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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 14, 2016.

I hereby appoint the Honorable REID J. RIBBLE 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 5, 2016, 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, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

SEAN'S RUN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. GIBSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Sean Patrick French and the tremendous community organization that was started to honor his life on its 15th anniversary.

Sean was an amazing kid, a friend to all, a community volunteer, honor roll student, and a record-breaking athlete at Chatham High School. His father has described him as someone who ''never walked anywhere.'' His mother has told a story about him running laps at age 8.

At Chatham High School, he was a standout, both athletically and as a member of the school community. But tragically, at age 17, he lost his life as a passenger in a drunk driving crash on New Year's Day in 2002.

Days after Sean's death, the Chatham High School community rallied around his family and organized a 100-person strong run from the high school to the memorial on Route 203. His family and friends, some of whom are with us in the gallery today, use this inspiration to preserve Sean's legacy. They asked themselves: What can we do as a community to help kids make better choices? And Sean's Run was born. This year, 2016, marks the 15th anniversary of Sean's Run and what has now expanded into a weekend-long series of events.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, as a member of this local community, Sean's Run has made a difference in our county and across the region. And as the father of three teenagers, I am personally grateful for the work of Sean's Run and what it has done to prevent similar tragedies and educate our community on the horrors of drinking and driving.

Sean's Run has worked to prevent underage drinking, impaired driving, and for increased seatbelt use by teenagers. It has helped kids think about making smart decisions and the tragic consequences that can result when they don't.

Sean's Run has grown each year—up to over 1,500 people in 2015—and the organization has become much more than an annual community 5K fundraiser and memorial. They regularly contribute to youth groups and community events to support anti-underage drinking and impaired driving programs and do pre-prom awareness events.

Sean's Run has also dedicated portions of the weekend to honor others lost in the community, including Meghan's Mile, a mile-and-a-half youth race for children ages 12 and under. Meghan's Mile is named in honor of a friend of Sean's, Meghan Kraham, who helped found Sean's Run at age 16, but lost her life to cancer on August 18, 2007.

Since 2002, Sean's Run has awarded almost $200,000 in grant and scholarship money. And since 2010, when I retired from the Army and returned to Columbia County, I have had the privilege to run in this 5K honoring Sean Patrick French.

This year's event will pay tribute to Sean and others through bike races, the 5K, Meghan's Mile, a prevention expo, seatbelt education, and the presentation of the Love of Running, Section II Good Sport, and Sean Patrick French Memorial Scholarships.

I am proud of the entire Sean's Run organization and the steps they have taken to prevent further tragedies such as this. Sean was a strong, smart, and caring young man whose legacy lives on through this organization every spring and throughout the year.

It is my honor to host some of Sean's family and friends today, including Sean's parents, Mark and Cathy, and his brother Eric. To them, I say thank you. Thank you for turning this tragedy into something that helps our community, and please know that you have made a difference in the lives of so many families in our country and across New York State. I look forward to, once again, honoring your son's memory by participating in Sean's Run next weekend.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would like to remind Members that the rules do not allow referencing occupants of the gallery.

MARIJUANA DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Printed on recycled paper.

Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as we struggle to deal with the epidemic of opioid addiction and thousands of deaths from overdose, it is ironic that later this afternoon I will be part of a debate at the Brookings Institution about whether or not marijuana should continue to be a Schedule I controlled substance because, according to the statute, it has no medical value and a high potential for abuse.

Well, as part of the national drug reform movement, this much is clear: marijuana is less addictive, by far, than tobacco, alcohol, and cocaine. Indeed, the percentage of people who become addicted is less than 9 percent, as opposed to alcohol, cocaine, and tobacco, which is much, much higher.

It carries this designation of Schedule I despite the fact that millions of people have used marijuana and there has never been a single documented case of an overdose death.

As to medical value, it has repeatedly been confirmed. The New England Journal of Medicine did a survey in 2013 of practitioners who overwhelmingly supported the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes. It has been endorsed by 15 State medical associations, the Epilepsy Foundation, and the American Nurses Association. People who have looked at it objectively agree that there is a huge potential for benefit. And that, most compellingly, is borne out by thousands of years of human existence.

It is used by well over a million Americans in 40 States to deal with things like PTSD and chronic pain. It is well known that it helps deal with the debilitating effects of chemotherapy for cancer: nausea and the loss of appetite. Indeed, we are having families move across the country to be able to get legal access to medical marijuana in States like Colorado because it is the only remedy that they have been able to get to give relief to their infant children who suffer a debilitating type of epileptic seizures, torturing their babies, and it works for them.

Well, in the 1970s Richard Nixon rejected the advice of his own handpicked Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse and decided to make this the centerpiece of his war on drugs. A trillion dollars later and after millions of lives being affected, we are on the verge of a national effort to right this wrong. We are going to see State after State voting to follow Oregon, Colorado, Washington, and Alaska in adult legalization.

It is time for Congress and the administration to reassess the flawed principle of making marijuana a Schedule I controlled drug, with all the resulting harms and none of the benefits. It is past time for action.

HONORING STANLEY G. TATE

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable individual and one of my oldest and dearest friends, Mr. Stanley Tate.

A Miami-Dade County native, Stanley Tate has successfully served many roles in his long life, including businessman, civic leader, and public servant.

From a young age, Stanley was ambitious and understood the importance of a solid education. He enrolled in the University of Florida, where he earned a bachelor's degree, followed by a graduate degree from Columbia University.

Stanley quickly proved himself to be an intelligent, capable, and resourceful individual who was willing to work hard to accomplish his goals.

Not long after school, Stanley founded a general contracting firm, building private homes and apartment buildings. As a young and driven newcomer to the industry, Stanley quickly became well known and respected for his quality work.

Never one to limit himself, Stanley continuously expanded upon his continued success, starting several other individual firms and entities that focused on consulting and investments, as well as commercial development, including office buildings, shopping centers, and restaurants.

While Stanley was focused on managing his companies, he also made it a point to be very involved in public service, both locally and on a national level. He served with the city council of Bay Harbor Islands in several capacities, including mayor and assistant mayor for 20 years. He was also on the board of directors of the Florida League of Cities and is a former chairman of the Housing Resource Team for Metro-Dade County.

Due to his vast knowledge and expertise, Stanley has served as a witness and testified before committees in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the United States Senate regarding housing and banking issues.

In addition, he was appointed by President George Herbert Walker Bush to be the chairman of the National Advisory Board of the Resolution Trust Corporation, and was then nominated by President Clinton to be the president of the RTC.

One of Stanley's strongest positions is one I share. It is the belief that every family should be provided a way to save for their child's higher education. His vision became a reality with the Florida Prepaid College Plan. His tenure as the program's chairman for the first 18 years was marked by his absolute dedication and selfless devotion to maintaining the program's viability.

In recognition of Stanley's efforts, then-Governor Jeb Bush signed House Bill 263 into law on June 26, 2006, renaming the program the Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid College Program.

For all of these efforts and many more, Stanley Tate has been the recipient of numerous civic awards related to his work. This includes the Youth Law Center's Unsung Hero Award, the College Savings Plan USA Network's Distinguished Service Award, the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust's Arête Award, and was selected as one of the Twelve Good Men of 2004 by the Ronald McDonald House.

As a man of strong Jewish faith, Stanley has always been quite active in the Miami Jewish community and a strong and early supporter of the Democratic Jewish State of Israel.

Mr. Tate served as chairman of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation, and he has been heavily involved in the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, or AIPAC, since its early beginnings.

Mr. Speaker, throughout his life, Stanley Tate has always made it a point to give back to others by sharing his time, his knowledge, and his passions. So today I ask my congressional colleagues to join me in honoring Stanley Tate and thank him for all he has done for our south Florida community, for our State, and for our Nation as a whole.

God bless you, Stanley Tate. May you have many good years to come.

□ 1015

PUERTO RICO

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, as we were reminded yesterday by the Speaker of the House, Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory, and the Constitution explicitly gives Congress the power to ''make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory and other property belonging to the U.S.''

Treating Puerto Rico as property is just what is being proposed by the Republicans in addressing the Puerto Rico debt crisis. My friend here, King George of England, would be very proud.

I will say, the Governor of Puerto Rico has been working hard to help move a bill forward. He and his staff have been honest and tireless brokers, trying to resolve a crisis decades in the making. He should be commended.

But what the Governor and the people of Puerto Rico need are the same protections that any U.S. citizen has when their local government is in crisis and bondholders are circling and demanding payments. Puerto Rico needs the ability to restructure her debt so that the bondholders get something instead of nothing on their investment, the local government is not crippled, and the people are not faced with the collapse of their basic services.

Congress, the colonial power, took away the ability to declare bankruptcy, so that was never an option—a move worthy of King George himself.

Yes, in the bill the Republicans put forward, there is a restructuring of

Puerto Rico's debt. There is even a temporary stay of the debt payments for a short period of time. But at what cost?

As I understand it, the debt restructuring for Puerto Rico would only take place if two-thirds of the bondholders on Wall Street approve. So Wall Street fat cats can literally veto what Republicans are proposing. On Wall Street, the fat cats know their Maseratis and yachts are safe, even if Puerto Rican schoolbuses, hospitals, and roads fall into further disrepair. They will live like kings, just like my buddy here, King George. They even bragged about it at the hearing yesterday, saying that the market ''responded positively'' when the Republican bill was introduced, because it signaled that Republicans have Wall Street's back, protecting the profits of the hedge funds.

I simply do not see things in the Republican bill that justify relinquishing what little sovereignty Puerto Rico has left to an unelected Federal control board. It is a new level of colonial rule on top of what Washington already has, what Washington already misuses, what Washington usually rather ignores. King George of England would be pleased that, even after 250 years, the U.S. Congress, this Congress, created to replace his tyrannical rule, has so fully embraced colonialism for its distant territories.

As Speaker RYAN said yesterday, the fact that Puerto Rico's government is ''ceding its authority to the Financial Control Board is a huge, but necessary, move that will ensure Puerto Rico will learn fiscal discipline from a board of experts.''

Oh, yes, those poor islanders, those uncivilized Puerto Ricans, will see how it is done up close and personal.

The board will have the power to reduce the minimum wage, block overtime rules, block laws, regulations, and government contracts approved by the island's democratically elected government. It can overrule the legislature and the Governor if it does not like the budget, and it can fast-track energy projects at the expense of the environment.

Does that sound familiar to you, Your Highness, King George?

Get this: Congress can impose a control board on Puerto Rico that can hire whomever they want, at whatever salary they want, and the people of Puerto Rico have to pay to for it—period, punto—100 percent. The control board is paid for by those it controls. If that is not colonialism, I don't know what is. It is so good, King George here would be jealous.

As if to add insult to injury, the bill addresses Vieques, the island off the coast of Puerto Rico that the U.S. Navy bombed for decades. It turns over the land with no conditions.

Now, I am all for the people of Puerto Rico having control of the lands of Puerto Rico; but in the current crisis, without protection, we all know what is going to happen. Hotels, restaurants, and businesses seeking to profit will be looking for bargain prices and will be out to profiteer, just like the pirates who used to control those waters.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Puerto Rico want jobs and an economy that allows them to live on the island and thrive; but so far, all the Republican majority has offered is more colonial oversight, more austerity, and more misery.

I once again say this Congress should reject the King George approach and free Puerto Rico so that its hardworking people can build the island. We should put them—yes, the people—above all other creditors, bondholders, and profit seekers. That ought to be our priority. The schoolchildren, the elderly, the working men and women, the police on the beat, they need us to stand up for them as human beings, and I call on my colleagues to join me in doing just that.

CONGRATULATING LOCAL SCHOOLS ON NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MUSIC MERCHANTS RECOGNITION

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate staff and students at several schools in the Pennsylvania Fifth Congressional District following their recognition from the National Association of Music Merchants, better known as NAMM.

Now, I am a big proponent of the importance of quality music education in our schools. I am very proud of what we accomplished with the repeal of No Child Left Behind and its replacement with the Every Student Succeeds Act, which really recognizes the importance of those programs such as music education.

In fact, my son is a middle school music teacher in New Jersey. We saw firsthand in our family that experience for all three of our sons. Being involved and being impacted by music education has really helped them with their creativity skills, helped them in so many different ways. Certainly, exposure to a quality music education for my youngest son, Kale, motivated him to pursue further education in music education. He did that with his undergraduate degree and is now a middle school music teacher in New Jersey, and making such a difference in the lives of the kids that he has the responsibility to teach and to influence. We are very proud of Kale, who, just this year, was selected as Teacher of the Year because of his contributions in music education and, specifically, in the lives of kids.

I am so proud that the efforts of the Moshannon Valley School District and State College Area School District have led to their recognition by NAMM as Best Communities for Music Education, drawing attention to their support and to their commitment for music education. In fact, these two districts are among only 476 to receive this distinction nationwide—out of America's more than 13,000 school districts.

In addition, I want to mention the DuBois Area Middle School, which received NAMM's SupportMusic Merit Award, which is given to individual schools which have shown a strong commitment to the value of music education. This school is among only 118 in the Nation to be honored.

Music education is vital to the education of children across the Nation and is essential to helping them become well-rounded adults. I commend the staff, the students, and the parents in each of these communities for placing music in such high regard.

PUERTO RICO IS LEFT IN LIMBO

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

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico who, once again, are left in limbo as Republican leaders in Congress fail to act. As jobs are lost and young workers continue to leave the island, Republican leaders have, not once, but twice, canceled plans to take up legislation in the House Natural Resources Committee this week.

As a member of this committee and a Latino, I continue to be outraged by the majority's inability to govern and respond to the humanitarian crisis on the island. Republicans will keep playing politics and use the urgency of time to force a bill that will turn out to be significantly worse for the Puerto Rican people, all while asking my Democratic colleagues for their support.

This is unacceptable. I will not vote for any deal that fundamentally misses the mark when it comes to long-term, meaningful progress, including addressing wide health disparities in Puerto Rico.

Mr. Speaker, Puerto Rico cannot afford to risk its future at the hands of Republicans, and we cannot afford to leave behind millions of American citizens who call the island home. Mr. Speaker, we need a bill.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF CAPTAIN JAMES JOSEPH BOYLE III

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Captain James Joseph Boyle III, who, sadly, passed away from pancreatic cancer earlier this month at the age of 73.

Captain Boyle served on my Veterans Advisory Board and was instrumental in helping advocate for veterans in Lake County, Illinois, and around our country. I am so proud to have had him as a friend and an adviser.

A resident of Libertyville, Illinois, for 34 years, Captain Boyle is remembered as being a loving husband, father, and grandfather.

Captain Boyle graduated from Loyola University in Chicago before serving in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968. As an artillery Officer, he commanded both a Marine rifle company and a Marine artillery battery at different points in his tour. For his time in Vietnam, Captain Boyle received a Bronze Star Medal, an honor well-deserved. Even long after his own service ended, Captain Boyle never stopped caring for his fellow marines. He was an active member in the Marine Corps League of Lake County.

It is because of veterans like Captain Boyle that we are able to live free from tyranny today. He is an American hero and will be greatly missed.

REMEMBERING CORPORAL RICHARD VANA

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I also rise today in remembrance of Corporal Richard Vana, a member of our Greatest Generation and a veteran of the United States Marine Corps.

Corporal Vana, sadly, passed away earlier this month at the age of 92, having lived a long life, with public service at its core.

Serving during World War II, Corporal Vana was a member of the Marine Raiders and fought in the Battle of Okinawa for 99 straight days. It was during this battle that Corporal Vana and another marine rescued a wounded soldier, taking him to shelter. Without the heroic work of both men, the marine surely would have died from his injuries. Corporal Vana's outstanding service to our country did not go unnoticed, as he was awarded two Purple Hearts.

Upon returning home after the war, Corporal Vana operated a Community cab, and was a founding parishioner of St. Stephen's Church.

A family man, Corporal Vana was a loving husband and father, finding joy in his 28 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren.

Corporal Vana's passing is a loss not only to his friends and family, but to our community and our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, my thoughts and prayers are with this brave soldier's family and friends during this trying time.

HONORING MUNDELEIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR COMPLETION OF DOORS PROGRAM

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor students at Mundelein High School for completing the Doors of Opportunity Relevant to Students, or DOORS, program.

DOORS works to help prepare students for future careers by bringing real-world skills into the classroom. Since its start in 2014, DOORS has helped train students in resume writing, interviewing, and other skills.

This year, 75 high school seniors had the opportunity to partake in mock interviews, attend career cells, and work as interns for local businesses and organizations. I was proud to be one of the many organizations to partake in this program by hosting interns in my congressional office.

Education is a fundamental building block of our Nation, and it is important that we encourage our students in every way possible. These students have taken the initiative to prepare for their future, and I have no doubt that they will be successful in whatever they put their mind to.

□ 1030

TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, Saturday is Emancipation Day in the District of Columbia. It marks the day, April 16, 1862, when 3,100 slaves in the District of Columbia led the way to freedom, securing their freedom 9 months before the Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves nationwide.

Isn't it ironic that, because Emancipation Day comes on a Saturday, the American people are going to have 3 extra days to file your income taxes?

Even though it is not a national holiday, it is a very special day for those of us who live in the District of Columbia because we are trying to get our full rights, the same rights as every other American.

While I vote in committee representing the people of the District of Columbia, I cannot vote on this floor. Others can vote on this floor on matters affecting my district and my district only, yet the District has more residents than two States and as many residents as about seven States in the United States. We outnumber Vermont and Wyoming.

There on this poster you see the District, Vermont, and Wyoming, yet Vermont, Wyoming, and every other State in the United States have two Senators and at least one Representative.

About seven States have one Representative who votes on this House floor. I do not vote on this House floor. The people I represent have earned every single right that every other American has.

Here on this poster are D.C.'s casualties in the major 20th-century wars, where the District of Columbia outpaced many States in casualties during those wars: World War I, more casualties than three States; World War II, more casualties than four States; the Korean war, more casualties than eight States; and the Vietnam war, more casualties than ten States.

These are American citizens who went to war for their country, died without a vote, did not come home, and their relatives today still do not have the vote on this House floor and have no vote in the Senate of the United States.

The largest irony of all, however, is shown on this poster. The people I represent here in the Nation's Capital pay more taxes per capita—more—than any residents of any State in the United States. They pay the highest taxes—$12,000 per person—and there are almost 700,000 people here. Who pays the lowest taxes in the United States per capita? It turns out to be Mississippi.

But wherever they come from, American citizens pay fewer taxes, less in taxes, than the people who live in their Nation's Capital, even though the people who live in the Nation's Capital live in a city that is among the oldest American cities, whose citizens still do not have their full rights as American citizens.

This is in violation of a treaty the United States signed in 1992, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The United States has been found to be in violation of that treaty because the U.S. does not give the residents of the District of Columbia the same rights as other Americans.

Ours is the only capital city in the world where those who live in their capital do not have the same rights as others, yet, as you saw in the District's casualties, this city has given and then given again.

The District wants to become the 51st State of the United States of America. That is the only way we can keep the Congress from interfering in our local affairs.

The District has to bring its own local budget to the Congress. We raise $7 billion in the District of Columbia. Our budget has to come here for the Congress to sign off so that we can spend our own money. What kind of autocracy is this?

Of course, what is most frustrating to us is that most Americans think that we who live in your Nation's Capital have the same rights as every other American. After all, they see me on the House floor and they see me vote in committee.

The greatest frustration, of course, to us is that most Americans do not know we do not have the same rights as they, and they would not countenance for a moment that there are in our country any Americans who are treated as unequal citizens.

THANKING SHARRA FINLEY FOR SERVING CENTRAL WASHINGTON

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express the gratitude of the people of central Washington State for the dedicated public service of Sharra Finley, who until last week served as my district director for Washington's Fourth Congressional District.

Sharra has a long history of serving the people of the State of Washington. For the last 10 years, Sharra worked for me also as a professional staffer for my office in the Washington State legislature and then as a professional staffer during my tenure as the director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture.

Sharra's efforts have been dedicated to assisting central Washington's constituents and keeping their concerns front and center.

On a personal note, there is simply not enough time to recount the number of stories, many filled with laughter and some with tears, which might encapsulate the last 10 years of working with Sharra Finley. Suffice it to say that she will be missed.

I am grateful for Sharra's hard work, for her sense of humor, and for her friendship. I look forward to her next steps as someone who is dedicated to her community and to her family, her husband Ellery, her daughters Emma and Abby, and her son Lane.

Congratulations to Sharra Finley on a job well done.

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 36 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DONOVAN) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Merciful God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Bless abundantly the Members of this people's House. During this season of new growth, may Your redemptive power help them to see new ways to productive service, fresh approaches to understanding each other, especially those across the aisle, and renewed commitment to solving the problems facing our Nation.

May they, and may we all, be transformed by Your grace and better reflect the sense of wonder, even joy, at the opportunities to serve that are ever before us.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GIBBS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. GIBBS 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

A SEVEN-PAGE PLAN WILL NOT WORK

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last month, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency testified that ISIL-Daesh will attempt mass murder within the United States. Sadly, despite these many threats, the President has failed to take ISIL seriously, dismissing them as the ''JV team'' and describing them as ''contained.''

It took an act of Congress to compel the President to submit a plan to defeat ISIL and violent extremists. Over a month after the February deadline, his plan of a pathetic seven pages was released. This is not a serious plan to protect American families, eliminating terrorist safe havens.

This is not a real plan because it does not directly reference radical Islam or jihad once. It is not a real plan because it only outlines past activities. It clarifies the President's legacy of failure.

Sadly, it is clear that this does not provide a path to defeat ISIL and mass murderers. While I have confidence in our servicemembers and military leaders, they deserve a clear mission. Seven pages is not sufficient, as American families are at risk of attack.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and may the President, by his actions, never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

GOLDMAN SACHS SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR ITS ACTIONS

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

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, the Justice Department reached a settlement with Goldman Sachs, where Goldman Sachs is paying $5 billion as a result of selling bad mortgages to good people.

I want to ask the question a Vermont banker asked me: Why isn't anybody going to jail?

What they did is put together mortgages that were designed to fail, and then they sold them to police officers, to teachers, to folks who have pension funds, with trust that Goldman Sachs was working for them.

So the banker's question from Vermont—why didn't anyone go to jail?—that is the question.

There is a second question: Why are the taxpayers paying over half of this settlement? It is tax deductible. The $5 billion settlement, $2.4 billion civil penalty Goldman pays, but the rest of it, about $2.6 billion, is deductible.

And why should the taxpayers be on the hook for the misconduct, intentional misconduct, cruel misconduct, unnecessary misconduct?

Taxpayers should not be paying a cent, and the people accountable should be going to jail.

SUPPORTING THE GREAT STRIDES MIAMI 2016 TO CURE CYSTIC FIBROSIS

(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, today I rise to support Great Strides Miami 2016 and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Cystic fibrosis is a tragic, genetic disease that can cause a buildup of thick mucous in the lungs and other organs, leading to frequent infections and organ failure.

This coming Sunday, April 17, at 9 a.m., I urge my fellow south Floridians to participate in the 5K walk at historic Virginia Key Beach, located in my congressional district, to raise awareness for the need for a cure to this terrible disease.

Delaney Jade Binker, right here, what a beautiful child. Delaney Jade Binker, seen here with her loving grandmother, Bonnee, is just one of some 30,000 Americans who desperately deserve more effective treatments and a cure.

Please consider taking a few hours of your weekend to walk at Great Strides Miami to help Delaney and so many others add more tomorrows to their precious young lives.

TAX DAY AND NO CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET

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

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is tax day, April 15. It is also the day that, by law, the U.S. Congress is supposed to introduce a budget.

Mr. Speaker, the sad truth is that the Republican House leadership is failing to meet even this most basic responsibility. Despite Speaker RYAN's promise months ago to return this House to regular order and restore the American people's faith that this body is working to address the needs of everyday Americans, House Republicans cannot even bring themselves to agree on a budget for us to vote on.

Hardworking American families deserve a Congress that invests in the future, protects their safety, and creates

a level playing field for them and their children to succeed. Hardworking Americans deserve a Congress that will address the growing threat of the Zika virus, which we now know is becoming more of a threat and causes birth defects. We need to address it.

Democrats will continue to press for a budget that creates jobs, raises the paychecks of the American people, and keeps them safe, while reducing the budget in a balanced and responsible way.

RECOGNIZING FOR-BOTS ROBOTICS TEAM

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, last week, I visited Forbush Elementary School in East Bend, North Carolina. While I was there, I had a chance to meet with the impressive students who are a part of the For-BOTS robotics team.

Although Forbush Elementary has only had a robotics team for 2 years, its students are already racking up awards. The For-BOTS team was named the grand champion of Yadkin County's First Lego League Robotics Tournament.

The team also placed first in the Robot Table Performance and Project Presentation categories in a regional tournament in Boone. Additionally, the For-BOTS placed first in Robot Programming in the North Carolina first Lego League Tournament, and they claimed a second place award in Robot Table Performance.

It is always a pleasure to visit Yadkin County Schools and witness the great things happening in classrooms across the county. It is clear the teachers and the administrators at Forbush Elementary are providing an educational experience that equips students for success.

SUPPORT THE TREAT ACT

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, in 2014, 28,000 Americans died from an overdose of opioid drugs, an annual total that has quadrupled since 1999. In Erie County, 11 people die per week from suspected opioid overdoses. Yet one in nine Americans with substance abuse problems—less than one in nine—are currently receiving treatment for their disorder. One cause is a cap that limits the number of patients a doctor can treat with opioid treatment medications such as Suboxone.

I have introduced legislation to raise these caps and expand prescribing authority to physician assistants and nurse practitioners, which is especially important in medically underserved communities. When treatment was approved for use in France without patient caps, the opioid overdose debt rate declined by 85 percent in 5 years.

I urge my colleagues to support the TREAT Act, to give professionals the tools they need to treat addiction and our families new hope for recovery.

WATER RESOURCES

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

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, this week I spoke to a group of civil engineers, local water utility managers, and others involved in the water infrastructure industry at their 2016 Water Week Conference.

While roads and bridges and airports and train tracks get a lot of attention, water infrastructure is just as critical to the health of our Nation's economy. Water transportation is the safest and most fuel-efficient, least polluting, and least expensive means of moving goods.

The public and private sectors must work together to deliver safe and affordable water to millions of Americans every day.

In 2014, we wrote a landmark Water Resources Reform and Development Act, which was signed into law. It reformed the way the Army Corps of Engineers studies and completes their projects; it shortened the nearly endless study and environmental review process; and, most importantly, it included no earmarks.

Our economy cannot afford to see the locks and dams of our Nation's inland waterways system fail, preventing cargo from reaching its destination. Our agriculture and energy industries depend on open and secure water transportation systems, and we hope to accomplish that in WRRDA 2016.

FILIPINO VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL

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

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, there are more than 200,000 Filipino and Filipino American soldiers who responded to President Roosevelt's call to duty. They fought under our American flag during World War II.

These loyal and courageous soldiers suffered, fought, and gave up their lives alongside their American counterparts throughout the war; yet decades have gone by, and they are still waiting for their service to be recognized.

I have introduced H.R. 2737, legislation that is strongly supported by Members of both parties and in both Chambers, to award these deserving veterans the Congressional Gold Medal so that our country can show our appreciation and recognize them for their dedicated service and sacrifice in defeating the Imperial Japanese Army.

Today there are just 18,000 of these Filipino World War II veterans who are still alive. Time is of the essence. We cannot afford to wait. I urge my colleagues to quickly pass this legislation so that these courageous men may be honored while they are still among us.

NATIONAL CORNBREAD FESTIVAL

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

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 20th annual National Cornbread Festival, which takes place in my hometown of South Pittsburg, Tennessee. This yearly event brings thousands of folks from around the country to experience the culture of southeast Tennessee.

South Pittsburg is also the home of the iconic American company Lodge Manufacturing, a major sponsor of the Cornbread Festival.

Growing up, almost all of us can remember a Lodge Cast Iron skillet playing a prominent role in home-cooked meals. The memories contained in those skillets and the family time with our loved ones are some of the most cherished.

Lodge truly embodies the spirit of American manufacturing and ingenuity. While the trend is for most companies to sell to large companies and move overseas, Lodge has continued to operate in Tennessee since 1896. In fact, many of my constituents have worked at Lodge Manufacturing for their entire lives, just like their parents and grandparents.

I appreciate Lodge Manufacturing for working to keep those American dreams alive, and I want to thank all those who play a role in hosting the National Cornbread Festival.

□ 1215

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, like many Americans, I spent last weekend struggling through my taxes, and I would like to know, like other Americans, that that money is going to be used in a responsible way and that we are going to move toward fiscal stability around here.

I am the lead Democratic sponsor of Mr. GOODLATTE's constitutional amendment to require a balanced budget. In my opinion, the only way you are going to get Congress to get serious is to have a constitutional requirement that the budget be balanced and that the President submit to Congress a balanced budget.

You can't pretend you are going to do it just by cutting the heck out of everything. It has to include revenues, has to close tax loopholes and overseas tax havens and a whole bunch of other things that are leading to revenue losses.

So I am introducing an improved amendment over and above that from

Representative GOODLATTE which deals with a few concerns I have about that one.

This one clearly protects Social Security and Medicare. This one clearly closes a loophole that we can't have off-budget spending for military operations. We must have a declaration of war if you are going to exceed a balanced budget. It would require the budget be balanced within 5 fiscal years of passing this.

We have been kicking this can down the road. It is not a can anymore. It is a mountain of debt that we are giving to our kids. We have got to get serious about solving this.

RECOGNIZING MORTON PLANT HOSPITAL

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

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Morton Plant Hospital, which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year.

In 1912, Mr. Morton Plant was vacationing in Pinellas County, Florida, when his son, Henry, was seriously injured. He quickly realized the closest medical care was a day's drive, so he offered the community a $100,000 endowment to open a local hospital. On January 1, 1916, the Morton F. Plant Endowed Hospital opened with 20 beds and 5 bassinets.

In the decades to come, Morton Plant Hospital would emerge at the forefront of cardiovascular health, orthopedics, neuroscience, emergency care, and neonatal health.

It has been awarded the baby-friendly hospital status by the United Nations Children's Fund. It has also been recognized by the Florida Hospital Association as the innovation of the year in patient care. Most notably, it is the only hospital in the United States to be awarded for 13 consecutive years the Top 100 Hospitals designation by Thomson Reuters.

Morton Plant was created out of a community effort, and the hospital continues to serve the Pinellas County community. I congratulate them on 100 years of service, and I offer the sincere gratitude of our Pinellas County community for Morton Plant's tireless work on behalf of patients and families.

COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, at 3:30 p.m., I am hosting a public discussion at the Community College of Rhode Island Lincoln campus to highlight financial aid opportunities for students and the work we need to do in Congress to address the crisis of student debt.

Our young people are drowning in student debt. It is projected that 65 percent of the job openings by 2020 will require postsecondary education or training beyond high school, so this will become even more urgent.

The cost of education in a 4-year university has increased 250 percent since 1979, while real wages have stayed about the same.

Compared to 1979, students pay $26,000 more per year for a private university and $11,000 more each year at a public university. The average Rhode Island college student has over $31,000 in student loan debt, the fourth highest in the country.

We need to guarantee young people that they can graduate from college debt free. We need to allow students to refinance existing debt at lower rates, and we need to increase Pell grants and other investments in higher education. This needs to be a national priority. We need to do it now. Our future depends on it.

CONGRATULATING JUSTIN DEETS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to serve, along with my colleague from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN), as co-chair of the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus.

In that role, I am always excited to learn of students in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District who are excelling in their preparation for careers in growing technical education fields.

Today I want to congratulate Justin Deets, a student at Oil City High School who also studies welding at the Venango County Technology Center.

Last December Justin won first place in the annual Pittsburgh Section of the American Welding Society Competition.

On March 29, Justin was awarded $100 for this accomplishment, a new welding helmet, jacket and gloves, along with a week at the Lincoln Electric Welding School and qualification in x-ray welding.

This is quite an achievement, which will undoubtedly open new doors for Justin. I wish him the best of success in his future endeavors.

Mr. Speaker, career and technical education training transforms lives. America needs a robust reauthorization of the Perkins Act.

REPUBLICAN BUDGET PROCESS FAILS NATION

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is April 15, the deadline for passing a budget. It is clear that the Republicans are going to miss it. From the start, this process has been a travesty.

Before President Obama even released his budget, Republicans announced that they would refuse to hold a hearing on it. They rejected the President's budget out of hand even before it was printed, a move unprecedented in this modern era.

Then they passed out of committee a budget that would end the Medicare guarantee, take healthcare coverage away from 20 million Americans who received it under the Affordable Care Act, and make deep cuts that harm children, students, seniors, and hard-working Americans.

Then the Tea Party wing of the GOP insisted on walking away from the bipartisan budget agreement inked just last fall.

So that brings us to today. My Republican colleagues don't seem to have a budget or a plan to move forward. The process has collapsed.

I urge my colleagues to start over and to work with Democrats to craft a budget that invests in our future and meets the challenges facing our Nation.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during National Volunteer Week to thank all of our Nation's unsung heroes: the millions of volunteers helping our communities throughout the Nation.

This Monday we kicked off the week with our first annual Heroes Among Us event to recognize some incredible people in my district who go above and beyond to make a difference in our community.

This week and every week it is important that we honor and thank these individuals for their selflessness and recognize the tremendous impact that their collective actions have on others.

Thank you to all those who helped nominate the well-deserved award winners of our Heroes Among Us event and thank you to all the volunteers and unsung heroes of Florida's 12th Congressional District and throughout the Nation. Keep up the great work. Happy National Volunteer Week.

REPUBLICAN BUDGET PROCESS

(Mrs. LOWEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, dire needs across this great Nation demand Congress' attention: Zika virus, the crisis in Flint, the opioid epidemic, not to mention the ongoing needs for education, infrastructure, jobs, and security. Yet, Republicans will miss tomorrow's statutory deadline to pass a budget.

The majority's ''Road to Ruin'' budget would devastate good jobs, end the Medicare guarantee, and increase poverty. Even this was not cruel enough

for the most extreme voices in the Republican Conference who demand cuts that will hurt hardworking American families.

The majority's internal dysfunction is preventing Congress from investing in job creation, economic growth, and help for the American public.

My friends, it is time to end the games, address the dire challenges we face today, and invest in a brighter future for tomorrow.

REMEMBERING JEAN HAMILTON ALDRICH

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

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in memory of Jean Hamilton Aldrich, who passed away on March 23, 2016, at the age of 96.

Mrs. Aldrich was married to the University of California-Irvine's founding chancellor, Daniel G. Aldrich, Jr. Together they witnessed Irvine evolve into the hub for business and technology it has become today, all centered around one of the Nation's top research universities. Their work played a tremendous role in this transformation.

But Mrs. Aldrich's public service reached far beyond the university. She participated in health and arts projects throughout Orange County and served on boards for a home for the developmentally disabled and South Coast Repertory, a professional theater company in Costa Mesa.

She will long be remembered for her infectious laughter, her ability to keep her composure in high-pressure situations, and her service to the Irvine community.

Mrs. Aldrich leaves behind a rich legacy. She is survived by 3 children, 7 grandchildren, and 16 great-grandchildren.

We join them in mourning the loss of Mrs. Aldrich, who was truly a leader in our community.

GOP FAILURE TO ADOPT A BUDGET

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with good news and bad news for the American people.

The good news is that, after months of infighting, my Republican colleagues in the House and Senate have found something they all agree upon. The bad news is what they all have agreed upon is to stop doing their jobs.

In the Senate, Judge Merrick Garland, who is widely recognized as a brilliant and fair legal mind, cannot get the courtesy of a hearing or a vote. In the House, the majority is not fulfilling its legal requirement to adopt a budget for the coming year.

As one prominent Republican once wrote in the Wall Street Journal: Failing to pass a budget is ''a historic failure to fulfill one of the most basic responsibilities of governing.''

That was Speaker RYAN in 2011.

HONORING NICHOLAS BROWN AND MICHAEL THARP

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor two heroes from the Fourth Congressional District of Arkansas. Nicholas Brown of Hot Springs and Michael Tharp of Hope were awarded the American Ambulance Association Stars of Life awards this week.

These men are both veterans who served their Nation with valor before returning home to Arkansas and joining the private sector.

But their sense of duty brought them back to public service, with both men now working as emergency medical services professionals. They are first responders saving lives in their hometowns every day.

I congratulate Nicholas and Michael on this award and thank them for their service.

APRIL 15 BUDGET RESOLUTION DEADLINE

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

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the deadline by which Congress is supposed to have enacted its annual budget resolution.

