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FULL COMMITTEE
BUSINESS MEETING:
MARK-UP OF SEVERAL BILLS
AND POSTAL-NAMING
MEASURES

FOR THE
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OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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**FULL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING:
MARK-UP OF SEVERAL BILLS AND
POSTAL-NAMING MEASURES**

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY,
Washington, D.C.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:10 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. James Comer [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Comer, Jordan, Turner, Gosar, Foxx, Grothman, Cloud, Palmer, Higgins, Sessions, Biggs, Mace, LaTurner, Fallon, Donalds, Perry, Timmons, Burchett, Greene, McClain, Boebert, Luna, Burlison, Waltz, Raskin, Norton, Lynch, Connolly, Krishnamoorthi, Khanna, Mfume, Porter, Bush, Gomez, Brown, Stansbury, Garcia, Frost, Lee, Casar, Crockett, Goldman, Moskowitz, and Tlaib.

Chairman COMER. The Committee will please come to order. A quorum is present.

Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare a recess at any time.

Pursuant to Committee Rule 5(b) and House Rule VI, Clause 2, the Chair may postpone further proceedings today on the question of approving any measure or matter or adopting an amendment on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered.

Today, we will use an electronic system for recorded votes on amendments and passage of the bills before the Committee. I will discuss this process prior to any recorded votes, but for awareness, my intention is to hold the first vote open for a bit longer than the following votes just to allow Members to arrive and get familiar with the new system. When using the electronic voting, Members must be in their seat in the hearing room to cast a vote. Members are not allowed to remove their voting remote from the room. Once voting begins, Members will be able to select “yes” or “no” or “present” for each vote. A Member may change their vote at any time prior to the closing of the vote by the clerk, but once a vote is recorded by a Member, they may not un-record their vote from the record.

Of course, should any technical issues arise, which I do not anticipate as I have tested the system, we will immediately transition to a traditional roll call. This new system will allow the Committee

to dispense with votes quickly, so it is important that Members arrive on time to vote and do not leave the room during the vote series. Any procedural or motion-related votes during today's markup will be dispensed with by a traditional roll call vote.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chair, a question on that?

Chairman COMER. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. If somebody is, you know, going back and forth to another Committee and so forth, and they come in the door to try to make the vote, will they be recognized verbally, or are they going to now be required—

Chairman COMER. I think we have to vote by this, right? We have to vote because it will pop up on the screen.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Got it. Got it.

Chairman COMER. Everybody has to vote.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. Is that OK? All right.

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 6283**, the Delinking Revenue from Unfair Gouging Act. The clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 6283, the Delinking Revenue from Unfair Gouging Act, a bill to improve services provided by pharmacy benefit managers.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill should be considered as read and open for amendment at any point. Without objection, so ordered.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes himself to offer an amendment in the nature of a substitute. The clerk will please designate the amendment.

The CLERK. An amendment in the nature of a substitute offered to H.R. 6283, as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read, and the substitute will be considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment.

Chairman COMER. I recognize myself for 5 minutes for a statement on the bill and amendment.

Rarely a day goes by that I do not hear from constituents concerned about the high cost of prescription drugs. I am pleased that today we have an opportunity to both address and lead this issue which is so important to many Americans. H.R. 6283, the Delinking Revenue from Unfair Gouging or Drug Act will make much-needed changes to the pharmacy benefit market. Consolidating PBMs are supposed to help negotiations and reduce the cost of prescription drugs for patients. I might add, the consolidation of pharmacy benefit managers, or PBMs, that the industry has left us with just three PBMs controlling 80 percent of the market.

Instead of reducing the cost of prescription drugs for patients, some PBMs have leveraged their control of the prescription drug market to control drug prices, rebates, pharmacy reimbursements, insurers, pharmacy networks, and formularies for financial gain. PBMs currently operate as middlemen between health insurers, drug manufacturers, and pharmacies in an unnecessarily complex prescription drug supply chain. In doing so, some PBMs have increased the overall cost of prescription drugs and hurt consumer choice. Furthermore, by skimming discounts meant for local phar-

macies, certain PBM practices drive up prescription drug prices for patients. Some PBMs have been found civilly liable for these practices.

That is why we are here today, to consider part of the DRUG Act to help curb these practices. We are specifically considering Subsection (d), which would ensure that PBMs contracting with carriers that provide Federal health benefit plans are prevented from engaging in many of these harmful practices. This legislation would ensure that covered PBM revenues are limited to fair market value service fees and would prohibit PBMs from charging health plans more than what they ultimately pay to pharmacies. The bill also prevents a PBM from steering beneficiaries toward pharmacies owned by the PBM, ensuring a consumer can go to the pharmacy of their choice. Finally, Subsection (d) of this legislation provides enforcement authorities for the subsection of the Office of Personnel Management, including the ability to collect \$10,000 daily civil penalty for noncompliance.

My amendment in the nature of a substitute offers necessary technical edits and expands on the legislation by allowing OPM to deposit any collected monetary penalties into the FEHB fund. I am pleased the Committee is considering such important legislation to rein in these PBMs and curb these abusive practices. This legislation is supported by several organizations, including the National Federation of Federal Employees, the Association of National Active and Retired Federal Employees, the National Association of Manufacturers, the Community Oncology Alliance, TransparencyRx, the PBM Accountability Project, the Association of Accessible Medicines, AffirmedRx, Patients Rising Now, and the Biotechnology Innovation Organization. I urge my colleagues to support this very important and bipartisan bill. I now yield to the Ranking Member for his opening statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to commend you and the Oversight Republicans for joining with us, the Oversight Democrats, this Congress in exploring ways to increase Americans' access to affordable medication. We held two bipartisan hearings last year to evaluate how certain pharmacy benefit managers', or PBMs', practices may harm patients' timely and affordable access to medicine, hurt independent pharmacies, and restrict provider care. The bill we are discussing today is intended to build upon these efforts and solve some of the problems we identified, but it is difficult to fully solve a problem before we completely understand it.

Our hearings last year made clear that, above all else, PBMs are operating in a black box. Both Congress and the public need a lot more clarity into how PBMs operate and how their practices might operate in conjunction with other actors in the prescription drug market, including Big Pharma, to make it harder for patients to get the care that they needed at an affordable cost. Last Congress, Oversight Democrats published our findings from a 3-year investigation into drug manufacturers that revealed how Big Pharma engaged in anticompetitive behavior to keep drug prices artificially high and specifically targeted the U.S. prescription drug market for price increases. The findings from this report allowed congressional Democrats and President Biden to address these concerns in the

historic Inflation Reduction Act, including by allowing Medicare to negotiate prices for some of the most expensive drugs in the country directly with manufacturers so Big Pharma can no longer exploit American taxpayers and patients.

This has allowed us to dramatically reduce prescription drug prices for certain drugs. For example, for insulin, I had constituents who were spending \$1,000 a month on their insulin shots as diabetics, and now that is capped at \$35 a month in the Medicare program. And at the same time, we saved the taxpayers billions of dollars by letting the market work in allowing the government to negotiate with Big Pharma for lower prices. Unfortunately, there is not a similarly comprehensive report on PBM behavior or an approach to the problem. Without a thorough understanding of how PBMs operate, I worry we cannot know to what extent this bill will actually address the problems it tries to solve.

That is why I plan to introduce a few amendments designed to help health plans and the Federal Government better understand the industry and PBMs' potentially misaligned incentives by establishing effective reporting and disclosure mechanisms for PBMs. Bringing sunshine in the system will enable Congress to craft and implement effective solutions. I believe these amendments are necessary to effectively address what we have come to learn about PBMs' role in the healthcare system. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Before I recognize Dr. Foxx, I ask unanimous consent to enter the following letters of support into the record: a letter from OneOncology, a letter from Pharma, a letter from the National Association of Manufacturers, a letter from the Association for Accessible Medicines and Biosimilars Council, two letters from Transparency-Rx, a letter from the PBM Accountability Project, a letter from AffirmedRx, and a letter from Community Oncology Alliance.

