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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 3424, the Bankruptcy Administration Improvement Act of 2025.

The bill before us today is an important piece of legislation that will help ensure the bankruptcy system continues to function efficiently and without taxpayer funding.

Congress designed the bankruptcy system to be funded through the fees imposed on those who utilize the system. From time to time, Congress has passed legislation to respond to how the bankruptcy system is operating.

S. 3424 responds to the current bankruptcy climate in three ways: First, the bill extends the temporary quarterly fees used to pay for the United States Trustee Program within the Department of Justice and bankruptcy judgeships. Ensuring taxpayers are not on the hook for the administration of the Bankruptcy Code is critical. The only way to ensure the bankruptcy system is funded far into the future is to maintain the current fee schedule.

Second, S. 3424 extends for an additional 5-year period numerous temporary bankruptcy judgeships across the country. These bankruptcy judges ensure that bankruptcy cases are quickly and efficiently administered. While bankruptcy filings in recent years have slowed, early data suggests that bankruptcy filings will likely increase in the coming years. Maintaining these temporary bankruptcy judgeships for the next 5 years will ensure that the bankruptcy system can continue to operate at full capacity if necessary.

Finally, and most importantly, S. 3424 increases the pay per case for Chapter 7 trustees. Chapter 7 trustees play a critical role in the bankruptcy system, ensuring that creditors recover as much as possible from bankruptcy debtors. Chapter 7 trustees also ensure that the government receives unpaid taxes, fines, and fees or whatever else it may be owed during a bankruptcy case. In around 90 percent of the cases, Chapter 7 trustees receive the statutory minimum payment for their services, $60 per case. This rate was established in 1994 and has never been permanently increased.

S. 3424 increases the pay per case by adjusting chapter 7 trustee compensation for inflation since 1994 to $120. This change is long overdue.

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

□ 1550

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bipartisan legislation, which will help ensure that Americans have access to bankruptcy relief when financial disaster strikes and they need it.

The legislation would increase compensation for chapter 7 trustees for the first time in more than 30 years, extend vital temporary bankruptcy judgeships, and ensure that our bankruptcy system continues to be self-funded and poses no cost to the American taxpayer.

Chapter 7 proceedings are designed for people who are most in need of financial relief. In chapter 7 bankruptcy, an individual debtor who has fallen on hard times, rather than go to debtor prison, which was the old-school method, can settle his or her debts, pay off back taxes, stop further collection actions, and secure a fresh start.

The process is means-tested, so it is available only for those who really need it, and it often comes with credit counseling and debtor education courses that can help our constituents achieve financial literacy and avoid bankruptcy a second time.

Nationwide, this process is overseen by trustees who help to distribute millions of dollars annually to local, State, and Federal Government agencies and private creditors of all types. In 1994, Congress set the pay for trustees at $60 per case, and we have not revisited that $60 pay rate in the decades since.

This bill would increase that paltry amount at long last. By doubling their fee to $120, we help to ensure that debtors will have the assistance they need to navigate the complicated and convoluted world of bankruptcy proceedings.

The bill also extends 29 temporary bankruptcy judgeships that are set to expire. In my State of Maryland alone, we are on track to lose three out of seven temporary judgeships. That is nearly half of our entire bankruptcy bench. We cannot afford to lose these judges at the very moment that bankruptcy filings are rising everywhere, up 30 percent in our State alone over the last couple of years.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this bill to increase the access and opportunity provided to all Americans under the bankruptcy system. I ask all of our colleagues to read it and to support it.

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

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, again, I restate my strong support for this bipartisan legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, again, this important legislation promotes efficient government rather than expanding it, reinforces user-funded government services, strengthens accountability and oversight, and reduces market distortions caused by uncertainty.

Mr. Speaker, I urge its support, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CLINE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3424.

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.

COMBATING ONLINE PREDATORS ACT

Ms. LEE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6719) to prohibit threats to a minor, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6719

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 ''Combating Online Predators Act'' or the ''COP Act''.