As a former member of the Budget Committee, I take that responsibility very seriously, and I know the Speaker, the former chairman of that committee, does as well. So it saddens me that the House majority is now abdicating that responsibility.

I come from local government where we had to work on a bipartisan basis to adopt and balance budgets every year. Yet, rather than work with Democrats to advance a budget resolution that reflects the spending levels of the hard-fought 2-year bipartisan budget agreement adopted just 5 months ago, House Republicans have decided not to pass a resolution at all because some in their caucus want to undo that bipartisan agreement.

Budgets are values-based documents, but they don't have to represent just one set of values. They can be inclusive and should represent the broad diversity of the interests of the people we represent.

Working together, we can demonstrate the power of government to spur economic growth, provide for national security, and meet the needs of our people.

Mr. Speaker, one only has to look at the growing costs of the Zika virus, the opioid addiction problem, and the Flint water crisis to realize the cost of doing nothing.

JOE MACALUSO SPILLS THE BEANS ON LOUISIANA HOTSPOTS

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

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, Louisiana is known as the Sportsmen's Paradise. We don't have snow skiing, we don't have rock climbing, and we don't have white-water kayaking in Louisiana, but we do have our bayous, we have our alligators, and we have our oysters.

We are America's foreign country, Mr. Speaker. We are the top wintering habitat for migratory waterfowl. We are one of the top recreational fishing destinations in the Nation.

For over four decades, Joe Macaluso has been writing for the Morning Advocate, spilling the beans on our secret fishing holes, our lures, and our hunting hotspots.

Joe has been translating what is known, again, as America's foreign country to our visitors and residents alike. He has received national awards for coverage of legendary Grambling University Coach Eddie Robinson.

He has received awards for his coverage of fisheries devastation following Hurricane Andrew in 1992. He has received a lifetime achievement award from Louisiana Outdoor Writers Association, Coastal Conservation Association, and the Louisiana Wildlife Federation. He was recently inducted in the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame.

Mr. Speaker, I am not a good hunter and am not a good fisherman. But, with Joe ''Mac,'' he made it easy because he was always spilling the beans. He will be sorely missed.

□ 1230

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 14, 2016.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on April 14, 2016 at 9:22 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H. Con. Res. 115.

That the Senate passed without amendment H. Con. Res. 117.

That the Senate passed without amendment H. Con. Res. 120.

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 1493.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

PERMISSION TO POSTPONE ADOPTION OF AMENDMENT NO. 1 ON H.R. 3791

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the question of adopting amendment No. 1 on H.R. 3791 may be subject to postponement as though under clause 8 of rule XX.

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

There was no objection.

RAISING CONSOLIDATED ASSETS THRESHOLD UNDER SMALL BANK HOLDING COMPANY POLICY STATEMENT

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 671, I call up the bill (H.R. 3791) to raise the consolidated assets threshold under the small bank holding company policy statement, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 671, the bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3791

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

SECTION 1. CHANGES REQUIRED TO SMALL BANK HOLDING COMPANY POLICY STATEMENT ON ASSESSMENT OF FINANCIAL AND MANAGERIAL FACTORS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Before the end of the 6-month period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System shall revise the Small Bank Holding Company Policy Statement on Assessment of Financial and Managerial Factors (12 C.F.R. part 225—appendix C) to raise the consolidated asset threshold under such policy statement from $1,000,000,000 (as adjusted by Public Law 113–250) to $5,000,000,000.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Subparagraph (C) of section 171(b)(5) of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5371(b)(5)) is amended to read as follows:

''(C) any bank holding company or savings and loan holding company that is subject to the application of the Small Bank Holding Company Policy Statement on Assessment of Financial and Managerial Factors of the Board of Governors (12 C.F.R. part 225—appendix C).''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. After 1 hour of debate on the bill, it shall be in order to consider the amendment printed in part B of House Report 114–489, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be considered read and shall be separately debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and submit extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3791, which is a much-needed regulatory relief bill and economic growth bill, sponsored by an outstanding, energetic, and inspirational freshman on our committee, the gentlewoman from Utah (Mrs. LOVE).

As we look at the state of our economy today, we know one thing is for certain, Mr. Speaker, and that is that the economy is still not working for millions of working Americans. The economy is underperforming dramatically by any historic standard.

Given how far the economy fell from the Washington induced real estate bubble burst of 2008, history shows us that we should have had faster growth than normal during a rapid rebound phase. But it didn't happen, Mr. Speaker. There hasn't been a single year where economic growth has even reached 3 percent.

One published report on this failure noted:

> There is no parallel for this since the end of World War II, maybe not since the beginning of the Republic.

Last quarter's GDP growth of only 1 percent just punctuates the matter again for working families that find themselves working harder for less. They have seen their paycheck shrink by more than $1,600. No wonder 72 percent of all Americans believe the country is still in a recession, because they are living that reality every day. For them, the recession never ended.

I don't need polls telling me, Mr. Speaker, that the economy is not working for working families because virtually every day I receive emails or letters like these:

Carla from Mesquite, Texas, in my district writes:

> We are struggling to make ends meet. My husband had temporary work for 3 months. The last 2 years, he has been looking for work and not finding any.

Michael from the town of Forney in my district back in east Texas writes:

> I hear on the news how the economy is improving and I see Wall Street making money. Average folks like me are not seeing any economic improvement.

The painful truth is that the Washington hypercontrolled economy, again, is failing low- to moderate-income Americans. They simply want a fair shot, a fair shot at economic opportunity and financial security.

Perhaps nowhere—nowhere—is the hyperregulation of Washington being felt more than when it comes to the customers of Main Street community banks. These banks are being buried under an avalanche of red tape, which is increasing costs for those customers, restricting their choices, and harming their personal finances.

Let's just look at a few examples, Mr. Speaker. Credit card rates have risen drastically, making them unaffordable and unavailable for a number of would-be borrowers. Federal regulations now on auto loans could hit some borrowers hard with a nearly $600 increase in interest payments on a $25,000 loan over a 4-year period.

Small business lines of credit have been cut back dramatically. And incredibly, the incredible regulatory burden placed on home buyers has now complicated the buying process and has led to fewer community banks offering home mortgages.

The fact is all of these higher costs are being felt at the same time that paychecks and savings are stagnant for working families. It just compounds the problem. The sheer weight, volume, and complexity of all of these regulations is killing prospects for new jobs, killing opportunities to spur economic growth, and it is harming working Americans. It is killing their ability to achieve financial independence through their home mortgages, through their auto loans, through their credit card loans, and through their small business lines of credit.

So it is on their behalf and on behalf of the Carlas and the Michaels of America, and millions of others like them, that we are here to pass a very simple, but very helpful, bill. It is a commonsense piece of legislation.

The bill, again, sponsored by the gentlewoman from Utah (Mrs. LOVE), will make it easier for our small hometown community banks to raise capital so that capital, this very same capital, can be turned around and turned into local jobs and economic growth on Main Street.

We know that passing this bill will immediately—immediately—benefit more than 400 community banks all across America. Not big banks, Mr. Speaker, not Wall Street banks, but community banks. Those are the banks, historically, that focus their attention on the needs of our local families, our small businesses, and our farmers.

As a matter of fact, passage of this bill is a longstanding goal of the Independent Community Bankers of America. At the end of the day, we shouldn't pass this bill simply because it is good for community banks. We should pass this bill because it is good for their customers—the people who benefit from the loans and services that our community banks provide, the people who will work at the jobs, the people who will help create this stronger economic growth.

Wouldn't it be nice to hear for a change that community banks are once again hiring new loan officers to serve their communities as opposed to more

regulatory compliance officers to serve their Washington masters?

That is how you help capitalize more small businesses and help families pay their bills, plan for the future, and achieve the dream of financial independence.

I, again, applaud the gentlewoman from Utah (Mrs. LOVE) for her leadership for fighting tenaciously for working families in her district and all across America.

I urge all Members to support and adopt H.R. 3791.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we are now considering a bill that not only could put our community banks at risk, but strikes at the heart of why compromise in Congress can be so challenging.

H.R. 3791 would direct the Federal Reserve to raise the asset threshold under the small bank holding company policy statement, allowing small banks and private equity firms to take on additional debt for mergers and acquisitions. The threshold would be increased to $5 billion in consolidated assets from $1 billion. Let me stress that this would be 5 times as much as the current threshold and 10 times as much as the initial level that was in place before a bipartisan compromise was enacted last Congress.

The small bank holding company policy statement is important because it allows small institutions, like community banks and minority-owned depositories, to access additional debt so they can continue serving their communities. However, it is important that this threshold is carefully calibrated so it cannot be abused by speculative investors.

If the threshold is raised too high, it will have the opposite of the intended impact. It will lead to mergers and acquisitions, riskier banking activities, and a reduction in banking services and credit availability to rural, low-income, minority, and underserved communities.

Indeed, Democrats and Republicans on the Financial Services Committee worked together just a little over a year ago to provide relief to almost 5,000 community banks by doubling the asset threshold under the policy statement to the current level of $1 billion from $500 million in assets. We did so after working closely with regulators and determining that $1 billion was the most appropriate threshold to help community banks grow without making them targets for mergers and acquisitions. At $1 billion, the policy statement covers 89 percent of banks in the country, providing relief to the vast majority of community banks and minority-owned depository institutions.

I am trying very hard to understand why my colleagues are reneging on that compromise and undermining the careful, considerate policy that we enacted. The administration has threatened to veto this measure because of the potential danger to our smaller banks and to the communities they serve. They have called this bill an unnecessary and risky change because we know what will happen if the Federal Reserve has to make this change.

For one, raising the threshold would have a serious impact on the consolidation of community banks. The majority purports to be concerned with consolidation in the banking industry and the disappearance of community banks.

This bill will all but ensure that larger banks and investors come in and purchase smaller banks and then cut branches in the communities that need them the most. We have already seen this happen with banks across the country, both large and small, that have been forced to shut down hundreds of branches because investors and shareholders demand higher and higher returns.

I supported the change we made last year to $1 billion because it would help ensure that small community banks are able to continue serving their communities. That is the point of the small bank holding company policy statement. We must help our communities retain access to local banks that know the specific needs of their consumers and small businesses.

This bill would do the opposite. Even those that did survive wouldn't be able to provide the same personalized service because of their size. I am particularly concerned about how this would impact our underserved communities.

Another problem with this legislation is that it would allow banks with as much as $5 billion in assets to operate under lower standards and less oversight by regulators. Many community banks failed during the 2008 financial crisis because they became overleveraged. Certainly, if a bank makes bad decisions in the amount of risk they take on, then it is appropriate to let it fail, but the failure of any bank, and especially a bank with up to $5 billion in assets, has a tremendous impact on the community it serves and on the Deposit Insurance Fund.

At the end of the day, more bank failures will increase premiums for all the banks protected by the Deposit Insurance Fund. We cannot allow reckless behavior that benefits investors and bank shareholders at the expense of small banks and the communities they serve.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3791 is not a small change. It is a risky move that threatens both bipartisanship and these already polarizing times, as well as the safety and soundness of our community banks and the customers they serve.

□ 1245

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting ''no'' on this bill. Mr. Speaker and Members, allow me to reiterate the point. We worked very hard in reaching across the aisle, in making compromise, in making commitments to each other, and in agreeing that we would raise the asset limit from $500 million to $1 billion. We had that agreement, and before the ink was dry on the deal, here we have a bill that says: So, we really didn't mean it. We want to raise it to $5 billion. Ha, ha, ha.

People wonder why we don't compromise more, why we can't get together more, why we can't understand what is in the best interests of all of our constituents, to put aside our differences, and work on behalf of those people we say we care about. The other side claims it cares about community banks. Then why would it renege on this agreement? If it cares about community banks, why would it put them in the position of being bought up by private equity firms and special money interests, which only want to find a way to make more money and more profit by closing down branches and firing people? That is what they do. When these private equity firms come in, they borrow a lot of money in order to make these kinds of purchases. Then guess what? They have to take the money back. So guess who are the victims of this kind of agreement? They are the small banks and the constituents.

While my chairman—a gentleman whom I like very much and get along with very well—opens with statements that have nothing to do with this bill and while he talks about the plight of those in our communities who are suffering, let me tell you why they are suffering not only in his community but in communities across this country. It is because in 2008, we had a subprime meltdown and a crisis that was created by these kinds of reckless public policy attempts. We discovered that, because of all of the exotic products and all of the recklessness of some of the big banks and others, we put our people at risk, and we put our constituents at risk. Guess what? They lost their homes. Many of them are homeless and are on the streets now. Many of them cannot afford the rents that have risen because of the crisis that we have come out of.

If you really want to help small banks and community banks and if you really want to help your constituents, you will not be for a bill like this one. This only puts them at risk. I ask my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this bill.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to say, number one, I find it incredible that the ranking member would say that this is going to harm community banks, which kind of begs the question: Why are they all for it? We already have their endorsements.

If the gentlewoman is concerned about big banks gobbling up small banks, then maybe it is time to repeal Dodd-Frank since the big banks have gotten bigger and since the small

banks have become fewer, and the small banks tell us that it is Dodd-Frank that is killing them. This is a bill that will help small banks survive. They will merge together as opposed to disappear from our rural communities.

With respect to increasing risk, I would urge the ranking member to read the Fed's policy statement, which reads that the Board may, in its discretion, exclude any small bank company regardless of asset size. So that takes care of that issue.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Utah (Mrs. LOVE), the author of the bill.

Mrs. LOVE. I thank Chairman HENSARLING for his support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, economic freedom and personal freedom run hand in hand. In order to enjoy our personal freedom, Americans need access to credit as individuals, on behalf of their families, and in their businesses. That is why I am so proud to have introduced this bill.

H.R. 3791 is a very simple bill to help small banks and savings and loan companies get access to the capital they need so as to make credit available in their communities.

These small banking institutions are critical to the people and the communities in which they reside. They support the credit needs of families, of small businesses, of farmers, and of entrepreneurs. A community bank is often the principal lending source for many people whether they are purchasing a home, starting a new business, or purchasing a vehicle. In many counties around the Nation, a community bank is the only banking presence that residents have.

When these community banking institutions are overwhelmed with regulations and mandates, many of which are meant for larger institutions, it is the hardworking middle-income and low-income families in those communities who suffer the most. Mr. Speaker, it is about people. Community banks give people the credit they need to pursue their dreams—to buy a home, to start a business. In fact, proximity to a community bank increases the chances that new small businesses will be approved for loans and will have the chance to succeed.

By raising the consolidated asset threshold under the Federal Reserve's small bank holding company policy statement from $1 billion to $5 billion in assets, over 400 additional small bank and thrift holding companies will qualify for coverage under the policy statement and, therefore, will be exempt from certain regulatory and capital guidelines.

These capital standards were originally established for larger institutions and disproportionately harm small holding companies. Many holding companies that are above the current threshold face challenges with regard to capital formation just when regulators are demanding higher capital levels. These exemptions provided in the policy statement make it easier for small holding companies to raise capital and issue debt. This bill is about making sure regulations fit the size of the institution.

Mr. Speaker, a similar effort was passed into law during the last Congress under suspension in the House and by unanimous consent in the Senate. That bill raised the threshold from $500 million, where it has been since 1996, to $1 billion. That legislation also extended the exemption to savings and loan holding companies. While we are glad that we were able to achieve that increase which helped, roughly, 500 small bank and thrift holding companies, we would like to extend those benefits further. H.R. 3791 would bring more than 400 additional small institutions within the scope of the policy statement.

One success story that we have already seen from the previous increase was an instance in which 35 bank holding companies pooled their resources to issue debt under the policy statement. That debt was then downstreamed to the respective banks, where the capital was then used to make loans in the communities they serve, illustrating the great multiplier effect that the policy statement can produce. H.R. 3791 seeks to extend that flexibility and success to a greater number of small institutions and the communities they serve.

Opponents of this increase have alleged that changing the regulatory threshold would put communities and the Deposit Insurance Fund at higher risk, but the policy statement contains several safeguards that are designed to ensure that small bank holding companies that operate with the higher levels of debt permitted by the policy statement do not present an undue risk to the safety and soundness of their subsidiary banks.

Mr. Speaker, to sum this up, this bill is not about supporting banks. It is about supporting families, communities, and small businesses. It is about making sure that a small-business owner, like my constituent Jennifer Jones, has access to the credit she needs to expand her early childhood academy, where she teaches children to read before they reach kindergarten. It is about families who are sitting around their kitchen tables and are imagining the possibilities of renovating or of improving their homes. It is about that entrepreneur who is starting a restaurant and being her own boss. It is about the thousands of new jobs that will be created in those communities as a result.

The raising of the threshold received widespread bipartisan support in the last Congress, and I hope that the people will receive equal support this time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY).

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. I thank very much the ranking member for yielding and for her leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 3791.

I would like to note the Statement of Administration Policy on this bill, which reads that the bill ''amounts to an unnecessary and risky change.'' I am disappointed that we are even considering this bill, because I thought that we had reached a thoughtful compromise—a good faith compromise—on this issue last year.

Last Congress, we came together in a bipartisan way to increase the threshold for small banks that want to make acquisitions of other banks or financial companies and that want to finance these acquisitions based—and dependent to some extent—on debt. The Fed used to prohibit banks with more than $500 million from using debt to finance these purchases, but in recognizing that this threshold was out of date, we worked together to raise the threshold to $1 billion last Congress. I was proud of that deal, and I thought it reflected a good faith compromise in the Financial Services Committee.

Now, less than a year later, our colleagues in the majority, apparently, want to change the deal. They want to raise the threshold from $1 billion to $5 billion—a 500 percent increase over the deal that we just struck a year ago. A $5 billion bank is, needless to say, significantly larger than a $1 billion bank, and a $5 billion bank likely engages in a much broader range of activities than does a simple $1 billion community bank.

Raising the threshold to this level would actually facilitate more consolidation among community banks. Banks at the high end of the $5 billion level would take on more debt, buy smaller banks, which would, thereby, lead to the deterioration of community bank branches in the neighborhoods that we represent, and it would also lead to fewer jobs as they then seek to slim down operations.

The current policy statement already covers 89 percent of the banks in the country. Eighty-nine percent of the banks are covered by the deal we struck last year, so raising this level further is not warranted. It is risky. It is unnecessary. The Statement of Administration Policy says that it will be recommending a veto from the President of the United States. It is unnecessary; it is unwarranted; and it reverses a spirited compromise and good policy.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER), the chairman of the Financial Services Committee's Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, today, the House will consider H.R.

3791, legislation to raise the consolidated asset threshold under the Federal Reserve's small bank holding company policy statement.

To say that the current regulatory environment presents challenges for small financial institutions would be a drastic understatement. Today, regulators require more and more from community-based institutions in terms of both regulatory oversight and capital requirements. Mrs. LOVE's bill seeks to alleviate some of the pressures that are facing our community banks.

Small bank and thrift holding companies confront unique challenges with regard to capital formation, which is of particular concern at a time when regulators are demanding more capital. In understanding these challenges, the Fed has recognized that small banks have limited access to equity financing.

The Federal Reserve's small bank holding company policy statement gives relief from certain capital guidelines and requirements, making it easier for a community bank to raise capital and issue debt and to make acquisitions and form new banks and thrift holding companies.

□ 1300

Our Nation's smallest banks have faced significant recession, consolidation, and an alarming number of bank failures. By increasing the threshold in the Fed's policy statement from $1 billion to $5 billion, we have the opportunity to help an additional 400 true community banks.

I know that the last speaker was concerned about 89 percent of the banks being already under this policy, but we are talking about 400 more communities that we can help to be able to have access to a regular stream of credit, rather than have to have increased costs and also bear restricted services from those banks.

H.R. 3791 will go a long way in ensuring that our Nation's smallest institutions are able to grow stronger and continue to serve their communities.

I want to thank Mrs. LOVE for her leadership on this issue. I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting the bill.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire as to how much time we have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California has 18 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas has 16½ minutes remaining.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker and Members, my friends on the opposite side of the aisle, who have brought this bill to the floor, claim they care about community banks, even when we know this bill will just result in more consolidation among small financial institutions.

Just yesterday the Republicans repealed the mechanism by which we would wind down systemically important firms. This puts us back to the days of September 2008, when our largest financial institutions could not only threaten the entire economy, but also the stability of our community banks.

Remember that when Wall Street banks cratered our mortgage system, they devastated the entire economy in ways that damaged not just workers and borrowers, but also small financial institutions.

Republicans, likewise, later today will repeal the independent funding for the Financial Stability Oversight Council, our regulator expressly charged with examining the largest, most interconnected, most complex, Wall Street firms.

Again, the Republicans want the biggest players to escape scrutiny, thereby threatening our smaller community institutions.

Republicans also have failed to put forward credible housing finance reform. Recall that in 2013 the chairman brought up his PATH Act, which would have all but excluded small banks and credit unions from the secondary market, especially handing the keys to our mortgage markets over to the largest Wall Street banks.

By eliminating Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, community financial institutions across the country would have had mortgage lending come to a halt.

Finally, remember that Republicans are willing to hold our government hostage over favors that help the largest banks and only expose our community financial institutions to more risk.

We need not go too far back to remember the 2014 fight over the government spending bill, where Republicans were willing to risk a government shutdown in order to repeal Dodd-Frank's swaps pushout rule, which would have required our largest banks to separate their riskier derivatives activity from the accounts holding depositors' money.

Let us be clear. My chairman has said over and over again, and never fails to remind us, that he hates Dodd-Frank. He wants to get rid of Dodd-Frank reforms. He said he would do anything to get rid of Dodd-Frank and the reforms that were put in place by the Congress of the United States and signed by the President.

He forgets what happened in 2008. He forgets the meltdown. He forgets the risk. He forgets about the almost depression that we found ourselves in.

He does not want to strengthen the hand of regulators. He does not believe that our regulators should have on their agenda consumer protection.

That is why, in all of this struggle, whether it is talking about the small banks or—you should hear him on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. He hates that Bureau, and he wants to dismantle that Bureau because they do not want regulations, really, for the biggest banks in this country.

Oftentimes, what they are doing is they are benefiting the big banks, but they are making it look as if they are benefiting the smaller banks. So we have to push back very hard on these attempts.

Moving from $1 billion to $5 billion is an absolute unraveling of our agreement. It is wrong to work so hard with the opposite side of the aisle and come to an agreement, only to have them renege on it.

But, in the final analysis, it is because they would rather put their influence and their time in on what amounts to helping the big banks and not the small banks and forget about what this does to our communities.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT).

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and, also, my good friend Congresswoman LOVE. She actually has become a very valuable member of the Financial Services Committee.

I appreciate this bill. We have to talk through something because there is something here that is just bordering on—you know, we are passing each other in the night here. That makes absolutely no sense.

Dodd-Frank: I accept some folks bathe in love for it, but it has made the big, money-center banks bigger. So a bill comes along that says there is this concentration—if you believe it is a concentration of risk—because these banks are growing bigger and bigger and bigger. And one of the big reasons they are growing bigger is because they can amortize the regulatory risk over a much bigger book of business.

The money-center banks are $2 trillion institutions. We are talking about a $5 billion step-up here. The small banks, which we are losing one a day, cannot cover these costs. Their regulatory costs on a much smaller book of business is putting them out of that business.

So if you want to make the big banks smaller, you can try to regulate them more. But they have demonstrated that actually is their competitive edge in the world right now. What you need to do is compete them out of their hugeness, if that is a word.

If you care about competition, if you want to stay with your rhetoric that, hey, we need to deal with these big banks and we need to keep regulating them, then create a market where other banks can start to take parts of their market share because the big banks have a different cost of money.

They have this ability to take this huge regulatory environment—sometimes five different agencies that have some level of prudential coverage—and amortize it over a book that is $2 trillion.

How about giving smaller institutions a chance to start taking some of their market share? That is what Mrs. LOVE's bill does.

It starts to say—and we are still talking something that is tiny in the banking world—let these holding companies get up to $5 billion. Let them actually start having a fighting chance to take some of this regulatory burden that has been shoved down their throats and start to amortize it over a little bit larger book. Because if you leave it at the smaller institutions, they cannot compete.

If you want to make the big banks smaller, create an environment where they face competition. This is a classic argument around here. Do you believe that you make the world safer by layer and layer and layer of regulation? Well, that worked great in 2008, didn't it?

We are going to file our paperwork and maybe next quarter some regulator will look at it and maybe the next 6 months someone will write a letter about it. Or do you want an environment where there is so much competition out there that there is lots of optionality in the financial markets? That is what we are looking for here.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, it is a fairly simple argument. If you want a competitive, robust financial market in our banking world, where institutions have the ability to survive because of the crushing costs that Dodd-Frank has created. This is a simple, simple bill. It is just a chip off the iceberg that is Dodd-Frank.

Think about it in a way that this is the first step to try to create more competition to those big banks that I hear the left rail on day after day. This is a good piece of legislation.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining on both sides, please.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 13 minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from California has 13½ minutes remaining.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire, also, whether the other side has any more speakers?

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, we have no more speakers.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER), the chairman of the Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit Subcommittee.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for the time. I also want to commend the gentlewoman from Utah (Mrs. LOVE) for an outstanding piece of legislation.

I rise today in support of H.R. 3791. Sometimes we get up here and we talk about things in a technical way. And let me just explain to you what this good piece of legislation does.

Unfortunately, over the last few years, we have lost over 1,000 community banks in our country. In fact, we are losing them at the rate of about one a day right now.

That is important to my district because I am from the 19th Congressional District, which is a relatively rural district. I have a lot of small communities that have community banks in there. Some of them have been in business 75 or 100 years.

Unfortunately, in this environment, because of all of the regulations coming out of Dodd-Frank, many of these financial institutions are no longer viable on a standalone basis.

What is the alternative? Well, the alternative for those small banks is to search for someone to purchase them so that that bank can remain in that community.

In Texas, for example, this bill would allow 44 small bank holding companies to be able to help absorb some of those smaller banks.

Why is that important? Because in many of those communities, that little community bank is really one of the last corporate citizens standing there. They are the ones that sponsor the scoreboard for Friday night football, which is kind of big in Texas. They are the ones that support the chamber of commerce.

So what the Federal Reserve recognized is that, normally, they don't allow debt to be used as the transaction for larger holding companies, but they realized going out and getting capital for these small purchases is difficult.

So what the Federal Reserve has said is: Well, we are going to allow them to use up to 75 percent of the purchase price that can be debt.

Now, this does nothing about the safety and soundness. In other words, the holding companies that are purchasing these still have to maintain the appropriate capital ratios and all of those other things.

So this in no way affects the health of the banking industry, but it does facilitate the ability to make sure that these small community banks are able to stay in the communities they are in by being purchased by an entity that is a little bit larger that can amortize that cost.

I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 3791 and support community banks.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL).

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, Congresswoman LOVE stands with Main Street. Main-Street-based community banks are why we are on the floor today, because they are at the heart of helping our families start new restaurants, get consumer financing, finance our farmers.

I come from a very rural state, Arkansas, and 70 percent of the agricultural production loans in this country are made by our locally owned community banks.

Making it easier for them to raise capital makes it easier for our consumers and businesses to get the credit they need. For every dollar raised in capital at our banks, $10 can be put into lending into our communities. And small bank holding companies have less access to equity financing than their larger counterparts. It has always been that way. So this effort makes complete common sense, to allow small bank and thrift holding companies to expand their capital base in an easier and more directed manner.

Dodd-Frank made it harder to raise capital because of the changes in the law about trust preferred securities and other ways that many, many small banks raised capital. So this policy statement change that Mrs. LOVE proposes is well-timed.

□ 1315

There is bipartisan support for raising this threshold to $5 billion, notwithstanding the comments heard in today's floor conversation. Senator BROWN, Democrat in the Senate, with Mr. VITTER in the Senate last Congress, proposed $5 billion as the appropriate level for this effort.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, concerning the ranking member's comments about raising the threshold on carte blanche relief under the policy statement that might lead to unsafe conditions, that is, in my view, not correct, Mr. Speaker, as there are numerous other restrictions and criteria that continue to apply, and the Federal Reserve retains the right to impose capital standards if it determines it necessary to protect the safety and soundness of the institutions.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. HILL. This bill is about Main Street and economic growth, and it surprises me as just a Member of Congress that our President, President Obama, would issue a veto message on this bill.

This bill is about economic growth, and I applaud my good friend from Utah's efforts at championing this bill. I urge my colleagues to support its commonsense design and measure.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to set the record straight. I have in my hand a statement from United States Senator SHERROD BROWN. It is a statement on House Bill to Alter Federal Reserve Small Bank Holding Policy Statement. U.S. Senator SHERROD BROWN, ranking member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, issued the following statement today on legislation—that is this legislation, H.R. 3791—that would increase

the asset threshold for the Federal Reserve small bank holding company policy statement: ''I understand that proponents of H.R. 3791 have mentioned a similar provision that I included in a larger bill in 2013 as somehow relevant to the current debate before the House of Representatives. It might be relevant if the House was also engaged in a real effort to address too big to fail, and it might be relevant if time had stood still. But since 2014, Congress and regulators have provided significant regulatory relief to community banks and raised the threshold of the small bank holding company policy statement to $1 billion. Raising the threshold to $1 billion was where Congress, regulators, and stakeholders could find broad bipartisan consensus on this issue, and I support that. I do not believe we should take further action to raise the threshold, and it is wrong to suggest otherwise.''

So, ladies and gentlemen on the opposite side of the aisle, don't use SHERROD BROWN's name one more time because this statement puts that to rest. He is not in support of raising this threshold to $5 billion.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. GUINTA).

Mr. GUINTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman. I rise in support of the gentlewoman from Utah's bill that would allow more small bank holding companies to raise the necessary capital to better serve not only their customers, but their communities.

H.R. 3791 would raise the consolidated asset threshold from the Federal Reserve small banking holding company policy statement from $1 billion to $5 billion. By simply raising this asset threshold, more institutions would be able to qualify for coverage under the policy statement and be exempt from the ongoing burdensome regulatory guidelines.

My home State of New Hampshire is chock-full of community banks and community-based financial institutions, and having a higher threshold would help more community banks in my State and others across the country meet their higher capital requirements under Basel III.

I appreciate this commonsense approach that the gentlewoman from Utah is taking, and I appreciate her leadership because just in my State, we have had a 20 percent reduction of community banks. That means the average individual who is looking for an additional loan, whether it is personal or to start a new business, they can't get access to that capital. That is hurting the very people that the other side tries to claim to support.

Just last week I heard about a woman who recently was divorced, had two kids, and is a nurse. She was looking for a mortgage to start her new life again. She was denied because of these burdensome regulations. That should not be the intent in this country. We should be able to help those individuals who are trying to succeed, create a better life, give their children opportunity. H.R. 3791 does just that.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on the bill. I, again, thank the gentlewoman from Utah for her leadership.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO).

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, while the financial crisis certainly showed that targeted regulations were needed to protect our financial system, it also showed that the real threats to the system did not come from community banks and other small financial institutions. Yet, because of high compliance costs and a fiendish complexity of the Dodd-Frank law, which all too often fails to recognize the lower risks posed by these institutions, they have been put at a disadvantage.

This bill is part of the effort by the House to institute targeted reforms and ensure that we are not holding back small, stable institutions that millions of individuals and small businesses trust.

H.R. 3791 is a well-targeted bill that will make it easier for small bank holding companies to raise capital and provide needed regulatory relief by raising the consolidated asset threshold for small bank holding companies. In doing so, this bill will benefit local economies and improve the health of the American economy as a whole.

At the same time, the bill contains important safeguards to ensure that the financial system isn't put at greater risk. In short, this bill is exactly the kind of measured approach that Congress should take to protect homeowners and investors while also ensuring that we have a vibrant, well-functioning financial sector.

I would like to thank Representative LOVE for her work on this bill and Chairman HENSARLING for his hard work and leadership. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

On Tuesday in the Committee on Rules, I reminded Members that I came to the Committee on Financial Services—it was known as the Banking Committee back then—in the wake of the savings and loan crisis. One of the biggest lessons I took away from that time was that we must be precise when we mandate changes to bank safety and soundness rules, even when our intent is to help community financial institutions.

Congress' intent may have been to help savings and loans serve their communities, but by not being measured and considered in its actions, Congress transformed the savings and loan industry into one that serves speculative investments and irresponsible CEOs.

That recklessness led to a banking crisis that brought down more than a thousand institutions, cost taxpayers more than $120 billion, and robbed many communities of access to affordable banking products.

As I have said, it is important that the small bank holding company policy statement threshold is carefully calibrated so it cannot be abused by speculative investors. If the threshold is raised too high, it will have the opposite of the intended impact. It will lead to mergers and acquisitions, riskier banking activities, and a reduction in banking services and credit availability to rural, low-income, minority, and underserved communities.

That is why 2 years ago I worked diligently with my Republican counterparts to pass a bill that raised the threshold to $1 billion in assets, providing additional funding resources to 89 percent of the banks in the United States. That was smart, bipartisan legislating, a decision that we came to after consulting the regulators, researching the industry, and carefully considering the ramifications of the proposal.

In addition to that bill on the small bank holding company policy statement, I and my fellow Democrats in both the House and the Senate also introduced comprehensive legislation that would reduce compliance costs at community banks. We introduced this legislation, which included carefully targeted reforms that would allow small banks to thrive rather than encouraging consolidation, as this bill would do.

Our support for small institutions is also why my fellow Democrats and I have been supportive of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which has used SMART data analysis to thoughtfully calibrate their rules for the needs of small banks.

We often forget that in the run-up to the crisis, many small banks were pushed out of the lending business by unregulated, nonbank lenders. The CFPB has now created an even playing field, and small banks and credit unions are a bigger share of the mortgage market now than they have been in years.

Carefully considered reforms provide relief to community banks without creating unintended consequences in a complex financial system with many players. Unfortunately, the legislation before us today would, as my friends across the aisle say over and over again, hurt the people it is trying to help.

After we worked in good faith with Republicans to come up with a smart, targeted reform, we are now attempting to use this issue as a political wedge. It is exactly that kind of thinking that set the groundwork for the savings and loan crisis and left thousands of communities without access to banking services.

I would urge my colleagues to oppose this bill.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. HENSARLING. I yield myself the balance of the time.

Mr. Speaker, ever since the Dodd-Frank law was passed, none of the promises that were made have been kept. It didn't end too big to fail. Big banks have gotten bigger. Small banks have gotten fewer. Working Americans continue to fall behind. They have seen their paychecks either remain stagnant or shrink. They have certainly seen their bank accounts shrink.

After Dodd-Frank, we have seen free checking at banks cut in half. Since other financial laws of the Obama administration have been passed, we have seen 15 percent fewer credit card offerings, and on average, many of them have increased by 2 percentage points in cost, hurting working Americans who need access to credit.

For purposes of the debate today, Mr. Speaker, what is undeniable is that we are losing a community financial institution a day in America. As we lose those financial institutions, we are also losing the hopes and dreams and financial security of millions of our fellow countrymen, particularly those who live in rural areas, like huge portions of the Fifth District of Texas that I have the honor of representing in Congress.

I keep on hearing the ranking member talk about a ''deal,'' something from the last Congress. The last time I read my Constitution, there is nothing to say that because one Congress acted on a matter, another Congress can't act on a matter. And, indeed, I am not sure we have any more urgent matter in the House Committee on Financial Services than to save community banking.

It is urgent, almost bordering on a crisis, Mr. Speaker, the loss of these banks. Small business lines of credit have been hampered, small business, the job engine of America, fueling our entrepreneurs, fueling new businesses, fueling the American Dream.

So I was happy that we passed a number of bipartisan regulatory relief provisions in this Congress. Now, regrettably, many of them were opposed by the ranking member. So I hear the rhetoric in helping community banks, and yet she opposed H.R. 766, Financial Institution Customer Protection Act supported by community banks; H.R. 1210, Portfolio Lending and Mortgage Access Act supported by community banks; H.R. 1266, Financial Product Safety Commission Act of 2015 supported by community banks; H.R. 1408, the Mortgage Servicing Asset Capital Requirements Act, supported by community banks; and the list goes on and on.

So I think the proof is kind of in the voting card, Mr. Speaker. It is Members of this side of the aisle, especially, that are consistent in trying to help our community banks, our rural communities.

□ 1330

So right now they are all, again, Mr. Speaker, suffering from the sheer weight, volume, load, complexity, and cost of this massive Washington takeover of our banking system—the micromanagement, the control by Washington.

Again, that is the primary reason we are losing a community financial institution a day. And let me tell you, they are not going to get bought up by JPMorgan. JPMorgan is not coming to Jacksonville, Texas. Goldman Sachs isn't coming to Forney, Texas.

