

July 22, 2025

The Honorable French Hill  
Chairman  
Committee on Financial Services  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Maxine Waters  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Financial Services  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hill and Ranking Member Waters:

The undersigned organizations representing the U.S. innovation ecosystem support congressional efforts to drive economic growth, job creation, and opportunity that fuels American innovation. We appreciate the Committee's continued focus on improving capital formation at all stages of a company's lifecycle, particularly for entrepreneurs and investors outside of traditional funding hubs, as well as expanding investment opportunities for everyday investors.

### **Importance of access to capital**

The U.S. capital markets are the engine that powers innovation and economic growth, but raising capital can be daunting for many startups, funds, and businesses. While the availability of private capital has grown substantially over the past few decades, opportunities to access these resources are limited outside of traditional capital-raising hubs and networks. [Data](#) shows the number of new funds continues to fall, while the average fund size gets bigger and capital becomes more concentrated. Lack of exits and lower VC valuations have caused investors to pull back from the asset class, and those who are investing are writing bigger checks to larger, more established funds.

Unless we modernize our policy infrastructure, the benefits of this economic and innovation engine will be constrained, and as private markets continue to grow, this gap will only widen. We need to bolster private capital, but importantly, we need to broaden its reach to more investors, more entrepreneurs, more companies, and more communities.

### **Bolstering emerging managers to grow regional funding networks**

To broaden the startup ecosystem, we must broaden the investor ecosystem beyond the traditional tech funding hubs and networks. Capital has become more mobile, but proximity matters, particularly for the earliest stages. Emerging managers are the key. To drive regional growth and the diversification of private capital, we need to support the emerging managers that identify and fund entrepreneurs across the country. These smaller funds are more likely to invest early, invest locally, and support a more diverse pool of entrepreneurs. And data shows [emerging managers](#) often [outperform](#) their larger counterparts.

Policy should lower barriers and help drive capital to this segment, which will help broaden local networks, create more economic opportunity, and lead to a more robust ecosystem. The following bipartisan measures the Committee are marking up today will help do just that, including the:

- Developing and Empowering our Aspiring Leaders (DEAL) Act,
- Improving Capital Allocation for Newcomers (ICAN) Act, and
- Small Business Investor Capital Access Act

### **The DEAL Act: Expanding qualifying venture capital investments**

Due to regulatory constraints, venture capital funds are largely limited to making direct investments in private companies without facing additional costs and compliance burdens that accompany SEC registration. After Dodd-Frank, private fund advisers were required to register with the SEC unless they qualified as an exempt reporting adviser (ERAs). ERAs are still subject to SEC oversight and compliance obligations that appropriately reflect the venture model, but registered investment advisers (RIAs) are subject to a more extensive and costly regulatory regime.

Venture capital fund advisers can qualify as ERAs if they meet a number of requirements, but 80% of the fund assets must be invested directly in private companies or cash (qualifying assets). The [DEAL Act](#) expands the category of qualifying investments to include fund-of-fund investments and secondaries, which will help drive more capital into emerging managers and markets while ensuring these funds continue to pursue a venture-focused strategy.

- **Fund-of-fund investments.** Increasing the ability for venture capital funds to invest in other venture capital funds could help incentivize established funds to invest in emerging fund managers without incurring additional regulatory burdens that come with SEC registration. Attracting an established fund to serve as an anchor LP could help first-time fund managers attract other investors, and investors will benefit from the diligence of the more established fund. A fund-of-funds strategy not only benefits the emerging manager, but could also [provide diversification opportunities and drive returns](#) for the investing fund and its investors.
- **Secondary investments.** Enabling greater flexibility to invest in secondary investments in qualifying portfolio companies will facilitate greater value realization for investors (such as pension funds and endowments) and recycle more capital into the system, which could unlock a significant source of capital for growing entrepreneurial ecosystems. It would also help startup founders and employees who have a need to monetize their equity compensation and allow existing and trusted venture capital fund partners to increase their investment in a company even between capital-raising rounds.

### **The ICAN Act: Expanding size and investor limits for qualifying venture capital funds**

Under Section 3(c)(1) of the Investment Company Act, private funds cannot raise capital from 100 or more accredited investors. The fund size for most first-time fund managers ranges between \$10–\$25M, which means the average investor check size for 100 investors in a \$25M fund would have to be \$250,000—a high bar for newer fund managers.

To enable emerging managers to accept smaller checks from more investors, Congress created the category of “[qualifying venture capital funds](#)” to help smaller venture capital funds raise capital from more investors. The higher limit of beneficial owners was intended to help emerging managers assemble competitive funds by collecting smaller contributions from a greater number of accredited investors. Currently, a venture capital fund can raise up to \$12M from 250 beneficial owners. In practice, however, the current parameters limit the utility of this provision.