Without objection, so ordered.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Dr. Foxx from North Carolina for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Comer, we share an interest in effective management of the Federal Employees Health Benefits, FEHB Program, and in delivering the best low-cost healthcare possible to Americans. I chair the Committee on Education and the Workforce, of which you are a member, and we have spent this Congress focused intently on improving transparency in healthcare and addressing the practices of pharmacy benefit managers, PBMs, in order to deliver lower healthcare costs to patients and plans. That is why I am proud of the House's broad bipartisan support for the Lower Costs, More Transparency Act—legislation that will give employers the information they need to make informed healthcare purchasing decisions on behalf of their employees, and I look forward to continuing to work with our Senate colleagues to enact it this year.

As a conservative, I am always hesitant to invoke the powers of the Federal Government, particularly to intervene in private businesses' ability to design their own contracts and determine fair compensation for their services. Overreach is all too easy, and I am particularly concerned with such interventions in the commercial

healthcare market. Congress does have a unique responsibility to ensure the FEHB Program delivers the highest quality and lowest costs for Federal workers. Tweaks to that program can reveal the consequences of proposals that some may desire to expand more widely. That is precisely what is before us today, the application of H.R. 6283, the Delinking Revenue from Unfair Gouging Act, or the DRUG Act, to the FEHB Program.

The bill applies three significant changes to contracting for prescription drugs by FEHB plans: delinking, a spread pricing ban, and an anti-steering provision. Delinking is intended to ensure that there is no incentive for a PBM to select a higher list price drug in lieu of a lower net price drug. We want to ensure that PBMs share the same incentives to deliver the lowest net cost to the plans they serve. We also must ensure bureaucrats do not have too much authority to dictate how PBMs can be compensated. It is particularly important to tread carefully on spread pricing and on anti-steering provisions that may take away plan sponsors' ability to lower cost. Employers who act as fiduciaries and benefit providers for their employees deserve to have a full array of tools available to design their plans to benefit patients and keep premiums low.

All of these changes are motivated by good intentions, but it is extremely important to move cautiously and avoid unintended consequences. While I am aware that the Office of Personnel Management has stated that these reforms may reduce drug spending and premiums in the FEHB Program, I believe it is important that the Congressional Budget Office share its analysis of the full financial impact of the legislation in short order. It is also very important that as this language applicable to FEHB is considered, there are additional efforts to ensure the text is perfected to address potential areas of improvement.

I am aware that there is too little free about the healthcare market in America. My North Star is restoring free market incentives and ensuring that the employer-sponsored healthcare so many Americans value is on a stable foundation for the future. Out of a willingness to work with Chairman Comer on giving a trial to these policies in the unique FEHB market, I am voting today to support H.R. 6283. I am open to additional good faith discussions with all stakeholders on each of the three pillars of this legislation but believe significant more study is necessary before any consideration of similar reforms in the commercial market.

It is vital that Congress enact PBM transparency legislation, the Lower Costs, More Transparency Act, into law now so that we can see the benefits of that data flow to patients and employers while revealing what additional action is needed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. Do any other Members wish to speak on the bill? Yes, Mr. —

Mr. RASKIN. I have an amendment at the desk, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. OK. We have still got some discussion on the bill first. The Chair recognizes Mr. Burlison from Missouri for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank you for holding this markup today, and we have a lot of issues that

are facing American people, and the high cost of prescription drugs is certainly something that is worth tackling. However, I respectfully disagree on this bill that targeting PBM practices is the way to drive down costs and expand consumer choice.

We all want to lower prescription drug prices, but the devil is in the details. First, in the delinking—Subsection (d) of this bill adds to the Federal Employee Health Benefits Act a new section that would implement delinking policies. Delinking is essentially the government stepping in and delinking what PBMs are allowed to charge from the list price to the net price, and while this sounds good on paper and may feel good in the short term, it only serves to increase premiums and raise costs for the patient.

Senator Rand Paul recently commented on a Senate drug pricing bill that included delinking provisions, explaining, “Like so many misguided policies in Washington, this bill may actually raise drug prices. If that happens, just imagine the outcry for a single-payer healthcare system with government price controls. Maybe that is exactly what the left is betting on, that if drug companies have free rein, the American people will get fed up fast and demand a socialist paradise. Let us hope that they do not get their wish,” and I certainly hope they do not get their wish either.

Regarding the process and the cost, I have some concerns with the process as well as the potential cost of the bill. We have had two PBM hearings in this Committee already this year, and at no point did we hear from many of the groups that are going to be involved, many of the stakeholders. Why are we marking up a policy about which we have not had actual public discussion with the stakeholders involved and the Federal agencies that might be impacted? Regarding the CBO, we have not seen, as was mentioned, a CBO score of this language. It has not scored this, and what is complicating the matter is that there are 800,000 postal retirees who will be shifting to Medicare Part D this year, and the question is, has CBO scored how this language will impact the cost for those retirees?

Additionally, the bill targeting PBMs’ involvement in the public sector is counterproductive, in my opinion. For example, the Department of Labor’s Inspector General found that the Agency spent an extra \$321 million over a 5-year period on prescription drugs because they did not use a PBM. Free markets simply work better. PBMs use their economies of scale to drive down costs. In the same way that Walmart, as we all know, does a great job of selling bulk things, but they do so at the benefit of the consumer by driving down costs. PBMs are paid based on performance. If they effectively secure savings from drug companies, they are paid more. And that is a good thing. The buying power of a PBM is one of the only remaining checks on drug companies’ unlimited pricing power. It is why you are seeing all of the ads that are being paid for by pharma targeting PBMs and supporting this bill. I would suggest that if we are looking for solutions to combat skyrocketing drug costs that we take a look at what our drug manufacturers are doing.

And at the end of the day, I had the exact same opinion as probably most of the Members are going to vote today. I originally used to think that PBMs were part of the problem, and after serving on

the very board for an entire state, the state of Missouri, who had to purchase the insurance for the lives of over 100,000 people, my attitude changed. And I look at this, and I think if I had been handcuffed in this way of negotiating with what I had to negotiate with, with the different insurance carriers and the pharmacy benefit managers, the only result would be an increase in premium prices for the lives of the insured people that I was purchasing insurance for. And so respectfully, I will be voting against the bill.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Seeing that no other Members want to speak on the underlying bill, I now recognize our Ranking Member for an amendment.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank the gentleman from Missouri for his thoughtful comments on that. This proposed amendment to the bill would help ensure that PBM reforms are working as intended by increasing transparency—

Chairman COMER. We need to call for the amendment.

Mr. RASKIN. Oh. I am sorry.

Chairman COMER. Will the clerk distribute the amendment to all Members?

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. And will the clerk designate the amendment?

The CLERK. Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6283, as offered by Mr. Raskin of Maryland.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read.

I reserve a point of order.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman from Maryland is recognized for 5 minutes to explain his amendment.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you. The purpose of the amendment is to make sure that the PBM reforms work as intended by increasing transparency around their business models. The amendment would require PBMs and health plans to disclose relevant information to Federal Employee Health Benefits Program carriers, FEHB Program carriers, as determined by OPM. OPM would determine which information would help the carriers negotiate the best healthcare coverage and prescription drug costs for Federal employees and promulgate reporting requirements through the Federal rulemaking process.

Chairman Comer, I think you and I agree that if PBMs are working as intended, they serve an important role in negotiating lower drug costs and ensuring patients can get the medications they need. And I think we also agree that we have a drug affordability and accessibility crisis in the country, and the current way PBMs operate is playing a role in exacerbating it. But despite this Committee's efforts to engage on the subject and hold substantive hearings, Congress and Americans still do not have a complete understanding of how PBM practices operate and how they may be contributing to high prescription drug costs and reduced accessibility to medication.