If we don't allow these smaller banks to consolidate, we will lose them. That is the choice, Mr. Speaker. Are we going to lose our community banks in rural America?

And again, if the other side of the aisle would want to repeal their number one threat—Dodd-Frank—maybe this bill from the gentlewoman from Utah wouldn't be necessary. But it is necessary. It is an urgent situation that we deal with today.

So I want to urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 3791. It is modest. It will help at least 400 community banks. Four hundred community banks will be helped. It will help them, hopefully, not only survive, but to thrive, so that they can fuel and finance the American Dream through better home mortgages, through better auto loans, through better small business lines of credit.

I want to thank the gentlewoman from Utah for her hard work, for her leadership. And, again, I urge all my colleagues to vote for H.R. 3791.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate on the bill has expired.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MS. KELLY OF ILLINOIS

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 3, line 15, strike the period and insert the following: ''for bank holding companies and savings and loan holding companies which have submitted to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System a credible plan to expand access to banking accounts and services, consumer and small business credit products, and bank branches in rural, low-income, minority, and otherwise underserved communities, which has been made available to the public via the holding company's website and submitted to the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 671, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, my Republican colleagues have put this bill forward under a simple proposition: small- and mid-size banks need the ability to provide more lending opportunities to best serve their depositors and their communities. I agree with that premise. Access to credit is crucial to economic development, rebuilding our economy, and creating jobs.

Banks and deposit institutions are vital to creating economic opportunity. From small business loans, farm loans, and mortgage loans, to a simple checking account, access to banking services is essential for all Americans.

I firmly believe that allowing banks to access additional capital is a good idea, and good policy, so long as those banks are using those funds to lend in a fair and responsible manner to those people and entities that need it most.

My amendment is simple. It merely adds a clause at the end of the bill stating that the increase to a level of $5 billion in assets will only apply to lenders who serve rural, minority, low-income, and otherwise underserved communities. These lenders will be required to have a clear and credible plan to expand access to banking services in those communities, and submit their plan to the Federal Reserve and to Congress.

Let me put it this way, Mr. Speaker. Suppose a very common scenario: a high school student has a part-time job after school and receives a little money each week from her parents to round out her spending cash. Suppose that student asked her parent to increase her allowance by 500 percent. She says she needs it because with school obligations, she will be working less and won't have enough money to both fill her car with gas, go to the movies, or out to dinner with friends.

Would a reasonable parent simply start handing over five times as much money as they used to? Or would they ask their daughter a few questions, making sure that the money is truly being spent on a productive thing?

The student may be completely right—a 500 percent increase may be justified—and they may have nothing but good intentions with the additional money.

But what is the harm in asking? What is the harm in making sure? It is what a responsible authority would do.

My Republican colleagues say this bill is needed to allow banks to lend—to spur economic growth and ensure banks are able to serve their customers.

What is the harm in making sure that lending goes to those creditworthy businesses and individuals who need it most?

If we want to encourage expansion of access to credit, let's make sure it goes to where it will do the most good: a mortgage loan for a single mom working hard to achieve her vision of the

American Dream; a business loan for a small manufacturing company looking to open a new facility in an urban community that hasn't seen new jobs in years or decades; a farm loan for a small family farm so they can continue operations and raise the grain and produce what will feed the world.

My district is urban, suburban, and rural. So I have farmers, I have people from the city, and I have suburbanites. And I see the need in all of those communities.

My amendment simply states: the threshold increase will apply to you if you promise to responsibly lend to those who qualify and need it most and where it will do the most good, and to report to the Fed and Congress about how you plan on going about it. No regulations, just a simple justification.

Mr. Speaker, all creditworthy borrowers deserve fair access to the funds our banks have available to lend. Expanding lending opportunities and ensuring lenders can access capital to create more jobs and economic growth is something we all should be able to support. I simply want to ensure that when doing so, banks are responsible and provide credit broadly and fairly, including to the communities where it will do the most good.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I claim time in opposition.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. Speaker, at best, this amendment is duplicative. Under section 3 of the Bank Holding Company Act, the Federal Reserve already requires all companies seeking to acquire a bank to submit an application describing how that acquisition would ''meet the convenience and needs'' of the target bank's community. Listing ''any significant changes in services or products'' and discussing ''the programs, products, and activities that would meet the existing or anticipated needs of its community under the applicable criteria of the Community Reinvestment Act, including the needs of low- and moderate-income geographies or individuals.''

But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, as our community banks continue to close, as they continue to suffer under the weight of the load, they don't need duplicative law. And my fear is that it is not actually duplicative. This is one more report, one additional report they are going to have to file in addition to the hundreds of other reports and paperwork that they have to fill out, one more cost that, at best, is duplicative. But the amendment is vague.

What does it mean to have a plan deemed credible? What is credible?

So here we are as a United States Congress, under the gentlewoman's amendment, yielding more of our article I authority to the Federal Reserve. The amendment lacks procedural safeguard. It doesn't provide for a public comment on the submitted plan. It doesn't allow the company to appeal an arbitrary determination. It does not permit a company posting a plan on its Web site to necessarily redact trade secrets or personally identifiable information.

Mr. Speaker, we just need to reject this amendment. It absolutely undercuts what the gentlewoman from Utah is doing.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I am just wondering, if this is duplicative, why are banks closing in these communities? If there are some concerns, why not work with me instead of rejecting this amendment? If it is duplicative, then why can't we add it and see how we can make things better? I still get a lot of concerns that people who need loans in various communities that I serve still don't get them.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. I yield to the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. I would just like to point out that here is a Democrat on this side of the aisle who is offering to the Republican side to support the idea that you would raise the asset level for these small banks if only you would support minority banks, if only you would have a plan for CRA, if only you would do the right thing, if you care about the constituents, and they are rejecting it.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining on each side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 3 minutes remaining. The time of the gentlewoman from Illinois has expired.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Utah (Mrs. LOVE), the author of H.R. 3791.

Mrs. LOVE. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say, while I have much respect for my colleague on the other side of the aisle, I am opposed to the amendment.

Let me reiterate again what this does. I understand that the other side of the aisle believes that we have already helped our community banks by raising the threshold from $500 million to $1 billion. However, we don't want to help our communities any longer or anymore?

This, again, would give access and the ability for 400 small banks to help their community. And I don't want you to think about this as 400 small banks. Please think of this as how many thousands of people these small banks are going to be able to help—people who are going to receive access to credit that they need in order to achieve their dreams.

It is time for us in Washington to stop giving people exactly what they need to stay exactly where they are and start giving them the opportunities to go beyond, to go to the middle class and beyond, if they choose; to have the opportunities to be as ordinary or extraordinary as they choose to be.

This is going to help many people from all walks of life in all sorts of communities. And that is why I believe that we in Congress should do our job and give as many people access to this credit so that they can help their families.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 1½ minutes remaining.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Again, I just want to thank the gentlewoman from Utah for her leadership. She has made such a great impact on our Financial Services Committee.

Again, I am not sure we have a more urgent matter on our committee—we have many important matters—but when you are losing a financial institution a day in America, and thus losing the hopes and dreams of millions who count on the community financial institutions to help buy their homes, fund their cars, capitalize their small businesses, it is an urgent matter. This is an important underlying bill that will grant relief to an additional 400 community banks to survive and, hopefully, go beyond surviving to actually thriving.

As ever well-intended as the amendment is from the gentlewoman on the other side of the aisle, it puts one more stumbling block in front of these community banks who are just withering on the vine, who are struggling.

Again, it is, at best, duplicative. Everything the ranking member brought up theoretically is already addressed in section 3 of the Bank Holding Company Act.

Why would you have to turn in essentially two different versions of a similar report?

More paperwork burden. At some point, it is the straw that breaks the camel's back, which absolutely breaks the back of community banking.

So it is time to reject the amendment. It is time for all Members to support H.R. 3791.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the previous question is ordered on the bill and on the amendment by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY).

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. 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, and the

order of the House of today, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

□ 1345

FINANCIAL STABILITY OVERSIGHT COUNCIL REFORM ACT

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 671, I call up the bill (H.R. 3340) to place the Financial Stability Oversight Council and the Office of Financial Research under the regular appropriations process, to provide for certain quarterly reporting and public notice and comment requirements for the Office of Financial Research, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 671, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Financial Services, printed in the bill, is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 3340

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 ''Financial Stability Oversight Council Reform Act''.

SEC. 2. FUNDING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 155 of the Financial Stability Act of 2010 (12 U.S.C. 5345) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''be immediately available to the Office'' and inserting ''be available to the Office, as provided for in appropriation Acts'';

(B) by striking paragraph (2); and

(C) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (2); and

(2) in subsection (d), by amending the heading to read as follows: ''ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE.—''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on October 1, 2016.

SEC. 3. QUARTERLY REPORTING.

Section 153 of the Financial Stability Act of 2010 (12 U.S.C. 5343) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(g) QUARTERLY REPORTING.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the end of each quarter, the Office shall submit reports on the Office's activities to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.

''(2) CONTENTS.—The reports required under paragraph (1) shall include—

''(A) the obligations made during the previous quarter by object class, office, and activity;

''(B) the estimated obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year by object class, office, and activity;

''(C) the number of full-time equivalents within the Office during the previous quarter;

''(D) the estimated number of full-time equivalents within each office for the remainder of the fiscal year; and

''(E) actions taken to achieve the goals, objectives, and performance measures of the Office.

''(3) TESTIMONY.—At the request of any committee specified under paragraph (1), the Office shall make officials available to testify on the contents of the reports required under paragraph (1).''.

SEC. 4. PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT PERIOD.

Section 153(c) of the Financial Stability Act of 2010 (12 U.S.C. 5343(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(3) PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT PERIOD.—The Office shall provide for a public notice and comment period of not less than 90 days before issuing any proposed report, rule, or regulation.

''(4) ADDITIONAL REPORT REQUIREMENTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided under paragraph (3), the requirements under section 553 of title 5, United States Code, shall apply to a proposed report of the Office to the same extent as such requirements apply to a proposed rule of the Office.

''(B) EXCEPTION FOR CERTAIN REPORTS.—This paragraph and paragraph (3) shall not apply to a report required under subsection (g)(1) or section 154(d)(1).''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. After 1 hour of debate, it shall be in order to consider the further amendment printed in part A of House Report 114–489, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be considered read and shall be separately debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and submit extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3340, the Financial Stability Oversight Council Reform Act, and I would like to thank our colleague who authored this legislation, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER). He is certainly one of the hardest working and most thoughtful freshmen that we have on the House Financial Services Committee.

As the American people know all too well, Mr. Speaker, over years—not years, decades, in fact—Congress has ceded far too much power to unaccountable bureaucrats, Article I ceding power to Article II. At the same time, it has provided many unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats with access to money with no accountability for how that money is spent.

The Financial Stability Oversight Council, or FSOC, as it is known by its acronym, typifies this misguided yielding of power to the unaccountable and unelected.

Last month there was, however, a small victory for those who are alarmed by this ever-encroaching Federal Government and the shadow financial regulatory system that FSOC is a part of and that operates with little transparency or accountability to the American people. I speak of the recent judicial ruling that struck down FSOC's designation of MetLife as a too-big-to-fail financial institution. FSOC's decision was found to be ''unreasonable'' and the result of a ''fatally flawed process.''

Well, Mr. Speaker, the American people can achieve yet another victory today, another step in restoring the rule of law in checks and balances, by reining in an administrative state run amok, by passing the important bill that is in front of us now. FSOC is clearly one of the most powerful Federal entities to ever exist and, unfortunately, also one of the least transparent and least accountable.

First, the Council's power is concentrated in the hands of one political party, the one that happens to control the White House. All but one of FSOC's members is the Presidentially appointed head of a Federal agency, but, interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, the agencies themselves are not members, thus denying bipartisan representation. The structure clearly injects partisan politics into the regulatory process; it erodes agency independence; and it undermines accountability.

Furthermore, FSOC's budget is not subject to congressional approval, removing yet another vital check and balance of its immense power over our economy and over our people.

FSOC has earned bipartisan condemnation for its lack of transparency. Two-thirds of its proceedings are conducted in private. Minutes of those meetings are devoid of any useful, substantive information on what was discussed.

Even Dennis Kelleher, the CEO of the left-leaning Better Markets, has said ''FSOC's proceedings make the Politburo look open by comparison. At the few open meetings they have, they snap their fingers, and it's over, and it is all scripted. They treat their information as if it were state secrets.''

FSOC typifies not only the shadow regulatory system but, also, the unfair Washington system that Americans have come to fear and loathe: powerful government administrators, secretive government meetings, arbitrary rules, and unchecked power to punish and reward. Thus, oversight and reform are paramount, and that is why the gentleman from Minnesota drafted H.R. 3340.

The legislation before us would bring much-needed accountability and transparency to two very powerful agencies birthed by the Dodd-Frank Act: the Financial Stability Oversight Council and the Office of Financial Research.

Currently, these two agencies are funded by assessments on financial institutions, money that ultimately comes out of the pockets of their customers. These funds flow directly from financial institutions into the Office of

Financial Research coffers and are available immediately to be spent by both the Office of Financial Research and the Financial Stability Oversight Council.

H.R. 3340 is a very simple, commonsense bill. Instead of allowing unaccountable bureaucrats to set their own budgets, the bill places these two agencies on the budget review viewed by the United States Congress, the elected representatives of we, the people. It says the Council and the Office should be funded through the normal, transparent congressional appropriations process to ensure accountability and transparency.

Is it too much to ask that these two powerful government agencies actually be subject to congressional oversight and budget approval? This should be the rule for a growing number of Federal bureaucracies that are tossed into the alphabet soup of Washington regulators who have more power than ever over the financial decisions and the American Dream of our hardworking fellow citizens.

Unfortunately, I have to pose this question often to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle: How much more congressional authority do we wish to outsource to regulatory agencies? Why did people run for Congress if they didn't want to legislate? Why did they run for Congress if they didn't want to engage in oversight?

Oversight is a fundamental congressional responsibility, and that includes budget oversight—most importantly, it includes budget oversight.

Mr. Speaker, sooner or later the shoe is going to be on the other foot. Sooner or later the White House will be in different hands. Sooner or later Congress will be in different hands, so this should not be a partisan issue. This is about Article I of the Constitution. All Members on both sides of the aisle should care passionately about this issue, to hold agencies accountable for their spending, because we are not just writing legislation for one Congress or one administration.

The bare minimum level of accountability to the elected representatives of we, the people, is to have Congress control the power of the purse. It is part of our quintessential and essential oversight responsibilities, regardless of who sits in the Oval Office or who resides in the Speaker's chair. If we are going to do our job, that means Congress must exercise its Article I responsibilities, and H.R. 3340 will help us do just that.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in opposition to H.R. 3340, which would impede the important work of the Financial Stability Oversight Council, commonly referred to as FSOC, and the Office of Financial Research, referred to as OFR, by subjecting their funding to the congressional appropriations process.

This bill would also hamstring the OFR's ability to conduct impartial research by requiring the Office to solicit public comment before issuing any report, rule, or regulation.

Just in case people don't understand who FSOC is, it includes the Federal Reserve, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, the National Credit Union Association, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the Federal Housing Finance Agency, and independent members with insurance expertise, chaired by the Treasury Secretary.

What you have is every representation from all of these oversight and regulatory agencies coming together, working together in the best interests of this country, identifying risk and where that risk is and what to do about it. But the changes that are now being suggested or being made in this bill will have serious adverse effects on financial stability in the United States.

The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Act created FSOC to oversee and prevent threats to our financial markets, and the OFR was established to support FSOC's critical work with analytical research. Dodd-Frank specifically empowered both agencies with independent budgets, the same way our other banking regulators, like the Federal Reserve, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, operate. The FSOC and OFR are funded outside of appropriations, through fees on large financial institutions. They were meant to be funded by the institutions they oversee and be shielded from congressional politics.

Republicans say they want accountability by overseeing regulators' budgets, but what they really want is control, so they can eliminate funding for these agencies altogether. This bill would prevent efforts to properly mitigate systemic risk, to the detriment of the entire economy; and in this Congress, it would subject the agencies to the uncertainty caused by the dysfunctional, failed Republican budget process.

All we have to do is look at the struggles facing the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. They continue to be underfunded, despite dramatic changes in the markets. It is a struggle every year to secure adequate resources to supervise complex institutions to the benefit of industries, but at dramatic cost to our economy.

Understandably, the administration opposes this bill, and the President's senior advisers would recommend a veto. The administration specifically says that subjecting these bodies to congressional appropriations would hinder their independence and would limit their ability to monitor and address threats to financial stability.

In addition, this bill would interfere with OFR's work.

Republicans also say they want transparency and cost-benefit analysis with regard to OFR's activities, but what they really want is to give industry a leg up on our regulators. In addition, by requiring the OFR to tell the industry what it is studying, the bill would corrupt OFR's findings and could have a chilling effect on its important work.

For similar reasons, I also will be urging my colleagues to oppose an amendment by Mr. ROYCE that we will consider later on today that requires detailed disclosure of the OFR's research agenda and practices. This is not the norm of any research organization and would severely limit OFR's ability to conduct rigorous, impartial analyses.

Our regulators need to act with certainty, impartiality, and position resources to conduct robust oversight of our financial markets so that we can properly detect and deter systemic risk. Unfortunately, this bill will be a step back in that effort, not forward, and it is further evidence that Republicans seek to dismantle Dodd-Frank and the improvements we have made in our financial markets, one bill at a time.

I am going to urge my colleagues to oppose this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER), the sponsor of H.R. 3340.

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. I thank my colleague from Texas, Chairman HENSARLING.

Mr. Speaker, I am a believer in a transparent and accountable government; and if a Federal institution is failing to meet these fundamental criteria, Congress needs to act.

Unfortunately, the Financial Stability Oversight Council, more commonly known in Washingtonspeak as the FSOC, and the Office of Financial Research, more commonly called the OFR, currently operate in the shadows, outside of congressional oversight and the democratic process.

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This has led to nonsensical and heavy-handed abuse by the government of numerous financial companies that had absolutely nothing to do with causing the 2008 financial crisis.

While I strongly believe that those who created the crisis must be punished, I can't stand by while businesses that had nothing to do with the crisis are being unjustly burdened with new regulations that force American consumers to pay higher prices for essential financial products like home mortgages and student, auto, and business loans.

That is why I have introduced the Financial Stability Oversight Council Reform Act. Not only will the bill reduce mandatory spending by $1.3 billion over the next 10 years, it will

make the FSOC and OFR accountable to the American people through their elected representatives.

Over the years, Congress has given much of its power to unelected bureaucrats. This legislation returns the constitutional power of the purse back to Congress by subjecting FSOC and the OFR to the appropriations process.

As you know, FSOC is authorized to identify risks to the financial stability of the United States. This authority allows the FSOC to designate nonbank institutions as systemically important financial institutions, or SIFIs, which, in turn, increases supervision and regulation of these firms by the Federal Government.

The Office of Financial Research was created to provide the research and analysis necessary for the FSOC to carry out this statutory mandate.

In a classic Washington fox-guarding-the-henhouse scenario, the FSOC and OFR are currently funded through taxes or assessments, as we prefer to call them, that they collect from the very SIFIs they designate.

These unelected bureaucrats then set their own budgets without any oversight or approval by Congress. Is it any surprise that the FSOC budget is already five times larger today than it was in 2010.

Senator Dodd and Representative Frank both have acknowledged that they never intended that insurance companies be designated as nonbank SIFIs.

Despite the stated intent by the authors of the Wall Street Reform Act, FSOC has already designated three insurance companies as nonbank SIFIs.

Unfortunately, further complicating the problem, FSOC has failed to create a viable off-ramp for designated companies and has not shared with Congress how they make these designations in the first place.

OFR has received its fair share of criticism, too. In 2013, their asset manager report wasn't only condemned by the industry, but the Federal Government Securities and Exchange Commission also expressed concerns.

According to a Reuters report, the SEC was concerned that the people who conducted the study at OFR ''lacked a fundamental understanding of the fund industry itself'' and ''the Treasury's research arm failed to take a number of the SEC's critical feedback into account.'' Thus, the SEC created its own comment period for the report.

Better Markets, a group that regularly advocates for increased government regulation, actually criticized the OFR for the inexplicably and indefensibly poor quality of the work presented in the report.

Despite all of this and the fact that Congressman Frank has also condemned the idea of designating asset managers, many fear the FSOC will move next with an asset manager SIFI designation.

For these reasons, I believe it is absolutely critical that we pass the Financial Stability Oversight Council Reform Act.

It is crucial for the FSOC and OFR to be more transparent and accountable to the American people. Subjecting these entities to the congressional oversight process, enhancing OFR quarterly reporting requirements and allowing Americans to weigh in on OFR rules and regulations gives Congress the tools it needs to provide the proper oversight of FSOC and OFR.

Now, some may argue that Congress should just trust these bureaucracies. But our Constitution makes it abundantly clear that Congress and Congress alone has the power of the purse. And like one of our great leaders once reminded us: ''Trust, but verify.''

I want to thank Chairman HENSARLING for his leadership on this issue. I urge all of my colleagues to support the Financial Stability Oversight Council Reform Act.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS from California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HECK), a member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. HECK of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member WATERS.

Mr. Speaker, this is a strange day. I almost feel like we are existing in parallel universes. On the one hand, today—today—is the deadline for the Rules Committee to meet to structure debate on a budget resolution. But it is clear by now that there will be no floor consideration of a resolution today or tomorrow or the day after or very possibly ever.

Instead, the headlines in Capitol Hill news publication after publication are all about how the appropriations process has descended into ''chaos.'' ''Chaos.'' So we have that on the one hand.

Then on the other hand we have a bill on the floor that subjects the Financial Stability Oversight Council to that very same chaotic appropriations process.

On the one hand, the appropriations process is in chaos. On the other hand, this bill moves valuable, critical, and important economic regulators into that same chaotic appropriations process. Have you ever heard the expression: Does the left hand know what the right hand is doing?

When the majority talks about putting agencies in the appropriations process, I hear a lot of high-minded talk and rhetoric—and appropriately so—about the Constitution and our Founding Fathers.

How would Alexander Hamilton have funded the FSOC? Frankly, I think it is great to ask those questions. I ask myself those questions every day.

Everyone who takes the oath of office and has the privilege to stand here ought to keep grasping for the answers to those questions. And how appropriate this week.

Yesterday was Thomas Jefferson's birthday. So I was going back and rereading something about him, his philosophies and contributions. Absolutely. We should all do that.

But we also have a responsibility to stay anchored in reality, to lay down laws for the country and the Congress we have—the Congress we have—not the country and Congress we all wish we had.

We live in an era of huge, complex financial markets, and we have learned again and again and again that those markets fail, sometimes wiping out $13 trillion in net worth in this country in a month. That is devastating. Somebody has to be looking at the whole system and working to shore up its weaknesses.

We live in an era of a broken appropriations process. It is chaotic. Today's Congress is not Madison's perfect vision.

Regardless of the ideals of article I of the Constitution, the reality today is that moving an agency into a chaotic appropriations process is to subject that agency to that very same chaos, to uncertain funding, to the risk of shutdown and backroom deals.

So let's find a budget resolution, fix the appropriations process, and then maybe, just maybe, we can talk about moving agencies into the appropriations process.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. HECK of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I will wrap up quickly. I thank the ranking member for the time.

But, for now, my friends, ladies and gentlemen, FSOC is too important. The risk of financial crisis is too great. Have we not learned that lesson, what happens?

To subject the only crisis prevention regulator to the dangers of a chaotic appropriations process—and that is what we have, it cannot be denied—is the last thing we can do.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) who is chairman of our Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit Subcommittee.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 3340, the Financial Stability Oversight Council Reform Act introduced by my good friend, Representative TOM EMMER, from Minnesota.

This is an important part. When I go back home and people hear about a bill that has been passed or new regulations that come out and they have a question about that—and particularly, I guess, under this administration, we have heard a lot of people say: What are you all going to do about that new rule that the administration pulled up? You all have the power of the purse. Why don't you do something about that?

The Founders were very clear about having different branches of government. One of the things that creates a

lot of consternation for a lot of people is that they see some of these agencies created in Dodd-Frank, like the Financial Stability Oversight Council, FSOC, which has no accountability to anybody.

They operate in an unaccountable and not very transparent way, and they have a huge amount of impact on markets. In fact, when they determined that MetLife was systemically important, a Federal judge the other day said that they reached that conclusion inappropriately, that they weren't transparent, they weren't open, and that they didn't actually follow their own rules in determining this entity being systemically important.

So why in the world would we not want them to be accountable to the taxpayers? Because, ultimately, all of this money, Mr. Speaker, belongs to the American taxpayers and they are expecting this Congress to review the actions of many of these agencies.

I am amused at my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. They kept talking about how important many of these entities are and what a great job they are doing, yet they are not willing to allow them to be accountable and to come forth and make a case why they should be spending the money they are spending or why they are taking the actions that they are taking.

Talking about Mr. Jefferson, this is not the government that our Founders intended. In fact, they were really reluctant to form a Federal Government, to give a centralized government any power.

But they did ultimately determine that there would be some good about that, primarily for the common defense. I don't think they intended to create agencies that had no accountability.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES).

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

Mr. Speaker, how soon we forget. If the movie ''The Big Short'' made you mad—and I hope you have seen that movie—then what the Republican House leadership is proposing today should make you furious.

After the financial crash in 2009, we acted. The Congress acted. We understood that we didn't have a wholistic picture of the risk across the financial markets before the crash.

So we made a decision to create the Financial Stability Oversight Council, FSOC, as they call it, to police these too-big-to-fail companies and to rein in the risks in our largest financial institutions.

Now some of the biggest banks want the oversight to stop so they can bring back their risky, anything-goes casino banking practices, the exact practices that tanked the housing market and destroyed retirement savings for millions of Americans in the 2008 Wall Street collapse.

This bill, H.R. 3340, pushed by Republicans and their big bank patrons, will neuter this important oversight body, blindfolding our government again and making another economic meltdown more likely.

I feel as though every couple of weeks the Republicans here in the House are giving us another memory test. They bring a bill up that tests whether we remember that just 7 years ago our financial markets crashed because of risky behavior on Wall Street.

I remember that that happened. Democrats remember that that happened. The American people remember that that happened. Apparently, the Republicans in Congress do not remember that.

But we are going to keep passing this memory test and pushing back against these kinds of efforts to water down the Dodd-Frank reforms.

Let me ask this, Mr. Speaker: How many of your constituents—I know none of mine—have asked to gut the Financial Stability Oversight Council, to strip critical oversight of our Nation's largest financial institutions, and to make another financial crash likely? Nobody is asking for that.

Americans deserve better. They see day in and day out a Congress out of step with their priorities, and they want change. In fact, right now thousands of Americans are engaging in direct action on the Capitol Grounds asking for campaign finance reform and restoration of voting rights. Instead of voting once again to support the big banks and Wall Street, we should be listening to them and taking action to restore their voice in politics.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to push back against congressional amnesia and to oppose this bill.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT), the chairman of our Capital Markets and Government Sponsored Enterprises Subcommittee.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for the time. I want to thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER) for putting forth a piece of legislation that will shine the light of day on some of Dodd-Frank's most secretive creations.

We often hear our friends from the other side of the aisle and regulators talking about their concerns over the so-called shadow banking system.

The FSOC and its members have used this sinister term on multiple occasions to strike fear in the hearts of the public in order to advance, basically, their growth-strangling regulatory regime.

But the real threat is not from shadow banking. The real threat comes from the shadow regulatory system that basically operates outside of our system of checks and balances with absolutely no accountability to the public and with little or no input from the Congress to conduct our proper oversight. You see, the FSOC and the OFR are the embodiment of this shadow system.

For years now, the FSOC has continuously denied our committee's simple request for some information about how it operates and about its proceedings. Really, all we know about these meetings are a few sentences that it drops into their press releases.

Meanwhile, even though the OFR embarrassed itself with its asset manager report that was issued back in 2013, that office basically still operates largely outside of the public eye.

So it is time to shine the light of day on both of these bodies, Mr. Speaker, particularly in light of the recent invalidation of MetLife's too-big-to-fail designation by FSOC.

□ 1415

The underlying legislation would restore Congress' Article I authority by putting Congress back in charge of funding both FSOC and OFR, by requiring OFR to submit regular reports to Congress that the American public can see.

It is time to stop letting bureaucrats in this town run wild, let's put Congress back in charge, and let's put back the checks and balances for these troubling agencies.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), the ranking member of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I thank her for her leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose H.R. 3340, a bill that would cause severe damage to the integrity of the Financial Stability Oversight Council and the Office of Financial Research. It is through these entities that the Dodd-Frank Act identifies risks in our financial systems and guards against another financial crisis.

FSOC and OFR have been intentionally placed outside political pressure. They make our financial system safer and protect the American people from a future financial crisis. However, the bill we are debating today would cripple FSOC and OFR by subjecting them to unnecessary political influence, putting our financial system at risk.

My colleagues across the aisle would have us believe that FSOC and OFR have free rein to set and approve their own budgets, and are, therefore, agencies that have run amok. FSOC's budget is approved by a majority vote of its members. FSOC does not have unchecked budget authority. FSOC's budget is similar to, and modeled after, the FDIC's budget mode.

The FDIC also sets its own budget. It has time and time again acted to protect the American people from financial collapse while setting a reasonable and prudent budget.

No one is calling on Congress to rein in the FDIC. The bill is nothing more

than an attempt by the majority to undo the progress made by Dodd-Frank and to eliminate the ability of FSOC to act on behalf of the American people by cutting its funding.

As I listened to my colleague from Maryland a few minutes ago talk about the folks who are right outside this Capitol, complaining about Citizens United, people want to know that they have power. These people are very upset. They want to know that their democracy is not being taken away from them.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this bill and against all bills that seek to roll back our progress in making the financial system safer.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining on each side, please?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 14½ minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from California has 15 minutes remaining.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING).

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3340, the Financial Stability Oversight Council Reform Act.

Mr. Speaker, I do not support the creation of FSOC and OFR and do not think that 10 unelected agency heads should be able to have such influence over the U.S. financial system. But H.R. 3340 doesn't even curtail any of FSOC's or OFR's powers. It simply provides greater accountability by making their budget subject to the annual Congressional appropriations process.

Strengthening congressional oversight would force FSOC and OFR to address questions and concerns from both sides of the aisle. Requiring OFR to report quarterly to Congress and provide the standard public notice and comment period before issuing any report or regulation is just common sense. In fact, it would ultimately serve the public interest to provide transparency and diverse perspectives on issues affecting the financial services industry.

The FSOC has the authority to declare large companies as ''systematically important financial institutions'' and then subject them to a new, costly regulatory regime that is designed for banks. I have serious concerns about their power, but this bill wouldn't even change that. It would only provide desperately needed transparency and accountability to the SIFI designation process, which was recently described by a Federal judge as ''fatally flawed'' and ''arbitrary and capricious.''

2008 demonstrated that we need effective regulation of our financial system, but regulators need to be held accountable for their decisions, especially given the impact they have on the competitiveness of U.S. companies.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Mr. EMMER for his legislation.

I strongly urge the adoption and passage of this legislation.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

My friends on the opposite side of the aisle keep talking about accountability and what Congress' responsibility is and what the Constitution says we should do. But I find it very interesting, while they are claiming that OFR and FSOC should be given more oversight, they don't seem to really want to exercise the responsibility to do that.

Republicans claim that only when OFR and FSOC are subject to the annual appropriations process, will these two entities be accountable to Congress.

However, how many times has the Financial Services Committee requested the director of the Office of Financial Research to testify?

Only one time.

Section 153 of the Dodd-Frank Act requires that the OFR director testify before our committee annually, and yet, OFR Director Berner has only been invited to testify once in the last 4 years—the only time being in March of 2013. That means for more than 3 years, our committee, under Republican leadership, has shirked its duties to oversee the OFR. Any Member who has met Director Berner can attest that he has always stated his eagerness to update Congress on what OFR is doing.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is not some valiant attempt to hold FSOC and OFR accountable, no. This bill is yet another attack on a Dodd-Frank financial reform by Republicans, who never supported financial reform in the very first place.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 3340, the so-called Financial Stability Oversight Council Reform Act.

This bill represents another example of death by a thousand cuts from our friends on the other side of the aisle. It is another Republican attack on the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.

After the catastrophe of the financial crisis and the near collapse of our banking system, Republicans are, once again, jeopardizing the stability of our financial system.

How many times will Republicans waste taxpayer dollars with these partisan and dangerous attacks on the independence of our financial regulators?

Dodd-Frank created the Financial Stability Oversight Council and the Office of Financial Research to bring independent regulators together to monitor risk across our banking system and address threats to the American economy. Prior to the creation of FSOC, no single entity was accountable for monitoring our Nation's financial stability—none. It was a mishmash, disparate mess. Dodd-Frank filled that void.

Similarly, OFR works to support consumers by conducting critical research on our financial system and whether our regulatory systems are, in fact, working.

Of course, if we don't invite the person who is the head of the Office to actually testify in front of the Financial Services Committee, how would we know?

Dodd-Frank ensured that important regulators like FSOC and OFR have the independence they need to protect consumers outside of the political turmoil of Congress. My House Democratic colleagues are serious about reining in our Nation's largest financial institutions, while my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are playing political games at the expense of American consumers.

I refuse to stand idly by and allow Dodd-Frank to be gutted and weakened. If this terrible bill got to his desk, President Obama wouldn't sign it. He would never allow it to become law. Nevertheless, congressional Republicans continue to waste taxpayers' time and money with this legislation that would peel back Dodd-Frank and hurt American consumers.

House Republicans need to instead focus on our Nation's most pressing problems: public health crises like the Zika virus, which has ravaged my home State of Florida; the ongoing debt situation in Puerto Rico; and keeping Speaker RYAN's promises to the American people that this body would pass a budget.

Our Nation's working families are keeping their fiscal houses in order.

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

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman from Florida an additional 1 minute.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We need to make sure that we hold Speaker RYAN's feet to the fire and make sure that he keeps his promise to the American people that this body will pass a budget, which we have yet to do.

Our Nation's working families are working hard to keep their fiscal house in order. It is long past time for the House Republicans to do the same, while also making sure that we protect American consumers.

That, ladies and gentlemen, is how we got into the worst economic crisis and nearly crashed the banking system in the first place. If we leave policymaking to the Republicans who are in the majority here, they would take us back to a time when we had a Wild West of regulation that left consumers twisting in the wind and banks to be able to make any decision they wanted and run over consumers all across America. We saw how well that worked out in 2008.

Now we have come through the worst economic crisis we have ever had since the Great Depression—73 straight months of job growth in the private sector. We need to continue that progress, not go backward.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN).

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for bringing this very important issue to the House floor.

I am pleased to stand up in support of H.R. 3340, the Financial Stability Oversight Council Reform Act.

I want to congratulate Congressman TOM EMMER of Minnesota for his tireless work on this bill to come up with a commonsense piece of regulation that helps create jobs in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to set the RECORD straight. There are some folks in this Chamber who continue to blame the economic problems we have had over these past years specifically on the financial services industry. Well, let's be honest here. There were D.C. regulators here in this town who put tremendous pressure on the banks to lend money at zero percent down and zero percent interest to folks who they knew could not afford these loans. When they were unable to repay these loans, the real estate market collapsed and brought the economy with it.

Mr. Speaker, every business in America, every industry, should be fairly and predictably regulated. However, when the regulations are so intense and so complicated and so smothering that it kills jobs, then it is our responsibility to make sure that we give our small businesses in this country relief.

Mr. Speaker, I have been here for a little over a year and I realize there is a fourth branch of government. Now, we all know what the Constitution says. It is that Congress, the legislative branch, creates the laws. The administrative branch, the White House, implements the laws that we create. If there is a question, then we get the referee involved, the courts. However, there is a fourth branch of government that is unconstitutional. It is called the professional regulator.

Now, what has happened over the course of these past years is that the administrative branch wants to send directions to their regulators to put more and more pressure on our business community that creates jobs and gives our families opportunities.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Maine an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. POLIQUIN. One of those agencies is the Financial Stability Oversight Council. Mr. Speaker, this organization has tremendous power on our economy to regulate financial institutions that pose no risk to the economy, like credit unions in northern Maine and small community banks in northern Maine that did not cause the problems that we have had over these past years.

However, all I am asking and all this bill does is make sure that the Financial Stability Oversight Council's operations are funded by the people's representatives. Mr. Speaker, we in Congress have the opportunity to fund that operation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has again expired.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Maine an additional 10 seconds.