The [ICAN Act](#) would expand the size and investor limits for qualifying venture capital funds to help smaller funds reach more investors.

### **Small Business Investor Capital Access Act: Ensuring regulatory thresholds keep pace with growth**

The Dodd–Frank Act also permitted small private fund advisers with less than \$150M in assets under management to be regulated by the SEC as ERAs. However, this threshold was not adjusted for inflation and has remained static since its inception. As a result, private fund managers who would have been eligible ERAs may now be subject to SEC registration and the increased regulatory burden simply due to the passage of time and an outdated threshold. This disproportionately impacts smaller fund managers who may lack the resources to meet the compliance obligations that come with SEC registration. As a result, capital is diverted away from startups and small businesses. The [Small Business Investor Capital Access Act](#) will modernize this exemption by indexing this threshold, ensuring small fund managers can continue to support small business capital formation without additional regulatory burden.

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Thank you for your leadership in advancing policies to ensure America’s entrepreneurs can access the capital they need at each stage of their lifecycle and provide more opportunities for investors. These efforts are critical to driving American competitiveness, innovation, and upward mobility, and we look forward to working together on a bipartisan basis to achieve these important goals.

Sincerely,

Angel Capital Association (ACA)

AngelList

Carta

Center for American Entrepreneurship (CAE)

Engine

Financial Technology Association (FTA)

Illinois Venture Capital Association (IVCA)

Institute for Portfolio Alternatives (IPA)

Michigan Venture Capital Association (MVCA)

National Venture Capital Association (NVCA)

New England Venture Capital Association (NEVCA)

Technology Councils of North America (TECNA)

Texas Venture Alliance



July 21, 2025

The Honorable French Hill  
Chairman  
Committee on Financial Services  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Maxine Waters  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Financial Services  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hill and Ranking Member Waters:

In advance of your Committee's July 22, 2025 markup, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce expresses our support for several bills the Committee will consider.

The Chamber commends the Committee for its continued work to advance capital formation legislation and to improve the financial regulatory architecture in the United States. By expanding investor access and modernizing securities regulation, these legislative proposals will help maintain the U.S. capital markets as the global gold standard. We support measures that enhance opportunities for businesses to raise capital at every stage of their lifecycle, from startup to IPO, ensuring that both private and public markets are strengthened. The Chamber looks forward to collaborating with the Committee to further these initiatives and promote a robust and inclusive financial environment.

The Chamber supports the following bills:

**H.R. 4429, The Developing and Empowering Our Aspiring Leaders (DEAL) Act**

The "Developing and Empowering our Aspiring Leaders Act" would amend Registered Investment Adviser (RIA) rules promulgated by the SEC that have disincentivized some venture capital funds from investing in Emerging Growth Companies (EGCs). The 2010 Dodd-Frank Act sought to exempt venture capital funds from the costs and challenges associated with becoming an RIA. However, the definition of "venture capital fund" promulgated by the SEC pursuant to Dodd-Frank was too narrow and did not meet the Dodd-Frank statutory obligations of a full venture capital exemption. The current definition ignores critical elements and developments related to the venture capital industry, including growth equity firms which can often be investors in EGCs around the time they are considering a public offering. Shares of EGCs, including the purchase of EGC shares on the secondary market, should be considered qualifying investments. Creating a more accurate

venture capital exemption definition – which the DEAL Act would do – would expand the pool of possible investors for EGCs.

#### **H.R. 4431, The Improving Capital Allocation for Newcomers (ICAN) Act**

This bill would promote venture capital investing in all regions of the country. The bill would make changes to the requirements for a fund to be able to rely on the qualifying venture capital fund exemption under Section 3(c)(1) of the Investment Company Act. This legislation would help mitigate regulatory burdens that can disincentivize fund formation and choke off capital to startup firms.

#### **H.R. 3673, The Small Business Investor Capital Access Act**

Title IV of the 2010 Dodd-Frank Act replaced the longstanding private fund exemption with a requirement that private funds with at least \$150 million in assets under management (AUM) become subject to SEC registration and supervision. Even fifteen years ago, this \$150 million AUM threshold was extremely low and encompassed many smaller funds that do not have substantial compliance resources. Very soon after Dodd-Frank was signed into law, members of the House Financial Services Committee worked on a bipartisan basis to revise this new mandate, understanding that it would create barriers to entry and inhibit the ability of many funds to invest in small and middle market businesses.

