

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

There was no objection.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2592, a bill introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROGAN), to remove unnecessary regulation of electric bicycles. The bill has benefitted from a full dose of regular order and enjoys a support of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

Electric bicycles are a great means of transportation and recreation. In particular, older and disabled riders who do not have the physical strength to ride a bicycle uphill without motorized assistance will benefit from these low-speed electric bicycles. These bikes are also used by law enforcement agencies to increase their patrol range while doing community policing.

Electric bikes help commuters who cannot afford automobile transportation or who work in traffic congested areas. Electric bikes are good for the environment. They are good for reducing traffic and they are good for recreation.

Unfortunately, low-speed electric-powered bicycles are currently regulated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration as motor vehicles instead of as bicycles. NHTSA does not want to focus on this. In fact, NHTSA does agree it does not make any sense to regulate these bicycles as motor vehicles, but it is required to by current law.

If NHTSA were to strictly enforce its regulations for electric bicycles, the bikes would be required to meet all sorts of standards that are designed for cars, but do not make sense for bicycles.

Since low-powered electric bicycles are used in the same manner as human-powered bicycles and travel at the same maximum speed, it is just plain common sense they should be regulated like human-powered bicycles.

In our committee hearings, there was bipartisan consensus that regulation of electric bikes should be transferred from NHTSA to the Consumer Products Safety Commission. The CPSC can then regulate them in the same way it regulates regular bicycles, or they can develop any regulations in addition that they might find necessary.

Mr. Speaker, it is a short bill. It is simple, but it is effective. It will make it easier for people to own and to use these electric bicycles.

Mr. Speaker, I want to add that I tried one of these out. Now, I am not, thankfully, yet so old or so out of shape that I think I should have one like this, but let me tell my colleagues, it is an excellent piece of equipment. With just a switch, a little switch that bicycle will add a little extra power to the peddles going up a hill. It feels like you are on a regular flat surface.

It will literally help a great many people in our society who need that little extra help in using a bicycle as recreation or use them to get around town or to work or, indeed, in some cases for the kinds of exercise they need to keep themselves healthy.

I am telling my colleagues when I am ready for it, I am going to get one. It is a really neat little device.

The gentleman from California (Mr. ROGAN) has done a good job in bringing this bill forward so that we can properly put this bicycle under the Consumer Products Safety Commission where it belongs, where it can be regulated as a human-powered bicycle. We urge support for this legislation.

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise as the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. TAUZIN), my friend, did in support of H.R. 2592. This legislation transfers responsibility for regulating low-speed electric bicycles to the Consumer Products Safety Commission. Currently, the National Highway Safety Administration, NHTSA, has jurisdiction over these bicycles, which are designed to operate at speeds of less than 20 miles per hour, approximately the same speed as human-powered bicycles.

The CPSC, the Consumer Products Safety Commission, and NHTSA support this common sense proposal. NHTSA has never attempted to issue a safety standard for these bikes and, I would say, for good reason. If NHTSA were to establish an electric bicycle standard, they would be subject to motor vehicle requirements that would significantly drive up the costs of these bicycles.

Mr. Speaker, the CPSC, which currently regulates human-powered bicycles, is the appropriate agency to regulate electric bikes that operate at comparable speeds. These are bicycles not motor vehicles and, therefore, they should be regulated by the agency with responsibility for bicycles.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation has bipartisan support. Our colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) who is on the Committee on Commerce, has worked hard for this bill. It is also cosponsored by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL); the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL), also on our committee; the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY); the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. MALONEY); the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR); and the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN).

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2592.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I just briefly want to say this is not obviously the most important bill that will come before Congress, but it is a good example of how the law is just wrong and common sense requires the law to be changed. So we change it tonight, and hopefully with the small change, we will make a consumer product that is going to be extremely helpful to many citizens of this country available to them and affordable for them. And just this small act by Congress, I think, is going to mean an awful lot to a lot of people, and I urge adoption of the bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. TAUZIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2592, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 3062.

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

There was no objection.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2000

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Government Reform be discharged from further consideration of Senate bill (S. 3062) to modify the date on which the Mayor of the District of Columbia submits a performance accountability plan to Congress, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

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

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, but I do not plan to object. I take this time to engage the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) in a colloquy for a brief explanation of his unanimous consent request.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 3062, the District of Columbia Performance Accountability Plan

Amendments Act of 2000. This bill contains technical amendments to the District of Columbia's performance plan requirements, which will allow the city to reform its management system more effectively.

