

Ms. HOULAHAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of my bipartisan and bicameral U.S. Public Health Service parity act, H.R. 2846.

This bill is about keeping a promise Congress already has made to the people who serve our country. You should not have to choose between your service and your family. I know something about that choice because, when I served in the Air Force, there was a 6-month waiting list for on-base childcare, but I only had 6 weeks of personal leave after the birth of my child. It was, in many ways, a choice that I needed to make between my family and my service.

If we value service and we value families, which we do, no one who raises their hand to serve this country should have to make that choice.

My own experience is just one reason why I was so proud to help secure 12 weeks of paid parental leave in the past for our military servicemembers in the fiscal year 2021 NDAA. That was good for military families. It was really good for retention and, it is very, very good for readiness.

However, we unintentionally left one of our uniformed services behind, the commissioned officers of the United States Public Health Service. Today, with this bill, we can fix that.

More than 6,000 Public Health Service officers serve our country. They are ready to deploy wherever and whenever they are needed. They have responded to hurricanes and oil spills. They helped lead our Nation's response to COVID. They have deployed to confront infectious disease outbreaks around the world, natural disasters, and public health emergencies.

They wear the uniform of our Nation. They leave their families when duty calls, and they serve alongside other uniformed services when our country needs them. However, when they become parents, right now, we don't give them the same parental leave benefits that we provide their counterparts in the armed services. There is not a very good reason—indeed, there is no reason for that distinction.

If we value their service when a hurricane strikes, when a disease spreads, or when another emergency threatens the American people, then we should value their families, too. That is the simple principle behind this bill: same commitment to service, same sacrifice, same support for their families.

I am really grateful that this has been a bipartisan and bicameral effort from the very beginning. I thank Chairman GUTHRIE and Ranking Member PALLONE for bringing this legislation to the floor. I thank my Republican co-lead, Representative BACON, and our Senate partners, Senators DUCKWORTH and MURKOWSKI, for working on this to get this here.

The Senate has, indeed, already acted. Today, the House has the opportunity to finish the job and to ensure that every uniformed service receives the same benefits and the same basic

support when its servicemembers welcome a child into their families.

□ 1820

We ask a great deal of the men and women who serve this country, and they should never have to wonder whether serving their Nation means shortchanging their family.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the U.S. Public Health Service parity act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, in closing, I, once again, want to say that this is an important piece of legislation, and I thank the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HOULAHAN) for sponsoring it.

Madam Speaker, I urge both sides of the aisle to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Pennsylvania for bringing this forward. I thank her for her service in the U.S. Air Force and her service here.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I encourage a "yes" vote on the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2846.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HIGH-CAPACITY GRID ACT

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6633) to establish a best-available transmission conductor standard for certain transmission projects under the Federal Power Act and to provide for presumptions regarding cost recovery for such conductors, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6633

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 "High-Capacity Grid Act".

SEC. 2. BEST-AVAILABLE TRANSMISSION CONDUCTOR CLASS.

The Federal Power Act is amended by inserting after section 223 (16 U.S.C. 824w) the following:

"SEC. 224. USE OF BEST-AVAILABLE TRANSMISSION CONDUCTORS.

"(a) USE OF BEST-AVAILABLE TRANSMISSION CONDUCTORS.—In exercising its authority under sections 205 and 206, the Commission shall require that public utilities use transmission conductors that are designated as part of the best-available transmission conductor class when carrying out covered projects.

"(b) REGULATIONS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, the Commission shall issue regulations to carry out this section.

"(2) INCLUSIONS.—In issuing regulations under paragraph (1), the Commission shall—

"(A) establish, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy, a methodology to designate, as part of the best-available transmission conductors class, transmission conductors that—

"(i) provide the greatest feasible and commercially available energy-carrying capacity at a given voltage level;

"(ii) provide the highest feasible and commercially available electrical efficiency at that voltage level; and

"(iii) provide the greatest feasible and commercially available level of mechanical performance, taking into account relevant factors, including reliability, safety, and affordability;

"(B) using such methodology, designate transmission conductors as part of the best-available transmission conductor class;

"(C) establish filing requirements for public utilities to demonstrate compliance with the regulations, including (as applicable) such information and data the Commission determines necessary to demonstrate project-specific impacts described in subparagraph (D); and

"(D) provide that the requirement to use transmission conductors that are designated as part of the best-available transmission conductor class not apply—

"(i) to carrying out any covered project for which a public utility, prior to the date of enactment of this section, has—

"(I) filed for any State or Federal permit required to carry out the covered project; or

"(II) procured any transmission conductors;

"(ii) to the emergency replacement or repair of transmission facilities necessary to restore service following a natural disaster, act of terrorism, or other event designated as an emergency by a relevant Federal or State authority;

"(iii) if such use would negatively impact safety or violate a reliability standard; or

"(iv) if the public utility carrying out the covered project demonstrates such use would significantly increase the cost per kilowatt-hour of electricity without providing a material and commensurate increase to capacity, efficiency, or mechanical performance.

"(c) PERIODIC REVIEW AND UPDATES.—The Commission may, to reflect improvements in technology, periodically review and update—

"(1) the methodology for designating transmission conductors as part of the best-available transmission conductor class; and

"(2) the designation of transmission conductors as part of the best-available transmission conductor class.

