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McClain Delaney
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McDonald Rivet
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Wasserman Schultz
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Watson Coleman
Whitesides
Williams (GA)
Wilson (FL)

NOT VOTING—8

Donalds
Dunn (FL)
Garamendi
Hoyle (OR)
Mills
Roy
Smith (WA)
Tiffany

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1727

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING MEGAN BEL MILLER

(Mr. SCALISE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize someone whose leadership, service, and friendship have meant so much to me, Team Scalise, and the people of southeast Louisiana. I am talking about my chief of staff and senior leadership adviser, Megan Bel Miller.

Megan has been part of my team from the very beginning. In fact, when I was first elected to Congress, she was the very first person that I hired.

As my then-legislative director and longtime Energy and Commerce Committee staffer, Megan helped lead our work on some of the biggest issues facing not only our district but the Nation, including energy and healthcare.

After the Deepwater Horizon disaster, she played a critical role in drafting and passing the RESTORE Act to help Louisiana communities recover and rebuild.

When Megan first left our office in 2013, I stood right here on this House floor to recognize her service and said she was leaving for ''bigger and better things.''

□ 1730

Luckily for me, those bigger and better things eventually led Megan back to Capitol Hill, this time as the chief of staff for my personal office in 2017.

Just months later, when I was shot, I came to rely on Megan in ways that none of us could have imagined.

Through it all, Megan's leadership and friendship never wavered, and Jennifer and I will always be grateful for the way she helped my family and our team make it through that challenging time.

Over the years, Megan has also been someone I have relied on for her expertise on policy and knowledge of this institution. She has become known for her deep knowledge of policy and process, her strong relationships on both sides of the aisle, and her ability to bring people together.

She played a key role in helping secure a provision in the working families tax cut that increases the amount of revenue-sharing dollars that Louisiana and other Gulf Coast States receive each year from offshore drilling.

Megan has always been someone I could count on for good advice, sound judgment, and an unwavering commitment to the people we serve.

I call her the ''Geaux Getter'' because no matter what the problem is that we have to solve, Megan just finds a way to get it done. Her impact can be seen not only in the policies that she shaped, but in the countless constituents she helped and staff members that she mentored along the way.

Mr. Speaker, I can't thank Megan enough for everything she has done for me, our office, and the American people.

Thirteen years ago, I stood on this floor, and I said I would miss her, as she went on to bigger and better things. Today, I find myself saying it again. It has been a privilege to work alongside her all of these years and an even greater privilege to call her a friend.

Jennifer and I wish Megan, Joel, Parker, and Caroline all the best in this next chapter. Best of luck to Megan and all of her friends and family in the gallery.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

RATEPAYER PROTECTION ACT

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 9340) to amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to establish a Federal standard relating to the recovery of the full, incremental costs of upgrades that serve large-load customers, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 9340

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 ''Ratepayer Protection Act''.

SEC. 2. FEDERAL STANDARD RELATING TO LARGE-LOAD CUSTOMERS.

(a) FEDERAL STANDARD RELATING TO LARGE-LOAD CUSTOMERS.—Section 111(d) of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2621(d)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(22) STANDARDS FOR LARGE-LOAD CUSTOMERS.—

''(A) RECOVERY OF FULL, INCREMENTAL COST OF UPGRADES.—A rate charged, or entered into, by an electric utility for providing electric service to a large-load customer shall be designed to recover from the large-load customer the full, incremental cost of any generation, transmission, or distribution upgrade necessary to serve the load of such large-load customer, including in the event of such large-load customer terminating a contract or other agreement with the electric utility pertaining to the sale of electric energy, or otherwise ceasing the purchase of electric energy from the electric utility.

''(B) FINANCIAL ASSURANCES AND CONTRIBUTIONS.—Before making any generation, transmission, or distribution upgrade that is necessary to serve the load of a large-load customer, an electric utility shall require the large-load customer provide to the electric utility financial assurances or contributions to cover the cost of such upgrade.

