Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MARCHANT), a member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. MARCHANT. I rise to support the Medicare Identity Theft Prevention Act of 2012. This is a commonsense, bipartisan bill that would establish cost-effective procedures to help protect the identity of all seniors.

Seniors are a high-risk demographic for identity theft. Identity thieves have targeted seniors in my district in Texas and across the country. This year's Centers for Medicare Services inspector general report found that more than a quarter million Medicare beneficiaries have been potential victims of identity theft.

□ 1510

Most Medicare cards currently use Social Security numbers as the identifier. By removing Social Security numbers from Medicare cards, this bill gives seniors the identity protection that they deserve. Seniors work their entire lives for financial security, and that security should not be jeopardized due to preventable identity theft. Other Federal programs and private insurance plans made similar changes years ago, and Medicare beneficiaries should have the same level of identity protection and security.

I'm proud to support this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to do so.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas, my colleague, Chairman JOHNSON, and I hope the Senate will respond this time to our action.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Thank you, Mr. DOGGETT.

I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, despite increasing pressure from this committee and this House, CMS has refused to act to remove Social Security numbers from Medicare cards. If CMS won't act, we must. This commonsense bill is a vital step in protecting our Nation's seniors from identity theft, and we can't afford to put seniors at risk any longer. Medicare beneficiaries want, need, and deserve better. I urge all my colleagues to vote ''yes,'' and I hope the Senate will act immediately to pass this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Medicare Identity Theft Prevention Act. I applaud Chairman JOHNSON and Representative DOGGETT for introducing this bill and bringing it to the floor.

America's seniors are some of our most valued citizens. They have spent their lives working hard and preparing for their much deserved "golden years." It seems only fitting, then, that we reward their hard work and labor by protecting them. That's our job.

Under current law, Social Security numbers are used as the main component of a Medicare beneficiary's health insurance claim number and are displayed on over 50 million Medicare ID cards. This simply doesn't make sense. It puts each of these 50 million people at heightened risk for identity theft and fraud. We've already seen high rates for this type of crime: in 2010 alone over 8.6 million households were victims of ID theft, including one million seniors. Seniors' social security numbers are especially valuable because they can be used by thieves to obtain employment, benefits, and credit.

The GAO first recommended removing social security numbers from government documents ten years ago. Both the private and public sectors have already taken steps to remove social security numbers from forms of public identification. However, fully aware of the risks posed to seniors, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has refused to act. Both sides of the aisle agree, this is simply unacceptable.

Therefore, it is clearly time for Congress to take action. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation so that we can better protect our senior citizens.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1509, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PROTECT OUR KIDS ACT OF 2012

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6655) to establish a commission to develop a national strategy and recommendations for reducing fatalities resulting from child abuse and neglect.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6655

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

SECTION 1. COMMISSION.

This Act may be cited as the ''Protect our Kids Act of 2012''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) deaths from child abuse and neglect are preventable;

(2) deaths from child abuse and neglect are significantly underreported and there is no national standard for reporting such deaths;

(3) according to the Child Maltreatment Report of 2011, in fiscal year 2011, 1,545 children in the United States are reported to have died from child abuse and neglect, and many experts believe that the actual number may be significantly more;

(4) over 42 percent of the number of children in the United States who die from abuse are under the age of 1, and almost 82 percent are under the age of 4;

(5) of the children who died in fiscal year 2011, 70 percent suffered neglect either exclusively or in combination with another maltreatment type and 48 percent suffered physical abuse either exclusively or in combination;

(6) increased understanding of deaths from child abuse and neglect can lead to improvement in agency systems and practices to protect children and prevent child abuse and neglect; and

(7) Congress in recent years has taken a number of steps to reduce child fatalities from abuse and neglect, such as—

(A) providing States with flexibility through the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011 to operate child welfare demonstration projects to test services focused on preventing abuse and neglect and ensuring that children remain safely in their own homes;

(B) providing funding through the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 for services and activities to enhance the safety of children who are at risk of being placed in foster care as a result of a parent's substance abuse;

(C) providing funding through the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 for grants to facilitate activities such as family group decision-making meetings and residential family treatment programs to support parents in caring for their children; and

(D) requiring States through the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011 to describe how they will improve the quality of data collected on fatalities from child abuse and neglect.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities (in this Act referred to as the ''Commission'').

