

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 240, the Crow Tribe Water Rights Settlement Amendments Act of 2025.

S. 240 would amend the Crow Tribe's existing settlement to support successful settlement implementation and extend the Tribe's authority to market hydropower to the Yellowtail Afterbay Dam in Montana.

The Tribe has devoted significant time and effort to achieving and implementing this settlement, and I thank the sponsor of the bill for dedicating that time, as well. This legislation would provide additional support to ensure it is successfully carried out.

This body has a responsibility to uphold our Federal trust and treaty obligations to Tribal nations, and that responsibility is especially critical when it comes to access to clean and reliable water.

Every person deserves access to safe water. Yet, Tribal nations, which often hold some of the most senior water rights, have far too often been unable to access or develop their own water resources due to Federal actions and policies, leaving those water rights largely underdeveloped and unprotected.

Tribal leaders have spent decades working to resolve these issues and negotiate settlements to ensure their communities have cleaner, reliable water. Negotiated settlements provide certainty for Tribes, States, the Federal Government, and other water users. They provide Tribal nations with the resources needed to deliver clean water to their communities while reducing legal, financial, and water supply uncertainty to all parties to a settlement.

Mr. Speaker, while I am grateful to see this bill move forward today, I urge our Republican leadership to take action on the numerous other pending Indian water rights settlement bills, many of which have already passed the Senate by unanimous consent.

Failing to advance settlement delays Tribal communities' access to clean water, prolongs uncertainty for all water users, and increases settlement costs over time.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a partisan issue. We have many Republican colleagues who want to get these bills across the finish line with us. We stand ready to work with the Republican leadership to resolve any procedural concerns.

I hope that S. 240 is just the beginning and that we will see more Indian water rights settlement bills before us on the floor soon, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Montana (Mr. DOWNING), the lead sponsor of the House companion to this bill.

Mr. DOWNING. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Crow Tribe Water Rights Settlement Amendments Act, as this legislation will make crucial adjustments to the Crow Tribe of Montana's water settlement, ensuring the Tribe can provide clean drinking water for its members for generations to come.

In Montana, water rights and infrastructure are the lifeblood of our Tribal communities. Indian water rights settlements protect those rights by codifying them in Federal law and providing resources to promote water infrastructure development.

For the Crow Tribe in my home district, the Crow Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act of 2010 was a significant milestone. It settled the Tribe's water rights and authorized \$460 million to design and construct a centralized municipal, rural, and industrial, or MR&I, water system for its reservation.

However, due to the project's complexity, rising costs, and extended estimated construction timelines, the initial MR&I pipeline system authorized by the settlement has proven unfeasible.

Without the ability to use settlement funds for water infrastructure, the Crow Reservation continues to face a clean water crisis. According to one BIA-funded water study, over 50 percent of Crow Reservation households have contaminated water. That is 50 percent. Moreover, multiple further studies have linked the Tribe's higher cancer rates with this lack of clean water access.

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Senator DAINES and I introduced the Crow Tribe Water Rights Settlement Amendments Act to directly address these challenges. The bill expands the scope of authorized water projects under the Crow Tribe's water settlement beyond the initial single mandated pipeline project to include a flexible array of smaller-scale regional water projects. In doing so, this legislation will dramatically reduce the timeline for delivering clean water to the reservation's communities.

S. 240 is a straightforward solution that does not alter any existing water rights and appropriates no new Federal spending. It simply provides necessary flexibility for the Tribe to meet the needs of its citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Senator DAINES for leading this effort with me. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this important legislation for the Crow Tribe.

Ms. ELFRETH. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this critical piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Senator DAINES and Representative DOWNING for their leadership on this important issue, and I thank the minority for working with us on it. I urge the passage of S. 240, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 240, 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.

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT PREVENTION IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2025

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2406) to amend the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 to address sexual harassment and sexual assault involving National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration personnel, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2406

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 "National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Improvements Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. REFERENCES.

Except as otherwise specifically provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a provision of subtitle C of title XXXV of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (33 U.S.C. 894 et seq.).

SEC. 3. POLICY ON PREVENTION OF AND RESPONSE TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT INVOLVING NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION PERSONNEL.

Section 3541(f) (33 U.S.C. 894(f)) is amended—

(1) by inserting "and equal employment" after "sexual harassment" in each place it appears; and

(2) in paragraph (2)—
(A) by redesignating subparagraphs (C) and (D) as subparagraphs (D) and (E), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subparagraph (B) the following:

"(C) Relevant data, including—

"(i) a synopsis of each case and the disciplinary action taken, if any, with respect to each such case; and

"(ii) data collected pursuant to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (5 U.S.C. 2301 note)."

