

them what to think. Otherwise, we will lose our democracy, which is a greater danger than the economy.

The media is hurting its credibility for the future. They should instead adhere to the highest standards of journalism and report the news fairly and objectively.

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**SUPPORT THE NATIVE AMERICAN
HERITAGE ACT OF 2008**

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I support H. J. Res. 62, the Native American Heritage Day Act of 2008, which I authored. This bill will help pay tribute to Native Americans for their many contributions to the United States by encouraging all Americans to recognize the Friday after Thanksgiving as Native American Heritage Day.

I thank Senator DANIEL INOUE, Speaker NANCY PELOSI, Majority Leader STENY HOYER, Chairman GEORGE MILLER, Representative DALE KILDEE, and the NIGA for their help on this bill.

I have been a strong advocate for Native Americans and have fought hard to preserve their heritage for the past 8 years that I have served in Congress and since my time in the California legislature.

It is important that we recognize the contributions of Native Americans in all aspects of our society, including government, language and history. We must not forget that Native Americans have fought with valor in every American war, dating back to the Revolutionary War.

My bill encourages public schools to teach Native American history and culture.

I also want to thank Tribal Chairman James Ramos of the San Manuel Tribe for helping us create this bill. This bill represents the first time in history that Congress is recognizing the great achievements of Native Americans in this manner.

I thank my colleagues for supporting this legislation.

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**CONGRESS MUST KEEP TAXPAYER
FIRST WHEN ASSISTING WALL
STREET**

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, it is becoming painfully clear to us and now we know that Americans should not be forced to endure a prolonged and painful economic downturn to pay for the sins of Fannie, Freddie or discredited Wall Street executives. The question that is being asked by many of our constituents is, all right, now what are we going to do?

So let me be clear. I do not support a bailout of Wall Street firms funded by hundreds of billions of taxpayers dollars. There are smarter ways for us to handle this.

The President and congressional leaders should set a timeline for legislation, come to mark it up, and look at things from both the short and the long-term. We have learned that the ad hoc approach to bailing out companies in the past few weeks just has not worked. What we need is a workout plan that leverages Wall Street's assets and ingenuity to bring the economy back to health while protecting the American taxpayer.

Any deal that comes forward should limit the cash available to Secretary Paulson. We cannot write one man, no matter how experienced or smart, a check for \$700 billion of the taxpayers' money.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that we continue to work forward on this and keep the American taxpayer first and foremost in our thoughts.

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**LETTING THE FOX GUARD THE
HEN HOUSE**

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration with its neocon philosophy either cut back, opposed, ignored or choked off restraints on the markets, especially those of Wall Street, while borrowing billions of dollars from China and Saudi Arabia to finance tax cuts for the wealthiest of Americans and while prosecuting the war in Iraq.

The borrow-and-spend approach and the party atmosphere cannot go on forever, and the bailouts, takeovers and bankruptcies of the recent weeks demonstrate that the party is over.

Bush's Treasury Secretary, Henry Paulson, is asking Congress for hundreds of billions of dollars to compensate for market excesses and wants the money within a week or two to restore confidence to the financial markets. I will listen to Mr. Paulson and his plea on behalf of the Bush administration about this immediate infusion of cash and the purchase of billions and billions of dollars in bad loans to take the burden of this bad debt out of the markets, but I must say I have my doubts about the foxes guarding the hen house or giving the Bush administration any more authority over anything. Thank goodness we did not privatize Social Security.

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**MINORITIES NOT RESPONSIBLE
FOR ECONOMIC WOES OF WALL
STREET**

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

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I am shocked that some in our community have implied that minorities are somehow responsible for the financial debacle our country is facing now.

Apparently, the argument is that minorities are getting loans through the Community Reinvestment Act on the basis of race, and often little else. I don't know what evidence there is for such a sentiment, but I do know that the vast majority of subprime market loans were financed by Wall Street, not by the commercial banks regulated under the Community Reinvestment Act.

Trying to shift the focus from the lack of oversight by this administration of our financial markets and the irresponsible behavior of so many brokerage firms by scapegoating minority families who are trying to realize the American Dream of homeownership is not only insensitive, but insulting.

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**REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER
AS COSPONSOR OF H. CON. RES.
421**

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 421.

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

There was no objection.