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) COMPOSITION.—

(A) MEMBERS.—The Commission shall be composed of 12 members, of whom—

(i) 6 shall be appointed by the President;

(ii) 2 shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(iii) 1 shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives;

(iv) 2 shall be appointed by the majority leader of the Senate; and

(v) 1 shall be appointed by the minority leader of the Senate.

(B) QUALIFICATIONS.—Each member appointed under subparagraph (A) shall have experience in one or more of the following areas:

(i) child welfare administration;

(ii) child welfare research;

(iii) child development;

(iv) legislation, including legislation involving child welfare matters;

(v) trauma and crisis intervention;

(vi) pediatrics;

(vii) psychology and mental health;

(viii) emergency medicine;

(ix) forensic pathology or medical investigation of injury and fatality;

(x) social work with field experience;

(xi) academia at an institution of higher education, as that term is defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001), with a focus on one or more of the other areas listed under this subparagraph;

(xii) law enforcement, with experience handling child abuse and neglect matters;

(xiii) civil law, with experience handling child abuse and neglect matters;

(xiv) criminal law, with experience handling child abuse and neglect matters;

(xv) substance abuse treatment;

(xvi) education at an elementary school or secondary school, as those terms are defined

in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801);

(xvii) epidemiology; and

(xviii) computer science or software engineering with a background in interoperability standards.

(C) DIVERSITY OF QUALIFICATIONS.—In making appointments to the Commission under subparagraph (A), the President and the congressional leaders shall make every effort to select individuals whose qualifications are not already represented by other members of the Commission.

(2) DATE.—The appointments of the members of the Commission shall be made not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT; VACANCIES.—Members shall be appointed for the life of the Commission. Any vacancy in the Commission shall not affect its powers, but shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(d) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 60 days after the date on which a majority of the members of the Commission have been appointed, the Commission shall hold its first meeting.

(e) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet at the call of the Chairperson.

(f) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number of members may hold hearings.

(g) CHAIRPERSON.—The President shall select a Chairperson for the Commission from among its members.

SEC. 4. DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.

(a) STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall conduct a thorough study on the use of child protective services and child welfare services funded under title IV and subtitle A of title XX of the Social Security Act to reduce fatalities from child abuse and neglect.

(2) MATTERS STUDIED.—The matters studied by the Commission shall include—

(A) the effectiveness of the services described in paragraph (1) and best practices in preventing child and youth fatalities that are intentionally caused or that occur due to negligence, neglect, or a failure to exercise proper care;

(B) the effectiveness of Federal, State, and local policies and systems within such services aimed at collecting accurate, uniform data on child fatalities in a coordinated fashion, including the identification of the most and least effective policies and systems in practice;

(C) the current (as of the date of the study) barriers to preventing fatalities from child abuse and neglect, and how to improve efficiency to improve child welfare outcomes;

(D) trends in demographic and other risk factors that are predictive of or correlated with child maltreatment, such as age of the child, child behavior, family structure, parental stress, and poverty;

(E) methods of prioritizing child abuse and neglect prevention within such services for families with the highest need; and

(F) methods of improving data collection and utilization, such as increasing interoperability among State and local and other data systems.

(3) MATERIALS STUDIED.—The Commission shall review—

(A) all current (as of the date of the study) research and documentation, including the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being and research and recommendations from the Government Accountability Office, to identify lessons, solutions, and needed improvements related to reducing fatalities from child abuse and neglect; and

(B) recommendations from the Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect.

(b) COORDINATION.—The Commission shall provide opportunities for graduate and doctoral students to coordinate research with the Commission.

(c) RECOMMENDATIONS.—The Commission shall—

(1) develop recommendations to reduce fatalities from child abuse and neglect for Federal, State, and local agencies, and private sector and nonprofit organizations, including recommendations to implement a comprehensive national strategy for such purpose; and

(2) develop guidelines for the type of information that should be tracked to improve interventions to prevent fatalities from child abuse and neglect.

