

Allowing a philanthropic partner to have exclusive after-hours access to park facilities will be a unique arrangement within the National Park System. I thank the majority for working with us to ensure it includes the right checks and balances.

Madam Speaker, I also thank my colleague and friend Representative BELL from Missouri for introducing this legislation and advocating for his hometown national park, hopefully creating a blueprint that could be utilized across this country.

While most Americans know about the iconic St. Louis Arch, famously known as the Gateway to the West, not everyone knows about the full history of the site. The park is also home to the Old Courthouse, the site where Dred Scott first tried and unsuccessfully sued for his freedom from slavery.

This is a transformational American story. While President Trump is doing his worst to sanitize American history and remove signs at national parks across the country, boosting its visibility is more important now than ever.

Celebrating 250 years of this great Nation means honoring and acknowledging the progress we have made since the days of the Dred Scott decision, not burying the truth or the full telling of our shared history.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, by creating a time-limited pilot program allowing private philanthropic partners to host events at park facilities, H.R. 5254 creates an innovative new model for improved public access, better visitor experience, and new revenue streams to support park operations.

This bill will create jobs, boost the local economy, and provide new opportunities to celebrate America's 250th birthday at one of the most iconic national park destinations in the Midwest.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5254, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5254, 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.

NORTH RIM RESTORATION ACT

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5729) to authorize direct emergency acquisition flexibilities for the National Park Service for the purpose of retaining, vetting, approving,

and expediting contractor approval for the clearing, rebuilding, maintenance, and improvement of the Grand Canyon grounds that have been impacted by the Dragon Bravo Fire, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5729

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 "North Rim Restoration Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **COVERED AREA.**—The term "covered area" means the areas within Grand Canyon National Park impacted by the Dragon Bravo Fire.

(2) **SECRETARY.**—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service.

SEC. 3. EMERGENCY CONTRACTING AUTHORITY.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Notwithstanding any requirement for a Presidential emergency or disaster declaration, the Secretary is authorized to use the emergency acquisition flexibilities under part 18 of title 48, Code of Federal Regulations (and any successor regulations), including the increased micro-purchase thresholds, simplified acquisition thresholds, and other higher-level emergency flexibilities, in contracting for the following services within the covered area:

(1) Forest management or restoration activities carried out in response to the Dragon Bravo Fire.

(2) Rebuilding, planning, development, and design of structures affected by the Dragon Bravo Fire.

(3) Improvements to the grounds and structures.

(4) Recovery efforts.

(5) Any activity listed in section 4(a).

(b) **PROCESS FOR OTHER SERVICES.**—Unless otherwise provided by law or regulation, the authority granted under subsection (a) does not apply to contracts for services other than those described in paragraphs (1) through (4) of subsection (a).

(c) **REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the Secretary begins to use the authorization under subsection (a), and every 180 days thereafter until the date that is 180 days after the date described in subsection (e), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Natural Resources and Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Energy and Natural Resources and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on all expenditures related to the recovery efforts for the Dragon Bravo Fire, including the following:

(1) The expected cost of recovery efforts.

(2) Cost expenditures.

(3) Cost overruns.

(4) Identification of contractors performing the work associated with the recovery from the Dragon Bravo Fire.

(5) Any affiliations or conflicts of interest between the contractor and the contracting office at the Grand Canyon National Park or the National Park Service.

(6) Any waste, fraud, or abuse detected during the recovery efforts.

(7) Any contracts that came in under expected expenses.

(8) An estimated time of completion for all projects and full recovery efforts related to the Dragon Bravo Fire.

(9) If an extension is needed for this authority to complete projects associated with the Dragon Bravo Fire.

(d) **EXTENSION.**—If, after the date of the enactment of this Act, a new wildfire ignites within the covered area and impacts recovery efforts

related to the Dragon Bravo Fire, the Secretary may request a 12-month extension of the authority granted under subsection (a), subject to congressional approval.

