Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, October 13, 2017, at 8:30 a.m.

House of Representatives

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2017

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. NEWHOUSE).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC, October 11, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAN NEWHOUSE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

NATIONAL FOREST PRODUCTS WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, next week is National Forest Products Week, which the Nation observes from October 15 through October 21. Each year since 1960, our Nation has celebrated the achievements of the forest product manufacturers and organizations throughout this country.

The forest products industry is an integral part of U.S. manufacturing competitiveness and is among the top 10 manufacturing sector employers in 45 States. In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, this industry is home to 265 wood products, paper, and packaging manufacturing facilities that make more than $16 million in products, annually, and contribute nearly $3 million to State and local economies through wages and compensation. More than 53,900 hardworking men and women in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are employed by the forest products industry.

Forest products continue to meet the evolving needs of people across the country and around the world. The forest products industry directly employs about 900,000 people and supports 2.4 million jobs. It is 4 percent of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP. The industry meets a payroll of approximately $50 billion, annually, and manufactures almost $240 billion in products every year.

One-third of the United States is forested—751 million acres. Privately owned forests supply 91 percent of the wood harvested in the United States; State and Tribal forests supply approximately 6 percent; and Federal forests supply only 2 percent of the wood used by the forest products industry. More than 56 percent of U.S. forests are privately owned, much of it by family forest owners who manage their lands to provide value to future generations.

The industry has tremendous impact on our environment, too. A single tree can absorb more than 10 pounds of CO₂ each year. In the United States, forests and forest products store enough carbon to offset approximately 12 percent of the Nation’s CO₂ emissions.

Forest products play a valuable role in the life of every American every day. Two-thirds of the Nation’s drinking water comes from forests. From paper and packaging to wood products, tissue and other personal care items, these products are at the heart of modern life and a modern economy.

Paper products allow us to communicate, teach, and learn. They provide safe packaging for goods and consumables, as well as personal hygiene and cleanliness. Wood products provide shelter and necessary components of daily life.

Mr. Speaker, because the industry plays such an important role in the life of everyday Americans, in 1960, Congress designated the third week in October as National Forest Products Week. Next week, the country celebrates with events and advocacy campaigns to mark that occasion. Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly join those across the Nation who applaud the forest products industry for its many contributions.
CLEAN POWER PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, 3 years ago, the Obama administration took a very positive and important step toward greenhouses gas emissions by initiating the Clean Power Plan, the first-ever national limit on carbon pollution from power plants. The plan was devised to give States the option to tailor how they would rein in pollution, following benchmarks set by the Federal Government.

For years, States, local governments, businesses, and universities have been making progress towards a low-carbon future, both in anticipation of full implementation of the Clean Power Plan and spurred on by a variety of other forces. Now, the Trump administration has vowed to unravel the Clean Power Plan, but the momentum will not stop because of this reckless act.

Donald Trump and Scott Pruitt cannot repeal engineering, science, or economics. Their attempts would only harm the economy and our citizens, miring us in the past to serve the interests of Big Coal.

The case for action in reducing carbon pollution is compelling. The Clean Power Plan encourages steps to reduce the dangerous extent of accelerating climate disruption and attendant extreme weather events.

Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria are only the latest example of those events. Now, millions of acres in the West are exploding in wildfires. More frequent, more intense, and more dangerous forest fires are the reality now, spurred by climate disruption.

Out-of-control wildfires have touched Oregon’s beloved Columbia River Gorge, and the latest instances are in California wine country, taking lives, destroying property, and damaging crops.

Regardless of your view on climate change, the Clean Power Plan is a very important step for the United States. It stands on firm legal ground. The Supreme Court has ruled on three separate occasions that the EPA has the authority and the responsibility to protect our families from carbon pollution.

Cleaner energy and a cleaner environment under the Clean Power Plan would improve the lives of working Americans. By 2030, it would prevent 90,000 asthma attacks, 300,000 days missed from work and school, and 3,600 premature deaths every year.

Instead of protecting human health, particularly those in communities most impacted by carbon pollution, Trump and Pruitt are seeking to tilt the energy playing field back in favor of Big Coal.

Major mistake: without subsidies and regulatory favoritism, most old, dirty, coal plants would have been shut down years ago if they had been required to meet carbon pollution and air quality standards, as they should have been.

Trump and Pruitt are making a big mistake when they assault the Clean Air Act and the Clean Power Plan. They are on weak legal ground, and they attempt to tear down science, economics, the environment, and common sense.

The Clean Power Plan will not be easily unraveled. There is a process to unwind it, similar to what it took to put it in place. It will take a lot of hard work—and evidence that Pruitt doesn’t have—to repeal it and prevent the EPA from regulating carbon emissions.

The plan has powerful allies. I am proud to stand with the environmental community, my fellow Democrats in Congress, many government and trade groups, civilians who care, and a number of businesses. Mars is the latest company to announce that they are going to follow through on their carbon reduction plan.

We will continue this fight for a low-carbon, healthier, more economical future. We will protect alternative energy and honor the commitments we have made to the wind and solar industries. We will continue to reduce emissions from our transportation sector by not rolling back fuel efficiency standards.

We will work with the agriculture sector, which makes up 9 percent of the total greenhouse gas emissions. A strong farm bill can reduce emissions and enhance productivity through low-carbon protections.

Ultimately, Trump and Pruitt cannot repeal science, engineering, or economics. I am proud to be part of this effort to ensure that the United States moves forward to exercise leadership in a low-carbon future to fight climate change and global weather disruption.

PROTECTING OUR SENIOR CITIZENS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join Mr. SCHNEIDER and me in support of this measure that will help ensure that our parents, grandparents, and loved ones are looked after after they become care-givers who will give them the treatment and respect they deserve.

CAREING FOR SENIORS DURING NATURAL DISASTERS

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the Protecting Seniors During Disasters Act, which I introduced with my colleague, Congresswoman LOIS FRANKEL of Florida.

The horrific deaths of 14 seniors in a Florida nursing home facility in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma made it abundantly clear that more must be done to protect seniors during and after natural disasters.

Times of emergency, many senior citizens find themselves disconnected from caregivers and without the treatments and resources that they so desperately need. Our bill seeks to reconnect seniors by requiring that Federal agencies assess how their emergency response efforts impact the elderly. It also calls for the implementation of standards to better protect and care for senior citizens and nursing home residents across our Nation during and after emergency situations.

This is a commendable, bipartisan legislative initiative that aims to save the lives of many senior citizens and helps ensure that the tragedy that took place in south Florida will not happen again. I urge my colleagues to join us in support of this lifesaving measure.

BUILDING A NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN LATINO

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, as we continue to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month and the many contributions of our vibrant community throughout our country, I would like to bring attention to a bill that I have sponsored that would permanently showcase the history and stories of American Latinos.

H.R. 2911, the National Museum of the American Latino Act, will establish a world-class educational institution on The National Mall for the millions of visitors who come to our Nation’s capital every year eager to learn about American history.

Latinos have served our great country in every war dating back to before the Revolutionary War and continue to proudly serve in our military. They are small-business owners, job creators, TV stars, athletes, and public servants.

An initiative over 20 years in the making, this museum would be a visual representation of the difficulties that Latinos have overcome leaving their home countries, whether to flee an oppressive communist regime in my native homeland of Cuba, or Venezuela, or for the opportunity to partake in the American Dream, as well as the
story of Hispanics who have made the U.S. their home for many generations. As the first Hispanic woman elected to the U.S. Congress, I am proud to invite my colleagues to join me in this endeavor and cosponsor H.R. 2911, the National Museum of the American Latino Act.

ASSISTANCE FOR PUERTO RICO
The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIÉRREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, it has been 3 weeks since the eye of Hurricane Maria crossed over Puerto Rico. It has been 3 weeks, and there are still parts of the island that have not had contact with FEMA yet—3 weeks. For most people, that has meant no power, and most still don’t have running water.

Hospitals and clinics were hit hard, as The New York Times reports. The daughter of one man who died because he couldn’t receive oxygen treatment told the paper: “Because of the electricity situation, a lot of people died and are still dying.”

For the people of the island still lacks running water because of the blackout, which still affects 85 percent of the island. As a result, many people are bathing in streams and receiving water from huge tanks, which is never a good idea.

This is after 3 weeks in the most powerful nation on Earth. This is unacceptable.

Our response to Hurricane Maria and the people of Puerto Rico is a national embarrassment and a tragedy. They are our own citizens in our own Caribbean colonies of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and we have not helped them all that we can. I spoke yesterday who have been in Puerto Rico for about a week, and they tell me it is worse than we are being told.

They told me yesterday that they are still making contact in towns where people come up to them and say, “Thank God, it is FEMA; you are finally here.” only to be told, “No, we are not FEMA; we are from Chicago; we are firefighters,” and they embrace and cry with gratitude.

Last week, a group of my colleagues and I got together. We represent large Puerto Rican communities here on the mainland—Brooklyn, New York; Chicago; we are all ready, but the problem is transportation. If you have money, connections, or internet access, then you probably can find a flight out.

I know this because I was in Puerto Rico 2 weeks ago, and I saw the Land Rovers, the Jaguars, parked at the private airports in San Juan, because if you have the money, you have already put your loved ones on a flight out of Dodge.

The individuals from FEMA have been doing a great job, given the constraints, but I think now FEMA and the military resources should focus on the task of evacuating the elderly, the sick, and the vulnerable from the island.

Look, this is the way FEMA works. They say: Well, we only take on tasks that the Governor asks us to take on, and the Governor is not likely to go to FEMA to ask for help for the thousands and thousands of his constituents off the island.

Number one, it is a difficult request for any local official to make. Captains of industry and leaders on the island we work with make sure that there are Puerto Rican workers there to rebuild, and of course, to continue to buy their products. I get that. But at the same time, those same captains of industry and political leaders, guess what, I bet you most of them have already got their loved ones off the island.

Number two, we know the Governor has to be extremely careful how he asks for anything because we all know the President doesn’t take criticism very well or even a hint of criticism. The Governor doesn’t want to get blackballed by the President who might go off on a Twitter rant at any moment unless he is praised and stroked.

But our Puerto Rican constituents don’t vote for the Governor of Puerto Rico. They vote for us, for DELAURÉ, for CROWLEY, for MCCOY, for ESPAILLAT, for Morales-Karner, and they want us to help them get their families out of danger’s way. They are demanding help getting their family members out, and I think FEMA and the U.S. military can do the job. They just need the orders from the people in charge.

Let’s be clear: if anyone wants to leave Puerto Rico, they should have our help in doing so. For thousands, it is a question of life and death and survival: is what is needed to help Puerto Rico. We don’t need the President tossing paper towels to storm victims like he was tossing a ball to a dog or maybe tossing peanuts to squirrels in the park. We need airplanes, ships, and helicopters to get the people the hell out; otherwise, it will be worse than let them eat cake; it is let them die.

CELEBRATING THE WORK OF TERESA LEWIS
The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the work of a very wonderful constituent of the Fifth District of North Carolina, Teresa Lewis.

Every September, we celebrate American Business Women’s Day in order to recognize the many different backgrounds and diverse occupations of American businesswomen. However, it is my belief that we should celebrate American businesswomen like Teresa Lewis every day.

Teresa’s success was born out of determination and the desire to provide a better life for her family. In 1986, Teresa founded WorkForce Carolina, a professional staffing service that includes recruitment, interview completion, and skills assessment.

As CEO of WorkForce Carolina, Teresa has employed thousands of people, and her company has served as a boon to the North Carolina economy. Most importantly, Teresa serves as a role model to all women and men in our country. I commend Teresa Lewis on all of her many accomplishments and thank her for all she does for the community.

CRITICAL TIME OF LIFE AND DEATH FOR PUERTO RICO AND VIRGIN ISLANDS
The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, this is a critical time of life and death for millions of U.S. citizens on the island of Puerto Rico and also in the Virgin Islands.

The efforts to rebuild will be great, and we each have a critical role to play to help these families recover following the aftermath of these catastrophic storms.

We have witnessed so much devastation this hurricane season, and the impact has been particularly destructive and wreaked havoc. It has left millions of U.S. citizens without shelter, electricity, and their lives in ruin.

We all have a part to play in the recovery efforts and must answer the calls to provide relief and aid in the immense rebuilding efforts that will take place to assist all of them who have been affected.

The amount of help and heart I have seen from my home State of New York, including a recent effort of Uptown United this weekend, and from constituents of mine like Lin-Manuel Miranda, and even from children willing to crack open their piggybanks has been overwhelming.

If the Federal Government could have matched that compassion, then Puerto Rico would be well on its way to recovery.

Last night, the House Appropriations Committee released a $36.5 billion disaster relief package: $5 billion of that will go directly to Puerto Rico; $14 billion for FEMA’s disaster fund; and $16

October 11, 2017 CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE H7923
billion for the National Flood Insurance Program. I see this as an initial downpayment. I hope this is just the beginning.

Nearly a month into this crisis, the status of Puerto Rico today is such:

The Jones Act. On Sunday, the White House let the 10-day shipping waiver for the Jones Act expire for Puerto Rico, meaning that foreign ships can no longer bring aid to the hurricane-ravaged island from U.S. ports. I have been pushing for at least a 1-year waiver and a permanent waiver for Port Aransas and Rockport, until December or January. There is a big job ahead. It is going to take a lot of people.

Several weeks ago, Speaker Ryan and several members of the Texas delegation joined Team Rubicon in the Houston area aiding in demolition and cleanup in the flood-devastated areas. The group’s positive attitude and commitment to service is inspiring. Last week, Janice Dean of FOX News visited the present and told the story about how Team Rubicon is helping with debris removal in Wharton, Texas. That is a city of about 9,000 south of Houston that was devastated by flood waters associated with the storm.

You know, Team Rubicon was founded in 2010, following the earthquakes in Haiti, by two marines, Jake Wood and William McNulty, who knew they could use their military experience and go out and help other veterans.

Since then, Team Rubicon has drastically expanded across the nation, unifying the skills and experiences of veterans and first responders to rapidly deploy emergency response teams.

I want to thank Team Rubicon for all the help they have provided the folks of Texas, especially Wharton, and the people around the world who have suffered disasters since 2010.

I also want to thank Janice Dean of FOX News for helping tell their story. Janice’s commitment to Team Rubicon didn’t stop with just telling the story. In fact, once the story aired, she has donated $15,000 from sales of her children’s book, “Freddy the Frogcaster” to Team Rubicon and will continue to be donating all proceeds from this book to the group. Thank you, Janice.

Thank you, Team Rubicon, and thank you for everyone who is helping out those who are victims of Hurricane Harvey and the various other disasters that this Nation is facing right now.

THANKING TEAM RUBICON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FARENTHOLD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few minutes to talk about and thank Team Rubicon and all other volunteers who are helping assist victims of Hurricane Harvey with storm cleanup, not only in the district I represent but throughout the State of Texas.

Many of our cities still have piles and piles of debris. Initially, it was trees and brushes cleared, but now, as people are starting to survey and repair the damage to their home, there is insulation, there is sheetrock, there are personal belongings all out along the street waiting to be picked up and cleaned up.

This Monday, I spent time with the Governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, visiting some of our cities, and they are telling me that the cleanup may not be complete in some cities, like Port Aransas and Rockport, until December or January. There is a big job ahead. It is going to take a lot of people.

Weekly, Speaker Ryan and several members of the Texas delegation joined Team Rubicon in the Houston area aiding in demolition and cleanup in the flood-devastated areas. The group’s positive attitude and commitment to service is inspiring.

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Thank you, Team Rubicon, and thank you for everyone who is helping out those who are victims of Hurricane Harvey and the various other disasters that this Nation is facing right now.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF FIRST SERGEANT CHARLESTON HARTFIELD OF THE NEVADA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of my constituent, First Sergeant Charleston Hartfield of the Nevada Army National Guard. Our community lost a true-blue American hero on the 1st of October.

Since the age of 18, Officer Hartfield valiantly served our country and our community, spending 16 years in the Army both on Active Duty and in the Nevada National Guard and 11 years in our local law enforcement.

First Sergeant Hartfield spent a year deployed to Iraq with the 82nd Airborne Division as part of the initial invasion in 2003, where they were awarded the Combat Action Badge for having bravely engaged in combat operations.

Those who knew Officer Hartfield remember him for his kindness to others and for pouring his heart into our community as a husband, a father, a friend, and a youth football coach.

Officer Charleston Hartfield was taken from us far too soon by a senseless tragedy. Our valley and this Nation will mourn his loss, and we will carry forward his spirit of courage and selflessness.

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. Speaker, it is hard to put into words the devastation and heartbreak my community suffered on October 1, 2017. This horrific violence has forever altered the lives of countless families in Las Vegas and across this country.

My heart breaks for those who lost a parent, a child, a sibling, and a friend. And while this was the deadliest mass shooting in modern American history, I know that we join a long list of communities: Sandy Hook, Aurora, Tucson, San Bernardino, and Orlando, all who have suffered way too much through similar heart-wrenching violence.

I have lived in southern Nevada for nearly 40 years, and I will tell you that I have been overwhelmed by the resilience of Las Vegas. We are not just "Sin City" or the glittering lights of the strip. We are also a tight-knit, compassionate community of hard-working families. The shooting on October 1 exemplified the worst of humanity, but our community represented the very best of people.

As we try to figure out how to move forward, I can tell you that we are finding strength and hope and courage in our brave first responders, in the heroic self-sacrifice of men and women who risked and gave their lives for others, and for the kindness of strangers who helped transport the wounded to the hospital, who stood in line for hours to donate blood, and who came together to support our communities.

I implore my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to find that same courage to come to the table and have real conversations about commonsense solutions to address gun violence. There is no single policy solution, but I know we can support the Second Amendment while taking reasonable steps to reduce the carnage inflicted on our communities by gun violence and mass shootings.

Mr. Speaker, devices designed to cause mass casualties, like bump stocks and high-capacity magazines, have no practical purpose for hunting or self-defense. They only increase the threat for potential victims trying to fight back or self-defense. They only increase the threat for potential victims trying to fight back or self-defense. They only increase the threat for potential victims trying to fight back or self-defense. They only increase the threat for potential victims trying to fight back or self-defense. They only increase the threat for potential victims trying to fight back or self-defense.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of my constituent, First Sergeant Charleston Hartfield of the Nevada Army National Guard. Our community lost a true-blue American hero on the 1st of October.
No community should ever be forced to experience the grief and trauma that my constituents are now confronting. It is more urgent than ever that we take meaningful action to reduce the toll of widespread gun violence. The time is now.

RECENTIFY IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL
The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the significance of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action regarding Iran, more commonly referred to as the Iran nuclear agreement.

I have always been a vocal advocate for tough sanctions on Iran. While I was a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, in 2010, I was a member of the United States team that drafted the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act. These sanctions, in 2010 and subsequently, did make a difference.

Unfortunately, Iran continues to support terrorism, and its record on human rights is well known. But we should not withhold certification of the Iran nuclear agreement without credible evidence that Iran is not complying. Let’s remember, this agreement has always been about Iran, not obtaining nuclear weapons.

Doing so would strip the United States of its credibility in future international agreements not just with Iran, but with our allies as well.

In addition to Iran, we negotiated the Iran nuclear agreement with the United Kingdom, Germany, European Union, China, and Russia, and we must keep our word. In other words, to remain a country of laws, we cannot change positions on international agreements from one administration to another without serious justification and without the consent in working with our allies.

Especially now, as we are facing an increasing threat with North Korea, we must work with our allies and, together, make a safer world through a comprehensive strategy that involves diplomacy, sanctions, and, yes, deterrence. If we must use such force, we have methods for addressing Iran’s non-nuclear behavior besides refusing to recertify the agreement, and I will continue to advocate for the use of these tools to take a strong stance against Iran and their support of terrorist state activities and their abuse of human rights.

But refusing to recertify the Iran nuclear agreement, without clear evidence that Iran has breached any of its commitments, will deeply damage our relationships with our allies, and it will weaken our credibility worldwide.

COMMEMORATING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH
Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month. The House resolution is to commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month, which is observed from September 15 to October 15 every year.

This month we honor and celebrate the history, culture, achievements, and contributions of Hispanic leaders in communities throughout our great country. From serving in our Armed Forces, to starting businesses that further develop our economy and provide employment for Americans, Hispanics have contributed greatly to the advancement of science, medicine, literature, and education. The Hispanic community and its people have been critical in shaping our Nation and the valley that I have the honor to represent.

The story of our Hispanic friends, neighbors, and loved ones is the story of the American Dream, as they have the same hope and aspiration that all Americans have: to make a better life for themselves and their families through hard work, access to a better education, and equal treatment under the law.

Let us remember, after all, we are a nation of immigrants past and present. For over 250 years, since the formation of the United States, immigrants have come from all over the world to America to have a better life for themselves and, in turn, have made us the greatest country in the world.

During Hispanic Heritage Month, I am honored to celebrate the community whose determination and achievements are an integral part of not only our Nation, but the San Joaquin Valley that I have the honor to represent.

SUPPORT FOR NFL FOOTBALL PLAYERS
The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise and stand in the well of the House of Congress of the United States of America to have a better life for themselves and their families through hard work, access to a better education, and equal treatment under the law.

I love my country. I have said it many times here at this podium. I salute the flag, Mr. Speaker. I say the Pledge of Allegiance. I sing the national anthem. I love my country. And I respect the flag.

And because I love my country, I can stand here in the well of the House of the United States of America and announce that I support the NFL men, who are professional football players. I can say I support them because I believe in what the flag stands for: liberty and justice for all. I believe in this. And if there is to be liberty and justice, then they are a part of has to be called to the attention of the American public. I support the NFL players, Mr. Speaker.

To those who say that “they are so lucky, they are making millions, why don’t they just play football, they ought to be happy,” first, let me comment in this way: They are earning millions. Their bodies are being torn apart, in many cases. They are earning millions. They are earning millions. They suffer after they leave football. They are earning millions. And they are earning pain as they play a game that amuses many.

So those who say they are making piles of money and they ought to just go away, I contend that they are not doing it for the money. They are doing it because they understand injustice anywhere is still a threat to justice everywhere, as Dr. King put it. They want to eliminate the injustice that they see, and, in so doing, they have decided to take a knee.

I salute the flag. I support my country. I love my country. And I respect what they are doing in the form of peaceful protest to bring about change that ought to have been brought about decades or centuries ago; should have been, but has not been. Yes, we have come a long way, but we sure have a long way to go.

Now, to those who say “they have earned millions, why aren’t they happy,” well, it is not hush money.

Is that what you are saying, that when they get paid, they are earning money that says that they don’t have freedom of speech? Does that check negate their freedom of speech?

I think not. Freedom of speech is something that you cherish, whether you live in a mansion or you live under a bridge. Freedom of speech belongs to you. It doesn’t matter your station in life. It doesn’t matter your ethnicity. It doesn’t matter your religiosity. Freedom of speech belongs to you because you are a child of God and you live in the greatest country in the world.

So I stand in support of the NFL players. I want them to continue. I want them to stand their ground. I want this movement to continue. And I want those who were thwarted to know that you are trying to thwart injustice. When you try to change the subject and make it about something that it is not, you are trying to thwart injustice. Even if you don’t do it with intentionality, that is the reality.

We cannot allow injustice to continue. And I thank God that there are those who are making millions, those who are having their bodies abused, who are willing to take a stand by taking a knee against injustice, and they still respect this country and its flag and this anthem.

If there is one among them who has other thoughts, then I don’t support them. I support those who are having the righteous cause and who are respectful of the country, who can love the flag and still protest. I support that.
I am an American. I was born in the United States of America. I am a patriotic American. I believe in this country. And if you believe in it, you ought to allow peaceful protest to continue, because John F. Kennedy was right when he was paraphrased by Dr. King: Those who make peaceful protest impossible will make other forms of protest inevitable.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today. Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 42 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

PRAYER

Reverend Molly Fraser, Gig Harbor United Methodist Church, Gig Harbor, Washington, offered the following prayer:

God of many names, we give thanks for the opportunity to serve. Remind us that we are servants of our country, our people, and the land. Let us not forget all the blessings You have given us so that we might use our power and influence to help order the country in ways that allow each and every person to find life and liberty and to pursue happiness.

We come, perhaps, already weary from an onslaught of emails, texts, tweets, phone calls, and meetings where people make demands on how we vote and assumptions about every decision that we put forward. Help us, O God, to do the right thing, not just for a few, but for the many. Help us work together diligently so we might see the fruit of our effort grow into good throughout our country, which can serve to make this world more livable for all.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof. Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Babin) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BABIN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND MOLLY FRASER

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. KILMER) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I am so honored to welcome Pastor Molly Fraser from Gig Harbor United Methodist Church, my home church.

Our church isn't the biggest church, it isn't the oldest church, but it has left a large impact throughout Gig Harbor because it makes clear that all are welcome. Whether you are in pain and need somewhere to go or you are looking for fellowship, there is a welcome mat for you.

It makes clear to regular attendees and to newcomers that it is a place of open hearts, open minds, and open doors. It is a place that is committed to supporting the needs of those most in need throughout our community and around the world. It is a place to ask tough questions and to celebrate our faith.

Finally, it is a place that benefits from the tremendous leadership of Pastor Molly, who, during her brief tenure with the church, has brought incredible energy and heart and musical talent.

She is here in our Nation's capital today with her family. It is my honor to welcome them and, in spirit, the entire congregation of Gig Harbor United Methodist Church.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

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

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to recognize the Army National Guard's 236th Engineering Company. Located in Stephenville, Texas, they were the first on the ground in Houston to assist with Hurricane Harvey relief efforts on August 27. Over the course of a week, they rescued approximately 2,300 civilians and 380 animals from flooded areas.

Mr. Speaker, these men and women who serve our country are true heroes, and I am honored to represent them in the 25th Congressional District of Texas. I had the opportunity to meet with these soldiers a few weeks ago and personally shake their hands to thank them for a job well done. They stepped up in a moment of absolute crisis and when the people of Texas needed them most. They put their lives on the line in order to save others. Without them, the number of deaths could have been significantly higher.

It is because of selfless people like these that America is able to remain the strongest country in the world. The Lone Star State can't thank them enough for their swift and noble actions, and we will always remember their heroism.

Hurricane Harvey victims are still recovering, and all of America is behind them. We will rebuild together because we are all Texas strong.

God bless Texas, God bless the military, and God bless the United States of America.

In God we trust.

HONORING JAHEIR MOORE FOR SERVICE TO HIS COMMUNITY

Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Jaheir Moore, a seventh grade student from Jersey City, New Jersey, for his service to people in need.

This young man from my district takes the time nearly every day to crochet hats, scarves, blankets, and other items for people in homeless shelters and newborn babies in intensive care units. Over the past couple of years, he has donated dozens of bags full of his creations to make life a little better for others.

Jaheir is a straight A student who wants to become a fashion designer. In February, he was a guest on the "Rachael Ray Show." A week later, Jaheir had his first runway show in Jersey City. In April, I presented him with a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition for his charity work.

Mr. Speaker, Jaheir Moore's unselfish acts of kindness for people in need shows that our country's future is a bright one.

ALLEN COUNTY RIGHT TO LIFE

Mr. BANKS of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BANKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, on Monday night, I had the privilege of attending the Allen County Right to Life's 20th annual Uniting Our City for Life Banquet.

The event was a wonderful time with fellow Hoosiers who share a common concern for the sanctity of innocent human life, from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death. It also was a celebration of the fact that our culture increasingly is recognizing the value of human life.