''(C) LARGE-LOAD CUSTOMER DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the term 'large-load customer' means a non-residential electric consumer that, on or after the date of the enactment of this paragraph, requests to enter into, or enters into, a contract or other agreement pertaining to the sale of electric energy for one or more facilities that—

''(i) require electric energy primarily to operate information technology infrastructure and related systems pertaining to data storage and computational applications and services; and

''(ii) have, in the aggregate, a peak electric demand of 100 megawatts or more at a single site or campus.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) OBLIGATIONS TO CONSIDER AND DETERMINE.—Section 112 of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2622) is amended—

(A) in subsection (b), by adding at the end the following:

''(9)(A) Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this paragraph, each State regulatory authority (with respect to each electric utility for which the State has ratemaking authority) and each nonregulated electric utility shall commence consideration under section 111, or set a hearing date for consideration, with respect to the standard established by paragraph (22) of section 111(d).

''(B) Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this paragraph, each State regulatory authority (with respect to each electric utility for which the State has ratemaking authority) and each nonregulated electric utility shall complete the consideration and make the determination under section 111 with respect to the standard established by paragraph (22) of section 111(d).'';

(B) in subsection (c)—

(i) by striking ''subsection (b)(2)'' and inserting ''subsection (b)''; and

(ii) by inserting ''In the case of the standard established by paragraph (22) of section 111(d), the reference contained in this subsection to the date of enactment of this Act shall be deemed to be a reference to the date of enactment of that paragraph (22).'' after ''paragraph (21).''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(i) OTHER PRIOR STATE ACTIONS.—Subsections (b) and (c) shall not apply to the standard established by paragraph (22) of section 111(d) in the case of any electric utility in a State if, before the date of enactment of this subsection—

''(1) the State has implemented for the electric utility the standard (or a comparable standard);

''(2) the State regulatory authority for the State or the relevant nonregulated electric utility has conducted a proceeding to consider implementation of the standard (or a comparable standard) for the electric utility; or

''(3) the State legislature has voted on the implementation of the standard (or a comparable standard) for the electric utility.''.

(2) PRIOR AND PENDING PROCEEDINGS.—Section 124 of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2634) is amended by adding at the end the following: ''In the case of the standard established by paragraph (22) of section 111(d), the reference contained in this section to the date of enactment of this Act shall be deemed to be a reference to the date of enactment of that paragraph (22).''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 9340.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 9340, the Ratepayer Protection Act, sponsored by my colleague and friend from Colorado, Congressman EVANS.

This bill encourages States to protect our neighbors and small businesses from footing the bill for infrastructure investments needed for the AI race, while protecting existing State authorities. The evidence is clear: When States have the proper processes in place to protect households, interconnecting large-load data centers have positive benefits for the communities in which they reside.

Data center growth can be a catalyst for investment in an aging grid, strengthening the tax base to fund essential public services and anchor tenants for utilities that lower rates for everyone else.

Electricity demand is growing at a pace not seen since World War II, and communities are rightly concerned about what this might mean for their daily lives.

As this industry continues to develop, I want to be absolutely clear that we need it to develop here at home and not in China. H.R. 9340 takes action on behalf of our constituents so we may keep costs low while ensuring the U.S. leads in the next-generation economy.

If we cede the race for AI dominance to China, then China will set the standards for future technology. This bill strikes the right balance of providing a modest but important level of accountability as we continue to support this vital industry.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Colorado again for his tireless bipartisan leadership on this issue. He is bringing together both sides of the aisle on a critical issue. I would say, we were home, working in our districts in August. We listened to our constituents, and we are here today based on what we heard, taking action here in Washington, D.C. That is how our system is supposed to work.

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

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

I rise in support of H.R. 9340, the Ratepayer Protection Act. Everyone knows that data centers are helping drive electricity prices to record highs this year. Just in the mid-Atlantic over the past few years, data centers have increased electric bills by over $30 billion. By and large, it has not been the data centers that have been footing the bill. It has been our constituents.