However, the \$150 million AUM threshold still has not been revised and remains in effect today. The Chamber commends the recent bipartisan work of Reps. Barr and Velazquez to introduce the Small Business Investor Capital Access Act. This bill would index the \$150 million threshold for inflation dating back to 2010, and then annually thereafter. This will ensure that the line determining SEC registration is more reflective of growth within the economy and within the private capital markets.

#### **H.R. 4430, The Expanding WKSJ Eligibility Act**

“WKSJs” are a class of issuer that benefit from certain tailored regulations which allow these companies to raise additional capital and communicate with potential investors in a more cost-effective manner. One of the more impactful items that WKSJs benefit from is the ability to use automatic “shelf” registration statements that permit a WKSJ to raise capital more quickly. The Chamber supports expanding this important mechanism to more issuers as it will vastly improve the capital raising process for public companies.

#### **H.R. 3446, The FDIC Board Accountability Act**

This legislation mandates that board members have expertise in state bank supervision and small depository institutions and imposes robust term limits, ensuring the FDIC Board remains dynamic, accountable, and representative of all segments of the banking sector. Converting the CFPB Director's position to a non-voting observer preserves vital consumer-protection insights while preventing any single agency from wielding disproportionate influence over deposit-insurance policy. These balanced reforms will enhance transparency, promote competitive markets, and strengthen the resilience of community and regional banks that drive local economic growth.

#### **H.R. 4478, The Tailored Regulatory Updates for Supervisory Testing (TRUST) Act of 2025**

This legislation would recalibrate the examination cycle for small banks and would qualify more banks for an 18-month examination cycle, rather than the standard 12 months cycle that applies to larger institutions. The bill would raise the current eligibility thresholds for the 18-month cycle from banks with \$3 billion or less in consolidated assets to those with \$10 billion or less in consolidated assets. This would provide regulatory and compliance relief for many well-managed and well-capitalized small banks that are integral to consumers and businesses in communities all across the country.

#### **H.R. 4437, The Supervisory Modifications for Appropriate Risk-based Testing (SMART) Act of 2025**

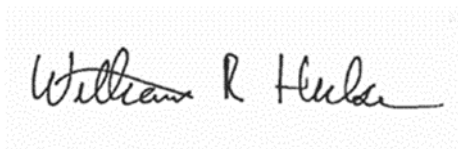
Similar to the TRUST Act, the SMART Act would provide additional regulatory relief for small banks and credit unions by allowing for alternating limited-scope examinations and combining safety and soundness and consumer compliance exams. Importantly, relief under the bill would only be eligible for well-managed and well-capitalized depository institutions.

#### **H.R. 3390, the Bringing the Discount Window into the 21st Century Act**

The Chamber supports a structured process for considering modernization of the Federal Reserve's discount window. This legislation recognizes the need for modernizing how the Federal Reserve provides liquidity to financial institutions to ensure the stability of our financial system. This legislation is a critical step in enhancing the accessibility and functionality of the Federal Reserve's discount window, a vital mechanism for maintaining liquidity and confidence in the banking sector. By updating the discount window to reflect the needs of today's financial landscape, this bill will provide financial institutions with the tools necessary to navigate economic challenges, support small businesses, and foster economic growth.

We thank the members of the Committee for considering our views and look forward to working with you as the legislative process continues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William R. Hulse", is centered within a light gray rectangular box. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Bill Hulse  
Senior Vice President  
Center for Capital Markets Competitiveness  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

cc: Members of the House Committee on Financial Services





July 22, 2025

The Honorable French Hill  
Chairman  
Committee on Financial Services  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Maxine Waters  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Financial Services  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hill and Ranking Member Waters:

On behalf of our nation's venture capital investors and the entrepreneurs they support, I write to express strong support for three bipartisan measures under consideration at today's markup: the Developing and Empowering our Aspiring Leaders (DEAL) Act (H.R. 4429, sponsored by Reps. Ann Wagner and Sean Casten), the Improving Capital Allocation for Newcomers (ICAN) Act (H.R. 4431, sponsored by Reps. William Timmons and Brittany Pettersen), and the Small Business Investor Capital Access Act (H.R. 3673, sponsored by Reps. Andy Barr and Nydia Velázquez). Together, these bills reflect smart, targeted reforms that will unlock capital, reduce unnecessary regulatory friction, and strengthen the American innovation ecosystem.