□ 1430

Mr. POLIQUIN. We only want to make sure that there is enough time for public comment. I ask everybody to support this bill. It is a great bill, and it keeps money flowing through the economy for our small businesses and job creators.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON).

Mr. TIPTON. I thank the chairman.

I thank my colleague from Minnesota, Representative EMMER, for offering this piece of legislation that is under consideration today.

Mr. Speaker, the Financial Stability Oversight Council Reform Act places the FSOC and the Office of Financial Research under the regular appropriations process and will require the Office of Financial Research to submit activity reports to Congress. Bringing FSOC under the appropriations process ensures greater accountability for a council that has continuously failed to fully disclose its SIFI designation methodology and that has yet to provide concrete guidelines for designated entities to lose their SIFI status.

Most importantly, this legislation will bring much-needed transparency to the Council. FSOC is intended to be a forum for discussion and analysis of financial regulator issues, but, unfortunately, the Council has continually failed to address the consolidation and failure of our Main Street banks. On its own, a single community bank failure will not pose a systemic risk to the financial system. However, losing these small banks at an accelerating pace is a clear warning signal that the financial system is not healthy, and losing community banks as a whole certainly qualifies as systemically risky.

Instead of closed-door deliberations, the Council, which is made up of financial regulators who have been acknowledging this exact problem, should be working to address this pressing issue in a transparent manner before it is too late. This legislation is a logical next step in reforming the Financial Stability Oversight Council to ensure that it actually addresses threats to our financial system.

I am happy to lend my support to this bill, and I encourage my colleagues to support this commonsense measure.

Again, I thank the gentleman from Minnesota for his efforts on this legislation.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining on both sides, please.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 8¼ minutes remaining, and the gentlewoman from California has 10 minutes remaining.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER).

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I begin my remarks with just a clarification of the argument of my friends on the other side of the aisle. Their argument is essentially this: that Federal regulators—banking regulators—cannot do their jobs if their funding is somehow held accountable to the American people. This argument ignores some important facts.

While Dodd-Frank may well have been intended to protect consumers and end Big Government bailouts, FSOC's authority to arbitrarily designate nonbank financial institutions as systemically important undermines the original intent of the law. In fact, just last month, a U.S. court rescinded MetLife's SIFI designation. The opinion called FSOC's determination process ''fatally flawed,'' and it called the insurer's designation ''capricious and arbitrary.'' Again, those are not my words, those are a Federal judge's words. In effect, the judge confirmed what House Republicans have been saying for years—that the FSOC is out of control and requires additional congressional oversight.

That is why I support this commonsense and, frankly, modest legislation, which subjects FSOC and the Office of Financial Research to the annual appropriations process and common practice reporting requirements.

We all want to hold financial providers accountable to their customers. It is also Congress' responsibility to hold our government accountable to the American people. This bill helps make that happen, and we should all be able to agree to that.

I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense bill.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to take a moment and talk about why we created the FSOC and the OFR in the very first place since my Republican colleagues seem to think that more regulatory cooperation and the overseeing of our financial system is such a bad thing.

Simply put, we created FSOC to look across regulatory silos and detect, prevent, and mitigate systemic risk in the U.S. financial system so that we would never again be caught off guard when major financial firms, like AIG, fail.

Recall that AIG created an entire business model that was designed to avoid regulation, which sent its major operations and risky credit default swaps to the London-based unit, AIG Financial Products, which, in turn, was guaranteed by the U.S. parent company. What is more, AIG was allowed to select as a regulator the Office of Thrift Supervision, OTS.

According to the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission, which is the FCIC,

the OTS failed to effectively exercise its authority over AIG and its affiliates. It lacked the capability to supervise an institution of the size and complexity of AIG's. It did not recognize the risk inherent in AIG's sales of credit default swaps, and it did not understand its responsibility to oversee the entire company, including AIG Financial Products.

As we all know, this regulatory arbitrage ultimately spelled failure for AIG because its enormous sales of credit default swaps were made without putting up initial collateral, setting aside capital reserves, or hedging its exposure—a profound failure in corporate governance, particularly in its risk management practices.

In having just witnessed the takeover of Merrill Lynch by Bank of America and the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers a mere 24 hours before, the U.S. Government stepped in and committed more than $180 billion to ensure that AIG's collapse didn't bring down the rest of the financial system to which it was so interconnected. From there, the Bush administration requested the authority to bail out the big banks.

When the dust began to settle, Democrats in Congress worked to come up with a solution to eliminate this regulatory arbitrage and encourage our financial regulators to communicate with one another. Of course, the commonsense solution was to create a council on which each of our financial regulators had a voice and could meet to consider gaps between the agencies' interconnectedness within the financial sector. This council would also hold each regulator accountable to how the regulators as a whole were mitigating systemic risk to our economy.

To help inform and support the council, we created the Office of Financial Research to research and report on potential systemic risk to our economy. Dodd-Frank ensured that the council of the OFR and that Congress would all be focused on emerging threats to our economy and would never be caught unawares by another AIG. H.R. 3340, however, undermines these reforms, and it should be opposed.

Mr. Speaker and Members, many of the Members on the opposite side of the aisle are talking about our oversight responsibility, but they don't even exercise oversight responsibility or get the regulators in and have a real discussion with them about how it all works. AIG was complicated. None of the Members of Congress really understood how it operated, how it was formed, how it was set up, and what it was doing. We have learned our lesson from AIG, and I hope that the Members of this Congress will not forget it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. TROTT).

Mr. TROTT. I thank the chairman for the opportunity to speak in support of the Financial Stability Oversight Council Reform Act.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is just one more step in our continued effort to rein in out-of-control regulatory bodies that are products of the Dodd-Frank Act. FSOC and the Office of Financial Research, which are both products of Dodd-Frank, have the power to obtain sensitive information and are tasked with the mission of monitoring the financial stability of the United States.

With such a broad mandate and vast authority, it is appalling that these bodies are not subject to the congressional appropriations process and must satisfy only minimal reporting requirements. OFR states that its job is to shine light in the dark corners of the financial system, but it operates in the dark corners, itself, as it spends funds that have been obtained from fees on an ever-expanding workforce and budget, all outside of the appropriations process and all outside of the eyes of our citizens.

The people of this great Nation deserve a transparent Federal Government that answers to them. Some here today have suggested that, in this bill, we want to put a blindfold on—stop oversight and ignore a future financial crisis. We have a blindfold on now. We are all in the dark. We don't want to stop oversight. We just want to exercise our responsibilities under Article I of the Constitution.

Some here today have suggested that Congress is no longer capable of exercising its Article I powers and that, therefore, FSOC must be independent of the appropriations process. To them, I ask: Why should Washington bureaucrats have more power over the financial decisions of the American people than their elected Representatives?

This legislation is a commonsense solution, and I urge its passage.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Under Democratic leadership, our country has made tremendous strides in creating jobs, in growing the economy, and in stabilizing the housing market since the depths of the 2008 recession. This was despite significant headwinds from both overseas crises and Republican intransigence. Instrumental to our achievements is the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, which has bolstered our Nation's financial stability and has brought accountability to the entire system.

Among its many accomplishments, such as protecting consumers from predatory practices, Dodd-Frank sought to address the excessive risk taking by the largest and most complex financial institutions by creating the Financial Stability Oversight Council—that is FSOC—and the Office of Financial Research, OFR. These two agencies were charged with looking at the big picture and identifying cracks in the system that could cause a breakdown in our economy. They oversee all aspects of the financial system and our largest institutions that can cause systemic risk.

FSOC works to identify and to address systemic risk posed by large, complex companies and activities before they threaten the stability of the economy. It provides for the cooperation and information sharing between agencies in order to research and correct threats before they become crises. OFR helps to provide the necessary tools to FSOC by collecting and analyzing data on the health of our financial markets and by conducting research on potential sources of financial instability. It flags emerging threats and shares that information with other regulators so that they can intervene before a crisis occurs.

Together, these two agencies have addressed the devastating, widespread failures in supervision and regulation that brought our economy to its knees in 2008. They fill the regulatory gaps to make sure that no institution, however powerful, can circumvent our rules and regulations.

This crucial work is supported by a majority of Americans—Republicans and Democrats—who favor Dodd-Frank and the reforms it has implemented. Yet, instead of recognizing the importance of these institutions and the interests of the American public, House Republicans are undermining our regulators' efforts to the benefit of the industries that are lining their own pockets. I am troubled by the amnesia that plagues my colleagues about the causes of the 2008 financial crisis and why Wall Street reform was so critical.

We created FSOC and OFR because our fractured regulatory system allowed firms to skirt the rules of the road. This behavior left millions homeless and unemployed, and it plunged us into the worst recession since the Great Depression. What is worse is that hundreds of communities across the country are still struggling to recover.

□ 1445

By cutting off FSOC and OFR's independent funding streams, H.R. 3340 will subject the agencies to the volatility of the congressional appropriations process and the same funding uncertainty faced by the SEC and the FCFTC.

Make no mistake. The bill before us today is part of a concerted effort by House Republicans to impede the progress of financial reform.

Yesterday Republicans passed a bill in committee to repeal the only mechanism to unwind a megabank without destabilizing the economy as well as a bill to eliminate funding for the bureau tasked with protecting consumers from predatory loans.

Earlier today and for much of this month, committee Republicans will depose public servants at the CFPB, Treasury, and FSOC, despite agencies providing thousands of pages of documents at the Republicans' request. Soon I expect my chairman to bring up bills repealing the rest of our reform.

Democrats in the House are all too familiar with these attacks. Are we not? Republicans have proposed $6 trillion in cuts to initiatives like Medicare, Medicaid, and food stamps. They have prevented us from debating America's sacred right to vote. Most Republicans voted against upholding the full faith and credit of our Nation's debt. I could go on and on and on.

So, to my colleagues, we have pulled the cover off of them, and we are pointing out to you in no uncertain terms how they are singularly focused on killing Dodd-Frank reforms.

They are not exercising their oversight responsibility. They are determined that they are going to have their way, and they have it under the banner of overregulation.

Well, that old argument is tired, ladies and gentlemen. Overregulation every time they want to do something for the big banks, et cetera.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this coordinated attack and vote ''no'' on this harmful bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

It has been a fascinating debate on a very, very simple bill. H.R. 3340 from the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER) does one very simple thing.

It says two Federal agencies—the Office of Financial Research and the Financial Stability Oversight Council—have to go through the budgeted appropriations process. It says nothing more. It says nothing less.

Right now these agencies write their own budget. They can write a budget for $100 million. They can write a budget for $500 million. They can write a budget for $10 billion.

Legally, they can write a budget for trillions of dollars. They can take money away from we, the people, and there is absolutely nothing Congress can do.

Mr. Speaker, every Member of Congress who has come here has raised their hand and, in their oath of office, they solemnly swear to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. I wonder how many Members reflect upon that solemn oath.

Because Article I, section 9, clause 7, of the Constitution says: ''No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law . . .''

Yet, theoretically, what has happened here is this power of the purse, a critical power of Article I of the Constitution, has been outsourced to Article II.

It is fascinating, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure there is a more solemn responsibility of the Federal Government than to provide for the common defense.

Yet, we don't allow the Pentagon to write their own budget. It has to go through the elected representatives of we, the people.

The Justice Department: We don't allow them to write their own budget. It has to go through the elected representatives of we, the people.

Even the Office of the President: The President is not allowed to write his own budget. It has to go through the appropriations process of the elected representatives of we, the people.

So we have two incredibly important and powerful Federal agencies that get to write their own budget. They get to take money away from hardworking Americans to essentially do what they please. This is not Article I of the Constitution.

Madison, in Federalist 47—I may not have the quote down perfectly—essentially said that the common notion of legislative, executive, and judicial power in one hand is the absolute definition of tyranny.

So we have in a Federal agency the FSOC, part of this shadow regulatory system that the American people have come to loathe, that has the ability to designate financial firms too big to fail and then allow them to be bailed out with taxpayer funds, to be functionally micromanaged by Federal agencies, essentially, a Federal takeover of the banking system so there can be a political allocation of credit, which is what led to the economic crisis in the first place: politicizing credit, mandating, forcing, suggesting, cajoling financial institutions to loan money to people to buy homes they couldn't afford to keep. Think Fannie. Think Freddie.

So we believe on this side of the aisle, regardless of which party is in power in Congress, regardless of which party is in power in the White House, that Federal agencies ought to be funded through Article I of the Constitution and be accountable to we, the people. It is that simple.

So the ranking member says: Well, we can't hold them to the volatility and uncertainty of this congressional appropriations process. Funny, the Pentagon is. Funny, the President is. Funny, the FBI is.

You know, if you don't like democracy, maybe it is the worst form of government, save every other form of government, but it is our form of government. And our Constitution is the bedrock of our freedom and our prosperity, and these out-of-control agencies ought to be accountable and they ought to be transparent to we, the people.

I urge all of my colleagues to support the bill of the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER), H.R. 3340, and bring accountability and transparency and fidelity to the Constitution back to this institution.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK). All time for debate on the bill has expired.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. ROYCE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Add at the end the following:

SEC. 5. ADDITIONAL DUTIES OF THE OFFICE OF FINANCIAL RESEARCH.

Section 153 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5343), as amended by section 3, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(h) ADDITIONAL DUTIES.—

''(1) ANNUAL WORK PLAN.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall, after a period of 60 days for public notice and comment, annually publish a detailed work plan concerning the priorities of the Office for the upcoming fiscal year.

''(B) REQUIREMENTS.—The work plan shall include the following:

''(i) A unique alphanumeric identifier and detailed description of any report, study, working paper, grant, guidance, data collection, or request for information that is expected to be in progress during, or scheduled to begin in, the upcoming fiscal year.

''(ii) For each item listed under clause (i), a target date for any significant actions related to such item, including the target date—

''(I) for the release of a report, study, or working paper;

''(II) for, and topics of, a meeting of a working paper group and each solicitation of applications for grants; and

''(III) for the issuance of guidance, data collections, or requests for information.

''(iii) A list of all technical and professional advisory committees that is expected to be convened in the upcoming fiscal year pursuant to section 152(h).

''(iv) The name and professional affiliations of each individual who served during the previous fiscal year as an academic or professional fellow pursuant to section 152(i).

''(v) A detailed description of the progress made by primary financial regulatory agencies in adopting a unique alphanumeric system to identify legally distinct entities that engage in financial transactions (commonly known as a 'Legal Entity Identifier'), including a list of regulations requiring the use of such a system and actions taken to ensure the adoption of such a system by primary financial regulatory agencies.

''(2) PUBLIC REPORTS.—

''(A) CONSULTATION.—In preparing any public report with respect to a specified entity, class of entities, or financial product or service, the Director shall consult with any Federal department or agency with expertise in regulating the entity, class of entities, or financial product or service.

''(B) REPORT REQUIREMENTS.—A public report described in subparagraph (A) shall include—

''(i) an explanation of any changes made as a result of a consultation under this subparagraph and, with respect to any changes suggested in such consultation that were not made, the reasons that the Director did not incorporate such changes; and

''(ii) information on the date, time, and nature of such consultation.

''(C) NOTICE AND COMMENT.—Before issuing any public report described in subparagraph (A), the Director shall provide a period of 90 days for public notice and comment on the report.

''(3) CYBERSECURITY PLAN.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Office shall develop and implement a cybersecurity plan that uses appropriate safeguards that are adequate to protect the integrity and confidentiality of the data in the possession of the Office.

''(B) GAO REVIEW.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall annually audit the cybersecurity plan and its implementation described in subparagraph (A).''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 671, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this amendment to the Financial Stability Oversight Council Reform Act, which mirrors bipartisan legislation I have authored, the Office of Financial Research Accountability Act.

A more open, collaborative, and cyber-secure Office of Financial Research would be better positioned to achieve its stated mission of promoting financial stability. So, basically, this amendment gets the Office of Financial Research on track with a few simple, reasonable reforms. There are three of them.

First, it requires the OFR to submit an annual work plan that details the Office's upcoming work while making it available for public notice and comment.

Second, it requires the Office to coordinate with financial regulators and agencies that have subject matter experience as it prepares public reports.

Third, it also tasks the Office, which handles immense amounts of sensitive financial data, with formulating a cybersecurity plan.

So this amendment strengthens the Office of Financial Research's ability to ensure a transparent, efficient, and stable financial system for the American people, the core objective of the Office.

I thank Mr. EMMER of Minnesota for his work on this important issue. I urge my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to support both my amendment and the underlying legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I claim time in opposition to the amendment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Royce amendment, which the Financial Services Committee considered last November as H.R. 3738. The amendment is yet further evidence of the Republican plan to kill Dodd-Frank with a thousand cuts.

If adopted, the Office of Financial Research would have to disclose its research agenda at the beginning of each year, potentially alarming markets, just as the underlying bill, the Royce amendment, would mean that any study of the OFR would become corrupted.

Our market actors would see that the OFR, an office that makes recommendations to the Financial Stability Oversight Council about systemic risks, was concerned about a particular topic.

In response, those actors would begin to change their behavior even if the OFR might later conclude that there was never any risks to our economy.

In addition, this amendment would require OFR to go into great detail when disclosing what it plans to study, something that is not done by any other research organization.

Finally, I am troubled by the amendment's provisions requiring the OFR to disclose its consultations. Internal consultations and deliberations are explicitly excluded by the Freedom of Information Act and for good reason. Individuals would not likely participate in OFR studies if their offline, candid remarks were made part of the public record.

Will this prevent industry lobbyists and trade associations from commenting? Of course not. They will continue earning their keep, and the amendment gives them even more opportunities.

Why would independent researchers, academics, and scientists want to weigh in on a public fight? This amendment, the underlying bill, and many of the other Republican initiatives we have seen this year all share the same goal. They are aimed at undoing all of the progress the Obama administration and Democrats have made in the last 8 years.

How many times are we going to find ways to kill financial reform? How many times are we going to vote to kill job-creating agencies, like the Export-Import Bank? How many times are we going to vote to get rid of ObamaCare and the health insurance of millions of Americans?

There is important work to be done, passing a budget, for one, ending homelessness in America, funding the administration's requests to help combat the Zika virus, helping Puerto Rico to restructure their crippling debt so that the island can grow and prosper and create jobs.

When are Republicans going to hear the cries of everyday Americans?

I encourage Members to support their constituents by continuing to fight for these issues and oppose Republican attempts like this to simply roll back Democrat reform.

I urge a ''no'' vote on the Royce amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL).

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the amendment offered by my good friend from California.

The Office of Financial Research, the OFR, is an important entity, but its work so far has been very, very disappointing.

It is so disappointing that a landmark study by OFR on asset management has been publicly criticized by a member of FSOC, the SEC, who took the unusual step of opening its own comment period on the report.

We must make sure that OFR's research is done in the right way with a strategic plan and that OFR consults with experts and gives proper public notice and involvement.

We don't want the Financial Stability Oversight Council, the FSOC, one of the most critical and sensitive creations in Dodd-Frank, relying on offhand work criticized publicly by institutions across this city and country.

Further, their data collection requirements and responsibilities bring concern to all of our citizens. As we have seen with the IRS, the OPM, the CFPB, and now the OFR, rising concern over the importance of cybersecurity and data protection are noted in this act and are an important part of Mr. ROYCE's amendment.

□ 1500

Many of our Federal agencies are the root cause of cyber breach and loss of privacy, and we don't want to see that extended here.

I support the amendment and the bill, and I urge a ''yes'' vote.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER).

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague from California, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Congressman ED ROYCE, for offering his amendment to the FSOC Reform Act.

As we have seen time and time again, our government needs to improve security procedures in order to protect the privacy of the American people and integrity for business. The burden, Mr. Speaker, is on the Federal Government to provide a plan and to be transparent about what it does with the information it collects.

This amendment accomplishes both of these goals at the Office of Financial Research. By mandating OFR to submit an annual work plan and allow for public notice and comment, the American people will have a greater voice in shaping the objectives of OFR. Perhaps most importantly, requiring Federal regulators to collaborate on data security will make the personal and financial information of all Americans more secure.

Again, I want to thank Chairman ROYCE for offering this amendment. I urge all my colleagues to support it.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, let's be clear about what this proposal does and does not do. Nothing in this amendment says that the Office of Financial Research must amend their work product because of public comments provided to them. The amendment here simply ensures that the public gets a chance to comment.

I have asked eight—eight—FSOC members about their potential opposition to this idea. Not a single one has raised an objection to this. As to any

rhetoric in opposition to this amendment, a lot of it has centered on the potential of opening up the Office of Financial Research to inappropriate influence. Nothing could be further from reality.

Inappropriate influence is what happens when you labor long with little or no transparency, not when you provides more sunlight. What this amendment does is provides that transparency. It provides that sunlight by opening that up.

There has been considerable, warranted criticism from those across the ideological spectrum about the quality of the OFR's research. We are taking a step today to improve the Office of Financial Research's research practices, something integral to FSOC reform as the Council makes designation decisions founded on the Office's work.

Regulators making decisions on financial stability should do so with their eyes wide open. A more transparent, collaborative, and cyber secure Office of Financial Research accomplishes that end. For that reason, I urge Members from both sides of the aisle to support this amendment.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended, and on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE).

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE).

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentlewoman opposed to the bill?

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I am opposed.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I reserve a point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. A point of order is reserved.

The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. Moore moves to recommit the bill H.R. 3340 to the Committee on Financial Services with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

Add at the end the following:

SEC. ____ Upon enactment of this Act it shall be in order to consider in the House of Representatives the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 125) establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2017 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2018 through 2026. All points of order against consideration of the concurrent resolution are waived. The concurrent resolution shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the concurrent resolution are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the concurrent resolution and on any amendment thereto to adoption without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget; and (2) one motion to recommit.

Ms. MOORE (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Clerk dispense with the reading.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. I object.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk continued to read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, today is April 14, and, by law, Congress must enact a budget resolution by tomorrow, April 15. I repeat, Mr. Speaker: by law, Congress must enact a budget resolution by April 15. That is tomorrow.

After months and months and months of the majority promising regular order, the Republican House leadership has failed to meet this most basic measure of responsibility of bringing a budget to the floor. So today, Mr. Speaker, my motion to recommit will help out my Republican colleagues with their responsibilities to this body.

In my motion to recommit, I am offering up the Republican budget that was passed out of committee last month to allow my colleagues the ability to vote on their own budget and also to allow us to offer our alternatives.

To refresh your memory, Mr. Speaker, the GOP budget resolution ends the Medicare guarantee, makes $6.5 trillion in drastic cuts, increases poverty, and erodes the economic security of all Americans.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as awful as Democrats think that this budget is, the Tea Party faction of the House GOP is demanding that we make even more draconian cuts and even deeper cuts, and they ought to have the right, as well, to offer their alternative on the floor.

Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker. I don't support this Republican budget, but I am offering this motion to recommit because, again, we cannot offer our alternative unless this budget is processed on this floor.

The Republicans are abandoning their promise to restore regular order because they can't agree on a worse product, but hardworking families deserve a Congress that invests in their future, protects their safety, and creates a level playing field for them and their children to succeed.

You know what they always say, Mr. Speaker: the majority gets its way, and the minority gets its say. Let's get to the ''have its say'' part.

We are going to continue as Democrats to press for a budget that creates jobs, opportunities, and raises paychecks for the American people while reducing the deficit in a balanced and responsible way, Mr. Speaker.

But, again, since the Republicans can't seem to get their act together by bringing their budget to the floor, my motion to recommit would bring that product to the floor. So that is why I am offering this motion to recommit today, and I would urge my colleagues to support it.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I insist on my point of order because the instruction contains matter in the jurisdiction of a committee to which the bill was not referred, thus violating clause 7 of rule XVI, which requires an amendment to be germane to the measure being amended. Committee jurisdiction is a central test of germaneness, and I am afraid I must insist on my point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Are there other Members who wish to be heard on the point of order?

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I would just mention that I think it is germane because tomorrow is April 15.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There being no other Member wishing to be heard on the point of order, the Chair is prepared to rule.

The gentleman from Texas makes a point of order that the instructions proposed in the motion to recommit offered by the gentlewoman from Wisconsin are not germane.

Clause 7 of rule XVI—the germaneness rule—provides that no proposition on a subject different from that under consideration shall be admitted under color of amendment.

One of the central tenets of the germaneness rule is that an amendment may not introduce matter within the jurisdiction of a committee not represented in the pending measure.

The bill, H.R. 3340, as amended, addresses funding and other matters relating to the Financial Stability Oversight Council and the Office of Financial Research, which are matters within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Financial Services.

The instructions in the motion to recommit propose an amendment consisting of a special order of business of the House, which is a matter within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Rules.

As the Chair ruled in similar proceedings on October 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 14, 2013, the instructions in the motion to recommit are not germane because they are not within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Financial Services.

Accordingly, the motion to recommit is not germane. The point of order is sustained, and the motion is not in order.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I appeal the ruling of the Chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is, Shall the decision of the Chair stand as the judgment of the House?

MOTION TO TABLE

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I move to lay the appeal on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to table.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, and the order of the House of today, this 15-minute vote on the motion to table will be followed by 5-minute votes on passage of the bill, if arising without further proceedings in recommittal; adoption of amendment No. 1 to H.R. 3791; the motion to recommit H.R. 3791, if ordered; and passage of H.R. 3791, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 239, nays 176, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 145]

YEAS—239

Abraham
Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Pitts
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—176

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—18

Allen
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Delaney
Duncan (SC)
Engel
Fattah
Lieu, Ted
Maloney, Carolyn
Marchant
Nadler
Payne
Poe (TX)
Sewell (AL)
Simpson
Tonko
Wasserman Schultz
Westmoreland

□ 1532

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Messrs. RANGEL, LARSEN of Washington, and JOHNSON of Georgia changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the motion to table was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 145, I was unavoidably detained.

Had I been present, I would have voted ''yes.''

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 239, nays 179, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 146]

YEAS—239

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Pitts
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions

Shimkus
Shuster
Smith (MO)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—179

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—15

Delaney
Duncan (SC)
Engel
Fattah
Lieu, Ted
Maloney, Carolyn
Marchant
McMorris Rodgers
Nadler
Payne
Poe (TX)
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Tonko
Wasserman Schultz

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1539

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 146, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote 146, the vote on final passage of H.R. 3340, the Financial Stability Oversight Council Reform Act. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

RAISING CONSOLIDATED ASSETS THRESHOLD UNDER SMALL BANK HOLDING COMPANY POLICY STATEMENT

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MS. KELLY OF ILLINOIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the adoption of amendment No. 1 on the bill (H.R. 3791) to raise the consolidated assets threshold under the small bank holding company policy statement, and for other purposes, offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the adoption of the amendment.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 165, nays 253, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 147]

YEAS—165

Adams
Aguilar
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NAYS—253

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Becerra
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Conyers
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Hinojosa
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perlmutter
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Waters, Maxine
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—15

Delaney	Maloney, Carolyn	Poe (TX)
Duncan (SC)	Marchant	Ruppersberger
Engel	Nadler	Simpson
Fattah	Payne	Tonko
Lieu, Ted	Pelosi	Wasserman Schultz

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1545

Mr. CONYERS changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentlewoman opposed to the bill?

Ms. MOORE. I am opposed.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I reserve a point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. A point of order is reserved.

The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. Moore moves to recommit the bill H.R. 3791 to the Committee on Financial Services with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

Add at the end the following:

SEC. ____ Upon enactment of this Act it shall be in order to consider in the House of Representatives the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 125) establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2017 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2018 through 2026. All points of order against consideration of the concurrent resolution are waived. The concurrent resolution shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the concurrent resolution are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the concurrent resolution and on any amendment thereto to adoption without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget; and (2) one motion to recommit.

Mr. HENSARLING (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with reading.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Wisconsin is recognized for 5 minutes in support of her motion.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, today is April 14. Tomorrow, by law, our budget resolution is due to be passed on the floor of the House.

Now, we have heard a great deal from the majority about the need to return to regular order, and regular order would require us to pass this bill either today or by tomorrow. So since that bill is not before us, my motion to recommit would give us an opportunity to vote on the Republican budget resolution that was passed out of our committee just last month.

Now, I just want to refresh your memory, Mr. Speaker. The GOP budget resolution ends the Medicare guarantee, makes $6.5 trillion in drastic cuts, increases poverty, and erodes the economic security of all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, believe it or not, as awful as this is, there is a faction over there among the Tea Party Republicans who want the opportunity to make it even worse than it is. But they can't submit their awful, worse bill, just like Democrats can't offer their alternative bill, until we get the Republican budget on the floor.

So by Republicans abandoning their promise to return us to regular order and to pass a budget, it is ridiculous for us to be passing these bills. Mr. Speaker, how can we talk about subjecting FSOC, for example, to the appropriations process? We can't really do these appropriations bills without a budget.

Hardworking families deserve to see where we stand on these budgets, and Democrats want to have our say. I get it. The majority gets its way, but the minority gets its say. Let's get on to the ''gets its say'' part.

Mr. Speaker, you guys can't get your act together. My motion to recommit would put that budget on the floor right now, and Republicans would have the opportunity to pass their bill, and then we have the opportunity to offer up our alternative.

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

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I insist on my point of order because the instruction contains matter in the jurisdiction of a committee to which the bill was not referred, thus violating clause 7 of rule XVI which requires an amendment to be germane to the measure being amended. Committee jurisdiction is a central test of germaneness, and I must insist on my point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Are there other Members who wish to be heard on the point of order?

If not, the Chair is prepared to rule.

The gentleman from Texas makes a point of order that the instructions proposed in the motion to recommit offered by the gentlewoman from Wisconsin are not germane.

The bill, H.R. 3791, addresses a Federal Reserve System policy statement relating to small bank holding companies, which is a matter within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Financial Services.

The instructions in the motion to recommit propose an amendment consisting of a special order of business of the House, which is a matter within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Rules.

For the reasons stated by the Chair earlier today, the motion to recommit is not germane. The point of order is sustained. The motion is not in order.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I appeal the ruling of the Chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is, Shall the decision of the Chair stand as the judgment of the House?

MOTION TO TABLE

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I move to lay the appeal on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to table.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute on the motion to table will be followed by a 5-minute vote on passage of the bill, if arising without further proceedings in recommittal.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 241, noes 177, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 148]

AYES—241

Abraham	Duffy	Joyce
Aderholt	Duncan (TN)	Katko
Allen	Ellmers (NC)	Kelly (MS)
Amash	Emmer (MN)	Kelly (PA)
Amodei	Farenthold	King (IA)
Babin	Fincher	King (NY)
Barletta	Fitzpatrick	Kinzinger (IL)
Barr	Fleischmann	Kline
Barton	Fleming	Knight
Benishek	Flores	Labrador
Bilirakis	Forbes	LaHood
Bishop (MI)	Fortenberry	LaMalfa
Bishop (UT)	Foxx	Lamborn
Black	Franks (AZ)	Lance
Blackburn	Frelinghuysen	Latta
Blum	Garrett	LoBiondo
Bost	Gibbs	Long
Boustany	Gibson	Loudermilk
Brady (TX)	Gohmert	Love
Brat	Goodlatte	Lucas
Bridenstine	Gosar	Luetkemeyer
Brooks (AL)	Gowdy	Lummis
Brooks (IN)	Granger	MacArthur
Buchanan	Graves (GA)	Marino
Buck	Graves (LA)	Massie
Bucshon	Graves (MO)	McCarthy
Burgess	Griffith	McCaul
Byrne	Grothman	McClintock
Calvert	Guinta	McHenry
Carter (GA)	Guthrie	McKinley
Carter (TX)	Hanna	McMorris Rodgers
Chabot	Hardy	McSally
Chaffetz	Harper	Meadows
Clawson (FL)	Harris	Meehan
Coffman	Hartzler	Messer
Cohen	Heck (NV)	Mica
Cole	Hensarling	Miller (FL)
Collins (GA)	Herrera Beutler	Miller (MI)
Collins (NY)	Hice, Jody B.	Moolenaar
Comstock	Hill	Mooney (WV)
Conaway	Holding	Mullin
Cook	Hudson	Mulvaney
Costello (PA)	Huelskamp	Murphy (PA)
Cramer	Huizenga (MI)	Neugebauer
Crawford	Hultgren	Newhouse
Crenshaw	Hunter	Noem
Culberson	Hurd (TX)	Nugent
Curbelo (FL)	Hurt (VA)	Nunes
Davis, Rodney	Issa	Olson
Denham	Jenkins (KS)	Palazzo
Dent	Jenkins (WV)	Palmer
DeSantis	Johnson (OH)	Paulsen
DesJarlais	Johnson, Sam	Pearce
Diaz-Balart	Jolly	Perry
Dold	Jones	Pittenger
Donovan	Jordan	

Pitts
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOES—177

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—15

Delaney
Duncan (SC)
Engel
Fattah
Lieu, Ted
Maloney, Carolyn
Marchant
Nadler
Payne
Pelosi
Poe (TX)
Simpson
Tonko
Wasserman Schultz
Westmoreland

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1610

Mr. SCALISE and Ms. FOXX changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the motion to table was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mrs. LOVE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 247, nays 171, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 149]

YEAS—247

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Ruppersberger
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vela
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—171

Adams
Aguilar
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Connolly
Conyers
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—15

Delaney
Duncan (SC)
Engel
Fattah
Lieu, Ted
Maloney, Carolyn
Marchant
Nadler
Payne
Pelosi
Poe (TX)
Simpson
Tonko
Wasserman Schultz
Westmoreland

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KELLY of Mississippi) (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1617

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, on April 14, 2016, I was absent and was unable to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

Rollcall No. 145—"Yea."
Rollcall No. 146—"Yea."
Rollcall No. 147—"Nay."
Rollcall No. 148—"Yea."
Rollcall No. 149—"Yea."

MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR THE CHIBOK SCHOOLGIRLS

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

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we stand to remember the nearly 300 Chibok girls who were kidnapped by Boko Haram on April 14, 2014—2 years ago—from their school in Nigeria.

Mr. Speaker, Boko Haram has no regard for human life, and it is wreaking havoc on the citizens of northern Nigeria. As Boko Haram commits acts of genocide that will take generations to recover from, the world stays silent. Their daily horrors include killing Christians, killing Muslims who do not agree with them, beheading and slaughtering boys, kidnapping and raping women and girls, selling them as sex slaves, and using them as suicide bombers. Human trafficking is their specialty. Boko Haram believes that Western education is sin.

We will never forget the schoolgirls. We will never forget the Chibok girls. We will tweet, wear red, and we look for them no matter how long it takes. We will never give up until we find them.

Let us bow our heads in a moment of silence.

OLDER AMERICANS ACT A BIG WIN FOR SENIORS

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to applaud the bipartisan efforts to support our seniors through the passage of the Older Americans Act, legislation that I have supported. Our seniors have spent their lives working hard, raising their families, and giving back to their communities. The Older Americans Act shows what we can do when we work together.

The bill improves services for seniors, especially those with the greatest social and economic needs. For example, it provides funding for the popular Meals on Wheels program. The bill saves taxpayers money by preventing very costly hospital readmissions and by helping senior citizens stay in their homes and communities. It also supports programs to prevent the abuse and neglect of senior citizens.

Mr. Speaker, the Older Americans Act is a big, bipartisan win for our Nation's seniors. I encourage the President to sign the bill as soon as it hits his desk.

FIND THE CHIBOK GIRLS

(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, in the dark of night on this very day 2 years ago, young girls at the early ages of 11 to 17 were in nightgowns, preparing for sleep, and were getting ready for the exams that would open the doors of opportunity, as they were told by their Nigerian parents. One daughter had rushed back to the school from a weekend trip because her father said: You shouldn't be home. You must go and take your exam.

That night, terrorists came and rounded them up and threatened them and took them into the dark of the Nigerian bush in Borno State, upwards of Abuja. They have now been gone for 2 years, the Chibok girls.

I stood alongside FREDERICA WILSON and LOIS FRANKEL when we went to Nigeria within weeks of their kidnapping. Boko Haram, which is now ISIL, and ISIL, which is now Boko Haram—the most dangerous terrorist group in the world—will come to the shores of America if we are not vigilant to find them and quash them.

We must find the Chibok girls. They deserve our constant refrain and study to realize that it is terrorists who took them. We must bring the terrorists down and find the Chibok girls to take them to their families.

NATIONAL RETIREMENT PLANNING WEEK

(Mr. ROE of Tennessee asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize April 11 through 15 as National Retirement Planning Week.