This problem is happening across the Nation, from Texas to California, from Florida to Washington State. It doesn't matter if you are in a red State or a blue State. Your prices have gone up.

Americans, Mr. Speaker, are concerned about what data centers and Big Tech's push for more AI means for their communities, jobs, property values, and the future. Electricity prices are skyrocketing. The electric grid is strained. Our clean air and water are being polluted. Noise is wearing on our communities' health and patience.

People, frankly, are sick and tired of corporate special interests and Big Tech billionaires taking over their neighborhoods and threatening their utility bills, air, water, and property.

Unfortunately, these very real concerns are repeatedly swept to the sidelines, minimized, or ridiculed by President Trump and Republican congressional leaders.

Last month, Trump posted on social media that communities that opposed data centers must want to end up being backward and poor. The President, in my opinion, is out of touch on this issue, and the American people are demanding action. That is the reality we are living in right now, where President Trump wants to continue to give Big Tech free rein to build data centers, with no Federal guardrails.

This bill is a start in addressing the impact that data centers have on our power bills, but this particular bill does not go far enough to ensure that Big Tech and other data center owners fully pay for the energy use and demand that they create. The bill requires State utility regulators to consider—and I say ''consider''—mandating that the electricity prices that data centers pay fully account for all their costs that they impose on the grid. This includes new and upgraded power plants, high-voltage transmission lines, and local power lines.

□ 1740

We can all agree that data centers must pay their fair share and that the data centers themselves allegedly agree, but this bill, I do believe, is one small step in that direction.

The bill, as I said, isn't perfect. It also only addresses one small part of the puzzle. It does not change how wholesale generation or transmission costs are allocated at the Federal level. It doesn't push for the transparency and data-transfer mechanisms that State regulators need to ensure that data centers actually are paying their fair share.

Data centers must bring their own clean electricity generation capacity onto the grid and be willing to get curtailed first when there are grid reliability issues.

Now, Representative LANDSMAN from Ohio has a bill that would kick FERC into gear to start studying some of those issues. It passed the Energy and Commerce Committee unanimously nearly 2 months ago, but unfortunately, House Republican leadership did not include that bill on the floor this week.

Regardless of what happens with this bill in the Senate, I will make a commitment to the American people, Mr. Speaker. Americans across the country are furious about the unchecked development of data centers and artificial intelligence. They are furious about what it means for their communities, for their jobs, or even for their lives. I promise that this bill is not the end of our focus on these issues. It is only the beginning.

I have repeatedly said that we need strong guardrails on data centers and the impact they have on our communities, our environment, and our bills. If we can't establish those strong guardrails, then it is my belief that we will need to establish a moratorium on constructing new data centers.

This bill by itself, or even in combination with a number of other bills we are considering this week, is simply not enough, but it is a start.

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

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE), the distinguished majority leader and my good friend.

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and the chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee (Mr. GUTHRIE) for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this really important bill by my friend Mr.

EVANS from Colorado who led on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the latest advancement in technology. If you think about the history of this great Nation as we celebrate 250 years of America, one of the things that America has been so successful at has been always being on the frontier of new innovations. In fact, in the last 150 years, America has led the world in advancements in technology.

Today is no different. In fact, today, America is at the heart of the domination of technology all around the world. If you think about some of the simplest things we are able to do in our lives, that give us the ability to have more free time, or the things you can do on a cell phone that would have taken a supercomputer 30 years ago to do, that is because of advancements in technology.

Artificial intelligence and data centers are no different. It is another advancement in technology. As we are advancing in technology, we have to do it the right way, Mr. Speaker, in a smart and thoughtful way. If you look at communities that have embraced data centers, some communities said it is not for me, and that is a choice communities make.

The Federal Government is not the one making that decision. What we have always said, and what President Trump took the leadership in doing, is meeting with all of the Big Tech companies building these massive data centers and said just make sure as you are making these big investments in communities, you won't add to the cost of a local community's ratepayer electricity rates.