SEC. 4. ANNUAL REPORT ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT.

Section 3548 (33 U.S.C. 894e) is amended—

(1) by striking the section heading and inserting the "ANNUAL REPORT ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT IN NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION";

(2) in subsection (a), by striking "the sexual assaults involving" and inserting "sexual harassment and sexual assault cases involving, and the equal employment of,";

(3) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “assaults” and inserting “harassment and sexual assault cases”;

(B) in paragraph (4), by inserting “, including a synopsis of each sexual harassment and equal employment case and the disciplinary action taken, if any, with respect to each such case” before the period at the end; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(5) A summary of the number of change of station, unit transfer, and change of work location requests submitted to the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, under subsection (a) of section 3544, including the number of such requests the Secretary denied under that subsection.

“(6) A summary of the number of cases reported to the Commandant of the Coast Guard under section 3550.

“(7) The number of alleged sexual harassment and sexual assault cases involving fisheries observers, protected species observers, and endangered species observers, including—

“(A) a synopsis of each case and the status of each such case;

“(B) the disposition of any investigation; and

“(C) a description of the fishery management region and fishery or the geographic region and type of permitted operation in which the incident of sexual harassment or sexual assault is alleged to have occurred, as appropriate.”; and

(4) in subsection (c), by striking “assault” and inserting “harassment or sexual assault case”.

SEC. 5. INVESTIGATION AND CRIMINAL REFERRAL REQUIREMENTS.

(a) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Sections 3548 and 3549 (33 U.S.C. 894e and 894f) are redesignated as sections 3551 and 3552, respectively.

(b) CRIMINAL REFERRAL.—Section 3547 (33 U.S.C. 894d-2) is amended—

(1) by striking “pursuant to” and inserting “at the onset or during the course of”; and

(2) by inserting “and, with respect to a licensed mariner, the Commandant of the Coast Guard” after “United States Attorney”.

(c) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle C of title XXXV (33 U.S.C. 894 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 3547 (33 U.S.C. 894d-2) the following:

“SEC. 3548. EXCEPTIONS REGARDING ANONYMITY OF VICTIMS IN CERTAIN CASES.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—In any case in which an employee of the Administration, member of the commissioned officer corps of the Administration, or covered personnel elects restricted or unrestricted reporting under section 3541(b)(3)(B) or 3542(b)(5)(B), disclosure to the following persons or organizations of the personally identifying information of the following individual is authorized for the following reasons:

“(1) To Administration staff or law enforcement personnel, if authorized by the victim in writing.

“(2) To Administration staff or law enforcement personnel to prevent or lessen a serious or imminent threat to the health or safety of the victim or another person.

“(3) To a victim advocate or healthcare provider, if required for the provision of victim services.

“(4) To a State or Federal court, if pursuant to a court order or if disclosure is required by Federal or State statute.

“(b) NOTICE OF DISCLOSURE; PRIVACY PROTECTION.—If information described in subsection (a) is disclosed under that subsection, the Secretary shall—

“(1) make reasonable attempts to provide notice to the individual the information of whom is so disclosed; and

“(2) take such action as is necessary to protect the privacy and safety of the individual.

“SEC. 3549. RESTRICTED REPORTING UPDATE.

“Not later than 3 years after the date of the enactment of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Improvements Act of 2025, the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, shall update the policies developed under sections 3541 and 3542 with respect to the mechanism established under subsections (b)(3)(B) and (b)(5)(B) of those sections, respectively, such that each such mechanism provides for a restricted reporting system that allows an employee of the Administration, member of the commissioned officer corps of the Administration, or covered personnel who alleges to have been sexually harassed or sexually assaulted to confidentially disclose the details of such sexual harassment or sexual assault to specified individuals and receive the services outlined in this subtitle—

“(1) without the dissemination of the personally identifying information of such individual, except as necessary for the provision of such services and as provided by section 3548(a); and

“(2) without automatically triggering an investigative process.

“SEC. 3550. MARINER REPORTING.

“(a) MANDATORY REPORTING BY RESPONSIBLE ENTITY OF A VESSEL.—

“(1) UNRESTRICTED REPORTS.—The responsible entity of a vessel shall report to the Commandant of the Coast Guard any incident of sexual harassment or sexual assault in violation of employer policy or law, of which the responsible entity of a vessel is made aware, involving—

“(A) an employee or contractor of the Administration who is required to hold a valid merchant mariner credential as a condition of employment; or

“(B) a crewmember of a vessel that, at the time of such incident, was operating under a contract with the Administration.

