coercion and enticement of a child, and one count of cyberstalking.

Still, there is no law that specifically prohibits the coercion of children to inflict harm on themselves or others, which sometimes makes it hard for prosecutors to pursue these charges.

The CSAFE Act is meant to fill in the gaps in our Federal law by creating a new crime that prohibits individuals from compelling, attempting to compel, or conspiring to compel children into physically harming themselves, others, or animals.

□ 1640

While the original bill considered by the Judiciary Committee raised several constitutional concerns, I am pleased to see that this bill before us today includes several improvements that address the concerns that we raised during our bill markup.

As the internet and online platforms continue to evolve and create new challenges that we have to deal with every single day, it is our job as policymakers to be responsive to those challenges, ensuring that these seemingly benign tools are not used for nefarious purposes. We must also make sure that our criminal justice system is capable of holding to account those who dare to exploit these platforms and these tools and prey on our children and cause harm to others.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues in this body to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HARRIS).

Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, bad actors often prey on the most vulnerable: our children. It is our job to stand up for them. That is why I rise today in support of the Coercion and Sexual Abuse Free Environment Act introduced by my colleague and friend, Chairman ANDY BIGGS.

This bill will ensure accountability for anyone who intentionally compels a minor to engage in self-harm or other degrading acts. As child abuse continues in this country and takes many forms, prosecutors must have the proper tools to go after these predators.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Coercion and Sexual Abuse Free Environment Act.

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. I have no further speakers, Madam Speaker. I will just restate my strong support for this legislation. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Arizona for bringing it forward. It is certainly a lot more fun to be with him on legislation than against him on legislation, and I am delighted we were able to work on this bipartisan bill together.

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

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Madam Speaker, I thank Ranking Member RASKIN for his helpful suggestions that will make this bill much better and has made it much better. I thank Ranking Member MCBATH for her support as well.

It is our desire to bring these malevolent-hearted people who are filled with evil and criminal intention to justice and to protect our children.

Madam Speaker, I urge the swift passage of this bill out of the House and the Senate and to get it signed and enacted, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. MALLIOTAKIS.) The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6732, 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.

ENDING IMPROPER PAYMENTS TO DECEASED PEOPLE ACT

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 269) to improve coordination between Federal and State agencies and the Do Not Pay working system.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 269

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 ''Ending Improper Payments to Deceased People Act''.

SEC. 2. IMPROVING COORDINATION BETWEEN FEDERAL AND STATE AGENCIES AND THE DO NOT PAY WORKING SYSTEM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 205(r) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(r)), as amended by section 801(a)(7) of title VIII of division FF of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116–260), is amended by striking paragraph (11) and inserting the following:

''(11) The Commissioner of Social Security shall, to the extent feasible, provide information furnished to the Commissioner under paragraph (1) to the agency operating the Do Not Pay working system described in section 3354(c) of title 31, United States Code, for the authorized uses of the Do Not Pay working system to help prevent improper payments of, and support the recovery of improperly paid, benefits or other payments through a cooperative arrangement with such agency, provided that the requirements of subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (3) are met with respect to such arrangement with such agency. The Commissioner of Social Security and the agency operating the Do Not Pay working system shall, while the data described in the preceding sentence is being provided to the agency operating the Do Not Pay working system, enter into an agreement based upon an agreed upon methodology, which covers the proportional share of State death data costs, which the Commissioner of Social Security and the agency operating the Do Not Pay working system may periodically review.

''(12) The Commissioner of Social Security may not record a death to a record that may be provided under this section for any individual unless the Commissioner of Social Security has found it has clear and convincing evidence to support that the individual should be presumed to be deceased.''.

(b) IMPROVING COORDINATION REGARDING INDIVIDUALS INCORRECTLY IDENTIFIED AS DECEASED.—Section 205(r)(7) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(r)(7)), as added by section 801(a)(4) of title VIII of division FF of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116–260), is amended by striking ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (A), by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (B) and inserting ''; and'', and by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) notify any agency that has a cooperative arrangement with the Commissioner of Social Security under paragraph (3) or (11) of the error.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on December 27, 2026.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and submit extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Ending Improper Payments to Deceased People Act.

This bipartisan bill continues a bipartisan policy that has already enabled the Federal Government to identify, prevent, and recover hundreds of millions of dollars of improper payments made to dead people.

Currently, the Social Security Administration has temporary authority to share its death data with the Treasury Department's Do Not Pay Portal to identify, prevent, and recover improper payments. In its first year alone, Treasury reported this data exchange saved American taxpayers over $108 million.

