

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.

Small businesses are the backbone of our Nation's economy. For many Americans, owning their own business is the embodiment of the American Dream. The NO BOSS Act supports these pursuits by increasing the percentage of individuals who can participate in the SEA Program from 5 percent to 10 percent. It also eliminates the requirement that a participant must be likely to exhaust their unemployment compensation benefits in order to qualify.

Entrepreneurship should not be a last resort for those who are unable to find any other form of employment. Rather, self-employment should be encouraged and, indeed, practiced. These two changes expand the eligibility and the opportunity to participate in the SEA Program for more unemployment insurance claimants.

Finally, the NO BOSS Act strengthens the SEA Program by requiring States to certify participation in the self-employment assistance activities weekly and adding new participation activities.

Currently, self-employment activities include entrepreneurial training, business consulting, and technical assistance. This bill adds submitting a business plan or market feasibility study for approval by the State to that list.

In January, the NO BOSS Act passed out of the Ways and Means Committee unanimously by a vote of 41-0. It is important to get this bill signed into law because the SEA Program is underutilized. The bill is a great example of how government can support, enable, and foster more entrepreneurship in a meaningful way.

Entrepreneurship empowers Americans from all backgrounds at all stages of their professional careers. New businesses create jobs for members of their communities and strengthen our economy. The NO BOSS Act is pro-small business and pro-self-starter.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Leader SCALISE, Chairman JASON SMITH, and Ranking Member NEAL for their support in advancing this legislation. I encourage all of the Members to vote "yes" on this bipartisan, commonsense legislation, and I yield back 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 NO BOSS Act, legislation from my good friend and colleague, Representative MIKE CAREY. I also acknowledge his co-lead on the bill, Representative GREG LANDSMAN. This bill is a demonstration of what neighbors and neighboring congressional Members can do together in a bipartisan fashion.

The NO BOSS Act would give workers the choice to use their unemployment insurance weeks, as necessary, to build their businesses, rather than being locked into job searches that don't fit their skills, their needs, or their potential.

Mr. Speaker, most businesses are small businesses. Nationwide, more than 80 percent, or nearly 30 million small businesses, are a solo venture, meaning they have no employees. The second most common type of business still has fewer than 20 total employees.

According to a Census in 2022, those solo-venture businesses contributed more than \$1.7 trillion, or almost 7 percent, to the U.S. economy. The one thing that all businesses have in common is that they are all started with a good idea and a founder with the time and commitment to develop that business.

Under the Self-Employment Assistance program, Americans using unemployment insurance can use their unemployment insurance weeks to start a business. The cost is negligible to the government since it is offered in lieu of normal benefits. Unfortunately, there are only five States that offer such a program, and participants are unnecessarily restricted.

That is why the NO BOSS Act would expand this program by doubling the number of people who can use it and let workers opt in earlier, instead of requiring them to wait until they have nearly exhausted their benefits.

To be clear, Mr. Speaker, this is not a blank check. Participants must follow an approved training or business plan. There must be a feasibility study, and they must certify weekly so that States can verify their progress.

The NO BOSS Act would simply make commonsense updates to a commonsensical program. It is a bipartisan effort, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes."

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from Ohio ask unanimous consent to reclaim his time?

Mr. CAREY: Yes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman is recognized. There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, what better way to put more Americans back to work than to foster and encourage entrepreneurial spirit.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to pass this commonsense legislation. As stated before, the NO BOSS Act would remove red tape and make simple, bipartisan updates to an existing program that works.

By giving Americans the option to develop their skills and to go to work for themselves, we can improve our unemployment system and opportunities for all American workers.

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

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

the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CAREY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6431, 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.

CLERGY ACT

Mr. CAREY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 227) to allow a period in which members of the clergy may revoke their exemption from Social Security coverage, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 227

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 "Clergy Act".

SEC. 2. REVOCATION BY MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY OF EXEMPTION FROM SOCIAL SECURITY COVERAGE.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Notwithstanding section 1402(e)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, any exemption which has been received under section 1402(e)(1) of such Code by a duly ordained, commissioned, or licensed minister of a church, a member of a religious order, or a Christian Science practitioner, and which is effective for the taxable year in which this Act is enacted, may be revoked by filing an application therefor (in such form and manner, and with such official, as may be prescribed by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue), if such application is filed no later than the due date of the Federal income tax return (including any extension thereof) for the applicant's second taxable year beginning after December 31, 2028. Any such revocation shall be effective (for purposes of chapter 2 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.)), as specified in the application, either with respect to the applicant's first taxable year beginning after December 31, 2028, or with respect to the applicant's second taxable year beginning after such date, and for all succeeding taxable years; and the applicant for any such revocation may not thereafter again file an application for an exemption under such section 1402(e)(1). If the application is filed after the due date of the applicant's Federal income tax return for a taxable year and is effective with respect to that taxable year, it shall include or be accompanied by payment in full of an amount equal to the total of the taxes that would have been imposed by section 1401 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 with respect to all of the applicant's income derived in that taxable year which would have constituted net earnings from self-employment for purposes of chapter 2 of such Code (notwithstanding paragraphs (4) and (5) of section 1402(c)) except for the exemption under section 1402(e)(1) of such Code.

(b) *EFFECTIVE DATE.*—Subsection (a) shall apply with respect to service performed (to the extent specified in such subsection) in taxable years beginning after December 31, 2028, and with respect to monthly insurance benefits payable under title II of the Social Security Act on the basis of the wages and self-employment income of any individual for months in or after the calendar year in which such individual's application for revocation (as described in such subsection) is effective (and lump-sum death payments payable under such title on the basis