(d) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date on which a majority of the members of the Commission have been appointed, the Commission shall submit a report to the President and Congress, which shall contain a detailed statement of the findings and conclusions of the Commission, together with its recommendations for such legislation and administrative actions as it considers appropriate.

(2) EXTENSION.—The President may extend the date on which the report described in paragraph (1) shall be submitted by an additional 1 year.

(3) ONLINE ACCESS.—The Commission shall make the report under paragraph (1) available on the publicly available Internet Web site of the Department of Health and Human Services.

SEC. 5. POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.

(a) HEARINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may hold such hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such testimony, and receive such evidence as the Commission considers advisable to carry out this Act.

(2) LOCATION.—The location of hearings under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) areas with high fatality rates from child abuse and neglect; and

(B) areas that have shown a decrease in fatalities from child abuse and neglect.

(3) SUBJECT.—The Commission shall hold hearings under paragraph (1)—

(A) to examine the Federal, State, and local policies and available resources that affect fatalities from child abuse and neglect; and

(B) to explore the matters studied under section 4(a)(2).

(b) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The Commission may secure directly from any Federal department or agency such information as the Commission considers necessary to carry out this Act. Upon request of the Chairperson of the Commission, the head of such department or agency shall furnish such information to the Commission.

(c) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Commission may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as other departments and agencies of the Federal Government.

(d) GIFTS.—The Commission may accept, use, and dispose of gifts or donations of services or property.

SEC. 6. COMMISSION PERSONNEL MATTERS.

(a) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Commission.

(b) STAFF.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chairperson of the Commission may, without regard to the civil service laws and regulations, appoint and terminate an executive director and such other additional personnel as may be necessary to enable the Commission to perform its duties. The employment of an executive director shall be subject to confirmation by the Commission.

(2) COMPENSATION.—The Chairperson of the Commission may fix the compensation of the executive director and other personnel without regard to chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, relating to classification of positions and General Schedule pay rates, except that the rate of pay for the executive director and other personnel may not exceed the rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

(c) DETAIL OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—At the discretion of the relevant agency, any Federal Government employee may be detailed to the Commission without reimbursement, and such detail shall be without interruption or loss of civil service status or privilege.

(d) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMITTENT SERVICES.—The Chairperson of the Commission may procure temporary and intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individuals that do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

SEC. 7. TERMINATION OF THE COMMISSION.

The Commission shall terminate on the earlier of—

(1) the 30th day after the date on which the Commission submits its report under section 4(d); or

(2) the date that is 3 years after the initial meeting under section 3(d).

SEC. 8. FEDERAL AGENCY RESPONSE.

Not later than 6 months after the submission of the report required under section 4(d), any Federal agency that is affected by a recommendation described in the report shall submit to Congress a report containing the response of the Federal agency to the recommendation and the plans of the Federal agency to address the recommendation.

SEC. 9. ADJUSTMENT TO THE TANF CONTINGENCY FUND FOR STATE WELFARE PROGRAMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 403(b)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 603(b)(2)) is amended by striking ''for fiscal years 2011 and 2012'' and all that follows through the end of the paragraph and inserting ''for fiscal years 2013 and 2014 such sums as are necessary for payment to the Fund in a total amount not to exceed $612,000,000 for each fiscal year, of which $2,000,000 shall be reserved for carrying out the activities of the commission established by the Protect our Kids Act of 2012 to reduce fatalities resulting from child abuse and neglect.''

(b) PREVENTION OF DUPLICATE APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013.—Expenditures made pursuant to section 148 of the Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2013, for fiscal year 2013, shall be charged to the applicable appropriation provided by the amendments made by this section for such fiscal year.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5

legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6655, the Protect Our Kids Act of 2012. As we are too painfully reminded this week by the horrific tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut, for all the good this Nation has done to lift up children, we still have much more work to do. So, Mr. Speaker, before I get into the remarks about the bill I want to extend my heartfelt condolences to the victims and their loved ones struggling, as we all are, to understand this senseless assault on children and their educators.

While Newtown is rightly receiving the Nation's attention, what goes unnoticed far too often is the number of children that die each year in this country as a result of abuse and neglect. Sadly, their deaths often come at the hands of those who should be caring for them the most.