(e) **EXPIRATION.**—The authority granted under subsection (a) shall expire on the date that is the earlier of the following:

(1) 7 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) The date on which projects and recovery efforts within the covered area are completed, as determined by the Secretary.

SEC. 4. LIMITED SOLE-SOURCE PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Notwithstanding chapter 33 of title 41, United States Code, or any other provision of law relating to the use of competitive procedures for the procurement of services, supplies, or construction materials and services, subject to a determination made by the Secretary under subsection (b), the Secretary may enter into one or more contracts, on a non-competitive basis, for the planning, design, repair, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, stabilization, replacement, or operation of assets supporting the recovery and reopening of the Grand Canyon National Park North Rim, including—

(1) employee housing and related facilities;

(2) water, wastewater, power, communications, and other utility systems;

(3) visitor-facing facilities and infrastructure, including lodging, food service, retail, transportation, and associated public-use facilities; and

(4) maintenance, administration, and other back-of-house assets necessary for safe and continuous operation of North Rim services.

(b) **DETERMINATION REQUIRED.**—The Secretary may utilize the authority provided in subsection (a) if the Secretary determines, in writing, that—

(1) the concessioner currently holding a valid concession contract for operations at the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park on the date of enactment of this Act is uniquely positioned to execute one or more procurement contracts identified under subsection (a) due to the concessioner's current operational responsibilities, site access, integration with existing concession infrastructure, or continuity needs essential to expedited North Rim recovery; and

(2) use of noncompetitive procedures under subsection (a) with this concessioner is necessary to ensure public health and safety, protection of park resources, or continuity of essential services.

(c) **EXPIRATION.**—The authority granted under subsection (a) shall expire on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(d) **RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING CONCESSION CONTRACT.**—Any procurement action conducted or contract awarded under this section shall be considered separate from, and shall not modify, amend, or extend the duration of, or provide any leasehold surrender interest or other benefit, under a concession contract issued under section 101913 of title 54, United States Code, or related authorities.

(e) **RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**—Nothing in this section shall be construed to—

(1) authorize the award of any concession contract or lease without full compliance with applicable concession contracting law; or

(2) prevent the Secretary from using competitive procedures if the Secretary determines such procedures to be in the best interest of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) and the gentleman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5729, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5729, the North Rim Restoration Act, introduced by my friend and colleague Representative CRANE of Arizona.

□ 1720

Madam Speaker, this vital legislation gives the National Park Service the streamlined authorities necessary to rebuild and restore one of the natural wonders of the world and iconic historic structures.

Last year, the Dragon Bravo fire tore through the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park, one of the true crown jewels of the National Park System. The fire burned nearly 150,000 acres of land. It left a deep mark on the once-peaceful landscape, severely damaging pristine evergreen forests, decimating wildlife habitat, and destroying more than 100 buildings and structures.

Among these structures destroyed was the iconic Grand Canyon Lodge, which millions of visitors had enjoyed visiting for nearly a century. Since the fire was contained, the North Rim has been partially closed to visitors.

The year before the fire, over 11 million visitors to Arizona's national parks contributed \$42.2 billion to the State's economy. As visitor numbers declined after the fire, the ripple effects have been felt well beyond the North Rim, especially by small businesses and gateway communities in northern Arizona.

These communities depend on tourism and recreation. Without quick action, visitor numbers may never rebound, harming small businesses in rural Arizona for years, even for decades. Representative CRANE's bill offers a bold and decisive solution to this problem. His legislation provides streamlined, practical recovery tools that will allow the National Park Service to quickly begin infrastructure rebuilding and forestry recovery efforts in the areas affected by the Dragon Bravo fire.

This bill will allow the National Park Service to use temporary emergency contracting authorities for up to 7 years to quickly hire highly qualified contractors, allowing them to move at the pace and scale necessary to repair fire damage, rebuild burned structures, and conduct essential forest management activities necessary to restore full access to one of the most visited landscapes in America.