The President got a commitment to do that. We are not fully codifying that. It is, in essence, a step in that direction what this bill is doing. But as the President did that, you saw companies going and making massive multibillion-dollar investments in some of our communities and helping those communities along the way, Mr. Speaker.

That story does not get told. Frankly, I think that story needs to get told more. I have seen massive data centers in my home State of Louisiana. In fact, if you go to little Richland Parish, a rural part of north Louisiana that not a lot of people live in, not a lot of opportunities for wealth in that parish, Mr. Speaker, but then Meta decided to build a data center, and that data center grew and grew as the community embraced it.

They worked with the community. They are building their own natural gas facilities. It is actually going to help the grid in that community because they are going to be paying their own way and anything extra they have is going to be off-loaded to the grid so the neighbors in that community will actually get lower utility rates.

Do you know what else happened, Mr. Speaker? This is another part of the story that is not getting told enough, but the data center is still being built. It is up to about $50 billion in private funding that is being built in little Richland Parish.

As they are building that data center, because of all of the increased sales tax collections to Richland Parish, they were able to give a bonus. I am not talking about the base salary of their schoolteachers. They gave a bonus to every schoolteacher in Richland Parish because of the building of that data center.

Mr. Speaker, do you know how much every schoolteacher in Richland Parish received a few months ago because of the data center? They received a bonus of $50,000 per teacher because of the data center.

Those are the stories that you are seeing in communities that have embraced it, where they worked with the local community. It is not a burden on that community. It is actually a tremendous benefit. Not only teachers will benefit, but small businesses are cropping up.

Loudoun County in Virginia, Mr. Speaker, is another community that made the decision for themselves. It is not a Washington choice. It is a local community choice, and I think everybody would agree with that. If there are local communities that don't want it, believe me there are other communities that will take those benefits.

Loudoun County in Virginia got the benefits of their data centers to the tune of a 30 percent reduction in property taxes for every homeowner in Loudoun County, Virginia. They are benefiting from that still to this day, as well as the jobs that come along with it. They are benefiting from the investment, the buildings that come along, and the small business growth that we are seeing.

There has been this assertion, Mr. Speaker, some of it funded by China, that data centers are driving up utility prices. There was a study done. In fact, the Institute for Energy Research did a State-by-State study in all 50 States of this country and they looked at energy costs, the kilowatt-per-hour cost in every State.

Some States have data centers. Some States don't. The study is titled: ''Have Data Centers Driven Up Electricity Prices?''

Their conclusion was clearly no, they do not. There was no disparity in kilowatt hours per customer in States that have data centers and States that don't.

Again, a lot of that is because President Trump made all of the data centers, the companies that build them, give those pledges that they will not have a negative impact on the ratepayers.

What they did find, Mr. Speaker, was quite interesting, and that was a disparity that does exist in electricity prices between States. It is not all States.

What they ultimately looked at is States that have a unified government, all one party, either Republican or either Democrat. The States that have all unified Democratic Party control in those States actually have higher electricity costs than States that have all Republican.

The Institute for Energy Research did the study. You can go find it online. It shows you State by State the kilowatt-per-hour cost. The reason it is rising is because a lot of those States that have unified Democratic government are also States that are losing population. Some hundreds of thousands to nearly millions of people have fled those States. As those States lose population because of bad policies, Mr. Speaker, their baseload capacity is the same. The cost to run their grid is the same. It is spread amongst fewer people because their bad policies are running hundreds of thousands or a million-plus people out of the State.

The States that are growing, that have good government policies, and that are attracting people and jobs, those States have lower kilowatt-per-hour costs for their consumers because the same grid has the same fixed costs, but there is more people to spread the cost around so those people pay less.

That is what actually is happening in this country. Look at all the States. Go look at the Institute for Energy Research study, Mr. Speaker, because it shows you what is really happening out there.