State reports indicate that more than 1,500 children in the U.S. died from abuse or neglect in fiscal year 2010, and research shows that these reports may significantly understate the actual number of these fatalities. Congress should do what it can to prevent these tragedies, which is why this legislation is before us today.

This legislation is the result of careful bipartisan work over the past couple of years. In 2010, I requested that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) review what is known about the circumstances of child deaths and near deaths resulting from abuse and neglect, State approaches to gathering and reporting this information, and what steps the Department of Health and Human Services has taken to support the collection and accurate reporting of this information.

GAO completed its review in July of last year and presented its findings at a Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources hearing that same month. In their report, GAO said many more children die from abuse and neglect than are currently reported. They also reported that government agencies have different definitions of abuse and neglect, and that administrative barriers hinder the sharing of this information across agencies.

Following that hearing, I worked with Congressman DOGGETT—and I thank him for his bipartisan support—the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Human Resources, to develop a legislative proposal to address these issues. Last week, the subcommittee held another hearing to review this proposal. Finally, after almost 2 years of work, we are here on the House floor today to consider and pass this important bill.

This bipartisan legislation will establish a commission charged with developing recommendations to reduce child deaths caused by abuse and neglect. The commission will study a variety of issues, including data on fatalities, prevention methods, and the adequacy of current programs before making their recommendations. Any Federal agency affected by a recommendation of the commission will be required to report within 6 months on how it plans to address the recommendation. Importantly, this legislation is paid for and will not add to our deficit.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote in favor of this bipartisan bill and, in doing so, take an important step toward preventing the tragic deaths of so many of our Nation's children from abuse and neglect.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the remainder of my time to Mr. PAULSEN, the acting chair of the Human Resources Subcommittee, and ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to control the time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Minnesota will control the balance of the time.

There was no objection.

Mr. DOGGETT. My thanks to Chairman CAMP and Chairman PAULSEN, whose leadership has facilitated our consideration of this bill today and the crafting of it into the piece of legislation that it is.

I rise in support of the Protect Our Kids Act, which represents an improved version over legislation that I introduced about a year ago.

We are reminded, as Chairman CAMP indicated, by the tragedy in Connecticut, each family touched by the damage, the deaths of these youngest Americans. In contrast, as with so many families, in our family we share the joy of three little girls. As difficult as it is to conceive of the wrong, the evil that occurred in Connecticut so recently, it is similarly difficult to conceive of how many of our youngest Americans are the subject of abuse and even death.

We, through the Protect Our Kids Act, are seeking to have thoughtful consideration of what steps we can take to protect these most vulnerable children. We're not interested in another commission that just prepares another report that gets filed somewhere; we're interested in action coming from this commission.

The original legislation, which was filed in a way that provided for its consideration in a number of committees, has been, in terms of jurisdiction, narrowed somewhat, but the objectives of the legislation remain as broad as they ever were—to explore every aspect of child abuse leading to child fatalities and to find more bipartisan solutions to addressing that serious matter.

I reflect on the testimony of a witness from Dallas, Madeline McClure, the executive director of the Texas Association for the Protection of Children, who testified before our committee very recently that the estimate of 753,000 children being abused and neglected in America is a conservative one, but that to put it in context, if you filled the Alamodome, the Darrell K. Royal Stadium in Austin, the Hubert Humphrey Metro Dome in Minneapolis, Yankee Stadium, the stadium in Georgia, in Tennessee, Tiger Stadium in Louisiana, the Rose Bowl, the Century Link Fields in Washington State, you would fill those and still not cover all of the children who are subject to abuse and neglect each year in this country. Almost half of those children that are abused are age 4 or under.

Our bill provides an opportunity to take an important step forward in developing a national strategy to protect our most vulnerable children. The commission, appointed by the President and Congress, would develop recommendations to reduce the number of children who die from abuse and neglect.

The commission would bring together a group of experts from around the country in a wide variety of professions to identify prevention efforts. So little of the resources that we focus on abused and neglected children in America today goes to prevention, and that should be an important focus in a broad sense, as well as the collection of good data so that we can adequately compare what's happening and can also understand the best practices that are already underway in many communities across America.