Saving for retirement is one of the most important steps that Americans can take to build a better future for themselves and their children. Unfortunately, too often, saving for retirement remains a distant goal that is put off in exchange for more immediate needs. A GAO report released last year found that, among households with those aged 55 and older, roughly 29 percent have no retirement savings or a defined benefit plan. With this in mind, it must be a national priority for us to communicate the importance of retirement planning. By encouraging more Americans to adequately prepare for their retirement years, we can significantly enhance retirement security in the United States.

Recognizing this week as National Retirement Planning Week is an important step in helping to raise awareness of this need, and I commend the members of the National Retirement Planning Coalition for their efforts in educating Americans about the importance of retirement planning.

I wish you all the best as you continue this valued campaign.

TRINIDAD GARZA HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVES ACT AWARD

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

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Trinidad Garza Early College High School, in Dallas, for receiving the 2016 ACT High School Exemplar in College and Career Readiness Award.

Since 2013, the annual ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign has recognized participating high schools and community colleges for their outstanding efforts in education. The prestigious award is presented to only one school per State that demonstrates exceptional efforts in preparing students for college and career readiness. Given Trinidad Garza's commitment to preparing students for success in higher education and the workforce, this accolade is well-deserved. The award also celebrates individual students within participating schools for their outstanding progress on their ACT scores, such as Trinidad Garza seniors Paola Soto, Ivan Gonzales, Barry Levine, and Lizbeth Garcia.

I am extremely proud of Trinidad Garza Early College High School for representing the State of Texas and the 33rd Congressional District.

You are an example of what a dedicated group of educators can accomplish when it is committed to empowering its students.

Once again, congratulations to everyone at Trinidad Garza Early College High School, and keep up the good work.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OAKLAND COUNTY SHERIFF MIKE BOUCHARD

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

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise to share the outstanding accomplishments of Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard, who was recently awarded the esteemed Ferris E. Lucas Award of 2016 for Sheriff of the Year from the National Sheriffs' Association.

As a lifelong resident of Oakland County, I can tell you that our sheriff's department is well-known around the country because of the outstanding work by Sheriff Bouchard and his world-class team of dedicated deputies. He is the kind of leader all families want to keep their families safe. I have known Mike Bouchard for many years, and I know that, every day, he looks forward to going to work to serve the men and women of our local communities, and he does an outstanding job

of it in utilizing his professionalism and compassion for people.

In serving Oakland County for over 17 years, Mike Bouchard was selected among a field of more than 3,000 sheriffs for this prestigious award, and I can tell you he absolutely deserves it. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have such a selfless, all-around good guy keeping the families in my district safe.

Thank you, Mike, for your commitment to the people you protect and to the entire community. We are grateful for your service.

EQUAL PAY DAY

(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, this week, we recognize Equal Pay Day—a somber reminder of the intolerably wide wage gulf that still exists between men and women. This is not just a ''woman's issue.'' It affects every working family throughout our economy from top to bottom.

The average woman in America today makes 79 cents for every dollar a man makes—even less for women of color. That disparity, when spread across the course of a woman's working life, can deprive her and her family of over $430,000, which is nearly $11,000 annually. Nobody can afford such dispossession, especially families who are already struggling to survive.

The gender pay gap will not fix itself without there being immediate congressional action. We already have a bill that is designed to right this wrong—the Paycheck Fairness Act—which is cosponsored by every single House Democrat.

Mr. Speaker, I implore my colleagues to enact it so that all American women can at least know they are worth equal pay for equal work.

□ 1630

BRING BACK OUR GIRLS

(Ms. FRANKEL of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking Congresswoman FREDERICA WILSON and Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE for their leadership on continuing to ensure that we don't forget about the 276 young women who were stolen from their families 2 years ago.

I traveled to Nigeria with Congresswoman WILSON and Congresswoman JACKSON LEE right after the kidnapping in order to see what kind of efforts were being made to get them back.

This kidnapping received international attention for a short time and then, like the girls, it disappeared. We are standing here exactly 2 years later while the Chibok girls, who we call ''our girls,'' remain hidden and subject to unimaginable crimes.

Boko Haram, the deadliest terrorist organization in the world, wants to silence these girls. I stand here with my colleagues to give ''our girls'' a stronger voice than the terrorists and more power than fear.

I want the Chibok girls to know that they are our daughters and we will not give up until they are returned.

KEEP THE PENSION PROMISES ACT AND PENSION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

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

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak for 1 minute on the Central States Pension Fund, which right now, because of its demise, is going to gut the pensions of thousands and thousands of workers in Ohio, over 4,000 in my district alone.

I want to thank MARCY KAPTUR of Ohio for spearheading this legislation in which we ask the wealthiest people in the country, those who are trading art, to help us raise the $29 billion we need to put back into this pension fund.

We have senior citizens who have spent 30 or 40 years as Teamsters or Machinists, working their rear ends off, earning a pension, saying: We don't want the money now—as they negotiated contracts—you take this wage that we could have and you save it for later, but we want it back.

This bill, these pieces of legislation, help to restore some respect and dignity for those workers in Ohio and across the country.

I ask my colleagues to help us with the Keep the Pension Promises Act and the Pension Accountability Act. People need to be respected, and these pensions need to be secured.

THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to be recognized by you to address you here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives.

I come to the floor here today with an issue that I think is important that America have a dialogue on the topic, and some of that is going on. It is going on in the Presidential races across the country and in the coffee shops and at work, at play, at church, and around the country in the things that we do.

But when a moment in history comes along that shocked a lot of us to the core—and that was the abrupt and unexpected loss of Justice Antonin Scalia, a person whom I got to know. I would like to say that I called him a friend. He was a person whose personality I enjoyed a lot, his robust sense of humor, his acerbic wit in the way that he conveyed his messages, especially when he wrote the dissenting opinions for the Supreme Court. He found himself occasionally in the minority, but I think he was almost always right in those constitutional decisions.

When Justice Scalia wrote those minority opinions, he realized that—and he just thought in advance—that the students in law school would have to read the dissenting opinions as well as the majority opinions.

So he made sure when he wrote especially his dissenting opinions that they were engaging, they were entertaining, they were provocative, and they were challenging. It caused the law school students to read those and remember the points that Justice Scalia had made.

That is a legacy of the 30 years of Justice Scalia that will live within the annals of the history of the United States of America, especially those who are studying constitutional law and those that are in law school.

The constitutional law students around America too seldom are taught constitutional law out of the Constitution itself. We have a President of the United States who spent 10 years as an adjunct professor teaching constitutional law at the University of Chicago.

I have met with a good number of the students that he taught. The ones that I met with, at least, said that, whenever they laid out a conservative principle and made a constitutional argument based upon those conservative principles, that then-adjunct professor Barack Obama would always turn that around to the activist side, to move the needle hard to the left.

It is my position—and I believe it is also the position of the chairman of the Judiciary Committee in the House and especially the chairman of the Judiciary Committee in the Senate—that the Constitution must be read and interpreted to mean what it says. It would mean precisely the text of the Constitution as it was understood to mean at the time of ratification.

The Constitution itself, Mr. Speaker, is the equivalent of—and I would say literally is—an intergenerational contractual guarantee from one generation of Americans to the next, to the next, to the next.

Our Founding Fathers understood that, and they so carefully crafted this Constitution. The language in it reflects their convictions and their guarantee to each generation.

If it were to be anything else, if it were to be a living and breathing document, as too many of our Justices on the Supreme Court and far too many on our Federal bench today, that 40 percent or so that will have been appointed by Barack Obama by the end of his term—those Justices, by and large,

don't believe what I've just said, Mr. Speaker.

They generally believe that the text of the Constitution is something that they can massage, that they can manipulate, that they can interpret and reinterpret to mean that which they would want it to mean if it were written by them today.

Of course, the words wouldn't be the same, but the ideology that grows from many of these precedent decisions shows that and is proof of it.

If anyone wonders, Mr. Speaker, I would take them back to the Court last June 24 and 25. On one day, the Supreme Court concluded that they could rewrite law. On the next day, the Supreme Court concluded that they could create not just new rights in the Constitution, but create a command in the Constitution.

Now, I hope to return to that topic in a little bit, Mr. Speaker.

What we have in front of us is this: The loss of Justice Scalia leaves an empty seat on the Supreme Court. It is an intellectual hole, not just a voting hole. But it is an intellectual hole left by the towering legal intellect of Justice Scalia.

In times throughout history—there are conflicting reports—one can make the political argument and one can make the traditional argument as to whether a President should be able to make an appointment to the Supreme Court and have that appointment ratified and confirmed by the United States Senate.

Under these circumstances that we have today—this is an election year, and the loss of Justice Scalia and the creation of that empty seat on the Supreme Court has brought about a nomination for the Supreme Court that has been produced by President Barack Obama, even though the majority party in the Senate, concurring with Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL from Kentucky, as well as the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Senator CHARLES GRASSLEY, have said: We are not going to take up a nominee and we are not going to have hearings in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

That means that we won't have a debate on the floor of the Senate for confirmation because they believe—and it is their prerogative to do so—they believe that the next Justice on the Supreme Court should be a reflection of the voice of the people who will go to the polls this coming November and an elected President of the United States who more accurately reflects the will of the people rather than a President who is a lameduck President.

I agree with Senator GRASSLEY and I agree with Majority Leader Senator MCCONNELL that this is a decision that is too big to be made by people who are on the way out the door. The President is on the way out the door. There are Members of the Senate that are on their way out the door.

We need the fresh faces that have the freshest support of the American people making these decisions, particularly the next President of the United States.

Now, predictably, when an argument like this comes up, each side seeks to gain a political advantage. Yes, this is a political decision. It is a political decision that needs to be based on the foundation, however, of the Constitution and the text of the Constitution and the understanding of the Constitution to mean what it says and mean what it was interpreted to mean at the time that it was ratified.

Our Founding Fathers gave us a means to amend the Constitution. So they didn't intend our Constitution to be a living, breathing document, as the people on the left say.

They intended it to be fixed in place, an intergenerational contractual guarantee, so that my grandchildren and great-grandchildren and each succeeding generation can count on this Constitution meaning what it says.

I have watched it distorted. I have watched it usurped by decisions made in our Federal courts and by our Supreme Court and a people and a public that will honor those decisions because they are made by the judges, not because they are constitutionally grounded decisions.

So this appointment that comes before the Supreme Court—first, I will go to this. In our Constitution, Mr. Speaker, Article II, section 2—the authority of the executive branch of government must be here somewhere.

Article II, section 2: This is the text we are working with, Mr. Speaker. This is the language that governs the nomination, the advice, the consent, and the appointment to the Supreme Court in this fashion.

I will read this verbatim from Article II, section 2:

''He''—meaning the President of the United States—this is executive branch authority—''He shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to . . . nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint . . . judges of the Supreme Court . . .''

Now, he shall have power to nominate and, by and with the advice and consent, appoint judges of the Supreme Court. That is power to nominate and appoint by and with the consent, Mr. Speaker.

So the language here is clear, ''by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.'' The advice and consent of the Senate is determined by the Senate. The consent of the Senate is the confirmation vote.

The advice would be that the President is to go to the Senate and say: I have got an appointment here to the Supreme Court. You all know that. Do you have some names you would like to offer? What is your counsel here? Look at the makeup of the Court. What is missing? Who do we have on the bench today? How are they contributing? What kind of job are they doing in ruling upon the supreme law of the land, the Constitution itself, and the text of the statutes that Congress has passed that go before the Court for evaluation as to their constitutionality?

I will go further than to suggest, Mr. Speaker. I will assert that we have a Court today that too often reaches outside its bounds. And if I had a criticism of Justice Scalia, it would be his deeper respect for stare decisis that I happen to see in a Justice such as Clarence Thomas.

But when a decision is made by the Court, there has been essentially a consent of the Court to accept that decision, to build on it, rather than to go back and reevaluate afresh, anew from the text of the Constitution.

I think we need to go back and refresh anew and take a look at the text of the Constitution with each decision of the Supreme Court with less deference to stare decisis.

□ 1645

The activists on the Court, on the other hand, are the exact opposite. They want to build these leftward precedents along the way so that, in the end, the Constitution would be obliterated.

That is the direction that President Obama has gone. It is the direction he seeks to go. I would submit that I don't expect that he is going to be able to make an appointment to the Supreme Court that would reflect a Justice on the bench whose interpretation of the Constitution would be to the text and the original understanding and meaning of it, but, instead, activist judges. That is the history that he has produced.

I have not evaluated Judge Garland. I don't have a comment on his work except that this is not the time to confirm an appointment for Barack Obama and let him shape this Court for the next generation or so. If we get this wrong, Mr. Speaker, we lose our Constitution for the next generation.

No matter how astute our Presidents have been, no matter how deeply they have been committed to the Constitution itself, we have still seen that, even under Ronald Reagan, he got about half of his appointments to the Court right.

We need a President coming around the pike that gets every one of them right. I wouldn't be happy and satisfied until all nine of the Justices on the Court reflected that they are traditionalists, that they are textualists, that they are originalists in the Constitution, and that the judges that are coming up on the Federal bench would also meet that same standard.

I am not in the United States Senate. We don't have a vote on the confirmation of appointments to our Federal courts over here in the House. I do serve on the Committee on the Judiciary, and this is the end of the 14th year that I have done that, Mr. Speaker.

And so the voice of time and observation and reading and consideration and

experience, especially as a member of the Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice of the House Committee on the Judiciary, yes, I have deep convictions on this issue and considerable experience and knowledge base on it.

I am suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that this House of Representatives evaluate the arguments that I am making here and the arguments that Senator GRASSLEY is making on the other side of the rotunda, and these arguments say we take an oath. This will be my argument.

Mr. Speaker, we all take an oath here to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. So do the Justices of the Supreme Court take that oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. The President of the United States takes an oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. These are serious oaths.

When you stand up before God and country and say ''so help me God,'' you better mean it. That means that the Constitution isn't a malleable document. When you take an oath to support and defend it, that doesn't mean you can take an oath to support and defend the Constitution as, let's say, amended by a Supreme Court.

I would support and defend a Constitution amended constitutionally only. The Supreme Court Justices are the last people on the planet that ought to be engaged in amending the Constitution of the United States.

But if I could take you back to those dates I mentioned—June 24, June 25, 2015—June 24, if you want to look at the calendar, is going to be a Thursday. That was the date that the decision came out on ObamaCare. That was King v. Burwell.

That decision, Mr. Speaker, a majority opinion written by the Chief Justice, boiled down to this: Congress passed a law in two different components. I call it ObamaCare. They called it the Affordable Care Act.

I have said that George Washington could not utter those words in referencing that legislation because it is not affordable and George Washington could not tell a lie. But it was actually the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

That long lingo threw people off. So they boiled it down to the Affordable Care Act. We boiled it down to ObamaCare. ObamaCare is far more descriptive than the Affordable Care Act and far more honest.

But that legislation came in two packages. It was passed by hook, by crook, by legislative shenanigan, and that wasn't just me saying that. There was at least one Democrat here on the floor who used the term ''legislative shenanigan'' in reference to the passage of ObamaCare.

It was passed in that fashion. Yet, when it began to be implemented, they wrote thousands of pages of regulations that could not have been imagined at the time that that bill passed the floor here.

There was a massive amount of arm twisting and leverage like this country has never seen. We had tens of thousands of people that surrounded this Capitol and pleaded: Keep your hands off of our health insurance. Keep your hands off of our health care. They wanted their freedom.

The people who came here understood this, that the most sovereign thing that we have is our own soul. And the Federal Government hasn't figured out how to tax it, how to nationalize it, how to take it away from us.

We are in control of our eternal salvation—that is our soul—and we manage that. Each one of us manages it. But the second most sovereign thing we have is our health, our skin, and everything inside it.

Yet, this Congress, House and Senate, together with the President of the United States—on March 23, 2010, he signed into law the combination of the two bills that became ObamaCare that I said were passed by hook, crook, and legislative shenanigan and have their own constitutional problems.

I would argue the Supreme Court at least twice has ruled outside the Constitution in order to get ObamaCare implemented, and one of those was the State exchanges.

The statutory authority for the States to establish insurance exchanges under the auspices of the State exists within ObamaCare, but the language that empowers the States to do so does not include the Federal Government. The Federal Government did not have the constitutional authority to establish exchanges, and it needed the language.

If the Obama administration had been astute, they may well have written into ObamaCare legislation three words, ''or Federal Government,'' so that the States or Federal Government would have the legal authority to establish the exchanges.

The Federal Government went ahead and established exchanges within the multiple States that refused to do so, and the Supreme Court's job is to read the text of the language and rule on the text of the language and the law.

But, yet, in a 5–4 decision of the Supreme Court written by the Chief Justice, they decided that, if the Congress really might have at that time passed legislation with the language in it that would have said ''or Federal Government,'' that they would just go ahead and interpret that it really means: Well, okay. It was an oversight on the part of Congress.

They might have slipped that in there if they had just known that they needed to write it in there. But it was maybe an oversight by staff in the middle of the night because, after all, the then-Speaker of the House, NANCY PELOSI, said we have to pass this legislation in order to find out what is in it.

Well, she didn't say we had to pass it to find out what wasn't in it. But what wasn't in it was the authority for the Federal Government to go into the States and intervene and establish their own exchanges within the States. But this Obama administration did that with the people's tax dollars, and I will say in violation of the law.

When it was appealed to the Supreme Court to assert just that, the Supreme Court ruled, well, it would have been better for the policy, in their judgment, if the language had been in there, ''or Federal Government.''

But it wasn't in there. So they deemed it in. That is a legislative decision made by a 5–4 decision of the Supreme Court that came down on us June 24, 2015. That is appalling to me.

I am aghast at the idea that a Supreme Court could be ruling upon the supreme law of the land and come down with a decision that they are now the legislative body to completely alter legislation that was the due decision of, I think, an erroneous decision, but a majority decision of the United States Congress.

Now, in any other world, in any other time, in any other kind of a decision that would come down, a Supreme Court could, should, has, and would justly send it back to Congress with this directive: We can't find in here the language you may have wanted to pass. If you want this language in this bill, Article I says all legislative authority is vested in the Congress of the United States.

So the only right choice for a Supreme Court faced with this kind of a decision was to not remand it back to a lower court for a decision, essentially and, I will say, virtually, remand it to Congress and say to Congress: If you want to have federally established exchanges within the States, you have to pass a law that says so.

That is not what they did. They decided that they could change the law over at the Supreme Court building.

Now, if that can be done, if the Supreme Court of the United States can take on the trappings of a legislature and become a super legislature—and, by the way, they are appointed for life, for life.

So there is no consequence for people who can't be voted out of office. You can't even replace them for the duration of their life.

But they made the decision that they were the super legislature, and 5–4, under King v. Burwell, they put three words de facto, three words into the ObamaCare legislation, ''or Federal Government.''

Now, I am barely up off the floor from reading this on that Thursday, June 24, 2015, and, as the Sun comes up on me on the following morning, I am contemplating: What do we do about this? How does Congress react? What should the public messages be in one part?

At 9:00 in the morning in Iowa, 10:00 D.C. time, I am rolling into St. Anne's Catholic Church in Logan, Iowa, to do an event there with a visiting priest

and with the parish there at St. Anne's in Logan, Iowa.

And who merged together—at the same time we pulled in and parked essentially simultaneously—was the vehicle of former Senator Rick Santorum, one of the leading constitutionalists in this country, one of the strongest people in defense of life and defense of marriage and defense of the Constitution that we have seen—and I will say within a generation—with deep convictions, a clear understanding, and a very articulate voice.

As we got out of our vehicles, each of us had been listening to the news report of the decision that came down from the Supreme Court that day. That was a decision on marriage. I pronounce it Obergefell decision.

But that decision on marriage that came down on Friday, June 25, 2015, where the Supreme Court—I mentioned in the earliest part of my conversation, Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court would legislate from the bench, and the Supreme Court not only created what would be a new right from the bench, but they created—they manufactured out of thin air a command, a command to every State in the Union.

That command that they created without any constitutional basis whatsoever was to the States this: If you are to have civil marriage in your State, it shall include same-sex marriage on equal standing with a man and a woman joined together in matrimony. No matter what your State laws, no matter what your State constitutions say, we usurp it from the Supreme Court with an edict, a directive, a command, that you shall conduct same-sex marriages on equal standing and you shall recognize same-sex marriages from other States with reciprocity as well.

Now, this is not a decision that could have been made by the United States Congress and not had it challenged. And I would say the Congress does not have the authority to impose same-sex marriage on the rest of the country.

If we had had the audacity to make such a decision in the House and the Senate and signed by the President, somebody would take that to the Supreme Court and say: Show me the enumerated power that Congress has to regulate marriage in such a fashion.

I would argue that we don't have that constitutional authority, but I would submit that the States do have. The States under the Ninth and Tenth Amendment do have the authority.

If they decide to establish same-sex marriage in their State legislatures and they can get their Governor to sign the legislation or override a veto, any one or any combination of or all of the States could pass a same-sex marriage law, I would respect that as a constitutional decision made by we, the people, whether it is we, the people of Iowa, or we, the people of another State, or all other States, for that matter, but not the Supreme Court, Mr. Speaker.

The Supreme Court of the United States didn't just manufacture a right, they created a command to the States, and that is constitutionally offensive to me to read a decision like that.

By the way, I had a preview of it because the State Supreme Court in Iowa did just that in about 2009 and some of us dug down into that decision. That was about a 63- or 64-page decision, and it was an appalling, sloppy piece of legal work that was written with, I believe, a conclusion. And then they had to go through a lot of legalistic and mental and logical contortions to get to their conclusion.

I would invite anybody to read that decision. I believe that an objective reading of that decision brings them down with the same characterization that I would have.

I want judges who read the Constitution and literally interpret the Constitution. And the judges who understand, as Justice Scalia did, that when he makes a decision based on the Constitution and the letter of the law—if he is uncomfortable with the policy decision that emerges with that, that tells him that he can be very comfortable with the constitutionality of the decision that he has made because, on policy, he disagrees, but he knows that he is not there to determine policy.

He is there, as Justice Roberts said in his confirmation accurately, I think, to call the balls and the strikes, not to be the one that is a player in that arena.

□ 1700

So we have Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY, the man who is standing in the gap and a man who is the chairman of the United States Senate Judiciary Committee who has the control over the agenda of that committee and decides whether there will be hearings before the Judiciary Committee on this appointment of the President or whether there will not be—and he has said in conjunction with Majority Leader MCCONNELL, that there will not be hearings in the Judiciary Committee. And CHUCK GRASSLEY is right, MITCH MCCONNELL is right.

This argument gets cast back and forth—and it will be cast back and forth—and the amperage of this will go up and up and up between now and the election. They will turn that into a political football.

For me, I say: Take CHUCK GRASSLEY's word to the bank and we are done talking about it. But they want the political leverage. So they will be pressuring CHUCK GRASSLEY.

Mr. Speaker, here is a little bit of what is going on. Here is my public position on the issue. And it had to do with a press conference where I said, ''There is no reason to have that hearing. The simple answer to it is this: It's inconceivable that he''—President Obama—''would nominate someone to the Supreme Court who believes in the Constitution. If we're going to save our Constitution, we can't have an Obama nominee on the court.''

Mr. Speaker, that is maybe a blunt statement, but I have watched the history and the pattern of Barack Obama and appointments that he has made to the court. There is no question that they are liberal, leftist activists who want to come down with decisions that are more in the direction of the leadership of the ideology on the left and with very little deference to the Founding Fathers and anchored to the text of the Constitution.

And I have given what the Constitution says about nominations by advice and consent. Again, the President ''shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint.'' In other words, the President can't make an appointment to the Supreme Court unless he has the advice and consent of the Senate.

Now, advice could be fairly loosely interpreted, but consent is a different story. That takes a vote to do that—judges to the Supreme Court. That means the President nominates, the Senate can provide the advice before the nomination—that would be the best—and perhaps some advice after. But the consent of the Senate is required or there won't be a seat in the Supreme Court that is filled by Barack Obama.

Now, I point out also that there is nothing in this Constitution that says that there has to be nine Justices on the Supreme Court. This is where the House could actually weigh in on this, if we decide to do this. The Constitution of the United States requires that the Congress establish a Supreme Court. And then it is up to our discretion as to what other Federal court we might want to establish.

Mr. Speaker, I actually had this debate with Justice Scalia. One of the things I enjoyed about him was little banters along the way and how these arguments came out. And I made the point to him that the Constitution only requires that the Congress establish a Supreme Court, not all the other Federal courts. So we could—Congress—abolish all of the Federal districts that are there. We could say there will be no Federal courts. It will all be handled through the Supreme Court itself. That is not a practical application, but it is from a constitutional perspective.

Then I said to Justice Scalia that we could eliminate all the Federal courts except the Supreme Court. And over time, we could reduce the Supreme Court. There is no requirement that the Supreme Court have nine Justices or seven or five or three. We could reduce the Supreme Court of the United States down to the Chief Justice. There is no requirement that we build or fund a building or heat it or wire it for electronics or anything. There is no requirement that we have staff for any of the Supreme Court. The Congress could crank all the Federal courts down to just the Supreme Court, reduce the Supreme Court down to just the Chief Justice at his own card table, with candle, no staff, and no facility.

That is the argument I made to Justice Scalia. Some of this I do for entertainment value because he always was an engaging fellow to have these conversations with.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know if you ever heard this point made to him before, but Justice Scalia's response to it was: I would argue that there is a requirement that there be three Justices on the Supreme Court; otherwise, there is no reason to have a Chief Justice.

I thought that was a pretty astute response, Mr. Speaker. But my response to that was: we have always had too many chiefs and not enough Indians.

So we had a little fun with that and moved on, but that is the leverage that the House and the Senate has together. There is not a requirement that there be a ninth Justice on the Supreme Court. I am comfortable with that and supportive of that, but I want to fill that seat with someone that reflects the values of Justice Scalia and perhaps one that will reflect even more closely the values of Justice Thomas, in particular.

And there are a number of other Justices that I admire on the Supreme Court, but another activist on the Supreme Court is not what this country needs. This country needs to have a constitutionalist, an originalist, a textualist on the Supreme Court that will reflect the meaning of this Constitution at its time of ratification.

And that is why our Founders gave us a means to amend the Constitution. They didn't intend for the Supreme Court to be taking on the trappings of a super legislature and legislating on one day by adding words to ObamaCare, and then the very next day create the new command in the Constitution that the State shall conduct same-sex marriages and honor same-sex marriages in other States. That is over the top. That is beyond the pale.

If you can imagine what our Founding Fathers would say, how about the signers of the Declaration of Independence?

If we could bring them to life today and walk them out here into Statuary Hall and say: take a look at this painting up here where you are all signing this Declaration of Independence. Or better yet, go over to the Archives, where they pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor, and you can still see John Hancock's signature there almost as clearly as the day that he may well have signed that.

What would those Founding Fathers say if they knew that within a 24-hour window or maybe a 25-hour window, the Supreme Court of the United States said, We are going to confer national health insurance on everybody in America, and the Congress didn't write the law right, so we wrote it for them; and then the next day, same-sex marriage?

You wouldn't find a single Founding Father that would agree with either one of those decisions, Mr. Speaker. We are on the cusp of making an appointment to the Supreme Court that would feed this back to us and do more and more and more.

How do you possibly teach the Constitution to young people? How do you teach civics to young people if the Constitution itself is moving in such a way that no one can predict what would happen?

I am very pleased to see that I am joined by another constitutionalist out of the State of Florida, who is a clear thinker and has a good understanding. I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO), my friend and a doctor.

Mr. YOHO. I would like to thank my colleague for those kind words.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take just a quick moment to add to the important work that Mr. KING is doing and to thank my colleague for yielding me the time and for his continued leadership in the fight to ensure the dignity of the Supreme Court so that it is not undermined by the nomination and subsequent appointment of a Justice whose judicial ideologies run counter to the Founders' constitutional principles, as you have spoken so eloquently about.

The United States of America, the great American experiment, is an experiment that has surpassed centuries of speculation and persisted through the Civil War, an experiment that survived two World Wars and continues to stand as a beacon of hope to nations across the globe, an experiment made possible because of the foresight of our Founding Fathers—and it had to have some divine intervention because men just aren't that smart, so there was wisdom—who recognized the necessity to establish a government ruled by a series of laws they felt were so essential to ensure equal opportunity—not equal outcome, but equal opportunity—in the pursuit of prosperity and happiness to all citizens.

These documents—the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights—I have right here. I want people to look at this. This is the entire Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. I think if you look at it, we will all agree it is not an epic in volume. Even my colleague across the aisle recognizes that.

It is not an epic in volume, but yet it is an epic in the ideology of what America stands for. And it stands for opportunity. And if you put work behind that, it becomes the American Dream, your American Dream. The very fabric of this country is our core value, our founding principles, and the Constitution that preserves this.

And that is the very document that gives people on the left the voice of dissension, as it does people on the right. And if we lose this—these principles—we lose that very argument, the very thing that made America great.

And I ask you: Are those ideologies Republican or Democrat, conservative, liberal, White, Black, or any other adjective you want to throw in there?

And I would venture to say that you would all say no, they are American ideologies. That is why this discussion is so important.

The United States is facing an unprecedented attack by activist justices in both the lower and upper courts. If leaders were to yield to the demands of President Obama or any other executive in the future, and nominate any individual who does not have a true, tried, and tested conservative record on constitutional issues, the ensuing Supreme Court opinions could be detrimental to constitutional law for years, if not decades, to come. And I would surmise that if we cross that bridge and go beyond the constitutional principles of this country, what America is, what it has been in the past, and what we hope it to be in the future may be lost in the history of time.

While I fully understand the importance of having a full Bench and all nine Justices available to hear some of the most critical cases of our time, it should not be done at the expense of our Constitution. That is a document we all should revere. We all should stand up and protect it. After all, don't we all give an oath to uphold that sacred document?

As American culture has ebbed and flowed—and it will continue to—morphing into what it is today, it was these founding documents that fostered an environment where the voice of the few, not just the many, could be heard.

And that is the beauty of our country: a constitutional Republic. So many people want to refer to it as a democracy. A democracy is majority rule. A democracy is mob rule. And as Ben Franklin was often quoted:

> Democracy is the same as two wolves and a sheep deciding what to have for lunch.

As we know, in that story, the sheep always loses. So that is why it is so important, because a constitutional Republic protects the rights of the minority, of all people.

American culture, as I said, has ebbed and flowed over the period of time and it is morphing and will continue to morph. They have allowed for the people to dictate change, not a man who likes to remind the American people that he believes he can rewrite our history and, through the use of his phone and a pen, direct executive agencies to act with disregard to the voice of the people. A pen and a phone are not a replacement for the legislative body. And it is the Senate's chore to pick that person.

Take, for example, a vital case about to be argued before the Supreme Court next week: United States v. Texas. To some, this may seem like a simple anti-immigration or, in some cases, a pro-immigration case. But at its core, it is not about whether or not you are anti- or pro-immigration. It is about whether or not the Supreme Court will allow the executive branch to circumvent Congress and legislate from the Oval Office rather than through Capitol Hill, the way it was intended by our Founders.

I believe the Constitution is clear on this issue, but I also believe any Justice who does not have a deep appreciation for the Constitution, as the late Justice Scalia did, would disagree with me. Therein lies the danger: any Justice who is willing to tip the scale in the balance of power in favor of a runaway Presidential office.

And it is not just this administration. It could be any in the future. And that is why this is so important. This crosses party lines. It is a political ideology that I would argue threatens the very fabric of the foundation and the founding of our Nation.

Congress cannot allow itself to cave and settle for a Justice that would be complacent in the destruction of the Constitution and ultimately the destruction of the great American experiment.

□ 1715

I challenge the President to get serious with this nomination and put forth the name of a Justice that will uphold the constitutional principles and not legislate from the bench.

In the meantime, I urge my colleagues in the Senate to hold steadfast and not allow themselves to be persuaded by public opinion, public pressure, and by those who will try to pressure them to vote for any nominee who will do the American legacy and the American people an injustice by undermining the Constitution from the highest court in this great Nation.

This discussion is so important. The very fabric of this discussion and the very basis of this discussion is about the preservation of this institution. That is what this is about.

If you look at a timeline of human history and you look at the American experiment, it is but a dot on that period of time, but it has created the greatest country in the world. The reason that has been allowed is because of the Constitution.

Again, those ideologies aren't Republican; they are not Democrat. They are American ideologies so that we will all benefit. And we all have a hand to preserve those. We can have our differences, but this is one thing we shouldn't differ on, and this is for the posterity of all Americans: conservatives, liberals, White, Black, anybody else.

This is something we stand strong on, and I appreciate the gentleman from Iowa, my colleague and mentor, Mr. KING, for bringing this up. I thank you for continuing the fight and bringing this out to the American people. This is important.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time and thanking very much the gentleman from Florida for the compliments and the input here, too.

I learned something in this discussion and listening to Mr. YOHO from Florida, and that is, when he spoke of divine intervention in our Constitution, the answer required divine intervention because men just aren't that smart.

I hadn't heard that expression in this town or anyplace. That explains it in a lot of ways. I have long said that I believe that the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are written with divine guidance.

I choose those terms because the Bible was written with divine intervention and divine inspiration. That is up here. Divine guidance is just a little click below that. I don't want to claim Biblical standards, but it is really close. We would not have this country if it were not for God's guidance of our Founding Fathers, and so I tuned my ear to that.

I would say also, whose advice should the Senators listen to on the other side?

Well, they should listen to TED YOHO's advice. I hope they are listening to my advice, Mr. Speaker. But those on the Republican side of the aisle, they are pretty solid.

I want to publicly and personally thank my friend, whom I appreciate and respect a lot, JERRY MORAN, who has been in a difficult place in Kansas. He is a terrific friend, and I served with him here in the House of Representatives. His position is shored up in opposition to having hearings in the Judiciary Committee and trying to move this. I think the reconsideration that he has done is a good thing, and I hope the people of Kansas understand and appreciate JERRY MORAN in the fashion that I do as well.

I would suggest that maybe JERRY MORAN and some of the Democrat Senators, in particular, may have been listening to this advice, Mr. Speaker. This would be advice from the Vice President himself, JOE BIDEN, advice that he gave on June 25, 1992. So it has sustained the test of time in this fashion. It is called the Biden Rule. Quote, from Vice President JOE BIDEN:

> It is my view that if a Supreme Court Justice resigns tomorrow, or within the next several weeks, or resigns at the end of the summer, President Bush should consider following the practice of a majority of his predecessors and not—repeats it—and not name a nominee until after the November election is completed.

That is JOE BIDEN, and, at that time, he was the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Mr. Speaker. Again, that was June 25, 1992. We are only a couple of months away in proportion to that in this period of time.

So if our friends over on the Senate side are not listening to the Vice President, I would suggest they might listen to the Senate minority leader, HARRY REID, the former majority leader in the Senate.

This is HARRY REID's statement made in 2005. You will note that this was back when George W. Bush was President. HARRY REID, minority leader today in the Senate:

> The duties of the United States Senate are set forth in the Constitution of the United States. Nowhere in that document does it say that the Senate has a duty to give Presidential nominees a vote. It says appointments shall be made with the advice and consent of the Senate. That is very different than saying every nominee receives a vote . . . The Senate is not a rubber stamp for the executive branch.

That is HARRY REID, 2005.

Both of those gentlemen, I would say today, would argue against their previous arguments. I am reinforcing their arguments today on the floor of the House of Representatives.

We are not finished, Mr. Speaker. Who is another strong, influential voice over there in the Senate Judiciary Committee?

Senator SCHUMER of New York. He wanted to block the Bush nominees, and here is what he had to say. He said:

> We should not confirm any Bush nominee to the Supreme Court except in extraordinary circumstances.

Senator SCHUMER cited ideological reasons for the delay, and I begin another quote:

> They must prove by actions, not words, that they are in the mainstream, rather than we have to prove that they are not.

Well, there is a statement of ambiguity for you, Mr. Speaker, requiring an appointment to the Supreme Court to prove that they are in the mainstream.

What is the mainstream? That would be what CHUCK SCHUMER would define as the mainstream, depending upon whether or not he supported the candidate that was speaking to present themselves to be in the mainstream.

I would argue that mainstream is not a requirement for an appointment to the Supreme Court. The requirements for the appointment to the Supreme Court are determined by the discretion and the judgment of the confirming Senators over on the other side of this Capitol Building, and they should be obligated to only confirm Justices who interpret the Constitution to mean what it says.

To mean what it says. Is that too much to ask? Why, then, do we have a Constitution if it can't mean what it says?