SEC. 2. PROHIBITING THREATS TO A MINOR.

(a) MATERIAL INVOLVING THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF MINORS.—Section 2252A of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (6), by striking ''illegal; or'' and inserting ''illegal;'';

(B) in paragraph (7), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (7) the following:

''(8) knowingly distributes, offers, sends, or provides, in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce, a threat to distribute—

''(A) a visual depiction of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct, or

''(B) a visual depiction of a person the defendant believes is a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct,

with the intent that the minor, or the person the defendant believes is a minor, create or transmit a visual depiction of any minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct,''; and

(2) in subsection (b), by striking ''or (6)'' and inserting ''(6), or (8)''.

(b) MATERIAL CONSTITUTING OR CONTAINING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY.—Section 2252 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (3)(B)(ii), by striking ''or'' at the end;

(B) in paragraph (4)(B)(ii), by inserting ''or'' after the semicolon; and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

''(5) knowingly distributes, offers, sends, or provides, in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce, a threat to distribute—

''(A) a visual depiction of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct, or

''(B) a visual depiction of a person the defendant believes is a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct,

with the intent that the minor, or the person the defendant believes is a minor, create or transmit a visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct,'';

(2) in subsection (b)(2), by inserting ''or (5)'' after ''paragraph (4)''; and

(3) in subsection (c), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting ''or (5)'' after ''paragraph (4)''.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. LEE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 6719.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. LEE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as we recognize January as National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, I am proud of all the work the House Judiciary Committee has done and continues to do to protect children and our most vulnerable populations.

In the 118th Congress, the Subcommittee on Crime and Federal Government Surveillance held two hearings focused on human trafficking, child protection, and the identification of victims. Through those important hearings, my legislation, the REPORT Act, which strengthened requirements for online service providers to report crimes involving child sex abuse material to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, was signed into law. I applaud Chairman BIGGS for beginning the 119th Congress with our first subcommittee hearing once again focused on protecting victims of online exploitation.

Our work is far from over, which is why I look forward to passing the Combating Online Predators Act today.

Mr. Speaker, the rise of sextortion against our Nation's children is troubling. Sextortion is a form of exploitation that occurs when someone threatens to distribute another person's private, sensitive material unless that person complies with a demand for additional sexual content, sexual favors, or money.

Incidents of sextortion have increased dramatically in recent years. Cases reported in the United States increased from 13,842 in the first half of 2024 to 23,593 in the same period in 2025. This rapid growth is disturbing, and it is unacceptable.

Children are especially vulnerable to falling victim to sextortion, with boys aged 14 to 17 most often being targeted. Tragically, this exploitation has led some young people to take their own lives in an attempt to prevent their images from being shared with friends or family.

Through this horrendous conduct, we have lost beautiful young lives, including Gavin Guffey from South Carolina, Bryce Tate from West Virginia, and many other children. I have also met with parents, including a mother from my home State of Florida, who shared the heartbreaking story of her son who fell victim to sextortion and later took his life.

Each of these precious lives was taken too soon, and today, we honor and remember them. Yet, under current law, law enforcement is not fully equipped with the tools necessary to prosecute those who push children into these acts. Sextortion falls outside of the CSAM statute, forcing Federal prosecutors to rely on a patchwork of charging theories that do not fully reflect the gravity of these crimes. The absence of a specific Federal statute prohibiting sextortion leads to inconsistent and inadequate sentencing that can fail to capture the seriousness of this offense.

A legislative fix is, therefore, necessary to ensure Federal prosecutors can charge this conduct directly and fight sextortion effectively.

Congress has a duty to protect children from online exploitation and ensure predators are held fully accountable. The Combating Online Predators Act does exactly that by amending the United States Criminal Code to criminalize intentional threats to distribute child sex abuse material.

No child should ever encounter these threats online, and no child should ever feel that the only way out is to end their own life. Predators must be stopped, and today, Congress continues its work. By passing the Combating Online Predators Act, we strengthen our laws, close a dangerous gap, and send a clear message to predators everywhere that this conduct will not be tolerated.