There is a revolution happening. China is competing, and America is competing. We surely do not want China to win this war. America is staying at the forefront. I want us to stay at the forefront. Let locals make the choice and let consumers reap the benefits. That is what is happening right now, and this bill, by my friend Congressman EVANS, ensures that we continue to see that growth continue.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption.

□ 1750

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR), who is the ranking member of our Subcommittee on Energy.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my bill, the Ratepayer Protection Act. I am proud to lead this bipartisan bill with Congressman EVANS to protect my neighbors from unfairly paying for the energy needs of large AI data centers.

Mr. Speaker, all across America, families, farmers, and small business owners fear the arrival of their electric bill every month. Too many are struggling under the weight of soul-crushing energy bills, and it comes at a time especially where everything costs more— your groceries, gas, diesel, healthcare, and housing.

Many of my neighbors back in the Tampa Bay area show me their electric bills. They are exorbitant, and it is gut-wrenching. They are not alone because across the country, electricity prices are up on average 15 percent, but much higher in many places.

But now there is a new stressor: massive hyperscale data centers are connecting to the grid. These are energy hogs. They are massive. The descriptors know no end.

When a data center or other large load comes online, it can trigger massive upgrades—new power plants, transmission lines, local transformers—and typically those costs are passed along to ratepayers, and that is not fair. Our neighbors should not be stuck paying for the energy infrastructure of the wealthiest countries in the world. The Ratepayer Protection Act says that the data center pays for its own upgrades, not the rest of us.

These monumental hyperscale data centers can span hundreds of thousands of square feet. They host thousands of servers, computer storage, networks, and then they have these giant cooling systems that also require massive amounts of energy as well.

Massive hyperscale data centers can continuously consume over 100 megawatts, with the largest facilities consuming over 650 megawatts. That is comparable to the energy use of tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of homes.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, right now data centers consume about 4.4 percent of all electricity in America, but they predict that that will go up to 12 percent of the total electricity consumption in America by just 2028.

Mr. Speaker, hyperscale data centers are being constructed by the wealthiest Big Tech corporations on the planet. As hardworking Americans are just trying to make ends meet, they shouldn't carry Big Tech's data center load as well. That is why we hammered out the bipartisan Ratepayer Protection Act, to ensure that data centers pay the full cost of their energy demand and upgrades.

It says that if a company wants to build a data center, they should pay for the power and grid upgrades they need, not the rest of us.

This bill will require those data centers to cover all the costs. It is an important first step. I know some people say this is not enough. It is not enough. It is not enough, but it does provide some first steps.

Congress has to do more. We should set stricter requirements for States to report their progress to Congress so we can ensure the bill is enforced. We should incentivize data centers to be empowered by clean energy and prioritize projects that can reduce demand during peak hours.

But notably, this bill does allow States to do some of those things. The States now can set additional specific guardrails. For example, States can require that data centers are powered by clean energy and don't damage local water supplies. They can require investments in grid-enhancing technologies or virtual power plants. States can even require that data centers fund weatherization initiatives or deployment of energy-saving batteries, rooftop solar, and heat pumps.

For example, Virginia is requiring data centers to cover new transmission and distribution capacity costs. Minnesota requires data centers to pay into an energy conservation and weatherization fund to benefit working-class neighbors. Kansas incentivized data centers to participate in demand response programs to reduce peak demand.

This bill also empowers local communities to make decisions on the siting and building of data centers. It allows for robust community input, not NDAs, nondisclosure agreements, where they try to sneak in.

For example, in Florida, at least 20 counties and municipalities passed or discussed very strict guardrails on data centers. In my home county, Hillsborough County, many say that is not the appropriate place for a data center because we don't have the water resources and we don't have the electricity yet to do that. There are places in America that don't want them.

We need to keep working on this, but this is a very important first step. These are the wealthiest corporations in America. There is no reason why the average American should be subsidizing their electricity upgrades and costs.