A poll released last year found that a majority of young Americans support increasing restrictions that protect the unborn. Another recent poll found that 61 percent of Americans oppose using tax dollars to fund abortions. This
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

October 11, 2017

ever hit the U.S. and the strongest storm to hit Puerto Rico in 80 years. What it left behind was vast devastation and great damage to infrastructure and energy distribution systems.

Mr. Speaker, I am tremendously proud of our Pennsylvania Guardsmen who are on the ground assisting with this humanitarian disaster. They welcomed the call to action and are working to restore Puerto Rico’s infrastructure, install additional telecommunications, help families and businesses, and deliver more than 300 generators to provide electricity to those who need it.

We are working on rebuilding, and the Pennsylvania National Guard is there to aid in the recovery effort. It is the American way to have all hands on deck, and I am grateful for their efforts.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS

(Ms. GABBARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, domestic violence often hides behind closed doors and drawn curtains, but the problem is very staggering.

In my home State of Hawaii, 575 domestic violence survivors reach out to local organizations seeking help every single day. Their stories are heart-breaking and, too often, even if they are temporarily removed from the abusive environment, they are often returned to their abuser.

Survivors of domestic violence need legal protection from their abusers, but they aren’t likely to do so or be successful unless they have a lawyer. Just 32 percent of victims successfully obtain a restraining order without legal representation.

I call on my colleagues to support the POWER Act, which requires every State’s U.S. attorney to promote and expand pro bono legal services specifically for domestic violence survivors.

We all need to be more conscious of this problem because it is happening in our communities. As we observe Domestic Violence Awareness Month, let us have the courage to confront the pervasiveness of this crime and take action to help protect survivors with the safety and security they need.

MEDIA IGNORES DONATION TO ANTI-COP GROUP

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, you may have heard of Colin Kaepernick, the football quarterback who started “the kneel” to protest the national anthem at NFL games. He was the originator of the resistance movement in the NFL against police officers. But you likely haven’t heard that his brother, Colin Jr., was named after a convicted cop killer.

Neither national broadcast stations nor major daily newspapers reported the donation to an organization honoring Assata Shakur, who escaped prison and fled to Cuba after being found guilty in the 1973 murder of police officer Werner Foerster. Assata is currently on the FBI’s Most Wanted Terrorists list.

Why did the liberal national media think this story was not newsworthy? Do they agree with Kaepernick? Do they approve of contributions to organizations named after cop killers?

The liberal national media seems to have a grudge against law enforcement and patriotism, as well as religion and traditional values, based on their lack of fair coverage of those subjects. This might explain why their media’s credibility is at a record low.

CONTRACEPTIVE COVERAGE

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Trump administration rolled back contraceptive care for hundreds of thousands of women. They called it a victory for religious liberty. But let’s be real. This is just one part of the White House’s fight to strip women of their independence and healthcare.

First, they came for title X, scaling back the essential family planning centers that served low-income women. They attacked Planned Parenthood, pleading to block access for the millions of women who depend on it. They expanded the global gag rule, a policy that will limit the preventative healthcare options for women across the world.

Then, they turned their destructive sights on title IX, scaling back crucial guidelines that protect sexual assault victims on our college campuses.

Now, they have opened the door for bosses to deny contraceptive coverage for their female employees.

This is not a victory for religious freedom. This is about taking away women’s choices.

HONORING DR. DANIEL J. BRADLEY ON HIS RETIREMENT

(Mr. BUCHSHON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BUCHSHON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a true champion for higher education, Dr. Daniel J. Bradley, the 11th president of Indiana State University.

During his 9-year tenure at Indiana State, Dr. Bradley has led ISU to achieve the highest enrollment in school history, added new degree programs to meet the demands of the 21st century workforce, and completed more than $300 million in capital projects on the campus. Most importantly, Dr. Bradley pledged to double student success by increasing the student retention rate and increasing the student graduation rate.
From his service to our country in the U.S. Army to his service to the students of Indiana State University, I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. Bradley on his retirement at the end of this year.

CHALLENGE TO DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS TO WORK TOGETHER TO PASS A DACA FIX

(Mr. POLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POLIS, Mr. Speaker, there are upwards of 800,000 DREAMers in our country—young, de facto Americans, people who grew up here, are as American as you or I, American in fact, albeit not in law. They are able to work legally under the deferred action, or DACA program, that President Obama has set up. That has been jeopardized by an announcement that President Trump will be terminating that program within 6 months.

Now we are down to about 4½ months, a challenge to this body, Democrats and Republicans, to work together to rectify the legal situation of 800,000 de facto Americans. This body must act. We can’t leave these young Americans in limbo with regard to what their future prospects are to work.

Make no bones about it, if this body fails to act, over 800,000 aspiring Americans will no longer be able to go to work legally the very next day after deferred action expires. In the interest of unifying families, in the interest of these young people who are as American as you or I, in the interest of our economic growth and prosperity, I call upon my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to stop playing politics and finally pass a DACA fix, like the Dream Act, into law to make sure that they can give back to the country that has given so much to them.

IMPACT OF RECENT HURRICANES

(Mr. BILIRAKIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. Speaker, it was great to participate in this morning’s board of delegation meeting, during which we discussed the impact of recent hurricanes on our State and unmet needs to require further attention.

With the onslaught of natural disasters that have plagued our country in recent months, we must provide appropriate levels of Federal support to all who are suffering. However, we must also ensure that Florida’s ongoing needs are not overlooked as we seek to fully recover.

Our two largest industries, tourism and agriculture, have sustained significant losses, which will have a long-term impact on our economy, unfortunately. We also learned valuable lessons during the hurricane as it relates to the care for our most vulnerable citizens, our seniors and the disabled. These lessons need to translate to action in order to prevent future tragedies.

I look forward to working with my colleagues as we evaluate the proposed natural disaster funding bill that will be voted on later this week and determine its impact on Florida.

HONORING DAVE DAVIS

(Mr. MESSER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MESSER, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a dear friend of mine, Dave Davis, who passed away recently. Dave was a giant Purdue fan, but we first met at a UCLA basketball game over 20 years ago.

We immediately struck up a friendship, and in 2000, when I announced I was running for Congress, Dave was all in and, despite the long odds, took vacation time to drive me all around Madison County. We didn’t win that day, but that is the kind of guy Dave Davis was. He put others first, sharing in your successes and your struggles as if they were his own.

Dave had a great smile and a rare quality: he cared for everyone for who they could be, not just what they were.

Dave spent his career in public service for our State and our Nation, but his most important priority was his family. He never passed up an opportunity to talk about his wife, Robyn; or his kids, Alex, Amy, and Eric.

Dave Davis was a good man and my friend. Congratulations on a life well lived. Godspeed.

REFORMING THE TAX CODE

(Mr. YODER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YODER, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about our efforts here in the people’s House to reform our Tax Code and reduce the burden of the Federal Government on every American. Right now, Americans know that our Tax Code, generally speaking, is too complicated.

It has been 30 years since we have made meaningful reforms, and the time for that change is now. House and Senate Republicans have announced reforms that will make the Tax Code simpler, with more than 90 percent of filers being able to do their returns on a simple postcard.

We have asked to make the Tax Code fair for middle class Americans, lowering their rates and doubling their standards of living. We have asked to give relief to low-income Americans by eliminating the lowest 10 percent bracket completely and cutting the 15 percent bracket to 12. We have asked to crack down on tax avoidance by ending the dozens and dozens of loopholes that only the wealthiest taxpayers and corporations can take advantage of.

Mr. Speaker, we have a unique opportunity to do so much for hardworking families across America. I hope that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will join us, offer solutions, and make this a bipartisan effort to give the American people the relief they deserve.

RISING ON BEHALF OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Mr. AL GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the many who have concluded that enough is enough. I rise today to speak on behalf of the many people who believe that Article II, section 4 of the Constitution of the United States of America has meaning and that it is something that is appropriate for a time such as this, appropriate for a time when there is opposition among us who seems to incite hatred, bigotry, and invidious discrimination.

I rise to speak on their behalf today, Mr. Speaker, and I do so understanding that I am not doing it on behalf of Republicans, generally speaking, or Democrats, generally speaking. The people whom I refer are Americans, generally speaking.

So I rise to speak on their behalf.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO OFFER RESOLUTION RAISING A QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 2(a)(1) of rule IX, I seek recognition to give notice of my intent to raise a question of the privileges of the House.

The form of the resolution is as follows:

Articles of Impeachment against Donald J. Trump, President of the United States of America, in the Congress of the United States of America. Resolution.

Resolved, that Donald J. Trump, President of the United States of America, has undermined the integrity of his office with impunity and has brought disrepute on the Presidency with impunity, has betrayed his trust as President to the manifest injury of the American people and is unfit to be President, and is impeached pursuant to Article II, section IV of the Constitution of the United States of America, and that the following Articles of Impeachment be exhibited to the United States Senate:

Articles of Impeachment exhibited by the House of Representatives of the United States of America in the name of itself and of all of the people of the...
On January 27, 2017, Donald John Trump incited xenophobia and hate against Muslims in the United States of America, engendering religious anxiety, when he disrespected Islam by issuing Executive Order 13769, fulfilling a campaign promise to ban Muslims from entering the United States of America. This widely published campaign promise is dated December 7, 2015, and reads as follows:

Donald J. Trump Statement on Preventing Muslim Immigration, New York, New York, December 7, 2015. Donald J. Trump is calling for the total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country’s representatives can figure out what is going on.

On March 4, 2017, Donald John Trump incited race-baiting and racism, engendering racial antipathy, when he defamed, disrespected, and disparaged President Barack Obama by making the widely published statement, which has since been disclaimed:

Terrible. Just found out that Obama had my "wires tapped" in Trump Tower just before the victory. Nothing found. This is McCarthyism.

On July 26, 2017, Donald John Trump incited hate, blending iniquitous LGBTQ enmity when he disparaged and disrespected transgender Americans by indicating that the costs of their medical care outweighs the sacrifice they are willing to make for our country as he made the widely published statement:

After consultation with my generals and military experts, please be advised that the United States Government will not accept or allow transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. military. Our military experts, please be advised that the military must be focused on decisive and overwhelming victory and cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail.

In so doing, the aforementioned Donald John Trump, unmindful of the high duties of his high office and the dignity and proprieties thereof, and of the harmony, respect, and courtesies which ought to exist and be maintained within in American society, has undermined the integrity of his office, has brought disrepute on the Presidency, and has betrayed his trust as President to the manifest injury of the people of the United States of America, and is unfit to be President.

Therefore, Donald John Trump, by betraying his trust as President, warrants impeachment, trial, and removal from office and disqualification to hold any office of honor, trust, or profit under the United States of America.

Article II: That Donald John Trump, President of the United States of America, unmindful of the high duties of his high office and the dignity and proprieties thereof, and of the harmony and courtesies which ought to exist and be maintained within American society, did betray his trust as President and bring shame and dishonor to the office of the President by assaulting the majesty and dignity of the Presidency with causes rooted in White supremacy, bigotry, racism, anti-Semitism, White nationalism, and neo-Nazism when he, to wit:

On August 15, 2017, Donald John Trump made a widely published statement characterizing a group of anti-Semites, bigots, racists, White nationalists, and Klu Klux Klansmen who rallied in Charlottesville, Virginia, as "very fine people."

Thereafter, on August 23, 2017, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination released a 2-page decision in which it was stated that they were "disturbed by the failure at the highest political level of the United States of America to unequivocally reject and condemn the racist violent events and demonstrations led by the aforementioned groups, thereby potentially fueling the incitement of racist criminal incidents throughout the State party, and deeply concerned by the example this failure could set for the rest of the world."

On October 7, 2017, hate groups were again back in Charlottesville, Virginia, at the statue of Robert E. Lee, the Confederate general, chanting, "You will not replace us." Since this event on October 7, the President has made many widely published statements about many things including, but not limited to, the National Football League, but has not made one widely published statement condemning the hate groups for returning to the place where an innocent person lost her life at the hands of hate.

In so doing, the aforementioned Donald John Trump, unmindful of the high duties of his high office and the integrity and proprieties thereof, and of the harmony, respect, and courtesies which ought to exist and be maintained within in American society, has undermined the integrity of his office, has brought disrepute on the Presidency, and has betrayed his trust as President to the manifest injury of the people of the United States of America, and is unfit to be President.

Therefore, Donald John Trump, by betraying his trust as President, warrants impeachment, trial, and removal from office and disqualification to hold any office of honor, trust, or profit under the United States of America.
million people voted illegally in the 2016 Presidential election and, further, expending tax dollars to establish a commission to investigate his claim, to wit:

On November 27, 2016, Donald John Trump made the widely reported claim that:

In addition to winning the electoral college in a landslide, I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally... in Virginia, New Hampshire, and California. So why isn't the media reporting on this? Serious bias. Big problem.

On January 25, 2017, Donald John Trump made the widely reported claim that:

On July 1, 2017, Donald John Trump made the widely reported claim that:

On June 28, 2017, according to highly reported news stories, the commission previously referenced by Donald John Trump requested detailed voter registration data from all 50 States, including names, addresses, and other sensitive data from every voter in the country. Several States refused to send the information, and some States have been prevented by courts from turning over the information.

In so doing, the aforementioned Donald John Trump, unmindful of the high duties of his high office and the dignity and proprieties thereof, has undermined the integrity of his office and has brought disrepute on the Presidency and has betrayed his trust as President to the manifest injury of the people of the United States of America, and is unfit to be President.

Therefore, Donald John Trump, by betraying his trust as President, warrants impeachment, trial, and removal from office and disqualification to hold any office of honor, trust, or profit under the United States of America.

Article IV: Donald John Trump, President of the United States of America, unmindful of the high duties of his high office and the dignity and proprieties thereof, and of the harmony and courtesies which ought to exist and be maintained in American society, while aware of the widely reported history of unlawful abuses and brutality perpetrated by many, not all, police officers against innocent persons in the United States of America, did betray his trust as President, bringing shame and dishonor to the office of the Presidency by encouraging law enforcement officials to violate the constitutional rights of suspects in their custody and control, to wit:

On July 28, 2017, Donald John Trump, in a speech in front of the Suffolk County Police Department in Long Island, New York, stated that:

And when you see these towns and when you see these thugs being thrown into the back of a paddy wagon, you just see them thrown in—rough. I said, “Please don’t be too nice.” Like when you guys put somebody in the car and you’re protecting their head, you know, the way you put their hand over? Like, don’t hit their head, and they’ve just killed somebody—don’t hit their head. I said, “You can take the hand away, okay?”

This statement is injurious not only to the rule of law, which presumes innocence until guilt is proven in a court of law, but also to the administration of justice, which requires that care is given to persons held in the custody of law enforcement. Our Nation is founded upon a social contract where the constitutional rights of the individual are not surrendered by them or she if accused of a crime. To speak to the contrary is a violation of the Presidential oath of office to which Donald John Trump is bound.

In so doing, the aforementioned Donald John Trump, unmindful of the high duties of his high office and the dignity and the proprieties thereof, and of his oath of office, to “faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States of America, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States,” has undermined the integrity of his office, has brought disrepute on the Presidency, has betrayed his trust as President to the manifest injury of the people of the United States of America, and is unfit to be President.

Therefore, Donald John Trump, by betraying his trust as President, warrants impeachment, trial, and removal from office and disqualification to hold any office of high honor, trust, or profit under the United States of America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FRANKS of Arizona). Under rule IX, a resolution offered from the floor by a Member other than the majority leader or the minority leader as a question of privilege and having immediate precedence only at a time designated by the Chair within 2 legislative days after the resolution is properly noticed.

Pending that designation, the form of the resolution noticed by the gentleman from Texas will appear in the RECORD at this point.

The Chair will not at this point determine whether the resolution constitutes a question of privilege. That determination will be made at the time designated for consideration of the resolution.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 562 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (S. 585) to provide greater whistleblower protections for Federal employees; increased awareness of Federal whistleblower protections, and increased accountability and required discipline for Federal supervisors who retaliate against whistleblowers, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform; and (2) one motion to recommit.

S 2. On any legislative day during the period from October 16, 2017, through October 20, 2017:

(a) the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved; and

(b) the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time, within the limits of clause 4, section 5, article I of the Constitution, to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment.

S 3. The Speaker may appoint Members to perform the duties of the Chair for the duration of the period, as set forth in section 2 of this resolution as though under clause 8(a) of rule I.

S 4. It shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of October 12, 2017, or October 13, 2017, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules as though under clause 1 of rule XV. The Speaker or his designee shall consult with the Minority Leader or her designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to this section.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on House Resolution 562, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to bring this rule forward on behalf of the Rules Committee.

Yesterday, the Rules Committee heard testimony from our colleagues, Congressman PAUL MITCHELL, Oversight and Government Reform Committee Ranking Member ELIJAH CUMMINGS, and Congresswoman ANN KUSTER.
This rule provides for the consideration of S. 585, the Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act. The rule provides for 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and the ranking member of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, and provides for a motion to recommit.

S. 585 was authored by Senator Johnson in the Senate, and the House companion was introduced by my friend, Congressman Sean Duffy. I want to thank my colleagues from Wisconsin for their leadership on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this bill addresses a problem that is, unfortunately, far too common. When Federal employees blow the whistle on questionable practices, they face risk of retaliation and intimidation from their own employers, even though the current Federal law is supposed to protect them. In fact, the underlying legislation provided for by this rule is named after an individual who courageously spoke out, and his story is part of what inspired me to seek to address the courage to speak up when they discover a problem.

The bill specifically requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to determine a plan to restrict unauthorized access to confidential files, which—and it disturbs me to say this—has been used as a method of retaliation against whistleblowers.

This legislation would make much-needed changes to ensure that those who come forward with information necessary to maintain and increase accountability within our government do not suffer backlash as well.

Importantly, the bill also helps these individuals to know their rights and what opportunities for recourse are available to them.

It is unfortunate that we need this legislation, but evidence has indicated that we do. The underlying legislation puts bullies who have made their nest in government agencies on notice that their behavior won't stand. It defends brave whistleblowers and puts the bad actor Federal employees on notice: hostile work environments that target whistleblowers are on the bureaucracy's endangered species list.

The Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act also builds on the work the current administration is doing to address retribution levied against whistleblowers at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Importantly, I have colleagues on both sides of the aisle who agree that we need to address this problem and that the time to do so is now.

The Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act was unanimously adopted by the Senate on May 25, 2017. We need to continue their good work here today.

On behalf of the whistleblowers who have risked their careers and safety to right wrongs in our government, we need to support this strong and timely legislation. Calling for attention and action to address improper behavior within the United States Government should not be considered a risky undertaking.

Many Federal employees work day in and day out on behalf of the American people, yet some feel threatened when they try in earnest to make things better.

We need to continue the Senate's work on behalf of these individuals and the Americans that they serve. Everyone deserves a government that is accountable for its own decisions and for the actions of its agents.

Today we have the chance to make strides towards a more accountable government. We have the opportunity to address the most pressing problems facing whistleblowers at the Department of Veterans Affairs and across the Federal Government.

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the customary 30 minutes and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule. As my colleague noted, Dr. Kirkpatrick was a psychologist at a VA medical center in Wisconsin. In 2009, he was fired from his job after allegedly questioning the overmedication of his patients, particularly related to opioids. Tragically, that very same day, Dr. Kirkpatrick committed suicide.

I think we can all agree that protecting whistleblowers helps to ensure that waste, fraud, and abuse in our government does not go unnoticed or ignored.

It is our responsibility to empower and encourage whistleblowers to come forward and speak out when something isn't right. No one should have to live in fear of retaliation for bringing the truth to light. No one should fear losing their job or career or their life simply for following the rules.

The Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act increases accountability by enacting mandatory punishments for any manager or supervisor at an agency who has been found to have retaliated against a whistleblower.

The bill also contains VA-specific reforms to better protect the privacy of medical records. Employee medical records would now be prohibited from being accessed in the case of potential retaliation cases, which adds an additional level of accountability for supervisors and protecting the whistleblower from attacks and threats based on their personal medical history, which would be completely inappropriate.

Mr. Speaker, while there are strong and necessary reforms in this bill, I want to make sure that you know that legislation can always be improved through the amendment process or at least through conducting a hearing and markup of a bill.

Sadly, but unsurprisingly in this Congress, this bill didn't have a markup in committee; didn't have a hearing; is considered under a closed rule, where amendments that were brought forward were not even allowed to be debated on the House floor.

This might be a surprise even to the chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, who himself requested a structured rule that allowed for debate on amendments.

Much of my statement today echoes the sentiment of Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Cummings and his testimony yesterday evening in the Rules Committee. Though this bill isn't perfect, it can be improved and strengthened by a few relatively straightforward amendments, which, unfortunately, were shut
down in the Rules Committee last night.

The first amendment, which was blocked today, would have addressed the bill's constitutional concerns first raised by the Office of Personnel Management’s mandatory disciplinary procedures to allow superiors their constitutional rights to due process in responding to accusations of retaliation. It would have improved the bill and made it more likely to stand up in court to challenge.

An amendment confirming the right to due process would have been something at least worth voting on, and, in fact, could have preserved the constitutionality of the core elements of this bill, ensuring that it stays in place to protect whistleblowers.

Another amendment blocked under this rule would have addressed privacy concerns contained in the bill. Specifically, the amendment would have protected the privacy of a whistleblower who sought the permission of the whistleblower’s next of kin before an agency can share information regarding the suicide.

Again, it seems like a straightforward fix to protect the privacy of whistleblowers and their families. At the very least, even if Members of this body disagreed with it, why didn’t we at least bring it forward for debate and a vote?

A third amendment that was blocked today contained the text of Mr. CUMMINGS’ bill, H.R. 702, which was passed by the House of Representatives unanimously. As you know, this bill would expand protections for employees who face discrimination, and it solidifies our commitment to protecting whistleblowers and other employees from retaliation. It was a bipartisan bill. It passed the House unanimously.

We simply should have allowed it under this bill to become part of a related effort.

Now, I know that my colleagues on the other side will say: Oh, the Senate is slow. They won’t take up this bill on time. It is better for us to pass something now than have to wait for their approval.

But it only takes 10 minutes usually to debate an amendment. So we could have allowed three amendments and spent no more than 30 minutes debating them and still reported this bill out efficiently.

Now, I happen to think that, while there are many on the other side of the aisle who would agree the House needs to return to regular order, it is time that Members actually started by voting according to what they are saying. By voting “no” on this rule and rejecting it, we can send the message to House leadership that we want an open, regular order process.

Bills should come out of committee through markups. Republicans and Democrats should have the opportunity to amend bills on the floor of the House. Perhaps if we did that more often, the Senate would not simply cast aside many of the bills that have passed the House, knowing that they went through the process of deliberate consideration by our body, rather than a bill that appears fully formed where Members of this body simply get an up-or-down vote.

This bill will enjoy bipartisan support when it passes the House later today, as it should, but it also begs the question of: Why are we spending valuable time debating a noncontroversial bill, especially if it is considered under a closed rule, and why did we simply put it up on suspension in the first place?

To say things bluntly, we are actually running out of time this year. By my count, we only have 30 legislative days left in the first half of the 115th Congress, yet we are faced with so many important issues we need to move forward on.

Nine million children face losing their health insurance because Congress hasn’t yet acted to reauthorize CHIP. Almost 4 million young, aspiring Americans have no idea what their lives will look like 6 months from now because of the President’s decision to end DACA and Congress’s continued inability to make it permanent law. The citizens, like Puerto Ricans and citizens, still have not been granted a Federal aid package and are suffering from a lack of food, clean water, healthcare supplies, and electricity, jeopardizing many of their lives today.

Yet here we are debating a bill without even allowing an amendment process that we could have passed under suspension vote yesterday so we could move on to CHIP, to Puerto Rico, to DACA today, rather than spend one of our 30 remaining days of business this year avoiding the topics that the American people want us to take on.

Despite the important goals we have left to accomplish this year, it is misleading to assume that regular order is somehow slow. How fast can Congress work when we are pushed right up to the edge. It is past time that we show that same urgency and commitment in considering legislation under regular order, even if it means we have to stay here on Thursdays and Fridays, even if it means we are working until 8 or 9 or 10 or midnight. The American people deserve no less.

Make no mistake, the Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017 is an important piece of legislation that protects whistleblowers and hold Federal agencies accountable, but if we are going to devote this much time to legislation that protects employees, let’s take it a step further and talk about expanding worker protections for an even greater number of Americans.

For example, my legislation, the Giving Workers a Fair Shot Act—which I introduced last session and this session, and has yet to receive a hearing, no less—is a markup in the Education and Workforce committee—would protect workers from wage theft, prevent taxpayer funds from going towards union busting, and establish first contract arbitration to prevent companies from dragging on labor negotiations unnecessarily to the detriment of workers.

We don’t have time to waste. If we are going to consider an issue, let’s dive in. We can protect whistleblowers from retaliation and strengthen the rights of workers at the same time. Given the minimal amount of time we have left to work with, 30 days this year, we have an obligation to do both.

By the way, the fact that we only work 30 more days this year here in the United States Congress probably comes as a great surprise to many hard-working Americans who are accustomed to working 5 days a week. We have the rest of the month of October, November, December. Well, many Americans might get Christmas Day off, perhaps even Christmas Eve, but I don’t think Americans realize that Congress is only going to work 30 days out of the next 78 days. That is less than a half-time job, Mr. Speaker.

I think the American people deserve more from us in this body, especially when so many issues like CHIP, like Puerto Rico, and many others have gone unanswered by us in this body, the House of Representatives, or by colleagues across the way in the Senate.

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

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. Roby).

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying bill, S. 585, the Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017.

This bill strengthens penalties against those who retaliate against whistleblowers, adds protections and opportunities for whistleblowers placed on probation, and ensures Federal employees have a greater knowledge of whistleblower rights and protections.

Specifically, this bill forbids a supervisor from taking or threatening to take action against an employee because they refuse to obey an order that would violate a law, rule, or regulation.

I want to thank Senator Roy Johnson for his persistence in pushing this legislation even after the former Senator Harry Reid shut it down last Congress.

What a poignant and meaningful gesture to name this bill after Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick, a VA employee who took his own life after being subjected to cruel retaliation from VA officials.

I hope it puts in perspective the immense emotional burdens that victims of retaliation face.

Mr. Speaker, this issue is personal for me. Unfortunately, I have seen exactly what retaliation against whistleblowers looks like, how easy it is to get
away with it, and why we have to put a stop to it.

Last week marked the 3-year anniversary since the director of the central Alabama VA became the first senior manager in the country fired as a result of the recent VA scandal. That was a major step towards turning around one of the Nation’s worst VA systems and restoring trust with the veteran population it serves.

Mr. Speaker, I can say, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that it would have never happened without brave whistleblowers inside the VA telling me the truth.

Two brave individuals in particular, Sheila Muse and Rich Tremaine, told me the truth about major instances of misconduct and mismanagement when no one else would. Seeing no other way to achieve change, they finally told their story to the media, at great personal risk to their careers.

The stories that emerged from these exposures were almost unbelievable:

More than 1,000 X-ray cancer screenings were lost and unread for years, even though some showed malignancies. When alerted to the problem, top administrators tried to cover this up.

A pulmonologist manipulated more than 1,200 patient records but, even after being caught twice, was still given a satisfactory review.

A central Alabama VA employee took a recovering veteran to a crack house and bought him drugs and prostitution in order to extort his VA payments. Even when caught, this employee was not fired until a year and a half later when we exposed it in the newspaper.

