-connected disability compensation is treated in a manner inconsistent with the amendment made by section 2; and

(3) with respect to each program administered by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in which service-connected disability compensation is treated inconsistently, provides legislative recommendations relating to how such program could better serve veteran populations, and under-served communities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) and the gentleman from California (Mr. VARGAS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. 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.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 224, the Disabled Veterans Housing Support Act, introduced by my good friend from Texas, Congresswoman MONICA DE LA CRUZ.

It has been said that what the American people desire is not bigger government but a much better and more effective government. The reforms proposed in this bill would accomplish just that. This bill would reform a program meant to assist those in need, HUD's, Housing and Urban Development's, Community Development Block Grant program. This includes helping our Nation's low-income veterans with the

housing challenges that many of them face across our Nation. However, the bureaucratic obstacles at HUD know no bounds.

Mr. Speaker, today, veterans are being turned away from this very positive CDBG program. How is that? The formula HUD tells communities to use to see if veterans qualify as low income and are therefore eligible to participate in the CDBG program counts service-connected disability compensation as income, whereas other government programs correctly do not.

The result has been, in some places, especially in our most rural areas, communities have to tell low-income, disabled veterans they are too wealthy to qualify for help.

Truly, Mr. Speaker, you cannot make this up.

Excluding low-income veterans because they are disabled is not what Congress intended for communities to take action on by receiving CDBG funds. Of course, HUD understands this exclusion has been happening. Yet, rather than fix the issue by providing clear rules on how to calculate the income of disabled veterans, the Biden administration kept saying that it was someone else's problem.

Mr. Speaker, that ends today with this good bill.

This bill would reform CDBG's income calculation formula, telling HUD, in no uncertain terms, to stop including service-connected disability compensation as income.

Fixing programmatic flaws and bureaucratic obstacles is exactly what the American people have sent these Members to this House floor to do. It is unfortunate that HUD has had several opportunities to fix its flawed guidance without Congress, but it has refused to act even with multiple letters from our Financial Services Committee.

This commonsense fix, which passed out of the committee with strong bipartisan support and on suspension in this House during the previous Congress, ensures that disabled veterans who have served our Nation with honor receive the benefits that they have earned and deserved. Under the leadership of Representative DE LA CRUZ, we will ensure that HUD stops excluding our Nation's heroes.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 224, the Disabled Veterans Housing Support Act, sponsored by Representative DE LA CRUZ.

While I appreciate Ms. DE LA CRUZ's intention to better serve our veterans who have served this country, it is ironic that this bill seeks to improve a program that the Trump administration has already threatened to dismantle through an illegal funding freeze.

Specifically, the Trump administration and Musk's illegal DOGE unit continue to threaten to cut programs and