The DEAL Act modernizes outdated SEC regulations to reflect today's venture capital landscape—one in which startups must stay private longer, and emerging fund managers in nontraditional regions struggle to access anchor capital. In 2024, the median fund size in the U.S. venture capital industry was \$21.3 million, and the median fund size for funds outside of the major hubs of California, New York, and Massachusetts was only \$10 million. By expanding the definition of "qualifying investments" to include secondary transactions and fund-of-fund strategies, the DEAL Act supports recycling capital to new startups, provides liquidity to founders and early employees, allows trusted venture funds to grow their investments over time with their portfolio companies, and empowers experienced VCs to back new fund managers without triggering costly SEC registration. These changes preserve essential investor protections while enabling a broader and more inclusive startup ecosystem.

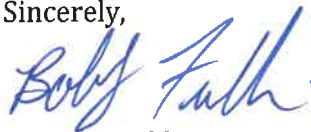
The ICAN Act builds on this by updating the thresholds for "qualifying venture capital funds" under Section 3(c)(1) of the Investment Company Act. Today's outdated limits make it difficult for emerging managers to raise competitive funds from smaller accredited investors. The ICAN Act's proposed increase in both fund size and the number of allowable beneficial owners would allow these managers—who are more likely to invest locally and diversify the innovation pipeline—to aggregate smaller checks from a broader base of investors, bringing more capital to underserved regions and founders. The ICAN Act would

also require the Securities & Exchange Commission to conduct a study to determine whether the changes to the qualified venture capital fund definition have had demonstrable effects on increasing the geographic distribution of capital to portfolio companies, among other trends.

The Small Business Investor Capital Access Act similarly makes a needed fix by adjusting the SEC's exemption threshold for exempt reporting advisers to account for inflation. Without this change, small and emerging fund managers risk crossing an artificial asset cap simply due to time, not risk. Requiring these funds to become full registered investment advisers imposes disproportionate compliance costs—diverting capital away from startups and into red tape. Indexing this threshold is a commonsense way to sustain the dynamism and diversity of early-stage investment.

Taken together, these bills send a strong bipartisan signal that Congress recognizes the evolving nature of capital formation and the importance of the venture capital ecosystem's patient capital model to nurturing the next generation of innovative, high-growth American companies—and is committed to ensuring that our policy infrastructure grows with it. We thank the Committee for its continued leadership and urge swift advancement of these critical reforms.

Sincerely,



Bobby Franklin  
President and CEO  
National Venture Capital Association



July 22, 2025

The Honorable French Hill  
Chairman  
Financial Services Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Maxine Waters  
Ranking Member  
Capital Markets Subcommittee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: July 22<sup>nd</sup> Financial Services Committee Markup**

Dear Chairman Hill and Ranking Member Waters:

The American Securities Association (ASA)<sup>1</sup> commends the Financial Services Committee for continuing its work to promote capital formation and improve the regulatory framework of the U.S. capital markets. The ASA previously submitted recommendations to the Committee to boost capital formation.<sup>2</sup> We are pleased to support the following legislation that the Committee is scheduled to consider.

**H.R. 4430, the Expanding WKSII Eligibility Act**

Well-known seasoned issuers, or WKSIs, are a class of issuers whose shares are registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), which are eligible for certain regulatory relief that allows these companies to raise capital more efficiently. For example, WKSIs are able to use “shelf registration” that makes their registration statements effective upon filing and are able to communicate with investors during their pre-filing period. This legislation would allow companies with a minimum \$75 million in public float to be eligible for WKSII status.

Expanding WKSII status reduces costs for companies because they can incorporate future filings by reference automatically, which keeps their prospectuses current without delay or additional SEC review. This also means investors receive timely and accurate information which decreases investment risk and increases investor confidence.

**H.R. 4460, the Stop Agency Fiat Enforcement of Guidance Act**

The ASA thanks Rep. Meuser for introducing this important bill, which would clarify for regulated entities and the general public that subregulatory “guidance” issued by an agency does not have the force or effect of law and is not binding on the agency or the public. In recent years,

<sup>1</sup> ASA is a trade association that represents the retail and institutional capital markets interests of regional financial services firms who provide Main Street businesses with access to capital and advise hardworking Americans how to create and preserve wealth. ASA’s mission is to promote trust and confidence among investors, facilitate capital formation, and support efficient and competitively balanced capital markets. This mission advances financial independence, stimulates job creation, and increases prosperity. ASA has a geographically diverse membership base that spans the Heartland, Southwest, Southeast, Atlantic, and Pacific Northwest regions of the United States.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.americansecurities.org/post/asa-submits-capital-formation-proposals-to-house-financial-services>





unelected and unaccountable career staffers at the federal financial regulators and other agencies, including the Department of Labor (DOL), have sought to make new law through guidance documents issued outside of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) process. We know this all too well as the ASA was forced to sue the Biden DOL to prevent a guidance document from illegally implementing a policy that the court ruled should have been done through a notice and comment rulemaking.