Mr. Speaker, just as the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 redesigned the management practices and accountability at Federal agencies, the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Act of 1995 requires that the city submit performance accountability plans to Congress preceding each fiscal year.

These plans set objective and measurable goals for the District's agencies and the departments, and establish a system of accountability in the city's daily operations.

Mr. Speaker, it also requires that after each fiscal year, the city must submit to Congress a performance accountability report evaluating its ability to meet the performance goals of the prior fiscal year.

This act has provided the city with the means to establish a system of performance budgeting. However, the Mayor of the District of Columbia requested that Congress make some minor changes to the law to improve the efficiency of this process. Therefore, S. 3062 changes the submission deadline for the annual performance accountability plan from March 1 of each year to be concurrent with the submission of the District's budget to Congress.

This change will tie the District of Columbia's budget to its performance accountability measures. This bill also streamlines the performance goal submission requirements set out in the act so that there is one set of measurable and ambitious goals.

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This is critical to ensuring that the managers of the District of Columbia government have a clear understanding of the goals which they are expected to meet.

Furthermore, this bill will impose no additional regulatory burdens on the District, and will eventually reduce the paperwork burden by creating a single integrated document as a result of the performance budgeting process.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting in support of this legislation to help the District of Columbia move closer to an effective budgeting process.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, S. 3062 was introduced on September 18, 2000, by Senators VOINIVICH and DURBIN. Together, these two Senators worked with the Mayor's Office to draft the technical changes to the performance plan submission requirements, and bipartisan support appears to exist in both houses for this legislation.

The legislative changes include, one, changing the deadline for submission from March 1 of each year to be concurrent with the submission of the D.C. budget to Congress each year; and two, getting rid of the multiple performance goals for each measure in exchange for one ambitious goal per performance measure.

With this, Mr. Speaker, I do urge the House to adopt this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the Senate bill, as follows:

S. 3062

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

SECTION 1. DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN.

Section 456 of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act (section 47-231 et seq. of the District of Columbia Code) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1) by striking "Not later than March 1 of each year (beginning with 1998)" and inserting "Concurrent with the submission of the District of Columbia budget to Congress each year (beginning with 2001)"; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(A) by striking "that describe an acceptable level of performance by the government and a superior level of performance by the government"; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1) by striking "1999" and inserting "2001"; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(A) by striking "for an acceptable level of performance by the government and a superior level of performance by the government".

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

FREEDMEN'S BUREAU RECORDS PRESERVATION ACT OF 2000

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Government Reform be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 5157) to amend title 44, United States Code, to ensure preservation of the records of the Freedmen's Bureau, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I do not by any means plan to object, but I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) for a brief explanation of the bill.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5157, the Freedmen's Bureau Records Preservation

Act of 2000, represents a bipartisan effort to safeguard important links to the past. These records document how the 38th Congress responded to the enormous social and economic upheaval in the aftermath of the Civil War.

The Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology, which I chair, held a hearing on this bill on October 18, 2000. The subcommittee heard testimony from a number of very distinguished scholars and witnesses, including the President of Howard University, H. Patrick Swygert.

President Swygert testified about the importance of safeguarding these uniquely valuable records, which are deteriorating due to the passage of time.

From 1865 to 1872, the Freedmen's Bureau helped better the lives of former slaves and others who had been impoverished by the war. These Bureau records are in many instances the only link many Americans have with their past and our past, especially those who are descended from former slaves.

H.R. 5157 would require the Archivist of the United States to preserve these irreplaceable documents. The bill would also require the Archivist of the United States to develop partnerships with educational institutions such as Howard University and others to index the records so they may be more readily accessible to anyone who is interested in this important period of the Nation's history.

I congratulate the authors of this legislation, my colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD), and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS), chairman of the House Republican Conference, for bringing this important issue to the forefront.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill. It is an important first step toward ensuring that a momentous part of America's history will be protected, preserved, and never forgotten.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, I would like to simply thank the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN), and tonight I introduce H.R. 5157, introduced along with my dear friend and colleague, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS).

This bill is known as the Freedmen's Bureau Preservation Act of 2000. The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, properly called the Freedmen's Bureau, was established in the War Department by an act of this government on March 3, 1865.

This act was the culmination of several years of efforts as the U.S. Government, embroiled in Civil War, sought to settle "the slave problem" for the United States.

From 1619 to 1800, more than 660,000 African men, women, and children were