Senator SCHUMER wasn't done, however. He argued again in 2007:

> We should reverse the presumption of confirmation. The Supreme Court is dangerously out of balance. We cannot afford to see Justice Stevens replaced by another Roberts, or a Justice Ginsburg by another Alito.

That was 2007.

Well, I think the Supreme Court is dangerously out of balance precisely because of the Justices that Senator SCHUMER supports and because there are not enough Justices on the Supreme Court that he has opposed, because I believe that the Justices need to reflect and protect the text and the original understanding of the Constitution.

Every Founding Father believed that as well when they went to their grave; and they would be rolling over in it if they saw a Supreme Court that was writing law on one day, manufacturing commands the next day, and now hearing an argument that the President of the United States has a right to his appointment to the Supreme Court, no

matter what kind of activist he might serve up, that is going to visit upon the American people, for at least the next generation, decisions that usurp the authority of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate and commandeer the legislative authority away from Article I and commandeer some kind of authority to manufacture commands, as they did last June.

Then, we are not done yet. In case this argument isn't strong enough at this point, Mr. Speaker, here is another.

The very individual that made the appointment to the Supreme Court, that would be then-Senator Barack Obama, now President Obama, he filibustered the Alito appointment—the Alito nomination. Excuse me.

Here is what then-Senator Obama argued in 2006. Well, they say this now. This is his spokesman today: ''President Obama regrets filibustering the nomination of Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito in 2006''—this is from his top spokesman who said, just a week or so ago, ''though he maintains that the Republican opposition to his effort to replace Justice Antonin Scalia is unprecedented.''

No, the President of the United States' opposition to Justice Alito was unprecedented, not the opposition created here by Chairman GRASSLEY or Majority Leader MCCONNELL and almost every Republican over there in the United States Senate; and I don't know any Republicans in the House who think they ought to move this appointment now.

So, here are some other positions along the way, Mr. Speaker, regarding Senator GRASSLEY's comments. Senator GRASSLEY made some strong positions on the floor of the Senate a little over a week ago, and they were published in Politico, as I recall, where it would be this. The Supreme Court has weighed in on this nomination, and that would be Chief Justice Roberts has intervened and made comments in this way: that before Scalia had passed away, he argued that the confirmation process is not functioning very well, that it has gotten too political.

I was very proud of Senator GRASSLEY when he stepped up on the floor of the Senate and rebutted that argument and he made the case that, no, the confirmation process in the United States Senate has gotten political precisely because the Court itself is making political decisions rather than decisions based upon the law and the supreme law of the land, the Constitution.

So when you see political decisions come out of the Court—and those decisions, I have described some of them; there are many others—that means that the confirmation process itself is political.

And when I sat before the Supreme Court and heard the oral arguments before the Court—and I hope to do that again next week—I was amazed. I expected that I would hear profound constitutional arguments before the United States Supreme Court. I mean, I grew up, I guess, naively believing that those were the arguments made before that Court. I think the Warren Court had already turned that thing in the other direction, and I didn't realize it.

But when I first sat before the United States Supreme Court and listened for those arguments, thinking it was going to be an amazing educational experience for me, what I found was there weren't any profound constitutional arguments made. Those arguments, instead, were being made to the swing Justice on the Court to try to get to that individual's heart, because they understood the various proclivities in the thinking and the rationale that might come. They went back and looked at the lives, the lifestyle, the history of the Justices and wondered what moves their heart rather than what moves their rationale. We should only have Justices whose rationale is moved by constitutional arguments before the Court.

Let's see. Who else do I have?

President Obama, who made the argument that he wants appointments to the Supreme Court who have—what is the word?—compassion, empathy. President Obama's word is ''empathy.''

We are not looking for empathy on the Supreme Court. We are looking for Justices that can rule on the letter and the text and the original meaning and understanding of the Constitution, and the letter and text of the law here in Congress that we passed.

And, yes, they can take into consideration congressional intent, but they can't amend the language. If the language says one thing, they don't get to add words to it. They should ship it back over here and tell us what they have interpreted that it said, and then the Congress can decide whether or not we want to act.

We take an oath to support and defend the Constitution. That doesn't mean we are bound by a decision of the Supreme Court that turns the Constitution on its head.

So this fight that is going on in the Supreme Court with the nomination to the Court now is one that will turn the destiny of the United States of America.

Depending on who ends up as the next President of the United States, I have every confidence that Senator GRASSLEY holds his ground, that there will not be hearings before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee, that the Senate prerogative will prevail, and that the people will go to the polls in November and elect a President. Part of that decision will be: Will that President make the right appointment to the Supreme Court?

In the meantime, CHUCK GRASSLEY, the man who is now the chairman of the committee, stands in the gap in the same way that Leonidas stood against Xerxes at the Battle of Thermopylae when he led the 300 to stand in that gap and face 300,000 Persians. He is holding his ground. He is holding his ground nobly. He is holding it with conviction. He is holding it with determination. And we need to stand with him, beside him, and behind him in every way that we can and understand that this is a political assault that is going at him.

We should reward him for his convictions by electing a President who will make that appointment to the Supreme Court who reflects the will of the people. And the will of the people, I trust, will still want to see an appointment to the Supreme Court of a Justice who would stand up and say this Constitution means what it says.

The text of this Constitution has to mean what it says, and it has to be interpreted to mean that which it was understood to mean at the time of its ratification. And if you don't like what it does for our policy, then get to work and amend the Constitution. That is why that provision is there. That is why we have the amendments to the Constitution today.

So I thank Senator GRASSLEY for his strong stand. I thank MITCH MCCONNELL for his leadership in the Senate. I thank everyone over there who holds their ground, and everyone here in this Congress who takes an oath to support and defend the Constitution and means it.

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

□ 1730

FORCED ARBITRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials related to the subject of this Special Order, which is forced arbitration

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

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it has been very thought-provoking to listen to the comments and observations of my good friend, STEVE KING from Iowa, and my other good friend, Representative TED YOHO from Florida.

It is always good to hear the impressions of laypersons about the law. I say that not in a condescending way because I know that my good friend, STEVE KING, is a successful businessman, construction, and he knows all about the business, and my friend, TED YOHO, is an esteemed doctor of veterinary medicine.

So being a lawyer myself by training, it is good for me to hear the impressions and observations of laypersons. I

say that in a noncondescending way. So I thank the gentleman from Iowa, Representative KING, for holding it down for us for that last hour.

The preamble to the U.S. Constitution, which is the introductory statement setting forth the general principles of our American government, reads: ''We the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.''

I want to just put a bookmark right where it says ''establish Justice.'' It says that right after it says ''in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice.''

So justice was something that was foremost in the minds of the Framers of our Constitution who, I believe, just as STEVE KING said, were divinely inspired in their deliberations and their decisionmaking in terms of our Constitution.

They were focused on the delivery of justice. They realized that justice was key. With that ideal, they established in Article III a court system, the judicial power and the framework for the court system. The judiciary, of course, is a coequal branch of government.

The courts, since the inception of this country, have served as a check and a balance on the excesses of the other branches of government while at the same time dispensing justice to individuals who are found to have violated the law or who have been aggrieved by the misconduct of someone else and, so, they come to court seeking justice. So justice is the business of the court system, and the court system's business is to render justice.

Now what is that word, justice? What does it mean? It is the maintenance or administration of what is just by law, as by judicial or other proceedings, in a court. Justice is the judgment of persons or causes by a judicial process to administer justice in a community. That is what justice is all about, and that is what courts do.

People bring to the court of justice their causes of action so that they can receive justice in the courts. The courts are set up with a set of procedures, rules, as to how you proceed in court. And then there are substantive laws upon which the court looks to the precedent that has been set and decides cases brought to it in accordance with those precedents.

Sometimes it must make new precedent, it must make new law, and it is done in accordance with the constitutional principles that have been laid out by our Framers. So this legal system has worked well. This legal system of trial by jury has worked very well.

In addition to maintaining order through the criminal laws, the civil laws have enabled people to achieve justice when they have been wronged, including wronged by corporations.

Companies don't like being brought to the bar of justice to be held accountable for wrongdoing. We know that corporations are powerful entities. They have more money than the average person. They are more powerful.

So the way to equalize the power of just an individual against a corporation that he or she has accused of wrongdoing—the equalizing factor has always been the jury system, a jury of one's peers.

That is what people have relied upon to address grievances, particularly with powers that are more powerful than they. They know that a jury of their peers is a mechanism whereby the truth can be found and that justice can be rendered.

So going to court and having a jury trial when a person is aggrieved is a part of the fundamental fabric of this Nation. That is how we have done business for so long.

It used to be before we had TV and radio that people would go down to the town square where the courthouse was always located and they would take the afternoon and they would go into the courtroom. They would have a calendar. They would know what cases were being heard.

It was a published calendar, and everybody knew that a certain lawyer would be in town to try a case. They would make their schedule such that they could go down and see that proceeding. It would be an open court. Nobody would be excluded. Everybody would know in advance what was going to happen.

You could sit there and watch the adversary process take place. You would see a judge seated, such as the Speaker is seated in this Chamber. That would be the person who would decide what laws were applicable. The jury would be to his or her left or right, and the judge would instruct them on the law.

After they have heard all of the evidence from the attorneys in that adversary process, the judge would instruct the jury on the law and charge the jury to find the facts in its own wisdom and apply justice.

The plaintiff would either win or lose, and the people would be in the courtroom watching the proceedings. And then, whatever happened everyone would have to live with.

Sometimes the plaintiff won. Sometimes the defense won. That is the way that it has always been in this country up until pretty recently.

Over the last 30 years or so, we have had an erosion of that process. The rich and powerful corporations have conspired to find ways that they can avoid being held accountable for the misdoings that they would be charged with committing by a regular person.

Let's face it, ladies and gentlemen. Corporations are just like people. People do wrong and, when they do wrong, you have to have some way of making them do right, of making it right. That is what the courts have always been for.

These corporations have gotten so powerful that they have come up with a way of privatizing the justice system. They have come up with a dispute resolution mechanism, which is not inherently bad, but it is being forced on people. That is the dispute resolution process known as arbitration.

Arbitration is a great alternative dispute resolution process when it is decided upon by the parties after a dispute has arisen.

But to bind a party to have to resolve a dispute in the arbitration setting as opposed to being able to exercise your Seventh Constitutional Amendment right to a jury trial and binding yourself, to have to go through an arbitration process, this is the scheme that has been hatched by the corporate interests who don't want to be held accountable in court.

So what they have done is inserted these forced arbitration clauses into agreements that they have with consumers.

So any kind of consumer agreement, for the most part nowadays, has a forced arbitration clause in it which requires that, in the event a dispute arises, the parties will settle that dispute not in a court of law, but in an arbitration proceeding.

Now, arbitration proceedings, unlike the courthouse, are done in private. There is no calendar that is published, and the people are not invited to come in. It is a secret proceeding.

It is a proceeding where, instead of having a judge trained in the law, you have got the possibility of having a layperson deciding the case. And that layperson may not be impartial.

That person may be making their living from getting referrals from the corporations to decide the arbitration cases that come before them. So it is an unfair process. It is a secret process.

The rules of procedure that are followed and required in a court are not required in an arbitration process nor are the substantive laws upon which cases are decided on precedent.

There is no requirement that the substantive law be used by the arbitrator in making the decision. Of course, there is no jury trial. There is no trial by a jury of one's peers.

So it is a very unfair setting, and it produces results that favor the corporations. This is what we are here to talk about today, this unfair, privatized secret system of justice that deprives people of having their day in court.

It is unaccountable. It is unaccountable to anyone other than to the corporate bosses that refer the cases to them. It is very unfair to the consumer, to the little guy.

So having said all of that, I yield to the gentleman from the State of Pennsylvania, MATT CARTWRIGHT, my friend, a distinguished trial attorney himself and, also, a member of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee in this Congress, the ranking member of the Health Care, Benefits, and Administrative Rules Subcommittee and,

also, a member of the Committee on Natural Resources.

□ 1745

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for yielding to me and for laying out the problem.

I rise proudly to remind my colleagues in this Chamber that what—as Representative TED YOHO of Florida just mentioned—what is in the Constitution really, really matters. In fact, I credit TED YOHO for carrying the Constitution with him at all times. I know that he says what is particularly dear to him in the Constitution is the Bill of Rights—those first 10 Amendments to the Constitution.

And Representative JOHNSON alluded to it earlier, it is the Seventh Amendment that we are talking about right now. If you are scoring at home, the Seventh Amendment is the thing that gives you the right to a jury trial in a civil case. And I'll quote it: ''In suits at common law . . . the right of trial by jury shall be preserved . . .''

It is a short sentence, it is unambiguous, it is easy to understand, and it is something that makes us Americans—that we can go to court and have our disputes settled by a jury trial. It is one of the things that has made this Nation great. It is one of the things that we went to war over in the American War of Independence because the British king was trying to take that right away from us. In suits of common law, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved.

But I am here to say, Mr. Speaker, that there have been attacks on the Seventh Amendment. As Mr. JOHNSON pointed out so deftly, it is in the last 25 or 30 years that these attacks have come to a crescendo. Even in the Supreme Court of the United States now, they are getting so squishy on the Seventh Amendment that they think it is all right—it is a case called Concepcion from about 5 years ago—it is all right for corporations to have you enter into contracts that do away with your Seventh Amendment right to a jury trial in the event of a dispute. This is called a pre-dispute forced arbitration clause. It rears its ugly head in all sorts of ways to hurt workers and consumers and homeowners and Americans of every stripe.

Now, what is wrong with this?

What is wrong—and, again, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia alluded to this. The main problem is that it is a secret system of justice. It is not out in the open. He is right. America has a tradition of open court systems, trials that you can go watch, proceedings of justice that are open and transparent and open to the sunlight so that sneaky things don't happen, things that they would be embarrassed to tell you about don't happen. That is the purifying aspect of sunlight overall, and that is why we treasure our justice system here in the United States.

It is the opposite when you talk about forced arbitrations. You are talking about arbitrators who have been selected by who knows who. Certainly not elected, certainly not appointed by elected officials. Accountable to no one. No one.

Is that really who you want deciding your case when you have a dispute?

Absolutely not.

Mr. Speaker, there is something even more insidious about these forced arbitration clauses, and that is this. It does away with any possibility of a class action.

Now, why do we care about that?

The ordinary American consumer may never get into a class action or know about one or care about one. But here is what happens.

If, for example, your credit card company—when you signed up for your credit card, you signed a boilerplate agreement. There is no way you read through that whole thing, but there was a forced arbitration clause in there. It says, in any dispute between us and the consumer, the dispute shall be decided by an arbitration.

What that means is that they can do anything they want to you. They can say, this month, in honor of it being April, we are going to charge everybody $45 for no reason. Forty-five dollars goes on your bill. If you don't pay it, they start dunning you and hurting your credit record. They can do that just for fun.

What are you going to do? Are you going to go to court over it?

No. You are going to join a class action because nobody can afford to hire a lawyer where $45 is the amount in controversy. That is why we have class actions, so the corporations don't get away with that monkey business.

In forced arbitration clauses, that precludes any possibility of going to court and, thereby, it precludes any possibility of a class action. That means a lot of wrong can happen in this country at the hands of unaccountable corporations. They can get away with it because there is no chance of a class action.

Well, I am here to raise my voice in support of something Mr. JOHNSON from Georgia has done. He has written something called the Arbitration Fairness Act, which remedies much of what I am talking about.

I am also here to stand up and add my voice in support of things that the administration has done: executive orders, either already done or in the works, in the Department of Education to combat forced arbitrations against for-profit universities; in the Department of Defense to combat actions of predatory lenders against our armed service men and women and our veterans; executive orders in the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to combat arbitration clauses such as the one I discussed about a credit card company; executive orders by the CMS, Center for Medicare Services, to combat abuses in arbitration clauses in nursing homes so that you wouldn't be able to bring a court case against a nursing home because you signed on the dotted line when you put mom or dad in the home so no matter what they do to mom or dad, you can't go to court, you have to go to arbitration. CMS is working on an executive order to curb that abuse.

An executive order in the Department of Labor to enforce rules and laws about safe work places and fair pay to prevent these forced arbitration clauses from taking these cases out of the sunlight and into the dark back rooms of the arbitrations where goodness knows what is going to happen, and it is probably not justice.

We have a statue of Thomas Jefferson right outside these chambers, Mr. Speaker. Thomas Jefferson said: ''I consider trial by jury as the only anchor yet imagined by man, by which a government can be held to the principles of its Constitution.''

We need to honor those words of Thomas Jefferson, we need to honor the Seventh Amendment, we need to support Mr. JOHNSON in his Arbitration Fairness Act, and we need to support the administration with executive orders fighting these unfair and nontransparent mandatory forced arbitration clauses.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative CARTWRIGHT.

It is amazing that when you are standing across the yard with the fence in between you and your neighbor and you are telling your neighbor about that great day of fishing that you had and you are telling him about this fish that was that long, you can do as much lying about the length of that fish—sometimes you didn't even catch a fish—and it is okay to lie to your neighbor.

But it is different when you go downtown and go to the courthouse because at the courthouse you are going to testify, you are testifying under oath, subject to being held accountable for perjury if you lie.

But it is amazing that in a forced arbitration proceeding, there is absolutely no requirement that you be administered, or that a witness be administered an oath before they are allowed to testify. So, therefore, in an arbitration proceeding, the lever of perjury to force someone to tell the truth is not there and it hurts the pursuit of justice.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. CARTWRIGHT for his testimony and his statements today.

I would point out that last year, the New York Times published an exhaustive and in-depth investigative series that pulled back the curtain and catalogued the immense harms of forced arbitration. In part 1 of the series, which was entitled ''Arbitration Everywhere, Stacking the Deck of Justice,'' the Times explored the rise and dramatic spread of forced arbitration clauses, their impact on American workers, consumers, and on patients. This investigation found that corporations crippled the consumer challenges

across a wide swath of harmful practices simply by banning class action litigation.

Furthermore, once corporations have blocked individuals from going to court as a class, the investigation found that most people simply dropped their claims entirely.

Why?

Because the amount in controversy was so small that it was not cost effective to hire a lawyer to go to court to recover such a small amount. The net result is that the corporate wrongdoers have escaped being held accountable because of these forced arbitration clauses, which equates to a ban on participating in class action litigation and, in some of those clauses, they had the words in there about class actions being bought.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ), my friend, who serves on the Ways and Means Committee. She is a former labor lawyer. She has had an interest in this issue of arbitration, forced arbitration, for a couple of sessions of Congress. She has introduced legislation that would outlaw forced arbitration agreements in nursing home contracts—you know, where we go to take our loved ones who have to be committed to a nursing home and we have no choice but to sign the contract which has the arbitration clause in it because all of the other nursing homes have the arbitration clause in them as well. Representative SÁNCHEZ has filed legislation that would get at that very unfair process.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. JOHNSON.

I rise today to join Mr. JOHNSON and Mr. CARTWRIGHT in bringing attention to the very unfair and deplorable practice of forcing people into arbitration.

In practice, what this consists of is generally those with more power, meaning very wealthy corporations, including confusing but legally binding language buried in the fine print of contracts, contracts that pretty much purveyed every aspect of our lives. This creates this insidious process in which people, in order to get a credit card or a cell phone or to put a loved one into a nursing home, have to accept the terms of this contract without really knowing what they are buying into.

I want to start by saying that the concept of arbitration is a great one. I strongly support the principles of arbitration and the arbitration process because arbitration can do many good things. It can clear court dockets, it can help provide a more swift resolution to a problem, and it can also reduce legal fees. Those are the benefits of a fair arbitration process. In many ways arbitration can be a great thing.

But—and this is the thing—people think that arbitration is this wonderful process. But what they don't realize is that buried in that fine print in forced arbitration, there can also be terms that limit the evidence that you can introduce. If you are forced into arbitration, there can be limits on the damages that you can claim. It can exclude your ability to request a jury trial. And mandatory binding arbitration has to be entered willingly by both parties, not just the party with the greater economic power. But, in fact, they know that they hold that leverage over the average consumer so they put this kind of limiting language into these arbitration clauses all the time.

Many retailers, banks, and online services have forced arbitration clauses written into their contracts. These arbitration agreements can be forced on vulnerable parties who have little knowledge about what they are signing or what it means to sign away those rights. Frankly, most consumers have little or no choice in the matter because the contracts are ''take it or leave it.''

□ 1800

Why does this hit so close to home?

My father has Alzheimer's, and at a certain point, he could not care for himself anymore, so we had to investigate nursing homes that could provide the kind of around-the-clock care that was required for him that my brothers and sisters and I simply could not.

Sadly, in the nursing home arena, this is where, oftentimes, mandatory—forced—arbitration clauses are buried in these contracts for the admission of your loved one. Loved ones who cannot care for somebody who is physically ill or frail, again, have no real choice in the matter. They need to find facilities to care for their loved ones because they, simply, cannot do it on their own.

That is why, in Congresses past, I introduced the Fairness in Nursing Home Arbitration Act. That legislation would make predispute mandatory arbitration clauses in long-term care contracts unenforceable, and it would restore residents and their families their full legal rights. What the legislation would do is say that you cannot force arbitration onto families who, in an emotional time and in a medical crisis, are looking for care for their loved ones. You cannot force them to sign something that they don't agree with or even understand. My bill would have allowed families and residents to have maintained their peace of mind as they looked for the best long-term care facilities for their loved ones.

For desperate families who are unable to provide the adequate care at home, the need for an immediate placement for their loved ones makes these contracts, basically, take it or leave it, which gives them no choice at all in the matter. Families who are in the midst of these painful decisions to place a parent or a loved one in a nursing home rarely have the time or the wherewithal to fully and thoughtfully consider what it is they are signing when they sign a contract that contains a mandatory arbitration clause. They are not in a position to adequately determine what agreeing to such a clause will mean for their loved ones should the unthinkable happen.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, CMS, is slowly working to include some of my bill's provisions through the regulatory process, but much work still remains in this area. In September of last year, Democrats sent a letter to CMS and called for a final rule that will ensure that nursing home residents will only enter into arbitration agreements on a voluntary and enforced basis after a dispute arises, not before.

We need commonsense solutions to forced arbitration agreements, solutions that would protect the average consumer, who is unfamiliar with the concept of arbitration and is not trained in the law. Many people may not even be aware of the rights they are signing away at a time when they are least prepared to make important decisions. As Members of Congress, we are called on to serve our constituents and to protect them from flagrant violations of their rights. We should be doing more to protect vulnerable families from these forced arbitration policies.

I thank my colleague, Mr. JOHNSON, for being such a strong voice on this issue.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. I thank the gentlewoman from California.

Next, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas, my good friend SHEILA JACKSON LEE, a senior member of the Judiciary Committee and the ranking member on the Crime Subcommittee. She is also a member of the Homeland Security Committee. She is a lawyer and a former judge.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the gentleman from Georgia for his leadership, along with Mr. CONYERS, and for the introduction of a very important initiative, H.R. 4899.

Mr. Speaker, many would think, particularly as we have watched the mediation and arbitration process grow as a newly developed practice amongst lawyers and one that businesses and others have seemed to adopt, that that was, in fact, helping consumers by allowing the concept of arbitration to be able to be utilized, thereby, allegedly, lowering the costs of litigation.

In a 2010 survey, 27 percent of employers, covering over 36 million employees—or one-third of the nonunion workforce—reported that they required the forced arbitration of employment disputes. The practice of forced arbitration is widespread and damaging. For example, the ability to obtain key evidence that is necessary to prove one's case is often restricted or eliminated in arbitration proceedings, and it can be nearly impossible to appeal adverse decisions by arbitrators.

We know that, in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution, there is a right to a trial by jury, a jury of one's peers. Therefore, it is a sacred right. This new practice had been projected as helping

the victim: oh, it will be a low-cost procedure; you will get an immediate decision; you won't have the stress of litigation; you might not even have to hire a lawyer. But, as indicated, the ability to obtain key evidence that is necessary to prove one's case is often restricted or eliminated in arbitration proceedings, and it can be nearly impossible to appeal adverse decisions by arbitrators.

I was one of the first Members to bring attention to this issue when I prevailed upon the late Chairman Hyde to authorize the Judiciary Subcommittee on Administrative and Commercial Law, when I was the ranking member, to hold a hearing on that matter involving Carl Poston and the NFL Players Association, with Gene Upshaw, then executive director, in the LaVar Arrington case. You may recall the LaVar Arrington case as being of the former Washington Redskins football player who was forced into arbitration in order to resolve a contract dispute.

Forced arbitration of State and Federal employment discrimination laws is also harmful to women workers. In 2015, nearly 64,000 discrimination claims were filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under title VII, and more than 41 percent of those charges were for sex-based discrimination. Sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, remains a persistent problem for women in the workplace. Nearly 83 percent of sexual harassment charges that are filed with the EEOC are filed by women. Just imagine that mandatory arbitration of claims under State or Federal family and medical leave laws could have a disproportionate impact on women as well.

I am pleased that this legislation was introduced, because it is a legislative initiative to restore rights. The bill is rightly named the Restoring Statutory Rights Act. It is also, I believe, the restoration of constitutional rights. Let me quickly tell you of the case of Stephanie Sutherland, which illustrates the difficulties of this forced arbitration.

Stephanie was hired by her company to work as a staff assistant. Her work involved relatively routine, low-level clerical work for which she was paid a fixed salary of $55,000. She routinely worked 45 to 50 hours per week, but because she was classified by her employer as exempt from overtime, she did not receive any additional compensation. By the time Ms. Sutherland was terminated in 2009, she had worked 151 hours of overtime for which she should have been paid $1,867 had the Fair Labor Standards Act and the New York State labor laws been observed. She filed a class action lawsuit and sought to recover overtime for her work in excess of 40 hours a week and for other current and former nonlicensed staff—one or two staff employees of the firm—who worked overtime.

When Ms. Sutherland was hired, she was given an offer letter that also provided, if an employment-related dispute arises between you and the firm, it will be subject to mandatory mediation. That was what the company attempted to do—enforce mandatory mediation. In her lawsuit, she attempted to enforce her rights because the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act had a provision to expressly permit lawsuits for minimum wage. To this end, the lower court was sympathetic to Ms. Sutherland's arguments. However, the United States Court of Appeals reversed, relying on the 2013 Supreme Court case.

Therefore, we do have a conflict in the issue of dealing with arbitration that is forced. This is the core of why this legislation is so very important. I believe that, if parties agree to engage in mediation and arbitration, Mr. Speaker, so be it; but if you choose to use the court system that is designed by the Constitution as one of the three branches of government that all Americans should have access to, I will make the argument that you should not be forced into arbitration or mediation.

I believe Mr. JOHNSON—and I look forward to joining him on his legislation—along with Mr. CONYERS, is really lifting up the Constitution to ensure that every citizen has access to the courts of this land to help decide their issues of conflict and to choose the forum which they desire to use. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and I look forward to working with him on this very crucial constitutional issue.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues of the Congressional Progressive Caucus to discuss the critical importance of an impartial and fair justice system, corporate accountability, consumer and employee protection, as well as the importance of enforcing laws on the books.

I would like to thank Congressman HANK JOHNSON (D–GA) for his leadership in putting forth this Special Order.

The practice of forced arbitration is widespread and damaging.

In a 2010 survey, 27 percent of employers—covering over 36 million employees, or one-third of the non-union workforce—reported that they required forced arbitration of employment disputes.

Although arbitration can be a valid and effective method of dispute resolution when both parties voluntarily agree to arbitrate, forced arbitration clauses that limit an employee's legal rights in a non-negotiable contract are abusive and erode employees' traditional legal safeguards.

For example, the ability to obtain key evidence necessary to prove one's case is often restricted or eliminated in arbitration proceedings, and it can be nearly impossible to appeal adverse decisions by arbitrators.

I was one of the first Members to bring attention to this issue when I prevailed upon Chairman Hyde to authorize the Judiciary Subcommittee on Administrative and Commercial Law to hold a hearing on that matter involving Carl Poston and the NFL Players Association (Gene Uphsaw, Executive Director) in the LeVar Arrington case.

You may recall LeVar Arrington as the former Washington Redskins football player who was forced into arbitration in order to resolve a contract dispute.

Forced arbitration of state and federal employment discrimination laws is especially harmful to women workers.

In 2015, nearly 64,000 discrimination claims were filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) under Title VII, and more than 41 percent of those charges were for sex-based discrimination.

Sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, remains a persistent problem for women in the workplace.

Nearly 83 percent of sexual harassment charges filed with the EEOC are filed by women.

In a national survey by ABC News and the Washington Post, one in four women reported experiencing sexual harassment, compared to one in ten men.

Mandatory arbitration of claims under state or federal family and medical leave laws could have a disproportionate impact on women as well.

Nearly 56 percent of employees who took time away from work to deal with a serious personal or family illness, or to care for a new child under the FMLA in 2012 were women.

If my colleagues fail to take necessary action, mandatory arbitration will continue to be a barrier to justice for workers.

I am pleased by the action of Mr. CONYERS and Mr. JOHNSON for their leadership on Tuesday, Equal Pay Day, for introducing a very important piece of legislation that will address these inequities, (H.R. 4899) the Restoring Statutory Rights Act, which I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of.

The Restoring Statutory Rights Act would ensure that when Congress or the states have established rights and protections for individuals, including protection against wage discrimination, that they are able to enforce these rights in court.

This bill amends the Federal Arbitration Act to prohibit mandatory pre-dispute, commonly known as "forced," arbitration agreements for claims rising under federal or state statute, the U.S. Constitution, or a state constitution.

The bill would further require that a court determines whether an agreement is unconscionable, legally invalid, or otherwise unenforceable as a matter of contract law or public policy.

Under current law, parties may resolve statutory claims, including claims rising under anti-discrimination statutes, through forced arbitration instead of the justice system.

This important legislation is a critical step in eliminating longstanding and unacceptable discrimination and barriers imposed on women and minority.

It should be noted that forced arbitration is a private system controlled by corporations to prevent corporate accountability.

Buried in the fine print of countless employment, cell phone, credit card, retirement, and nursing home contracts, forced arbitration eliminates Americans' access to the courts, tipping the scales of justice in favor of corporate wrongdoers.

When corporations force arbitration on individuals using nonnegotiable and many times unnoticed contract terms, it becomes an abusive weapon.

Forced arbitration means giving up the most fundamental legal protection: the right to equal justice under the law.

For decades, we have fought hard for dozens of laws that protect against discrimination based on age, sex, religion, race, disability, and unequal pay for equal work, such as the Civil Rights Act and the Equal Pay Act But these laws are meaningless if unenforceable in court.

It's time to close the arbitration loophole that gives employers and businesses the right to ignore civil rights and consumer protection laws.

Although states have tried to address this problem through their consumer protection laws, the courts have interpreted the Federal Arbitration Act (FAA) to trump state laws leaving consumers very little recourse.

Arbitration can be a fair and effective method of dispute resolution when parties voluntarily agree to arbitrate.

When the choice of arbitration is post-dispute—and therefore understandable and voluntary—it is a fair process that parties choose willingly.

I call upon my colleagues to come together and pass legislation that would reinstate workers' ability to enforce their rights in a court of law and protect the rights of women and minorities.

More than 20% of employees are covered by mandatory arbitration clauses.

Tens of millions of consumers use consumer financial products or services that are subject to pre-dispute arbitration clauses.

Federal court statistics show that 17,977 labor claims and 35,965 civil rights claims were filed in 2012.

National Arbitration Forum (NAF) arbitrators ruled in favor of consumers in less than 0.2% of all cases (30 out of 18,075) heard.

These 30 victories only occurred in hearings where a consumer brought claims against a business; when companies brought claims against consumers, they were successful in hearings 100% of the time. The employee win rate after arbitration was 21.4%, which is lower than employee win rates reported in employment litigation trials (36.4% in federal court and 43.8% in state court).

In cases won by employees, the median award amount was $36,500 and the mean was $109,858, both of which are substantially lower than award amounts reported in employment litigation ($384,223 for federal court litigation and $595,594 in state court litigation.)

A 2015 study of federal court employment discrimination litigation by Theodore Eisenberg found that the employee win rate has dipped in recent years to an average of only 29.7 percent.

At the same time, another 2015 study found that the employee win rate in employment arbitration had also dipped in recent years, to an average of only 19.1%; similar dip in employee win rates has occurred in state courts.

58% settlement rate in federal court employment-discrimination litigation.

While recent research on mandatory arbitration found a 63% settlement rate across all employment cases in that forum.

In court, summary judgment motions were filed in 77% of the court cases, while summary judgment motions were raised in 48% of arbitrations.

The win rate was 32% lower in mandatory arbitration than in litigation.

Plaintiffs' overall economic outcomes are on average 6.1 times better in federal court than in mandatory arbitration ($143,497 versus $23,548) and 13.9 times better in state court than in mandatory arbitration ($328,008 versus $23,548).

21.1% of employment cases in mandatory arbitration are brought by employees without legal counsel.

Damages from arbitration are 16% of the average damages from federal court litigation and a mere 7% of the average damages in state court—thus lawyers are reluctant to take cases that are subject to mandatory arbitration.

Whereas on average plaintiffs' attorneys accepted 15.8% of potential cases involving employees who could go to litigation, they accepted about half as many, 8.1% of the potential cases of employees covered by mandatory arbitration.

The first time an employer appeared before an arbitrator, the employee had a 17.9% chance of winning, but after the employer had four cases before the same arbitrator the employee's chance of winning dropped to 15.3%, and after 25 cases before the same arbitrator the employee's chance of winning dropped to only 4.5%.

The study results provide strong evidence of a repeat employer effect in which employee win rates and award amounts are significantly lower where the employer is involved in multiple arbitration cases where the same arbitrator is involved in more than one case with the same employer, a finding supporting some of the fairness criticisms directed at mandatory employment arbitration.

In the credit card market, larger bank issuers are more likely to include arbitration clauses than smaller bank issuers and credit unions. As a result, while less than 16% of issuers include such clauses in their consumer credit card contracts, just over 50% of credit card loans outstanding are subject to forced arbitration clauses.

In the checking account market, which is less concentrated than the credit card market, around 8% of banks, covering 44% of insured deposits, include arbitration clauses in their checking account contracts.

40% of the arbitration filings involved a dispute over the amount of debt a consumer allegedly owed to a company, with no additional affirmative claim by either party. In another 29% of the filings, consumers disputed alleged debts, but also brought affirmative claims against companies.

The average disputed debt amount was nearly $16,000. The median was roughly $11,000. Across all six product markets, about eight cases a year involved disputed debts of $1,000 or less.

Overall, consumers were represented by counsel in roughly 60% of the cases, though there were some variations by product. Companies almost always had counsel.

Of the 1,060 arbitration cases filed in 2010 and 2011, so far as we could determine, arbitrators issued decisions in just under 33%.

In approximately 25%, the record reflects that the parties reached a settlement. The remaining cases ended in an unknown manner or were technically pending but dormant as of early 2013.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. I thank the gentlewoman from Texas for her tremendous, informative presentation, which is all based constitutionally as the great lawyer that she is.

Next, Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend, the gentleman from Massachusetts, JOE KENNEDY, who is an esteemed member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank Congressman JOHNSON. I am honored to be here with the gentleman, and I thank him for his leadership on this important issue.

I thank, of course, Ranking Member CONYERS, who has for so long been a guiding light in our party on issues of justice.

Congressman, you and Mr. CONYERS together have been this Chamber's champions on civil rights and equality in our justice system. You are, once again, leading the fight as we call for reforms to an unjust and unequal arbitration system. I am grateful, and I thank you for your leadership.

Mr. Speaker, at the foundation of our democracy is one simple promise: no matter who you are or where you come from or what you have done, you will be seen as equal before the law.

Thomas Jefferson, himself, wrote centuries ago:

> The most sacred duties of government is to do equal and impartial justice to all citizens.

Forced arbitration, Mr. Speaker, is an affront to that duty—a manipulation of the justice system that tips our scales in the direction of influence, money, and power. It removes even the slightest veneer of fair treatment in cases ranging from sexual harassment and discrimination to loss of housing and shelter, to neglect and abuse inside substance abuse treatment centers and retirement homes.

When a plaintiff sits at an arbitration table across from a powerful corporation to challenge a fraudulent charge or to question its practices, the protections that we have spent centuries instilling in our justice system get washed away. There is no judge, no jury, no avenue for appeal. There is no justice at that table.

At the very moment you need to access our courtrooms most, you find yourself locked out, diverted to a room outside the scope of our judicial system and beyond the bounds of our laws. Without your choice or sometimes even knowledge, forced arbitration transforms a level playing field into an uphill climb. At that point, most Americans turn around; but for the few who muster the will or the resources to continue their cases, there is no guarantee to counsel, forcing them to face off against some of the most experienced legal minds in our country completely on their own.