I have in my possession a fact sheet from the sponsoring office, Representative Miller-Meeks, of the DRUG Act. And while I commend the legislative motivations behind the bill, it is unclear how much evidence there is to support claims that the bill will "increase coverage of lower cost alternatives, including generics and

biosimilars, and generate savings for employers and plan sponsors.” I share those goals, and I want to be sure that the bill will actually achieve them, but it is hard to be sure that the changes proposed will accomplish those objectives if the features of PBM operations remain shrouded in secrecy and darkness.

Although we have heard that practices, like rebate negotiation and spread pricing, may increase costs for patients while enriching PBMs, without an understanding of the remuneration PBMs may obtain from rebates, fees, and other discounts and from practices like spread pricing, we do not have complete insight into the ways in which PBM practices may be a contributing factor of our drug affordability crisis. It is clear we need increased transparency within the PBM market to make sure Congress and the people understand the role they play in our very needlessly complex healthcare system.

With this understanding, Congress can enact more effective policy solutions. In fact, in a memo requested by the sponsor of this bill, Ellis Health Policy, specifically said combining delinking, as this bill would do, along with greater transparency, which is the purpose of my amendment, we would be generating additional savings and reducing premiums, and this should be a bipartisan commitment. In fact, the Lower Costs, More Transparency Act that was passed by the House in December with bipartisan support included significant reporting requirements for health plans and PBMs meant to shed light on the inner workings of the PBMs, but that bill did not apply to the Federal Health Benefits Program.

My amendment to this bill models the House-passed language in the Lower Costs, More Transparency Act and would require PBMs to report similar information to carriers that participate in the Federal Health Benefits Program as determined by OPM. For example, the Lower Costs, More Transparency Act requires PBMs to report information related to PBM spending on drugs dispensed to patients, the amount reimbursed by PBMs to pharmacies for dispensing those drugs, and the remuneration received by the PBM from drug manufacturers. By having a better understanding of PBMs within the healthcare supply chain, FEHB carriers will be better informed to ensure that patients will end up coming out on top. I urge my colleagues to support the amendment. I yield back to you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Would the Ranking Member engage in a friendly colloquy?

Mr. RASKIN. Yes, by all means.

Chairman COMER. I appreciate the Ranking Member’s proposal to bring greater PBM transparency to the Federal Employees Health Benefit market. I have long been a supporter of PBM transparency and believe it is one of the best ways we can reduce the cost of prescription drugs for all of our constituents. Transparency was a central proposed solution during the hearings this Committee has held on the impact of PBMs on prescription drug prices. State attorneys general in Ohio, Oklahoma, Utah, Texas, and others have filed lawsuits and opened investigations into the anti-competitive practices of PBMs. State legislatures across the country have passed legislation preventing some of their anticompeti-

tive practices and requiring transparency in pricing and contracts, and I know that Kentucky did that.

Finally, the dam is breaking here in the Nation's Capital. While I have some concerns that the Ranking Member's amendment would cause confusion rather than transparency, I appreciate his proposal and agree with the goals. So, I would commit to working with the Ranking Member to draft comprehensive PBM transparency within the FEHB, if he were willing to withdraw the amendment and engage with my staff on drafting a separate stand-alone bill to address that.

Mr. RASKIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is acceptable to me. I withdraw the amendment, and I look forward to working with you on that comprehensive transparency legislation.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. We will begin talks at the conclusion of this hearing. Thank you. Does any other Member wish to be recognized for the purpose of an amendment? Ms. Crockett? Oh, for what purpose does Mr. Lynch seek recognition?

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Chairman, I believe I have an amendment at the desk.

Chairman COMER. The clerk will distribute the amendment to all Members.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will designate the amendment.

The CLERK. Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6283, as offered by Mr. Lynch of Massachusetts.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read.

I reserve a point of order.

Chairman COMER. Representative Lynch is recognized for 5 minutes to explain his amendment.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the Ranking Member. It is good to be working on something where I think there is general agreement between Republicans and Democrats. It is refreshing.

Mr. Chairman, this amendment would allow the Inspector General of the Office of Personnel Management to have full access to information relating to contracts entered into by pharmacy benefit managers, PBMs. The data would include company-wide rebate receipt agent reports, information and methodology used to calculate and allocate rebates, information on average wholesale price, dispensing fees paid, and any methodologies used to calculate additional administrative and service fees. Including data from all contracts entered into by PBMs will highlight any discrepancies or unfair practices between the Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan—FEHBP—and other contracts. If the Federal Employee Health Benefit Plan has a contract that is higher than others, this amendment will give the IG the ability to review that data. To this, transparency is essential to ensuring proper oversight of these PBMs.

I formerly chaired the Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, where we conducted an extensive investigation into the role of these pharmacy benefit managers in prescription drug pricing under the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program. The FEHBP—again, I hate to use these acronyms because people do not

understand what they mean—the Federal Employee Health Benefit Plan is the largest employer-sponsored group health insurance program in the world. It covers about 8 million Federal employees, retirees, former employees, and their family members. It is widely considered the gold standard when it comes to affordable health insurance.

For example, in our investigation, we learned that pharmacy benefit managers and drug store combinations that manage 80 percent of the benefits within the FEHBP was offering its own generic discount program. And under that generic discount program, any person walking in off the street could sign up for only \$9.99 and gain access to hundreds of generic drugs. In contrast, we found that a Federal employee enrollee and the Federal Government, because we are helping contribute to this, were paying much, much more for most of the drugs on that general discount list, in some cases, \$200 more for the exact same drug.

So, get this. A Federal employee with insurance paid for by themselves and the Federal Government on the copay would be better off taking their insurance card, sticking it in their shoe, and walking in off the street and saying I would like to purchase a \$9.99 discount program. As a stranger without insurance, they would be charged less than they would be charged if they walked in with full insurance coverage under FEHBP. It was astounding. So, additional oversight and transparency in PBMs' contracting is one area where we can find bipartisan agreement. I look forward to adopting this amendment and continuing to work together as Democrats and Republicans to help Federal employees, and the American public, who are also being ripped off by these PBMs. I yield back. Thank you.

Mr. MFUME. Would the sponsor yield for just a moment?

Mr. LYNCH. I would.

Mr. MFUME. I am trying to get some sense as to why you might think that this variance exists. I mean, is this a subjective opinion? Clearly, it is not objective if people who are Federal employees are paying that much more.

Mr. LYNCH. Right. So, what we actually did, we actually went to court. You know, the Federal Government and FEHBP went to court against the PBM because we wanted to see the discount arrangements that they had. They fought us tooth and nail, and the court in that case agreed. They agreed that it was a proprietary item—their discount process. So, we were blocked by PBMs from getting information that would allow us to protect not only Federal employees, but also just the American public that might be dealing with a PBM as part of their insurance program.

So, the PBMs are boosting the price of prescription drugs and putting the difference in their pocket. They are making tremendous amounts of money by this scam. And when we passed the Affordable Care Act, it automatically made a lot of people eligible for programs that were not eligible before, but they are being ripped off as well, so it was a windfall for these PBMs, right?

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Would the sponsor take another question?

Mr. LYNCH. Sure.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. So, do you believe, Congressman Lynch, that for those without insurance or who do not have the ability to

pay, that PBMs decided they would give them something that was perhaps more akin to their own costs, but for Federal employees, they decided to rip us off?

Mr. LYNCH. Let me put it this way. They ripped off the Federal employees big time, and they ripped off people who had less ability, they ripped them off a little bit less.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. OK.

Mr. LYNCH. Yes. Well, they ripped everybody off.

Mr. MFUME. I thank the gentleman for his amendment. It is so much in line with the testimony that this Committee has heard over and over again about PBMs. I yield back.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you. I yield back. Thank you for your courtesy, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I recognize myself. First, let me say I appreciate Representative Lynch's sincere effort to support the overall objective of the purpose of the bill, and it is refreshing that this Committee can have a substantive piece of bipartisan legislation that I believe addresses waste, fraud, and abuse in the Federal Government, which is what our Committee is supposed to be focused on.