Unfortunately, Social Security's authority to share its data with Treasury is temporary and lapses at the end of this year if Congress doesn't pass this bill. That would only increase the likelihood that more taxpayer money is erroneously sent to dead people. In 2023 alone, before this policy was implemented, the Office of Management and Budget found the Federal Government sent $1.3 billion to dead people. That is unacceptable. The American people expect Congress to safeguard their hard-earned tax money from waste, fraud, and abuse.

I thank Representative HIGGINS for his leadership on this issue as well as

Senator KENNEDY. As a former law enforcement officer, CLAY HIGGINS has worked to protect Americans from criminals, and now he is translating that commitment into finding ways that we can protect taxpayer dollars as well.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DOGGETT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Madam Speaker, information on the deceased is already shared among Federal agencies under existing law. This is really a trivial bill that is designed only to make it appear that Republicans are doing something about supposed fraud. An independent investigation found that the Social Security Administration has an incredible success rate with less than 1 percent of payments found to be improper, some of those being overpayments and some of those being underpayments.

Today, of course, is not the first time we have heard these claims about fraudulent Social Security payments to the dead. Indeed, from that very podium, Madam Speaker, we heard President Trump last March come to give a lengthy address to a joint session of this Congress. In his remarks that combined misinformation, outright lies, and a good many platitudes, the President devoted special attention to Social Security, ridiculing it with outlandish tales. He spoke of ''3.9 million people from ages 130 to 139, 3.5 million people from ages 140 to 149. And money is being paid to many of them.''

What nonsense. Thanks to the antifraud guardrails that are already available, that has not happened, and the President's representation was absolutely wrong.

While today's bill essentially duplicates existing efforts to prevent erroneous payments, the focus on improper payments to deceased people is just another part of the Republican plan to undermine public confidence in Social Security, a social insurance program that has been one of the most valuable initiatives ever approved in this Congress.

Yet Trump appointed Elon Musk, who proclaimed that Social Security is ''a Ponzi scheme.'' He gave him the authority to take a hatchet to the Social Security Administration. For months, DOGE, the department of government evisceration, promoted related lies.

Undermining the delivery of checks and quality service, the Trump regime, through DOGE, abruptly fired thousands of Social Security workers, and it continues to enact erratic policy changes. This comes on top of years of Republican opposition to adequately staffing the Social Security Administration.

Social Security has less staff today than it did a decade ago, despite the fact that it now serves many, many more Americans. As a result, at Social Security, under the Trump regime, there is a backlog of 6 million cases, public inquiries, along with an agency that is riddled with errors and delays from the shortage of adequate staffing.

Now, the plan from the Trump regime on Social Security is to cut in-person visits at offices around the country, which is just another effort to obstruct Americans from getting straight answers, not from a machine but from a person, concerning their hard-earned benefits. These are just more ways to cause Americans to question this vital Federal program so that nobody is surprised if, one day, the payments are late or the trust fund is insufficient.

We have had one current Member of the United States Senate, a Republican, who has declared that what we need to do, he insists, is to ''pull it up by the roots and get rid of it'' with reference to Social Security.

Providing modest retirement, disability, and retirement benefits to 69 million Americans, Social Security is what puts food in the fridge and keeps the lights on week after week.

For 22 million Americans, Social Security is the difference between living in poverty, and for 40 percent, it is more than one-half of their income.

It is a lifesaving, irreplaceable, social contract. As stewards of this hard-earned benefit, we must protect taxpayers' dollars, but empty promises to address supposed fraud are not the answer.

Americans deserve a restored watchdog and efficient program at Social Security that ensures swift and easy access to their payments.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1650

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES).

Mr. ESTES. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman SMITH for yielding time to me on this important topic.

It is important to be here today to express my support for S. 269, the Ending Improper Payments to Deceased People Act. It is commonsense legislation that taxpayers should not be footing the bill for people who are deceased.

The purpose of this legislation is to permanently authorize the Social Security Administration to share its full Death Master File with the Treasury's Do Not Pay service. The Death Master File that is generated by Social Security is the best, if not the only national file that identifies the death of individuals throughout the country. This access will allow Federal agencies to have the updated, complete death data necessary to verify benefit eligibility and prevent erroneous overpayments.

We are well aware that the Federal Government has a major spending problem, and we face a massive problem continuing to pay people for all sorts of Federal programs, including Social Security, who have passed away. In FY 2024 alone, Federal agencies reported over $162 billion in improper payments. By making this data exchange permanent, the Bureau of Fiscal Service projects that we will save $330 million across the Federal Government by December of 2026.