I am eager to keep advancing bipartisan, real solutions to invest in our U.S. power grid, which is reaching the end of its useful life, which is also raising costs on Americans. We have just got to remain clear-eyed that right now our neighbors are suffering an affordability squeeze. They deserve so much better than what they are getting right now.

This Ratepayer Protection Act is a good first start, but it is a modest first start. It is about fairness on this one.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the bill.

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

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA), the chair of the Subcommittee on Energy.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, the chairman of the full Committee on Energy and Commerce, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 9340, the Ratepayer Protection Act, led by the gentleman from Colorado's Eighth Congressional District.

This legislation passed out of our Energy and Commerce Committee with a 52–0 vote.

Mr. Speaker, the goal here is very simple: Data centers should pay their own way. That is why this legislation is so important. We must ensure that American families and small businesses are protected from electricity price increases caused by large loads like data centers.

The increase in data center development raises important questions about how these facilities will affect local electric grids in nearby communities.

H.R. 9340 encourages States to establish a standard that requires large data centers to cover the full costs necessary to service their loads.

Over the last 5 years, electricity rates have steadily increased across the country.

While data center demand growth is exploding, at the same time, record amounts of baseload generation are prematurely leaving our grids. This is a problem that must be addressed.

H.R. 9340 ensures that States can hold AI companies responsible for their own costs and that hardworking American families aren't on the hook for the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to pass the Ratepayer Protection Act.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time. I have no additional speakers.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BALDERSON), a member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Mr. BALDERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 9340, the Ratepayer Protection Act.

This bill codifies the principles of the President's Ratepayer Protection Pledge, ensuring that Ohio families and small businesses aren't left on the hook to pay the costs associated with generation and energy infrastructure needed to power large data centers.

As demand for electricity continues to rise across Ohio and the Nation, it is critical that Congress takes action to protect our constituents from increased electric bills.

Ohio has already taken strong steps to make sure large electricity users contribute appropriately to the costs they impose on the grid.

The Ratepayer Protection Act builds on that commonsense approach by directing States to adopt standards that ensure these facilities pay their fair share.

Importantly, this bill does not infringe on local control over the siting and permitting of these projects.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman EVANS for leading this bipartisan legislation and urge my colleagues to support the bill.

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

□ 1800

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. EVANS), a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee and sponsor of the legislation.

Mr. EVANS of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bipartisan bill with Representative CASTOR, the Ratepayer Protection Act.

America is in a period of incredible growth. Manufacturing jobs are returning to our shores. We are investing in American energy again. We are leading the charge for technological innovation. With that growth, our demand for energy is also skyrocketing, and some people have very understandable reservations and questions about data centers.

The future, however, is binary: Either we build out our power systems to meet that demand, or we become dependent on other countries, like Communist China, for our daily needs, to include digital infrastructure that stores Americans' consumer data, financial data, healthcare data, and personal data.

Hardworking Coloradans in my district do want economic growth, and they do not want the Chinese Communist Party handling their sensitive information. They want responsible development practices, but they see the need for massive investments in our energy systems and wonder who is going to pay for it. This bill answers that question very clearly.

Large-load data centers must cover the full costs of any system upgrades they require, not families or small businesses. We cannot accelerate this growth on the backs of Americans who are working hard to pay their electric bills at the end of the month.

The Ratepayer Protection Act also gives States and local communities a voice to implement these principles and protect community members from rising utility bills.

This bill passed unanimously in the Energy and Commerce Committee. It is common sense. It keeps costs low for Americans and helps us build the energy backbone required to compete and win in the AI race and to keep Americans' digital information here in the United States, not in China.

Madam Speaker, I am grateful it is being considered today. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN).

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 9340, the Ratepayer Protection Act.

This legislation will require State utility regulators to examine standards to ensure that data centers pay all the costs associated with their power generation, transmission lines, and grid upgrades needed to serve their facilities.

The Commonwealth of Virginia is home to approximately 13 percent of all data centers in the world. Some of these data centers are located in the district that I represent.

