

That includes the early-childhood teachers, who are charged with instilling in our youth a love of learning and curiosity from the youngest age.

I encourage my colleagues to support this 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 Missouri (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5334, 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.

ENSURING CHILDREN RECEIVE SUPPORT ACT

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6903) to require the Secretary of State to revoke any United States passport issued to an individual, on receipt of a certification by the Secretary of Health and Human Services that the individual has a child support arrearage exceeding \$2,500, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

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 "Ensuring Children Receive Support Act".

SEC. 2. REVOCATION OF PASSPORTS ISSUED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH A CHILD SUPPORT ARREARAGE EXCEEDING \$2,500.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Section 452(k) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 652(k)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “, revocation, or limitation” and inserting “or revocation”; and

(2) in paragraph (2)—
(A) by striking “may revoke, restrict, or limit” and inserting “revoke”; and

(B) by inserting “, and notify such individual of the intent to take such action” before the period.

(b) *EXCEPTION.*—Notwithstanding the amendments made by subsection (a), if an individual is abroad and needs to return to the United States on an emergency basis, the Department of State is authorized to issue a temporary passport for that purpose. That passport will be good only for the return to the United States of the individuals and will be limited in duration.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments made by this Act shall take effect on October 1, 2026.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and submit extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6903, the Ensuring Children Receive Support Act, bipartisan legislation introduced by Representatives BETH VAN DUYNE and JIMMY PANETTA.

This legislation has a simple premise: Parents must meet their obligations to care for their kids, period. It is pretty simple.

To ensure that is happening, State-level child support agencies rely in part on the Passport Denial Program, which is run out of the State Department and, as its name suggests, is used to deny the ability of delinquent parents to obtain a passport to leave the country when they owe back child support.

The State Department has authority under current law to deny, limit, or revoke a passport of an individual, but as we have discovered, quite often the bureaucracy does not act with the level of urgency that is needed. This bill makes it clear that the State Department must revoke an individual’s passport, both at the time of initial application for a passport and at the time of renewal.

Research indicates that child support is a significant portion of income for low-income families, making up 41 percent of total income when received and can help reduce poverty and reliance on welfare. Among all families served, 24 percent have income below the Federal poverty level.

Representatives VAN DUYNE and PANETTA are doing tremendous work here to ensure that States have the enforcement tools that they need and children receive the support that they need and are owed without delay.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Ensuring Children Receive Support Act, which I am proud to co-lead with Representative VAN DUYNE. I thank her for her leadership and thank the chairman for pushing this bill forward with overwhelming support out of the Ways and Means Committee onto the House floor for this vote.

This bill would expand the existing bipartisan legislation and the universal commonsense values of taking care of our children.

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It addresses the somber issue when it comes to the services and protections that we can provide for children.

We all know that parenthood is a privilege, but it is also a serious responsibility. Unfortunately, nationwide, there is more than \$115 billion owed in child support arrears. As of fiscal year 2024, there were more than 8.7 million parents who hadn’t made a payment in over 5 years.

In 1996, Congress, in a bipartisan fashion, gave the State Department the authority to withhold passports and

passport renewals from someone with unpaid child support. That is called the passport denial program. That program collects about \$30 million a year in outstanding child support debt, but this is out of about \$30 billion that we collect each year in total child support payments.

That means that the vast majority of child support goes uncollected, single parents struggle, and, unfortunately, that means that, at times, children can go hungry.

I believe we should be doing everything we can to close this gap and ensure child support is making it to the children who need it the most. The Ensuring Children Receive Support Act is part of that effort.

It is legislation that builds on the existing law that I talked about by rescinding passports when someone is more than \$2,500 in arrears for child support. When you don’t pay, you must stay.

Under this bill, people would get a notice that their case is being referred to the State Department. However, if necessary, there would be emergency passports if they urgently need to travel while in arrears. Moreover, they would also be eligible to have their passports reinstated once they pay their child support.

With this bill, we are ensuring that the Federal Government plays its part to meet the urgency that so many single parents feel and finds practical solutions to ensure that child support gets paid. That is why I urge my colleagues to vote “yes.”

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

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. VAN DUYNE), the sponsor of this legislation and someone who is standing up for children across this country to ensure that they get the support that they need.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding, and I thank my colleague Congressman PANETTA from California for also helping to introduce this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my bill, H.R. 6903, the Ensuring Children Receive Support Act.

Nearly 2 weeks ago, families experienced one of the largest tax refund seasons on record, with an estimated \$91 billion already issued as part of an expected \$370 billion refund season. On average, families can look forward to nearly \$4,000 back in their pockets compared to last year, and families with two children earning \$73,000 will have no Federal income tax liability.

Supporting working families is more important than ever, especially now that the working families tax cuts have been signed into law. By claiming the standard deduction and the child tax credit, families keep more of their hard-earned money to be able to provide for their families by putting food on the table, covering rent, or keeping

up with everyday expenses, giving them immediate relief when it matters most.