□ 1520

As we listened to experts both in our recent hearing in front of the Subcommittee on Human Resources and last year when we held a hearing, we note the need for what one called an ''accessible blueprint'' for the States to implement better child abuse prevention strategy. That's a blueprint that this commission can provide.

In my home State of Texas, there are groups like Voices for Children San Antonio, CASA, Children's Shelters in San Antonio, Austin and other communities, and TexProtects, that are serving as a voice for the voiceless and trying to prevent child abuse. There are local leaders like Texas State Senator Carlos Uresti, who was the moving force behind the Texas Blue Ribbon Task Force and the Bexar County Task Force on Child Abuse.

The important work that these folks are doing has been a great benefit; but despite it, the fatalities that are stemming from child abuse continue to grow, and they are almost at epidemic proportions in Texas, and in San Antonio in particular. Last year, there were almost 6,000 confirmed cases of child abuse in the San Antonio area in Bexar County, the highest number in Texas, higher than even Houston and Harris County, which has about twice the population.

In the last decade, Texas had over 2,000 children who were killed—who

died—as a result of abuse and neglect. Last year, we had a total in Texas of nearly 66,000 confirmed cases. That's just too much. There is more that we can do and that we must do to protect these youngest Americans.

Child abuse and neglect are not isolated. The children don't just ''bounce back.'' The consequences of abuse and neglect are felt throughout the lifetime and, indeed, often from one generation to another. These conditions can linger for a very long time. The data are clear: among those adults who have experienced the highest level of childhood trauma, these individuals were five times more likely to suffer from alcoholism, nine times more likely to be involved in drug abuse, three times more likely to be clinically depressed, and four times more likely to be addicted to nicotine. Additional research shows a relationship between childhood abuse and the presence of a range of adult diseases.

In the past, this Congress' adoption of expert advice has provided progress in dealing with the issue of child neglect and abuse. We have made some positive changes to the way children are placed into foster care and have elevated child safety as a primary welfare goal for the States. But as evidenced by the statistics, there are gaps in policy. There is much more work to be done to reduce the number of children who die each year in the hands of someone who is supposed to be caring for them.

The Protect Our Kids Act is a significant step in the right direction, and I urge its approval.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, today we have an opportunity to improve the way our child welfare system works. We have a chance to learn what is most effective in preventing fatalities from child abuse and neglect. By acting on this bill today, we can make a significant difference in the lives of children who need to be protected.

In a hearing that we held just this last week on the Protect Our Kids Act of 2012, I shared the heartbreaking story of Devin Drake, who is an example of the type of tragedy we hope to prevent through the work of this important commission.

In August of 2011, Devin Drake was a 3-year-old boy living just outside of Minneapolis with his mother and her boyfriend. Child welfare officials had been in contact with the family previously, but this wasn't enough to prevent what happened next. It was on one fateful night that Devin was seriously injured when his mother's boyfriend struck him, knocking him down to the bathroom floor. Devin hit his head hard enough that he had trouble standing up, but neither his mother nor her boyfriend took the time to bring him to the hospital.

His condition worsened the next day; and when he was finally taken to the hospital, it was too late. Doctors reported that Devin had severe head trauma, punctured lungs, and a number of contusions. Four days later, Devin Drake died.

This bill will help to prevent those types of tragedies. This commission created by this bill would review the effectiveness of current child welfare services, it will examine the data we have now about childhood fatalities, and it will study factors that are predictive of child abuse and neglect. And through this work, this commission can provide Congress and others with critical information on how we can improve our child abuse prevention efforts.

I note that while this bill provides some resources for the commission to do its work, thanks to Chairman CAMP and Mr. DOGGETT, they have worked very carefully to ensure that the commission operates within existing social services funding. As a result, this bill does not add to the deficit. This shows how critical this issue is and how bipartisan this issue is, as well.

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California, who is the cochair of the Foster Youth Caucus and who has actively participated in coming to the hearings in our committee because of her great interest in preventing child abuse, Ms. BASS.

Ms. BASS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Protect Our Kids Act. First of all, I want to thank Ranking Member DOGGETT, Chairman CAMP, and Chairman PAULSEN for their leadership and commitment to eliminating child fatalities.

