

Again, I thank the chair and ranking member for working together to make that happen.

As I urge my Senate colleagues to complete their work, to get it done. Let's get to the negotiation table. I encourage my colleagues to vote for the CR so we can have a bipartisan funding package that truly invests in the needs of the American people.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH), my good friend and the distinguished chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means.

□ 1240

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman COLE for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation, which not only prevents another government shutdown but also includes legislation passed by the Ways and Means Committee and the House to reauthorize trade policies that are vital to our Nation's economy and national security.

For over two decades, the African Growth and Opportunity Act has been the foundation of America's trade partnership with the nations of sub-Saharan Africa. AGOA promotes greater economic stability and opportunity across Africa while advancing America's strategic and national security interests, including access to critical minerals and more secure supply chains that are not beholden to Communist China.

Africa is home to approximately 30 percent of the world's critical mineral resources. Strengthening our trade relationship with Africa ensures that we do not surrender those critical minerals to China.

China has invested \$8 billion to \$10 billion in Africa and is seeking to monopolize that entire market to control future technological innovation and achieve military dominance. We cannot let that happen.

This bill also reauthorizes the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act and the Haiti Economic Lift Program Act, known as HOPE and HELP. These programs provide trade preferences for textile and apparel products from Haiti and encourage greater stability in a nation less than 600 miles away from the Florida coast that has long suffered political and economic upheaval.

Greater stability in Haiti means fewer regional security concerns for the United States. Earlier this year, we reauthorized both of these vital agreements for an additional 1 year. Today's legislation ensures that both AGOA and Haiti HOPE/HELP will be in effect through the end of 2028, which will give our committee and stakeholders interested in these vital programs time to consider reforms and update them to ensure that they continue to advance U.S. interests.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for the purposes of closing.

Mr. Speaker, I support this measure, as I have indicated. It makes important improvements over the bill that was put forward by House Republicans before the August break.

It received broad bipartisan support in the Senate. It freezes a White House budget policy that would take substantial power over Federal funding away from Congress and claim it for the President, and it allows us to complete our work on the 12 full-year funding bills for fiscal year 2027. The House has completed its work, and now the Senate must complete its work.

Continuing resolutions are imperfect tools. They are not replacements for full-year appropriations, but they can be useful under certain limited circumstances like those we currently find ourselves in.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, as always, for working with us in this matter cooperatively.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased, honestly, with the progress of the House Appropriations Committee this year. Again, all 12 bills were reported out of committee in the fastest time since fiscal year 2020.

I know those bills aren't in their final form, and so does my friend. We still need to sit down and bargain together and bargain with the Senate. Out of that, I believe we will emerge with a bipartisan compromise that both sides can be proud of and that we can send to the President for his approval.

For that to occur, the United States Senate has to begin to act. They have to produce bills. For us to go an entire fiscal year almost—we are about 30 days short of it—without a single Senate bill is just unprecedented. I do not blame that on my Republican colleagues. Frankly, they have the filibuster over there. They have to get to 60. They have not been able to do that, and that is going to mean that we are going to have an extraordinarily short time.

I am pleased, however, that the Senate acted. When we passed our continuing resolution over here, we knew it would change when it got to the Senate. Some of those changes, I actually agree with. Some of them, I don't. They don't really change the substance or the fact that we bought the time that we need to get through the election cycle and, hopefully, the time that we need to get down to serious bargaining on the other side of it.

For that to work, again, every person has to be at the table. Every point of view has to be represented, and we have to find common ground.

We were able to do that last year by working together on almost everything—not quite, but almost—and I think we can do that again this year. It is important for the country that we do.

Mr. Speaker, again, I thank my good friend, the ranking member of the full committee, for always being an honest and direct negotiating partner. I know that is going to continue. I know we have the same goal of trying to get all of these bills done by the end of the calendar year, if not the fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the United States Senate, as a body, to join us in that and produce some product, post some numbers, do something so that we have some idea of what they are thinking about in terms of long-term appropriations. Then, we will sit down, appropriately, and we will bargain with them and hopefully come to a common conclusion.

The last thing this country needs is a full-year continuing resolution. We need negotiated, bipartisan bills that achieve the common objectives that, despite the partisan rhetoric of an election year, I know we have together. We have worked together before to defend the country, to advance biomedical research, to take care of early childhood, to help first-time college students, to do all of the things that the United States Government ought to be engaged in and do it in a bipartisan way. I think we can do that again. This bill is a step in that direction.

Again, I thank my friend for supporting the legislation. I hope our Senate colleagues recognize that we are trying to move along. We didn't want to fight over things, even the couple of things that we disagreed with. We wanted to bring this to the floor and begin a bipartisan process. Again, I think that is what we will accomplish today if we pass these bills.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill, H.R. 6500.

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. COLE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

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 12 o'clock and 47 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1331

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 1 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE
CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, August 31, 2026.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a letter received from Mr. J. Blake Evans, Elections Director, with the Georgia Office of the Secretary of State indicating that, according to the unofficial results for the Special Election Runoff held on August 25, 2026, the Honorable Everton "EJ" Blair was elected Representative to Congress for the Thirteenth Congressional District of Georgia.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KEVIN F. MCCUMBER,
Clerk.