Transparency in the PBM market is vital to ensuring the cost of prescription drugs to go down. However, the proposed amendment far exceeds the scope of the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program—our jurisdiction within this bill—and would likely cause significant contracting issues for OPM. Whereas the underlying bill is intended to stop certain PBM practices within the FEHB program, the proposed amendment will require any PBM contracting with the OPM to provide data and information for every contract that PBM has with any company, even if that information has nothing to do with the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program. This requirement would unnecessarily burden OPM with data it does not need to fulfill the requirements of this particular bill. And given the differences between healthcare programs across the Nation, this data could create more confusion within the market. For these reasons, I respectfully oppose the amendment offered by my colleague, Mr. Lynch.

Do any other Members wish to speak on the Lynch amendment? The chair recognizes the Ranking Member.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts for this excellent effort to ensure that PBMs negotiate the best costs and real coverage for patients and his unwavering commitment to increasing Federal workers' affordable access to healthcare.

I strongly support the amendment, which would require PBMs to report key data points to the Office of Inspector General of OPM. It would provide OPM OIG with increased resources to improve audits of FEHB carrier contracts and ensure that the PBMs engage in reasonable conduct that puts the healthcare of Federal employees over the reckless pursuit of profits or rip-offs, as the gentleman so eloquently put it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back—oh, and I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you very much, Mr. Ranking Member. So, here is the thing. As I mentioned, not only are Federal employees being ripped off, but the general public is being ripped off. And the way we drafted this is, it would give the ability to work on behalf of both groups, right? If we just restrict it to FEHBP, which is what the Chairman is saying the bill requires, then we do address that narrower issue, and it is 8 million people, so it is not insignificant. I recognize that. But we got 330 million people in this country, and we could be helping everyone, and so my inclination would be to stand firm on protecting everyone.

However, if you tell me I sort of have a lifeboat problem, where if we let too many people in and the boat sinks, then I have got another thing to think about, but in first instance, I would like to protect everybody. I think PBMs are ripping off everybody, and we ought to stop them from ripping off everybody. I guess it is the parliamentarian saying that this is outside the scope of the—OK. OK. Mr. Chairman, well, I would yield back to the Ranking Member, and he can redeploy his—

Mr. RASKIN. Yes, I am happy to yield to my friend, Mr. Mfume, from Baltimore.

Mr. MFUME. Yes. I just have a parliamentary inquiry. If the gentleman wanted to amend his amendment to be in line with what the Chairman of the Committee spoke about, is that admissible today? I mean, can we do that?

Chairman COMER. We can get back with staff and resubmit it in that manner.

Mr. MFUME. And I am not trying to get in front of the sponsor, but I am just saying I hear him loud and clear, and I heard you, Mr. Chairman. So, if there—

Chairman COMER. Yes. We agree with what he is saying. It is just about the jurisdiction. Our jurisdiction just applies to the Federal—

Mr. MFUME. Right.

Chairman COMER [continuing]. Employees Health Benefit Plan.

Mr. RASKIN. And I would like to yield back to Mr. Lynch.

Mr. LYNCH. I thank the gentleman for the clarification. I do have a further amendment that pulls it back. I have the language here. I could offer that as a substitute amendment, but it would now work just to protect the 8 million Federal employees and their families.

Chairman COMER. That is great. You would have to withdraw the current amendment, and then we would have to have the clerk report this next one.

Mr. LYNCH. OK. If that is allowable, I would do that. I move to withdraw that and to resubmit this revised amendment.

Chairman COMER. OK. The clerk will distribute the second Lynch amendment to all Members. OK.

Mr. MFUME. Is it a unanimous consent request? That way we could move quickly.

Chairman COMER. Yes. We are going to have to distribute this so everyone can look at it, so we will briefly suspend while the proposed amendment is being distributed.

Mr. MFUME. And, Mr. Chairman, I would ask that it is distributed over here also. I did not get the last two.

Chairman COMER. Very well. My friend from Maryland will have plenty of time this weekend to read lots of bills since we will not be watching our quarterback play in the Super Bowl.

Mr. MFUME. No, the Ravens will be at home.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. The Committee is back in order. Mr. Lynch, would you like to formally withdraw your amendment?

Mr. LYNCH. I would. I would like to withdraw the amendment and just note that we have, in progress, an amended—

Chairman COMER. Absolutely.

Mr. LYNCH [continuing]. Version of that amendment that will be offered a little later in the hearing.

Chairman COMER. Absolutely.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The Lynch Amendment Number 1 has been withdrawn.

For what purpose does the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. Krishnamoorthi, seek recognition?

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. Mr. Chairman, I would like to offer an amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6283.

Chairman COMER. The clerk will distribute the amendment to all Members.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will designate the amendment.

The CLERK. Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6283, as offered by Mr. Krishnamoorthi of Illinois.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read.

I reserve a point of order.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman from Illinois is recognized for 5 minutes to explain his amendment.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank Chairman Comer as well as Ranking Member Raskin and their staffs for assistance with this amendment. I am so pleased that we could do this on a bipartisan basis.

Mr. Chairman, my amendment would strengthen pharmacy benefit manager, or PBM, transparency by requiring the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to report on services provided by a health benefits plan or a PBM by posting on a public website annually. Information would include aggregate dollar amounts of rebates, administrative fees, and post-claim adjudication payments collected. Information would also include aggregate retained rebate percentages across all contractual relationships for each PBM managing prescription drug coverage for a plan under the Federal Employee Health Benefit Plan. I thank my Republican colleagues as well as my Democratic ones for working to require PBM transparency in a bipartisan fashion. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I recognize myself to speak in support of this amendment. The rapidly rising cost of prescription drugs have forced patients to choose between life-saving medications and putting food on the table. H.R. 6283 is designed to decrease the cost of prescription drugs by removing com-

plicated incentives for PBMs which push higher drug costs onto patients. This amendment strengthens the transparency requirements on PBMs in the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program by requiring aggregate reporting of rebates, fees, and retroactive clawbacks. Furthermore, this amendment will help ensure OPM has the information needed to keep costs and premiums down. For these reasons, I support the amendment offered by my colleague, Mr. Krishnamoorthi from Illinois.

Do any other Members wish to speak on the amendment?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, all those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to.

Do any other Members wish to be recognized? The Chair recognizes Ms. Crockett for 5 minutes.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have an amendment at the desk.

Chairman COMER. Will the clerk please report the amendment?

The CLERK. Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6283, as offered by Ms. Crockett of Texas.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read.

I reserve a point of order.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes to explain her amendment.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Members of the Oversight Committee, it is our job to examine the issues and increase transparency and oversight on problems facing the American people. And once we do, we can develop tools and legislative solutions to address these problems. I agree we need to ensure PBMs do not take advantage of their role or power to force companies, pharmacies, or beneficiaries to pay higher prices just to benefit themselves. We also need to make sure that how we change how the PBMs operate will actually result in price decreases for those needing lifesaving medications and increase reimbursement rates for our local independent pharmacies.

I am offering this amendment today because before restructuring our healthcare system, it is imperative that we understand the complete role PBMs and others play in the larger drug market system. My amendment is simple but an essential step to ensure we have the necessary information and data to make sure PBMs are doing their job to decrease drug cost, and what Congress must do with entities, like Big Pharma, that do the same.

We need to examine what particular barriers to entry exist in the PBM market to make it more competitive and bring prices down. We need to examine how frequently PBMs are steering to pharmacies that are vertically integrated at the expense of independent pharmacies. We need to examine if PBMs are forcing nonvertically integrated pharmacies to pay more compared to those that are vertically integrated, and how pervasive this is and how damning

its effects are on our community pharmacists. We also need to examine whether forcing flat fees on PBMs will achieve this goal of bringing down drug costs compared to other solutions like capping revenue percentages. In short, we need more answers, and we need to know whether these proposed changes will actually result in savings.