Unfortunately, Federal Government statistics estimate that every day in America approximately 2,000 children are confirmed victims of child abuse and neglect, nearly 700 children are removed from their families and placed in foster care due to child abuse and neglect, and about four children die as a result.

Additionally, in fiscal year 2010 alone, more than 1,500 children in the U.S. died due to maltreatment. Of these, more than 40 percent were under the age of 1 year old, and more than 80 percent were under the age of 4.

These statistics are absolutely unacceptable; and to make matters worse, research has shown that these reports substantially underestimate the number of children who die due to maltreatment.

As a Nation, we have a responsibility to develop effective strategies and solutions to proactively stop this abuse and neglect. When children are removed from their home, they really become our children, and it is our responsibility.

While Congress has enacted a variety of laws regarding child welfare and protection, there is no unified, comprehensive Federal strategy for reducing instances of child abuse and neglect. This bill will ensure that the highest levels of government work together to develop a national strategy to eliminate child abuse and neglect fatalities. By bringing together experts on child development, trauma and crisis intervention, pediatrics, social work, law enforcement, criminal law, and substance abuse treatment, the commission will truly protect our kids.

As the cochair of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth, I look forward to continue working with my colleagues to help prevent child abuse, neglect and fatalities. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6655.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, we have no other speakers. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DOGGETT. I would yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as Texas District Judge Darlene Byrne, a leader in establishing child protection courts has said:

> Childhood should be a time of innocence and freedom, but it is a sad fact that many children are vulnerable to injury and abuse. Our Nation's children need good leaders to stand up and find creative ways to protect them from harm. The creation of the National Commission to End Child Fatalities is an important step in that direction.

At a hearing, Mr. Speaker, of our Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee that we held over a year ago, I expressed hope that we would be able to come together in a bipartisan response. Today, we are doing just that.

As we take this step toward reducing child neglect and abuse, I would like to thank the many children's protection groups that have been so instrumental in providing input and support for this legislation, including the members of the National Coalition to End Child Abuse Deaths; particularly the National Association of Social Workers; the National Center for the Review and Prevention of Child Deaths; the National Children's Alliance; Every Child Matters Education Fund; and, of course, the National District Attorneys Association, as well as individuals like Michael Petit, Teresa Huizar, who testified before our committee, Kim Day, Teri Covington and Joan Zlotnick.

We have a real chance to see this bipartisan legislation become law this very year in the few days that remain. There is similar, bipartisan legislation that was introduced last year at the same time I originally filed the bill that is authored by Senators KERRY and COLLINS.

□ 1530

I'm hopeful that the Senate will see the bipartisan action that we have here today and the commitment we have and will move forward with this improved version of the legislation quickly.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time and give my thanks to Chairman PAULSEN.

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

Mr. Speaker, the Protect Our Kids Act of 2012 will help us prevent child fatalities from abuse and neglect. The commission created by this bill will show us how we can improve on our current efforts, and it will help provide us with the information we need to move forward on this issue.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill today.

I want to thank not only Chairman CAMP, but Ranking Member DOGGETT for his leadership and his passion on this issue.

I urge support and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6655.

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. PAULSEN. 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 question will be postponed.

JAMES M. CARTER AND JUDITH N. KEEP UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 6166) to designate the United States courthouse located at 333 West Broadway Street in San Diego, California, as the ''James M. Carter and Judith N. Keep United States Courthouse,'' and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6166

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

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION.

The United States courthouse located at 333 West Broadway Street in San Diego, California, shall be known and designated as the ''James M. Carter and Judith N. Keep United States Courthouse''.

SEC. 2. REFERENCES.

Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the United States courthouse referred to in section 1 shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''James M. Carter and Judith N. Keep United States Courthouse''.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to offer my bill, H.R. 6166, for consideration to designate the new courthouse at 333 West Broadway Street in San Diego as the James M. Carter and Judith N. Keep United States Courthouse.

First, I would like to thank Chairman MICA, Ranking Member RAHALL, Subcommittee Chairman DENHAM and Subcommittee Ranking Member NORTON, the Democratic and Republican staff of the Committee, and my colleagues from California who came together to move this legislation honoring two highly deserving judges and human beings.