Oftentimes these guidance documents are heavily influenced by outside special interest groups that co-opt agency career staff to carry out their political agendas. This legislation establishes a truth-in-labeling standard for agencies to make clear that any regulatory effort done without the consent of Congress or outside the APA process is unenforceable.

### **Conclusion**

ASA commends the Committee for holding this hearing and will continue to work with members on both sides of the aisle on these important issues.

Sincerely,

*Christopher A. Iacovella*

Christopher A. Iacovella  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
American Securities Association





MIDDLE EAST

## U.S. citizen killed in Syria sectarian violence alongside 6 Druze family members

Video circulating online and verified by NBC News showed Hosam Saraya, 35, and six male relatives being made to kneel before they were gunned down.



— Hosam Saraya. [via Instagram](#)

July 22, 2025, 7:03 AM EDT

**By Abigail Williams, Astha Rajvanshi, Caroline Radnofsky, Jean Lee and Colin Sheeley**

**Listen to this article** / 04:44

An American citizen from Oklahoma was killed along with six male relatives during [the sectarian violence](#) that erupted last week in [Syria](#).

Syrian-American Hosam Saraya, 35, was visiting his family in Sweida in southern Syria from Oklahoma City, where he lived.

Last Wednesday, he and his family members were seized by armed men and gunned down in the street, according to a relative who spoke to NBC News on the condition of anonymity. NBC News could not independently verify who was responsible for the attack.

Video circulating online and verified by NBC News showed Saraya and his family members being killed.

In one video posted on Instagram, eight men are seen forced to walk in a line on a deserted street west of Tishreen Square in Sweida's city center by about half a dozen armed [men in military-style fatigues](#).

In another video, the same men are kneeling before being gunned down by the armed men, as dozens of shots are fired over 15 seconds.

### Sectarian violence erupts in Syria despite U.S.-backed ceasefire

01:44



A graduate of Oklahoma Christian University and Damascus University, Saraya was a member of [Syria's Druze religious minority](#) and had founded a virtual school for [Syrian children](#) administered from Sweida.

“He loved to help his community. ... He’s always been, you know, very ambitious and very kind,” his relative said.

The State Department on Monday confirmed that an American citizen had been killed in Syria but did not identify the person or provide any details.

“We offer condolences to the family on their loss and are providing consular assistance to them,” a spokesperson for the State Department said, adding, “We are greatly concerned when any U.S. citizen is harmed overseas, wherever they are.”

The spokesperson said the U.S. had called for “accountability in all cases where U.S. citizens are harmed abroad.”

Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla., said in [a post on X on](#) Monday that he and his wife were "heartbroken" by Saraya's death.

"Hosam was an Oklahoman and member of the Druze community who was tragically executed alongside other members of his family in Syria," Lankford said.

Clashes first broke out between [Syria’s Druze minority](#) and Bedouin tribal militias earlier this month, drawing interventions from government security forces and Israel. Hundreds were [reportedly killed](#) in the clashes.

The fighting came to a pause over the weekend after the Syrian government said it agreed to a fragile ceasefire with both sides.

As part of the U.S.-backed truce, the Syrian government on Monday [began evacuating Bedouin families](#) from the predominantly Druze city.

“Escalating hostilities can only be contained with an agreement to pause violence, protect the innocent, allow humanitarian access, and step back from danger,” Thomas Barrack, special envoy for Syria, said in a statement while announcing the deal.

[Israeli airstrikes](#) in Syria last week also caught [President Donald Trump](#) by surprise, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters Monday.



Trump “was caught off guard by the bombing in Syria and also the bombing of a [Catholic Church in Gaza](#),” Leavitt said, adding, “In both accounts, the president quickly called the prime minister to rectify those situations.”

The recent outbreak of violence risks reigniting sectarian tensions in the country nearly seven months after its [longtime ruler, Bashar al-Assad, was toppled](#).

The Druze and other minorities [remain wary](#) of interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa, a former al-Qaeda commander [who met Trump in May](#) after the president said [he would lift sanctions](#) on the war-torn country.

U.S. officials are now scrambling to contain the violence, with [Secretary of State Marco Rubio](#) calling on Damascus to prevent “violent jihadists” from “carrying out massacres.”

“They must hold accountable and bring to justice anyone guilty of atrocities including those in their own ranks,” Rubio said in a statement Sunday.

More than 128,500 people have been displaced since the clashes began July 13, according to the United Nations’ International Organization for Migration.