Mr. Speaker, this behavior is egregious, and, trust me, there is a lot more where it came from.

However, had it not been for the courage of those on the inside to expose the wrongdoing, the world might not have ever known. To me and to the veterans whose lives they might have saved, they are heroes. But that is not how they were treated by VA officials. They were treated as enemies and outcasts, all because they tried to do the right thing.

Rich Tremaine actually testified here before the Veterans’ Affairs Committee, detailing the systemic way that some VA officials attempted to silence or disparage him. The effects of him blowing the whistle on wrongdoing follow him to this day, far away from Montgomery, Alabama.

Mr. Speaker, my experience working to clean house at the VA taught me the fascinating and frustrating truth about the culture in some parts of the VA. The system routinely goes out of its way to protect those who don’t do their jobs or even harm veterans, but then goes after those who try to stop that misbehavior.

For years, because of poorly written civil service laws and powerful unions, too many VA employees got the message that misconduct, negligence, and poor performance would be tolerated, but blowing the whistle on that kind of behavior would not be.

I have seen it too many times. All too frequently, VA employees caught for doing the wrong thing are reprieved, face retaliation for speaking up. It is not because people are just naturally mean or because there is some kind of misunderstanding. The reason whistleblowers face systemic retaliation is because it works. Whistleblowers who face intimidation or persecution for their action, every other employee sees it, and they know what will happen to them if they tell the truth. It has a powerful, chilling effect—one we saw firsthand in Montgomery.

They retrench because it works. That is just wrong, and it is time to punish those who do it with harsher penalties. We need to rethink our civil service laws in this country to make sure public servants live up to the honor and responsibility of the public trust, and I believe that this bill is another positive step in that direction. Mr. Speaker, that is why I urge my colleagues to bring it to the floor by supporting this rule.

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

Mr. Speaker, President Trump has been relentless on his attack on immigrants. Americans, generally, and, in particular, DREAMers since he took office. Yet 82 percent of American voters, including about 70 percent of Republicans, believe DREAMers should be allowed to stay in the U.S. and apply for citizenship. When President Trump has continued to turn his back on these innocent young people.

Mr. Speaker, here is our chance to rectify President Trump’s decision and restore the American people’s faith in us and our faith in our aspiring Americans.

When we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to bring up H.R. 3440, the Dream Act. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation would help the thousands of young people who are de facto Americans in every way except for on paper.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD, along with extraordinary praise by my colleagues in support of the House of Representatives to amend the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, by defeating the previous question today, we can bring forward the Dream Act, which I am confident would pass on the floor of the House probably by a good margin.

What the Dream Act does is it allows young people who grew up in our country, who know no other country, a pathway to become citizens that have gone to our schools, they have been on the football team or cheerleaders like your own kids or grandkids, Mr. Speaker.

They are able to work legally in our country because of the deferred action program, which is scheduled by President Trump to be canceled in 4½ months. We need to act now to give these young people the certainty they need to live their lives as Americans, the only country they know, and the only country that they are loyal to.

We simply don’t have time to waste. We need to give these young de facto Americans the certainty they need to continue with their lives to be able to contribute to our country, join our military, pay taxes, and the other responsibilities that Americans have.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, protecting whistleblowers is important. It is critical to ensure that our democracy functions honestly and the ability and government is truly working in the best interests of the people that it serves. But we could get there a better way, by having an open process that allows Democrats and Republicans to suggest further improvements to whistleblower protection rather than having a bill that was never marked up in committee, that simply appeared fully formed for the full House to consider without the opportunity for Democrats or Republicans to make it any better.

The Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act will strengthen the rights of whistleblowers and reaffirm their value and importance to our country. But once again, this bill would have gone through a regular process that allowed us to amend it.

The fact that this bill passed the Senate, with bipartisan support shouldn’t stop us from making changes in this body, the House of Representatives, to improve the bill and make it work even better. We have an obligation to our constituents to thoughtfully consider every piece of legislation in front of us and to amend where we see fit.

So, let’s move forward addressing the pressing issues in front of us, such as finding a path forward on deferred action, which we will present if we can defeat the previous question, reauthorizing CHIP, or making improvements in our healthcare system, let’s do it through a regular process that allows Democrats and Republicans, the 435 of us who serve here, to bring forward our ideas, not just the ideas of leadership in making the country a better place.

We have good, smart, deliberate Members on both sides of the aisle who want to work, want to legislate. It is ridiculous that we only have 30 days out of the next 78 in which Congress
will even be working, and I suspect for most of the 30 days, like today. Democrats and Republicans won’t even be able to offer their ideas and have them considered. The American people deserve better.
ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition, in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule requiring the House to defeat the previous question and a member of the opposition party proposed to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: “The previous question having been called, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.”

The Republican majority may say “the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution, and (clause 2(a)(1) of rule IX) has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.” But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here’s how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: “Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controls the time for debate, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment.”

H. Rept. 99-720, in its Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled “Amending Special Rules” states: “a vote to order the previous question on such a rule [a rule requiring the resolution to stand as final (and on Rules) opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.] (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: “Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question, the resolution on a report filed from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.” Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority’s agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The vote on the previous question has been rejected. The next speaker will be Mr. Dobbs.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XX, proceedings on this question will be postponed and yeas and nays ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 2(a)(1) of rule IX, the Speaker designates this as the time for the offering of the resolution noticed by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN).

The resolution has not been offered.


The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 562) providing for consideration of the bill (S. 585) to provide greater whistleblower protections for Federal employees, increased awareness of Federal whistleblower protections, and increased accountability and required discipline for Federal supervisors who retaliate against whistleblowers, and for other purposes; providing for proceedings during the period from October 16, 2017, through October 20, 2017; and providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules. The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The previous question has been ordered.

YEAS—227

Adams            Aguilar            Arrington          Barrett          Black            Boyle, Brendan
Adherholt        Aderholdt        Allen            Amash            Anderson          Bankes (IN)
Aiken            Akin             Akwasi           Altmire          Arrington         Baker
Ali             Ali            Alex             Alexander        Allen             Bart
Ainsworth        Ainsworth        Alpert           Allen             Andrews          Barden
Al Fahim         Al Green         Altmire          Alvin            Alves            Barrow
Alvarez          Allard            Alves            Allred            Alexander        Beatty
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The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a question on the resolution. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The House will resume proceedings. So the resolution was agreed to.

Messrs. ELLISON and LYNCH changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

Messrs. JONES and BRADY of Pennsylvania changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

Mr. POLIS, Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote. The result of the vote is an agreed upon 2 to 1 vote in favor.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yes 234, noes 185, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 561]

AYES—234

Mr. H. B. FORD (PA) moved that the House stand adjourned.

The Clerk: The resolution was agreed to.

The House will resume proceedings.

Mr. RUCKER, Chairman, presented the report of the Committee on Standards and Technology to dissemi-

NIST SMALL BUSINESS CYBERSECURITY ACT

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2105) to require the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology to disseminate guidance to help reduce small business cybersecurity risks, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, in the year of our Lord two thousand and seventeen:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE

This Act may be cited as the “NIST Small Business Cybersecurity Act”.

SEC. 2. IMPROVING CYBERSECURITY OF SMALL BUSINESSES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) R E S O U R C E S .—The term “resources” means guidelines, tools, best practices, standards, methodologies, and other ways of providing information.

(2) S M A L L B U S I N E S S .—The term “small business” means businesses that have the mean-
Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to review the amendments and include any extraneous material on H.R. 2105.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the leadership of the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Security, and Intelligence of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, the Chair, Mr. RINEHART; the ranking member, Mr. WYDEN; and the subcommittee members. This important legislation is the result of their hard work and dedication.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. WEBSTER for his work on the bill and all of my colleagues on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee for their support of the bill.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida and the National Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Information Technology Association of America, the National Restaurant Association, the National Retail Federation, the National Small Business Association, the International TechneGroup, and the Chamber of Commerce, for their support of the bill. The bill would help small businesses and large businesses and what they need to develop to specifically help themselves.

This bill describes the vital role played by small businesses in the U.S. economy, the devastating impact of cyber attacks on a majority of small businesses and large businesses and what they need to develop to specifically help themselves.

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This bill describes the vital role played by small businesses in the U.S. economy, the devastating impact of cyber attacks on a majority of small businesses and large businesses and what they need to develop to specifically help themselves.
The NIST cybersecurity framework provides valuable guidance on cybersecurity best practices for organizations of all sizes, but small businesses often don’t have the time or resources to figure out how to adapt it to their needs and implement it. This bill directs NIST to develop, disseminate, and best practices specifically for small businesses so that they can protect their networked resources.

Most small businesses do not have significant IT departments. Some do not even have dedicated information security personnel. Thus, they may be more at risk of cyber attack than large enterprises.

According to data released last month, 53 percent of American businesses of all sizes suffered a cyber attack in the past year. Of those, 72 percent spent more than $5,000 to investigate and recover. A 2016 report found that 42 percent of businesses suffered a cyber attack of some kind.

Indeed, attacks do not only hurt individual small-business owners, employees, and customers, they hurt American competitiveness.

In my district in the southwest suburbs of Chicago, there is a fourth-generation manufacturing business that has suffered multiple sophisticated phishing attacks. The few times they have fallen victim to these attacks, the costs have been significant.

The owners have told me that they would welcome guidance on affordable, off-the-shelf resources to strengthen their cyber defenses and let them get back to focusing on their business.

This is a story repeated across the country. That is why we must act, and we must pass this bill for our small businesses. The guidelines created under this bill, like the NIST framework, will be voluntary, so we won’t be adding to the regulatory burden on small businesses. Instead, we will be offering an opportunity to secure their networks so that they can compete on a level playing field.

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

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DUNN).

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 2105, the National Institute of Standards and Technology Small Business Cybersecurity Act. This bipartisan legislation instructs the Director of NIST, in consultation with other Federal agencies, to disseminate guidance to help small businesses identify, assess, manage, and reduce their cybersecurity risks. As a small-business owner, I am honored to be a cosponsor of this bill.

We know the importance of keeping all records safe and secure from outside threats. With the recent hacking of Equifax and many others, there is clearly a serious threat to our economy and cyber warfare in the world today. It is imperative that we ensure that the backbone of our economy, our small- and medium-size businesses, have the resources they need to stay safe.

I strongly believe that the businesses in Florida’s Second District would benefit from this vital information, which will help them keep their data safe and secure. By implementing cybersecurity efforts, we are protecting both small businesses and their millions of customers across the country.

This bill doesn’t cost the taxpayers anything, but it could potentially save small-business owners both their privacy and livelihoods.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON), the ranking member of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2105, the NIST Small Business Cybersecurity Act of 2017, which directs the National Institute of Standards and Technology to provide more guidance, resources, and tools to small businesses to improve their cybersecurity and protect the personal information of their customers.

According to the Small Business Administration, the 28 million small businesses in America account for 54 percent of all U.S. sales and 55 percent of all U.S. jobs. Small businesses play a central role in our economy. Unfortunately, the information systems and networks of small businesses are especially vulnerable to an increasing volume and sophistication of cyber attacks. Small businesses rarely have employees or leadership with education and training in cybersecurity. Further, small businesses typically have limited resources to invest in cybersecurity.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology, or NIST, is a leader in cybersecurity in both the public and private sectors. In 2009, NIST developed a guidance document called, “Small Business Information Security: The Fundamentals.” The document described the fundamentals of an effective small-business information security program in nontechnical language.

In 2014, in response to an executive order from President Obama, NIST published the Cybersecurity Framework for Critical Infrastructure. The cybersecurity framework, as written, is most useful for larger businesses with at least some cybersecurity expertise. Therefore, in November 2016, NIST published an update of their small-business guidance document using the framework as a template.

These are just two examples of how NIST has long privatized supporting small-business efforts to strengthen cybersecurity. The requirements of H.R. 2105 are consistent with these ongoing efforts and help ensure that they will continue.

Ideally, H.R. 2105 would have also provided resources for NIST to expand these activities because the need is very clear. We cannot effectively support small business in this country unless we provide the relevant government agencies the resources to help protect those businesses from cyber threats.

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 2105, and I thank the sponsors, including Mr. WEBSTER, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Ms. ROSEN, for their strong support for small businesses and NIST’s important role in cybersecurity. However, I am concerned that the House bill contains an explicit unfunded mandate clause and that the Senate passed a version that is silent in funding. I hope Congress will provide NIST the adequate resources to fulfill the mandates in this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the bill.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), chairman of the committee.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida (Mr. WEBSTER) for yielding me time and for introducing H.R. 2105, the NIST Small Business Cybersecurity Act.

This important and timely bipartisan bill, cosponsored by 17 Members of Congress and approved by the Science Committee by voice vote, directs the National Institute of Standards and Technology to provide small businesses with cybersecurity guidelines, tools, best practices, standards, and methodologies necessary to better protect themselves from cyber attacks.

Small businesses help produce a thriving economy that benefits our entire country. They bring innovative ideas, cutting-edge products and services, and jobs to the marketplace. In my home State, for example, there are more than 2.4 million small businesses that employ almost 4.5 million Texans. Major cyber attacks dominate news coverage, such as the Equifax or Yahoo hacks that impacted millions and billions of people. But small businesses, which often do not have sufficient information to adequately monitor and protect their computer systems, are frequently the target of cyber attacks, as well.

A 2016 Symantec report notes that cyber attacks against businesses with fewer than 250 employees have grown from 18 percent in 2011 to 43 percent in 2015. This bill can help those businesses.

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, so it is appropriate that we consider a bill designed to help protect small businesses from cybersecurity attacks. Today’s legislation provides small businesses with NIST expertise to reduce their cybersecurity risk.

NIST experts developed a cybersecurity framework through collaboration between the government and the private sector. This framework is accepted and used by many private organizations to address and manage their information technology vulnerabilities in a cost-effective way.
The guidance described in this bill to help small businesses is based on the NIST cybersecurity framework. H.R. 2105 prioritizes dissemination of this guidance by NIST within its almost $1 billion budget.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to show their support for small business by approving Mr. WEBSTER’s fiscally responsible, innovation protection bill today.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. COMSTOCK), the chairwoman of the subcommittee.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2105. When I travel around my district, which is rich with technology workers, the thing that I hear repeated concern about is the increasing need for individuals with the skill set, education, training, and knowledge of cybersecurity matters.

With the recent events with Equifax, WannaCry, and OPM breaches, it is clear that our cybersecurity infrastructure needs to be strengthened.

In December 2016, the Commission on Enhancing National Cybersecurity specifically recommended that the administration should “develop concrete efforts to support and strengthen the cybersecurity of small- and medium-sized businesses.”

With small businesses accounting for most of the U.S. economy’s jobs and sales, it is imperative that we provide guidance to help them identify, assess, manage, and reduce their cybersecurity risks. By making these resources readily available to small businesses across the country, this commonsense legislation will help them protect their sensitive data and business from cyber threats so they can grow our economy and provide more jobs instead.

I am an original cosponsor of this measure, the NIST Small Business Cybersecurity Act, and I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on its passage.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Florida (Mr. WEBSTER) for his leadership on this legislation.

Mr. WEBSTER. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON), who is speaking.

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Commission on Enhancing National Cybersecurity, and I urge my colleagues to pass this bill.

Mr. WEBSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia (Mrs. COMSTOCK) who knows the importance of small business. We know how important small businesses are to our country, the real engine of our economic growth.

We also know that, in most small businesses today, they don’t have the capabilities to have an IT department or the expertise that they need to protect themselves from the continual cyber attacks, the theft of data that we hear about. But those attacks and that theft of data does not only happen for large corporations, it is a threat to small businesses. Therefore, we need to do all that we can to make sure that they are capable of protecting themselves so that our small businesses can continue to thrive and be the economic engine that they are.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill. We get something good done for our small businesses. I urge them to support this, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank those from both sides—Ranking Member LIPINSKI, Chairman SMITH, and others—who have supported this bill. It is a great idea. It is an opportunity to not only have available for us, it has bipartisan support and also bicameral support. This is a good opportunity to help all small businesses.

I know personally from my business and I know others who have small businesses who know that there is, in a sense, very little help right now for small businesses in this area of cybersecurity. The larger businesses certainly have their own IT people; we don’t. So I am excited about the fact that this could happen, and I move passage.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BACON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEBSTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2105, 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.

THE SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH AND SMALL BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2017

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2763) to amend the Small Business Act to improve the Small Business Innovation Research program and Small Business Technology Transfer program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2763  
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as “The Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer Improvements Act of 2017”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

1. Short title, table of contents.  
2. Requiring insertion incentives.  
3. Additional SBIR and STTR technology insertion reporting requirements.  
4. Encouraging innovation in United States manufacturing.  
5. Encouraging innovation in cybersecurity.  
6. Compliance of Phase III awards with competitive procedures.
Sec. 7. Improvements to technical and business assistance in the SBIR and STTR programs.

Sec. 8. Procurement center representatives and other acquisition personnel in the SBIR and STTR programs.

Sec. 9. Increased outreach requirements.

Sec. 10. Reporting requirements.

Sec. 11. Establishing the Civilian Agency Commercialization Readiness Program.

Sec. 12. Commercialization assistance pilot programs.

Sec. 13. Phase 0 Proof of Concept Partnership Pilot Program.

Sec. 14. Reporting requirements.

Sec. 15. SBIR Phase flexibility.

Sec. 16. Extension of deadline for assistance for administrative, oversight, and contract processing costs.

SEC. 2. REQUIRING INSERTION INCENTIVES.

Section 9(y)(5) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(y)(5)) is amended by striking "(B)" and inserting "(A)"

SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL SBIR AND STTR TECHNOLOGY INSERTION REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

Section 9(a)(6) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(y)(6)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by striking "and" at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (C)(i), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

(D) not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than December 31 of each year thereafter, submit to the Committee on Science, Technology, and Innovation of the Senate, a report describing the goals set under paragraph (A) and the incentives used or created under subparagraph (B),

SEC. 4. ENCOURAGING INNOVATION IN UNITED STATES MANUFACTURING.

Section 9 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(l) ENCOURAGING INNOVATION IN UNITED STATES MANUFACTURING.—In carrying out this section, the Administrator shall—

(1) ensure that, in selecting small businesses that participate in SBIR or STTR programs under this section, Federal agencies give high priority to small manufacturing companies and other small businesses or entities engaged in or planning to engage in manufacturing research and development for the purpose of developing and producing new products and technologies in the United States; and

(2) include in the annual report to Congress under subsection (b)(7) a determination of whether the priority described in paragraph (1) is being carried out.

SEC. 5. ENCOURAGING INNOVATION IN CYBERSECURITY.

Section 9 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638), as amended by section 4, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(uu) ENCOURAGING INNOVATION IN CYBERSECURITY.—In carrying out this section, the Administrator shall—

(1) ensure that, in selecting small business concerns to participate in SBIR or STTR programs under this section, Federal agencies engaged in cybersecurity research give high priority to small business concerns that are engaged in cybersecurity research and development for the purpose of developing and implementing technology services and products to strengthen the security of United States Government and private computer systems, including software, hardware, and portable devices; and

(2) include in the annual report to Congress under subsection (b)(7) a determination of whether the priority described in paragraph (1) is being carried out.

SEC. 6. COMPLIANCE OF PHASE III AWARDS WITH NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS.

Section 9(r)(4) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(r)(4)) is amended by inserting "as direct follow-on awards issued without further competition" after "developed the technology"

SEC. 7. IMPROVEMENTS TO TECHNICAL AND BUSINESS ASSISTANCE IN THE SBIR AND STTR PROGRAMS.

Section 9(q) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(q)) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by inserting "and Business" after "Technical";

(2) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking "a vendor selected under paragraph (2)" and inserting "1 or more vendors selected under paragraph (2)";

(ii) by inserting "and business" before "assistance services"; and

(iii) by inserting "assistance with product sales, intellectual property protections, market research, market validation, and development of regulatory plans and manufacturing plans," after "technologies," and

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking "includes intellectual property protections" before the period at the end;

(3) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking "Each agency may select a vendor to assist small business concerns to meet" and inserting the following:

"(A) In consultation with the PresidentialScience and Technology Advisor, an agency may select 1 or more vendors from which small business concerns may obtain assistance in meeting; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

(B) SELECTION BY SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN.—A small business concern may, by contract or otherwise, select 1 or more vendors to assist the small business concern in meeting the goals listed in paragraph (1); and

(4) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by inserting "(A)" after "paragraph (2)" each place it appears;

(B) in subparagraph (A), by striking "$5,000 per year" each place it appears and inserting "$5,000 per project";

(C) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) by striking "$35,000 per year" each place it appears and inserting "$35,000 per project"; and

(ii) in clause (i), by striking "which shall be in addition to the amount of the recipient's award and which may, as determined appropriate by the head of the agency, be included as part of the recipient's award or be in addition to the amount of the recipient's award";

(D) in subparagraph (C)—

(i) by inserting "or business" after "technical";

(ii) by striking "the vendor" and inserting "a vendor"; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

"Business-related services aimed at improving the commercialization success of a small business concern are obtained from an entity, such as a public or private organization or an agency of or other entity established or funded by a State that facilitates or accelerates the commercialization of technologies or assists in the creation and growth of private enterprises that are commercializing technology.

(1) by inserting "or business" after "technical" each place it appears; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(u) DEFINITION OF SENIOR PROCUREMENT EXECUTIVE.—Section 9(e) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(e)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (12)(B), by striking "and" at the end;

(2) in paragraph (13)(B), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(14) the term 'senior procurement executive' means an official designated under section section 15(k) for the agency letting the contract, to assist small business concerns participating in a SBIR or STTR program with any research developed under such a program before such small business concern is awarded a contract from such Federal agency;

(2) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 9(b)(3) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(b)(3)) is amended by striking "and" at the end.

(c) MODIFICATIONS RELATING TO PROCUREMENT CENTER REPRESENTATIVES AND OTHER ACQUISITION PERSONNEL.—

(1) SBIR AMENDMENT.—Section 9(j) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(j)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(4) MODIFICATIONS RELATING TO PROCUREMENT CENTER REPRESENTATIVES.—Before the period at the end of this subsection, the Administrator shall modify the policy directives issued pursuant to this subsection to require procurement center representatives (as described in section 15(i)) to coordinate with the appropriate contracting officer or SBIR program officer, and the appropriate Director of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization established pursuant to section 15(k) for the agency letting the contract, to assist small business concerns participating in the SBIR program, particularly in Phase III. The procurement center representatives shall coordinate with the appropriate contracting officer and the appropriate Director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization established pursuant to section 15(k) for the agency letting the contract.

(2) STTR AMENDMENT.—Section 9(p)(2) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(p)(2)) is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (E)(i), by striking "and" at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (F), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:
Section 15(l)(2) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648(k)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (I), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (J) as subparagraph (L); and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (I) the following new subparagraph:

(2) CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

([^)]+)
“(8) SELECTION.—In selecting eligible entities to participate in a commercialization assistance pilot program under this subsection, the head of a covered agency shall consider—

(A) the extent to which such award could aid the eligible entity in commercializing the research funded under the eligible entity’s Phase I SBIR or STTR award; and

(B) the extent to which such award will aid the eligible entity in commercializing the research funded under the eligible entity’s Phase II SBIR or STTR award.

“(9) EVALUATION REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this section, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate, a report including—

(A) a summary of the activities of commercialization assistance pilot program carried out under this subsection;

(B) a detailed compilation of results achieved by such commercialization assistance pilot programs, including the number of eligible entities that received awards under such programs;

(C) the rate at which each eligible entity that received a subsequent Phase II SBIR award under this subsection commercialized the research of the recipient;

(D) the growth in employment and revenue of eligible entities participating in a commercialization assistance pilot program planned under this subsection; and

(E) a comparison of commercialization success of entities participating in a commercialization assistance pilot program with recipients of an additional Phase II SBIR award under subsection (f).

“(10) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—

(A) the term ‘covered agency’ means a Federal agency required to participate in the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs; and

(B) the term ‘commercialization assistance pilot program’ means a program established by a covered agency to provide matching funding for eligible entities participating in the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs.

“SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL AGENCIES IN ASSISTANCE PILOT PROGRAM.

“(a) INCLUSION OF ADDITIONAL AGENCIES IN PILOT PROGRAM.—Section 9(j)(7) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(j)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking ‘‘The Director’’ and inserting ‘‘Each covered agency head’’; and

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking ‘‘or the Office of Science and Technology Policy’’ and inserting ‘‘or the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the United States Senate, and the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate’’.

“(b) EXTENSION OF PILOT PROGRAM AUTHORITY.—Section 9(j)(7) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(j)(7)) is amended by striking ‘‘fiscal year 2017’’ and inserting ‘‘fiscal year 2022’’.

“SEC. 4. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

“(a) ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Section 9(b)(7) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(b)(7)) is amended by striking ‘‘to report not less than annually’’ and inserting ‘‘to submit a report not later than December 31 of each year’’.

“(b) ANNUAL REPORT TO SBA AND OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY.—Section 9(g)(9) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(g)(9)) is amended—

(1) by striking ‘‘make an annual report’’ and inserting ‘‘submit a report not later than March 30 of each year, submit a report’’; and

(2) by striking ‘‘Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the United States Senate, and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives’’ and inserting ‘‘Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the United States Senate, and the Committee on Small Business of the United States Senate’’.

“SEC. 5. SBIR ELIGIBILITY.

“Section 9(cc) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(cc)) is amended by striking ‘‘During fiscal years’’ and all that follows through ‘‘may each provide’’ and inserting ‘‘During fiscal years 2018 through 2022, all agencies participating in the SBIR program may provide’’.
establish commercialization readiness programs, or CRPs. As a pilot program from the 2011 reauthorization, these CRPs have been shown to provide much-needed support to small companies nearing the completion of the process and have helped address technological issues that can hinder commercialization.

Fifth, it extends, through 2022, the provision that allows participating agencies to utilize 3 percent of their allocation for administrative functions, conduct outreach in an effort to bring more companies into the SBIR and STTR programs, and increase deterrents to waste, fraud, and abuse.

I want to thank Congressman KNIGHT and Congresswoman MURPHY for the bipartisan work on this important legislation. I would also like to thank Chairman SMITH and Ranking Member JOHNSON of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, as well as Chairwoman COMSTOCK and Ranking Member LIPINSKI of the Subcommittee on Research and Technology, for working together with us to produce this bipartisan bill that we have before us this afternoon.

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

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2763, the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer Improvements Act, which will modernize two programs that provide Federal funding to small technologically advanced firms to research and develop innovative products.

I am proud to have cosponsored this legislation with Congressman STEVE KNIGHT, and I am encouraged that my colleagues on the Small Business Committee and the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee on both sides of the aisle support the bill.

For decades, American innovation and ingenuity have bolstered our economic growth and solidified our country’s status as a global leader in technology; and for more than 30 years, the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs have provided a critical source of funding to small businesses that engage in research and development activities to help spur innovation and job creation throughout the country.

Since the inception of the programs, more than $30 billion has been awarded to small, innovative firms to address our Nation’s most important research and development challenges. Because of the high-risk nature of their ventures, SBIR and STTR grantees receive R&D funding that might otherwise be unavailable in the private sector.

As a direct result of the Federal investment, the programs’ breakthroughs have been made in a wide range of sectors, including agriculture, defense, energy, and healthcare. In turn, these discoveries have generated tremendous economic growth and job opportunities across the country, including in central Florida.