The Grand Canyon is not only a national treasure but also an engine for

local jobs and the outdoor recreation economy. H.R. 5729 is the right solution at the right time that will ensure the North Rim's much-needed recovery from the Dragon Bravo fire is not slowed down by avoidable red tape.

Representative CRANE's bill ensures the North Rim can recover to its full glory. It restores access for millions of American families. It will support our local communities that rely on park access and a strong outdoor recreation economy.

I thank Representatives CRANE and TIFFANY as well as Chairman GOSAR for their collective work on this important effort. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5729.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I rise in support of H.R. 5729, the North Rim Restoration Act, offered by my colleague Representative CRANE of Arizona.

Last summer's devastating Dragon Bravo fire burned nearly 150,000 acres of the Grand Canyon's North Rim, causing irreparable damage to crucial water infrastructure, well-loved trails, and 106 buildings, including the historic Grand Canyon Lodge.

After the fire, safety concerns forced the Park Service and the nearby Kaibab National Forest to restrict visitor access, effectively closing the North Rim overnight. The loss of tourism has been devastating for communities and businesses. The loss for this Nation cannot be overstated.

Arizona's \$29.3 billion tourism economy is fueled by visitors to the Grand Canyon National Park, with nearly 5 million people visiting this crown jewel each and every year. Restoring and rebuilding at the North Rim is a serious priority.

It will take an all-hands-on-deck approach to rebuild the iconic North Rim lodge to get visitors back to this wonderful landscape.

H.R. 5729 will allow the National Park Service to use expedited contracting authority to efficiently move projects along as quickly as possible. However, the single best action we can take is to ensure our Federal land management agencies have the sustained resources and staff required to fulfill their mission of wildfire mitigation and ecosystem restoration, along with the tools necessary.

To recover from tragedies like the Dragon Bravo fire, the seventh largest fire in Arizona's history, we must fully fund our national parks, forests, and public land management agencies.

I would be remiss if I didn't point out that most of the emergency authorities in this bill could have been granted with the stroke of the President's pen if he had approved an emergency or disaster declaration. That likely hasn't happened because disaster recovery at FEMA has been deeply politicized and delayed by this administration.

We can never and should never play politics with rebuilding and recovery

efforts. While I appreciate what this bill will do for the North Rim rebuild, I urge my colleagues to work with us and collaborate on the larger issues of staffing, funding, cutting of red tape, and disaster recovery we are seeing in communities across this country.

Madam Speaker, I urge support for H.R. 5729, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CRANE), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mr. CRANE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the North Rim Restoration Act of 2025. Last July, a lightning strike ignited the Dragon Bravo fire, which grew into the seventh largest wildfire in Arizona's history.

It burned more than 145,000 acres. It destroyed over 100 structures, including the historic Grand Canyon Lodge. It also forced the closure of the North Rim. The result was great uncertainty for gateway communities whose livelihoods depend on a steady flow of visitors.

In the days and months during and after the fire, I traveled to the region to meet with park staff, local employers, and community leaders. Each conversation revealed different consequences of the disaster, but one concern came up repeatedly: the layers of bureaucracy threatening to slow recovery and prolong economic hardship.

Families and workers cannot wait years for the infrastructure and housing needed to bring the North Rim back to life. That is why I worked closely with local stakeholders to draft the North Rim Restoration Act of 2025. This bill gives the Department of the Interior emergency contracting authority for all recovery efforts from the Dragon Bravo fire.

This is a bipartisan approach that would minimize unnecessary delays. At the same time, it preserves community input, environmental standards, and mandatory reporting every 180 days to ensure transparency, accountability, and responsible use of taxpayer dollars.

Although last year's July 4 lightning strike brought months of hardship to the region, we now have a chance to restore this iconic destination as we honor America's 250th anniversary.

Passage of this bill sends a clear message to every visitor, worker, and family who cherishes the North Rim. This place will not fade into memory. It will endure as a living legacy.