By requiring a certification by OPM that the changes in this bill will result in lower premiums, and by directing the Government Accountability Office to publish a report with this information, as well as recommend legislative actions for lowering prescription drug prices for carriers and covered individuals, improving lower cost and better competition in the pharmaceutical supply chain, and developing PBM transparency requirements, we will be extremely well equipped to achieve our common goal of lowering drug costs and making sure Big Pharma is not taking advantage of the little guys. And with that, I will—

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. I now recognize myself to speak in opposition of this amendment. I have long supported efforts to examine the PBM industry and its impacts on patients, premiums, healthcare costs, and pharmacies. I have also called for improving transparency in PBM practices and reforms to reduce the price of prescription drugs. However, I am unable to support this amendment because it would condition the bill's implementation on a certification unique to Federal practice, enabling an unelected bureaucrat to determine whether they want to implement the will of Congress.

The DRUG Act is important because we need Congress to step up, take action to inspire real change to address the problems of rising prescription drug costs, not allow an unelected bureaucrat to dictate policy outcomes. For these reasons, I respectfully oppose the amendment offered by Ms. Crockett from Texas.

Do any other Members wish to speak on the Crockett Amendment?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, all those in favor of the Crockett Amendment signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[Chorus of noes]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the noes have it—

Ms. CROCKETT. Mr. Chairman—

Chairman COMER [continuing]. And the amendment is not agreed to.

Ms. CROCKETT [continuing]. I would ask for a recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote is ordered. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed, and we are going to suspend for a moment as we try to finalize the proposed Lynch Amendment.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. For what purpose does the gentleman from Massachusetts seek recognition?

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and the Ranking Member and Mr. Mfume.

Chairman COMER. Do you have an amendment at the desk?

Mr. LYNCH. I do have a revised amendment at the desk. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. I think we have distributed the revised amendment.

Will the clerk designate the amendment?

The CLERK. Amendment Number 2 to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6283, as offered by Mr. Lynch of Massachusetts.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read.

I reserve a point of order.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 5 minutes to explain his amendment.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My amendment would allow the Inspector General of the Office of Personnel Management full access to information relating to contracts entered into by the Federal Employee Health Benefit Plan and PBMs, so this is narrower than the original amendment. The data would include, as described before, reports and methodology used to calculate and allocate rebates, information on average wholesale prices, et cetera. And after making those edits suggested by the Majority, the amendment includes data from FEHBP contracts entered into by PBMs. This will highlight any discrepancies within the FEHBP, and this transparency is essential, I think, to ensuring the proper oversight of those PBMs.

I do want to thank the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. Mfume, for his assistance in this, and also Mr. Krishnamoorthi, as well as the Ranking Member and the Chairman and Majority and Minority staff. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I recognize myself. I support this amendment. I think this is proof of good faith effort by this Committee in a bipartisan manner to address one of the biggest challenges that I think both sides of the aisle agree we have in America, and that is the rising cost of prescription drugs. So, this is a great example of our sincere commitment to work together on this issue, to move forward, for this Committee to lead on this issue, and I will support the Lynch Amendment.

Do any other Members wish to speak on the amendment?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, the question is on the Lynch Amendment.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it, and the Lynch Amendment is agreed to.

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 7219**, Information Quality Assurance Act of 2023. The clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 7219, the Information Quality Assurance Act—

Chairman COMER. OK. I apologize. We are going to back up. All right. OK. Let us start all over.

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 7219, the Information Quality Assurance Act of 2023. The clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 7219, the Information Quality Assurance Act of 2023, a bill to require agencies to rely on the best, reasonably available scientific, technical, demographic, economical, financial, and statistical information to support new rules and guidance.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill should be considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Without objection, so ordered.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes himself to offer an amendment in the nature of a substitute. The clerk will please designate the amendment.

The CLERK. An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 7219, as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read, and the substitute will be considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment.

Chairman COMER. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for a statement on the bill and the amendment.

I am pleased to support this bill, the Information Quality Assurance Act. Each year thousands of regulations are imposed as an added burden on the American public. The Code of Federal Regulations in which these rules are housed spans 243 volumes that contain over 180,000 single-spaced pages. Agency guidance explaining these regulations to the public likely spans millions more pages. If we must have rules imposed by Federal regulatory agencies, we should, at the very least, ensure that regulatory agencies rely on the best-available information.

Unfortunately, agencies do not rely on the best-available information to create the regulation. Year after year, the Federal courts are clogged with litigation brought by regulated parties, who point out that Federal agencies have acted based on flawed information. Over the years, Congress has tried to improve this situation. In 2000, Congress enacted the Information Quality Act, which charged the Office of Management and Budget and each Federal agency to adopt guidelines to assure agencies relied on high-quality information. In 2015, Congress enacted the Foundations of Evidence-Based Policymaking Act, expanding on the Information Quality Act to further ensure agencies use high-quality information. Still, year after year, disputes arise over whether regulators are basing their decisions on the best quality information available. Every year, courts strike down agency rules that do not rely on adequate information. Every year, agency guidance that does not rely on the best information forces regulated parties down pathways that do not make sense.

The Information Quality Assurance Act takes several major but straightforward steps to solve that problem. For the first time, it requires that the information on which agencies rest their rules and guidance be the best, reasonably available information. It also includes several additional terms to make sure agencies are finally held to that standard. This legislation will improve the quality of agency decision-making, improve the acceptability of new rules and guidance, and avoid the need for many disputes over agencies use

of information to go to court. I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill, and I thank Representatives McClain and Porter for their introduction of this important bipartisan legislation. I now yield to the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The Information Quality Assurance Act is bipartisan legislation introduced by our colleagues, Representatives Porter and McClain. It would require the Director of OMB to update guidance issued under the Information Quality Act. That guidance is more than 20 years old now, and much work has been done by Congress and the executive branch on these issues in the meantime.

The Evidence-Based Policymaking Act, the DATA Act, and Open Government Act are just a few of a generation of new laws requiring updated guidance. Updated guidance would help agencies to better ensure the quality of information and evidence used in promulgating rules. The new guidance would ensure that the best, reasonably available scientific, demographic, economic, financial, or statistical information is relied on in the regulatory process. The bill continues the practices of the Information Quality Act that allow for public input on the information submitted and mechanisms for OMB to report any complaints to Congress.

I would like to thank the Majority for working closely with the Minority and the Administration in crafting this bill. It is a good, solid, bipartisan result, and I fully support it. I yield back to you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Do any Members seek recognition? The chair recognizes Ms. Porter from California.

Ms. PORTER. Having quality information can be the difference between making a great decision and a terrible decision, and as a single mom, I spend a lot of time at stores making decisions about what to buy for my three kids. With two teenage boys in the house, it often feels like the cupboards get emptied faster than I can fill them up. When I am shopping for my family, I rely on the best available information to decide what to buy. I look at ingredients to see if there are any irritating chemicals in the shampoo. I check out the price tags and the price per ounce so I can figure out which brand of laundry detergent is going to wash all of those loads of dirty clothes. When I need to pick up more olive oil, I inspect the bottle to see where it was made and if it has any quality certifications. Imagine what kinds of decisions I might make if I had bad information. I might accidentally buy itchy shampoo, pricy laundry detergent, and rip-off olive oil. I always make better decisions when I have the best information in front of me.

As decision-makers, Federal agencies are no different. If we want the best outcomes, we need Federal agencies to use the best information. The Information Quality Assurance Act would require Federal agencies to rely on the best, reasonably available scientific, technical, demographic, economic, and statistical information and evidence in their rules and guidance. Just like Americans want the best information when they are shoppers and decision-makers, Americans want to have confidence that Federal agencies are making informed decisions based on the best data.

This bill helps provide that certainty, but this legislation does not just expect Americans to take the government's word that it is

relying on the best-available information. Federal agencies would also be required to publish their rulemaking guidelines on their websites for all Americans to be able to read for themselves. Additionally, agencies would have to disclose the methods and data that they relied on to produce their guidelines. This level of transparency will allow the public to understand how Federal agencies develop their rules and to verify that they relied on the best available information.