While data centers create economic opportunities for our communities, they also come with enormous challenges. Data centers support telehealth, mobile banking for American small businesses, and everyday technologies like streaming services. At the same time, they consume massive amounts of power and place increasing strain on our electric grid while threatening to increase costs for families.

Virginians and Americans who choose to have data centers in their communities should not be paying higher electric bills as a result. Instead, these costs should be borne directly by the data center developers, the primary catalysts of this increased demand for energy.

We have a responsibility to ensure that our constituents are not picking up the tab for data centers, and this legislation will do exactly that.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of the Ratepayer Protection Act, and I urge all of my colleagues to support its passage.

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

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT).

Ms. BOEBERT. Madam Speaker, America is in a race for the future, and that future is artificial intelligence.

We need to build data centers that will power American AI. We need to create jobs, grow our economy, and make sure that the next generation of technology is built right here in the United States.

But there is one principle that we should never compromise: American families should not be forced to pay for someone else's data center. That is exactly what the Ratepayer Protection Act addresses.

If a massive data center wants to come in and consume hundreds of megawatts of electricity, it should pay the full incremental costs of providing that power, not the families struggling to pay their electric bills and not the small businesses trying to keep their doors open. The companies creating the demand should pay for the demand.

This is not antibusiness. It is not anti-AI. It is certainly not antigrowth. It is common sense.

In fact, when we get this right, the data centers can actually strengthen communities. Georgia Power was able to freeze residential rates for 3 years as large-load growth expanded.

In Virginia, data centers took on a dramatically larger share of transmission costs while residential customers saw their share decline. In Loudoun County alone, data centers have generated $1.1 billion in tax revenue.

Madam Speaker, let's build. Let's compete. Let's win the AI race. Let's also protect the people who keep this country running. The Ratepayer Protection Act gives States a practical tool to make sure that massive new electricity users pay their fair share while preserving State authority over their energy markets.

America can lead the world in AI without making American families foot the bill. That is not a radical idea. That is responsible leadership, and I applaud my colleague from Colorado (Mr. EVANS) for leading on this issue.

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

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAWLER), my good friend.

Mr. LAWLER. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 9340, the Ratepayer Protection Act.

New York families and businesses face some of the highest electricity costs in the country. In February, the average residential electricity price in New York reached about 70 percent higher than the national average, and it is up 58 percent in the last 6 years.

At the same time, data centers seeking to connect to New York's electric grid are reportedly requesting more than 9,000 megawatts of additional electricity. Years of failed energy policies out of Albany, including shutting down nuclear, banning natural gas, blocking pipelines, and other crazy ideas, have already driven up costs for New Yorkers. We cannot afford to make the problem worse.

As we work to bring new investments and jobs to New York and, indeed, America, we need to make sure that the costs of growth do not fall on the families and small businesses already struggling to pay their utility bills. That is why I support the Ratepayer Protection Act.

This legislation simply establishes a basic principle of fairness. It is about making sure that the companies driving new demand for electricity are responsible for the costs associated with that demand.

We are already seeing communities and policymakers grappling with how to manage the rapid growth of large-scale data centers and the demands that they place on our energy infrastructure. This is something that the Federal Government needs to work together on to create regulations and protect the people because we need a better approach.

We need one that respects the role of local communities while ensuring that companies driving new demand are responsible for the costs that they create. We need a policy that looks ahead, builds the infrastructure we need, and protects ratepayers at the same time.

I will continue working to ensure that New Yorkers have access to reliable and affordable energy while making sure that large energy users pay their fair share.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MACKENZIE).

Mr. MACKENZIE. Madam Speaker, communities throughout the Nation are seeing unprecedented growth in electricity demand, driven in large part by data centers and other energy-intensive facilities.

That growing demand is already having a direct impact on communities like those that I represent in the Lehigh Valley and the Poconos, where, after 4 years of severe inflation under President Biden, residents are being put in a position where they could end up footing the energy bill for new data centers. The rapid growth of these facilities requires unprecedented new investments in our electric grid.