“(2) RESTRICTED REPORTS.—Paragraph (1) does not apply with respect to an incident of sexual harassment or sexual assault reported on a restricted basis pursuant to the mechanisms established for such reporting under sections 3541(b)(3)(B) and 3542(b)(5)(B), respectively.

“(b) REPORTING PROCEDURES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—

“(A) TIMING OF REPORTING.—The responsible entity of a vessel shall make a report required under subsection (a)(1) as soon as the responsible entity of a vessel is made aware of the incident of sexual harassment or sexual assault that is the subject of the report.

“(B) MODE OF REPORTING.—The responsible entity of a vessel shall make a report required under subsection (a)(1) to a single entity in the Coast Guard designated by the Commandant of the Coast Guard to receive such reports by the fastest telecommunication channel available to the responsible entity of a vessel.

“(2) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—Each report made under this section shall include, to the best of the knowledge of the responsible entity of a vessel—

“(A) the name, Coast Guard merchant mariner credential reference number, if applicable, official position or role in relation to the vessel, and contact information of each individual involved in the incident of sexual harassment or sexual assault that is the subject of the report;

“(B) the name and official number of the vessel;

“(C) the time and date of the incident of sexual harassment or sexual assault;

“(D) the geographic position or location of the vessel when the incident of sexual harassment or sexual assault occurred; and

“(E) a brief description of the incident of alleged sexual harassment or sexual assault being reported.

“(c) NOTIFICATION BY SECRETARY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, shall notify the Director of the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations of each report of an incident of sexual harassment or sexual assault received by the Secretary.

“(2) NOTIFICATION CONTENTS.—Each notification under paragraph (1) shall include, to the best of the knowledge of the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere—

“(A) with respect to an unrestricted report submitted pursuant to section 3541(b)(3)(B) or 3542(b)(5)(B), the information required under subsection (b)(2) of this section; and

“(B) with respect to a restricted report submitted pursuant to section 3541(b)(3)(B) or 3542(b)(5)(B), the information required under subsection (b)(2) of this section that does not include the personally identifying information of the individual that submitted the restricted report.”.

SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.

Section 3552, as redesignated by section 5(a) of this Act, is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 3552. DEFINITIONS.

“In this subtitle:

“(1) ADMINISTRATION.—The term ‘Administration’ means the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

“(2) COVERED PERSONNEL.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘covered personnel’ means an individual who works with or conducts business on behalf of the Administration.

“(B) INCLUSION.—The term ‘covered personnel’ includes—

“(i) observers, at-sea monitors, and catch monitors required by the National Marine Fisheries Service to operate on or in commercial fishing vessels, other privately owned vessels, barges, or platforms, and shoreside processing facilities for—

“(I) commercial fisheries observation required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (13 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.);

“(II) protected species or endangered species observation required by the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.) or the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); or

“(III) platform removal observation; and

“(ii) voting members and executive and administrative staff of each Regional Fishery Management Council established by section 302 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1852).

“(3) RESPONSIBLE ENTITY OF A VESSEL.—The term ‘responsible entity of a vessel’ means the Director of the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations, with respect to each vessel owned or operated by the Administration.

“(4) SEXUAL ASSAULT.—The term ‘sexual assault’ has the meaning given the term in section 40002(a) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13925 (a)).”.

SEC. 7. CONFORMING AND CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.

(a) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Subtitle C of title XXXV (33 U.S.C. 894 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by striking “individuals who work with or conduct business on behalf of the Administration” each place it appears and inserting “covered personnel”; and

(2) by striking “National Oceanic and Atmospheric” each place it appears.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(1) GLOBAL TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents in section 2(b) is amended by striking the items relating to sections 3548 and 3549 and inserting the following:

“Sec. 3548. Exceptions regarding anonymity of victims in certain cases.

“Sec. 3549. Restricted reporting update.

“Sec. 3550. Mariner referral.

“Sec. 3551. Annual report on sexual harassment, sexual assault, and equal employment in National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

“Sec. 3552. Definitions.”.

(2) TITLE XXXV TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents at the beginning of title XXXV is amended by striking the items relating to sections 3546 and 3547 and inserting the following:

“Sec. 3546. Investigation requirement.

“Sec. 3547. Criminal referral.

“Sec. 3548. Exceptions regarding anonymity of victims in certain cases.

“Sec. 3549. Restricted reporting update.

“Sec. 3550. Mariner referral.

“Sec. 3551. Annual report on sexual harassment, sexual assault, and equal employment in National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

“Sec. 3552. Definitions.”.

SEC. 8. PROHIBITED ACTS.

Section 307(1)(L) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1857(1)(L)) is amended—

(1) by striking “forcibly”; and

(2) by striking “on a vessel”.