For many research companies in my district, these two programs serve as a gateway to the Federal contracting field. That is why I am honored to have cosponsored this bipartisan legislation.

The final bill reflects bipartisan compromises and input from both committees of jurisdiction. Most importantly, it includes many provisions focused on developing innovative products that support important national priorities and that can be sold on the commercial market.

To improve oversight of the program, the bill requires the Small Business Administration to submit an annual report to Congress no later than December 31 of each year. This will enable us to better account for the use of the SBIR and STTR funds and to encourage more small firms to apply for funding.

After more than a decade of fits and starts with these two programs, H.R. 2763 will make program improvements and provide much-needed certainty to small businesses seeking to commercialize. By authorizing the administration to take additional steps to educate small firms about the SBIR and STTR programs and to encourage more small firms to apply for funding, Congress is taking proactive steps to give small firms the confidence they need to continue developing innovative products.

I respectfully ask my colleagues to vote for this bill.

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. KNIGHT), who is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce on the Small Business Committee.

Mr. KNIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman for his hard work and for his leadership, and I want to thank my partner in this, Congresswoman MURPHY, for her cosponsoring of this bill and for her work on this important legislation.

A 21st century military requires a 21st century acquisition process, one that is agile, efficient, and effective. I represent California’s 25th District, and nowhere will you find a more exemplary place that demonstrates the important role that small businesses play in both our aerospace and defense industrial base.
The policy changes in H.R. 2763 advance sensible ways to further leverage small business R&D to help meet Federal mission needs, as well as contribute more broadly to U.S. innovation and economic growth. The bill includes continued support for early-stage faculty entrepreneurs, provides funding for important agency outreach and administrative activities, streamlines reporting requirements, ensures agency outreach for researchers at minority-serving institutions, and prioritizes several additional activities to support implementation of the program.

I am particularly pleased that the bill includes a provision to address current agency shortfalls in fostering the participation of women and minority-owned firms. Fostering diversity in STEM research and innovation is an economic imperative.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO).

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIFINSKI).

Mr. LIFINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairmen SMITH and CHABOT and Ranking Members JOHNSON and VELÁZQUEZ for including my amendment to benefit minority-serving institutions in H.R. 2763. This is essential to retaining American leadership in innovation and small business development.

The SBIR and STTR programs have helped countless innovative small businesses grow jobs through American ingenuity. This bill will make these programs work even better by providing small businesses with additional tools for bringing innovations to market. Better SBIR and STTR programs mean more successful small businesses and more jobs.

I especially want to thank my colleagues for supporting inclusion of two provisions that I put forward in committee.

First, the bill increases the amount of money that grant recipients are allowed to spend on business and technical services, like market research, intellectual property protection; or participation in entrepreneurial training programs, like the highly successful Innovation Corps program. This helps small businesses, especially startups, use their funds where they know they are needed most, for technical assistance, creative approaches to problem solving, and other types of guidance new to today’s complex marketplaces.

Second, this bill expands the highly successful Phase 0 Proof of Concept Partnership pilot program, which I helped create at the National Institutes of Health in a previous SBIR reauthorization. This highly successful program provides the earliest funding for researchers exploring the possibility of turning their research into a viable product.

After just 2 years in operation, the three hubs created by the NIH program have filed 30 patent applications, negotiated 14 technology licenses, formed 7 companies, and have 70 promising technologies in their pipeline.

This bill extends the Phase 0 program for another 5 years at NIH and expands it to the National Science Foundation, NASA, and the Department of Energy. In doing so, we will be giving a needed boost to more researchers who are budding entrepreneurs who will create the jobs of tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, our small businesses deserve support as they drive America’s economic growth. This bill will give innovators and entrepreneurs additional tools to drive this growth that we so desperately need. So I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. McNERNY).

Mr. McNERNY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO).

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIFINSKI).

Mr. LIFINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairmen SMITH and CHABOT and Ranking Members JOHNSON and VELÁZQUEZ for including my amendment to benefit minority-serving institutions in H.R. 2763. This is essential to retaining American leadership in innovation and small business development.

The SBIR and STTR programs were both created to expand small business participation in the Federal research mission. One of the four objectives Congress had in mind in establishing the SBIR was to facilitate and increase participation of minority and disadvantaged persons in technological innovation.

My amendments require that the participating Federal agencies in the SBIR and STTR programs conduct outreach to minority-serving institutions—MSIs—and Hispanic-serving institutions and faculty conducting research at MSIs to increase participation of minority and disadvantaged persons in technological innovation.

My amendments require that the participating Federal agencies in the SBIR and STTR programs conduct outreach to minority-serving institutions—MSIs—and Hispanic-serving institutions and faculty conducting research at MSIs to increase participation rates in Federal research and development opportunities will increase.

There are many great MSIs and researchers who work at these institutions across the country. For example, California State University Stanislaus, which has a campus in my district, is a Hispanic-serving institution and an MSI, and has been ranked one of the best colleges in our Nation. Our country depends on innovation of MSIs and the intellectual capital of its graduates.

In the 21st century, American economic growth is going to be determined by the innovation and growth of technology and STEM-focused businesses. It is critical to the growth of our economy that minority-serving institutions and minority-owned businesses are connected to this technological ecosystem.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO).

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. McNERNY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO).

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO).

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.
Mr. Speaker, supporting our entrepreneurs and small businesses is a top priority for both sides of the aisle. Our bill will make it easier for small firms that receive SBIR and STTR awards to bring their products to market and achieve commercial success.

The SBIR and STTR programs are also critical to our economy, as they support our Nation’s job creators and ensure that our country continues to produce cutting-edge research and development. This ingenuity is what makes our country a global economic powerhouse.

These programs, while successful, can be improved. The bill before us is a step in the right direction insofar as it will ensure that all Federal agencies are enhancing efforts to help more small businesses obtain SBIR and STTR funding and bring their innovative products to market.

Therefore, I respectfully urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill.

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I thank all those who spoke on this legislation, a very bipartisan, good legislation, here this afternoon on the House floor.

In closing, whether it is a new security system for tracking contract payments or a new medical device to help with cancer treatments, or a new piece of technology that literally saves lives on the battlefield, the SBIR and STTR programs have consistently delivered results to Federal agencies. They are worthy programs that do what they are supposed to do, but we can always do better. This legislation improves and modernizes these programs, and I ask that all of my colleagues support it.

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 2763, the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer Programs Improvement Act of 2017.

And I thank the gentleman from California, Mr. KNIGHT, for introducing this important legislation. He serves on the two Committees that share jurisdiction over the SBIR and STTR programs: the Small Business Committee, chaired by my good friend, Mr. CHABOT, and the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, which I chair.

Mr. KNIGHT took the lead on last year’s timely reauthorization of the SBIR and STTR programs, and he is the sponsor of H.R. 2763, which incorporates a number of needed policy changes to increase the programs’ efficiency and effectiveness.

The SBIR program was signed into law by President Reagan in 1982, followed by the STTR program in 1992. These programs help spur economic innovation and competitiveness, and increase small business participation in federal research and development activity.

SBIR and STTR award winners convert the results of taxpayer-supported pioneering research into products that are critical to our economic competitiveness and national security. Recent examples include parts for NASA’s Mars Rover and a unique cockpit airbag system to protect Army helicopter pilots.

Today 11 federal agencies provide funding to small businesses through SBIR, and five agencies provide funding through STTR—a total of nearly $3 billion this fiscal year. That’s more than 66 times greater than the $45 million spent under the original program in 1983. Recipients of SBIR and STTR funding have boosted scientific and technological innovation and created hundreds of thousands of American jobs.

Several large, international companies like Qualcomm, Sonicare and Symantec can trace their initial growth to when they were small businesses that received SBIR and STTR support.

I want to call attention to two provisions of H.R. 2763 that were added by Members of the Science Committee.

A provision authored by Mr. HULTGREN requires participating federal agencies to give priority to SBIR and STTR projects that will strengthen American manufacturing innovation and increase manufacturing jobs in our country.

A provision authored by Mr. HIGGINS requires federal agencies engaged in cybersecurity research to give priority to SBIR and STTR projects that will spur advances in cybersecurity to protect the American people from increasingly aggressive and malicious cyberattacks.

The legislation before us addresses a number of red flags raised by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) about lax administration of the SBIR and STTR programs.

Several participating agencies do not produce accurate, timely information that Congress requires to evaluate program performance.

The U.S. Small Business Administration has not submitted its required, comprehensive annual report to Congress since 2013.

The last administration provided virtually no information to Congress and taxpayers about the SBIR and STTR programs.

It’s reassuring that SBA associate administrator Joseph Shepard promised during a joint hearing of our Committee and the Small Business Committee that annual reports will be submitted on time.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2763 was unanimously approved by both the House Small Business Committee and the House Science Committee. I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material in the record.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 190.

External power supplies are used for all sorts of devices, and we have learned from experience that the Federal energy efficiency standards sometimes don’t work in the ways we want them to work. In particular, we need an exemption from these rules for the security and life safety alarms and surveillance alarms.

S. 190, the Power and Security Systems, or PASS, Act, provides targeted exemptions that allow these critical uses to stay on the market.

Devices like home security alarms or fire detection need to be on 24/7. 365, but the 2007 energy law on energy efficiency standards for external power supplies does not allow for this. Since then, Congress has created exemptions for these “always on” devices, but this exemption ended on July 1 of 2017. S. 190 extends this exemption out to 2023.
The result of this bill would be that these important security systems will continue to be available, preserving the jobs of those who make them, and, most importantly, the safety of those who use them.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ‘yes’ on this measure, and I intend to support the bill. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 190, the Power and Security Systems, or PASS, Act.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would provide a nonprescriptive technical fix to a Department of Energy efficiency standard, and it has widespread bipartisan support.

I would also like to acknowledge my colleagues, Mr. WELCH from Vermont, Mr. BROOKS from Alabama, as well as Senator GARDNER and Senator CANTWELL, for their work in sponsoring this bill and getting it to the floor here today.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation would simply amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to require the Department of Energy to issue a rule by July 1, 2021, which would determine whether energy conservation standards for external power supplies should be amended.

The rule must contain any amendment standards and would apply to products manufactured on or after July 1, 2023.

Mr. Speaker, current law exempts external power supplies for security or life safety systems from energy conservation standards until July 1, 2017. This bill simply extends that exemption to July 1, 2023.

Mr. Speaker, this clarification is necessary in order to exclude power supply circuits, drivers, and devices that are designed to power security alarms, life-saving devices, and surveillance systems.

Mr. Speaker, as I stated, this legislative fix has widespread support from both houses of Congress, from both sides of the aisle, as well as from industry and the energy efficiency community.

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I close with a short and sweet: good bill, vote for it.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 190.

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.

NATIONAL CLINICAL CARE COMMISSION ACT

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 920) to establish a National Clinical Care Commission.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “National Clinical Care Commission Act”.

SEC. 2. NATIONAL CLINICAL CARE COMMISSION.

(a) Establishment.—The Commission shall be established, within the Department of Health and Human Services, a National Clinical Care Commission (in this section referred to as the “Commission”) to evaluate and make recommendations regarding improvements to the coordination and leveraging of programs within the Department and other Federal agencies related to awareness and clinical care for at least one, but not more than two, complex metabolic or autoimmune diseases resulting from issues related to insulin that represent a significant disease burden on the United States, which may include complications due to such diseases.

(b) Membership.

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall be composed of the following voting members:

(A) The heads of the following Federal agencies and departments, or their designees:

(i) The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

(ii) The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

(iii) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

(iv) The Indian Health Service.

(v) The Department of Veterans Affairs.

(vi) The National Institutes of Health.

(vii) The Food and Drug Administration.

(viii) The Health Resources and Services Administration.

(B) Primary care physicians.

(C) Non-physician health care professionals.

(D) Patient advocates.

(E) National experts, including public health experts in the duties listed under subsection (c).

(F) Health care providers furnishing services to a patient population that consists of a high percentage (as specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, or its designee) of individuals who are enrolled in a State plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act, or a high percentage (as specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, or its designee) of individuals who are funded by the Federal Government.

(2) ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.—The Commission shall include additional voting members, as may be appointed by the Secretary, with expertise in the prevention, care, and epidemiology of any of the diseases and complications described in subsection (a), including one or more such members from each of the following categories:

(A) Physician specialties, including clinical endocrinologists, that play a role in the prevention or treatment of diseases and complications described in subsection (a).

(B) Primary care physicians.

(C) Non-physician health care professionals.

(D) Patient advocates.

(E) National experts, including public health experts in the duties listed under subsection (c).

(F) Health care providers furnishing services to a patient population that consists of a high percentage (as specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, or its designee) of individuals who are enrolled in a State plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act, or who are not covered under a health plan with significant disease coverage.

(3) CHAIRPERSON.—The members of the Commission shall select a chairperson from the members appointed under paragraph (2).

(4) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet at least twice, and not more than four times, a year.

(5) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on the Commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments.

(c) DUTIES.—The Commission shall evaluate and make recommendations, as appropriate, to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and Congress regarding:

(1) Federal programs of the Department of Health and Human Services that focus on preventing and reducing the incidence of the diseases and complications described in subsection (a);

(2) current activities and gaps in Federal efforts to support clinicians in providing integrated, high-quality care to individuals with the diseases and complications described in subsection (a);

(3) the improvement in, and improved coordination of, Federal education and awareness activities related to the prevention and treatment of the diseases and complications described in subsection (a), which may include the utilization of new and existing technologies;

(4) methods for outreach and dissemination of education and awareness materials that—

(A) address the diseases and complications described in subsection (a);

(B) are funded by the Federal Government; and

(C) are intended for health care professionals and the public; and

(5) whether there are opportunities for consolidation of unnecessarily overlapping Federal programs related to the diseases and complications described in subsection (a).

(d) OPERATING PLAN.—Not later than 90 days after its first meeting, the Commission shall submit to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Congress an operating plan for carrying out the activities of the Commission as described in subsection (c). Such operating plan may include—

(1) a list of specific activities that the Commission plans to conduct for purposes of carrying out the duties described in each of the paragraphs in subsection (c);

(2) a plan for completing the activities;

(3) a list of members of the Commission and other individuals who are not members of the Commission who will need to be involved to conduct such activities;

(4) an explanation of Federal agency involvement and coordination needed to conduct such activities;

(5) a budget for conducting such activities; and

(6) other information that the Commission deems appropriate.

(e) FINAL REPORT.—By not later than 3 years after the date of the Commission’s first meeting, the Commission shall submit to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Congress a final report containing all of the findings and recommendations required by this section.

(f) SUNSET.—The Commission shall terminate 60 days after submitting its final report, but not later than the end of fiscal year 2021.
The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, today in support of S. 920, the National Clinical Care Commission Act, a bipartisan bill that has received unanimous support within both the House and the Senate Chambers, S. 920 is the Senate companion to my bill H.R. 309, which is cosponsored by over half of my House colleagues.

It has this level of support because our Nation faces an epidemic. Diabetes or prediabetes affects over 100 million Americans. Nearly one in three of our neighbors is affected.

This legislation will also help many others who are affected by other diseases like heart disease, obesity, and many others.

When I first came to Congress in 2009, it was crystal clear that we had a big problem. Seventy percent of all the Federal research dollars going into these diseases were simply not making their way to patients. Researchers at the NIH, the CDC, the DOD, the VA, and the FDA weren’t sharing diabetes research.

This bill accomplishes that goal by creating a National Clinical Care Commission comprised of doctors who specialize in diabetes care for patients.

This commission will have 3 years to strengthen the partnership between Federal stakeholders and health professionals who will bring hands-on, clinical experience to improve care.

This is not a new, unending bureaucracy. After 3 years, this commission will sunset. In 3 years, it will be gone.

We have already made such a huge investment of taxpayer dollars into research. It is time to leverage that investment into meaningful prevention and effective treatment options.

President Reagan once said: “There is no limit to the amount of good you can do if you don’t care who gets the credit.”

That is why I stand here today in strong support of my bill, which became Senator SHAHEEN’s bill, because this bill will help so many Americans who are suffering from diabetes.

So today I ask my colleagues to again help all those who suffer from diabetes and other complex metabolic and autoimmune disorders by voting for S. 920.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 920, the National Clinical Care Commission Act.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation aims to help improve Federal efforts to treat and to prevent metabolic and autoimmune disorders related to insulin.

The most common metabolic disorder in the U.S. is diabetes, which affects more than 25 million Americans. Another 86 million Americans have prediabetes, a condition associated with an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Mr. Speaker, diabetes takes a huge toll on human health; in fact, it is the seventh leading cause of death in our Nation.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, all too often diabetes leads to avoidable complications, such as blindness, such as limb amputation, and also kidney failure.

In addition to the effects on human health, Mr. Speaker, diabetes care makes up a large percentage of U.S. healthcare expenditure.

Mr. Speaker, currently $1 of every $5 of healthcare cost is spent caring for people with diabetes. The proportion of Medicare dollars going toward diabetes care expenditure is spent caring for people with diabetes.

Mr. Speaker, that is why it is important to improve the Federal efforts that prevent avoidable cases of diabetes and other metabolic disorders, and to ensure that all Americans have the treatment and support services necessary to successfully manage this and other similar conditions.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation was previously passed in the 114th Congress and again at the beginning of the 115th Congress. I am pleased to see that the Senate took action on this legislation to support passage of this bill into law.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on S. 920, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS).

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of S. 920, the National Clinical Care Commission Act, sponsored by Senator SHAHEEN.

This legislation has been around for a while. It has been championed in the House by our good friend and fellow Texan, Representative PETE OLSON, as H.R. 309. This bill has strong bipartisan support. It passed this House unani-

Diabetes and other endocrine disorders have been a great cost burden on Medicare and, in fact, our Nation’s healthcare system in general. Thirty million Americans have diabetes, 84 million have prediabetes, and three out of four Americans on Medicare have diabetes or prediabetes. And $1 out of every $3 Medicare spends is spent on diabetes.

This bill will establish a clinical care commission to investigate and recommend solutions for better coordination and use of Federal programs aimed at improving care for people with diabetes and other related endocrine dis-

orders. This commission will be tasked with identifying gaps where new approaches are needed, eliminating duplication across Federal agencies, and leveraging the Federal resources and tools available to enhance the quality of patient care.

I am confident their work will improve the lives of tens of millions of Americans living with diabetes and with other endocrine disorders while beginning the process of reducing the staggering impact of these diseases.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to thank and commend our colleague, Representative PETE OLSON, for spearheading this important initiative. I want to thank him for bringing it to the floor of the House as many times as he has. This has been a lengthy process, but today, with the passage of this bill, we are voting on final passage, and this bill will be sent to the President’s desk for signature. Mr. Speaker, Mr. OLSON’s long and arduous journey now comes to an end, and I thank my colleague from Texas (Mr. RUSH) for yielding time to me today to speak on this important bill.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in strong support of S. 920, the National Clinical Care Commission Act, S. 920, as was mentioned already, creates a commission comprised of clinical endocrinologists, other physician specialists, primary care physicians, healthcare professionals, patients, and representatives from the Federal agencies most involved in diabetes care.

The commission is charged with making recommendations to streamline Federal investments in diabetes, to improve the coordination and clinical care outcomes for people with diabetes, prediabetes, and other insulin-related metabolic and autoimmune diseases.

Passage of this legislation will help the Nation undertake more and innovative approaches to diabetes and its disease complications, for which the United States spends some $322 billion annually.

I urge the Secretary also to move expeditiously to set up the commission so it can begin its important work as soon as possible. Clinical training and expertise in diabetes and other insulin-related diseases will be needed to lead the commission, and it is my hope that a clinical endocrinologist will be chosen to serve as the chairperson of the commission. I think that is very important.

With a clinical endocrinologist as chair and representatives from other medical specialties, healthcare professionals, and patients, this group will have a critical voice alongside with Federal diabetes experts, and the commission created under S. 920 will help to ensure that new innovative medications and devices are...
In addition to his academic contributions, Dr. Nash gained worldwide acclaim from the 2001 film “A Beautiful Mind,” which portrayed his vast accomplishments while living with schizophrenia and throughout his recovery from mental illness.

In recognition of his lifelong work, Dr. Nash was awarded a Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 1994, and the 2015 Abel Prize from the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters.

Tragically, he and his wife, Alicia, were killed in an automobile accident in 2015 on their return from receiving the award in Norway.

Finally, I want to end my remarks by congratulating Ms. Lyla Malloy, the student in my district whose essay submission to our post office naming competition was chosen out of 84 entries.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of H.R. 2302 in recognition of Dr. Nash’s important contributions to our country, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of 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 Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2302.

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.

BONUSES FOR COST-CUTTERS ACT OF 2017

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 378) to amend title 5, United States Code, to enhance the authority under which Federal agencies may pay cash awards to employees for making cost saving disclosures, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 378

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

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Bonuses for Cost-Cutters Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. COST SAVINGS ENHANCEMENTS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 4511 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking “Defining” and inserting “Definitions”;

(2) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking the period at the end and inserting “;”;

(B) by striking “this subchapter, the term” and inserting the following: “this subchapter—

(‘‘the term’’); and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

(‘‘the term ‘wasteful expenses’ means amounts made available for salaries and expenses accounts, operations and maintenance accounts, or other equivalent accounts—

(A) that are identified by an employee of the agency under section 4512(a) as wasteful; and

(B) that the Chief Financial Officer of the agency determines are not required for the purpose for which the amounts were made available.”).
(b) AUTHORITY.—Section 4512 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—
(1) in subsection (a), (A) by inserting “The head of an agency may pay a cash award to an employee of such an agency whose identification of wasteful expenses to the Chief Financial Officer of the agency has resulted in cost savings for the agency, as determined by the Chief Financial Officer,” after “designated employee,”; and (B) by striking “employee designated under subsection (a)” and inserting “designated employee”;
(2) in subsection (b) by striking “awards under this section” and inserting “awards for the disclosure of fraud, waste, or mismanagement under this section”; and
(3) by adding at the end the following:—
“(c)(1) If the Chief Financial Officer of the agency determines that potential wasteful expenses have been identified by the employee meeting the requirements of section 4511(a)(2)(B), the head of the agency shall notify the President for purposes of proposing the expenses for recapture under section 1116 of title 31, the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 681 et seq.).
“(2) In the case of an agency for which there is no Chief Financial Officer, the head of the agency shall designate an agency employee who shall have the authority to make the determinations for identification of wasteful expenses under this section.
“(d) The head of each agency shall make available, along with, and in the same manner and form as, the provision of information required under section 1116 of title 31, information on disclosures of wasteful expenses under this section, including—
“(1) a description of each disclosure of possible wasteful expenses identified by an employee and determined by the agency to have merit; and
“(2) the number and amount of cash awards provided by the agency under subsection (a).
“(e) An individual may not receive a cash award under this subchapter if the individual—
“(1) an officer or employee of the Office of the Inspector General of an agency; or
“(2) ineligible for a cash award under section 4509.
“(f) The Director of the Office of Personnel Management shall—
“(1) ensure that the cash award program of each agency complies with this section; and
“(2) submit to Congress an annual certification indicating whether the cash award program of each agency complies with this section.
“(g) Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of the Bonuses for Cost-Cutters Act of 2017, and every 3 years thereafter for 6 years, the Comptroller General of the United States shall have the authority to make the determinations for identification of wasteful expenses under this section, including—
“(1) a description of each disclosure of possible wasteful expenses identified by an employee and determined by the agency to have merit; and
“(2) the number and amount of cash awards provided by the agency under subsection (a).”

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I speak in support of H.R. 378, introduced by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FLEISCHMANN), the Bonuses for Cost-Cutters Act of 2017. 

The people in the best position to identify waste throughout the Federal Government are the employees on the front lines of the Federal agencies. They are the ones on the ground who know when agencies waste money. It is in the taxpayers’ best interest to encourage Federal employees to report waste when they see it. 

H.R. 378 increases the incentive for Federal employees to report wasteful spending by authorizing a reward of up to $20,000 for blowing the whistle on waste. This incentive is especially necessary at the end of the fiscal year when too many agencies adopt a “use it or lose it” mentality regarding their budgets. 

Some agencies fear that if they do not spend every last dollar in their budget, that Congress will somehow decrease their future funding. That dynamic leads to the most outrageous expenditures in the last week before the end of the fiscal year on September 30. 

Under the structure put in place by H.R. 378, agency leadership will also be able to verify reviews identified by whistleblowers is actually wasteful. This was a concern raised by our colleagues in the minority. We are thankful for their constructive work in getting this bill to a mutually agreeable compromise. 

The bill also maintains Congress’ constitutional role in the appropriations process. As we know, Congress is responsible for authorizing spending by the Federal Government, and this bill is careful to respect that authority. 

After the agency’s chief financial officer affirms that the spending in question is indeed wasteful, the agency must submit a report to the President. The President may then submit a recommendation to Congress to eliminate the wasteful spending in question. 

H.R. 378 is the result of a bipartisan process, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill as an example of what we can achieve when both sides put their minds to the problem and husband the taxpayers’ dollars. 

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.
for Cost-Cutters Act of 2017. I wish to thank the gentleman from Oklahoma and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, what we see today in my bill is what I think the American people want. Republicans and Democrats working together with good, commonsense legislation that makes sense and saves the American taxpayer’s money.

Let’s face it: whether we are a family or a business, we have to manage our money in the private sector; and the Federal Government, for far too long, has been guilty of spending waste, fraud, and abuse. There have been so many problems, and the American people know it.

When we go home and we talk with our constituents, they want us to be very good stewards of their money, and they deserve that. That is exactly what this good work does. And it does it in a way that does a lot of different things that I think is great.

First of all, as my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have said, it incentivizes Federal employees to detect and report waste, fraud, and abuse. The government has a tendency, when they have a pool of money, to spend it, whether they need it or not. So if a Federal employee can go in there, find this problem out, tell the agency head, he or she now can get up to $20,000 of incentive pay. So we have incentivized fiscal responsibility in the Federal Government. That is great, and that is just good government.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we look at the United States Constitution, and that is a document that our Founding Fathers gave us and is so important. Why is that so important with this bill? Because when that agency head or that President, the President of the United States, looks at that recommendation, the President of the United States has to come where? Back to the Congress, where he should have to come.

When Congress looks at that recommendation from the President, Congress then can make the final determination. So we have fiscal responsibility, we have constitutional sanctity, and we have good government.

Most of all, I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. We have Republicans and Democrats working together, the way the American people want us to do, to be fiscally responsible.

Mr. Speaker, I urge colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass this good government bill.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion of Mr. Russell to amend the bill by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 378, as amended.

The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2196) to amend title 5, United States Code, to allow whistleblowers to disclose information to certain recipients, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

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

SECTION 1. RECIPENTS OF WHISTLEBLOWER DISCLOSURES.

Section 2302(b)(8)(B) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking "or to the Inspector" and all that follows through "disclosures" and inserting "the Inspector General of an agency, a supervisor in the employee’s direct chain of command and up to and including the head of the employing agency, or designated by any of the aforementioned individuals for the purpose of receiving such disclosures".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

Mr. RUSSELL. 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 the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I speak in support of H.R. 2196, a bill I introduced with my colleagues Mr. HYNES, Mr. LYNCH, and Mr. FARENTHOLD from Texas, and Ranking Member CUMMINGS, Mr. LYNCH, and Mr. FARENTHOLD from Texas earlier this year to allow whistleblowers to disclose information to certain recipients.

