

comply with duly authorized subpoenas issued by the Committee on Ethics.

At a time when public confidence in Congress is at historic lows and the House's ability to self-police Member conduct is under intense scrutiny, enforcing lawful congressional process is vital to delivering swift transparency and accountability for any misconduct.

A witness who refuses to cooperate with the Ethics Committee hinders the thoroughness and swiftness of an investigation. If the committee must authorize and issue a subpoena for that witness, more delays result.

If after those additional steps the witness decides to flout the subpoena, the committee is ultimately deprived of key evidence needed to resolve the allegations.

A subpoena from the House Ethics Committee is not a suggestion. It is a lawful demand for information needed by the House to fulfill its constitutional responsibilities to enforce the official code of conduct, adjudicate violations, and to impose appropriate discipline.

The investigative subcommittee in the matter of Representative Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick repeatedly sought documents and testimony from Mr. Joseph, yet he failed to comply with voluntary requests for information and multiple subpoenas in the 118th and 119th Congresses.

While other witnesses did not fully cooperate with the committee's investigation, Mr. Joseph's conduct went further. Twice he failed to appear for subpoenaed testimony in the current Congress, and he was made aware numerous times that his failure to comply with the subpoenas could result in contempt proceedings. He had notice of and was properly served all the subpoenas by the investigatory subcommittee, and he never asserted any valid privilege or basis for noncompliance.

The bipartisan investigative subcommittee unanimously found, and the full committee agreed, that his conduct was contemptuous. His noncompliance also unnecessarily and significantly delayed the committee's investigation.

Contempt referrals like these are a rare step because almost all subpoenaed witnesses cooperate with the committee before contempt proceedings need to be initiated.

But the rareness of this step should not obscure its importance. The effectiveness of the committee's oversight hinges on the expectation that subpoenas cannot and will not be ignored.

This contempt resolution is not intended to be a punitive measure. It is a deterrent to future noncompliance and obstructive conduct by witnesses in future investigations.

With this resolution, we can establish a clear and necessary boundary for future witnesses. If you are subpoenaed by the committee, you cannot simply decide that compliance is optional.

By demonstrating that noncompliance has consequences, this resolution

will empower the Ethics Committee in its continued efforts to uphold civic confidence and the integrity of this body.

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

□ 1520

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

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SUBRAMANYAM).

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and the ranking member for bringing this to the floor today.

Whenever I tell people I am on the Ethics Committee in Congress, people tend to ask me the same questions: Why doesn't the Ethics Committee move faster? What is taking so long? Why are these investigations taking so long? Justice delayed is justice denied.

Well, Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons is because a lot of times witnesses and people with information string our committee along. Even their lawyers tell them to ignore our subpoenas, ignore our inquiries, or delay us as much as possible.

This subpoena, in particular, was issued September of last year, and that was after a very long process of trying to get this witness in, going back to before I was even in Congress. That was more than 2 years ago. There have been multiple requests, multiple failures to appear.

If we don't enforce these subpoenas, then everyone will ignore our investigations. They will string us along, and they will draw out these investigations for months or sometimes years, like in this case, and the American people will lose faith in this body's ability to investigate our own.

The Ethics Committee will never be as fast as the news cycle, and we will afford everyone due process. Today's vote is a message that we, as a committee, do intend to move swiftly in these investigations. It is a message that Congress does intend to hold people accountable if they don't comply with our subpoenas, whether it is Members or people with information.

I thank the chair and ranking member for their leadership on this, and I ask the body to support this motion.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I move that the rules be suspended and that this body agree to the resolution printed in House Report 119-693 regarding proceedings against Michael Joseph, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. GUEST) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1504.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the

rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THAT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FIND HECTOR ROOS IN CONTEMPT OF CONGRESS FOR REFUSAL TO COMPLY WITH SUBPOENAS DULY ISSUED BY THE COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1505) which is printed in House Report 119-694, regarding proceedings against Hector Roos and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1505

Resolved, That Hector Roos shall be found to be in contempt of Congress for failure to comply with the subpoena *duces tecum* issued to him August 12, 2025.

Resolved, That Hector Roos shall be found to be in contempt of Congress for failure to comply with the subpoena *ad testificandum* issued to him August 12, 2025.

Resolved, That pursuant to 2 U.S.C. §§ 192 and 194, the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall certify the Report of the Committee on Ethics, detailing the refusal of Hector Roos to produce documents and appear before the Investigative Subcommittee as directed by these subpoenas to the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, to the end that Mr. Roos be proceeded against in the manner and form provided by law.