By way of background, when this iconic new courthouse construction project in downtown San Diego was nearing completion and the time had come to consider a name for the new building, my office sought input from the San Diego legal community to determine a consensus choice.

After considering hundreds of submissions, it became clear that, among many worthy options, San Diegans preferred to honor two former, prominent San Diegan judges—Judge James Carter or Judge Judy Keep.

After reviewing their achievements, I decided that the right thing to do would be to honor both of these individuals—as they were both true trailblazers in the San Diego community.

And reflecting San Diego's widespread support for honoring Judge Carter and Judge Keep my legislation was endorsed by the San Diego City Council, the San Diego County Bar Association, and San Diego's Mayor at the time, Jerry Sanders.

Judge Carter was the moving force behind the creation of the Southern California District.

In response to the tremendous population growth in San Diego after World War II, Judge Carter successfully convinced the Judicial Conference of the United States to create the Southern District—allowing the people of San Diego and its neighboring communities access to the federal court system.

In 1966, after its creation, Judge Carter became the first Chief Judge of the District Court, serving in that position until his appointment to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Judge Keep was instrumental in opening up the San Diego legal field to women.

Judge Keep graduated from San Diego Law School as its valedictorian—at a time when fewer than 5% of lawyers were women!

She then worked as a Staff Attorney at Defenders, Inc. where she was the first female staff attorney representing indigent criminal defendants in federal court.

In 1980, Judge Keep was nominated to become the first female judge for the District Court of the Southern District of California, and later she became the District Court's first female Chief Judge.

Displaying true dedication to public service, both Judge Carter and Judge Keep worked tirelessly off the bench to better the San Diego community.

Judge Carter founded the Federal Defenders of San Diego and was instrumental in the creation of the University of San Diego Law School.

Former law clerks of Judge Carter remember him as a giant of his time, a man who was revered by the San Diego legal community, and whose service was an example for all those who followed in his footsteps.

Judge Carter even touched the life of one of our colleagues, Senator MIKE CRAPO. Like many law clerks who passed through the judge's chambers, he was in awe of Judge Carter's service and work. And in Senator CRAPO's words, there is "no more appropriate way to honor his legacy than to name this federal courthouse for Judge Carter."

Judge Keep was a Chair of both the Task Force on Judicial Wellness and the Conference of Chief District Judges for the 9th Circuit, and she worked with the San Diego Community Foundation and the Armed Forces YMCA.

And, both judges served as role models and mentors to countless young attorneys and judges in San Diego.

A Superior Court judge, who appeared before Judge Keep as a young prosecutor wrote to me:

Judy's presence and words of wisdom shaped my own career and trajectory. Even after her death, her light continues to shine. I keep her picture in my court chambers to remind me everyday of what is important in life and about how to arrive at the best decisions possible.

Judge Carter and Judge Keep served the public with distinction and truly reflected the San Diego legal community's shared values of excellence and integrity.

The new San Diego Courthouse will be a fitting testament to their careers and inspire others in the community to continue to follow their path.

Thank you again for your consideration of this legislation honoring these two trailblazing San Diego public servants.

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, September 16, 2010.

Representative SUSAN DAVIS,
Longworth HOB,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: I recently became aware of your efforts to solicit input on the naming of the new federal courthouse in San Diego, to be opened in 2013. I expect you have been receiving many worthy suggestions from your constituents, and I would like to join those who have suggested to you that the courthouse be named for former federal judge James M. Carter.

Following graduation from Harvard Law School in 1977, I served for a year as law clerk to Judge Carter on the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. I learned a great deal through this experience and came to admire Judge Carter as an outstanding federal judge.

Judge Carter was responsible for the legislation that first created the Southern District of California, and he would go on to become the District's founding Chief Judge. Upon his passing in 1979, the local newspaper editorials hailed him as ''The Dean of the San Diego Judiciary''.

Given the time that has passed since his service, I recognize many of his contemporaries are no longer with us, and the memory of his accomplishments may have faded. As one who did have the honor of working with this fine man, I can think of no more appropriate way to honor his legacy than to name this federal courthouse for Judge Carter.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

MIKE CRAPO,
U.S. Senator.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DENHAM. 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 materials on H.R. 6166.

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