Whistleblowers in the Federal Government should be able to tell their supervisors when something is wrong. That is true no matter what, but especially so in cases involving classified information, which implies a matter of national security.

If whistleblowers cannot make a protected disclosure to their supervisors, they are more likely to make an illegal disclosure to people or entities without the proper security clearances.

Under current law, if a whistleblower discloses classified information, the whistleblower is protected only if he or she makes those disclosures to the Office of Special Counsel, an inspector general, the head of the whistleblower’s agency, or an employee designated by the head of the agency.

Under current law, if a whistleblower discloses classified information, the whistleblower is protected only if he or she makes those disclosures to the Office of Special Counsel, an inspector general, the head of the whistleblower’s agency, or an employee designated by the head of the agency.

This bill would encourage employees who handle classified information and want to report waste, fraud, and abuse.

Under this bill, an employee who is covered by the Whistleblower Protection Act could disclose to any supervisor in his or her direct chain of command classified information the employee reasonably believes shows wrongdoing.

Under current law, if a whistleblower discloses classified information, the whistleblower is protected only if he or she makes those disclosures to the Office of Special Counsel, an inspector general, the head of the whistleblower’s agency, or an employee designated by the head of the agency.

This bill would encourage employees who handle classified information and want to report waste, fraud, and abuse.

Under this bill, an employee who is covered by the Whistleblower Protection Act could disclose to any supervisor in his or her direct chain of command classified information the employee reasonably believes shows wrongdoing.

This bill would encourage employees who handle classified information and want to report waste, fraud, and abuse.

Under this bill, an employee who is covered by the Whistleblower Protection Act could disclose to any supervisor in his or her direct chain of command classified information the employee reasonably believes shows wrongdoing.
This bill is modeled on language in the Presidential Policy Directive issued in 2012. That directive, PPD 19, provided whistleblower protections to intelligence community employees who are not covered by the Whistleblower Protection Act.

This bill will provide a more consistent approach for employees who handle classified information by ensuring that employees who are covered by the Whistleblower Protection Act will blow that whistle to a supervisor, the same way that intelligence community employees who are covered by PPD 19 can do so.

This is a good bill. I urge my colleagues to support it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Ranking Member Cummings, Mr. FARENTHOLD of Texas, and Mr. LINCH of Massachusetts for their great support in this needed reform, and I urge my colleagues to support my bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by Mr. RUSSELL that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill. The Speaker pro tempore stated the objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma.

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I speak in support of H.R. 2229, the All Circuit Review Act, which Ranking Member CUMMINGS of Maryland and Mr. FARENTHOLD of Texas introduced earlier this year. It is critical that we guarantee whistleblowers access to fair and efficient reviews of their claims of retaliation.

Between 1982 and 2012, whistleblowers could only appeal retaliation rulings made against them by the Merit Systems Protection Board, or the MSPB, to the Federal circuit court. That monopoly led to the Federal circuit court’s interpretation of whistleblower protection law without a check by any of the other circuit courts.

In 2012, to the wide acclaim of the whistleblower community, the whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act ended the Federal circuit court’s monopoly over whistleblower retaliation appeals. The result, as expected, was better case law and more expeditious appeals.

As a pilot program, that expansion was set to expire 3 years after enactment. In 2014, Congress acted to extend the program until November of this year. Now, this highly effective program will expire next month unless it is renewed. The whistleblower community has benefited tremendously from the pilot program. There is no good argument against making this permanent.

Critics had feared that expanding jurisdiction over the MSPB appeals would lead to a torrent of cases for those circuits, swamping dockets across the Nation. Those fears have proved to be unfounded. Instead, the whistleblower community has benefited from other circuits having an opportunity to interpret Federal whistleblower case law.

H.R. 2229 makes the all circuit expansion permanent, ensuring the benefits of the pilot program continue. This bipartisan initiative will put the question of appeal jurisdiction for whistleblower retaliation cases to rest once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.
Federal whistleblowers to file appeals in courts where they work or live rather than in the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Federal circuit has a terrible track record on whistleblower cases. Allowing other courts around the country to handle whistleblower cases will provide a check on the monopoly the Federal circuit has held for many years.

The bill would also authorize the Office of Management and Budget to request a decision of the Merit Systems Protection Board to any appeals court with jurisdiction.

This bill was listed on the Project On Government Oversight's list of legislative reforms Congress should enact in 2017. Protecting whistleblowers is not a partisan issue. It is a patriotic issue. Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will support this bipartisan legislation.

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

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), ranking member of the full Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I introduced the All Circuit Review Act. Mr. Speaker, to send a clear message to all Federal employees who blow the whistle on wrongdoing that we here in Congress have their backs.

This bill would give Federal employees who face retaliation for blowing the whistle a more equitable playing field when they challenge that retaliation in court. Under the bill, whistleblowers could file appeals in the jurisdictions where they work or live, rather than having to file appeals in the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C. Whistleblowers who live outside of Washington, D.C., should have the same opportunities as those who live in Washington.

I want to thank Representative Blake Farenthold for cosponsoring this bill with me. Representative Farenthold has been a steadfast supporter of this basic due process right for Federal employees.

The bill we are considering today makes permanent a pilot provision that began in 2011, the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act, which was signed into law in 2012. That pilot provision will expire in November if we do not send this bill to the President before then.

With this bill, whistleblowers could appeal a decision of the Merit Systems Protection Board only to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. The Federal circuit has historically been overly restrictive of whistleblower rights.

According to the Merit Systems Protection Board, 29 cases have been appealed to courts other than the Federal circuit since 2012. The Project On Government Oversight sent a letter to the Oversight and Government Reform Committee on May 2, 2017, in strong support of this bill. Executive Director Danielle Brian wrote as follows: ‘‘The pilot program has been a success. It has not resulted in a flood of whistleblower appeals as opponents of the program asserted it would do, and it allows for potential circuit splits, which encourage sister circuits to review the laws and allows for possible Supreme Court review. It is working exactly as intended and should be made permanent before it expires in November 2017.’’

The bill was approved by the Oversight and Government Reform Committee without opposition in May. Two years ago, Congress approved an extension of the All Circuit Review Extension Act pilot program in 2014 without a single negative vote.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this whistleblower bill.

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank Chairman Gowdy for his support of this legislation, and for the hard work of Ranking Member Cummings of Maryland and Mr. Farenthold of Texas for all that they have done to bring this needed bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of 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 Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2229.

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.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION ACT

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2989) to establish the Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2989
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 “Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission Act”.
SEC. 2. FINDINGS.
Congress makes the following findings:
(1) Born into slavery on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in 1818 and given the name Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey after his mother Harriet Bailey, Frederick Douglass has been called the father of the civil rights movement.
(2) Douglass rose through determination, brilliance, and eloquence to shape the American Nation. He was an abolitionist, human rights and women’s rights activist, orator, author, journalist, publisher, and social reformer.
(3) Taught basic reading skills by his mistress until she was forced to stop, Douglass continued to teach himself to read and write and taught other slaves to read despite risks including death.
(4) During the course of his remarkable life Frederick Douglass escaped from slavery, became internationally renowned for his eloquence in the cause of emancipation, and established the United States government.
(5) Forced to leave the country to avoid arrest as an escaped slave, he returned to become a staunch advocate of the Union cause and helped recruit African-American troops for the Union Army, including two of his sons, Charles and Lewis Douglass. His personal relationship with Abraham Lincoln helped persuade the President to make emancipation a cause of the Civil War.
(6) With the abolition of slavery at the close of the Civil War, Douglass then turned his attention to the full integration of African-Americans into the political and economic life of the United States, committed to freedom, Douglass dedicated his life to achieving justice for all Americans, in particular African-American minority groups. He envisioned America as an inclusive Nation strengthened by diversity and free of discrimination.
(7) Douglass served as an advisor to Presidents. Abraham Lincoln referred to him as the most meritorious man of the nineteenth century. Douglass was appointed to several offices. He served as the United States Marshal of the District of Columbia under Rutherford B. Hayes’ administration; President James Garfield appointed Douglass the District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds in 1889; and President Benjamin Harrison appointed Frederick Douglass to be the United States minister to Haiti. He was also appointed by President Grant to serve as Assistant Secretary of the Commission of Inquiry to Santo Domingo.
(8) Douglass lived in the District of Columbia for 23 of his 57 years as a free man, and in recognition of his leadership and continuous fight for justice and freedom, his home, Cedar Hill, was established as a National Historic Site in Anacostia, in Southeast Washington, DC.
(9) The statue of Frederick Douglass in the United States Capitol is a gift from the almost 700,000 residents of the District of Columbia.
(10) All Americans could benefit from studying the life of Frederick Douglass, for Douglass dedicated his own life to ensuring freedom and equality for future generations of Americans. This Nation should ensure that his tireless struggle, transformative work, and inclusive vision for a community continue to inspire and sustain us.
(11) The year 2018 marks the bicentennial anniversary of the birth of Frederick Douglass, and a commission should be established to plan, develop, and carry out, and to recommend to Congress, programs and activities that are fitting and proper to celebrate this anniversary in a manner that appropriately honors Frederick Douglass.
SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT.
There is established a commission to be known as the Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission (referred to in this Act as the “Commission”).
SEC. 4. DUTIES.
The Commission shall have the following duties:
(1) To plan, develop, and carry out programs and activities that are fitting and
The Speaker pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) and the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members receive and expedite; and pass the resolution of the District of Columbia.

No objection.

Mr. Speaker, I speak in support of H.R. 2989, the Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission Act, introduced by Ms. NORTON of the District of Columbia and Mr. HARRIS earlier this year.

Next year will mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Frederick Douglass, a man who has been called the father— and rightfully so— of the civil rights movement.

Douglass was born into slavery in Maryland around 1817 but escaped by the age of 21. Douglass went on to publish an autobiography documenting his life as a slave, called, “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass,” while a fugitive slave.

Throughout his remarkable life, Douglass advocated for justice for all Americans, encouraging President Lincoln to make emancipation a cause of the Civil War, and advocating for the full integration of African Americans into political and economic life in the United States both during and following the war.

H.R. 2989 establishes the Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission to recommend the best ways to celebrate the legacy of a man who dedicated his entire life to ensuring freedom and equality for all Americans.

H.R. 2989 would do this by creating a 16-member commission to plan, develop, and coordinate activities fitting and proper to honor Frederick Douglass. The commission will submit to Congress with recommendations for activities, programs, and other important information. The commission will end 30 days after the submission of its final report.

The amended text considered today adds a new section clarifying that the commission will not receive additional authorized funds and will, instead, rely on private funds for its operations.

The commission presents an important opportunity to recognize and support Frederick Douglass' leadership and body of work. He was a phenomenal man, and I am proud to also be a cosponsor of this important bill.
I would like to thank Ms. Norton, Mr. Russell, and the 16 other cosponsors for their hard work on this bill in honor of Frederick Douglass.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the lead sponsor of this bill, Representative Andy Harris, for working closely with me on the bill of which I am a cosponsor, and I want to thank my good friend Representative Russell, who is managing on the other side, for also being a co-sponsor of this bill.

My thanks also to Chairman Trey Gowdy, Ranking Member Elijah Cummings, and Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy for bringing this bill to the floor in time to begin the commemoration, in 2018, of the bicentennial of the birth of Frederick Douglass.

I am pleased that this bill has not only bipartisan, but bicameral support.

Senators Chris Van Hollen and Ben Cardin have introduced the companion bill in the Senate.

The bill would establish a commission to plan and carry out programs and activities, as well as to recommend to Congress programs and activities that the Federal Government could undertake to honor and celebrate the life of Frederick Douglass during the bicentennial of his birth in 2018.

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in 1818 on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He learned basic reading skills from his mistress and continued to teach himself and other slaves to read and write despite the risks he faced, including death. After two attempts, Douglass successfully escaped to New York and went on to become this country’s leading abolitionist and antislavery lecturer.

He served in several administrations, including as close adviser to President Abraham Lincoln, U.S. Marshal of the District of Columbia under President Rutherford B. Hayes, and District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds under President James Garfield. In 1889, President Benjamin Harris appointed Frederick Douglass to be the U.S. Minister to Haiti. He was later appointed by President Ulysses S. Grant to serve as secretary of the commission of Santo Domingo.

Douglass dedicated his life to achieving justice for all Americans. He lived in the District of Columbia for 23 of his 57 years as a free man, and his home at Cedar Hill is an official National Historic Site in southeast Washington, D.C. Every year, thousands of Americans and others visit Cedar Hill. The Frederick Douglass statue that stands in his honor in the United States Capitol is a gift from the nearly 700,000 residents of the District of Columbia.

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

Mr. Russell. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. Harris), who is the original cosponsor of this bill.

Mr. Harris. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the committee for promptly reporting H.R. 2989 to the floor for consideration.

I rise today in support of a bill I have cosponsored with Delegate Norton, the Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission Act. As we approach the 200th anniversary of Frederick Douglass’ birth, I urge my colleagues in the House to support this legislation.

The purpose of this bill is more than just honoring the birth of one great civil rights leader. Its purpose is to recognize his lasting impact on American Government, culture, and values.

Frederick Douglass’ work stretched far beyond the fight for legal freedom into the equally important fight for social and cultural equality.

Born on Maryland’s beautiful Eastern Shore, Douglass escaped slavery to become an author, abolitionist, and true American hero. Frederick Douglass is a model for the values that make our Nation great: equality, liberty, and a commitment to working hard and helping others.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to honor Frederick Douglass and the resounding impact his work has had on modern American culture by passing this legislation.

Ms. Norton. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speech and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. Russell. Mr. Speaker, I would like to echo all of the comments that we heard. It is important that all of us take time and pause to recognize the tremendous work that Frederick Douglass did not only in his life, but how he impacted the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by Mr. Russell, the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2989, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the bill, H.R. 2989, as amended—

(a) Post-separation partial withdrawals.—Section 8433(c) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking “and who has not made a withdrawal under subsection (h)(1)(A) may make one or more withdrawals” and inserting “may make one or more withdrawals”; and

(B) by striking “as a single payment” and inserting “in the same manner as a single payment is made”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(5) Withdrawals under this subsection shall be subject to such other limitations or conditions as the Executive Director may prescribe by regulation.”.

(b) Limitation on return of payment relating to a change in election.—Section 8433(d) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting “; except that in the case of an election to receive an annuity, a former employee or Member may not change an election under this section on or after the date on which an annuity contract is purchased to provide for the annuity elected by the former employee or Member” after “this subsection”;

and

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking “change an” and inserting return a payment that was made pursuant to an”;

and

(B) by striking “on or after” and all that follows through “the former employee or Member”.

(c) Elimination of automatic annuity in absence of election.—Section 8433(f) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “(1) Notwithstanding” and inserting “Notwithstanding”;

(2) by striking “this paragraph” and inserting “this subsection”; and

(3) by striking paragraph (2).

(d) Allowance of multiple agi-based in-service withdrawals.—Section 8433(h) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (2);

(2) by redesigning paragraphs (3), (4), and (5) as paragraphs (2), (3), and (4), respectively; and

(3) in paragraph (3), as so redesignated, by inserting “limitations or” before “conditions”.

(e) Technical amendment.—Section 8433(h)(2)(A) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking “section 8433(d), or paragraph (1) or (2) of section 8433(h)” and inserting “subsection (d) or (f) of section 8433(h).”.

(f) Regulations.—As soon as is practicable, as determined by the Executive Director of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, but not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Executive Director shall prescribe such regulations as are necessary to carry out the amendments made by this section.

(g) Effective date.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date on which the regulations prescribed under subsection (f) take effect.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. Russell) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. Norton) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

Mr. Russell. 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 the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland? There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3031, the TSP Modernization Act of 2017, introduced by Ranking Member Cummings from Maryland and Mr. MEADOWS from North Carolina earlier this year.

Federal employees enrolled in the Federal Employees Retirement System—known as FERS—enjoy the benefits of a three-part retirement structure. Those are a defined benefit pension plan, Social Security, and a 401(k)-style defined contribution plan known as the Thrift Savings Plan, or TSP.

With its low administrative costs and simple design, the TSP is an ideal retirement vehicle. Participants can choose from a variety of investment options, including index funds designed to track the Standard & Poor's 500 Index, the Dow Jones U.S. Completion Total Market Index, and huge proportions of low-risk government securities investment fund.

Participants can also passively manage their investments by putting money into a Lifecycle Fund, which allows Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board to purchase a combination of investments based on the year the employee is expected to retire.

Employees have a lot of options when investing their TSP funds, but when it comes to withdrawing their funds, the options are much more limited. This is because current statutory rules preclude employees from taking multiple post-service partial withdrawals. Employees cannot request a partial withdrawal to address life events. Similarly, participants who are separated from Federal service and who have not made a partial withdrawal are restricted to making only one partial separation withdrawal.

H.R. 3031 would eliminate these restrictions and allow participants to make multiple age-based and post-separation withdrawals from TSP accounts. The bill also would allow participants to elect to combine partial withdrawals with an annuity. It also would eliminate automatic annuities as a default option in the absence of an election by participants.

By providing greater withdrawal flexibility, studies show that participants would be more likely to keep their assets in their TSP accounts. For example, a study issued by Vanguard in 2013 found that 50 percent more participants and assets remain in retirement plans when partial disbursements are allowed.

Providing more withdrawal options for Federal employees and retirees in the TSP may help their financial security since administrative fees for the TSP are much lower than fees charged by other financial institutions.

This legislation is supported by the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, the American Federation of Government Employees, and the National Treasury Employees Union.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I am proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), who is the ranking member of the full committee.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I thank the Government Operations Committee chairman, Mr. MEADOWS, for working with me in a bipartisan manner on this commonsense, good government bill. I also thank the Oversight and Government Reform Committee chairman, Mr. GOWDY, for his support of this legislation.

Congressman MEADOWS and I introduced this legislation to make the Federal Government's Thrift Savings Plan more closely align with private sector best practices by allowing TSP participants more flexible withdrawal options.

In 2013, the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board found that employees who separated from Federal service transferred $9 billion of their TSP accounts to other financial institutions. TSP participants do this because private sector 401(k) plans provide more flexibility, and they wanted more options for withdrawing money in case they needed it.

A 2014 survey of TSP participants who withdrew funds showed that more than 50 percent reported that they wanted more flexibility to withdraw funds to address life events.

Current law limits participants to only one withdrawal from their TSP accounts while in Federal service after reaching age 59½, and participants who make this type of age-based withdrawal cannot take another partial withdrawal once they separate from service. Similarly, participants who are separated from Federal service and who have not made a partial withdrawal are restricted to making only one partial separation withdrawal.

H.R. 3031 would eliminate these restrictions and allow participants to make multiple age-based and post-separation withdrawals from TSP accounts. The bill also would allow participants to elect to combine partial withdrawals with an annuity. It also would eliminate automatic annuities as a default option in the absence of an election by participants.

By providing greater withdrawal flexibility, studies show that participants would be more likely to keep their assets in their TSP accounts. For example, a study issued by Vanguard in 2013 found that 50 percent more participants and assets remain in retirement plans when partial disbursements are allowed.

Providing more withdrawal options for Federal employees and retirees in the TSP may help their financial security since administrative fees for the TSP are much lower than fees charged by other financial institutions.

This legislation is supported by the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, the American Federation of Government Employees, and the National Treasury Employees Union.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank Chairman GOWDY, Ranking Member CUMMINGS, and Chairman MEADOWS for their outstanding work in addressing the needs of Federal employees who give selfless public service to our Nation and should have this flexibility in their retirement planning.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3243) to amend title 40, United States Code, to modernize the Federal Personal Savings and Thrift Investment program.
States Code, to eliminate the sunset of certain provisions relating to information technology, to amend the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 to extend the sunset relating to the Federal Data Center Consolidation Initiative, and for other purposes.

This area is at high risk of waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement. In 2014, Congress passed the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act, otherwise known as FITARA, to address some of these IT challenges.

Congress has maintained a watchful eye to ensure agencies fully implement the requirements of FITARA and use it as a vital oversight tool. In fact, the Oversight and Government Reform Committee has held five hearings on FITARA implementation.

The committee also created a FITARA scorecard to hold Federal agencies accountable for meeting FITARA requirements, some of which sunset in the near term.

This bill will help us facilitate Congress’ oversight efforts by extending key FITARA requirements to improve Federal IT.

For example, this bill extends requirements for agencies to publicly report schedule cost and schedule information and to assess the risks of major IT investments. This bill also extends requirements for each agency to regularly assess its IT portfolio, look for opportunities to reduce duplication, and find savings.

Finally, the bill will help us continue to hold agencies accountable for consolidating and optimizing their data centers by extending these requirements—and GAO’s verification of these requirements—through 2020.

The GAO, which has been instrumental in assisting Congress oversee FITARA implementation, supports extending the FITARA sunset dates.

Mr. CONNOLLY from Virginia and Mr. ISSA from California have been the key leaders on the original FITARA law, and they have come together again to sponsor this bill, along with Representatives MEADOWS and KELLY.

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma. GENERAL LEAVES

Mr. RUSSELL. 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 the bill under consideration.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the FITARA Enhancement Act of 2017.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

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 the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I speak in support of H.R. 3243, the FITARA Enhancement Act of 2017.

I am joined by Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. ISSA, Ms. KELLY from Illinois, and Mr. MEADOWS earlier this year.

Today, the Federal Government spends more than $90 billion on Federal IT, with approximately 75 percent of this money spent on archaic and legacy IT. This means we are paying more for less: less capability and less security. Meanwhile, major Federal IT investments often result in multimillion-dollar cost overruns and delays.

The condition of affairs led the Government Accountability Office to designate Federal IT acquisition and management as high risk in 2015, meaning this area is at high risk of waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement.

It has seven pillars:

First, it enhances CIO authorities, responsibilities, and accountability.

Second, it enhances transparency and improves risk management by requiring detailed information on investment costs to be published on the IT dashboard.

Third, we increased the frequency of portfolio reviews from annual to quarterly and included key decisionmakers from the agency and Congress to not only look for ways to increase efficiency, but to eliminate duplication.

Fourth, we built on the Federal data center consolidation effort to push agencies to realize big savings from this low-hanging fruit.

Fifth, people. Recognizing that Federal IT success is only as good as the people behind it, FITARA calls for expanding the training and use of IT professionals.

Finally, FITARA seeks to maximize new tools like the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative, taking a page from the private sector to reduce duplicative spending on common purchases and off-the-shelf items.

Finally, FITARA advances a government software purchasing program to allow for purchasing licensing agreements that can be made available for use by all Federal agencies.

FITARA is a rubber for IT procurement that, hopefully, someday enables initiatives like the Modernizing Government Technology Act to build on our success of improving how the government acquires and modernizes IT.

In the stakeholders met on Federal IT from government agencies and industry, both Mr. ISSA and I constantly were reminded of why previous major IT reform efforts had fallen short of their potential: the lack of robust implementation plan and congressional oversight.

As Mr. RUSSELL indicated quite clearly, in that latter regard, we have robust oversight, and it will continue.

One of the things new in FITARA were some sunset provisions, in the hope and expectation that, by having that, we would encourage cooperation and implementation. That cooperation and implementation is uneven throughout the Federal Government.

The GAO, or Government Accountability Office, reminded that we have this bill to extend those sunset provisions to buy a little bit more time to get with the program for those Federal agencies.

So that is what this bill does, but it builds on FITARA, which is the framework for IT procurement and modernization.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the bill.

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA), an original co-sponsor of this bill and also the former chairman of the Government Accountability and Oversight Reform Committee.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, no one has ever had a better partner on a piece of
FITARA is bipartisan legislation that has made significant strides in reorganizing government IT and making agencies more accountable. I thank Representative CONNOLLY for all his hard work on this bill, as well as my good friend who has just spoken, Mr. RUSSELL.

This bill would extend three provisions of FITARA that are set to expire. These provisions include the provision on Federal data center consolidation; transparency and risk management of major IT systems; and agencies’ IT portfolio, program, and resource reviews, also known as PortfolioStat.

These provisions provide transparency and accountability for agencies and should be continued. GAO reports that if we allow these provisions to expire, we will miss out on major savings. IT spending makes up roughly $100 billion of government spending each year. We cannot afford to allow this legislation that will save funds and help modernize IT assets to simply expire.

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

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of 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 Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3243.

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. RUSSELL, Mr. 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.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for a period of less than 15 minutes. Accordingly (at 4 o’clock 14 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.
Mr. ELLISON changed his vote from "nay" to "yea."
Mr. ALLEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to make votes. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on rollocall No. 562, and “nay” on rollocall No. 563.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the provisions of section 7 of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1546) shall apply to H. Con. Res. 81 not earlier than November 2, 2017, but on the same terms that would have adhered on October 13, 2017.

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

There was no objection.

REMEMBERING SERGEANT DUSTIN WRIGHT

(Mr. ALLEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a Toombs County native. Twenty-nine-year-old Staff Sergeant Dustin Michael Wright was one of the three U.S. Army Green Beret soldiers killed in the line of duty last week.

The U.S. Africa Command says Dustin was part of a team assisting in advising local forces in southwest Niger at the time of the ambush.

A 2007 graduate from Toombs County High School, Dustin joined the Army soon after graduation, following in the footsteps of his parents and his brother. His family remembers him as a beloved jokester and was always making people laugh. He took great pride in serving the country, and I am so proud to see the Toombs County community coming together to paint the town red, white, and blue in honor of Dustin’s life. Dustin was truly a hometown hero, and Toombs County will remember him often.

As Jesus said: “Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one’s life for his friends.”

Dustin sacrificed his life for his brothers and sisters in service to this great country. I will never forget our freedom fighter from Toombs County.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF JESUS A. PERMUY

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to honor my constituent, Jesus A. Permuy, for a lifetime of service.

Jesus was forced to flee Castro’s brutal tyranny. Jesus embraced his new life in Miami. He is a dedicated husband, a proud father of 8 children. Jesus is a shining example to so many others in my congressional district, Jesus was forced to flee Castro’s brutal tyranny. Jesus embraced his new life in the United States and became involved in numerous civic and community affairs while working to restore freedom and democracy in Cuba.

Like my family and me and so many others in my congressional district, Jesus was forced to flee Castro’s brutal tyranny. Jesus embraced his new life here in the United States and became involved in numerous civic and community affairs while working to restore freedom and democracy in Cuba.

In 1976, Jesus secured accreditation for the Christian Democratic Movement of Cuba to speak before the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

For decades, Mr. Permuy has been involved in a number of human rights advocacy organizations denouncing the systemic repression brought upon the Cuban people by the evil Castro regime. Jesus founded the Center for Human Rights in Miami. He is a dedicated husband, a proud father of 8 children, and a grandfather of 11 grandchildren. Jesus is a shining example to us all.

Thank you, Jesus A. Permuy, for your service to our community and to my native Cuba.

REFUGES HAVE A TREMENDOUS IMPACT

(Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize MaST Community Charter School, an incredible institution in my district that was just named a 2017 Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the Department of Education.

MaST is a groundbreaking educational community that emphasizes collaborative, technology-driven, hands-on learning. They are preparing the next generation of American leaders and visionaries who will change the future in ways we can only imagine.

Blue Ribbon schools are characterized by the highest level of academic excellence and by their success in closing achievement gaps across student populations.

These elite institutions are a gold standard of instruction, inclusion, and innovation. MaST Community Charter School was one of only 342 schools across the country to earn this honor this year.

I want to congratulate the teachers, staff, administrators, parents, and students of the MaST Community Charter School on their remarkable and well-deserved achievement.