"(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) BEST-AVAILABLE TRANSMISSION CONDUCTOR CLASS.—The term 'best-available transmission conductor class' means a class of transmission conductors that are designated as part of the class pursuant to this section.

"(2) COMMISSION.—The term 'Commission' means the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

"(3) COVERED PROJECT.—The term 'covered project' means—

"(A) the construction of a new transmission facility subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission under section 201(b) that includes a transmission conductor; or

"(B) any major (as determined by the Commission) modification, upgrade, replacement, or reconductoring of an existing transmission conductor subject to such jurisdiction.

"(4) RELIABILITY STANDARD.—The term 'reliability standard' has the meaning given such term in section 215."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Mrs. FLETCHER) 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 on the legislation and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 6633.

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 in support of H.R. 6633, the High-Capacity Grid Act sponsored by my colleague, Congresswoman FEDORCHAK, from North Dakota.

The High-Capacity Grid Act will leverage advancements in transmission conductors to more cost-effectively expand our grid and meet the electricity demands of our next generation.

Advanced conductors can significantly increase the number of electrons that we put on our system to power our households and businesses of all kinds.

H.R. 6633 will bring savings to households on their electric bills while more efficiently meeting the demands of our next-generation economy ensuring the U.S. is a global leader in innovation.

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

Mrs. FLETCHER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, Democrats have argued for years that growing our power grid is crucial. A grid that is too small, too dumb, and too rigid only serves to make power unreliable and increase American families' power bills. A grid that is larger, smarter, and more flexible is what we need, especially if we hope to withstand a wave of data-center-driven demand for power.

While it is critical that we give grid operators new tools to build new power lines, the cheapest and quickest way to expand our grid is to get more of what we currently have. For decades, utilities have largely used the same conductors and power lines, but it doesn't have to be that way. New advanced conductors can often carry much more power through the same transmission line than traditional conductors.

H.R. 6633, the High-Capacity Grid Act would require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, FERC, to issue a rule requiring utilities to use the best available class of transmission conductors.

I want to note two important things. First, the bill focuses on the best-available class of conductors, not a single technology. The goal here is not to favor a single company or a single technology, but to give FERC and the Department of Energy the flexibility to designate what constitutes the best-available class of conductors.

Second, the bill relies on FERC to maintain a balance, to ensure that utilities have the ability to use other conductors when they really need to, and to ensure that the exceptions do not become the rule.

This bill is only a small part of a much larger conversation we need to have about how to expand our power grid. Unfortunately, Republicans and the Trump administration have been reluctant to engage in serious conversations on what we can do to build a grid for the 21st century. I think that is a shame, and there should be more transmission bills on the floor along with this one today.

We should be considering Energy Subcommittee Ranking Member CASTOR's bill to speed up the process that generators use to connect to the power grid. This bill certainly won't solve the problem by itself, but it does represent an important first step.

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

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Nebraska (Mrs. FEDORCHAK), who is a sponsor of the legislation and a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of my legislation, the High-Capacity Grid Act.

America's electricity demand is growing at a pace faster than it ever has. Domestic manufacturing, large load growth, electrification, and investments in aging infrastructure are placing unprecedented demands on our grid, and it is contributing to rising utility bills for American families.

When people think about their electric bills, they often focus on the cost of generating power. However, transmission costs, the wires that carry the power, are one of the fastest growing components of those bills.

According to research from the Brattle Group and the Energy Information Administration, transmission costs have increased by more than 180 percent since 2005 while generation costs have declined.

Meanwhile, permitting and constructing new transmission lines can take years. On average, it would take more than 4 years just to permit a new power line, and sometimes over a decade, before a single shovel hits the ground. Of course Congress must continue working to reform our broken permitting system.

However, even with those reforms, we cannot permit and build our way out of this challenge fast enough. We must make the most out of the existing infrastructure we have already built. That is exactly what the High-Capacity Grid Act will help us do.

First, it requires utilities building or rebuilding interstate transmission lines to use the best available conductors when practical.

Second, it encourages advanced conductors that carry significantly more electricity using existing structures and rights-of-way.

Third, it protects ratepayers by requiring utilities to justify using lower performing conductors before passing those costs onto families.

This is a commonsense approach. That is why this bill earned unanimous support from the Energy and Commerce Committee. Advanced conductors can dramatically increase the amount of electricity delivered over existing lines. It can also improve efficiency, safety, and reliability. In many cases, these technologies can double transmission capacity without requiring new rights-of-way or years of additional permitting. That is good for grid reliability. It is good for affordability, and it is good for hardworking families who ultimately pay the bill.

That is a no-brainer. The High-Capacity Grid Act is about squeezing every possible megawatt out of the infrastructure we already have, and it is about delivering more power at the lowest possible cost.

Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman GUTHRIE and Energy Subcommittee Chairman LATTI for their leadership and for helping advance this legislation to the House floor.

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

Mrs. FLETCHER. Madam Speaker, in closing, I just encourage my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I appreciate all the hard work. I appreciate Congresswoman FEDORCHAK's hard work, working on both sides of the aisle. I encourage a "yes" vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1830

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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. 6633, 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.

LOAD FORECASTING ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 9332) to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to establish regional joint boards to study electric load forecasting, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 9332

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 "Load Forecasting Enhancement Act".

SEC. 2. REGIONAL JOINT BOARDS TO STUDY ELECTRIC LOAD FORECASTING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission shall establish—