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**ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the additional motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

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**COMMENDING THE TENNESSEE
VALLEY AUTHORITY ON ITS 75TH
ANNIVERSARY**

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1224) commending the Tennessee Valley Authority on its 75th anniversary.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1224

Whereas May 18, 2008, marks the 75th anniversary of the Tennessee Valley Authority;

Whereas the Tennessee Valley Authority was created by Congress in 1933 to improve navigation along the Tennessee River, reduce the risk of flood damage, provide electric power, and promote agricultural and industrial development in the region;

Whereas the Tennessee Valley Authority Act of 1933 (16 U.S.C. 831 et seq.) was signed

into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on May 18, 1933;

Whereas the Tennessee Valley Authority continues to serve the Tennessee Valley, providing reliable and affordable electricity, managing the Tennessee River system, and stimulating economic growth;

Whereas the Tennessee Valley Authority provides more electricity than any other public utility in the Nation and has competitive rates and reliable transmission;

Whereas the Tennessee Valley Authority is expanding its environmental policy to increase its renewable energy sources, improve energy efficiency, and provide clean energy in the Tennessee Valley region;

Whereas the Tennessee Valley Authority continues to reduce power plant emissions and is working to further improve air quality for the health of individuals in the Tennessee Valley region;

Whereas the Tennessee Valley Authority is a leader in the nuclear power industry, with multi-site nuclear power operations that provide approximately 30 percent of the Tennessee Valley Authority's power supply;

Whereas as part of NuStart Energy Consortium, the Tennessee Valley Authority submitted one of the first combined operating license applications for a new nuclear power plant in 30 years;

Whereas the Tennessee Valley Authority's integrated management of the Tennessee River system provides a wide range of benefits that include providing electrical power, reducing floods, facilitating freight transportation, improving water quality and supply, enhancing recreation, and protecting public land;

Whereas the Tennessee Valley Authority builds business and community partnerships that foster economic prosperity, helping companies and communities attract investments that bring jobs to the Tennessee Valley region and keep them there; and

Whereas the Tennessee Valley Authority no longer receives appropriation to help fund its activities in navigation, flood control, environmental research, and land management, because the Tennessee Valley Authority pays for all its activities through power sales and issuing bonds: Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends the Tennessee Valley Authority on its 75th anniversary;

(2) recognizes the Tennessee Valley Authority for its long and proud history of service in the areas of energy, the environment, and economic development in a service area that includes 7 States;

(3) honors the Board of Directors, retirees, staff, and supporters of the Tennessee Valley Authority who were instrumental during the Tennessee Valley Authority's first 75 years; and

(4) directs the Clerk of the House of Representatives to transmit a copy of this resolution to the Chairman of the Board of the Tennessee Valley Authority, Bill Sansom, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Tennessee Valley Authority, Tom Kilgore, for appropriate display.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 1224.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1015

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

I will leave it to the gentleman from Tennessee to carry the major part of this legislation for which he is responsible, but I would just like to reflect on it for a moment.

I think it's very telling that we are here to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Tennessee Valley Authority, something that was created by Congress and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the Great Depression. They had a little different philosophy back then.

It wasn't shower money on Wall Street and hope things get better for people on Main Street and around the country; it was invest in America, invest in our infrastructure, build dams, roads, bridges, WPA projects. My region is a tremendous beneficiary from something called the Bonneville Power Administration, a wonderful gift that is still paying dividends to the American people that was key in our World War II effort and was there for the aluminum plants and for our nuclear weapons development to end the war.

This is a different philosophy. Today, unfortunately, we seem to be going down the path that the way to fix the economic problems on Main Street in America is to shower money on Wall Street, buy up their bad investments and hope maybe someday taxpayers get their money back.

What if we took the \$250 billion they are talking about as an initial down payment on this faulty plan and we doubled our investment in our roads, bridges, highways and transit in America? Would that put more people back to work? Would that instill more confidence in the American economy? Would that maybe even drive up the value of stocks on Wall Street? I think so.

I think it's incredibly appropriate that Mr. COHEN has brought this bill here to the floor today, and I thank him for doing that.

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

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

The Tennessee Valley Authority, an independent government corporation, was established in 1933 to aid in the development of the Tennessee River Valley watershed through the proper use, conservation and development of the region's natural resources. TVA is the Nation's largest wholesale power pro-

ducer and the fifth largest electric utility. TVA supplies power to nearly 8 million people over an 80,000-square-mile service area covering Tennessee and parts of Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia and Kentucky.

In addition, TVA's nonpower program responsibilities include the multipurpose management of land and water resources throughout the Tennessee Valley and fostering economic development. Prior to 1959, construction of the power projects was financed mainly by congressional appropriations. The power program is now completely self-financed through power revenues.