Enclosure.

THE OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE,
Atlanta, GA, August 26, 2026.

Hon. KEVIN F. MCCUMBER,
Clerk, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. MCCUMBER: This is to advise you that the unofficial results of the Special Election Runoff held on Tuesday, August 25, 2026, for Representative in Congress from the Thirteenth Congressional District of Georgia, show that Everton "EJ" Blair received 9,891 votes or 53.95% of the total number of votes cast for that office.

It would appear from these unofficial results that Everton "EJ" Blair was elected as Representative in Congress from the Thirteenth Congressional District of Georgia. To the best of our knowledge and belief at this time, there is no contest to this election.

As soon as the official results are certified to this office by all jurisdictions involved, an official Certificate of Election will be prepared for transmittal as required by law.

Best,

J. BLAKE EVANS,
Elections Director.

SWEARING IN OF THE HONORABLE
EVERTON BLAIR, JR., OF GEOR-
GIA, AS A MEMBER OF THE
HOUSE

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Georgia, the Honorable Everton Blair, Jr., be permitted to take the oath of office today.

His certificate of election has not arrived, but there is no contest and no question has been raised with regard to his election.

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER. Will the Representative-elect and the members of the Georgia delegation present themselves in the well.

All Members will rise and the Representative-elect will please raise his right hand.

Everton Blair, Jr., appeared at the bar of the House and took the oath of office, as follows:

Do you solemnly swear that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which you are about to enter, so help you God.

The SPEAKER. Congratulations, you are now a Member of the 119th Congress.

WELCOMING THE HONORABLE
EVERTON BLAIR, JR., TO THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Speaker, as dean of the Georgia congressional delegation, I am pleased to welcome Dr. EVERTON BLAIR, JR., as the newest member of our delegation, representing Georgia's 13th Congressional District.

Our delegation is diverse, consisting of ordinary citizens with an extraordinary passion for improving lives and representing the great State of Georgia. Most of all, regardless of our differences, we consistently and tirelessly pursue common ground, uplifting our communities and addressing their needs and interests.

EVERTON is 34 years old, born and raised in Gwinnett County in the metro Atlanta area. His parents are both Jamaican immigrants. His father is a computer scientist and his mother a pediatrician.

EVERTON earned a B.A. in mathematics from Harvard College; a master's in policy, organization, and leadership from Stanford University; and a doctorate of educational leadership from the Harvard Graduate School as a Presidential Public Service Fellow.

He taught for 2 years in the Atlanta public school system through the Teach America Program, and in 2018, at the young age of 26, he ran for a seat on the Gwinnett County Board of Education, defeating a longtime incumbent and becoming the youngest and first person of color to serve on the board. Moreover, he was unanimously selected to chair that board and led the Gwinnett system through the COVID-19 pandemic.

In April 2025, along with several others, he filed to run for a seat in the 120th Congress for the 13th Congressional District that was represented by our late colleague David Scott.

Sadly, David passed and EVERTON announced that he would run in the special election for the remainder of David Scott's unexpired term, which he won last month.

We welcome this dynamic, young leader to the Georgia delegation and to this House as he begins his service to the people of Georgia's 13th Congress-

sional District for the remainder of this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BLAIR).

Mr. BLAIR. Mr. Speaker, it is such an honor and a privilege to be here.

Mr. Speaker, growing up in Gwinnett County, my parents, who are here, imbued in us a real responsibility.

I know that they are proud of me, but above all, I thank them for how tirelessly they worked to support me, even when I had these crazy ideas to do things that I didn't even ask their permission for. They showed up and made it all possible. I thank them again.

I also acknowledge and thank a colleague, a dear mentor and friend of mine without whom I don't even know if I would have known anything about running for Congress, and that is Congresswoman LUCY MCBATH.

LUCY MCBATH sees in young people an ability and a prospect of leadership that I think a lot of us should adopt. I was so fortunate to have had her as my Congresswoman and to now be her colleague. I thank her again for all of the things that she has done.

Mr. Speaker, I will briefly acknowledge that my story is not really that unique. Born and raised in a very American household with immigrant parents, we acclimated.

So many of the things that I have been able to achieve and accomplish, I have just sought to try and do and make sure everybody else can. The reality is that it is getting a lot harder for way too many of us, especially in younger generations, to fulfill that American Dream.

My mandate here is clear: I will do everything in my capacity to make life more affordable for the hardworking Americans in Georgia's 13th Congressional District. I will do everything in my capacity to make sure that district maintains its representation and retains the majority Black representation that it currently has.

There are too many Black Americans who look at the progress that we have had over decades and wonder if their children and grandchildren are going to have as much access to prosperity, economic opportunity, voting rights, and the American systems that we know to be dear and true writ large.

It is up to us now. I didn't get here by accident. I got here by working really, really hard to earn the support of a lot of people and to introduce myself again and again. I will continue to do that as I work to build relationships with all of you and partner in the good work ahead of us. I cannot wait to spend the remainder of this term with all of you. I am thankful for the opportunity.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the administration of the oath of office to the gentleman from Georgia the whole number of the House is 432.