Resolved, That the Speaker of the House shall otherwise take all appropriate action to enforce the subpoenas.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. GUEST) and the gentleman from California (Mr. DESAULNIER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution printed in House Report 119-694.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I reemphasize my comments made earlier regarding these matters and would urge adoption. At this time, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution holding Hector Roos in contempt of Congress for his failure to comply with duly authorized subpoenas issued by the Committee on Ethics.

The investigative subcommittee, in the matter of Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick, repeatedly sought documents and testimony from Mr. Roos, who was a key witness in the matter. Yet Mr. Roos failed to comply with voluntary requests for information and multiple subpoenas in the 118th and 119th Congresses.

While other witnesses did not fully cooperate with the committee's investigation, Mr. Roos' conduct went further. He simply ignored multiple subpoenas without asserting any valid legal privilege or basis for noncompliance.

Despite his later claims that he affirmatively reached out to the committee after he was contacted about his noncompliance, Mr. Roos never communicated to an email address belonging to any staff, and he failed to respond to numerous emails and phone calls at the points of contact where he claims to have been reachable.

The bipartisan subcommittee unanimously found, and the full committee agreed, that his conduct unnecessarily and significantly delayed the committee's investigation and was thus worthy of a referral for criminal contempt proceedings.

Compliance with the Ethics Committee subpoenas is not optional, as I have said before. This contempt resolution is meant to demonstrate to witnesses before the committee that obstructive conduct has consequences, and the committee will vigorously use all the tools at its disposal to thoroughly and swiftly investigate allegations of misconduct.

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

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional witnesses and am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules to agree to the resolution printed in House Report 119-694 regarding proceedings against Hector Roos. I urge its adoption, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. GUEST) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1505.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NORTHEAST LOBSTERMAN PROTECTION ACT OF 2026

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1499, I call up the bill (H.R. 9436) to amend the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 to extend the time period for which certain regulations concerning the North Atlantic right whale are effective, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1499, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources, printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 119-40 is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 9436

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 "Northeast Lobsterman Protection Act of 2026".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF CERTAIN REGULATIONS CONCERNING NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE.

Section 101 of division JJ of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (16 U.S.C. 1387 note) is amended by striking "2028" each place it appears and inserting "2035".

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOST). The bill, as amended, shall be debatable for 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources, or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

□ 1530

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 9436.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 9436, the Northeast Lobsterman Protection Act, which will protect one of the world's most iconic fisheries and the American jobs, communities, and families that depend on it.

In Maine, lobster accounts for 75 percent of the total value of the State's commercial fisheries, supporting an estimated \$2 billion in economic activity and 17,500 jobs.

While critical to the State's economy, a robust lobster industry isn't just about dollars and cents. It is about individuals, families, and communities whose stories and traditions are directly tied to this industry that has operated for more than 70 years.

However, Maine lobstermen have faced tremendous adversity over the past several decades. The American lobster fishery has been under attack from radical groups determined to end

this way of life. These serial litigants have pushed for a regulatory regime that could shut down the entire fishery.

For nearly 30 years, the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team has overseen the Maine lobster and Jonah crab fisheries. They have implemented and updated a take reduction plan with extensive regulatory requirements designed to minimize the fishery's impact on North Atlantic right whales. What they are doing is working. For decades, the industry has led conservation efforts to reduce right whale entanglements in their gear.

Despite the American lobster fishery virtually eliminating its impact on right whales, the take reduction plan has faced repeated litigation, leaving the industry subject to regulatory whiplash. The American lobster fishery has been subject to four different biological opinions between 2010 and 2021, with ever more draconian restrictions.

When the National Marine Fisheries Service issued its most recent biological opinion in 2021, unsurprisingly, the radical groups remained dissatisfied and continued to litigate. At the same time, Maine's Democratic Governor, Janet Mills, and the lobster industry argued that NOAA failed to utilize the best available science.

Facing new regulations that threatened to shut down the entire fishery, the Maine delegation worked on a bipartisan basis in December 2022 to enact a regulatory pause for the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries. This pause provided ESA and MMPA coverage for the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries through 2028, providing the State and the industry more time to develop new gear innovations, prudent conservation measures, and conduct more research on the fishery's interactions with right whales.

Since then, the State of Maine, the industry, and other scientific and research bodies have made progress, investing more than \$90 million in research. However, it is clear that more time is needed to gather the necessary data and incorporate it into final regulations. Representative LAWLER's bill would provide MMPA and ESA coverage for these fisheries through 2035, providing the necessary time to get these regulations right without the threat of more frivolous litigation.

I thank Representative LAWLER for carrying this legislation, and also I recognize the gentleman from Maine, Representative JARED GOLDEN, for his tireless leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, the Congress returned yesterday from a long district work period where most of us heard a lot of things from our constituents. They told us about the grinding cost of groceries, gas, and healthcare and the instability their small businesses face