The Arbitration Fairness Act would help remedy this profound shortcoming in our justice system and ensure that equal access to legal protection doesn't come along with a price tag. Mr. Speaker, that is one of the most fundamental promises we make in our country. I am grateful to Mr. JOHNSON for his leadership on the issue.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for his wise words.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I congratulate the writers of The New York

Times' exposé, a three-part series on forced arbitration. The second part of the series examined the secretive nature of forced arbitration, and the third part of that series talked about the forced arbitration in the context of binding persons to arbitrate secular claims in religious tribunals, applying religious law.

□ 1815

I would strongly encourage those who are interested in this subject to look to The New York Times article because it gives you a good understanding of where we are as far as forced arbitration is concerned. I applaud the reporters for their groundbreaking work in writing that series and producing it.

Jessica Silver-Greenberg, Michael Corkery, and Robert Gebeloff have done yeoman's work. They have exposed a threat to the justice system that shakes the tenets of our very democracy to its core. They deserve the highest commendation that I can give them, and that is just simply a shout-out from the well of the House.

I understand that the Pulitzer Prizes for journalism will be announced this coming Monday. If I could nominate this series, I would certainly do so. I certainly support their nomination for that award.

Next, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE), my good friend, the former mayor of Providence, Rhode Island, a lawyer in his own right, a member of the Judiciary Committee upon which I also serve and, also, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I want to particularly thank the gentleman for his extraordinary leadership on this very important issue of forced arbitration, which is denying many, many Americans the right to have their grievances heard.

I want to thank both Mr. JOHNSON and Mr. CONYERS for not only the legislation, but for continuing to raise this issue.

As many of my colleagues have said, forced arbitration denies individuals the most basic right to have their grievances heard fairly. No court, no lawyer, no judicial proceedings, all the things that we have over many centuries recognized as essential to the fair and impartial resolution of disputes.

But there is an area that I want to speak about in particular where forced arbitration, I think, is particularly damaging and particularly unfair.

In the coming weeks, I will introduce legislation that will protect the rights of our troops to pursue justice in our courts. My legislation will simply clarify the original intent of the Uniformed Services Employment Rights Act of 1994, also known as USERRA, and allow veterans and servicemembers to have their claims heard in court.

This legislation was intended to protect the men and women of the Armed Forces from losing their jobs as a result of their service to our country. It specifically prohibits employment discrimination due to military service and guarantees benefits and reemployment rights to those who leave their civilian jobs to serve.

However, these rights have rapidly eroded in recent years. Employers are requiring their employees to sign forced arbitration agreements barring access to justice for servicemembers. As my colleagues have discussed this evening, these agreements are often heavily tilted toward the parties who insist upon them.

In mandatory arbitration, the employers can select the arbitrator and the location of the forum, and the avenues for appeal are entirely closed off. In many instances, these clauses are imposed by employers without the knowledge or consent of their employees.

While USERRA explicitly prohibits any agreement that limits any right or benefit provided under the statute, some Federal courts have misinterpreted the law to exclude procedural rights.

As a result, many of the 1.3 million brave men and women who serve in our military may return to civilian life without their jobs and without the ability to fully assert their rights in the courts.

This includes servicemembers like Javier Rivera, an Army Reservist who was deployed for 6 months only to learn that his job had been filled in his absence. Despite 900 job openings, his former employer claimed that he could not find a single open position for him upon his return.

Under these circumstances, USERRA should have provided some relief. At the bare minimum, it should have guaranteed him the opportunity to have his claim heard in a fair, objective forum. However, because of a forced arbitration clause in his contract, he had no access to the courts at all.

Denying our servicemembers and veterans this essential right directly conflicts with the intent of USERRA. By limiting their access to legal recourse, it represents a direct affront to all who serve in our military.

Our troops face many potential threats in service to our country. The last thing they should be concerned about is whether they will be able to keep their job.

A Nation that asks young men and women to defend this country with their lives should protect them from losing their livelihoods when they come home.

So I urge my colleagues to support this legislation to help preserve access to justice for our servicemembers and veterans and to recognize this is just one very powerful example of what the real damage and the gross unfairness of forced arbitration clauses do to millions of Americans.

I thank Mr. JOHNSON again for yielding, for his extraordinary leadership on this issue, and for his fight to ensure that all Americans have access to the courts and fair resolutions of their grievances.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, as this Special Order has powerfully documented, forced arbitration isn't open, isn't just, and isn't fair. Simply put, forced arbitration clauses have become an exculpatory mechanism to rig the justice system.

Arbitrators don't have to be lawyers. Their decisions are practically irreversible. There is no record kept of the proceedings upon which you could appeal. There isn't even a requirement that witness testimony be given under oath.

As The New York Times investigative series illustrated, arbitration can even take place in the offices of the party representing the defendant.

There is also overwhelming evidence that forced arbitration creates an unaccountable system of winners and losers through what is called a repeat player advantage process that favors corporations over one-time participants, such as individual workers and consumers.

An analysis of employment arbitrations found that workers' odds of winning were significantly diminished in forced arbitration.

In 2012, the Center for Responsible Lending likewise reported that companies with more cases before arbitrators get consistently better results from these same arbitrators. Why? Because they are the ones who refer cases to the arbitrators.

The arbitrators want to eat. They know that, if they rule against whoever is referring the cases to them, then that is going to cut short their ability to feed themselves.

And so they rule in favor of the hand that is feeding them, and that is arbitrators, who are not even required to be lawyers and who have a perverse incentive to favor the repeat business over the consumers or the worker that they will never see again.

I am particularly alarmed by the growing number of companies that hide forced arbitration clauses outside of the four corners of the document.

For example, General Mills included a forced arbitration clause in its privacy policy that bound any consumer who downloaded the company's coupons or participated in its promotions.

Under its new terms, consumers also waived the right to a trial simply by liking the company's page on Facebook or mentioning the company on Twitter. Can you imagine giving up your Seventh Amendment jury trial right on Facebook?

It has become an increasingly common practice to use gotcha tactics to deceive consumers and employees by providing so-called notice of binding arbitration in brochures, email and memoranda, job application forms, signs outside of restaurants binding you—if you set foot in there and consume, binding you to forced arbitration, in-store application kiosks, employee training programs, contests and

games associated with company promotions. People have to watch out. Even on the side of a cereal box you can waive your right to a jury trial.

Just imagine a child finding glass in their cereal, but because the company prohibited class action litigation through forced arbitration, the child's parents would have to individually not go to court, but go to an arbitrator to have their claim adjudicated.

What if it affected several thousand children? That same forced arbitration clause would prevent class litigation to ensure that our children's food is safe to eat.

These are actual cases where someone potentially lost their right to hold a company accountable for unlawful conduct in a public courtroom. In all of these cases, we are not even talking about an agreement with a dotted line.

I am reminded of Justice Kagan's dissent in American Express v. Italian Colors where she observed that the Federal Arbitration Act was never meant to be a mechanism easily made to block the vindication of meritorious Federal claims and insulate wrongdoers from liability.

The tides are turning. Americans are beginning to fight to restore their right to a jury trial. Policymakers are using every tool available to fix our laws so that corporations can no longer escape public accountability.

I thank my colleagues for their participation in this Special Order. Before I close, I want to also thank the Congressional Progressive Caucus for their tireless work to advance a progressive agenda of equality and opportunity for all.

I will close with this observation. The American people would fight back if someone came into their home and said: We are going to take away your Second Amendment right to bear firearms. They would fight.

But when corporations take away their Seventh Amendment right to a jury trial, they remain mum, but not for much longer.

People are standing up. People are tired. They are desiring change. They are angry and realize that they have been taken advantage of.

They want to level the playing field, and that is exactly what the legislation that we have introduced in this Congress will accomplish.

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

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, during the congressional debates on arbitration more than 90 years ago, witnesses testified about the benefit of resolving disputes without judicial intervention. They noted, for example, that when arbitration is properly used, it can help parties avoid the uncertainty, delay, and costs of protracted litigation. Their testimony ultimately led Congress to pass the Federal Arbitration Act of 1925, which empowered courts to enforce arbitration agreements.

As the use of pre-dispute forced arbitration agreements—especially with respect to consumer transactions and employment agreements—has proliferated in recent years, however, it is clear that arbitration is not always beneficial to all parties and it may, in fact, eviscerate the protection of critical federal consumer and civil rights statutes. It is also apparent that the secrecy of arbitration awards can be used to hide awareness of wrongdoing by businesses. And, there are serious concerns about whether some arbitrators are indeed neutral.

The New York Times, in an excellent three-part series of investigative articles on the use of forced arbitration agreements published last year, reported that ''clauses buried in tens of millions of contracts have deprived Americans of one of their most fundamental constitutional rights: their day in court.'' Based on its exhaustive investigation of court records and hundreds of interviews with lawyers, judges, arbitrators, corporate executives, and plaintiffs, the Times found that arbitration practices are often closed, fail to adhere to rules of evidence or even substantive law, and are nearly impossible to appeal. The arbitration provisions that prohibit class actions, as the Times reports, are viewd by state judges as virtual 'get out of jail free' cards ''because it is nearly impossible for one individual to take on a corporation with vast resources.'' By privatizing the justice system, arbitration ''bears little resemblance to court'' and has become an ''alternate system of justice'' for businesses precisely because it tends to favor them, according to the Times.

Nothwithstanding these concerns, the use of pre-dispute forced arbitration clauses has become virtually ubiquitous. They appear in credit card agreements, car rental agreements, and employee handbooks. They even appear in nursing home agreements when they are signed ''at the time of admission only because the resident or family member does not even notice or understand the arbitration clause, or sign[ed] . . . out of fear that otherwise the admission will be jeopardized,'' according to the National Senior Citizens Law Center.

Pre-dispute mandatory arbitration agreements do not offer any option to reject. Once signed, these agreements force consumers and employees to irretrievably waive their right to judicial redress for harms they have suffered, prevent them from availing themselves of any class action remedy, and deny them the right to otherwise obtain justice under applicable state and federal law.

As a result, millions of consumers and employees across our Nation are legally bound by forced arbitration clauses in contracts with little or no ability to negotiate them.

Accordingly, it is time for Congress to reconsider the value of pre-dispute mandatory arbitration agreements. We must restore integrity to the arbitration process and limit the enforceability of mandatory arbitration clauses that provide no opportunity for consumers and employees to opt-out.

Congress should not restrict the rights and options of consumers and employees to resolve disputes Rather, arbitration should be one option among many to resolve disputes. Legislation that protects consumers and employees is a common-sense solution for all Americans.

For example, H.R. 2087, the ''Arbitration Fairness Act,'' is an excellent measure that was introduced by my colleague, Representative Henry C. ''Hank'' Johnson, Jr. This bill would make pre-dispute arbitration agreements unenforceable in employee, consumer, civil rights, and antitrust disputes. Importantly, H.R. 2087 would leave arbitration in effect when it is truly voluntary: after a dispute arises.

Similarly, H.R. 4899, the ''Restore Statutory Rights Act,'' which was also introduced by Mr. Johnson earlier this week, would ensure that the rights and protections established by Congress or the states are enforceable in court.

These bills would help restore balance and fairness to contractual agreements by allowing consumers, employees, franchisees, residents of long-term care facilities, and others to opt for arbitration, rather than have arbitration imposed on them as a pre-condition. Such measures would help ensure a fairer arbitration process because the terms of arbitration.

Congress must do more to protect the right of consumers and employees to have access to the courts. Americans should not be forced to lose this precious right as a result of one-sided, pre-dispute mandatory arbitration agreements.

Mr. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of American consumers who are too often denied access to justice and forced into arbitration by contracts they were unable to negotiate fairly.

The Federal Arbitration Act was enacted to resolve disputes among businesses of equal standing; not to restrict consumer access to our courts. The horrific distortion of this law has allowed certain actors to tip the scale in their favor and create an uneven playing field in the pursuit of justice.

It is our responsibility to guarantee every American equal access to justice and protect the public from unfair and pernicious business practices. For this reason, I strongly support my colleague, Representative Hank Johnson's bill, the Arbitration Fairness Act. This bill would require that agreements to arbitrate employment, consumer, civil rights or anti-trust disputes be made only after the dispute has arisen. Consumers can only properly evaluate their options, and make a truly voluntary choice, after a dispute has arisen. Arbitration undeniably serves an important role in our legal system, but its use must be a choice, and not a mandate resulting from a one-sided contract.

Americans deserve to choose whether court, arbitration, mediation, or any other method of dispute resolution works best for them. I urge my colleagues to join me in guaranteeing all Americans this meaningful choice by cosponsoring the Arbitration Fairness Act.

HOLDING THE IRS ACCOUNTABLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PALMER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DESANTIS) for 30 minutes.

Mr. DESANTIS. Mr. Speaker, tax day is fast approaching. If you, as a taxpayer, get audited and the IRS subpoenas documents from you, do you think you could destroy them and say: The heck with it? Could you lie to the IRS when they are asking you about your taxes and investigating you?

If somehow you unintentionally provided false information to the IRS, could you decline to correct the record once you found out that what you told them was not true? If you had a duty to comply with a lawfully issued subpoena, could you just fail to take basic efforts to comply?

I think every taxpayer in America instinctively knows that they would never be able to get away with the conduct I just outlined.

So I think the question that we here in this body have to answer is: Should the IRS be able to get away with conduct that a taxpayer would never be able to get away with? Can we really accept that the IRS gets to live under a lower standard of conduct than the taxpayers that the agency wields so much power over?

We know how this began. The IRS abused its authority. They targeted Americans based on their First Amendment beliefs. They got caught redhanded; so, Congress investigated.

Now, the Department of Justice was supposedly investigating, but that was baked in the cake from the beginning. They were not interested in this case. And, of course, they did not pursue prosecutions. Ultimately, even though Lois Lerner was held in contempt, they didn't pursue that even to the grand jury.

□ 1830

So Congress has tried to get to the truth of this, and Congress is even taking some action, like cutting funding for the IRS. Of course, when we cut funding, all they did was stop answering the phone calls. They didn't take it out of the bureaucracy. They just basically harmed the taxpayers.

So we are trying to get to the truth. We subpoena documents from the IRS, we bring in the Commissioner, John Koskinen, to testify, and we are trying to get the truth on behalf of the American people.

And yet, what has happened?

The IRS destroyed 400 backup tapes containing as many as 24,000 of Lois Lerner's emails that were under not one, but two congressional subpoenas.

Commissioner Koskinen came to the Congress and made multiple statements that are demonstrably false. He breached his duty to correct the record once it was clear that some of his statements were false, such as the fact that he said we will produce every one of her emails. Koskinen even claimed that the IRS went to great lengths to ensure that Congress was given all documents, yet the IRS failed to conduct even basic investigation, such that the inspector general found a thousand emails that were in the IRS' possession all along. It took them 2 weeks to find it.

The IRS didn't look at Lerner's BlackBerry. They didn't look in other areas which were obvious that you would want to look at.

Great lengths?

Give me a break. As Judge David Sentelle noted today in the D.C. Circuit, it is hard to find the IRS to be an agency that we can trust.

So I think the question is: What is the remedy for them frustrating the American people's inquiry into their targeting of Americans?

I have argued, along with my colleagues here, that the appropriate remedy is found in the Constitution, which provides for impeachment of civil officers.

You have an IRS Commissioner who breached multiple duties that he owed to the public, and he violated the public trust, which is what Alexander Hamilton said was kind of the touchstone for what an impeachment should be in the Federalist Papers. Impeachment is not a prosecution or a punishment. It is really a constitutional check.

I think as you listen to some of the conduct that the IRS engaged in—my colleagues will go into more of it—obviously there is a need to get the truth, but there is also a need for this institution here to stand up for itself. It is really a question of the House's self-respect.

How much longer can we, as elected officials, allow the bureaucracy to simply walk all over the Congress?

We are supposed to be the people's representatives. We are supposed to be able to do justice for them when the government is not acting appropriately.

Fear of a media backlash or that people in the beltway will say you shouldn't be doing it, that is no excuse for our failure to discharge our basic constitutional duties.

As James Madison said: ''Ambition must be made to counteract ambition.'' No government agency is above oversight and accountability by the people's representatives.

And so as it stands now, we have filed articles of impeachment that have basically been collecting dust for several months. We think they should be brought up on the Committee on the Judiciary and we should have a debate about whether this Commissioner's conduct satisfied the standards of conduct that the Founding Fathers envisioned for civil officers of the United States.

I think any taxpayer who looks at what the IRS did will instinctively say, you know, it just ain't right that they are able to get away with that when they are dealing with the Congress, but I would never be able to get away with that when I am dealing with the IRS.

I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JORDAN), my friend and colleague, a guy who has been really, really fearless on holding the IRS to account.

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for organizing this Special Order, but more importantly, for the fight that he has waged in holding the IRS accountable and for saying to the American taxpayer, the American people, when you have individuals running an agency with the power of the Internal Revenue Service, doing what was done under Commissioner Koskinen's watch, he, in fact, should be impeached.

Let's just walk back through the story. Remember how this started. We had conservative groups around the country saying, hey, we are being harassed by the IRS for filing to get tax-exempt status, something that used to be kind of a matter-of-fact thing; we are being harassed for doing so.

So the Congress of the United States called for the inspector general to do an investigation. The inspector general does his investigation. It takes a long time. It takes about a year. They do an investigation and they find, you know what, our very own tax collection agency is, in fact, targeting citizens for their political beliefs. They find it. They find targeting took place. The inspector general of Treasury tells the Treasury officials and tells the IRS what they have discovered, and they are going to file their report the following week.

In an unprecedented move, Lois Lerner, the Friday before the report is supposed to be made public the following week, Friday, May 10, 2013, Lois Lerner does what all kinds of people do when they get caught with their hand in the cookie jar. She wants to get ahead of this story, so at a staged event, bar association event, staged question, planted question from a friend, she gets asked about the targeting and the inspector general's investigation, and she does what all kinds of people do when they get caught. She lies. She flat out lies. She tries to blame good public servants in Cincinnati. She said this was all about Cincinnati.

We all know what the evidence pointed to. It was about Washington. It was about the folks right here in the Internal Revenue Service.

The report comes out the following week. On the following Monday, 2 days later, the President of the United States and the Attorney General say this is inexcusable, and they call for a criminal investigation.

In fact, it is so bad, the President fires the then-Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service. They bring in an interim Commissioner. For a long time, we have hearings and a bunch of things happen. And, of course, one of the most noteworthy things is the very lady who was at the center of the storm, who lied when she first made

this public, gets brought in front of the Congress.

And what did she do?

She takes the Fifth. So when you have the central figure exercising their Fifth Amendment right, not willing to testify in public and answer the people's representatives' questions, it sort of puts a premium on getting the documents and the communications that the IRS had relative to this issue.

And so a long investigation ensues. Both a criminal investigation and a congressional investigation. Mr. Koskinen is then brought in as the Commissioner who is going to clean it all up, clean up this agency with so much power over American people's lives. He is brought in.

And guess what happens?

Everything Congressman DESANTIS just described. There are 422 backup tapes destroyed containing potentially 24,000 emails. Many of those emails most likely were Lois Lerner's emails that the American people and the Congress will never get a chance to see. They were destroyed, as Congressman DESANTIS pointed out, with three preservation orders in place. One from the IRS and the Treasury themselves. Another preservation order by the Justice Department saying preserve all documents, preserve everything. So three preservation orders, two subpoenas in place, and the Commissioner, under his watch, 422 backup tapes are destroyed containing 24,000 emails.

What does Mr. Koskinen do when he learns about problems with these tapes and problems with Ms. Lerner's hard drive?

He waits 4 months—4 months—before he tells Congress. Again, raising the obvious question—if you are a taxpayer being audited and you realize, oops, I lost some documents or I destroyed something, and you wait 4 months to tell the IRS what you did, oh, my goodness, you are in huge trouble.

But Mr. Koskinen, he is the cleanup guy, he is the President's hand-picked person, he is brought in. He thinks it is just fine that there are all these problems that he knows about.

Now, he didn't just wait 4 months and then tell us. In that time, when he first learned there were problems, he testified in front of Congress several times and didn't tell us. And then the worst thing is he provided false testimony, which, again, my colleague from Florida has pointed out. He said: Look, everything is fine.

And then finally, think about all the duties this guy, the guy brought in to clean up the mess, think about all the duties he had. A duty to preserve all the documents, particularly in light of the fact the central figure has taken the Fifth. A duty to produce them when they are asked for by the Congress. A duty to disclose to us if he couldn't preserve and produce them. A duty to testify accurately. And then, finally, a duty to correct the record if, in fact, he testified and said something that wasn't accurate. Every single duty he had, he breached. Every single one.

Here is the final point I will make. And this is why—what Congressman DESANTIS, what Congressman HICE, and what Congressman LAMBORN are going to talk about is why this is so important, why this is so critical that this individual be brought in front of Congress. And, actually, we go through the articles of impeachment, and we exercise the right that the Constitution requires us to do of a situation of this magnitude.

Why it is so important is, remember the underlying offense. This is an agency with the power and influence that the IRS has systematically and for a sustained period of time targeting Americans' most cherished rights. You think about your First Amendment liberties: freedom of the press, freedom to petition your government, freedom to assemble, freedom to practice your faith, freedom of religion, practice your faith the way you think the good Lord wants you to. But under the First Amendment, your most fundamental liberty is your right to speak.

When the Founders put together the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and that First Amendment, when they were talking about your free speech rights, what they were mostly focused on was not just any old speech, any old talk, they were mostly focused on doing what we are doing right now, political speech, talking about politics, talking about government.

You have the right as an American citizen to speak out against your government and not be harassed for doing so. And yet, the IRS did just that. And that is why, Mr. Koskinen, that is why we filed these articles of impeachment and that is why we are asking that they move forward in the Committee on the Judiciary and we do what the American people sent us here to do.

I thank the gentleman from Florida who has done so much good work on this issue and a host of others.

Mr. DESANTIS. I thank the gentleman from Ohio. I now yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN).

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the leadership of Representative DESANTIS and Representative JORDAN in holding the Obama administration accountable.

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to call for the impeachment of John Koskinen, Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service, for high crimes and misdemeanors. This effort is needed to hold the IRS Commissioner accountable for allowing documents to be destroyed and for providing misleading statements to Congress after IRS targeted conservative organizations. I am a cosponsor—and proud to be one—of the resolution. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

As it has become abundantly clear, Commissioner Koskinen has failed the American people by stonewalling congressional investigations into the IRS targeting scandal. Conservative organizations were intentionally targeted by our Federal Government simply because they believed and expressed a message that was in opposition to the administration.

Now, while I may disagree with many on the left, I would never seek to threaten them by use of government force and coercion and take away their freedom of speech.

Moreover, what is truly disturbing about the IRS scandal is that Commissioner Koskinen has violated the public trust. As a Commissioner, he failed to comply with a congressional subpoena, failed to ensure that evidence was preserved, failed to testify truthfully, and failed to notify Congress when he learned that thousands of emails were missing.

Our constituents expect Congress to exercise oversight of this administration and to demand accountability. We know the IRS Commissioner cannot be trusted. Impeachment would help rectify this sorry situation and would go a long way toward showing the American people that we are serious about our constitutional duties.

Impeachment is the appropriate means to restore balance between the branches of government. The Framers included impeachment in the Constitution for precisely this scenario, where an executive branch official who violated the public trust will not resign and they refuse to fire him. That is exactly what should happen here. IRS Commissioner Koskinen must go.

Mr. DESANTIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado. I now yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JODY B. HICE).

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, we all know this time of year is when the American people are held accountable to pay their taxes. Unfortunately, the IRS—and especially its head Commissioner John Koskinen—have proven over and over and over that they cannot be trusted to hold themselves to the same standard that they hold the rest of us. It is critical that we, as Congress, as we are trying to do here this evening, that we ensure that the IRS is held accountable for its actions the same way the American people and other Federal agencies are held accountable for their actions.

House Republicans, my colleagues and I, many of us on the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in particular are very familiar with Commissioner Koskinen. Under his leadership, the IRS has failed to respond to multiple subpoenas for evidence. There has been destruction of thousands of key documents, thereby really hindering the work of Oversight investigations, possibly obstructing justice.

□ 1845

John Koskinen, as has already been mentioned here just moments ago, sat before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and lied

under oath multiple times, providing false and misleading testimony, which, of course, as we all know, is outright perjury.

John Koskinen's continued role as Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service—which we all know is one of those powerful Federal agencies—despite his continued attempts to deceive Congress and the American people, is nothing but the living embodiment that the IRS indeed does not play by the same rules that they demand of other Americans.

The American people are well aware that the IRS has placed itself above the law, above the rest of us. In fact, according to a recent Rasmussen poll, only about 30 percent of Americans actually trust the IRS to fairly enforce the law, which means that we have got nearly 70 percent of Americans who don't trust the IRS to abide by the law here in America. One of the most powerful agencies that we have cannot be trusted. And the American people don't trust them. This is a Federal agency that desperately needs to be set on the right track. Of course, the first step to that is eliminating the failed leadership.

So I join my colleagues on the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, many of whom are here this evening. I am proud to be a cosponsor of H. Res. 494 to impeach Commissioner John Koskinen. This is absolutely one of our most important roles in Congress: to hold our Federal agencies and heads of these agencies accountable.

So with that mission, I appreciate the gentleman for the opportunity to speak a few moments, and I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 494 to impeach IRS Commissioner John Koskinen.

Again, I want to thank my good friend, Congressman DESANTIS, for leading this Special Order.

Mr. DESANTIS. It is my pleasure to yield to one of my friends and colleagues from the great State of Florida (Mr. YOHO), who is really a stalwart in terms of bringing accountability to government.

Mr. YOHO. I would like to thank my colleague from my neighboring district, Mr. DESANTIS.

Mr. Speaker, this is a great moment in time and I appreciate the gentleman bringing this up. This is such an important issue that we all deal with and something that every American has a vested interest in. I thank the gentleman for holding this Special Order this evening. The topic of tonight's discussion is an important one and one that demands attention by all Americans.

My district and I have never been a fan of the IRS. It is an agency that wreaks terror amongst the American people. And in a perfect world, we would eliminate it altogether, but that is not what we are here to talk about tonight. When you consider their actions over the past couple of years of targeting conservative groups and individuals seeking nonprofit status or political ideology that doesn't agree with an administration, my desire to see this agency dismantled increases tenfold.

Although the focus tonight is the conduct of IRS Commissioner John Koskinen and his failure to perform his duty to respond to lawfully issued congressional subpoenas, let us not forget that the IRS scandal began back in 2010. 2010—over 6 years ago—this started.

And do you want to know why the frustration of the American people is so high, why they say, You guys don't ever change in Washington, you never hold anybody accountable?

We see the law being blatantly broken every day. Yet we stand here neutered, afraid to do something.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we stand up and hold those people that are breaking the law accountable. I know Mr. DESANTIS' goal is to do that, his committee's goal is to do that, and my goal is to help them accomplish that.

Many have accused Commissioner Koskinen of obscuring multiple congressional investigations into the IRS targeting of conservative groups seeking nonprofit status. Some argue that in the process of stalling and misrepresenting the facts to Congress, he has committed culpable misdemeanors.

If Commissioner Koskinen has deliberately misled the American people, Congress has the constitutional responsibility to hold him accountable to the American people.

Who else can do that?

Only this body has that power: the House of Representatives, the people's House. That is why our Founders instilled that power, that authority, that oversight with this body. The American people can't hold anybody accountable. It is us, the legislature.

And I support his impeachment. I feel that his agency completely went off the rails. And by doing so, I am proud to support JASON CHAFFETZ' House Resolution 494 asking for the impeachment of John Koskinen for high crimes and misdemeanors.

This is something that has only been used 19 times in our Nation's history: impeachment of a Federal official. Nineteen times in over 200 years. It is not something that is flagrantly used to throw people out of office because we don't agree with their political ideology. This is something that has been used very sparingly, and it is a tool that must be used when the time is right to use it. Mr. Speaker, I say the time is right. The American people want to see this done.

The resolution was introduced in October of last year, and we have yet to see it come out of the Judiciary Committee and onto the House floor. What is the holdup, is my question and that of a lot of other people.

We know the White House will not lift a finger. This White House and administration will not lift a finger to hold anyone accountable, but why hasn't our own House leadership done more to bring this resolution to the House floor? That is my question. It is the question when I go home: Why are you guys not holding people accountable? Because if we don't hold ourselves accountable and we blatantly break the law, why should not the American people do that? This is to send an example that we cannot break the law. Because if we don't follow the rule of law, why should the American people?

The American people want answers and accountability in their government. As Members of the House, we have heard their cries and worked together to hold the Obama administration accountable. It is time we bring H. Res. 494 up for a straight up-or-down vote and do the work our constituents ask of us.

Just this month I held four town hall and teletown hall meetings, and one of the topics I heard over and over again was about government accountability. We hear it a lot: government accountability and transparency. We talk about it and hear about it, but don't see it.

Again, that leads to the frustration of the American people: Why aren't elected officials ever held accountable?

We have government agencies targeting American citizens for nothing more than a political ideology, their beliefs, ignoring our demand for information and flagrantly ignoring the law. This needs to end. We cannot change our Nation for the better if we do not change how business is done in Washington. Nothing in Washington will ever change if we don't start holding officials accountable.

We need to start here. We need to start now. And I urge my colleagues to support the impeachment of John Koskinen. This is something not taken lightly. Again, I want to reiterate it has been used 19 times in over 200 years. I urge my colleagues to support the impeachment of John Koskinen and to continue to hold strong against this and future administrations that disregard the law, the Constitution, and the people of this great Nation.

Mr. DESANTIS. I appreciate my friend from Florida. Those were very well-received comments.

I would also like to just mention that Mr. PALMER from Alabama—who is serving up there—and I were discussing before he had to go up and serve in that duty—and I think it was a good point: if this were a private business and the private business had behaved this way—in the face of the IRS—the CEO would have been fired because it just would have been absolute hell for the company.

And that is one reason why the American people are so frustrated with government. There are different standards that apply for people in Washington versus the rest of the American people and the taxpayers. And that is just totally intolerable in a Republican form of government.

And I make one other point that I think sometimes gets lost. When you start talking about what are impeachable offenses, people tend to think of it in terms of criminal offenses. And while there are criminal offenses that would qualify as impeachable offenses, the two are not mutually exclusive. And, in fact, the Founders believed that the real reason you needed impeachment was for things that may not necessarily be criminal, but that were breaches of the public trust.

Joseph Story, the preeminent Supreme Court Justice, noted that:

> Impeachable offenses are aptly termed political offenses growing out of personal misconduct or gross neglect or usurpation or habitual disregard for the public interest. They must be examined upon very broad and comprehensive principles of public policy and duty.

I think that is tailor-made for this instance. Some of the false statements maybe do violate statues, but we don't have to get into that. We can simply say: Has he violated, has he shown a disregard for the public interest, has he been—even grossly negligent would be actionable—and I think that is clearly the case here.

I echo my friend from Florida that said we need to get the dust of the impeachment resolutions, we need to get it up to Judiciary and pass it out, and then let's let the House make a decision about whether that is valid or not.

Some people say: Well, the Senate may not want to do it. They will have to defend their votes then. And that is fine with me. I think most Americans want the IRS to live at least under the same standard they do. I think it should be a higher standard, given all the power they have.

I appreciate my colleagues for coming and discussing this issue. The articles have not been brought up, but we are not forgetting, many of our constituents are not forgetting, and really the time to act is now. If we don't—this is absolutely true—the IRS will have gotten away with everything. That is unacceptable.

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

EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT INCOME SECURITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 30 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge that Congressman TIM RYAN of Ohio and Congressman RICK NOLAN of Minnesota had scheduling conflicts. They were here earlier, and we thought this Special Order would start earlier. And I want to say thank you to both of them so very much for their strong support of the pension benefit rights of America's workers and retirees.

Tonight I rise to bring a very serious situation to the attention of the American people, a situation that demands justice. It relates to something called ERISA, or the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, passed decades ago that says when workers work and accrue benefits for retirement, those are sacrosanct. They are earned benefits and no one can cut them. ERISA promises that those retirees will receive the earned benefits that they worked so hard for.

Mr. Speaker, I want the American people to know that today I stood with thousands of America's workers out here on the lawn facing the Capitol. American retirees, their families, and supporters are here in our Nation's capital to save their hard-earned pensions that should be guaranteed under the laws of this country. They are here in Washington because Congress abandoned them. They were abandoned by the executive branch, too.

What has happened is that hundreds of thousands of American workers are getting notices in the mail. These are current beneficiaries, people who are already retired, who are getting notices that their pensions are being cut by half, by 30 percent, some as much as by 70 percent under something that passed here in the Congress called the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act.

But it didn't pass on its own, as a freestanding piece of legislation. It was stuck in a gigantic bill—we call it a must-pass bill—that, in December of 2014, if it had not been passed, the government would have shut down. The problem is most Members of Congress had no idea that was even in that bill. That section was airlifted into what was called the CR/Omnibus, the continuing resolution appropriations bill of that year. But on the section that dealt with pension rights, which had nothing to do with the appropriations process or the continuing resolution, these pension cuts were dropped in. There was no floor debate, there was no separate debate on that issue.

□ 1900

There were no amendments allowed. People, Members didn't even know what was in that section of the bill.

So that Multiemployer Pension Reform Act, they call it MPRA, was supposed to solve one crisis, and that is a shortage in the funds currently in that particular pension fund; but it placed the solution on the backs of the workers, the people who had earned those benefits themselves. Retirees who never caused the financial shortfall are going to bear the entire burden of the shortfall in that fund.

In reality, people in Ohio—just who were Ohio Teamster retirees, nearly 48,000 retirees in Ohio, the State most impacted in the union—are now getting notices that their pensions are going to be cut. Overall, there are over 270,000—a quarter million—Teamster retirees, alone, across our country who are being affected; and, of course, some of them were with us today.

Over the last year, I have heard extensively from retirees who will see their pensions dramatically reduced—dramatically reduced—if, in fact, these cuts are approved by the U.S. Treasury Department.

These Americans did everything our country asked them to do as productive citizens. They went to work. They worked for decades. They worked for companies that matched that money, and they thought they would have a secure retirement—guaranteed. The law says, under ERISA, their retirement income will be guaranteed. But now it is a promise not being kept, and they are facing a stark reality. These workers earned their benefits. No one has the right to take them away.

Imagine working for 30 years as a truck driver, where your work takes you away on long trips for weeks at a time—time away from your family, time away from your community, countless missed family gatherings and life moments you will never get back, but you are a good worker so you do it. It is a good job with good pay, a solid middle-class living, a chance to make life better for your family and children, and, with it, all the promise of a reasonable and secure retirement in later years, if you can make it, doing that hard work.

Imagine that you retire with your earned, predictable pension you have worked for your whole life. You are in your seventies, and a hastily passed government law reduces your pension from $3,500 a month to $1,400 a month—poof, just like that, through no fault of yours. You did everything you were supposed to.

This example is not the exception of what is happening to the American people; it is the rule.

Now, let me tell you, truck driving is hard work. It is debilitating on bodies, the bouncing, hopping out of that truck, many workers having to load the truck, as well as drive the truck, and then unload the truck, leaving many of these retirees disabled from work they did for 20 and 30 years.

I hear countless stories of how retirees are caring for their children, some of whom who have disabilities, supporting their own ill and aged parents, or supporting children and grandchildren with life expenses which, the last time I looked, aren't going down.

Electric bills are up. Food is up. It is not so easy to make it in retirement years. These pension cuts impact more than just the individual who earned the pension. Literally, these cuts impact millions of Americans and the communities in which they reside.

The House has continued to let these retirees down in its failure to hold even a single hearing to fully understand their financial plight. Can you imagine that? A federally guaranteed income secured, been in the law for years, now you have got hundreds of thousands of Americans impacted and Congress is dead as a doornail. They are not doing their job, even as these workers face these tremendous cuts.

Now, one of the major funds that is affected was called Central States, and

it was the first fund being affected—where its workers, pension retirees, were being affected—that filed an application with the Treasury Department to restructure benefits. But that application is only the first of many funds, pension funds, that will seek cuts in the years ahead.

The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation reports that 150 multiemployer plans—covering a million and a half participants—are in grave risk of insolvency. With those cuts, entire communities will feel the economic impact.

