

employ more than 300,000 people across the entire country. They create jobs. They drive economic growth, and they help build stronger communities. They deserve the same opportunities to succeed as other small business owners in America.

That is why I introduced the Native American Entrepreneurial Opportunity Act. This bipartisan bill strengthens the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Native American Affairs by establishing it in law and ensuring that Native entrepreneurs have a permanent advocate within the SBA, no matter who controls the White House.

The bill creates an assistant administrator to lead the office, to coordinate resources, and to help make sure that Tribal entrepreneurs can access the lending programs, the business counseling, and the contracting opportunities that already exist within the SBA.

Just as importantly, it creates accountability by requiring regular reports to Congress about how these efforts are working in Indian Country. This is a practical and bipartisan step that is going to help entrepreneurs start businesses, create jobs, and contribute to their local economies.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representatives JAKE ELLZEY, KELLY MORRISON, and ELI CRANE for partnering with me on this legislation. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill and to support the entrepreneurs, workers, and communities that it is going to benefit.

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

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

In closing, Native American-owned businesses are economic engines, generating \$86 billion in sales, shipments, and revenues every year, and employing nearly 364,000 people in their communities.

The ONAA serves an important role in aiding Native American communities that lack access to Federal programs. By helping American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians launch, grow, and expand their small businesses, the office strengthens local economies and promotes economic development. This bill will go a long way in empowering Native entrepreneurs and supporting long-term economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 7936, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 7396 to strengthen economic opportunity in Native American communities and provide certainty that this important SBA office will continue its work.

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

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

the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7396, 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.

SMALL BUSINESS LENDING FRAUD PREVENTION ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7401) to require employees of the Small Business Administration to certify that the employee does not have any prohibited conflicts of interest with respect to loans in which the employee is involved, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7401

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 "Small Business Lending Fraud Prevention Act".

SEC. 2. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION EMPLOYEE CONFLICT OF INTEREST CERTIFICATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on the date that is 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, an employee of the Administration that will personally and substantially participate in the origination, review, or approval of a loan administered by the Administration shall, prior to such participation in such loan, certify to the Administrator in writing that such employee—

(1) to their knowledge, does not have any conflict of interest prohibited under section 208 of title 18, United States Code, or section 2635.502 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, with respect to such participation in such loan;

(2) upon learning of any such conflict of interest after submitting such certification, will immediately disclose such conflict of interest to the supervisor of such employee and recuse themselves from participating in such loan; and

(3) understands the requirements applicable to such employee under Federal law and regulations of the Administration regarding conflicts of interest with respect to such participation in such loan.

(b) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment, the Administrator shall issue regulations implementing this Act.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATION.—The term "Administration" means the Small Business Administration.

(2) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term "Administrator" means the Administrator of the Administration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. OLSZEWSKI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. 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 Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 7401, the Small Business Lending Fraud Prevention Act, introduced by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEUSER) and the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. GOODLANDER).

Last year, a former SBA loan officer pled guilty to submitting false statements in order to fraudulently secure over \$500,000 in pandemic relief loans for herself and family members. When the SBA initially denied the loans, the SBA employee approved them herself.

The SBA Office of Inspector General identified multiple instances in which SBA employees approved loans to relatives or others who were barred from conflict of interest rules and noted that such cases were rarely prosecuted. We must take serious steps to avoid such cases in the future. It should not be possible for fraud like this to occur.

This bipartisan legislation offers a commonsense solution to add a layer of security to crack down on loan fraud. H.R. 7401 requires SBA employees to certify that they have no conflicts of interest before processing a loan, to disclose any conflicts immediately, and to recuse themselves if a conflict of interest is discovered.

It is our responsibility to ensure taxpayer funds are handled appropriately. This bill will provide a safeguard against improper loan approvals and establish a clear basis for prosecution if an employee knowingly approves loans prohibited by conflict of interest rules.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 7401, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Small Business Lending Fraud Prevention Act.

Let me begin by commending Representatives MEUSER and GOODLANDER for their bipartisan work on this bill, which would enhance SBA's internal processes to further detect fraud.

As the chairman mentioned, recently an SBA loan officer pled guilty to making false statements after approving more than \$550,000 in fraudulent COVID-19 pandemic loans for herself and for family members.