As the chairman of the Social Security Subcommittee, I am committed to enforcing this legislation and protecting the integrity of our programs for the American taxpayer.

Mr. DOGGETT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself another 5 minutes.

This bill is really another missed opportunity. The protections that are most urgently needed are not these new guardrails, but guardrails to protect our inalienable right to privacy.

Through the Privacy Act and other means, this Congress has long set limits on what the government can and cannot do with intimate details that it collects about each American. Government officials are not free to use our sensitive personal data however they wish, but that may actually be happening under the Trump regime.

When this legislation was before the Ways and Means Committee, I offered an amendment to address a serious and looming threat to our privacy. The Trump administration is pursuing an unprecedented effort to consolidate Federal data on virtually every American into a single, centralized master file, a de facto digital ID on every American.

This would be a digital record containing most anything that any part of the government knows about you, tracking where you live, where you work, your earnings, your bank account, your health insurance, your child support agreements, and more.

To understand the scope of this extraordinary project, my amendment required the administration to produce materials related to the Social Security Administration's role in data aggregation and its chosen contractor, Palantir, a company that one Silicon Valley executive once described as ''building the infrastructure of the police state.'' This project would further empower a President whose priorities include revenge, personal enrichment, and self-glorification to misuse this data.

Beyond the obvious danger of empowering a surveillance state or enabling the targeting of political opponents, the other danger associated with this mass centralization is that this sensitive information held by the Federal Government in one place could be exposed to hacking. One vulnerability, one malicious actor, one insider threat, and millions of Americans could be exposed.

A whistleblower has already revealed that the Social Security records of roughly 300 million Americans were uploaded into an unsecured cloud environment without adequate safeguards. Internal Federal reviews have identified serious weaknesses in Palantir's systems.

One internal U.S. Army memorandum described Palantir's platform

as ''very high risk,'' warning that any unauthorized user, regardless of clearance, could access all the applications and datasets, the very kind of thing that would interfere with our privacy from private entities.

Palantir, of course, disputes these findings, but the concerns are real, and the consequences of getting it wrong would be enormous. My approach would not have stopped this project. It would not have dismantled anything. It simply would have required transparency, basic disclosure of how Social Security data has been used or misused by the Trump regime in the creation of this centralized database.

Yet, despite the gravity of these concerns, Republicans voted to block this reasonable inquiry from a regime that seems to thrive on secrecy.

This vote follows a troubling pattern that occurred right here in the House when rules were adopted to block a resolution of inquiry that I and other Members had to ask for this data from the administration.

Twice now, Republicans have adopted special rules, extraordinary measures that are designed to prevent the House from ever considering this question. Twice they have used the process to hide from the American people what is happening and to protect their Members from having to take a vote about this sweeping intrusion into our privacy.

Remarkably, Palantir has even said they are willing to support the resolution. That hasn't been enough for our Republican colleagues. This is the time for sunlight instead of fear of sunlight. It is unfortunate that this transparency, which should not be controversial, is not included in this bill.

I will be voting for this bill, as we did in committee, but it is relatively meaningless, and the big issues of the day are not being addressed in this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BEAN).

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman for the time.

Madam Speaker, if there is one group of Americans who definitely shouldn't be receiving Federal payments, it is the dearly departed. There is a famous line in the movie ''The Sixth Sense'' where the star says: ''I see dead people.'' Our Treasury Department doesn't see dead people. They just write them checks.

Year after year, gaps in our data system allow improper payments to flow to individuals who are no longer living. It is wasteful, avoidable, and undermines trust in government-run programs.

As founder and co-chair of the DOGE Caucus, I am proud to support the Ending Improper Payments to Deceased People Act. It is a commonsense, bipartisan effort to strengthen the accuracy of the Death Master File, improve data sharing across Federal agencies, and ensure that benefits programs have the timely, reliable information they need to verify eligibility, and a pulse, before payments go out the door.

The results, Madam Speaker, speak for themselves. The Treasury Department recently announced it recovered $31 million in fraud and improper payments in just the first 5 months of test driving and implementing these reforms. The legislation makes these temporary provisions permanent and stops payments to deceased individuals moving forward.

Madam Speaker, this bill is a big step toward accountability, and I urge my colleagues on all sides of the aisle to join me in supporting this vital antifraud, antiwaste, antiabuse legislation.