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

□ 1600

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6719, the Combating Online Predators Act, and I echo my distinguished colleague in noting that sextortion is a serious and rising threat faced by countless unsuspecting teens all over America when they use the internet and social media.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, or NCMEC, operates a Cyber Tip Line to receive reports of suspected child exploitation. The Cyber Tip Line has received many more reports of sextortion of minors in recent years, amounting to tens of thousands of potential victims. These crimes have deadly consequences.

NCMEC has identified 36 teens who took their own lives after being subjected to harsh and incessant harassment from callous perpetrators of sextortion. The problem is everywhere.

Last May, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Maryland announced the guilty plea of a man who had coerced at least 108 different girls to send him pictures and videos of themselves engaged in sexual conduct. The victims ranged in age from 5 to 17 years old and lived all over the U.S. and even around the world, from Tennessee and Massachusetts to Australia and the United Kingdom.

When the man asked for access to the social media account of an 11-year-old, he wrote: ''Add me back or I'll post all your vids online and in servers. I have everything saved.''

When some victims said they did not want to send him any more images, he threatened to post the images online, come to their house, or tell their parents. The man victimized a 12-year-old, her friend, and her 5-year-old sister through Snapchat.

Investigators obtained an IP address linked to the Snapchat account, which eventually led them to the perpetrator's house, where they recovered a laptop, two hard drives, and four iPhones containing evidence of the coercive treatment of more than 100 different girls. In this case, the man pled guilty to an existing crime of producing child sex abuse material.

Prosecutors have said the existing statutes do not always fully address the scope or severity of the conduct involved in these terrible cases. This bill would close that gap and ensure that more of these criminals are held accountable.

I hope we continue to work with our colleagues in a bipartisan way to strengthen and improve our laws to address these new and dangerous crimes and to keep our children safe online.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to support H.R. 6719, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. LEE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS), the subcommittee chairman.

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her leadership on this issue. I thank all the members of our Subcommittee on Crime and Federal Government Surveillance, both Republicans and Democrats, for working together on these very important issues.

Mr. Speaker, sextortion has become a devastating crisis. Predators threaten to release explicit images of minors to extort money, more content, or compliance, preying on shame and fear.

Protecting children from online sexual exploitation remains a top priority for our Subcommittee on Crime and Federal Government Surveillance in this Congress.

Offenders, often overseas or even juveniles, groom victims and then weaponize images or AI-generated deepfakes pulled from public photos to demand payment or further abuse. This drives severe trauma, self-harm, and suicide.

More than three dozen teens have taken their lives in recent cases, with boys aged 14 to 17 hit hardest. Reports of these horrible crimes are surging. NCMEC, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, reports that financial sextortion cases jumped from over 13,800 in early 2024 to nearly 24,000 in early 2025. The FBI logged nearly 55,000 sextortion reports in 2024 alone, with $33 million in losses.

I commend the FBI for its investigations and public alerts. Current law, 18 U.S.C. 2252 and 2252A, does not explicitly cover threats to distribute child

sexual abuse material or images believed to be of minors. That gap limits prosecution.

The Combating Online Predators Act closes that gap by criminalizing knowing threats to distribute these depictions with intent to coerce or extort. This is a targeted bipartisan fix that gives prosecutors the tools they need to stop these predators and protect our kids.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this bill. I hope that this bill passes out of the House today and swiftly passes out of the Senate to be signed by the President.

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

Ms. LEE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HARRIS).

Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the internet is increasingly becoming a hostile place for children. The practice of sextortion is becoming far too common. As many as one in five teenagers report experiencing sextortion.

That is why I rise in support of the Combating Online Predators Act, which takes decisive action against the practice of sextortion.

This bill updates current child sexual abuse material laws to ensure that sextortion is included so that no minor can be threatened with the release of explicit content that depicts them.