During the TVA's first 20 years, most of the power generated was hydroelectric. By 1950, with increased power needs, TVA began building coal-fired electric plants, and those plants now account for about 75 percent of TVA's power generation. TVA provides more electricity than any other public utility in the Nation and has an unparalleled record of reliability.

In addition, TVA is broadening its environmental stewardship responsibilities by increasing its use of renewable resources, improving energy efficiency, and working to improve air quality for the millions who live in the Tennessee Valley watershed. TVA constructed nuclear plants to supply additional power needs and just recently returned an additional nuclear power unit in Alabama, Browns Ferry Unit 1, to service to meet expected future demand in energy.

The agency spent approximately \$2 billion to recover the facility, which became fully operational by May 2007. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has approved a 20-year license renewal for all three units at the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant.

For 75 years, the TVA programs of navigation, flood damage reduction and power reduction have fostered economic development in an important region in the Nation.

I urge all of my Members to support the resolution celebrating the Tennessee Valley Authority's 75th anniversary.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 1224, to commend the Tennessee Valley Authority on its 75th anniversary. My hometown of Memphis is the largest customer of the Tennessee Valley Authority. It supplies us with our energy.

The Tennessee Valley Authority over the years has had many, many great commissioners and has now a new form of administration. In the past, one of our predecessors from this House and the State of Tennessee, Bob Clement, served as a member of the board of directors of the TVA; and also a gentleman named Johnny Hayes, who

passed away this past week, who was a great Tennessean and a great supporter of our previous Vice President Al Gore and a dear friend of mine.

The Tennessee Valley Authority was signed into law by Franklin Delano Roosevelt on May 18, 1933. At that time America was in the midst of a Great Depression, and the Tennessee Valley Authority was seen as a way to lift the country out of economic recession.

The establishment of TVA by the Federal Government was a sign of Congress' recognition of the importance of integrating regional and national resource management strategies and issues affecting multiple States. The TVA wove together Southeastern Conference members in a way that hasn't been done since other than the conference. More specifically, it was created to provide inland waterway navigation, flood control, affordable electricity and to bolster economic development in the Tennessee Valley region. TVA also helped farmers improve crop yields, replant forests and improve fish and wildlife habitation in the valley.

TVA's facilities now include 30 hydroelectric dams, 11 fossil fuel powered plants and three nuclear power plants. It is the Nation's largest public power company and provides reliable electricity to nearly 8.5 million customers in the Tennessee Valley. Near my home is Pickwick Dam, also a source of great opportunity for enjoyment and pleasures for people wanting to boat and enjoy outdoor life.

Today, TVA continues to support navigation along the Tennessee River, reduce the risk of flood damage to the surrounding area, and provide reliable electric power to its many customers. It does so while applying a unique problem-solving approach while fulfilling its mission of integrated resource management.

TVA has proven that it remains committed to fulfilling the needs of the region's businesses and citizens. This has been reflected in the development of hydroelectric facilities in the 1940s to support the war effort and the production of aluminum, to its present day development of renewable power sources.

I urge my colleagues in the House to join me in supporting this resolution and honor the Tennessee Valley Authority for helping to meet the needs of our country for the past 75 years.

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he might consume to my good friend, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) who is the ranking member on the Highways and Transit Subcommittee of Transportation.

Mr. DUNCAN. I thank the gentleman from Arkansas for yielding me this time. I rise in support of this resolution congratulating the Tennessee Valley Authority on its 75th anniversary.

First, I want to commend my good friend the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. CRAMER) for bringing this resolution to the floor. He has served with great distinction as chairman of the TVA Caucus in the Congress.

Since the Congress passed the Tennessee Valley Authority Act of 1933, TVA has played an important role, not only in the Tennessee Valley but in the course of the history of this Nation as well. TVA carries out its three-pronged mission of providing reliable electric power, economic development, and stewardship of the Nation's fifth largest river system by tapping into the talents of its 12,000 employees, many of whom live in my district.

Right from the start, TVA tried to establish a problem-solving approach to fulfilling its mission of resource management for power production, navigation, flood control, malaria prevention, reforestation, or erosion control, and each was studied in its broadest context. TVA weighed each issue in relation to all the others.

Today the Tennessee Valley is one of the most beautiful and fertile places in the Nation. With its beauty, hard-working people and abundant natural resources, the Tennessee Valley would have developed in a good and prosperous way without TVA, as did other areas of the South where there was no TVA.