As the saying goes: You can't take it with you, so let's stop writing checks to dead people.

Mr. DOGGETT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Madam Speaker, I think it would be more accurate to say this bill is a tiny step, it is a trivial step, and it is curious how narrow the interest of our Republican colleagues are with regard to fraud.

Trump has been busy pardoning one fraudster after another. We haven't heard a peep from our Republican colleagues about that nor about his wrongful action within days of his inauguration of abruptly and unjustifiably firing the chief inspector general of the Social Security Administration. That is the public watchdog who is there to ensure that no fraud—dead, living, or otherwise—occurs. In only a single year, that inspector general had saved Social Security about $12.4 billion through audits and investigations.

House Republicans have similarly remained totally mute about the fact that as of today, almost a year later, Trump has continued his failure to nominate a replacement inspector general. They are apparently not too eager about addressing fraud to have a real watchdog there.

Just as they yell ''fraud'' as an excuse to replace ObamaCare with Republican nothing care, while Trump reinstates the suspended insurance brokers that were causing the fraud, the Trump regime and its congressional enablers are really just yelling ''fraud'' as a cover for the real agenda, which is to privatize Social Security.

Trump's Treasury Secretary, Mr. Bessent, recently blew their cover by indicating that the big, ugly bill about which Republicans have been so gleeful is really a ''back door'' to privatize Social Security, a step that will undermine the program that so many Americans are counting on.

This bill offers no additional protection to them or to the taxpayer. What it does do is continue the myth that Social Security is fraudulent, that it is not delivering the benefits that Americans have been able to rely on for generations, and with appropriate action will be able to rely upon for generations to come.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1700

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

As stewards of Americans' hard-earned tax dollars, we have a responsibility to ensure efficient and appropriate government spending. The dollars that have been spent on Social Security have been spent well and effectively to benefit millions.

For years, I have sought action on several fraud prevention measures, efforts that have been repeatedly rejected, not even heard by the Republican majority.

Ignoring my legislation and other proposals that have been offered from the Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, another inspector general that was fired by President Trump, Republicans instead offer this minor bill that does little to address fraud, that raises a myth concerning payments to the deceased, and perpetuates that myth that Social Security should be, in the words of one Republican Senator: pulled up by its roots and gotten rid of.

It is all fear-mongering from some of the same people who recently enacted a truly horrifying scheme with the largest cuts to healthcare and SNAP food assistance in the history of this country, all in order to further enrich some billionaire donors. These cuts leave millions of children, people with disabilities, and seniors without access to a doctor, struggling to afford their medications, and unable to receive in-home support.

The billionaire class was so greedy that even $1 trillion in cuts to healthcare wasn't enough to pay for everything that they demanded. The total receipt from Republicans' legislation means that trillions of dollars are being added to our national debt, even after these draconian cuts to healthcare. Those additions to the national debt will endanger the long-term promise of Social Security and Medicare.

This legislation does nothing to address Social Security's guarantee to American workers. If this Congress fails to act, the Federal Government will default in 2032, and people would see their Social Security payments cut.

Meanwhile, this bill also ignores the Trump regime's effort, which I discussed, about the development of a digital file on every American and the invasion of our privacy. It is good that this legislation requires the Treasury Department's Do Not Pay system to reimburse Social Security and State agencies for its use of death records that the States collect and provide to Social Security.

Social Security should not bear the price for that Do Not Pay system's use of the data. I certainly support that provision, but every American will bear the cost of Republicans' failure to protect their hard-earned benefits and private information from Trump's hatchet job on the Social Security Administration.

While I don't oppose the bill, I do oppose the misrepresentations that are made about it.

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

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, this bill is another piece of the puzzle in the fight against waste, fraud, and abuse. Before the Social Security Administration began sharing its complete death records with the Treasury Department, the Federal Government paid $1.3 billion to the dead in just a single year.

Congress authorized the Treasury to access Social Security's death data for 3 years ending in 2026. In the first year alone, Treasury reported that it helped the Federal Government identify, prevent, or recover $108 million in improper payments, with another $200 million expected by the end of this year. It is only common sense to make this fraud prevention measure permanent.

This policy has already passed both the Senate and the Ways and Means Committee with broad, bipartisan support. I hope the House does the same and sends this to President Trump's desk as soon as possible.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 269.

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.

AGOA EXTENSION ACT

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6500) to extend duty-free treatment provided with respect to imports from certain countries in Africa under the African Growth and Opportunity Act, to extend customs user fees, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6500

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 ''AGOA Extension Act''.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT FOR CERTAIN COUNTRIES IN AFRICA UNDER AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT; RETROACTIVE APPLICATION.