As bad actors use the internet to harm kids, Congress must ensure our laws are updated to protect them. Those who seek to threaten our youth through sextortion must be held accountable, and this bill ensures they will.

Mr. Speaker, I am so grateful to my colleague, Representative LEE, for leading this effort to protect children from this harmful practice. I am pleased with the widespread and bipartisan support for it, and I urge my colleagues to support the Combating Online Predators Act.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, to close, I strongly support H.R. 6719, the Combating Online Predators Act. I encourage all of our colleagues to support it, and I praise the gentlewoman for her leadership on this legislation.

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

Ms. LEE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their thoughtful debate and for their support on this important issue. This legislation addresses a clear and dangerous gap in Federal law that predators have exploited to harm children online.

By explicitly criminalizing threats to distribute child sex abuse material, Congress ensures these heinous acts are prosecuted with the seriousness that they deserve. This legislation reflects the bipartisan recognition that protecting children from exploitation is a shared responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, it provides law enforcement with the clarity, consistency, and tools necessary to hold offenders accountable and prevent future harm.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to pass H.R. 6719, the Combating Online Predators Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WIED). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. LEE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6719, 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.

CHILD PREDATORS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6715) to prohibit sexual exploitation and sexually explicit depictions of minors, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6715

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 ''Child Predators Accountability Act''.

SEC. 2. PREVENTING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND SEXUALLY EXPLICIT DEPICTIONS OF MINORS.

(a) SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN.—Section 2251(a) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after ''coerces any minor to engage in,'' the following: ''or be depicted engaging in,''.

(b) SEXUALLY EXPLICIT DEPICTIONS OF A MINOR FOR IMPORTATION.—Section 2260(a) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after ''coerces any minor to engage in,'' the following: ''or be depicted engaging in,''.

(c) DEFINITION.—Section 2256 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (10), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (11), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(12) 'engage in', when used with respect to a minor depicted in a visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct, includes—

''(A) the participation of the minor in the sexually explicit conduct; or

''(B) the depiction of the minor in the visual depiction of the sexually explicit conduct, regardless of whether the minor participated in such conduct, if the defendant intentionally included such minor in the visual depiction.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HARRIS) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 6715.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the state of child protection in our Nation and around the world is deeply alarming and demands our immediate and undivided attention.

Sadly, in today's world and today's age, child sexual abuse material, better known as CSAM, has never been more prevalent.

□ 1610

According to a study from February 2025, 1 in 12 children worldwide have been subjected to online sexual exploitation or abuse. Even more troubling: The vast majority of child sexual abuse, over 90 percent in many documented cases, is perpetrated by someone whom the child knows or is related to, whether family members, trusted adults, or acquaintances.

These are not distant strangers. They are often people with direct access to our children, making the betrayal all the more heartbreaking.

We, in Congress, have a duty to act decisively. We must commit ourselves fully to making the internet and our entire society a safer place for America's children and children everywhere.

My bill, the Child Predators Accountability Act, strengthens the criminal code to hold perpetrators accountable and to protect our children.

Under current law, the definition of ''sexually explicit material'' requires that a child be engaged in sexually explicit conduct for the material to qualify. This narrow wording has created a dangerous loophole.

In one egregious case, a defendant produced a sexually explicit video that included a child who was merely present, passive, and not actively participating. Since the child was not deemed to be ''engaged in'' the act, the conviction for distributing CSAM was overturned. The predator was let off the hook for using a child due to a technicality in the statute.

Mr. Speaker, this cannot stand. We cannot allow one rogue case to lead to a domino effect of bad case law and less protection for these vulnerable children. No predator should escape accountability simply because they included a minor in the frame but did not physically touch or direct them in the explicit conduct.

Such content is profoundly abusive. It exploits the child's presence, dignity, and vulnerability for depraved purposes. It inflicts lasting harm and deserves to be unequivocally classified as CSAM.

My bill delivers a precise, necessary fix. It amends the law to clarify that the depiction of a minor would qualify