GIVING TO CHARITY IS CRUCIAL

(Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to announce the introduction of the Universal Charitable Giving Act. Many Americans believe that people, not the government, offer the best solutions to solve the ailments that face our society. Strong families, strong churches, and strong communities are the foundations of our Nation. By supporting charities, we can make our communities and our country a better place for Americans from all walks of life.

Giving to charity is crucial for economic prosperity, happiness, and the success of our people, but for too long only the most wealthy have been incentivized to give to the causes they believe in.

The Universal Charitable Giving Act incentivizes charitable giving for low- and middle-income taxpayers. It would allow everyone to deduct charitable giving, regardless of itemizing status.

With tax reform, our aim is to increase take-home pay for middle America. With my bill, our goal is to increase support for all charities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the great work of our faith-based and charitable organizations by supporting this bill.

MEMBER EXPLANATION

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to announce the introduction of H.R. 3979, bipartisan legislation that reauthorizes the National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer, Community Partnership, and Education Program. This program ensures public access to refuges for exploring, hunting, fishing, and studying wildlife.

Refuges have a tremendous impact, even in Brooklyn, where Fish and Wildlife Service staff and volunteers work with local public schools to cultivate the next generation of conservationists and wildlife enthusiasts through hands-on learning.

Carmen Wheeler, a second grade student in Brooklyn, recently wrote to me and said: “I think we should keep the wildlife refuges safe, even if they are far away, because they will always keep our world healthier.”

We are with you, Carmen.
NAFTA RENEGOTIATIONS BEGIN

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, this week, the fourth round of NAFTA renegotiations will begin. President Trump will have an opportunity to deliver on his promise last year to get a better deal for American workers. I hope he does.

Our current trade deals are rigged in favor of the largest corporations in this country and against working people. In my home State of Rhode Island, we have lost 31,000 manufacturing jobs since NAFTA and the WTO took effect. That is more than half of the manufacturing jobs in my State. The folks who kept their jobs have seen their paychecks get smaller.

Rhode Islanders know, most importantly, that we need a trade deal that is fair; but they know that trade deals that we have now help powerful corporations, but they are killing American jobs, helping corporations outsource jobs at the expense of working people.

This week I am asking President Trump to demand a new NAFTA agreement that has strong labor and environmental protections, that end foreign tribunals that allow corporations to sue the U.S. Government and force taxpayers to pay the bill, that has better Buy American requirements, that has strict protections against currency manipulation, that has strong rules of origin on manufactured goods, and that has provisions that bring down the cost of prescription drugs.

These are commonsense provisions that will empower American working families, and they should be included in any new trade agreement.

HOPE FOR TRAFFICKED VICTIMS

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, for years, Lynda could not bring herself to speak about her past turmoil and nightmares.

Lynda is finally telling about her tortured life. When she was 16, two neighborhood boys drugged and sexually assaulted her. Highly drugged, the boys convinced her to have sex for money just once. But it wasn’t for just one time, Mr. Speaker. They set up online advertisements to sell her and other girls.

When one of the other girls tried to escape, they tied her to a chair and beat her up mercilessly. They mixed drugs into the food to maintain control over the girls. It was years before Lynda finally escaped her torment.

Today, the rape and torture still haunt Lynda. She works every day to become a survivor. I recently introduced the Abolish Human Trafficking Act that provides grants to ensure that victims like Lynda get help and services, such as mental health counseling, legal aid, job training, things that they deserve from us. This will help trafficking victims put their broken lives back together.

Trafficking is a scourge, and we need to send a message to everyone that our kids are not for sale.

And that just the way it is.

FOCUS ON THE PAIN THAT PEOPLE ARE SUFFERING

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me first of all say what the world is coming to and how much our friends, our neighbors in America have had to go through: the most recent tragedy and massacre in Las Vegas, and now the horrendous, unspeakable tragedy by fires in California. I offer my sympathy to my friends, MIKE and JARRED, California residents, and we look forward to working with them, and offer our sympathy for those who are lost, those who are missing.

I think it is important, as we have these natural disasters, that we really attentively work on the pain that people are suffering; that is on the back side of Puerto Rico, where there is no power, and we don’t know the assessment of loss of life, there is no housing; from Florida to the U.S. Virgin Islands, where people are still waiting for relief, and the attention is not at the peak that it should. Then, in my own community, we are in desperate need of housing. We have senior citizens, after Hurricane Harvey, being dismissed and out of their homes.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we are looking for a new disaster supplemental food program. We have the okay from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We have the State of Texas ready to work with us, but we must make sure that our local officials realize that this is a disaster and an emergency and that they move forward quickly to serve the people who are hungry and who are in need.

In 2013, Mr. Rich became the principal of Barringer Road Elementary. Since that day, he has arrived at school promptly at 6:30 a.m. each morning, bringing a positive attitude and inspirational words to each morning announcement.

Prior to his service at Barringer Road, Mr. Rich served as principal at the now-closed Remington Elementary School, where he was integral in facilitating the successful merger of the Mohawk and Ilion school districts.

During his time as principal for High School, he served as the principal, the dean of students, and an English teacher.

Mr. Rich’s commitment to his role is unparalleled. Both teachers and parents alike describe Mr. Rich as comforting, helpful, and passionate. One teacher described him as a “superstar principal and a fantastic human being.” Mr. Rich’s record exemplifies his clear dedication to public education, his students, and our community.

Please join me today in congratulating this well-respected educator and beloved member of the 22nd District.

RECOGNIZING JEREMY RICH, NEW YORK’S 2017 NATIONAL DISTINGUISHED PRINCIPAL

(Ms. TENNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jeremy Rich, the principal at Barringer Road Elementary School in Ilion, a constituent of the 22nd Congressional District. For his stellar record of service, professionalism, and contributions to the educational process, Mr. Rich was named the National Association of Elementary School Principals’ 2017 National Distinguished Principal by the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

FOURTH ROUND OF NAFTA NEGOTIATION BEGINS TONIGHT

(Ms. JAYAPAL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the cruel immigration proposal unveiled by the White House this week. This proposal goes beyond some of the worst immigration bills. It demands billions more for border security, tightens asylum standards, cuts off legal immigration, and implements a faulty points-based system, undercutting our core values as a country and destroying our economy and our future.

Mr. Speaker, two-thirds of all immigrants to the United States are women and children, and these policies will disproportionately hurt them. A points-based system eliminates family-based immigration, and it is insulting to the valuable contributions of women, especially. Nearly 70 percent of all women immigrants with legal status obtained it through the family system, and many are stuck in visa backlogs waiting years and even decades to reunite with their families.

Mr. Speaker, immigration has never been just about immigration. It has always been about who we are as a country and what we are willing to stand up for. I believe the majority of my Republican colleagues want to pass the Dream Act, and I ask them to join us in rejecting these anti-immigrant poison pills and proposing real solutions that benefit the American people and unify our country.
So, Harris County, you need to move faster to use the Federal funds that we now have.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF TOM PETTY
(Mr. Yoho asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. Yoho. Mr. Speaker. I rise to honor the life and legacy of Gainesville’s native son, Mr. Tom Petty.

Thomas Earl Petty was born on October 20, 1950, and, over a career that spanned five decades, collected 28 top 10 hits, the most of all time.

But his contribution cannot be measured in hits or awards. He wrote America’s soundtrack. Tom Petty’s story sounds familiar. He grew up in a small town, struggled, persisted, and then succeeded—a true American Dream story.

But it is not what he did; it is how he did it that strikes us. It is the honesty, wit, and sentimentality that made his music special. Every hit Tom Petty crafted became an anthem, each song a score to the memorable moments of our lives. Our life would be much diminished without his work.

Jefferson and Madison wrote our system. Twain wrote our story that described Early American folklore. Petty wrote our songs. The songbook of America is bigger and brighter because of him.

Rest in peace as you continue “Running Down a Dream.”

REPUBLICAN STUDY COMMITTEE

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. Taylor). Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Walker) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. Walker. Mr. Speaker, we are here today because, almost 11 months ago, the American people voted to give Republicans control of unified government. They were tired of being crushed by rising healthcare costs due to ObamaCare. They wanted America’s economy to prosper again. They wanted a secure border.

During the months that followed, Congress worked with President Trump to sign over 50 bills into law. On top of that, the House passed over 270 laws that now sit in the Senate awaiting action.

Despite this legislation, there is a unified voice that is loud and clear arising daily from our base, saying, “Get something done.” The reason for that call is because Americans continue to be crushed by government policies, something that is very evident. These are the same policies that drove them to vote for us in the first place.

Americans are scarred by the broken promises of the former administration. They could not keep their doctor, even though they were told by the former President they could. Their premiums did not go down $2,500, and their exchanges did not work.

ObamaCare resulted in fewer options and increased costs for many Americans. Out-of-pocket costs continue to soar, with average deductibles for bronze plans topping $6,000 in 2017.

Some States, like Arizona, faced premium increases of 116 percent; Oklahoma, 69 percent. Tennessee faced a 63 percent premium increase—one-third of counties have only one insurer offering coverage on the exchange. Some entire States like Wyoming, right below me, South Carolina, Oklahoma, and Alaska only have one insurer.

Think about that. This trend is predicted to worsen, with half of American counties only having one insurer in 2018.

As we have come to almost 8 years with the ACA, or ObamaCare, we run a risk of thinking that it is normal. Our healthcare system is not perfect before. We are not making that case. But ObamaCare made what was already bad even worse.

We cannot think of these stats as mere numbers. Americans are really hurt by the obstacles under this law. Just because Senate Majority Leader McConnell gave up on repealing ObamaCare in the Senate does not mean Americans will give Congress and Republicans a pass. We cannot and we must not give up on this important promise.

The burden of ObamaCare is only made worse by the lackluster growth of the economy in recent years. During the Obama administration years, the economy failed to grow even once at the historic goal of 3 percent a year, something we just saw in our last quarter.

Americans are as industrious and innovative as ever. Americans’ work ethic is not the problem. It is our antiquated Tax Code that has been bogged down over the years by regulators and lobbyists.

Since our last major rewrite of the Tax Code 31 years ago, the same year that “Top Gun” was number one in the box office, 1986, our Tax Code has added over 35,000 pages. Think about that—35,000 pages. That is about three changes per day. Each page is another carve-out or a loophole for the well connected, leaving the rest of the economy behind.

Our companies are at a disadvantage internationally, as our tax rate stands at 35 percent, the highest, as we know now, in the industrialized world.

Families continue to be punished with a marriage penalty.

Our Tax Code should be a competitive advantage for our companies competing with the world. It should encourage innovators to push the boundaries and find success.

The call to get something done that we hear loud and clear from Americans is also coupled with a call to make sure that we are doing our very best to secure the border. Perhaps there is no more vocal call from the past year than to build that wall.

In 2016, the United States saw a surge in illegal border crossings, with 46,000 illegals apprehended in that October alone. This is both a fiscal and a security issue.

Border security is more than just the border, though. Visa overstay is responsible for up to 40 percent of illegal immigration. We need a solution, and we need an action to this problem if we are truly to secure the border.

To add to these problems, more than 100 sanctuary jurisdictions have enacted policies which restrict cooperation with ICE, allowing potentially dangerous illegal immigrant criminals to remain in our country.

I am confident that the American people will deliver their final grade on Republicans over the next 3 months simply based on the three issues, the three promises that I am speaking about today: number one, continuing to work and replace and repeal ObamaCare; number two, reforming the Tax Code; and, number three, securing the border.

In short, repeal, reform, secure. We need to fulfill these promises in the next 3 months. The urgency and the time is now.

As I said before, the status quo on these policies is literally crushing Americans, and this is why we elected Republicans. In fact, since 1913, when Republicans expanded, or when the House expanded the 387 Members to 435, this is the only time in history when back-to-back Congresses, the Americans have elected 240 or more Republicans, and it is time we did our job.

We need to keep our promises to the American people.

I am pleased to be joined by members of the Republican Study Committee to talk about the issue of keeping these promises. That is why it is my privilege to introduce one of our newer members from Kansas, Representative Ron Estes.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. Estes).

Mr. Estes of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, after a decade of inadequate economic growth across America, there is new growing optimism that our economy is about to be set free again. Consumer confidence in the economy is the highest it has been since 2000. Why? I believe this is because the American people expect us to reform our broken Tax Code, and they are excited about it.

Outdated and unfair, our Tax Code has held our economy down for the past decade. It is time we fix this and empower working families in America.

Real tax reform will be the best way to help America climb up the economic ladder. A stronger economy will bring higher wages and better jobs. The goal is to make our Federal Code simple and to make it fair.

□ 1730

The Tax Code, as it is, only benefits the rich and well-connected who can...
hire an army of lawyers to protect their interests. This is why Republicans are looking to enact real reform for all Americans. The argument against tax reform is this: the plan is just a tax cut for the rich.

The reality is, this tax reform framework is focused on helping middle class families. The tax system is laid out by Republicans that allows low- and middle-income workers to keep more of their hard-earned paychecks in order to save for their children’s college, for their retirement, or any other things that they want.

I implore my colleagues across the aisle to do what is right and help to fix our antiquated Tax Code.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative Escobedo. Perhaps no one knows more and has had more experience than the chairman of our Judiciary Committee, a former immigration attorney who has spent years working on resolving these issues.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE).

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the gentleman organizing this hour of Special Order remarks and your leadership on these three important issues.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss the importance of bolstering enforcement of existing immigration law and securing the border. The interior enforcement cadre is vital in enforcing public safety, keeping the door open to law-abiding immigrants, protecting our borders, and restoring the rule of law.

Under President Obama, interior enforcement deterriorated dramatically as his administration refused to enforce immigration laws, rewrote the law through executive action, and implemented policies that enabled millions of unlawful and criminal aliens to remain in the United States free from any possibility of removal.

The Obama administration’s policies had—and continue to have—disturbing consequences. The rule of law was undermined as hundreds of thousands of Central American unaccompanied minors and families arrived at the southwest border during the Obama years and were released into the U.S. Too many Americans were killed or seriously harmed at the hands of aliens who are legally permitted to be in our country.

Fortunately, the Trump administration has begun to reverse the Obama administration’s disastrous policies and is enforcing the law as written by Congress. President Trump has issued executive orders to strengthen interior enforcement security, implement strong border security measures. The Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security are already executing these executive orders, and there have been quick results.

Illegal border crossings at the southwest border dropped dramatically at the beginning of the Trump administration, in large part, to consistent enforcement of the law and the strong message that the U.S. no longer tolerates illegal immigration. However, illegal border crossings are rising again despite the best efforts of the Trump administration, demonstrating that it should be granted additional, long-needed legislative tools. The House Judiciary Committee has been hard at work to improve our Nation’s immigration laws and has already approved bills that are crucial to enable our country to gain control of our immigration system.

The Davis-Oliver Act is the keystone of our interior enforcement efforts and is named after Placer County Detective Michael Davis, Jr., and Sacramento County Deputy Sheriff Danny Oliver, two California law enforcement officers who were murdered by an unlawful immigrant in October 2014.

The bill improves the enforcement of our Nation’s immigration laws to enhance public safety. Specifically, the Davis-Oliver Act provides tools to crack down on dangerous sanctuary city policies and contains much-needed changes to protect American communities from unlawful immigrants who commit crimes in the United States, or are gang members.

The Davis-Oliver Act also enhances national security by improving our Nation’s first line of defense, the visa issuance process. It provides thorough screening of foreign nationals seeking to enter the United States in order to prevent terrorists from entering our country. The bill also ensures the rule of law and removes the ability of any President to unilaterally shut down immigration enforcement by granting the United States law enforcement the authority to voluntarily assist in the enforcement of Federal immigration law and to enforce their own immigration laws consistent with Federal practices.

The House Judiciary Committee has also approved bills to reform the asylum and refugee programs to curtail rampant fraud, while ensuring that our Nation continues to be a safe haven for those persecuted around the world. The surge of Central American unaccompanied alien minors and family units seeking to enter the U.S. illegally at our southern border put a strain on manpower and resources. It also exposed loopholes in our Nation’s immigration laws that are being exploited by smugglers and others seeking to game our Tax Code.

The Asylum Reform and Border Patrol Act makes a number of improvements to our Nation’s laws to prevent fraud and abuse in the system and assure that asylum is reserved for those truly fleeing persecution in their home country.

Further, the Protection of Children Act makes sure that unaccompanied alien minors who make the dangerous journey to the United States are swiftly and safely returned home. For those who stay with a sponsor in the United States while awaiting their immigration hearing, the bill provides for greater transparency and safety to these minors to ensure that they are not inadvertently delivered into the hands of criminals or abusers.

The Refugee Program Integrity Restoration Act reforms the refugee program by curbing the inflow of terrorists, improving our public safety and national security. It also provides States and local governments the power to decide if refugees are to be resettled within their communities and gives Congress, not the President, the power to set the overall refugee ceiling for each year.

The House Judiciary Committee also plans to bring up a bill that protects jobs for citizens and legal workers, the Legal Workforce Act. This bill requires all U.S. employers to check the work eligibility of all future hires through the tried and tested E-Verify system. E-Verify quickly confirms 99 percent of work-eligible employees and takes less than 10 minutes to complete.

Over 740,000 American employers currently use E-Verify, and 83 percent of America’s employers support a mandatory electronic verification system. While many aspects of our Nation’s immigration system remain unproved, including our guest worker program for American agriculture, we must strengthen the enforcement of our immigration laws.

Immigration enforcement is crucial to maintain our sovereignty, to protect national security, and to restore the rule of law.

Mr. Speaker, I call on Congress to take up the House Judiciary Committee’s immigration enforcement bills soon.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman Goodlatte and appreciate those powerful words.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DeSANTIS), a colleague and one of the sharpest, most intellectual Members of Congress.

Mr. DeSANTIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from North Carolina for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, if you were trying to do damage to the United States and you wanted to design a Tax Code that hindered economic growth, that diverted a lot of productive energy, that basically kept America from reaching its economic potential, you probably wouldn’t do much worse than designing the code that we have.

It is enormously complex—70,000 plus pages. I confess, there is no way I can understand my own taxes, that is true for millions and millions of Americans. There is a frustration with that, but it also costs massive amounts of money and diverts energy. We are talking about hundreds of billions of dollars that get diverted to complying with our Tax Code that is not optimal for economic growth.

It repels capital and incentivizes companies to relocate overseas and take jobs overseas. You see companies reincorporating in Ireland or Canada. Illinois because they have the highest corporate tax rate in the industrialized world. We are almost trying to send businesses overseas.
It doesn’t allow middle class families to keep enough of the money they earn. If you look over the past decade or so, family income really hasn’t risen by that much, yet the cost of living has gone up. So by taking more and more from taxes, it makes it harder for middle class families to make ends meet.

So reforming the Tax Code, doing a big tax cut, I think is long overdue. It would be a boon to our economy. You would have a simple system—no more 70,800 pages. Fill out your own tax return. That not only is more economically efficient, it gives people a lot of peace of mind to know they can do their taxes themselves. It is going to incentivize us to bring all of the trillions of dollars in overseas profits, and bring it back to the United States so that we can invest it here through our companies and create more jobs here.

It will make our American businesses more competitive. Our business tax system is 14 percent. It is much more competitive. This, I think, will change a lot of that by having a competitive business tax rate, and I think that that will mean more economic growth.

So I think all that is pretty obvious to most of us, and I think this in a fair way. The question for us now is, we have to produce this bill. We have been talking about tax reform for a long time this year, and I think that is great, but it is time right now for us to produce this bill and debate it here in this House, pass it, and send it over to the United States Senate.

I am not encouraged when, given the urgency of this, we are going on a recess next week. The House is not going to be here. You are not going to have a tax bill marked up in the Ways and Means Committee or unveiled to the public. Members are not going to be debating that. I think it is time that we do that, and I think there should be a sense of urgency to push that through.

We have got to get our job done. I think the bill should have been passed by now, but let’s get it done. Send it to the Senate. I don’t think you would probably have very smart money to bet that the Senate is going to come through in the clutch. They haven’t shown they can do that yet. But this is going to be a big question for them: Can you get anything done in the U.S. Senate? This is something that we know we need to do. It will be good for our economy.

All of the Republicans have said that our Tax Code is a disaster. So if we send them a good bill, this is going to be a major test. Can you apply the majority that the voters gave us? Can you honor your commitments and do something good for taxpayers? I hope the answer is yes. But I think in this body we have got to be focusing on, let’s put the Senate to the test. Let’s draft, debate, and pass a strong, bold, tax cut and tax reform package.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments. I always appreciate the contribution that the gentleman makes to the House and to the American people.

I could not agree more. For those who may be listening or watching, you may have seen, in the last few months, a heightened energy, or an urgency when it comes to doing our job to get tax reform to the Senate to begin to move and to begin to act—not just on things like repealing the healthcare, ObamaCare, but also moving, getting ready to move, hopefully, on tax reform.

I know there has been some agreement on the framework, but, as the details continue to be more and more clear, we hope our colleagues on the Senate are ready to move quickly and swiftly for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. Norman), a brand-new Member who came in from a special election to replace OMB Director Mick Mulvaney when he took the position with President Trump’s administration. He has gotten up to speed quickly and is a huge asset to the Republican Study Committee and the House Republicans as a whole.

Mr. Norman. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the Republican Study Committee’s three promises in 3 months’ pledge to repeal ObamaCare, secure the border, and enable comprehensive tax reform.

I applaud RSC’s Chairman Mike Walker for his leadership on this and his three promises to repeal and secure the House has begun to deliver by passing the American Health Care Act and providing $1.6 billion in border wall funding.

Tonight, I want to focus on the third promise: passing comprehensive tax reform. Our Nation’s Tax Code affects every family, business, and worker and is a key driver behind America’s economic competitiveness. Congress has not passed comprehensive tax reform since 1986.

The average cost of a new house then in the United States was $89,430. For a new Ford F–150 pickup truck, the average price was $35,000. Mr. Speaker, it has been way too long before we have taken comprehensive tax reform into consideration.

Since then, the number of pages in the IRS code has increased by nearly 50,000 pages. The corporate tax rate is at 35 percent, which is the highest in the industrialized world. Ireland’s, to name one, is 12 percent. This is unsustainable.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Yoho).

Mr. Yoho. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the chairman’s leadership on this.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the three promises, 3-month initiative that you have outlined here, and I think it is so important that we follow through with this.

Now it is in our ability to make sure this gets through the Senate and passed into law by the President. We can’t force all that, but what we are committed to is doing our part and doing our job to get these pieces of legislation through regular order to the House for a vote to fulfill the promises that most of us ran on over the last several elections.

It is also a wonderful privilege tonight to introduce our House veterinarian—the gentleman that as he would need if we need a House veterinarian—but the great Representative from central Florida who does fine work in the House, Dr. Ted Yoho.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Yoho).

Mr. Yoho. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with the House leadership, Chairman Brady, and all of the congressional Members to pass this fair and simple tax reform package to make this country as great as it can be.

Mr. Walker. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments. As you see, three promises, 3 months; October, November, December, three promises, 3 months: repeal, reform, and secure. That is the promise from the Republican Study Committee to getting up 157 members, 17 of the 20 chairman.

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Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with the House leadership, Chairman Brady, and all of the congressional Members to pass this fair and simple tax reform package to make this country as great as it can be.

Mr. Walker. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments. As you see, three promises, 3 months; October, November, December, three promises, 3 months: repeal, reform, and secure. That is the promise from the Republican Study Committee to getting up 157 members, 17 of the 20 chairman.
I applaud President Trump for releasing a set of principles which I fully endorse and his priorities that are focused on making our borders more secure. President Trump’s consistent messaging call for better enforcement of our immigration laws and improving border security are the main reasons he won the Presidency.

President Trump is sticking to his campaign promises, which is refreshing to see in Washington, D.C., these days, a town where too many times there is an aversion to tough decisions in fear of how that will be viewed in the next election. So it is refreshing to see President Trump do what he said he was going to do.

Protecting our borders, ending sanctuary cities, and facilitating State and local cooperation in immigration enforcement are commonsense ideas that will protect national security, promote public safety, and deter future illegal immigration. We are hard at work on solving the problems of illegal immigration in the House.

Just three real quick facts:

- From November 2013 to July 2014, officials apprehended 143 individuals list-ed on the U.S. terrorist watch list trying to cross the Mexican border and enter the U.S. illegally. So many times I hear people say that this is not true and that this does not happen, but we know better.
- As of 2014, illegal immigrants were convicted and sentenced for about 13 percent of the crimes in the United States.
- Then, lastly, border security should also focus on maritime domain. Our Coast Guard, a hardworking branch of our military service, has set a new record for cocaine seizures at sea for the second consecutive year, seizing more than 455,000 pounds of cocaine in 2017 that was destined for the home-land.

So I am proud to join the Republican Study Committee in recognizing the necessity of border security today.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative Yoho, and we appreciate the gentleman’s work in the United States House.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most accomplished men, sometimes a person whom we refer to as “Governor” around here when it comes to political minds, is the gentleman from South Carolina, Representative MARK SANFORD. Week in and week out, he is a very diligent and great leader in this House.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield to the fine gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD).

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I would make two quick points on the importance of tax reform. One, I would refer to an editorial that appeared in yesterday’s Wall Street Journal. What it talked about was the nexus between deficits and tax reform. Oddly enough, if you look at the numbers here of late and if you look at the 2017 CBO report, what it shows is that, in fact, deficits are creeping up again. Last year’s number is $668 billion.

What they point to in this editorial was that a good part of the reason why deficits have escalated has been tied to anemic economic growth and that, unlike other recoveries that had been more robust in nature, the revenues had not come in as they have in past recoveries. As a consequence, deficits have exploded.

So if you care about the deficits—and I do, and I know that the gentleman from North Carolina does, and I know that other members of the RSC do. If you care about deficits, then you have got to do something about tax reform this year was, in essence, the premise of the editorial.

The other point I would make is this. In a capitalistic society, capital matters. In essence, it is a mathematical formula.

Savings drives investment, which drives productivity gain, which ultimately drives living or wages, which we talk about. There are only two ways of increasing or improving human productivity. One is with gray matter: you can build a better mousetrap because you have been well trained to find a better process to solve something different. The other is with physical capital. One person with a bulldozer can move a lot more dirt than one person with a shovel.

Yet what we oftentimes forget in the debate on tax reform is how important it is that we encourage and, in essence, complement the efforts of those who are out there risking on a daily basis. So with that in mind, it is important that we have tax reform that includes people who are actually, again, building businesses.

Think about this: the top 25 percent of the earners out there pay 90 percent of the taxes; the top 10 percent pay 60 percent of the taxes.

Now, let’s make that just a second. If you are in the top 25 percent, that begins at $77,000. If you are in the top 10 percent, you are at $333,000.

Now, tell me this: When I talk to a truck driver and a schoolteacher at home, their combined income could be around $100,000. Are they rich? I would say no. But they are out there making the kind of risks that are necessary to the building of capital that was exactly what The Wall Street Journal talked about.

If we want to do something about deficits, and if we want to do something about capital formation that is so necessary to raising wages, then we have got to do something about this equation. It is important that those earners and those small-business people not be left out, as is the case right now. That is yet another reason why tax reform is so important this year.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative SANFORD; I appreciate the gentleman’s good words, experience, and knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, speaking of Congress as a whole, it is well past time to make sure that tax reform and tax relief gets across to the American people.

A lot of times we talk about classes. The truth is it is probably better terminology to talk about income levels, lower, middle and higher income levels.