SEC. 9. PROHIBITION ON SERVICE IN COMMISSIONED OFFICER CORPS OF NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION BY INDIVIDUALS CONVICTED OF CERTAIN SEXUAL OFFENSES.

Section 261(a) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps Act of 2002 (33 U.S.C. 3071(a)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (26) as paragraph (27); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (25) the following:

“(26) Section 657, relating to prohibition on service by individuals convicted of certain sexual offenses.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2406, the bill now under consideration.

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.

I rise in support of H.R. 2406, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Improvements Act of 2025.

The Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act required

NOAA to develop a policy to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment within its workforce. In 2021, the Government Accountability Office found that while NOAA has made progress, more work remains.

H.R. 2406 expands coverage of NOAA's sexual harassment prevention and response policy to include observers and the voting members and staff of the regional fishery management councils. It also expands existing reporting requirements and requires additional transparency in cases of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

This legislation will advance the protection of NOAA's workforce. I appreciate the minority working with us on this, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2406, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Improvements Act of 2025.

This bill would strengthen NOAA's efforts to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault by expanding protections, improving reporting systems, and increasing critical accountability. This legislation would help create a safer and more productive workforce for the dedicated public servants who serve the American people through their work at NOAA.

Building upon existing efforts to combat sexual harassment by expanding and strengthening key safeguards, this bill would extend policy protections to personnel who work for NOAA but are not directly employed by the agency—critically, these are contractors and fishery observers—ensuring that all members of the NOAA workforce are covered by this policy.

The legislation would also improve reporting options for victims and broaden NOAA's enforcement authority, ensuring the agency has comprehensive jurisdiction to investigate and address sexual harassment and assault.

Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of representing over 45,000 Federal employees, many of whom work for NOAA. I commend the sponsor of this bill for her leadership in helping to close loopholes and tackling this issue to protect Federal employees and Federal contractors, who often serve in some of the Nation's most remote environments, including on fishing vessels and scientific research cruises.

Enacting H.R. 2406 would help foster a safer, more equitable workplace that promotes accountability and ensures every individual has the opportunity to thrive. In doing so, we would strengthen NOAA and reinforce our commitment to the Federal workforce that upholds the highest standards of professionalism and excellence while serving the American people.

I thank the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for her leadership

on this critical issue. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2406, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ELFRETH. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI), the sponsor of the bill.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative ELFRETH for yielding. I rise today in strong support of my bipartisan bill, H.R. 2406, the NOAA Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Improvements Act.

No matter the job or the position, everyone deserves to work in a safe and welcoming workplace. Many employees at NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, work in remote locations, aboard research and survey vessels, to conduct cutting-edge scientific research and to support U.S. fisheries.

This bill has some history. Several years ago, a fisheries biologist came to me with a serious issue. She had experienced sexual harassment while conducting research on a ship owned by NOAA, and she wasn't the only one. After reporting the harassment, she was effectively grounded, and so were the others who spoke up. Her research was derailed, and she was advised against going to sea for her own safety.

Her colleagues and harasser knew she had reported her experience, and there seemed to be little investigation into her case and the others. After hearing her story, I started to work with NOAA to find a resolution.

After several months, I met and worked directly with then-NOAA Administrator Dr. Kathryn Sullivan, who truly took this issue seriously. With Dr. Sullivan's leadership, NOAA implemented new training requirements, made it easier to report sexual harassment, and changed NOAA's investigation protocol. NOAA then completed its investigations into the cases that were brought to my attention, and the employees were able to return to sea and resume their important research.

I will note that every acting or confirmed NOAA Administrator since then, including Dr. Neil Jacobs when he was Acting Administrator and now again in his position as Administrator, have all expressed a commitment to the policies that keep their employees safe and free from abuse and harassment.

Although NOAA has taken steps to update their policies, threats to researchers are still alarmingly persistent. Last year, a multiyear study of harassment in the North Pacific Groundfish and Halibut Observer Program, the largest fisheries monitoring program in the U.S., found that nearly one-third of the 400 North Pacific observers experienced harassment or assault annually. Of these, only 45 percent of the observers who experienced

that harm disclosed it. Female observers were at least twice as likely to become targets as men.

As a member of both the Science Committee and the Education Committee, for years I have heard consistent support for getting more women into scientific careers. That is important, but it is also important to keep them safe while they are at work.

We must do more to prevent harassment and assault, help survivors seek justice, and hold harassers accountable for their actions. This bipartisan bill builds on NOAA's progress by expanding the agency's sexual harassment prevention and response policy to include employees of contractors, who were originally not covered.