What is more shameful is this was caused, in large part, by the role played—get ready—by the large, multinational banks. Let me list three of them for you: Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs, and Northern Trust. You see, the Central States Pension Fund is the only major private pension fund where all the discretionary investment decisions are made by financial firms, not our government. There was a court order from 1982 that has made the decisions for the retirees' billion-dollar fund. So the government basically turned this money over to the big banks.

Does this sound familiar?

This was the result of the Department of Labor wrestling control of the fund, back in the eighties, away from organized crime, who used funds as their own piggy bank to build parts of Las Vegas. But the real irony here is that the Teamsters' pension fund disappeared more quickly under Wall Street than it did under the mob. How about that?

Ask the retirees how they feel, and they will tell you they got their money under the mob control. And I am not arguing for mob control. I am arguing for fair treatment of pensioners in our country and getting the money they earned.

Time has not been friendly to the trucking industry, with deregulation decimating good-paying jobs in trucking companies across the country and bankruptcy laws allowing hundreds of companies to exit the fund without paying their full withdrawal liabilities.

Lots went wrong by the big shots making the decisions, but the people paying the price over this 30-year period are the workers, and that is wrong. That is wrong.

The fund was hit particularly hard by the turmoil in the markets during the dot-com bubble and then followed by the Great Recession and financial crash during 2007 and 2008. Guess what. The fund, the pension fund, lost nearly 40 percent of its assets as it appears to have been overly invested in risky assets by Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, and Northern Trust.

We are calling for a forensic audit of what happened every year with the investments of this fund and who did it, who benefited, and now, who is being asked to pay the price.

How tragic that Congress will bail out the big banks, but then they will throw millions of truck drivers and middle-class retirees who worked hard for a living under the bus—or under the truck.

Central States will tell you that these dynamics have caused the shortages, but the handwriting has been on the wall for a rather long time. While other funds diversified and recruited additional employers, something happened in this fund that is atypical. But why should the workers be blamed for what the managers and the bankers did?

Immediately after that law was passed, called MPRA, I set to work to correct the unfairness to America's workers and introduced H.R. 2844, the Keep Our Pension Promises Act. It now has nearly 50 cosponsors—50.

The idea here is—we call it KOPPA—the Keep Our Pension Promises Act would prevent these draconian cuts to the earned pensions of our workers by filling the financial gap in the fund and reinstate the ''anti-cutback'' provisions in ERISA, the bedrock of that law.

We have to keep our promises. ERISA promised that pension benefits in multiemployer plans would be cut only when a plan runs out of money; and even then, the benefit of the retirees should be the last to be cut, not the first to be cut.

No wonder that the middle class is mad at Washington. No wonder we see this Presidential race that is occurring, where there is a lot of hubbub around the country. The public is sick and tired of Washington doing this kind of thing to the American people. The public sees that this is just another broken promise by Washington and another rigged bill that went through here by the top leaders in Congress that most Members didn't even know was in there.

The system is rigged. A Senator from the other body said that. Well, by golly, on this one, in terms of benefits of pension retirees, it sure is rigged.

There are more than a million honest Americans who, for decades and decades, worked hard. They followed the rules, and they are now getting thrown to the wind by their own government.

Imagine if Congress were to cut Social Security benefits in the same way, by two-thirds, in a retiree's monthly pension payments. There would be riots in the streets.

My colleagues, if you ever wonder why tens and tens of millions of Americans are angry, deeply disappointed, and feel betrayed by their government, look no further than this issue.

I want to say to all the Americans who drove across the country today to be with us here in Washington, to spend the money for that gasoline, to take time away from their families—frankly, some of the men and women who were there couldn't even stand up on the lawn. They had to sit along the concrete fences along the side because their bodies simply can't hold them up as they did when they were younger. We can do better than this as a country.

The bill that we are offering, H.R. 2844, basically would tax some of the assets of the most wealthy in our country and fill the gaps between now and 10 years from now so these workers wouldn't have to take these cuts. It is truly unfair to them.

It is time we operate, in this Congress, with the oversight that this institution was built upon. It is time for the committees of jurisdiction to do their job. Give these Americans, who are patriotic people—many of them are veterans. Many of them have served our country so ably in so many ways. They have been good family people. They don't need to have their benefits cut in their retirement years.

It has caused such havoc in these families, the worry alone, the blood pressures that have gone up and the heartache and the lost sleep of losing what they worked for their entire life. What is happening to them is wrong. It is not just.

It is time for the Treasury Department to deny the Central States application to cut benefits, and it is time that this Congress keep our pension promises to the American people who worked so hard, paid their taxes, helped build their families, helped build their communities, had a great work ethic, went to work every day, many of them getting up real early before the sun even rose. And now to treat them like this, in their golden years, how wrong is this?

I am so proud to rise on this floor this evening to speak on their behalf. They deserve a better day. I expect the people in this Congress and I expect the executive branch to dole out justice fairly to them and not make them the victim of the bad decisions that were made by the biggest banks in this country and by the managers of those funds that these workers dutifully paid their dues into over the years, coming out of their check every pay period. It is not right to cut their benefits. They do not deserve this.

Those funds need additional time to recover following that 2008 crash. You don't recover in 7 or 8 years, not from that kind of downfall in the economy. Why make the workers pay for the mistakes of others? It is just so wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to come down here this evening urging my colleagues to support the Keep Our Pension Promises Act, to urge them to sign onto our bill, H.R. 2844.

I say to those workers and retirees across our country who are likely listening: Keep up the faith. Keep writing your Representatives. Keep writing the U.S. Treasury Department, Mr. Ken Feinberg, who is in charge of this solution.

We want to make sure that justice prevails; and if we speak out, if we don't give up, if we make sure we stand up and talk to our Senators, talk to our Representatives, talk to all the Presidential candidates coming

through our States, across our country, during this year, this Presidential year, we can impact this policy.

Both political parties should have in their platforms this year that they will be writing come this summer that the Keep Our Pension Promises Act should be passed, that we should take care of these retirees and not permit them to lose the earned benefits that they spent their lives devoted to and now, in their later years, are facing these draconian cuts.

It is so wrong. I ask for justice for these American workers. Let's do what is right for them. And I know the people listening tonight agree, and they would do the same thing if they were standing down here on this floor with me.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for allowing me to speak out this evening and to stand alongside the hardworking men and women of our country. They deserve better treatment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

HOLDING THE IRS ACCOUNTABLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on the comments of my dear friends' Special Order earlier by Congressman RON DESANTIS.

I know there were a number of people who spoke, but the ones I actually saw and heard—Congressman DESANTIS, a dear friend, dear friend TED YOHO, and my dear friend JIM JORDAN—did an extraordinary job of laying out why we simply have to show that this House has standards, that Congress has rules, and you can only thumb your nose so far. You can only lie and defraud and, in some ways, be incompetent before there has to be an impeachment.

And with regard to the head of the Internal Revenue Service, the case has been made very effectively in the prior Special Order. So I want to add on to that by reference to this article from the Washington Examiner entitled, ''IRS Chief:''—basically, the IRS chief is saying this; this is the headline—''Agency Encourages Illegal Immigrant Theft of Social Security Numbers to File Tax Returns.''

□ 1915

It is by Rudy Takala, dated April 12.

It says, ''The IRS is struggling to ensure that illegal immigrants are able to illegally use Social Security numbers for legitimate purposes, the agency's head told senators on Tuesday, without allowing the numbers to be used for 'bad' reasons.''

Now, that is the IRS director's reasoning. It is okay for someone illegally in the United States to be engaged in identity theft.

This is the IRS director that has presided over the massive manipulation of the Internal Revenue Service as a tool of this administration and the Democratic political party back in 2012 to prevent conservative groups, groups whose one foundational basis was the Constitution as written, groups who believed that people should follow the law.

This director's IRS targeted such people and, in some cases, kept them from getting a tax ID number and a verification that they could raise money. They kept them from participating in the 2012 election because President Obama was up for reelection, of course.

And now he has the gall to go before a Senate committee and testify that it is okay for someone illegally in this country that is involved in identity theft to use fraudulently someone else's Social Security number as long as it is not for a bad purpose.

If there has ever been a good reason to remove a department head, it certainly exists with the IRS Commissioner John Koskinen.

The article goes on and says that he made the statement in response to a question from Senator DAN COATS, a Republican from Indiana, during a session of the Senate Finance Committee about why the IRS appears to be collaborating with taxpayers who file tax returns using fraudulent information. Senator COATS said that his staff had discovered the practice after looking into agency procedures.

This is Senator COATS being quoted: ''What we learned is that . . . the IRS continues to process tax returns with false W–2 information and issue refunds as if they were routine tax returns, and say that's not really our job. We also learned the IRS ignores notifications from the Social Security Administration that a name does not match a Social Security number, and you use your own system to determine whether a number is valid.''

He is talking about the IRS.

So if we are just talking about strictly the issue of competence and not even getting into lies, fraud, deception, violating court orders, violating congressional orders, violating his own department directives—if we are just talking about an issue of competence and the Internal Revenue Service utilizes Social Security numbers in order to determine whose tax return is being filed and processed and he has the unmitigated gall to say: Now, when the Social Security Administration that issues these numbers tells us that person is filing a tax return and the information that they have given the IRS is false, it is fraudulent, it is not their number, it is not their tax return, it is not their tax information, the head of the IRS, Mr. Koskinen, says: We don't trust the Social Security number—that is basically what he is saying—we don't trust the Social Security Administration on whether or not it is a valid Social Security number when they tell us it is clearly not a number that belongs to the person that is filing that return. We go by our own information.

Now, how in the world could the Internal Revenue Service have more valid information about a taxpayer's Social Security number than the Social Security Administration that issued the number, maintains the number, and updates their records regarding who is using that number?

Giving the benefit of the doubt, maybe it is not incompetence. Maybe it is just so much unbridled arrogance that he honestly believes that nobody can be right except his department because he is the head of it.

The article goes on: ''Asked to explain those practices, Koskinen replied, 'What happens in these situations is someone is using a Social Security number to get a job, but they're filing their tax return with their [taxpayer identification number].' 'What that means,' he said, 'is that they are undocumented aliens . . . They're paying taxes. It is in everybody's interest to have them pay the taxes they owe.'

''''As long as the information is being used only to fraudulently obtain jobs,' Koskinen said, 'rather than to claim false tax returns, the agency has an interest in helping them. The question is whether the Social Security number they're using to get the job has been stolen. It's not the normal identity theft situation,' he said.

''The comments came in the broader context of a hearing on cybersecurity in the agency. About 464,000 illegally obtained Social Security numbers were targeted by hackers in a February cyber breach of the agency, while information on 330,000 taxpayers was stolen in an unrelated breach last year.''

Koskinen ''added that the agency wanted to differentiate that 'bad' misuse of personal data from other uses. 'There are questions about whether there's a way we could simply advise people . . . A lot of the time those Social Security numbers are borrowed from friends and acquaintances and they know they've been used, other times they don't.' ''

So, apparently, people at the IRS, like Lois Lerner, don't mind violating the law, don't mind violating their oath, don't mind violating the very instructions for doing their jobs, and don't mind people—apparently, Koskinen doesn't—mind people that have violated the law to come into this country and have violated the law by possessing and using a stolen Social Security number without regard to whether they actually stole it themselves. No problem there as long as they are using it, apparently, to pay taxes.

What he doesn't say is that what these returns normally do—from what I can glean, they are not using fraudulent Social Security numbers to say: IRS, we want to pay more taxes into the U.S. Treasury. So just look the other way while we use a fraudulent or a stolen identity, a stolen Social Security number. Just look the other way because we are going to send you some more money.

Isn't that wonderful? What gratuity. What a wonderful spirit that someone would break our laws to come into this country, then steal somebody's Social Security number, and then be so gracious as to say: Now, I am filing my tax return because I want you to know I want to pay more taxes fraudulently in somebody else's name.

That is normally not why somebody would file a tax return at the end of the year using a stolen Social Security number.

No. Normally, you would file that to get money back from the government. You violated all kinds of laws. So why not violate one more to get a nice check back from the government?

Is it too much of a stretch to think that perhaps, if somebody will violate the laws of the United States to come into the United States, they will refuse to comply—like millions of American immigrants have that, thank God, have wanted to come into America, have made America better, have come in and followed the law—no. These want to come in illegally and use stolen Social Security numbers.

Again, is it too much to think, perhaps, if they are willing to perjure themselves using a stolen Social Security number, willing to file a fraudulent tax return that is not really theirs or the name or number on it is not theirs so that they are guilty of perjury, they are guilty of Internal Revenue fraud—is it too much to think they might just be willing to claim some exemptions and to claim some tax credits that they are not really owed so that they get a big old check back from the Federal Government?

□ 1930

I mean, why not ask for a big tax return, tax refund from your return after you have already violated so many laws of the United States? Yet the man whose oath of office should have had him rooting out stolen Social Security numbers and making sure taxpayers are not defrauding the U.S. Government, that they are not getting refunds back they are not owed, couldn't he go ahead and do that and protect Americans from identity theft? No, apparently not.

So Americans aren't protected. Their information clearly has not been adequately protected with the Internal Revenue Service under Koskinen's control. So Americans are at risk, especially if they are law-abiding and want to keep their information protected, because we have a head of the IRS that thinks it is okay if you are illegally in the country and filing fraudulent tax returns and using stolen identities, it is okay if you are simply trying to file your tax return. But, of course, how many of them really are getting refunds? That is why they are filing the fraudulent return using a stolen Social Security number.

Well, I know, having handled thousands of felony cases in Texas that came through my court and having noticed over the years that juries feel the same way, if you will lie repeatedly or break laws of moral turpitude repeatedly, isn't it just kind of fundamental that you might be willing to lie in order to get some money back? Juries thought so, repeatedly. I thought so in numerous cases.

As we know from the rules of evidence—it should also apply to life, and it should apply to government investigations—that rule is credibility is always an issue. If somebody would use a stolen Social Security number or commit perjury in filing a tax return, provide fraudulent information, they might just be willing to put in a number, too, that is also fraudulent in order to get that big check from the United States taxpayers that actually worked and didn't steal anybody's Social Security number.

Is it any wonder why the American people are so stirred up against what is perceived as an establishment involving both parties in Washington, D.C., when we have this kind of contempt for honesty and honor and following the law and for tax returns and tax refunds from a man that is head of the IRS that needs to be impeached and removed from office?

I applaud my friends for making the case they did. They didn't touch on this particular area, but it really brings the gavel down. As litigants often said in front of me as a judge, ''I rest my case.'' Mr. Koskinen needs to go.

Now, in talking about immigrants who have come in illegally, we have an article from CNS News, Terence Jeffrey, this month: ''Obama Claims Power to Make Illegal Immigrants Eligible for Social Security, Disability.'' The article asked the question: ''Does the President of the United States have the power to unilaterally tell millions of individuals who are violating Federal law that he will not enforce that law against them now, that they may continue to violate that law in the future, and that he will take action that makes them eligible for Federal benefit programs for which they are not currently eligible due to their unlawful status?''

I recall sitting right back there on the aisle, my friend JOE WILSON was sitting right over in the middle of this section over here, and the President was standing at this second level here, because that is where non-Members of the House have to stand to address this body if they are invited, as he was. He made statements about how his bill would not provide health insurance or healthcare provisions for people that were illegally here for abortion. My friend JOE WILSON just erupted—such a righteous man, he couldn't contain himself—and yelled out, ''You lie.''

Now, we have House rules—and I know every time I bring this up or talk about this House rule against my friends in the Parliamentarian's office, paying real close attention to make sure I don't violate the rule myself, well, they start listening very carefully. Well, they always listen carefully, but even more carefully.

But in talking hypotheticals, if a President or someone speaking officially in this House to either the House or a joint session makes a statement—and I am talking hypothetically. I am not saying the President did because I know that would violate the rule. But hypothetically, if he made a statement that is a bald-faced lie and somebody points out that it is a lie and it turns out the person that said it is a lie is 100 percent right, it makes you wonder about the propriety of the rule if the rule says somebody is lying and somebody else points it out, and the one that points it out is at fault.

We do get into some tricky issues when it comes to areas of impeachment because it is real hard to make a case for impeachment if you can't talk about somebody that is in a position of authority in the Federal Government having violated the law in order to justify the term of high crimes and misdemeanors. So it gets kind of delicate in here at times trying to figure these things out.

But regardless of whether anybody thinks the President lied or told the truth, I am not getting into that because I don't want to violate the House rule while I am trying to make my point. But here in this room, the President said basically people who are illegally here, they are not going to get the health insurance and not going to pay for abortion.

Well, we know not only is it paying for abortion, but this administration will actually go to court and come after the Little Sisters of the Poor, these precious nuns who committed their lives to helping people less fortunate, basically a vow of poverty. They don't live lavishly. Their lives, like Mother Teresa's, are intended to better other people's lives.

And this administration decides it is not the people that are violating our laws of immigration that they are going to come after, it is not people that steal Social Security numbers to use them to get refunds fraudulently from the American taxpayers, they want to litigate with the Little Sisters of the Poor. They want to litigate with Christians devoted to helping others but who believe with deeply held religious beliefs like so many of our Founders had, like the Founders of Harvard and Yale had when they required students basically to take a pledge of allegiance that the most important aspect of life is living for Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. And you go back and look at those oaths.

But not this administration. To them, it is more important to go after some precious, sacred, caring nuns who say: We will do anything, we will lay down our lives for others, but you can't ask us to take actions that will provide for abortions because we deeply religiously believe that violates our Biblically-based beliefs, so please.

No. This administration will meet them at the Supreme Court and demand these nuns give up their religious convictions, give up what they have dedicated their lives to stand for. Why? Because to them an abortion is more important.

As I am running out of time, I want to also call attention today to something that became very important to me, having visited Nigeria to visit with a couple of dozen or so moms of daughters who were kidnapped by Boko Haram, basically shedding my State Department protection so I could go 2 or 3 hours to meet with them because they wouldn't initially come into the city to do that, having prayed with them and their pastor, wept with them and a few girls that were able to escape.

It was 2 years ago tonight that 276 schoolgirls were kidnapped by radical Islamists not because they were girls on this occasion. They do believe girls are inferior. They can't bring themselves to accept what we here know: we are equal in God's eyes. In some ways, ladies are superior, but not to Boko Haram, not to radical Islamists. They are basically property. The school was not attacked because they were girls. I asked that. No, they can't stand girls. They see them as property, something to be raped and traded into sex slavery. But the reason they attacked the school is because it is a Christian school.

Having talked to leaders there, religious leaders, and learning that our administration not only has done nothing significant to help them get their girls back other than launch a campaign based on #bringbackourgirls, but we haven't given them the information they need to get the girls released. We don't have to send troops, put boots on the ground.

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There are things we could do to help them; but according to the information we have gotten, this administration says: Well, if you want our help in getting these precious girls released, you are going to have to start to change your law and allow for gay marriage. Also, you are going to have to start paying for abortions.

As a Catholic bishop in Nigeria said: Our religious beliefs are not for sale to President Obama or to anybody else.

God bless him. God strengthen him.

Our tribute goes to those families. We need to do more to help them. Two years ago today, that horrible thing occurred.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. PAYNE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and April 15 on account of official business.

SENATE ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to enrolled bills of the Senate of the following titles:

S. 483. An act to improve enforcement efforts related to prescription drug diversion and abuse, and for other purposes.

S. 2512. An act to expand the tropical disease product priority review voucher program to encourage treatments for Zika virus.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 46 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, April 15, 2016, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

5040. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, CMCS, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Medicaid Program; Deadline for Access Monitoring Review Plan Submissions [CMS-2328-F2] (RIN: 0938-AS89) received April 11, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5041. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting two reports entitled ''U.S. Assistance for Palestinian Security Forces'' and ''Benchmarks for Palestinian Security Assistance Funds'', pursuant to Public Law 113-235; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5042. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the annual report pursuant to Sec. 2(9) of the Senate's Resolution of Advice and Consent to the Treaty with the United Kingdom Concerning Defense Trade Cooperation (Treaty Doc. 110-07); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5043. A letter from the Special Counsel, U.S. Office of Special Counsel, transmitting the FY 2015 No FEAR Act report, pursuant to Public Law 107-174, 203(a); (116 Stat. 569); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5044. A letter from the Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting the FY 2014 annual report on reasonably identifiable expenditures by Federal and State agencies for the conservation of endangered or threatened species, pursuant to 16 U.S.C. 1544; Public Law 93-205, Sec. 18 (as added by Public Law 100-478, Sec. 1012); (102 Stat. 2314); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. MCCAUL: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 4785. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department's vehicle fleet, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 114–494). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

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 Mr. WALBERG:

H.R. 4936. A bill to provide assistance to small businesses; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, Small Business, Education and the Workforce, and 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 Mr. DENHAM (for himself, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. SHUSTER, and Mr. DEFAZIO):

H.R. 4937. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to reauthorize pipeline safety programs and enhance pipeline safety, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, 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. ROSKAM (for himself, Mr. KIND, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. NEAL, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. PAULSEN, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. PASCRELL, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. CRENSHAW, Ms. FOXX, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. COHEN, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. HOLDING, Mr. COLE, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. BEYER, Mr. KILMER, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. HIMES, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. ROSS, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. POLIS, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. AMODEI, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. LATTA, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. RUSH, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. DIAZ-BALART):

H.R. 4938. A bill to make permanent the Internal Revenue Service Free File program; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ENGEL (for himself and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN):

H.R. 4939. A bill to increase engagement with the governments of the Caribbean region, the Caribbean diaspora community in the United States, and the private sector and civil society in both the United States and the Caribbean, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 4940. A bill to direct the Director of National Intelligence to establish an integration cell to monitor and enforce the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and for other

purposes; to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select).

By Mr. CALVERT (for himself, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. COOK, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. FORBES, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. ISSA, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. JONES, Mr. JOYCE, Mr. MCKINLEY, Ms. PINGREE, and Mr. RYAN of Ohio):

H.R. 4941. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the eligibility for monthly stipends paid under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program for certain members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BARTON (for himself and Mr. LEWIS):

H.R. 4942. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the standard charitable mileage rate for delivery of meals to elderly, disabled, frail and at risk individuals; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. KIND (for himself and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas):

H.R. 4943. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat Indian tribal governments in the same manner as State governments for certain Federal tax purposes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, 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. NOLAN:

H.R. 4944. A bill to modify the boundary of Voyageurs National Park in the State of Minnesota, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BRIDENSTINE (for himself and Mr. LAMBORN):

H.R. 4945. A bill to permanently secure the United States as the preeminent spacefaring nation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, Intelligence (Permanent Select), Rules, Ways and Means, Transportation and Infrastructure, Energy and Commerce, and 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 Mr. COFFMAN (for himself, Mr. WALZ, and Mr. HARDY):

H.R. 4946. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for an increase in the earned income tax credit for individuals with no qualifying children, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. JOLLY:

H.R. 4947. A bill to establish a program to provide reinsurance for State natural catastrophe insurance programs to help the United States better prepare for and protect its citizens against the ravages of natural catastrophes, to encourage and promote mitigation and prevention for, and recovery and rebuilding from such catastrophes, and to better assist in the financial recovery from such catastrophes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. LEWIS (for himself and Mr. BUCHANAN):

H.R. 4948. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide that a deduction equal to fair market value shall be allowed for charitable contributions of literary, musical, artistic, or scholarly compositions created by the donor; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LEWIS:

H.R. 4949. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an exclusion from gross income for AmeriCorps educational awards; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. QUIGLEY (for himself and Mr. PITTENGER):

H.R. 4950. A bill to establish advisory committees within the Department of the Treasury, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. RUSSELL:

H.R. 4951. A bill to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to allow the importation of certain foreign-manufactured firearms components; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RUSSELL:

H.R. 4952. A bill to impose a deadline by which a person whose Federal firearms license has expired, or is surrendered, or revoked, must liquidate the firearms inventory of any business subject to the license, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SALMON:

H.R. 4953. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to limit the length of administrative leave for Federal employees to 30 days, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. DEFAZIO:

H.J. Res. 86. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to provide for balanced budgets for the Government; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD (for herself, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. GRANGER, Ms. NORTON, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. LEE, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. VELA, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. HONDA):

H. Res. 680. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Public Health Week; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California:

H. Res. 681. A resolution honoring women who have served, and who are currently serving, as members of the Armed Forces and recognizing the recently expanded service opportunities available to female members of the Armed Forces; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself and Mr. SHERMAN):

H. Res. 682. A resolution urging the Department of State to provide necessary equipment and training to the men and women of the Kurdish Peshmerga in the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. SPEIER (for herself and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY):

H. Res. 683. A resolution supporting and protecting the right of women working in developing countries to safe workplaces, free from gender-based violence, reprisals, and intimidation; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

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. WALBERG:

H.R. 4936.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution of the United States; the power to regulate commerce among the several states and Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers.

By Mr. DENHAM:

H.R. 4937.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically Clause 3 and Clause 18.

By Mr. ROSKAM:

H.R. 4938.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, which states ''The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes,'' and Article I, Section 7, which states ''All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives.''

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 4939.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 4940.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. CALVERT:

H.R. 4941.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority of Congress to enact this legislation is provided by Article IV, section 3 of the United States Constitution, specifically clause 2 (empowering Congress to make rules and regulations respecting property belonging to the people of the United States), Article I, section 8 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). Furthermore, this bill amends the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331), which Congress previously enacted pursuant to similar authority.

By Mr. BARTON:

H.R. 4942.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I

Section 1: ALL Legislative powers review granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate & House of Representatives.

By Mr. KIND:

H.R. 4943.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 7, Clause 1

''All Bills for raising Revenue shall orginate in the House of Representatives''

By Mr. NOLAN:

H.R. 4944.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the Constitution provides that Congress shall have the Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States.

By Mr. BRIDENSTINE:

H.R. 4945.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8: ''The Congress shall have Power to . . . provide for the common Defence.''

By Mr. COFFMAN:

H.R. 4946.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I and the 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. JOLLY:

H.R. 4947.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. LEWIS:

H.R. 4948.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Mr. LEWIS:

H.R. 4949.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Mr. QUIGLEY:

H.R. 4950.

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 regulate commerce; as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. RUSSELL:

H.R. 4951.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. RUSSELL:

H.R. 4952.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. SALMON:

H.R. 4953.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 9, Clause 7—''No money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time.''

By Mr. DEFAZIO:

H.J. Res. 86.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress)

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 27: Mr. LOUDERMILK.
H.R. 247: Ms. ADAMS.
H.R. 257: Mr. KILDEE.
H.R. 292: Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, and Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 329: Mr. MULLIN.
H.R. 379: Mr. MACARTHUR, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. SMITH of Washington, and Mr. PASCRELL.
H.R. 430: Mr. HONDA.
H.R. 449: Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 532: Mr. LARSEN of Washington and Mr. TED LIEU of California.
H.R. 556: Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. LANGEVIN, and Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 663: Mr. KATKO.
H.R. 664: Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 670: Mr. HUDSON and Mr. CRAMER.
H.R. 711: Mr. VEASEY, Mr. WITTMAN, and Mr. KING of New York.
H.R. 748: Mr. CALVERT.
H.R. 775: Mr. LUETKEMEYER.
H.R. 800: Mrs. BEATTY.
H.R. 842: Mr. KNIGHT.
H.R. 940: Mr. CULBERSON.
H.R. 953: Mr. QUIGLEY and Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia.
H.R. 969: Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 996: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 1061: Ms. ESTY.
H.R. 1111: Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 1149: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 1151: Mrs. BLACK.
H.R. 1174: Ms. JACKSON LEE.
H.R. 1206: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.
H.R. 1218: Mr. TAKAI, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, and Mr. SIMPSON.
H.R. 1247: Ms. DELAURO.
H.R. 1256: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.
H.R. 1258: Mr. DOGGETT.
H.R. 1288: Mr. GIBSON.
H.R. 1301: Mr. GUINTA.
H.R. 1336: Mr. LANGEVIN.
H.R. 1439: Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 1459: Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 1486: Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. SHUSTER.
H.R. 1492: Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. RANGEL, and Ms. MOORE.
H.R. 1538: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 1586: Mr. FOSTER.
H.R. 1594: Mr. RUSSELL, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. HASTINGS, and Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 1603: Mr. MEEHAN and Mrs. LAWRENCE.
H.R. 1706: Mr. WELCH, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Mr. GUTIÉRREZ.
H.R. 1728: Mr. BERA.
H.R. 1733: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
H.R. 1769: Mr. KING of Iowa.
H.R. 1775: Mr. CICILLINE.
H.R. 1779: Ms. SLAUGHTER and Mr. PASCRELL.
H.R. 1859: Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana and Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 1933: Ms. MENG.
H.R. 1943: Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 2114: Mr. CARTWRIGHT and Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 2132: Mr. GIBSON.
H.R. 2205: Mr. LARSEN of Washington.
H.R. 2221: Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H.R. 2304: Mr. BRAT.
H.R. 2342: Mr. LUETKEMEYER.
H.R. 2434: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 2449: Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 2493: Mr. LYNCH.
H.R. 2519: Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee.
H.R. 2536: Mr. MOULTON.
H.R. 2658: Mr. MEEHAN, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. GIBSON, Ms. EDWARDS, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. REED, and Mrs. MILLER of Michigan.
H.R. 2694: Ms. MATSUI, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mrs. BEATTY, and Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 2698: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.
H.R. 2711: Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 2726: Mr. TONKO, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. DESJARLAIS, and Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H.R. 2775: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 2799: Mr. HUDSON, Mr. FORBES, and Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 2817: Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 2848: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina.
H.R. 2850: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.
H.R. 2896: Mr. FORBES and Ms. STEFANIK.
H.R. 2903: Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. SALMON, Mr. PERRY, and Mr. KATKO.
H.R. 2911: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.
H.R. 2939: Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 2948: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. TITUS, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, and Mrs. BEATTY.
H.R. 3007: Mr. LEVIN.
H.R. 3026: Mr. LAMALFA.
H.R. 3099: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 3119: Mr. RUSH and Ms. MATSUI.
H.R. 3142: Mr. ISRAEL.
H.R. 3222: Mr. SALMON, Mr. CHABOT, and Mr. ABRAHAM.
H.R. 3280: Mr. FARR.
H.R. 3308: Ms. MATSUI, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 3326: Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. VARGAS, and Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 3384: Mr. SMITH of Washington.
H.R. 3406: Mr. SIRES.
H.R. 3441: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. KING of New York, and Mr. ASHFORD.
H.R. 3463: Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois.
H.R. 3539: Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 3576: Mr. VARGAS.
H.R. 3656: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 3666: Miss RICE of New York.
H.R. 3688: Mr. CASTRO of Texas.
H.R. 3706: Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. LANGEVIN, and Mr. MULLIN.
H.R. 3722: Mr. ZELDIN.
H.R. 3808: Mr. JOYCE and Mr. HUDSON.
H.R. 3851: Mr. AMODEI.
H.R. 3862: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 3870: Mr. CONYERS and Mr. NEWHOUSE.
H.R. 3886: Mr. NOLAN.
H.R. 3892: Mr. MARCHANT and Mr. PITTENGER.
H.R. 3949: Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 3989: Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. WALZ, Mr. CARTER of Texas, and Mr. GIBSON.
H.R. 4055: Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 4158: Mr. KATKO.
H.R. 4160: Mr. HINOJOSA.
H.R. 4177: Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. HONDA, Mr. PETERSON, and Mr. GOODLATTE.
H.R. 4184: Mr. FATTAH and Mr. HUFFMAN.
H.R. 4194: Ms. NORTON, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. FATTAH, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. DELANEY, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. KEATING, Ms. MOORE, and Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 4223: Ms. NORTON and Mrs. BEATTY.
H.R. 4247: Mr. BURGESS.
H.R. 4296: Mr. MEEKS.
H.R. 4320: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H.R. 4399: Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mrs. LOWEY.
H.R. 4442: Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. ROKITA, and Ms. TITUS.
H.R. 4447: Ms. MATSUI and Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 4454: Mr. CALVERT.
H.R. 4479: Mr. WELCH and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 4480: Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. ESHOO, and Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 4490: Mr. TAKAI.
H.R. 4498: Mrs. WAGNER.
H.R. 4499: Mr. ROKITA.
H.R. 4511: Ms. KAPTUR.
H.R. 4515: Mr. VALADAO.
H.R. 4519: Mr. VARGAS.
H.R. 4523: Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 4534: Mr. KING of New York.
H.R. 4553: Mr. LATTA.
H.R. 4554: Mr. NEWHOUSE.
H.R. 4592: Mr. RANGEL, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. DEGETTE, and Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 4603: Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 4611: Mr. CAPUANO.
H.R. 4613: Mr. KING of New York.
H.R. 4625: Ms. STEFANIK, Ms. BONAMICI, and Mr. MURPHY of Florida.
H.R. 4626: Mr. VALADAO, Mr. LOEBSACK, and Mrs. NOEM.

H.R. 4637: Mr. PALMER.

H.R. 4640: Mr. BYRNE, Mr. RUSH, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. STEWART, Mr. MOULTON, and Mr. LOUDERMILK.

H.R. 4653: Mr. FATTAH, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. GARAMENDI, and Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 4662: Mr. SCALISE.

H.R. 4668: Mr. LEVIN.

H.R. 4681: Mr. MURPHY of Florida and Ms. EDWARDS.

H.R. 4693: Mr. MURPHY of Florida.

H.R. 4696: Mrs. COMSTOCK.

H.R. 4710: Mr. SWALWELL of California.

H.R. 4715: Mr. JORDAN and Mr. SENSENBRENNER.

H.R. 4730: Mr. BARR, Mr. HARDY, Mr. HUELSKAMP, and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.

H.R. 4739: Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. LABRADOR, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. BENISHEK, and Mr. WALDEN.

H.R. 4754: Mr. LEWIS.

H.R. 4764: Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. GIBSON, and Mr. RUSSELL.

H.R. 4766: Mr. NEAL.

H.R. 4773: Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. PERRY, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. WALKER, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. STIVERS, Mrs. ROBY, Mr. RUSSELL, Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. SALMON, Mr. COLLINS of New.York, Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. UPTON, and Mr. BISHOP of Utah.

H.R. 4786: Mr. WITTMAN.

H.R. 4791: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina.

H.R. 4814: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.

H.R. 4816: Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. GUINTA, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mrs. ROBY, and Mr. GRAVES of Georgia.

H.R. 4817: Mr. SMITH of Washington and Ms. BROWNLEY of California.

H.R. 4819: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 4848: Mr. ALLEN and Mr. HARRIS.

H.R. 4856: Mr. COOK and Mr. BUCK.

H.R. 4864: Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mrs. Radewagen, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Mr. CONYERS.

H.R. 4869: Mr. YOUNG of Indiana.

H.R. 4890: Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 4898: Mr. BENISHEK.

H.R. 4901: Mr. ROKITA.

H.R. 4904: Mr. PALMER.

H.R. 4905: Mr. HONDA and Mr. SERRANO.

H.R. 4907: Mr. SMITH of Missouri.

H.R. 4912: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

H.R. 4924: Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mrs. ROBY, and Mrs. NOEM.

H.R. 4926: Mr. BURGESS and Mr. JONES.

H. J. Res. 11: Mrs. BLACK.

H. Con. Res. 13: Mr. CALVERT.

H. Con. Res. 17: Mr. YOUNG of Indiana.

H. Con. Res. 88: Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. ROHRABACHER, and Mr. SALMON.

H. Con. Res. 112: Mr. PALAZZO and Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia.

H. Con. Res. 114: Mr. DIAZ-BALART.

H. Con. Res. 122: Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. MULVANEY, and Mr. TAKAI.

H. Res. 14: Mr. PERRY.

H. Res. 28: Mr. VEASEY.

H. Res. 110: Mr. SHERMAN.

H. Res. 112: Mr. DESAULNIER.

H. Res. 192: Ms. MATSUI, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. ELLISON, and Mr. MCNERNEY.

H. Res. 290: Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. KEATING, and Mr. DESAULNIER.

H. Res. 394: Mr. CICILLINE.

H. Res. 487: Ms. BROWN of Florida.

H. Res. 617: Mr. YOUNG of Indiana.

H. Res. 642: Mr. AMODEI.

H. Res. 661: Mr. GRAYSON and Ms. TSONGAS.

H. Res. 665: Mr. POSEY, Mr. BRAT, Mr. SANFORD, Mrs. LUMMIS, and Mr. YOHO.

H. Res. 667: Mr. MESSER.

H. Res. 668: Ms. JACKSON LEE and Mr. CULBERSON.

H. Res. 674: Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina, Mr. PITTENGER, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. MESSER, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. SANFORD, Mr. KATKO, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. ROUZER, and Mr. VISCLOSKY.

H. Res. 675: Ms. BASS, Mr. BEYER, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. KATKO, and Ms. PLASKETT.