As a former professor, I always had to explain my methods and my sources for anything that I published to have credibility. Allowing others to check for errors, review the quality of data, and highlight any assumptions, made my research stronger, and the same will be true for our Federal Government. I am proud to support the Information Quality Assurance Act, and I thank my Republican colleague and friend, Congresswoman McClain, for leading this commonsense bipartisan legislation with me. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. We are going to suspend for 2 minutes, while Mrs. McClain, the sponsor of the bill, rushes back.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Michigan, the sponsor of the bill, Mrs. McClain, for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am proud to be the sponsor of H.R. 7219, the Information Quality Assurance Act of 2024. I thank the Chairman, Mr. Comer, for bringing this bill up for the Committee's consideration today, and I thank Rep. Porter for partnering with me on this important piece of legislation. Thank you.

From my time in business, I can tell you the American employers and workers cannot afford for the Federal Government to impose new regulations and guidances on them that are misinformed and backed by bad data regulations that only harm the American people. They needlessly drain employers' resources, kills jobs, and cede economic victory to Americans and all other competitors, such as China. The same can be said of ill-informed and ill-conceived agency guidance.

When an agency's guidance on how to conform to Federal statutes and rules rests on flawed information, it risks sending regulated parties and the resources down the rabbit holes just to avoid the threat of misguided agency enforcement actions. One of the most important ways we can make sure the Federal Government does not use ill-informed regulations and guidance is also one of the simplest. It requires Federal regulators to base new regulations and guidance on the best, reasonably available information.

My act requires three really simple things. First and foremost, it requires the agencies to use the best data possible in drafting the regulations. This includes data on the impacts the regulations would have on the American people. Second, it requires the agencies to make public in a timely fashion, any model, methodology, or source of scientific, technical, demographic, economics, or statistical information upon which it intends to utilize in its rulemaking. Third, it makes sure the public has a chance to question whether that information is the best that is reasonably available. With just these three simple commonsense reforms, we can make sure the

Federal regulatory system avoids a mountain of mistakes that would unfairly burden the American people. I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the remainder of my time.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. Do any other Members wish to be heard on the McClain Amendment?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Before we call for the vote, I might add that both Chairman McClain and Ranking Member Porter are in charge of the Economic Growth, Energy Policy and Regulatory Affairs Subcommittee and this is legislation that has come out of their work—I am sorry—the Healthcare and Financial Services Subcommittee, and this is the product of several Subcommittee hearings.

All those in favor of the McClain Amendment, signify by saying aye.

The question is now on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The amendment is agreed to.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 7219, as amended.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those oppose signify by saying no.

[No response]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported.

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Chairman? I ask for a recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS. I ask for a recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote is ordered. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 262**, the All Economic Regulations are Transparent. The clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 262, the All Economic Regulations are Transparent, a bill to establish various reporting requirements with respect to Federal agency rulemaking.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill shall be considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Without objection, so ordered.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes himself to offer an amendment in the nature of a substitute. The clerk will please designate the amendment.

The CLERK. An amendment in the nature of a substitute offered to H.R. 262, as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read, and the substitute will be considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment.

Chairman COMER. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for a statement on the bill and the amendment.

The Federal regulatory system is estimated to impose over \$3 trillion in annual costs on the American economy. To make matters worse, Federal regulators are constantly adding to this cost by pumping out thousands of new rules every year. The weight of these rules falls hard on hardworking Americans. The least the Federal Government can do is give fair notice of what new rules are planned, how much they are likely to cost, and when they are expected to be imposed. The Federal Government is already required to publish its agenda for all new rulemakings twice each year. This agenda, known as the unified agenda of regulatory and deregulatory actions, is intended to provide the advance notice regulated parties need.

In practice, however, multiple administrations have failed to publish these agendas in a timely manner. In 2012, for example, the Obama Administration delayed the publication of its unified agenda, which was chock full of new major rules until after the 2012 Presidential election. This allowed President Obama to hide the ball from voters and denied them the opportunity to hold him accountable for these new burdens. The Biden Administration has repeated the Obama playbook, failing multiple times to publish timely unified agendas, including by delaying publication until after the 2022 midterm elections. Moreover, the unified agenda has never been required to inform regulated parties in meaningful detail about how much new rules truly are expected to cost. That cost information is necessary for employers and households to plan their affairs and investments.

This legislation, the ALERT Act, fixes these problems. H.R. 262 requires the Federal Government to publish online the information traditionally required to be included in the unified agenda, plus new specific information about how much each new rule will cost. To keep members of the public informed in real time, the bill requires this information to be updated online on a rolling monthly basis. And to fix the problem of administrations hiding the ball by failing to publish their agendas on time, it requires each new rule to have appeared in the online unified agenda for 6 consecutive months before it can take effect. In the digital age, this is all feasible, it is all fair, and it is, in fact, all overdue.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and the amendment that I will offer in the nature of a substitute, which conforms the text of this legislation to the text which last passed during the House during the 115th Congress. This legislation is supported by the National Federation of Independent Business. I thank Representative Good for reintroducing this important legislation. I now yield to the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. H.R. 262, the ALERT Act, is yet another attack on the regulatory protections that safeguard the health and the security of the American people and the strength of our economy. In the name of increasing transparency, ironically, the bill imposes duplicative and burdensome new reporting requirements on Federal agencies that actually undermine transparency by showcasing the costs of Federal regulations, while hiding the corresponding benefits. This is transparently one-sided

and pernicious. If, for example, we focus only on the cost of compliance with Clean Air Act rules, which is somewhere around \$523 billion over a 20-year period, we miss the corresponding and obvious benefits realized for the American people, which are estimated at around \$50 trillion.

Committee Democrats recognize the game that is being played here. If you were to decide on whether to buy a house based only on the costs of the house and not looking at what the benefits of the house are to you, the whole world would be homeless. Committee Democrats strongly support real transparency and real clarity in the rulemaking process and must, therefore, oppose H.R. 262 because it would force agencies to completely distort the real meaning and the complete impact of regulations adopted by agencies. Indeed, the whole reason the agencies are authorized to promulgate regulations is because of the underlying benefits, which would be suppressed and hidden by this legislation.

H.R. 262 would also prevent many important regulations from taking effect until OIRA has posted a slew of largely redundant information on the internet, for an at least 6-month period. The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards, an alliance of more than 180 scientific research, labor, good government, faith, community, health, environmental, and public interest groups, sent us a letter, Mr. Chairman, raising this concern. They wrote, "As a result of this requirement, the benefits of critically needed regulations, whether measured in lives saved, environmental damage averted, or money saved, would be put on hold unnecessarily for 6 months or longer." I ask unanimous consent, Mr. Chairman, to submit their letter to the record.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. RASKIN. Another basic flaw of H.R. 262 is the fact that it does not provide the public with any significantly new or useful information. The reporting it requires would be generally duplicative of information made available by Executive Order 12866, which directs Federal rulemaking agencies to prepare agendas of all rules under development or review. Federal agencies already meet this requirement through the semi-annual production of the unified agenda of regulatory and deregulatory actions.

OMB also provides annual reports to Congress on the costs and benefits of Federal regulations pursuant to the regulatory Right to Know Act. The bill would also force Federal agencies to replicate much of the information already publicly available on Regulations.gov. And with a narrow, unworkable implementation deadlines that would require agencies to shift limited resources away from existing workflows, we hardly do a favor for governmental efficiency and clarity by simply duplicating and multiplying the number of times that the same information has to be produced.

Republicans have made no effort to address concerns that the bill threatens to curtail the ability of agencies to execute their statutory responsibilities. If they are interested in real solutions to advance the transparency and effectiveness of Federal regulations, I encourage them to engage with the Biden Administration's ongoing work to modernize the regulatory process. As it is, they appear more concerned with regulating Americans' individual rights and freedoms, inserting themselves into the private lives of women and

their healthcare and their pregnancies, making it harder for Americans to exercise the right to vote, and banning books and fact-based curricula from schools and libraries. I urge my colleagues to oppose these efforts to curtail the freedoms of Americans and to oppose this bill, and I yield back to you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Before I recognize Mr. Gosar for 5 minutes, I ask unanimous consent to enter this letter of support for the ALERT Act from the National Small Business Association into the record.