As I prepare to close, I thank the Coconino County Board of Supervisors, Chairman WESTERMAN, and everyone who has played a role in advancing this legislation. As a result of their dedication and persistence, we are on the verge of securing House passage just 5 months since introduction.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this effort and help ensure a full and timely recovery.

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this critical and timely piece of legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. CRANE for his thoughtful and aggressive efforts to make sure we can restore the Grand Canyon National Park to its former glory and for his work in highlighting the incredible stress that this places on the communities there.

I thank him, too, for offering this legislation at a key point to make sure that the right things happen so that people in his district can indeed get back to what they know is highlighting a great, great national treasure.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 5729 gives the National Park Service limited accountable authorities to expedite the restoration and rebuilding process following last year's Dragon Bravo fire so that the treasured North Rim of the Grand Canyon can fully reopen and do so safely.

I thank Representative CRANE once again for his leadership on this effort and for his insightfulness. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5729, 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.

□ 1730

NATIONAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES MEMORIAL EXTENSION ACT

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2196) to provide for an extension of the legislative authority of the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2196

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 "National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Extension Act".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY FOR MEMORIAL ESTABLISHMENT.

Section 1(b) of Public Law 115-275 is amended by striking the period at the end and inserting " , except that any reference in section 8903(e) of that chapter to the expiration at the end of or extension beyond a seven-year period shall be considered to be a reference to an expiration on or extension beyond the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of the National

Emergency Medical Services Memorial Extension Act."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam 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. 2196, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2196, the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Extension Act, which is sponsored by Representative HUDSON.

Emergency medical service providers are often the first people on the scene in a moment of crisis. They respond to accidents, natural disasters, public health emergencies, and everyday calls for help. More than 1 million Americans serve as EMS providers across the country under one shared mission: to save lives and protect the public.

Despite that service, there is still no permanent memorial in our Nation's Capital dedicated to EMS professionals who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

In 2018, Congress authorized the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish such a memorial. Since then, the foundation has moved through the Federal approval process and is now working on site selection and environmental review. Like many memorial projects, progress has been steady but slow due to design approvals and the need to raise private funds.

Unfortunately, the authorization for this important memorial expired last year, and the foundation needs this authorization extended to finally complete its mission.

Representative HUDSON's bill provides a straightforward solution. His legislation extends the foundation's legislative authority for an additional 7 years, allowing their work to continue so that this memorial can finally be completed.

Importantly, this memorial will remain funded entirely through private contributions, with no cost to the taxpayers. This legislation also does not expand the project or change its purpose. It simply ensures that the effort to honor fallen EMS providers can be finished.

Madam Speaker, I thank Representative HUDSON for his leadership on this bill. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2196, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2196, offered by my colleague, Representative HUDSON of North Carolina, which provides the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation with a straightforward extension to establish the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial right here in Washington, D.C.

This is a deeply meaningful and important project that deserves our full support. Congress first authorized the establishment of this memorial in 2018, and the foundation's work to finalize its design and construction is almost complete.

Unfortunately, the initial 7-year authorization recently expired. Today, this bill allows us to take the simple step and let the foundation continue its work to honor the service and sacrifice of the medical emergency service community for generations to come.

Every year, EMS providers around the Nation respond to millions of calls, ranging from health emergencies to mass shootings. Whether they serve at the Federal, State, local, private, volunteer, military, or Tribal level, these brave men and women are dedicated to commitment and service.

The memorial will be a small token of our appreciation for those who help others when they need it most. It is the least we can do to give to these heroes, who serve our communities around the Nation and across the globe, a place of honor in our Nation's Capital.

I look forward to the completion of this meaningful memorial, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ELFRETH. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this critical and timely piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Extension Act provides the time needed to complete a project that honors the service and sacrifice of EMS providers without imposing a cost on taxpayers.

Representative HUDSON's legislation keeps the memorial on track and ensures that EMS professionals are recognized alongside other public safety heroes in our Nation's Capital.

Once again, I thank Representative HUDSON for his leadership on this effort and for his dedication to those who serve this Nation humbly and selflessly.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by