That some of the issues have been connected to tax reform, pointing forward the Charitable Giving Act, which is something that impacts both the lower and middle income levels.

We believe that is something that needs to be connected to tax reform to make sure that those folks who come from a background of teachers and truck drivers as we just heard about, but also other areas of the middle class and maybe lower income levels, something that they have a way where they are able to make sure that every dollar and every sacrifice they give back to a charitable organization—whether it is a local church or whether it is to the United Way—to make sure that every dollar is counted.

It means something that has been going on way too long. As we know, there are 75,000 pages right now of IRS Tax Code regulations. If the IRS wants to come after a private citizen, the private citizen doesn’t have much of a re- source ability to fight back whether it is in the legal or whether it is extended wealth. This is a machine that has been building, and the bureaucracy has been growing well past time.

It is time to neuter the IRS. One of the ways we can do that is reducing it from seven tax brackets down to three. It was erroneously shared by somebody across the aisle recently that we are driving up the lowest bracket from 10 percent to 12 percent. The truth is: we are condensing it right now to three tax brackets—35 percent, 25 percent, and 12 percent—and doubling the standard deduction from $12,000 to $24,000. This is something that we are looking forward to doing to benefit the American people.

We talk much in these Halls about bipartisan support or bipartisan this or that. When did it become an issue, when did it become a problem, and when did it become a point of conten-tion to allow the American people to keep more of the money from the hard work they put in day in and day out, week in and week out? That is something that we must do. That is something that should not even be a place of argument or a place of debate when it comes back allowing these folks to continue.

For some, we can get past the tax credit language. We can move on beyond the charitable deductions and all the different political and accounting words. What about just the family of four that needs another car, that needs to be able to afford a car payment to get a mom or a dad back and forth to work, or maybe a teenager in the house? We have decreed that through that twice now. We had more claims than we probably should, but we get it. But also, maybe it is a few more times out to eat or to the movies, the things that
make you want to get up every day and continue to pursue that American Dream.

But not only from the individual side of this—certainly very important—but what about this corporate tax rate, this business rate that we talk constantly about that almost has become Washington jargon talking points? Why is that so important?

Over the years since the 1930s and 1940s, our corporate business rate has climbed to the highest in the industrial world. Why is that? Why would we make it tougher on our manufacturers and our companies to have a higher tax rate? What incentive is it to stay here? We could track company after company.

I come from the State of North Carolina where textiles and furniture used to be two of our top three job providers. A lot of those companies now you will find in Vietnam or other places.

That corporate tax rate that literally has gone through the roof, why wouldn’t we want to reduce that business rate? Why wouldn’t we want to incentivize companies to begin to bring those jobs back to the United States?

I think it is something that all of us should have the energy and the ability to be able to get behind and really push forward.

We have been promising this for how long? Sixty-three years? I was a junior in high school. Thirty years this has been on the docket, and the moment is now for us to deliver. If it is not now, as Reagan used to say, then when? Then how?

What should we be doing if it is not fulfilling the very promise that we have made to the American people, and that is that we are going to provide genuine—not some kind of phony legislation, not some kind of smokeout, but genuine tax reform and tax relief for the American people?

Now, you may hear sometimes that, hey, the Republican plan is only for the most wealthy. As I said in my opening, I am confident that the American people will deliver the final grade over the next 3 months. The 115th Congress, what kind of grade will we have over the next 3 months if we do not deliver on these three promises?

I am hoping that that urgency is resonating. Repealing and replacing, continuing to fight to repeal and replace ObamaCare, to make sure that we are continuing to reform and do everything that we can to work on the Tax Code. Finally, the promise that we have been making year after year is to make sure that we are protecting the American people by securing our border.

I understand that each of these items is a major legislative item in its own right. To be frank, we should have been delivering on them throughout the year. It is October, the 10th month of year. It is high past time. We only have such a busy agenda this late in the game because we haven’t delivered on our promises.

I want to thank my colleagues and fellow Republican Study Committee members tonight for joining us this evening.

I would ask the American people to continue to support and continue to urge their Members of Congress to deliver on these promises.

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

REAUTHORIZE CHIP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O’HALLERAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. O’HALLERAN. Mr. Speaker, as a Member of Congress, as a father, and as a grandfather, nothing I do is more important than ensuring every child in Arizona and America has the opportunity to live up to their God-given potential. No matter where they live, kids deserve to grow up healthy, with every chance to succeed.

That is why it is beyond unacceptable that, for the first time ever, Congress missed the deadline to reauthorize the Children’s Health Insurance Program.

For decades, CHIP has been a bipartisan program and has been reauthorized with broad support, until now. It has now been 11 days since CHIP expired. This is an outrage for children across the Nation who depend on the affordable, quality care they receive, thanks to CHIP. It is especially troubling for Arizona.

Arizona has had the unfortunate distinction of being one of the worst States for healthcare access for children. Until last year, it was the only State in the entire Nation without an active Children’s Health Insurance Program.

When Arizona froze CHIP KidsCare program in 2010. At its height, the waiting list for coverage after the freeze topped 100,000. I repeat: the list topped 100,000 because of a freeze put on by the State of Arizona.

Two years ago, Congress reauthorized CHIP and included enhanced match rate funding for States under the Affordable Care Act. Thanks to advocates on the ground and with bipartisan support in our State legislature, this enhanced funding finally paved the way for our State to reopen KidsCare.

Last year, KidsCare began enrolling children—over 23,000 so far. We have just begun the hard work of educating and reaching out to the working families who qualify for the Affordable Care Act.

Arizona is one of a handful of States, as you can see here in this chart in blue, that would run out of Federal funds to cover children by December of this year, absent congressional action. Families in these States are the most at risk for losing critical access to care, until Congress steps up to the plate and passes a robust reauthorization with enhanced rate funding.

I have met and heard from many of these families and their providers. I know what is at stake for them.

Cate Arnquist is a mother from Tucson, Arizona, whose 8-year-old son, Zachary, was approved for coverage through KidsCare last month. This is a huge relief to Cate, who recently moved to Arizona with her husband and works at a local elementary school. Cate said:

It’s important for me to know that if I need to take him to the doctor, I will be able to take him. As a parent, your kids are always your biggest priority. I think every parent wants to make sure their kids are healthy.

Cate, I couldn’t agree with you more. Kids like Zachary deserve to know that their elected officials here in Congress are looking out for them.

Graciela is a working single mom who lives in Phoenix. Her 17-year-old daughter, who suffers from high blood pressure, relies on KidsCare coverage. Graciela says:

I just pray and ask everybody who is behind CHIP to think about it. They don’t know how hard it is sometimes when you are a parent and you don’t know what to do. Should I put a plate of food on the table or should I take my kid to the doctor?

These are questions no parent in Arizona or in America should have to ask themselves. Doctors in our community agree.

A pediatrician practicing in Gilbert, Arizona, shared an important story.
with us about a family with five children in her practice. The father works as a grocer, but makes $20 too much to qualify for Medicaid. That is $20.

One of the children has significant developmental delays and another child has a serious neurological disease. When the child was born, it became clear that he most likely had the neurological disease as well.

The doctor referred this child for evaluation but the family was unable to take him to the neurologist because they could not afford the office visits and diagnostic testing necessary. Had KidsCare been open at the time, the family could have applied for coverage, since they qualified, based on their income.

This story and our experience in Arizona should be a cautionary tale for the rest of the States who may freeze their program if Congress fails to reauthorize CHIP now.

No family should be put at risk when they need help for their kids. Working families like these are doing their best to make ends meet and raise healthy kids.

Reauthorizing CHIP isn’t just the right thing to do morally, but it is the smart, economic decision for our communities. I understood that when I was a Republican State legislator and fought for KidsCare, and I understand it now here in Congress.

We must do better. Instead of playing partisan games and spending time on bills that make coverage and affordability worse for Americans, we need to make CHIP reauthorization front and center of our focus.

While I am pleased that the Senate Finance Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee have started to take up action, it is past time to get a robust bill to the President’s desk.

CHIP has long been a bipartisan program, and I will keep working with any member of this body or party, to make sure our kids have the care they deserve. They are counting on us. We cannot let them down.

I am pleased to be joined this evening by my colleagues who are committed to fighting for kids in our communities. I want to thank them for joining this Special Order hour to fight for CHIP and a strong reauthorization process.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. CICILLINE.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona for yielding and for his leadership in organizing this Special Order hour.

There is no more sacred responsibility that we have than to ensure that the children in this country have access to quality, affordable healthcare. So I rise this evening to speak in support of the vital Children’s Health Insurance Program, also known as CHIP. As of September 30, 2017—this past September—CHIP authorization expired. This program assures that 9 million children, including 27,000 children and pregnant women in my home State of Rhode Island, are provided with low-cost health insurance, which covers essential services such as routine checkups, immunizations, doctor visits, prescriptions, dental and vision care, inpatient and outpatient hospital care, laboratory and x-ray services, and emergency services.

This historically bipartisan program has been successful in lowering the percentage of children who are uninsured from nearly 14 percent when it started in 1997 to 5.5 percent in 2015. Historic achievements.

If not extended by Congress soon, many States will no longer be able to fund the program and will begin limiting coverage, some as early as the end of the year.

In fact, the Kaiser Family Foundation recently concluded that, without an extension of CHIP, “States would face budget pressures, children would lose coverage, and implementation of programs would result in increased costs and administrative burden for States as well as confusion for families.”

If not extended by Congress soon, many States will no longer be able to fund the program and will begin limiting coverage.

Congress must also act with urgency to extend and reauthorize the other programs that were enacted in the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015, including extending funding for community health centers; the Personal Responsibility Education Program; the rural and Medicare-dependent hospitals program; Teaching Health Centers; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; and the Special Diabetes Program for type 1 diabetes and for Indians.

These critical programs, as well as CHIP, are vital to the American way of life. Without CHIP, we would be at risk of losing the ability to provide for the critical problem by cutting CHIP?

I don’t think so.

Even more, Mr. Speaker, last week, we spent a considerable amount of time debating the 20-week abortion ban. We heard passionate speeches about how important it was to preserve the life of fetuses. We spent all this time and money after speaking about emotional demands on this body that we restrict women’s body autonomy, but we spent no time reauthorizing the program for little Junior, once he crowns and is born—the basic healthcare that he needs immediately as he exits the womb.

Mr. Speaker, simply put, it is hypocritical for you to say that life ends as soon as the umbilical cord is cut. And, Mr. Speaker, your actions prove it.

You know, I am of the mindset of one of our news reporters, Rachel Maddow, that we ought to just watch what you do and not what you say.

Almost 9 million children depend on CHIP for healthcare; 9 million children from low- to moderate-income families who will lose access to vaccinations, routine checkups, dental care, mental healthcare, prescriptions, and some of the children are profoundly disabled.

Mr. Speaker, what is going to happen to the 24 percent of the children enrolled in CHIP that have special...
healthcare needs, including asthma and learning disabilities?

The health of our children depends on this program, yet, Mr. Speaker, all you can do to muster up a reauthorization for CHIP is to fund it by increasing Medicaid—Medicare, a program designed for people over 65—and cutting the Prevention and Public Health Fund.

All you can do, Mr. Speaker, is to pit old people against our babies in order to provide basic healthcare to children. This sounds really Faustian, and it is unimaginable, yet this is the reality that we are working with.

Mr. Speaker, it is now time to put these politics aside and to reauthorize CHIP now for 5 years. This is a disgrace not only in this Nation, but internationally. I, as an American, don't want to be judged by putting our kids last.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Wisconsin for her comments.

Mr. Speaker, I am kind of new to this body, but when I came here, I came with the same intention as I did when I first got into the Arizona State Legislature. One of the first issues I worked on was the CHIP Program, a program that helped kids stay healthy, a program so that they could be successful at school, a program that is imperative. Yet, today, millions of people around this country, millions of families around this country, millions of families to have to be in a hospital instead of having had the ability to have preventative care, what it means to see children taken out of homes in ambulances instead of having preventative care. What it means to see children look like, what it means to see children taken out of homes in ambulances instead of having preventative care. What it means to see children look like, what it means to have children have disabilities to have to go through that process and not have the physical therapy that is needed...

This happened time and time again before CHIP became reality. I don't think America wants to go back there. I think America wants to move forward and make sure our children are healthy and able to withstand the issues in our society that lead us to make sure that they do.

I cannot understand, for the life of me, why we would keep these families—it is 11 days now. It is going to mean many more. We will have to come to find new ways to get our constituents to understand that child health means to those families to have to suffer through this process of the unknown of their child’s future healthcare.

I have to say that this is an issue that most Americans and most of this body agree to. I don’t know why we have gone down this path of taking money—or thinking of taking money away from those children. But I do know that we should get this dealt with quickly and make sure the families in America that need it can provide for their children's health.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to Representative LANGEVIN, the gentleman from Rhode Island.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I appreciate all his time and effort he is putting into bringing attention to this vitally important issue that he brought this evening as we highlight the imminent need to pass a full reauthorization of the Children’s Health Insurance Program.

Now, I represent the great State of Rhode Island, a State with over 27,000 children and pregnant women at risk of losing health care if CHIP is not fully funded. It is deeply troubling to me and many of my constituents, my colleagues in government; and we fought hard to make sure that we did better by our young people, by the most vulnerable, and by pregnant women in making sure that they had the healthcare coverage that they desperately need and deserve.

Now, in Rhode Island, the lack of a reauthorization endangers $26 million in Federal funds that support this vulnerable population, many of whom will not otherwise have comprehensive coverage. This is particularly frustrating because congressional Republicans knew that CHIP funding would expire on September 30. They had ample time to fix this problem in a bipartisan way and have chosen not to.

Instead of proactively crafting legislation to ensure 9 million low-income children and families maintain access to affordable, high-quality healthcare, Republicans focused their efforts on gutting the Affordable Care Act to the exclusion of everything else. Now, instead of making their political priority to eliminate coverage for 23 million, they are passing on an opportunity to govern on multiple healthcare fronts. Rather than work to find meaningful bipartisan solutions, Republicans still seek ways of systematically unraveling ACA protections and have only offered untenable options to offset the cost of CHIP. That is no way to govern responsibly or to even remotely do it in a bipartisan way, which they could do. Now, their plan to pull for healthcare for one population by stripping access to healthcare from another is wrong. This approach of robbing Peter to pay Paul does nothing to build a foundation for a healthier future, nor does it protect the communities with sufficient healthcare access today.

Proposing to slash the ACA’s Prevention and Public Health Fund and creating a greater financial burden on seniors by suggesting destructive Medicare changes are not acceptable ways to bring Democrats to the table and pass a CHIP reauthorization with bipartisan support. Which, by the way, I am sure my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who care as passionately about our children, and we need to come together again.

We have a responsibility to move quickly, to ensure our children continue to have access to high-quality healthcare. States like Rhode Island deserve to know that we will support the efforts to do the right thing for the children in the State. The health professionals who treat these children deserve more certainty. Most importantly, the children who benefit from CHIP deserve much better than to be threatened with coverage termination because my colleagues in the majority can't set aside their political ambitions and goals.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to again thank my colleague for raising an alarm bell on this issue, calling attention and focusing the American people on the need to reauthorize CHIP.

We take great pride in Rhode Island that over the years we have built a very strong program to cover vulnerable children and pregnant women. We have been leaders in the country in having a very low rate of uninsured. Going back even before the ACA was enacted, we had a partnership with our Rite Care and Rite Share program. There were hard-fought battles that moved the ball forward for providing better and more responsible health coverage for the people who need it and deserve it the most.

We need to come together now in a bipartisan way to make sure that CHIP is reauthorized. We cannot let this program fail. We cannot fail our children, our most vulnerable populations. We cannot come together in a bipartisan way. Democrats stand ready to do just that, come together in a bipartisan way to reauthorize CHIP, just as it had been authorized in a bipartisan way when it was first created.

Now, I know that there are many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who care as passionately about covering low-income children, providing affordable healthcare, doing the right thing by our children, and I look forward to reaching across the aisle to do just that. Let's do this in a bipartisan way. Let's do the right thing and put partisan politics aside and cover our children.
Mr. Speaker, I thank again Mr. O’HALLERAN for his leadership on this vital issue, and I look forward to continuing to work with him as we reauthorize CHIP, hopefully in the very near future. Again, we got to do this together.

Mr. O’HALLERAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Rhode Island not only for his discussion today, but also for all his work on behalf of the children of America. I think that his record speaks for itself, and I am obvious that what we are hearing from him came from his heart. So I thank the gentleman for his remarks.

I asked my fellow colleagues, when they start to work on this bill again—hopefully, they do it in a speedy fashion—that when they wake up in the morning, they think of what it means to have their child potentially without healthcare, what it means to have the unknown that we don’t know if next month or the month later they will lose that coverage because Congress has failed to address the issue that they have all agreed on for 20 years. We have to and we must find a way to come to an agreement.

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

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Norman). Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Gohmert) for 30 minutes.

Mr. Gohmert. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my good friend, Mr. Higgins from Louisiana.

THE PLIGHT OF THE CITIZENS OF LOUISIANA IMPACTED BY HURRICANE HARVEY

Mr. Higgins of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise unscripted to bring to the attention of the entire Nation the plight of the good citizens of Louisiana who were impacted by Hurricane Harvey last month. Beside me at this graph shows the rainfall, the water event of Hurricane Harvey as it impacted Texas and Louisiana.

As anyone can see, it was a tremendous water event, unprecedented rainfall, that overwhelmed any water management that we can see, the parishes of southwest Louisiana were impacted, as well as many counties in Texas, yet, as we discuss disaster relief, Louisiana is absent from our conversation. I point out, to all who have to witness the State line of Louisiana, as defined by the Sabine River, and the impact of Hurricane Harvey.

Mr. Speaker, Hurricane Harvey did not recognize the artificial State boundaries that we have created as a Republic nor should we as we provide disaster relief for our citizens. Just after Hurricane Harvey had impacted Texas and Louisiana, my office drafted a letter to the executive branch to a President that I admire and respect, advising him of the impact, and begging his expedited approval of the disaster status once the formal request had been submitted by our Governor.

Sometime later, just 2 weeks ago, that formal request was submitted by the Governor of our State. Just after that submission, my office drafted and submitted a second letter requesting expedited approval of disaster status for these citizens of Louisiana, who were clearly just as impacted by this storm as many citizens in Texas.

Tomorrow, we shall send a third letter, this time signed by the entire Louisiana delegation, I ask that the Nation recognize the plight of the people I represent. The good and patriotic citizens of southwest Louisiana are suffering. I respect and admire my President, I support him, I have supported him since day one, and I support him still. But it is important that we, as representatives of we the people, communicate clearly our intent and our service.

I beg that the leaders of the executive branch level would witness this clear evidence of the need for disaster declaration for southwest Louisiana. And I beg that this message is received with the spirit with which it is delivered, which is respectful, yet in determined service of our citizens whom I have sworn to represent.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding these precious moments to me.

Mr. Gohmert. Mr. Speaker, we had some interesting days here, but, over the weekend, being back in Texas, I am hearing the cries from people all over east Texas. There is a small number that say: Hey, I am not making much, and I am getting a subsidy from the government, so I am okay on my healthcare. I am young, I have no health problems, and that is fine.

But over and over, there is a cry going out around America that says: We elected Republicans in the majority in the House and the majority in the Senate to help us with our healthcare—with really health insurance. Everybody can get healthcare. You can just go to the emergency room, whether you have money or not.

This is really more about health insurance. Some of us have not wanted health insurance to make our major decisions for us on our own healthcare. We haven’t wanted the government to make major decisions on our healthcare, but both are making those decisions for people across the country today.

Unfortunately, there are people telling me they are paying $8,000, $10,000, $12,000. I heard one for $20,000 yesterday from Texas, $20,000 for the family’s insurance, and they have a $12,000 deductible, and they can’t afford either one. They expected help.

President Trump is not the Congress. He has pushed, shoved, cajoled, done everything he could to try to get Congress moving in the House after a back and forth, wailing, gnashing of teeth. We got a bill. It wasn’t perfect by any stretch. But at least it would have given people relief from high premiums, most Americans. Hopefully, Governor Trump can misrepresent the truth, as some did. Actually, we know some people just flat lied about ObamaCare. People who said, “If you like your insurance, you can keep it,” they knew it was a lie. If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. They knew that was a lie.

And now the people are suffering the consequences of trusting people in government who lied to them. They were deceived. But even with all the deception, most of the time it appeared that a clear majority of Americans did not want what was fraudulently called the Affordable Care Act. There was nothing affordable about it, unless you didn’t have any healthcare problems at all.

Mr. Speaker, Hurricane Harvey did not recognize the artificial State line of Louisiana, as defined by the Republican, nor should we as we provide the weight of the taxes in this country have needed help. They counted on us to provide legislative changes, repeal of ObamaCare, let’s put a system in place where people can make their own healthcare decisions and we send the bill to the Senate, and I still believe we should have been demanding more of the Senate every day.

I know there are a lot of people who say: Well, Republicans can’t lose the majority in the Senate because there are a bunch more Democrats whose seats are up this time instead of Republicans. Yes, we can lose the majority, even when there are more Democratic seats up for election.

That is what happens when people are sorely disappointed. Many stay home, and the wrong people will get elected when too many people stay home.

But the adage is, still true, democracy ensures people are governed no better than they deserve. So whether anybody liked or disliked President Obama as our President—and, by the way, for those who like to throw out the term “hater,” I don’t hate anybody, but I can certainly disapprove of conduct.

For 8 years, America deserved Barack Hussein Obama. Before that, whether you like him or not, I like him. America deserved George W. Bush in the Senate because there are a bunch more Democrats whose seats are up this time instead of Republicans. Yes, we can lose the majority, even when there are more Democratic seats up for election.

It is interesting, though, being in hearings today and hear people clamoring that they demand action from this department, that department, it is taking too long, while, at that very moment, Democratic Senators at the other end of this building are doing everything they can to prevent confirmation of President Trump’s appointees.
to those departments so they can start getting things done.

It is amazing when one party like that can hold the ability, because of the filibuster rule, because of the requirement for 60 votes, apparently, they hold up the appointments. To me, that is all the reason to go ahead and say: Do you know what, you are demanding action from people who you have not confirmed yet, so we are not going to let you play that game anymore. You have people saying, “Oh, goodness, those departments aren’t getting decisions made, aren’t getting their work done,” and all the while you are holding them back from being able to do it by not confirming the people who need to be doing that work.

The Senate ought to just say: We are not playing that game, we are not letting you play that game, we are going to call the game off, we are going to get serious about America’s problems, and we are going to make sure Trump’s nominees with 51 votes, not just judges, we are going to confirm his nominees with 51 votes. We cannot tolerate people—really it is fraudulent activity to hold back the nominees from being in the House, and give them the White House as a Republican Party—

But the American people are still suffering. And the budget apparently does not provide for ObamaCare to be repealed and replaced, nor the reconciliation for the next 12 months. So unless the Senate feels enough heat from the American people—the Republicans that is—they are not going to do anything about ObamaCare that they promise to repeal and replace.

□ 1845

Apparently, it is going to have to get pretty hot in the kitchen down in the Senate to now there worked up enough to finally give the American people the relief that the Senate Republicans promised.

Now, I don’t like talking about this, despite what some may think. It is a much more serious and go along, but people are suffering because we haven’t kept our promise. The Senate couldn’t pass anything that would get the American people some relief from all the suffering from ObamaCare.

For those aware yes, there were bailouts for the monopoly insurance companies. Some made record profits, and yet they are still, under ObamaCare, the way it was written, supposed to get bailouts.

So it appears pretty clear the design of ObamaCare was to make it fail. Apparently, people at the top of some of these insurance companies have not been smart enough to figure out that they signed their own death warrants when they embraced ObamaCare, but it appears it was designed to make people angry at the greedy, allegedly corrupt health insurance companies.

I don’t think they are corrupt, but there sure was a lot of greed there between some of the pharmaceutical companies and the health insurance companies signing on. Some of them tried to say: Well, oh, but we needed to be at the table.

We are going: Not if you are on the menu you didn’t want to be at the table.

I am sure the executives that have their golden parachutes leave the health insurance companies after 5, 6, 7 years with their incomes.

The design was the health insurance companies make a fortune, people’s premiums kept going through the roof, deductibles kept going through the roof, bailouts were provided to insurance companies that had record profits, and then the design ultimately would be the American people getting so angry they would just wash out and say: Enough already. I never thought I would say this, but anything has got to be better than these insurance companies, the handful that are left, so let’s just let the government take care of everything.

Then we get a system that is twice as bad as the VA for all Americans, so all Americans can suffer fairly, equally, instead of getting what used to be some of the finest healthcare ever in the history of the world.

We have another issue I want to touch on. Our Taxed Enough Already Caucus had a meeting yesterday and heard from Luke Rosiak, who has done more investigation on the IT scandal here on Capitol Hill, apparently done more investigation than anybody at the FBI. We keep hearing rumors that the FBI is reporting there is nothing to this, kind of like the Clinton scandal, the money that the Clinton Foundation got from the stockholders of Uranium One—she approves the sale of 20, 25 percent of America’s uranium production; it ends up going to the Russians—the email scandal, that obviously was a force to try and obfuscate and obfuscate evidence that was being sought, and Comey went out of his way to protect Ms. Clinton. There is just so much there that needs to be investigated.

As the Attorney General apparently can’t investigate because of his own recusal. Mr. Rosenstein is sure not going to investigate it and thinks Mueller will do it.

Mueller is disqualified from doing it. As the person who is supposed to be our protector, I will not disqualify himself. Comey is a material witness—should be—in the investigation.

As the Washingtonian reported back in 2013 in this long expose they did on glorifying Mr. Comey and Mr. Mueller’s relationship, that Comey knows that basically, in essence, if the world were on fire, the one person who would be there with him, protecting him, standing with him, would be Mr. Mueller. Mueller cannot investigate anything in which Comey is a witness. He can’t.

So what does he do? Comey goes and hires more lawyers. He has already had more lawyers than anybody I am aware of—ever. He is already exceeding the very general charge he got, going back years before he needed to. I mean, this is just incredible.

They were a problem 10 years ago. The Obama administration had 8 years to get it into. Mueller, as FBI Director, had plenty of time to get into it.

So there is only one thing we can be looking at, and that is a vendetta by Robert Mueller after some people. He is clearly disqualified. Comey is in it up to his eyeballs. We have got to have a special prosecutor that will look into the matters that should be investigated.

Then we have this issue on Capitol Hill. We need to know how compromised our computer system, our IT system on the Hill has been.

We had a guy named Imran Awan working on Capitol Hill, started working with Democrats’ computer systems

We had a guy named Imran Awan working on Capitol Hill, started working with Democrats’ computer systems...
12 years or so ago. He was not even an American citizen at the time.

Appropriately, if there has ever been a background check on Imran Awan, it certainly was not adequate, because in the Awan family and cohorts, you kind of disrupt your get massive indebtedness; there was money received by one of the team, $100,000 or so, from a known consort with Hezbollah.

Then we find out yesterday—or I did; I had no word of this before—that Imran Awan, for parts of the year, would not even be here in Washington. He would be in Pakistan servicing up to dozens of our Democratic colleagues’ computer systems from Pakistan, making the maximum that somebody working on Capitol Hill could by working for different Members of Congress, and then you add the partial salaries altogether until you get around $160,000.