However, the establishment of the TVA led to the development of cutting-edge fertilizers and improved farming techniques and helped to revive the Tennessee Valley and forever changed its landscape. With the completion of dams, TVA brought electricity and flood control to the Tennessee Valley, providing stability and vital insect control programs that helped drastically reduce deaths caused by mosquitoes and increase the quality of life.

By the end of the 1930s, the Tennessee Valley was probably the most thoroughly mapped region in the country. Before long, however, TVA was called upon to use this expertise to provide then-General Eisenhower with the most detailed topographic maps of German-occupied France and, later, Japan during World War II.

TVA played an important role in the Manhattan Project, the development of our first atomic bomb. At a time when the enrichment of uranium in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, consumed around 15 percent of the electricity of the United States, TVA rose to the occasion and met those power needs and helped end World War II.

I am proud to say that TVA is headquartered in my congressional district. I am proud of TVA's president and CEO Tom Kilgore, and Chairman Bill Sansom, two good friends of mine, and of the leadership they provide to TVA in this challenging time for utilities across the country.

I believe as we move into the future and look for more sustainable sources

of energy, that TVA will continue to provide the leadership to help the valley become even stronger and more economically vibrant. I can tell you that my region has become one of the most popular places to move to in the entire country, and that is in no small part because of the Tennessee Valley Authority and the role it plays in the lives of our citizens.

The citizens of the Tennessee Valley have been better off because of the work and historic mission of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I would now like to yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman who is the sponsor of this bill and brought this to the Congress, a gentleman who is retiring, and was one of the first people I had the opportunity to meet when I came up here. He has been very kind to me in my first year.

I regret his leaving, but he has provided his service to this Congress, and a gentleman whose district shares much with my district, music, and many of the Memphis musicians fled to Muscle Shoals at one time. We forgive him that; that was their choice. We wish him good luck in the Alabama-Georgia game—Mr. CRAMER of Alabama.

Mr. CRAMER. I thank my friends from Tennessee, and I thank the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee where I spent so many valuable years, the staff on both sides of the aisle. I have appreciated what you have meant to my congressional district and what you have meant to the Tennessee Valley Authority as well.

I rise today to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Tennessee Valley Authority. I think it's only appropriate that we do this during what we hope will be the last hours of this, the 110th Congress.

In the 110th Congress, I had the honor of serving as the cochair of the congressional TVA Caucus, which has existed since I have been here, before I was here. I have been here 18 years. I have cochaired this caucus along with Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER from Tennessee, so we have had a House-Senate partnership there.

There are 41 House and Senate Members that comprise this very proactive Tennessee Valley Authority Caucus. As I look around the room today, many of our House Members that have participated in that caucus are here today.

My friends have talked about when TVA was created. Mr. DUNCAN, we know that TVA is wonderfully headquartered up there in your congressional district in Knoxville. When TVA was first chartered back in 1933, it was headquartered in the Muscle Shoals area of north Alabama, so we still reluctantly accept that you have the headquarters there that we had

back when TVA was first chartered back in 1933.

Let's remember back to 1933. It was the Great Depression. At that time the agriculture industry, which was the bread and butter of the Tennessee Valley, had collapsed. Trying to make ends meet, the people of the valley had overfarmed their land, leading to widespread erosion, soil depletion and low crop yields.

As part of this New Deal program, President Franklin Roosevelt envisioned TVA as a different kind of government agency that could be backed by the power of the United States Government but also have the "flexibility and initiative of a private enterprise."

TVA was born, TVA has prospered, and TVA has done remarkable things for our area. We are economically prosperous because of the presence of TVA. They've built the dams, they've developed new fertilizers, they've been the lifeblood of partnerships with local and State government over economic development opportunities.

You can't drive through the Tennessee Valley area without looking around and seeing a much different and much more prosperous area than we ever would have been if TVA had not been the entity that it had been.

Now the TVA of today is not the TVA of the thirties, forties and fifties. We have a different board construct today. TVA is very concerned about the environment. It's looking at its plants, making sure that they are cleaner, more efficient than they ever were before.

□ 1030

Reflect back, also. After the war, TVA built a 650-mile navigation channel along the Tennessee River, allowing it to become one of the longest transport systems in the country. When we make our pitches for economic development opportunities, it is that navigational channel that is our strength as we acquaint those prospective new industries with what we have to offer.