However, ensuring children are taken care of should not be negotiable, particularly in joint custody households where both parents share responsibility. When child support obligations go unmet, that responsibility breaks down, leaving children without the consistent support they deserve.

In 2024 alone, there were over 8 million unpaid child support cases—at the direct expense of our children. That is why stronger enforcement tools are necessary to hold delinquent parents accountable.

Mr. Speaker, just weeks after the Ways and Means Committee marked up my legislation, we have seen reports that the administration is moving to proactively revoke passports for individuals who owe significant child support. That reinforces exactly what this bill is about: making sure the tools we already have are used both effectively and consistently.

The passport denial program administered by the State Department currently allows for the denial or revocation of a passport when an individual owes more than \$2,500 in past-due child support and seeks consular services.

My bill strengthens this program by requiring the State Department to revoke an individual's passport and notify them of the intent to take such action. If an individual is abroad when their passport is revoked, the State Department may make an emergency exception to allow that individual to return to the United States.

Since its implementation, this program has successfully collected over \$600 million in past-due child support, including \$30 million in 2024 alone. This legislation builds on that success by strengthening enforcement and ensuring accountability for those who deliberately evade their obligations as parents.

When parents meet their responsibilities, children have greater stability. Families are stronger, and taxpayers are not left picking up the tab.

Mr. Speaker, this is a commonsense, bipartisan step forward and a clear win for children and families. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to pass this commonsense, bipartisan legislation. The majority of child support, as we have heard, goes uncollected. Today, we have a chance to do something about it.

The Ensuring Children Receive Support Act would expand existing bipartisan policy to ensure the law is enforced and children receive the support that they need.

Representative VAN DUYNE understands that. I thank her for her leadership on this bill because a vote for this legislation is a vote to support children, and ultimately, it supports families.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a “yes” vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, this legislation strengthens the federal child support enforcement program, which is meant to ensure parents pay the support that they owe to their children.

This program is one of the most effective Federal programs we have. In 2024, States reported nearly \$30 million in collections through the passport denial program, and over 5,000 payments were made to custodial families.

The bill closes a loophole in current law that can let parents with large unpaid child support debts receive a passport renewal without consequence. This bill makes sure that the State Department uses its authority to revoke passports, both at the time of the application and renewal. We should use every opportunity to make sure children get the support that they need to thrive.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this 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 Missouri (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6903, 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.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS OWNERSHIP AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY ACT

Mr. CAREY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6431) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the rules governing the State administration of self-employment assistance programs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6431

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 “New Opportunities for Business Ownership and Self-Sufficiency Act”.

SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF RULES GOVERNING STATE ADMINISTRATION OF SELF-EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

(a) ELIMINATION OF REQUIREMENT THAT PARTICIPANTS ARE LIKELY TO EXHAUST REGULAR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION.—Section 3306(t)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking subparagraph (B) and by redesignating subparagraphs (C) and (D) as subparagraphs (B) and (C), respectively.

(b) MODIFICATION OF REQUIREMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN SELF-EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES.—Section 3306(t)(3)(B) of such Code, as redesignated by subsection (a), is amended to read as follows:

“(B) are participating in self-employment assistance activities which are approved by the State agency and either—

“(i) include entrepreneurial training, business counseling, and technical assistance; or

“(ii) are performed pursuant to a business plan and market feasibility study submitted by the individual and approved by the State or an agency designated by the State; and”.

(c) WEEKLY CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT.—Section 3306(t)(3)(C) of such Code, as redesignated by subsection (a), is amended by inserting “and are certifying such activities on at least a weekly basis to an agency designated by the State” before the semicolon at the end.

(d) ADJUSTMENT OF LIMITATION ON NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATING.—Section 3306(t)(4) of such Code is amended by striking “5” and inserting “10”.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply beginning on the date that is 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, except that nothing in this section shall be interpreted to prevent a State from amending its law before the end of the 2-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(f) ISSUANCE OF REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of Labor shall, after public notice and comment and subject to approval by the Office of Management and Budget, adopt regulations to administer this Act.

(g) ISSUANCE OF GUIDANCE.—The Secretary of Labor shall provide guidance to State workforce agencies that includes—

(1) a model list of self-employment assistance activities that fulfill requirements of the program under section 3306(t) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; and

(2) best practices for verification of completion of such activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CAREY) and the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CAREY. 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 Ohio?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of my bill, which is H.R. 6431, the New Opportunities for Business Ownership and Self-Sufficiency Act, also known as the NO BOSS Act.

This bill is a product of bipartisan work across the aisle, and I thank my dear friend and colleague from Cincinnati, Representative GREG LANDSMAN, for co-leading this legislation with me.

The NO BOSS Act makes small tweaks to the Self-Employment Assistance, or SEA, Program to support unemployed workers who decide to create their own next jobs.

The SEA Program is voluntary for all States. It allows qualified unemployment insurance claimants to collect an allowance to support their efforts to establish a business in lieu of regular unemployment compensation.