The previous administration identified the wrongdoing, terminated the employee, and referred the case to the Office of Inspector General. This proves that the process worked. However, requiring loan officers to attest that they are not violating any conflict of

interest laws or regulations every time they originate, review, or approve a loan is a simple step that further reinforces ethical standards and reminds them that misconduct has consequences. Implementing this practice will help to increase accountability, strengthen compliance, and deter fraud.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support this bipartisan bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we must pass H.R. 7401 to strengthen integrity in SBA lending programs by requiring employees involved in loan decisions to certify they have no prohibited conflicts of interest.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, in closing, this committee has played an integral role in conducting oversight of SBA programs, especially the pandemic relief programs. Approximately \$1.2 trillion of economic aid was distributed through SBA's pandemic relief programs over the course of the pandemic, providing economic relief to small businesses all over the country.

Unfortunately, bad actors took advantage of the programs, and it has become clear that we need to work together to recover fraudulent dollars. The previous administration took strong steps to root out fraud and to put internal controls in place to prevent it, and the Inspector General has been working diligently to uncover fraudulent schemes.

The bottom line is that the current process worked. The bad actor at the SBA was identified, investigated, and prosecuted. Moving forward, SBA employees being required to certify there is no conflict of interest before approving a loan provides an extra layer of security which will help deter fraud.

Once again, I applaud Representatives GOODLANDER and MEUSER for working together on this bill that enhances conflict of interest laws at SBA and provides even more accountability.

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

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Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 7401 to support transparency, accountability, and public confidence in the administration of SBA loans, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7401.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make

the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

COVID FRAUD TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2026

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 826) to require the Inspector General of the Small Business Administration to submit a quarterly report on fraud relating to certain COVID-19 loans, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 826

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 "COVID Fraud Transparency Act of 2026".

SEC. 2. REPORT ON FRAUD RELATING TO CERTAIN COVID-19 LOANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 3 months thereafter, the Inspector General of the Small Business Administration shall submit to the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate a report on the number of borrowers engaged in fraud with respect to a covered loan.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include, with respect to the period covered by such report—

(1) the number and total dollar amount of all covered loans made;

(2) the number of new cases of fraud and suspected fraud;

(3) the number of fraud cases resolved; and

(4) the types of fraud cases described in paragraphs (2) and (3).

(c) COVERED LOAN DEFINED.—In this section, the term "covered loan" means—

(1) a loan made under paragraph (36) or (37) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)); or

(2) a loan made under section 7(b) of such Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b)) in response to COVID-19 during the covered period (as defined in section 1110(a) of the CARES Act (15 U.S.C. 9009)).

(d) TERMINATION.—This Act and the requirements of this Act shall terminate on the date that is two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. COMPLIANCE WITH CUTGO.

No such funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. OLSZEWSKI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. 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 Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my bill, H.R. 826, the COVID Fraud Transparency Act of 2026.

Earlier this year, I introduced this bill alongside my good friends the gentleman from New York (Mr. LATIMER), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BEAN), and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. MFUME).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we moved quickly to provide relief to families, workers, and small businesses facing unprecedented hardship. When the government acts at that scale and speed, we also have the responsibility to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent as intended, especially for honest, hardworking Americans. Unfortunately, we fell short in addressing that challenge.

The SBA Office of Inspector General estimates that roughly \$200 billion in potentially fraudulent relief funds were disbursed through COVID-19 relief programs. Over 5 years after the pandemic began, the work of accountability is not finished. The American people deserve to know how the fraud occurred and what lessons can be learned to better protect public resources in the future.

On March 16, President Trump announced the White House task force to eliminate fraud, to strengthen inter-agency coordination, and more to directly confront waste, fraud, and abuse. Since its formation, the task force has helped coordinate inter-agency efforts to identify improper payments, improve oversight, and advise in investigations into COVID-19-era-related fraud. That is what it means to be accountable to the American people.

By improving reporting requirements and enhancing oversight, we can gain a clearer understanding of the schemes of these bad actors who exploited these relief programs. More importantly, we will be able to identify the weaknesses that made them possible.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 826, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the COVID Fraud Transparency Act of 2026, as amended, and I applaud Chairman WILLIAMS and Representative LATIMER for their efforts to increase reporting on COVID fraud.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Small Business Administration stepped in and served as a critical lifeline to small businesses. The SBA distributed more than \$1.2 trillion of economic aid and executed 14 years' worth of lending in 14 days, keeping millions of businesses afloat.

I had the opportunity to see the impact of that lending firsthand, as I was serving as Baltimore County executive