In the 1990s, TVA began several energy efficiency and conservation programs. These initiatives allowed TVA to cut their annual operating costs by more than \$800 million while still meeting the electricity needs of the growing population of the Tennessee Valley.

In 1998, TVA started a new \$5.8 billion clean air program that has reduced their emissions by 70 to 80 percent. Additionally, TVA recently began its Green Power Switch Program, designed to increase the availability of energy derived from renewable resources such as solar and wind for customers in the Tennessee Valley.

TVA is also leading the way to clean and safe nuclear power. In my district, TVA is making great strides to increase our Nation's use of nuclear en-

ergy. That is a reality we must confront.

So I believe the TVA today, under the leadership of Chairman Bill Sansom and CEO Tom Kilgore, is ready and able to meet the growing environmental and power demands while continuing to be a valuable economic partner to the men and women of the Tennessee Valley.

Since I am leaving Congress, I want to thank my colleagues for serving with me and making sure that our TVA area is the area that we know it to be today, an efficient government entity, and that is not something you can say very often.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, we certainly support this resolution and thank Mr. CRAMER for bringing it forward. We also thank him so much, not only for this resolution but for his hard work in Congress in general. Mr. CRAMER has done an outstanding job and he is an individual that will be missed by both sides, by Republicans and Democrats, and we truly appreciate all that you have done, BUD, in serving your constituents.

I yield such time as he would like to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN. I thank the gentleman from Arkansas for yielding to me one more brief time.

I rise to say it has been a privilege and honor for me to serve with the gentleman from Alabama who unfortunately is leaving the Congress this year. BUD CRAMER and I have traveled many times together. We have become, I think, very close friends. It is interesting to me that our careers have been almost parallel. We were in law school at approximately the same time. We practiced law. He became a prosecuting attorney in his hometown of Huntsville when I was serving as a criminal court judge in my hometown of Knoxville. He came to Congress shortly after I did. He rose to become one of the senior members and one of the most powerful and influential members on the Appropriations Committee here in the Congress.

I can tell you that I have respect and admire BUD CRAMER more than almost anybody I know. He has been an outstanding public servant in every way, and this Congress will certainly miss the gentleman from Alabama when he leaves. I want to personally thank him for not only his friendship to me, but more importantly his service to this Nation.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Does the gentleman have any more speakers?

Mr. COHEN. No, sir.

Mr. BOOZMAN. If the gentleman has no further speakers, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I again join with my colleagues in expressing the pleasure I have had serving with Mr. CRAMER and my appreciation for

his service. We do share a lot. Sam Phillips was born in your district. He came to Memphis, he gave birth to Elvis Presley and the rest is history.

Thank you; you have been a true gentleman and I will miss you.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1224, to commemorate the Tennessee Valley Authority ("TVA") on its 75th anniversary.

H. Res. 1224 recognizes the TVA for its long history of service in the areas of energy, the environment, and economic development on a service area that includes parts of seven States.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the legislation creating the TVA on May 1, 1933. This Authority was a product of President Roosevelt's New Deal plan to help the economy rise from the depths of the Great Depression.

The establishment of the Tennessee Valley Authority by the Federal Government illustrated Congress's recognition of the importance of integrating regional and national planning into problem solving strategies that affect multiple States.

The TVA's mission areas were originally identified to reduce the risk of flood damage, improve navigation on the Tennessee River, provide electric power, and promote "agricultural and industrial development" in the region.

The TVA continues to manage its resources in an integrated fashion for a wide range of benefits including electric power production, flood control, waterborne commercial transportation, recreation, water supply, and water quality.

Through the years, TVA has continued to adapt and evolve to reflect the needs of the day. This evolution is reflected in its development of hydroelectric facilities in the 1940s to support the war effort and production of aluminum, to its present day development of renewable power resources.

I applaud the sponsor of this legislation, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. CRAMER), for his strong advocacy of the Tennessee Valley Authority during his 18 years in Congress. The gentleman has been a valuable member of this Chamber, a distinguished alumnus of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and a dedicated champion for the people of the 5th Congressional District. I wish him well in his future endeavors.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in agreeing to the resolution.

Mr. COHEN. 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 Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1224.

The question was taken.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the

Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 5159. An act to establish the Office of the Capitol Visitor Center within the Office of the Architect of the Capitol, headed by the Chief Executive Officer for Visitor Services, to provide for the effective management and administration of the Capitol Visitor Center, and for other purposes.

FEDERAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE GUARD CONTRACTING REFORM ACT OF 2008

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 3068) to prohibit the award of contracts to provide guard services under the contract security guard program of the Federal Protective Service to a business concern that is owned, controlled, or operated by an individual who has been convicted of a felony.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendment is as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Federal Protective Service Guard Contracting Reform Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. FEDERAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE CONTRACTS.

(a) *PROHIBITION ON AWARD OF CONTRACTS TO ANY BUSINESS CONCERN OWNED, CONTROLLED, OR OPERATED BY AN INDIVIDUAL CONVICTED OF A FELONY.—*

(1) *IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Assistant Secretary of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement—*

(A) *shall promulgate regulations establishing guidelines for the prohibition of contract awards for the provision of guard services under the contract security guard program of the Federal Protective Service to any business concern that is owned, controlled, or operated by an individual who has been convicted of a felony; and*

(B) *may consider permanent or interim prohibitions when promulgating the regulations.*

(2) *CONTENTS.—The regulations under this subsection shall—*

(A) *identify which serious felonies may prohibit a contractor from being awarded a contract;*

(B) *require contractors to provide information regarding any relevant felony convictions when submitting bids or proposals; and*

(C) *provide guidelines for the contracting officer to assess present responsibility, mitigating factors, and the risk associated with the previous conviction, and allow the contracting officer to award a contract under certain circumstances.*

(b) *REGULATIONS.—Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the*

Secretary shall issue regulations to carry out this section.

SEC. 3. REPORT ON GOVERNMENT-WIDE APPLICABILITY.

Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of the Act, the Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy shall submit a report on establishing similar guidelines government-wide to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 3068.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

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

I rise in support of the Senate amendment to H.R. 3068. The bill is the result of two oversight hearings held by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management that examined the role of the Federal Protective Service in providing security to our Nation's public buildings.

There was evidence and serious allegations of wrongdoings, chaos and irregularities in the contracting and employment of private security guards who protect Federal employees and facilities. This legislation intends to preserve the security of the country's most sensitive buildings.

The Senate amendment supports the principles of the House bill and authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security to devise regulations that prohibit contracts for the provision of guard services to any business owned or controlled by a convicted felon. In addition, the Senate amendment provides some limited flexibility for the contract officer to identify serious felons and create guidelines for the contracting officer to assess mitigating factors and the risks associated with previous convictions.

I urge all Members to vote for the Senate amendment to H.R. 3068, the Federal Protective Service Guard Contracting Reform Act of 2008.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

H.R. 3068 was introduced by Subcommittee Chairwoman NORTON last year, and prohibits the Federal Protective Service from awarding contracts to businesses owned, controlled or op-

erated by convicted felons. Specifically, the bill would direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to promulgate regulations to implement this prohibition.

The Federal Protective Service, FPS, has a critical mission. FPS serves as one of the first lines of defense for our Federal buildings. It employs more than 1,000 trained personnel, and 15,000 contract security guards. It is charged with securing nearly 9,000 federally owned and leased buildings.

This legislation will help improve security at those buildings and facilities and increase the standards of safety for Federal properties across the country. H.R. 3068 passed the House last year and was amended in the Senate. The Senate amendment provides additional direction to the Secretary of Homeland Security on key issues that the regulations should include. The Senate amendment also directs the administrator for Federal procurement policy to issue a report to Congress on establishing similar guidelines government-wide.

This legislation is important to ensure the integrity of the forces protecting our Federal buildings and the employees and visitors that work in and visit those buildings every day. I support this legislation. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, we very much appreciate that the House has gotten to this bill before we adjourn. This bill arose from oversight, and I think emphasizes the importance of oversight. Essentially it eliminates proxy ownership of vital FPS contracting operations. As a result of oversight and reports from workers and sometimes from unions, we learned that there were unpaid contract guards. As a result of the hearings, upon learning of these reports, we found that there was a contractor who was a felon, had spent 5 years in jail for money laundering and fraud.

What we discovered was sometimes there were unpaid guards working out of, of all places, the Department of Homeland Security, and that at other times the money had been received, as in the case of the proxy ownership, and had not been paid.

Security guards have grown to overwhelm the Federal Protective Service which is the official service that guards these buildings. The decrease in the Federal Protective Service is itself a hazard. But with 15,000 Federal security guards, that means hundreds probably of contractors, because many of them are small businesses. As the number of security guards and therefore contractors has grown, it is important that our vigilance of the contract operations also increases.

I was particularly concerned because these reports came in, from all places, the Nation's capital and the national