Without objection, so ordered.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Gosar from Arizona for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOSAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Agencies already list the rule's potential benefits in the notice of proposed rulemaking, or the NPRM. Under the ALERT Act, industries, employers, employees, manufacturers, and stakeholders affected by a proposed rule would have a clearer idea of the potential cost of a rule compliance with the necessary lead time to address it. If agencies are promulgating standards that require billions of dollars in compliance cost, it is only fair that those who have to foot the bill for these costs are given time to adjust for these new requirements.

Agencies also should be granting the public ample notice to respond to rules that could cause the economy billions of dollars. Under the Regulatory Flexibility Act and Executive Order 12866, agencies are required to post the regulatory plans in April and October in what is commonly referred to as the unified agenda. However, there are no effective means to enforce timely publication. For example, President Obama posted the unified agenda for 2012 in December, conveniently after the November elections. The Biden Administration has failed to meet its own deadlines multiple times. The ALERT Act provides a solution for these demonstrated administrative failures by tying Federal regulatory action to transparency.

We have put so many onerous regulations on small business or businesses across this country, and the Federal Government has no idea what it does to comply. And they do not comply, and so we have got to have some lead time in order to see how these affect our economy, see how they affect businesses. We ought to be rewarding businesses, not hamper them. With that I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Do any other Members wish to speak on the bill?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The question is now on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

All those in favor of the Good bill, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The amendment is agreed to.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 262, as amended.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Gosar.

Mr. GOSAR. I ask for a recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote is ordered. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 5798**, the Protecting Our Nation's Capital Emergency Act of 2023. The clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 5798, the Protecting Our Nation's Capital Emergency Act of 2023, a bill to restore the right to negotiate matters pertaining to the discipline of law enforcement officers of the District of Columbia through collective bargaining; to restore the statute of limitations for bringing disciplinary cases against members or civilian employees of the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill shall be considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Without objection, so ordered.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes himself to offer an amendment in the nature of a substitute. The clerk will please designate the amendment.

The CLERK. An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5798, as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read, and the substitute will be considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment.

Chairman COMER. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for a statement on the bill and the amendment.

The men and women of the Metropolitan Police Department serve their community every day to keep the District safe and secure. In doing so, the department routinely places themselves in dangerous situations to protect others, and yet progressive policies from the Washington, D.C. Council continue to hamstring district police officers and needlessly place them in unsafe situations.

On January 4, 2023, the D.C. Council passed the Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Act of 2022. The act targeted D.C. police officers, taking away employee protections and making their jobs more difficult, despite rising crime in the District. When the D.C. Council passed this law, Congress acted swiftly and in a bipartisan, bicameral fashion to overturn it. The House and Senate passed H.J. Resolution 42, which would have overturned the entire D.C. law. President Biden, however, vetoed Congress' legislation, allowing the harmful policies of the D.C. Council to remain in effect today.

This bill, Protecting Our Nation's Capital Emergency Act, repeals certain provisions of the D.C. law, restoring D.C. police officers' right to collectively bargain over disciplinary matters and restoring clear timelines for disciplinary investigations. H.R. 5798 also repeals the D.C. Council's requirement that the time and place of some adverse action hearings be posted to a public website. This

public posting requirement would allow activists to harass officers attempting to pursue their due process in the workplace. This legislation is necessary to ensure the Metropolitan Police Department's recruitment and retention.

The D.C. police force has lost over 1,200 members since 2020, and staffing levels remain the lowest they have been in the last 50 years. Meanwhile, violent crime is rising in Washington D.C. From 2022 to 2023, all crime increased by 30 percent. Homicides increased by 35 percent. Violent crime increased by 39 percent. Robberies rose by 67 percent. Motor vehicle thefts increased by a staggering 82 percent, and the statistics from January of this year provide little hope that this trend will change. D.C. cannot lose another police officer during this crisis.

My Republican colleagues recognize the importance of supporting the law enforcement officers who risk their lives to protect our communities by restoring basic employee protections. This legislation shows Metropolitan Police Department officers the respect they deserve. Everyone should feel safe in the capital city. I am proud to support this bill, and I urge my colleagues to do the same. I now yield to the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the dangerous and unsafe situations that Metropolitan Police Department officers had been thrust into was defending the Congress of the United States and the Vice President against a rampaging mob of insurrectionists on January 6, 2021, chanting, "Hang Mike Pence," and wounding or hospitalizing more than 140 officers, both from the Capitol force and from the MPD. I remember one of the MPD officers who came to help out that day, Michael Fanone, was not even on duty, but just heard about what was going on and came down to join the forces defending our democracy.

Now we are here on the Protecting our Nation's Capital Act, and I do want to start by thanking our colleagues for at least spelling capital in the title with an "A" and not an "O;" a decision which saves us from completely destroying the laugh meter this week. But there is another irony in the contents of this bill. Of everything we could be doing to reduce criminal violence and protect citizens in our Nation's Capital, the GOP wants to make it harder for the chief of the D.C. police to fire or discipline police officers who themselves commit serious crimes or engage in official misconduct. You heard me right. Their big anti-crime initiative for the city where we work is to make it easier for lawbreakers to remain on the D.C. police force. Apparently, nothing screams public safety louder to our colleagues than pinning badges on the chests of crooked cops.

Look, we could be having a hearing today on passing a nationwide universal background check on violent criminals for gun purchases, a measure that would save hundreds or thousands of American lives and is favored by more than 90 percent of Americans of every political persuasion and is supported by the Major Cities Chiefs Association, but the NRA-operated GOP will not allow that. We could be having a hearing on a Federal ban on military-style assault weapons, including the mass shooters' weapon of choice, the AR-15, last used at massacres at a Texas mall, a Tennessee school, and a Kentucky bank. This ban, too, is favored by the vast majority

of Americans, including Washingtonians, but the NRA will not allow us to have a hearing on that.

Instead, we are studying an obscure bill to allow union-busting Republicans, who oppose collective bargaining in general, to suddenly strike the pose of defenders of unions as they seek to override and crush a law passed in someone else's community. And why are we doing this, you reasonably ask? Well, the answer is plain. The local police officer's union, which could not otherwise override the majority will of D.C. voters, is demanding it. They failed to persuade a majority on the 13-member council of the District of Columbia of their position. Their legal challenges were rejected in court. They tried and failed to have their way through a congressional disapproval resolution, and thus far, they failed to expand collective bargaining protections for officers found guilty of misconduct through the congressional appropriations process. So, this is take five for this project.

Republicans will not take "yes" for an answer on a strong bipartisan immigration package coming from the Senate, which would solve the problems at the border they have been bewailing and bemoaning all year, but they will not take "no" for an answer when it comes to overriding a D.C. law to strip the power of the local chief of police to regulate discipline on his own police force, an issue which the vast majority of Americans have never even heard of.

Now, if I were a member of the D.C. Council, which I am not, I have no idea how I would vote on this question, but I am sure I would sit through many hours of witness testimony, analyzing it, and I would interact with thousands of constituents about it, which D.C. Council members did. I would talk to the union, and I certainly would want to talk to the Chief of the D.C. Police Department. My colleagues will forgive me if I say we do not know the first thing about the legislative merits or demerits of this issue in the District of Columbia.