My bill also directs NOAA to provide a clear, secure structure to anonymously report sexual harassment or assault. This would allow survivors to more easily identify safe reporting services without triggering an investigative process, if that is what the survivor prefers.

This bill would also add provisions so new covered employees and change of station or work location requests are included in the report to Congress. Importantly, this bill empowers NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement to enforce prohibitions on assault, intimidation, and interference with fisheries observers by removing restrictive stipulations that the acts be forcible in nature and occur on a vessel for NOAA to investigate.

NOAA has taken meaningful steps to protect its researchers, contractors, and ocean-dependent communities. That work should be recognized. This bill, as the chairman recognized, will strengthen those efforts and make needed improvements to prevent harassment, modernize reporting, and hold harassers accountable to bring justice to survivors.

We must do everything we can to create a work environment where scientists can achieve the next breakthrough discoveries, and everyone can feel safe at sea without fear of harassment, assault, or retaliation.

I am very grateful to Representatives SALAZAR and FITZPATRICK for cosponsoring this important legislation. I thank Chair WESTERMAN and Ranking Member HUFFMAN for advancing it through the Natural Resources Committee to the floor.

I urge all of my colleagues to support the NOAA Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Improvements Act.

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Ms. ELFRETH. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this critical legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 2406, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend

the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2406, 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.

PROVIDING FOR THE EQUITABLE SETTLEMENT OF CERTAIN INDIAN LAND DISPUTES REGARDING LAND IN ILLINOIS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 550) to provide for the equitable settlement of certain Indian land disputes regarding land in Illinois, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 550

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SETTLEMENT OF CLAIMS.

(a) JURISDICTION CONFERRED ON THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the United States Court of Federal Claims shall have jurisdiction to hear, determine, and render judgment on a land claim of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma under its Treaty with the United States of America signed at Grouseland August 21, 1805 (7 Stat. 91) (commonly known as the "Treaty of Grouseland"), without regard to the statute of limitations, including section 2501 of title 28, United States Code, and any delay-based defense, no matter how characterized.

(2) JURISDICTION EXPIRATION.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the jurisdiction conferred to the United States Court of Federal Claims under paragraph (1) shall expire unless the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma files a land claim under that paragraph.

(b) EXTINGUISHMENT OF TITLE AND CLAIMS.—Except for a claim filed under subsection (a)(1), all other claims, including any and all future claims, of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, or any member, descendant, or predecessor in interest to the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, to land in the State of Illinois are extinguished.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

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 S. 550, the bill now under consideration.

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.

S. 550, introduced by then-Senator Mullin and championed by Chairman

COLE in this Chamber provides a narrow pathway for the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma to bring its treaty-based land claim related to certain lands in Illinois before the U.S. Court of Federal Claims.

Now located in Oklahoma, the Tribe was originally based in the Great Lakes and Midwest region. The 1805 Treaty of Grouseland recognized the Miami Tribe's title to lands in the Wabash River watershed and ensured that the U.S. would not purchase portions of that territory without Tribal consent.

In the decades that followed, additional treaties and Federal policies led to the large-scale cessions of the Tribe's land, including their historic homelands in Illinois. These lands are central to this legislation, as they were later patented to non-Native settlers without properly extinguishing Tribal title. This forms the basis of the Tribe's treaty-based claim.

Congress enacted the Indian Claims Commission Act of 1946, which established the Indian Claims Commission, or ICC, to provide a forum for Tribes seeking monetary compensation for claims against the U.S. that predated August 13, 1946.

The ICC did not restore land. Rather, it awarded monetary damages based on the land's value at the time of the taking. At the time of the ICC, the Miami Tribe preferred the return of the land in Illinois over cash awards. The Indian Claims Commission Act of 1946 required all claims to be filed within 5 years of enactment and barred late claims from being filed. The ICC ceased operations in 1978, and the U.S. Court of Federal Claims assumed all remaining matters.

This legislation provides a narrow jurisdictional pathway for the Miami Tribe to bring its treaty-based land claim before the U.S. Court of Federal Claims within 1 year of the enactment of this legislation.

This legislation only authorizes monetary relief against the U.S. and precludes any equitable relief or recovery against private landowners. Finally, this legislation extinguishes the Tribe's remaining land and title claims to the specified Illinois lands.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman COLE for being a long-time champion of this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, S. 550 would provide the U.S. Court of Federal Claims with jurisdiction over the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma's land claim in east central Illinois.

Prior to being forcibly removed from their homeland, the Miami Tribe resided in the Great Lakes region.

In 1805, the Miami Tribe, the Eel River Band, and the Wea signed the Treaty of Grouseland with the United States. The 1805 treaty provided that land south of the Great Lakes in the