While the grid capacity will catch up eventually, the short-term costs of those investments must not be passed on to families, seniors, and small businesses, many of whom don't want data centers in their communities in the first place.

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That is why I am proud to cosponsor the bipartisan Ratepayer Protection Act, because large energy consumers who create the demand for new energy infrastructure should pay their fair share of the cost.

We can maintain local control of development activities while also protecting existing ratepayers, and that is exactly what this legislation does.

I thank Representative EVANS for his partnership on this legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 9340.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close. I do believe that this legislation is a first step, and therefore, I support it and would ask my colleagues to vote for it. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close. I agree, this is important. We have to beat China. We have to win the war on AI. If we don't, they are going to set the standards for technology around the world. It needs to be with our values, not theirs.

To do that, we have to have the data centers. It needs to be locally decided where they go, and ratepayers need to be protected from it. That is what I heard all of August. I think most of us home working heard about it.

This is an example where people are going home, both sides of the aisle, listening, and coming back here and doing something about the concerns for the people they represent.

I encourage support of this bill. I encourage for its passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Illinois). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 9340, as amended.

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. GUTHRIE. Madam 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.

APPLICATION OF LEAVE PROVISIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2846) to amend title II of the Public Health Service Act to include as an additional right or privilege of commissioned officers of the Public Health Service (and their beneficiaries) certain leave provided under title 10, United States Code to commissioned officers of the Army (or their beneficiaries).

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2846

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

SECTION 1. APPLICATION OF LEAVE PROVISIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 221(a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 213a(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(22) Chapter 40, Leave.''.

(b) CONFORMING REPEAL.—Section 219 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 210–1) is repealed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2846.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2846 led by the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HOULAHAN).

The U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps is one of eight uniformed services in the U.S. It is first in line to defend our Nation's public health against any threat. This bill closes the gap in benefits between Public Health Service officers and other civilian uniformed public servants by aligning their leave policies with those of other uniformed services.

The dedicated men and women of the Public Health Service Corps have my respect and gratitude, and they deserve the same benefits and protections afforded to their fellow uniformed servicemembers.

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

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

I rise in support of H.R. 2846, legislation that would extend expanded leave benefits to members of the U.S. Public Health Service Corps.

The U.S. Public Health Service Corps is one of eight uniformed services in the United States. There are more than 6,000 officers who serve as physicians, nurses, and scientists across agencies to advance public health. Right now, these officers are not guaranteed the same 12-week leave benefit as members of the military are entitled to under Federal law nor are they eligible for the 12 weeks of leave that all Federal Government employees are entitled to under the Federal Employee Paid Leave Act. This bill fixes this by extending leave benefits to Public Health Service officers, and this leave includes expanded parental leave, emergency leave of absence, and leave for rest and recuperation.

I thank Representative HOULAHAN for her leadership on this legislation and my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee for working with us to bring this bill to the floor. I encourage all my colleagues to vote ''yes.''

Before I reserve the balance of my time, I do want to take an opportunity to thank Una Lee, who is right here, for her more than 11 years here at the Energy and Commerce Committee, most of those years serving as chief counsel for the Health Subcommittee.

Una has played a critical role in every major healthcare bill that has been signed into law during that time. Una has been a trusted adviser, and she will be missed. I don't want her to leave, but what can I do.

I wish her nothing but the best in her future endeavors and congratulate her for her tremendous work, truly tremendous work of making healthcare more affordable and accessible for every American.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I just want to speak briefly. I have no further speakers, so I will be prepared to close. The gentleman recognized Una Lee, but I didn't get to speak earlier in the subcommittee today. We get to work with fantastic people here, and I know Una is one of them. We get to see, on the opposite sides of the table sometimes, but I know we are always working to try to improve our country.

I thank her for her service. We will miss seeing her around the Energy and Commerce room. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HOULAHAN), the sponsor of the legislation.