U.N. Human Rights Chief Volker Turk said in [a statement last week](#) that there were credible reports of widespread violations and abuses, including summary executions, arbitrary killings, kidnappings, destruction of private property and looting of homes by the Syrian government forces, as well as Druze and Bedouin fighters.



Abigail Williams

Abigail Williams is a producer and reporter for NBC News covering the State Department.

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Astha Rajvanshi

Astha Rajvanshi is a reporter for NBC News Digital, based in London. Previously, she worked as a staff writer covering international news for TIME.



Caroline Radnofsky

Caroline Radnofsky is a supervising reporter for NBC News' Social Newsgathering team based in London.

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Jean Lee



Jean Lee reports with NBC News' Social Newsgathering team in Los Angeles. She previously reported for the NBC News investigative unit.

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Colin Sheeley

Colin Sheeley is a senior reporter for NBC News' Social Newsgathering team based in New York.

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Larissa Gao contributed.

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**Syrian Americans Urge 'No' Vote on the Syria Sanctions Accountability Act of 2025 (H.R. 4427), Call on HFSC Chair Hill to Withdraw It from Consideration**

***Bill Is a Backdoor Expansion of U.S. Syria Sanctions***

**July 21, 2025**

The Syrian American Council, together with the broader Syrian American community it represents across the United States, strongly opposes the Syria Sanctions Accountability Act of 2025 (H.R. 4427), which is scheduled for markup before the House Financial Services Committee on Tuesday, July 22 at 10:00 A.M.

At a time when Syria is finally being given a pathway to rebuild, re-stabilize, and reintegrate into the international community, this bill, which was introduced by Rep. Mike Lawler on July 16, 2025, moves the country—and U.S. policy—decisively in the wrong direction.

**This Bill Undermines President Trump's Syria Policy**

H.R. 4427 directly contradicts the clear policy direction set forth by President Trump in his June 30, 2025 Executive Order terminating broad-based Syria sanctions. That order formally ended the Syria sanctions program, shifted U.S. posture from isolation to engagement, and opened a door for reconstruction and refugee return. President Trump's message was simple and bold: it's time to give Syria a chance to recover.

Rather than supporting this shift, H.R. 4427 locks in even more burdensome conditions for sanctions relief, doubling down on a sanctions regime that is crippling Syria's economy and deepening the suffering of ordinary Syrians.

**Unnecessary and Redundant Conditions**

The bill adds two new conditions that, while well-intentioned, are both unnecessary and counterproductive:

**1. Captagon Trafficking**

The Assad regime's role in Captagon production is serious—but it is already being addressed under numerous existing laws such as the Captagon Act (H.R. 6265), and the Illicit Captagon Trafficking Suppression Act of 2023 (H.R. 4681), which give the

U.S. broad tools to sanction traffickers and dismantle networks.

*There is no need to duplicate this mandate in the Caesar framework.*

## **2. Arbitrary Detention of Religious Minorities**

Again, this is a vital concern—but the Executive Order already empowers the U.S. to target human rights violators. And existing authorities under the Global Magnitsky Act, International Religious Freedom Act, and others provide robust mechanisms to hold perpetrators accountable.

Adding these issues to the Caesar Act now—after more than a decade of atrocities that included mass civilian killings and siege warfare—appears arbitrary and politically symbolic, not policy-driven.

## **A Delayed Path to Relief**

Given the slow legislative process, even in an ideal, best-case scenario—where Syria satisfies every condition immediately and fully—this bill's structure would delay any sanctions relief until at least 2028, due to the new requirement that compliance be maintained for two full consecutive years.

That means another three years of blocked capital, frozen reconstruction, and stagnant economy, just as Syrian families begin to return and the country begins the long road toward normalization. This delay will have devastating consequences on refugee return, housing, healthcare, food security, and infrastructure.

## **This Is Not Repeal—This Is Reinforcement**

The title of this bill may imply accountability or reform—but in substance, it is a backdoor expansion of the Caesar Act.

At a time when Syrians across the political spectrum are asking for relief, not punishment—when the international community is finally aligned on re-engagement—this bill tightens the screws instead of removing them.

The reality is this: this bill strengthens the Caesar sanctions at the exact moment they were supposed to end.

## **Our Appeal to Chairman French Hill**

We close by addressing Chairman French Hill, who has long been a valued ally of the Syrian American community. Chairman Hill has championed critical efforts to address human rights violations in Syria, combat Captagon trafficking, promote humanitarian access, and

lead principled, bipartisan work on Syria policy. We are sincerely grateful for his leadership and longstanding commitment.

Today, we call on Chairman Hill to demonstrate continued leadership—leadership that reflects the realities of this moment, not the policies of the past.