(a) EXTENSION.—

(1) TRADE ACT OF 1974.—Section 506B of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2466b) is amended by striking ''September 30, 2025'' and inserting ''December 31, 2028''.

(2) AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Section 112(g) of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (19 U.S.C. 3721(g)) is amended by striking ''September 30, 2025'' and inserting ''December 31, 2028''.

(B) REGIONAL APPAREL ARTICLE PROGRAM.—Section 112(b)(3)(A) of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (19 U.S.C. 3721(b)(3)(A)) is amended—

(i) in clause (i), by striking ''21 succeeding'' and inserting ''24 succeeding''; and

(ii) in clause (ii)(II), by striking ''September 30, 2025'' and inserting ''December 31, 2028''.

(C) THIRD-COUNTRY FABRIC PROGRAM.—Section 112(c)(1) of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (19 U.S.C. 3721(c)(1)) is amended—

(i) in the paragraph heading, by striking ''SEPTEMBER 30, 2025'' and inserting ''DECEMBER 31, 2028'';

(ii) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''September 30, 2025'' and inserting ''December 31, 2028''; and

(iii) in subparagraph (B)(ii), by striking ''September 30, 2025'' and inserting ''December 31, 2028''.

(b) RETROACTIVE APPLICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 514 of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1514) or any other provision of law, and subject to paragraph (2), any entry of a covered article to which duty-free treatment or other preferential treatment under section 506A of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2466a) would have applied if the entry had been made on September 30, 2025, that was made—

(A) after September 30, 2025, and

(B) before the date of the enactment of this Act,

shall be liquidated or reliquidated as though such entry occurred on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) REQUESTS.—A liquidation or reliquidation may be made under paragraph (1) with respect to an entry only if a request therefor is filed with the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act that contains sufficient information to enable such Commissioner—

(A) to locate the entry; or

(B) to reconstruct the entry if it cannot be located.

(3) PAYMENT OF AMOUNTS OWED.—Any amounts owed by the United States pursuant to the liquidation or reliquidation of an entry of a covered article under paragraph (1) shall be paid, without interest of any kind, not later than 90 days after the date of the liquidation or reliquidation (as the case may be).

(4) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) COVERED ARTICLE.—The term ''covered article'' means an article from a country that is designated by the President as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country under section 104 of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (19 U.S.C. 3703) as of the day before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(B) ENTRY.—The term ''entry'' includes a withdrawal from warehouse for consumption.

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF CUSTOMS USER FEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 13031(j)(3) of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (19 U.S.C. 58c(j)(3)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''September 30, 2031'' and inserting ''December 31, 2031''; and

(2) in subparagraph (B)(i), by striking ''September 30, 2031'' and inserting ''December 31, 2031''.

(b) RATE FOR MERCHANDISE PROCESSING FEES.—Section 503 of the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (19 U.S.C. 3805 note) is amended by striking ''September 30, 2031'' and inserting ''December 31, 2031''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH) and the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. 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 this bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6500, the AGOA Extension Act, legislation to reauthorize the African Growth and Opportunity Act trade preference program.

Our Nation's economic, strategic, and national security interests are front and center in AGOA. Think about it: This program strengthens our critical supply chains and helps us counter the harmful global influence of nations like China and Russia.

Don't just take my word for it. A witness testifying before the Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee put it bluntly when discussing the potential for a lapse in AGOA when he said: ''There will be a party in Moscow. There will be a party in Beijing if we don't reauthorize it.''

To achieve this, however, we aren't going to lower our standards. This extension maintains the most stringent eligibility criteria of any trade preference program, with annual reviews to defend IP rights, human rights, market access, and the rule of law against corruption. To be eligible, countries must also ensure they are not undermining America's national security or foreign policy interests.

While we still need a longer-term AGOA extension, this reauthorization provides a much-needed level of certainty and stability in the near term so that Congress can continue its work on future reforms to address and strengthen U.S. priorities. After all, U.S. businesses have invested $8 billion annually under AGOA while our African trading partners have begun to open their markets for U.S. agriculture.

Protecting market access for America's farmers and ranchers is incredibly important to the rural communities I represent in Missouri, a point I have made in my travels to the regions going back to 2015 when I attended the AGOA forum in Gabon.

After we take this step, we can build further. Americans would benefit if African nations graduated into formal bilateral trade agreements with the U.S.