We heard yesterday that as he would get one person up to $160,000 working for them, then they add another to the payroll and get them up to $160,000. One of the group owed another individual $100,000. So with no indication that that individual who was owed $160,000 even came to Capitol Hill or did any work here, he got put on the House payroll and made a couple hundred thousand dollars in return for the hundred thousand that he had loaned to one of the Awan team.

It is just almost inconceivable that we would have someone working with some of the highest privileged material. It seems to me the courts made it clear the speech or debate privilege to protect constituent information, information that people provide to us as whistleblowers, that is probably more constitutionally protected than the attorney-client privilege. It is that important.

Yet knowing there are countries, there are companies that would pay larger sums of money to knock Members of Congress’ schedule, have access to all their emails, see what they are saying about different bills, what they want to do, that is some valuable stuff. And yet, in some years, we were told yesterday, that Imran Awan was servicing Capitol Hill computers from Pakistan.

Now, I don’t know how secure the Pakistani internet systems are, but it is kind of hard to believe that the American interests would be as protected in Pakistan and the Capitol congressional computer system would be protected as it is going through the Pakistani internet to be serviced.

We also heard that Imran Awan, from some of the emails that WikiLeaks put out—we don’t know if he worked for the Democratic National Committee when they were hacked, but we know there were emails where someone was saying: We need to get into the chairwoman’s laptop. We need her password. Oh, well, Imran Awan has all of her passwords, so check with him.

So we don’t know the extent that he could have compromised things, with all the indebtedness he had and the car dealership he that he never reported. Anybody that makes over $120,000 from Capitol Hill has to report any outside income. He never reported those things.

In fact, it appears to be a crime when he failed to even report that he had his wife on the payroll making money on Capitol Hill in those financial disclosures he filed.

We also know that he had some history of violence complaints. His stepmother complained of being kidnapped by him and forced to sign documents that would turn over money and property that Imran’s father supposedly had coming.

We know that he has now been indicted simply on a bank fraud charge for lying in order to get a bank loan, the money from which was sent overseas.

We also learned that they were sending technological equipment over to Pakistan. They were fraudulently filling vouchers showing that $800 iPads only cost under $500 so they wouldn’t have to be listed on inventory. That obviously makes things more easy to steal.

There were reports, in fact, by the person who rented his house when he and his wife appeared to flee—he was trying to flee when he was stopped at the airport. There were hard drives, all kinds of things.

We know that he and possibly some of those working—maybe they didn’t work. We don’t know. But $6 million to $7 million was paid to him and his family and his cohorts during the time they were working here, and yet he was downloading from Members of Congress’ clouds or from their own servers all of their information into a spot where people who weren’t authorized could access those Members of Congress’ accounts.

This has got to be investigated more thoroughly than it has been.

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

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Soto) for 30 minutes.

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, it is Hispanic Heritage Month, and I want to take this time to honor some great heroes in my district of Hispanic descent, who range from reporters to civil rights heroes, to community organizers, to businessmen and women, and I am just proud to be here tonight to be able to do that.

HONORING DANIEL BARAJAS

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, the first gentleman I want to talk about is Daniel Barajas, the executive director of the Young American Dreamers.

Daniel Barajas was born in Winter Haven, Florida, to a family of migrant workers. Growing up, he worked in the orange groves of Florida. There, he witnessed firsthand how farmworkers were exposed to dangerous pesticides while working for poverty wages. He also learned about the long-term effects of failed immigration policies, seeing his own father be deported during a local operation.

As a teenager, Daniel saw his friends join gangs to survive poverty and defend themselves against deeply rooted racism within their communities. He joined this path but was dubbed “Lucky” because he survived.

Barajas dropped out of school in the ninth grade but earned his GED in 2001. During an incarceration in 2009, he noticed that inmates had no access to books or to reading glasses. It was then that Daniel founded the Library of Hope to collect books and reading glasses to donate to inmates.

Daniel’s younger sister, Maria Isabel, founded the Young American Dreamers, YAD, in 2010 to help local immigrant youth. Maria Isabel passed away in a car accident, tragically, in 2012, and to honor her legacy, Daniel joined YAD and was voted executive director in 2013.

Barajas also continues to fundraise for annual scholarships to local students and participates in philanthropic events in the community.

Daniel now speaks at high schools across Polk County, talks to students about his life, and shows them that one is not defined by their past, and that breaking down barriers is possible.

He also closely works with the Polk County Supervisor of Elections Office to help register voters, increase voter turnout, and distribute clemency applications to help felons restore their civil rights.

Daniel is an example of one who could turn their life around and benefit the community as a whole, and he works with the MultiEthnic Advisory Committee in Orlando to do community workshops to teach immigrant families of their constitutional rights.

Thank you, Daniel, for your contributions.

HONORING ERICKA GOMEZ-TEJEDA

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, next is Ericka Gomez-Tejeda with Vamos4PR, Florida chapter. She is the civic engagement coordinator at 32BJ SEIU. Ericka Gomez-Tejeda came from Colombia to the United States when her mom was 8 years old. Moved by her lifelong commitment to her birth country, Ericka moved to Medellin, Colombia, in 2009 and began a master’s in theology.

Upon her return to the U.S. 2 years later, she moved to Florida and was elected vice president of SEIU Local 1199 United Health Care Workers East for the Florida nursing home division, representing 11,000 nursing home workers in the State.

In 2014, under the leadership of 32BJ President Héctor Figueroa, Ericka returned to the Local 32BJ as deputy director of the 12,000-member New York
City security division, leading the field of operation for the division’s first citywide contracts.

In 2016, Ericka moved back to Florida and became the 32BJ civic engagement coordinator and organizer of Vamos4PR parents, students, teachers, and organizations successfully worked with the Orange County Public Schools community speaking primarily Spanish, Vamos4PR parents, teachers, students, and organizations successfully worked with the Orange County Public Schools to ensure English-learning parents get information, orientations, and translation.

The coalition is currently focusing on offering immediate lifesaving resources to Puerto Rico and the cancellation of crippling debt, while working locally to open doors for the newly arrived Puerto Ricans to our region so they can use their knowledge and skills to integrate and contribute to the local economy and society from the day they arrive.

HONORING ESTEBAN GARCES

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, next I would like to highlight Esteban Garces, Florida State director of Mi Familia Vota.

Esteban directs the Florida operation of Mi Familia Vota, managing strategy, policy development, campaigns, civic engagement, organizing efforts, and nonpartisan electoral work.

Esteban’s career was set in motion at an early age as a victim of landlord abuse and the struggle to immigrate, education, and racial injustices spurred his interest in social justice. He began his career in social justice organizing, and then electoral organizing.

He joined Mi Familia Vota in 2015 to continue working to create positive change. He was previously the immigration campaign director for SEIU Local 615.

HONORING JIMMY TORRES

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, next I would like to honor Jimmy Torres of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Central Florida.

Frank Lopez is the president of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Orlando. Lopez is passionate about what he does, and nothing is more fulfilling to him than being part of a team with similar interests of an organization that is philanthropic and mission driven, and that values and empowers their employees.

Lopez has been successful in creating substantive underwriting support to develop and sustain innovative youth learning and entrepreneurship services. These programs have produced an impressive array of community-building benefits, such as workforce readiness and leadership development, youth entrepreneurship experimental training camps, mentoring and coaching programs, community-based technology, and wealth-building programs.

Lopez served as a member of the U.S. Hispanic Council on Federal Employment that advises the Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management on strategies for improving access of Latinos to the Federal workforce.

Lopez has also served as a founding member of the National Hispanic Outreach Advisory Council, established by Intuit Corporation, focusing on diversity and inclusion, and expanding the equitable tax filing practices within growing Latino communities across the country.

Lopez is also a former president and CEO of U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation, developing strategic services to Latino entrepreneurs from across the Nation.

Throughout his career, Frank has served several philanthropic and social service governing boards, most recently with SourceAmerica, an organization created by Congress that manages over $2.5 billion in Federal employment-producing contracts administered locally by affiliated nonprofit agencies across the United States and Puerto Rico.

As part of his work, he has created and developed relationships with various Puerto Rican communities. After years organizing public and private sector employees, Jimmy organized and managed the State legislative office for SEIU in Puerto Rico and continued with the establishment of the legislative coordinating body for the AARP as well.

After moving to Florida to help with retired members of the Service Employees International Union, he became an activities of the Puerto Rican community and Latino community overall.

To improve the Latino representation in our area, he organized and coordinated the Boricua Vota movement. This movement is a nonprofit educational and mobilization tool to improve activism and civic engagement and participation of Puerto Ricans in the political process. Jimmy also organized and became president of the Puerto Rico Action Institute.

To respond to Hurricane Irma, Jimmy has helped to organize a coordinated group called Aid, Support, and Help Coordinating Group, otherwise known as CASA. When Maria devastated the island, CASA galvanized enthusiasm and desire of the Puerto Rican community in central Florida to help their fellow compatriots—my fellow compatriots—on the island and has collected and has sent hundreds of thousands of goods and merchandise to Puerto Rico.

HONORING JORGE ESTEVEZ

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, next I would like to honor Jorge Estevez, WFTV news anchor and journalist in Orlando. Jorge Estevez is an anchor for the evening newscast of Eyewitness News at 10 p.m. on WRDQ TV 27. He also anchors and reports newscasts on WFTV Channel 9.

Jorge first came to WFTV in 2001 and covered the attack of 9/11 and how it impacted central Florida’s tourism industry.

During the next 5 years as an anchor and reporter for WFTV and WRDQ, Jorge worked on major news affecting the various counties that make up our central Florida community. Jorge anchored several major local stories, including the severe hurricane season of 2004, during which several storms impacted the Orlando area.

Since his return to central Florida, Jorge has been sent to cover major stories. His most recent trip was to Atlanta, where he interviewed Ronny Ahmed, one of three students injured when a shower stormed the campus of Florida State University in 2014 and started firing at random.

The son of Cuban immigrants, Jorge is from West New York, New Jersey, where he graduated from Rutgers University, like myself, with a dual degree in journalism and communication. Now he trains to be back in central Florida, where he enjoys the change of seasons each year. He enjoys the warm weather because it gives him a chance to leave
the gym to take his 5-mile runs outdoors, where he can really break a sweat.

Thank you, Jorge, for your contributions.

HONORING JOSEPHINE BALZAC, ESQUIRE
Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, next I would like to honor Josephine Balzac, Esquire, attorney, writer, and professor at Rollins College, specializing in environmental law.

Josephine M. Balzac is currently a visiting assistant professor in the Department of Business, teaching in the social entrepreneurship major. She has had the honor of being part of Rollins since 1994.

Her greatest honor is receiving two teaching awards from the students: a student government association’s Outstanding Faculty Award, and the Walter E. Barden Distinguished Teaching Award. Throughout each of her classes, she makes sure to engage with the local community by bringing her legal professionals and organizations as guest speakers.

Professor Balzac is a licensed attorney admitted to practice law in Florida and the U.S. District Court Middle District of Florida.

In May of 2017, the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, FAMU, College of Law presented her law office with the Distinguished Alumni Award and Professional Excellence Award, Solo Practitioner.

She is also a community rights staff attorney for the Center for Earth Jurisprudence.

During the summer, she is an adjunct law professor at Barry University School of Law, teaching sustainability in business.

Professor Balzac previously worked as an associate attorney at an AV-rated trial litigation firm and worked for a food safety regulatory consulting group.

Ms. Balzac is actively involved in the local community, frequently educating and advocating as an avid speaker on environmental justice, sustainable development, climate change, human rights, food, and social justice issues.

Thank you, Josephine, for your contributions.

HONORING NANCY ALVAREZ
Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, next I would like to honor Nancy Alvarez. Nancy was part of the Spanish anchor team on an English language TV station in central Florida. Along with Jorge Estevez, her coanchor, she brought the 10 o’clock news on Channel 27 TV to number one for the first time in more than 15 years.

Alvarez joined the team at the ABC affiliate in May 2010 and currently coanchors Eyewitness News This Morning, alongside Jamie Homes. She is the daughter of Cuban immigrants and was born and raised in south Florida, although she considers Orlando a second home. Alvarez has spent most of her journalism career in central Florida, where she has been front and center for every major news event in the last 15-plus years.

She spent years covering the space program at Kennedy Space Center, and was also in central Florida for hurricanes Charlie, Frances, and Jean, reporting on the now-infamous 2004 hurricane season.

In recent years, Alvarez was a central part of her station’s coverage of the Pulse nightclub shooting tragedy and covered various stories during the community’s journey toward healing. She was also on the air for continuous coverage of Hurricane Irma and traveled to Puerto Rico to report on the devastating impacts of Hurricane Maria.

Alvarez is also a graduate of Florida’s Atlantic University, with degrees in communications and history. She has dedicated her career to giving a voice to people in need and using honest journalism as a tool for community service.

Alvarez, a mother of two who is married to a news photographer, has dedicated her life to honoring the sacrifices made by her parents when they came to the U.S. from Cuba. It is her hope that her life, career, and impact have made the hardships they have endured worth it.

Thank you, Nancy, for your contributions.

HONORING LUIS PASTRANA
Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, next I would like to honor Luis Pastrana, attorney, activist, and professional at Ana G. Mendez University.

Luis Pastrana was born in Puerto Rico. He received his bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus, while simultaneously being commissioned from the Army ROTC as a second lieutenant in the artillery branch.

He taught at the Puerto Rico Junior College and at Florida International University for more than 30 years. In 2015, he was named as one of the 25 Most Influential Hispanics in central Florida.

Pastrana is a graduate of the University of Puerto Rico and has lived in Puerto Rico and has served in the United States Marines Reserves since 1977. After high school, he served for nearly 30 years in the United States Marine Corps, earning the rank of captain.

He has served in Afghanistan, as well as in many other parts of the globe. After retirement, he began to pursue law at the University of Puerto Rico.

He has worked in banking as vice president for investments of the Cooperative Bank, as a general manager for a newspaper in San Juan; he was a candidate for lieutenant governor of Puerto Rico for the Popular Democratic Party, trial attorney and senior partner of the law firm Pastrana, Perez, Martinez and Quevedo, executive director of the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration for the Southeast of the United States, and now professor of law of the bachelor’s degree in criminal justice for the Orlando campus of the Ana G. Mendez University. He published five books, all honoring his Puerto Rican roots.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Luis for his contributions.

HONORING ROXY SANTIAGO
Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, next I would like to honor Roxy Santiago, board of directors for the LGBT Center of Central Florida, and board of the Pulse Foundation.

Roxy Santiago was born in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico, and has lived in Orlando for over 30 years. Roxy has worked for over 12 years at Walt Disney World in numerous management roles and had the privilege of being a personal tour guide for former Presidents and other high-profile individuals.

In 2017, she was a partner with Phish Phest Entertainment for 10 years. The organization held dozens of events, raising more than $150,000 for charity over the past decade.
Roxy was Tri-Chair Federal Club Steering Committee member for Human Rights Campaign, in 2006 through 2009; and in 2014 to present, she is currently serving on the Web Communications Steering Committee and Committee Engagement. In 2014, she was honored with being selected among 50 distinguished local LGBT leaders by entering her biography and accomplishments in the U.S. CONGRESSIONAL RECORD; and here it is happening again.

In 2015, she became a member of the Democratic Hispanic Caucus of Central Florida and assists in their web communications. In 2015, Roxy also became a volunteer at the American Red Cross of Central Florida. In the aftermath of Pulse, she was hired by the Red Cross in the position of community partnership.

In 2016, she was selected by the National Human Rights Campaign, with 19 other women around the U.S., to attend a workshop for Women and Leadership: Equality for the 21st Century. In 2016, Roxy became a board member for the LGBT Center of Central Orlando and serves as their secretary on the board.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Roxy for her contributions.

HONORING ROXY MORENO

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, next I would like to honor Roxy Moreno. Roxy was born in Mexico and came to this country in family to do farm work. He is currently the director of the Farmworker Association of Florida.

In 1982, he became the lead organizer for the Farmworker Project of the Office for Farm Ministry, during which time he and several other farmworkers initiated the Farmworker Association. Under his leadership as general coordinator, the association has grown from a local to statewide organization with over 10,000 members.

Roxy is a cofounder and board member of the Farmworker Health and Safety Institute and serves on the boards of Southern Partners Fund, Domestic Fair Trade Association, National Immigrant Farming Initiative, and the Rural Coalition. He also advocates for farmworkers’ and immigrants’ rights in national and international meetings.

The Farmworker Association of Florida (FWAF) has five offices throughout central and south Florida. The mission of FWAF is to build power among farmworker and rural, low-income communities to respond to and gain control over the social, political, economic, workplace, health, and environmental justice issues that impact their lives.

FWAF’s core strategy is to help farmworkers realize their power to be effective agents of social change and personal change by: validating and strengthening the experience and understanding of farmworkers; building farmworkers’ capacity to participate in decisionmaking processes that affect their lives; and raising consciousness about and advocating for farmworkers’ and immigrants’ rights.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Roxy for his contributions.

HONORING WILLIAM DIAZ

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to honor William Diaz, Spanish radio host. Identified as a consistent community leader and insightful journalist, William Diaz’s passion to help fellow citizens in life’s struggles has been evidenced in the last 28 years of his residency in central Florida.

William’s activism in favor of Latin-American political development has granted him daily recognition with most of the Latin-American community in central Florida who listen to him and read his articles.

A native of Cumana, and raised in Caracas, Venezuela, he developed a natural way to start friendships and show loyalty and support for all humanitarians.

William was the recipient of a scholarship that brought him to the United States to obtain his postgraduate diploma. In 1979 at the University of Texas at Austin gave him a master’s degree in mass communications.

William served as a Venezuelan diplomatic official in Europe, when he was designated as general coordinator of the GMA Foundation and the educational attaché to the Venezuelan Embassy in Paris, France.

Founder and president of several community organizations in his native Venezuela, in 1989, William brought all of his experience to the U.S. Since then, he has been very active within the Latino community, specifically advising and counseling new nonprofit organizations.

At this time, William is full-time with his radio show, “Cara a Cara con William Diaz,” which broadcasts in 18 different counties, founder of Casa de Venezuela, 15 years ago, which gathered most of the Venezuelans in central Florida. The company Made in Venezuela Business Club, dedicated to developing networking and promotions of products and services for Venezuelan businessmen and professionals, and current executive secretary of MUD Central Florida, the political organization that hosts and coordinates most of Venezuela’s opposition political parties.

HONORING ZORAILDA RIOS-ANDINO

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, next I would like to honor Zoraida Rios-Andino, president of Mission Boricua.

Zoraida Rios-Andino has been a resident of Orlando, Florida, for 17 years. She has been very active in promoting cultural, social, and historic events in the Puerto Rican community. Zoraida is currently president and founder of Mission Boricua, an organization dedicated to history and civic engagement of the Puerto Rican community. Zoraida supervised the creation and promotion of Mission Boricua’s outreach efforts.

Zoraida has been part of the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Orlando chapter; United Front 436, National Boricua Human Rights Network, Orlando chapter; and Asociacion Borinquena. She is currently a board member for Speak Up Florida, and a member and cofounder of The Justice Project Coalition of Central Florida.

In addition, she was an English as a second language instructor and worked as a personnel administrator for many years. Zoraida was also program coordinator for ALSE, where she assisted hundreds of high school students pursuing postsecondary education.

Zoraida has also led the movement to have the Florida Legislature pass a law in 2014, to put a honorary plaque along Semoran Boulevard in recognition of Rico Piccard, the late civil rights hero in central Florida.

Zoraida has received numerous awards for her community service, like the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women; Roberto Clemente Community Service Award; Latino History Society President’s Award; Outstanding Membership Award from the Asociacion Borinquena; Community Service Award from the office of Congressman Alan Grayson; 2014 Florida State Proclamation recipient from State Representative Victor Torres; Coqui de Oro Award from La Casa de Puerto Rico; the Rico Piccard Award from the Orange County Democratic Party, and more.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Zoraida for her contributions to central Florida.

I am excited to be able to have this opportunity to talk about these heroes—so many who are symbolic of the hardworking Hispanic Americans in central Florida who help out with everyone from our poor, to our civil rights, to education, to the news, to politics, to our environment, to families, to so many important issues that matter to Hispanics across central Florida and across our Nation.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:
Mr. MARINO (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today and for the balance of the week on account of personal reasons.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to accordingly (at 7 o’clock and 26 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, October 12, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following
titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Ms. SÁNCHEZ (for herself, Mr. MEHJAN, Mr. SCHRADE, and Mr. LANCE):

H.R. 4006. A bill to establish a Community-Based Institutional Special Needs Plan demonstration program to target home and community-based care to eligible Medicare beneficiar...s for purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. DENT (for himself, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. BOS, Mr. BUCSCONI, Mr. CARSON of Georgia, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. COSTY of Pennsylvania, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. HARPER, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. KATKO, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. KINZINGER, Mr. KNIGHT, Mr. LONG, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. REED, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. CURRIEL of Florida, Mr. SIMPSON, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. TOOMS, Mr. UPTON, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. BARLETTA, and Mr. REICHERT):

H.R. 4007. A bill to revise the quorum requirement for the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN:

H.R. 4009. A bill making additional supplemental appropriations for disaster relief requirements for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas (for himself, Mr. COLE, and Ms. MATSU):

H.R. 4010. A bill to authorize the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution to plan, design, and construct a central parking facility on National Zoological Park property in the District of Columbia; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ISSA (for himself, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. PARENTHOLD):

H.R. 4011. A bill to amend the Revised Statutes of the United States and title 28, United States Code, to enhance compliance with requests for information pursuant to legislative requests under Article I of the Constitution, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. UPTON (for himself and Mrs. TITUS):

H.R. 4012. A bill to require a National Intelligence Estimate on Iranian proxy forces, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select), and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mrs. ELLISON, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. GALLO, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, and Mr. CICILLINE:

H.R. 4013. A bill making appropriations for the Bureau of the Census for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. CICILLINE (for himself, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. DEFIASO, Mr. GUILALVA, Mr. CONNOLLY, and Mr. DOOGHETY):  

H.R. 4014. A bill to amend chapter 5 of title 31, United States Code, to require publication of information relating to regulatory conflicts of interest, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DUFFY:

H.R. 4015. A bill to improve the quality of proxy advisory firms for the protection of investors and the U.S. economy, and in the public interest, by fostering accountability, transparency, and competitiveness in the proxy advisory firm industry; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. GALLEGPO (for himself, Mr. BOS):

H.R. 4016. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to eliminate the recoupment of separation pay, special separation benefits, and voluntary pre-retirement pay from members of the Armed Forces who subsequently receive disability compensation under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs to improve transparency, place limitations on the authority of the Secretary of Defense to recoup such pay from members who subsequently receive military retired or retainer pay; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HUYGINES (for himself and Mr. MAST):

H.R. 4017. A bill to authorize the President to take actions to ensure Israel is prepared to defend itself against all threats; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI:

H.R. 4018. A bill to provide for a 3-day waiting period before a person may receive a handgun, with exceptions; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TED LIEU of California (for himself, Mr. CURRIEL of Florida, Mrs. LOVE, and Mr. LIEU):

H.R. 4019. A bill to provide grants to States and Indian tribes to reform their criminal justice systems to encourage the replacement of the use of payment of cash bail as a condition of pretrial release in criminal cases, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico (for herself and Mr. ROYDEN DAVID of Illinois):

H.R. 4020. A bill to reauthorize the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 relating to the distribution of food; and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. BASS (for herself, Mr. GRUILVA, and Mr. EVANS):

H.R. 4021. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to provide funding for public transportation services offered by high-performing public and private systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. REICHERT (for himself, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. LEE, and Mr. DONOYAN):

H.R. 4022. A bill to implement a strategic approach for providing foreign assistance in order to end preventable child and maternal deaths globally within a generation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio (for himself, Mr. TONKO, and Mr. REED):

H.R. 4023. A bill to authorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to award grants to States educational agencies and local educational agencies to support, develop, and implement formal and informal engineering education programs in elementary schools and secondary schools; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. SPEIER (for herself, Mr. BRYER, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. DEFIASO, Mr. LA MALFA, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. GUILALVA, Ms. NICK JACOBS, Mr. GARAMENDI, Ms. LAWRENCE, Mr. COSTA, Ms. LEE, Mrs. LOWEY, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. RODGERS of California, Mr. SLAUGHTER, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. CLAY, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. POLIS, and Mr. JONES):

H.R. 4024. A bill to amend section 105, United States Code, and title 39, United States Code, to provide the United States Postal Service the authority to mail alcoholic beverages, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. TOWERS (for herself, Mr. SCHREIDER, Mr. ENZI, and Ms. TTUS):

H.R. 4025. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to expand to all firearms the requirement that Federal firearms licensees report sales of 2 or more handguns to the same unlicensed person within 5 consecutive business days; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. VARGAS (for himself and Mr. COOK):

H.R. 4026. A bill to take certain land located in San Diego County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Paia Band of Mission Indians, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mrs. WAGNER (for herself, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, and Mr. GALLAGHER):

H.R. 4027. A bill to promote a global economic and political pressure to support diplomatic denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, including through the imposition of sanctions with respect to the Government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and any enablers of the activities of that Government, as well as to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Financial Services, and Intelligence (Permanent Select), for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. BASS (for herself, Mr. GUILALVA, and Mr. EVANS):

H.R. 4028. A bill to amend section 107 of the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 342) to support scientific research and the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 242) to support scientific research involving human subject participation and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.
CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. DENT:
H. R. 4007.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section VIII

By Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN:
H. R. 4008.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The principal constitutional authority for this legislation is clause 7 of section 9 of article I of the Constitution of the United States (the appropriation power), which states: "No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law..." In addition, clause 1 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution (the spending power) provides: "The Congress shall have Power...to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence; and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States." By Mr. SCHNEIDER:
H. R. 4012. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York:
H. R. 4013. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Clause 7 of Section 9 of Article I states "No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law..."

By Mr. CICILLINE:
H. R. 4014. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. DUFFY:
H. R. 4015. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, section 8 (relating to the general welfare of the United States); and Article I, section 8, clause 3 (relating to the power to regulate interstate commerce).

By Mr. GALLEGO:
H. R. 4016. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. GOTTHEIM:
H. R. 4017. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to "provide for the common Defence, and support Armies", and "to make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces" as enumerated in Article I, section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI:
H. R. 4018. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, subsection 3:
To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. TED LIEU of California:
H. R. 4019. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, clause 1; and Article I, Section 8, clause 18

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico:
H. R. 4020. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. PERRY:
H. R. 4021. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, of the United States Constitution

By Mr. REICHERT:
H. R. 4022. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Pursuant to Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution and amendment XVII of the United States Constitution, specifically clause 1 (relating to providing for the general welfare of the United States) and clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress), and Article IV, section 3, clause 2 (relating to the power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States).

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio:
H. R. 4023. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof.

By Ms. SPEIER:
H. R. 4024. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
According to Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: of the United States Constitution, see below, this bill falls within the Constitutional Authority of the United States Congress.

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. VARGAS:
H. R. 4026. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
(1) To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution; and
(2) To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mrs. WAGNER:
H. R. 4027. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H. R. 4: Mr. PAYNE, Mr. GLEAVER, and Mr. FLESCHMANN.
H. R. 80: Mr. BRAT.
H. R. 140: Mr. LAMALFA and Mr. HARRIS.
H. R. 166: Mr. PETERSON.
H. R. 173: Mr. CORREA, Mr. ALLEN, and Mrs. MURPHY of Florida.
H. R. 176: Mr. BARNIN.