We respectfully urge Chairman Hill and the House Financial Services Committee to:

- **Withdraw H.R. 4427 from consideration;** and
- **Work toward a clean, full repeal of the Caesar sanctions,** in alignment with President Trump's vision and the urgent needs of the Syrian people today.

Syrians need peace, investment, and a chance to rebuild—not more conditions, more penalties, and more delay.

We thank the Committee for its attention and welcome the opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue on a better path forward.

**Syrian American Council**

**On behalf of its Syrian American community**

Opinion **War in Ukraine**

## **Europe must act now to seize Russia's frozen assets**

Using Moscow's immobilised holdings in Belgium to bolster Ukraine's economy and defence is both legal and necessary

**J FRENCH HILL**



Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, during a press conference in Berlin. So long as the war continues, Kyiv will remain in need of external assistance © Emmanuele Contini/NurPhoto/Getty Images

**J French Hill**

Published JUL 7 2025

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*The writer is chairman of the financial services committee in the US House of Representatives*

The recent European Council meeting in Brussels failed to force Russia to finally pay for its aggression against Ukraine. This critical meeting was an opportunity to change course and greatly increase the pressure on President Vladimir Putin to end his illegal war. Yet, it's not too late for Europe to act — at no cost to taxpayers anywhere.

The council should agree to seize the roughly €258bn in frozen Russian sovereign

assets in Europe as a down payment of Russian compensation for the damage it has unjustly inflicted on Ukraine. Alternatively, some portion of those assets could strengthen Ukraine's military defences and enhance its negotiating position before any serious peace discussions begin.

The recently elected German chancellor, Friedrich Merz, indicated in May that he was open to making full use of Russia's frozen assets to aid Kyiv. He is backed by a governing coalition that sees them as a potential source of economic and military support for the Ukrainians. So long as the war continues, Ukraine's economy will remain in need of external assistance. Kyiv requires a global partnership for financial aid far beyond what the IMF, World Bank and other donors have provided or realistically can provide in the future.

Russia, however, still owns its immobilised sovereign assets held abroad. Thanks to action last year by the G7 leaders with support from the US and Europe, the "extraordinary revenues" earned from those frozen assets are starting to flow to Ukraine. So far, approximately €28bn has been disbursed. But it's not enough. Legal scholars and a report commissioned by the European parliament have clearly affirmed that action can be taken to compensate Ukraine under the law of collective countermeasures. The European Council must go beyond the G7 status quo; simply restating that all immobilised assets will remain immobilised is necessary but not sufficient.

Three immediate steps are in order. First, all nations holding Russian assets must segregate those into clean escrow accounts as recommended by several international experts to be held in trust for Ukraine's benefit. This step includes full accountability, transparency, good governance and professional asset management to protect Ukraine's interests. Because the bulk of these assets are held in Belgium by Euroclear, Belgian authorities will need to receive indemnification assurances.

Second, the council must immediately begin working with all affected countries to create the Ukraine international trust fund recommended last year by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Third, the transfer of a significant part of the frozen funds to Ukraine for its urgent security and financial needs must begin soon. Frozen Russian funds could move quickly either through existing European fund mechanisms or, alternatively, through the World Bank.

The US needs to act as well. I have urged President Donald Trump to cancel the Biden-era policy of timidity to send a strong signal to Putin and help Ukraine from a position of American strength, by fully implementing the Repo for Ukrainians Act and immediately transferring an initial \$5bn in Russian central bank reserves immobilised in the US by executive order. This will continue the demonstration of Washington's resolve to stand with its allies.

Given Putin's continued commitment to murder and mayhem, the status quo is unacceptable economically and geopolitically. If Russia can incapacitate Ukraine economically, then Putin wins. Ukraine, Europe and the rest of the world will then face a catastrophic financial loss and invite further Russian aggression elsewhere. Europe holds tremendous leverage over the outcome of this conflict. It should seize the opportunity while it still can.

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### **Follow the topics in this article**

J French Hill

War in Ukraine

Russia





July 21, 2025

**Via E-Mail**

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**RE: United Steelworkers supports Representative McClain's amendment to H.R. 3074, the Common Cents Act.**

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 850,000 members of the United Steelworkers union (USW), I write to express our support for H.R. 3074, as amended. This bill would authorize the use of zinc as an alternative metal in the production of nickels. This legislation would help protect American jobs, support domestic manufacturing, and generate savings for the American taxpayer.

USW represents workers across various industries, including the 250 employees at Artazn in Greeneville, Tennessee who manufacture zinc coin blanks, formerly used for the penny. Back in April, Representative McClain introduced H.R. 3074, which would have eliminated the penny. This narrow bill claimed to create fiscal savings given how expensive minting the penny had become; however, it would also have threatened the livelihoods of those 250 USW members. Furthermore, the savings claim was dubious because it currently costs approximately 14 cents to produce a single nickel.<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately, Representative McClain has offered an amendment to her original legislation, which creates a new opportunity for these workers to continue supplying zinc blanks to the U.S. Mint — now for the use of nickels. The proposed zinc-based alternative costs less than five cents to produce, has been actively tested by the U.S. Mint, and has demonstrated strong performance in terms of durability, functionality, and cost-effectiveness.

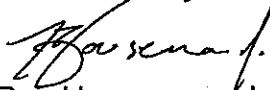
In closing, USW previously opposed H.R. 3074 since it threatened the livelihoods of our members at Artazn. However, with the inclusion of this amendment,

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Mint, "2023 Annual Report", Accessed July 21, 2025.

the bill now offers a viable path forward that preserves jobs, supports American industry, and delivers savings to taxpayers. We urge you to support this amended version of H.R. 3074.

Sincerely,



Roy Houseman, Jr.  
Legislative Director

Assistant to the International President

United States House of Representatives  
Committee on Financial Services  
2129 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Record

July 23, 2025

The Honorable French Hill  
Chairman  
House Financial Services Committee  
2129 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Hill:

During the week of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the enactment of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Dodd-Frank), I write again to respectfully request that you, as our Chairman, work to ensure our Committee complies with Section 1016 of that Act requiring semiannual hearings with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Director, and promptly invite Acting Director Russell Vought to testify before our Committee. It has been more than five months since I sent my first letter, and despite subsequent requests, this hearing has not been held. Indeed, it has been more than a year since the Committee last fulfilled this semiannual hearing requirement,<sup>1</sup> so I ask that you promptly rectify this matter and convene the hearing.

You did not formally reply to my letter in February requesting the Committee convene such a hearing, however, your spokesperson said, "We received the letter and will work with the Ranking Member to schedule a CFPB semi-annual hearing following the confirmation of a Director." Of course, President Trump nominated an individual to serve as CFPB Director, but that individual was reassigned and nominated to a different post several months ago,<sup>2</sup> and the President has failed to nominate anyone else. Given the Committee's long history of having acting officials testify, including from the CFPB, to satisfy statutory hearing obligations or otherwise conduct oversight,<sup>3</sup> that is not a legitimate reason to not proceed with scheduling this hearing.

The need for convening this hearing and some basic oversight grows by the day. The Republican Congress recently slashed the CFPB's budget in nearly half without getting any kind of analysis from Acting Director Vought or other CFPB officials what the implications are for this terrible policy. Meanwhile, Acting Director Vought has claimed the CFPB is prioritizing protecting servicemembers, and yet he recently let a bad actor off the hook for harming servicemembers and their families.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, through regulatory rollbacks and dropped enforcement actions, his radical actions have cost consumers a staggering \$18 billion in a few short

<sup>1</sup> FSC hearing entitled, *The Semi-Annual Report of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection* (Jun. 13, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> Ballard Spahr's Consumer Finance Monitor, *Trump Administration to withdraw McKernan's nomination to serve as CFPB Director* (May 13, 2025).

<sup>3</sup> See FSC hearing, *The 2018 Semi-Annual Report of the CFPB* (Apr. 11, 2018), which was less than 5 months after President Trump appointed Mick Mulvaney to serve as Acting Director on November 24, 2017. FSC Republicans also invited OCC Acting Comptroller Hsu to testify before the Committee four times last Congress, despite having no statutory obligation to do so. See FSC hearings entitled *Oversight of Prudential Regulators* held on May 16, 2023, Nov. 15, 2023, May 15, 2024, and Nov. 20, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Banking Dive, *CFPB drops \$95M overdraft case against Navy Federal* (July 2, 2025).

months,<sup>5</sup> but this Republican-led Congress continues to abrogate its responsibilities under the Constitution to function as a co-equal branch of Government.

It is past time for Acting Director Vought to testify and answer for his reckless decision-making. Again, we are obliged to hold this hearing under the law, and I look forward to working with you to fulfill our responsibilities under the Constitution to serve as a check and a balance to the Executive Branch.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Maxine Waters". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Maxine" and last name "Waters" clearly legible.

MAXINE WATERS  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Financial Services

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<sup>5</sup> SBPC, *Trump's Consumer Financial Protection Agenda—or Lack Thereof—Has Already Cost Americans More Than \$18 Billion* (Jun. 24, 2025).