We have never gone out to the eight wards of Washington D.C. to hear from the people affected by it. The only thing we really know is the last four chiefs of police in Washington—Charles Ramsey, Cathy Lanier, Peter Newsham, Robert Contee—have all argued strenuously that they need the authority to discipline officers who commit crimes or engage in corrupt actions in order to maintain good morale on the police force and preserve the trust and loyalty of the vast majority of good cops and the rest of the community as well. We know that 12 of the 13 Council members in D.C. agree with those police chiefs because they sent us a letter yesterday, Mr. Chairman, which you and I received, citing to a D.C. auditor report, which catalog numerous cases where officers in the Metropolitan Police Department were convicted of activities like sexual assault, domestic violence against their wives or partners, officers who were arrested for assorted criminal activity, who gave false statements on the stand, who misused their issued firearms, who slept on the job, and so on. Every MPD chief for the last 15 years has supported the law as it stands because it empowers police leadership, not a third party, to determine the appropriate standards of conduct and discipline for their officers.

So, H.R. 5798 is a shocking assault on local democracy, which has made itself clear where it stands on this question. It marks a new low in the appalling efforts to override local government in Washington and micromanage the affairs of the people of D.C. This bill would do one thing and one thing only. It would overthrow the internal disciplinary procedures for police misconduct. If anything, it will make criminal matters worse in Washington, D.C. So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I urge us to reject this misguided legislation, and I will yield back to you.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Before I recognize Ms. Greene from Georgia, I would like to ask unanimous consent to add to the record letters of support for H.R. 5798 from the following organizations: the D.C. Police Union, Fullerton Police Officers Association, Las Vegas Police Protective Association, Pomona Police Officers Association, Public Safety Alliance of Nevada, San Jose Police Officers Association, Sergeants Benevolent Association, the United Coalition of Public Safety, and the Fraternal Order of Police.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, I have no objection to your introducing that, but is there written testimony or analysis by the Las Vegas and Pomona and these other jurisdictions which have suddenly taken an interest in Washington D.C.?

Chairman COMER. These are letters of support for H.R. 5798.

Mr. RASKIN. Written by those individual unions? Is that it?

Chairman COMER. We will be happy to give you a copy, right.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. Thank you. Then I have no objection. OK.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, these letters will be entered into the record.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Greene from Georgia for 5 minutes.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to express in the strongest words possible that I support the police, and we should be supporting the police here in our Nation's Capital because it is our Nation's Capital that has one of the highest murder rates in our country, one of the worst crime records in our Nation's history, and is an absolute embarrassment to our country. I would also like to remind everyone that one of our own colleagues was carjacked months ago here in Washington, D.C. We also just had a former Trump Admin official die because he was shot here in our Nation's Capital, and many Hill staffers themselves have been attacked just walking the city streets.

This is an ongoing crime epidemic here in our Nation's Capital, and it is appalling. We should be supporting police officers, not attacking American's gun rights. While all of us walk around under the protection of good guys with guns, Capitol Police carry those AR-15s and guard all of us, but, yet, Democrats would love to take away the gun rights of American citizens and blame guns that never get up by themselves and shoot people.

Murder is already a crime. People kill people. They do not just kill them with guns. They kill them with knives. They kill them with fists. They kill them with objects. They strangle them. But, yet, I just listened to one of my colleagues say that we need to disarm Americans in order to somehow stop crime in Washington, D.C. We should be protecting—

Mr. RASKIN. Will the gentlelady yield?

Ms. GREENE. No, I will not. We should be protecting and supporting police officers. I also heard President Trump come under attack once again because Democrats have nothing else to say to defend their own policies but attack President Trump. I would like to remind everyone that it was Antifa BLM, by the way, supported by Democrats, BLM, as an organization, raised millions and millions of dollars on ActBlue, the Democrat fundraising site. And then BLM riots across America that were endorsed heavily by Democrats and apologized and said were mostly peaceful protests by media who are totally defending Democrats constantly. These riots caused \$2 billion in damage across America.

I would also like to remind everyone that in 2017, when President Trump was inaugurated, that rioters nearly burned down Washington, D.C.—that is right—nearly burned down the city here, but, oh, we have got to attack President Trump every single day. You know, it was also Democrats that said things like, “I do not know why there are not uprisings everywhere.” That was our former Speaker of the House. Our current Vice President, before the election of 2020, said, “we will not stop, we will not stop.” Talking about these BLM riots. Also, one of our Democrat colleagues is on video—by the way, all of this is on video, their statements—and she was talking about Trump supporters and she said, “when you see them, you make a crowd, surround them wherever they are.” These are the statements that come from our Democrat colleagues, but they want to attack President Trump every single day and take away police officers’ ability to stop criminals and arrest criminals and protect our city streets, our community streets, and our Nation’s Capital, and I am sick and tired of it. It is ridiculous, absolutely ridiculous.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say I support the amendment that you just spoke on and introduced, and I would urge my colleagues to pay attention very carefully. The American people are paying attention, and they are not stupid. Just because you have a little microphone you can talk in does not mean that you can sit here and lie to the American people every single day. They can read the crime statistics. We all know you cannot walk around the city without being in danger of being robbed or carjacked or murdered maybe. My goodness. How horrible is that?

So, let us support our police officers. Let us vote for good things to help citizens in this city, and, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. RASKIN. Will the gentlelady yield for a question?

Ms. GREENE. No, I will not yield to one of your stupid questions that are always attacking me and attacking President Trump.

Mr. RASKIN. How about a mediocre question?

Ms. GREENE. No, I do not want your question.

Mr. RASKIN. An excellent question?

Ms. GREENE. No.

Mr. RASKIN. A smart question?

Ms. GREENE. No.

Mr. RASKIN. An intelligent question?

Ms. GREENE. You have no smart or intelligent questions.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Garcia for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you. That was a lot. I want to remind the gentlelady that it was her that actually organized a trip to the D.C. jail to hug and high-five and sit with the insurrectionists that actually attacked our Capitol, so if we are talking about the safety of D.C. and the Capitol, it is just quite, I think, ironic. This is all facts.

Mr. HIGGINS. And me.

Mr. GARCIA. This is quite ironic that the insurrectionists that tried to overthrow our government in the Capital City were actually being coddled by—

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

Mr. GARCIA. It is quite a shame that you call them political prisoners or hostages, I think maybe you called them. They actually tried to overthrow our government.

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

Mr. GARCIA. Let me continue with my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chairman, she is not recognized.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you. So, I think it is quite interesting that my colleague was trying to talk about the safety of D.C. when she literally supported an insurrection, an attack on the Capitol, visited the prisoners—I was there as one of two Democrats there as part of that visit on behalf of this Committee—and seeing her high-five folks that want to overthrow our government, so quite ridiculous. And if she is so interested in fixing Washington, D.C., maybe she should run for mayor of D.C. It is what she seems to be interested in. She is obsessed with everything going on.

I just want to remind folks that D.C. and the District has a mayor. They have a city council. They are trying to pass regulations. They are trying to work. There are definitely challenges. They are working very hard on those. And overall, let us remember that crime all across the country has actually decreased over the last couple of years. It has not increased. It has decreased, and with that, I yield back my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Well, Mr. Garcia, would you yield?

Mr. GARCIA. Absolutely.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much for your trenchant remarks, Mr. Garcia. Trying to pierce through the fog of propaganda, confusion, disinformation, and just lies that we just heard, the distinguished gentlelady, who I would be very happy to yield some of my time to answer the question, started off by complaining about the murder rate in Washington, the carjacking in Washington, and gun violence. And the question that I wanted to pose to the gentlelady, which she anticipated as a stupid question, was simply what she thinks, in this legislation that we are here to discuss, 5798, will bring down the murder rate or bring down carjacking or bring down gun violence in Washington? Because the sole purpose of the legislation, as I can read it, is simply to say that the Chief of Police no longer has disciplinary authority over his or her own police force, but instead, it will be subject to collective bargaining.

Now, that might be a great policy for the gentlelady's district in Georgia. I would be interested to know where the municipalities in her district are on that question, but in any event, the people of Washington, D.C. have dealt with this repeatedly. We have got a letter right here, which I submitted for the record, from 12 out of

13 members of the D.C. City Council saying please do not change our law. We have the statements of four different chiefs of police saying please do not change our law. We have got cops who have been convicted of sexual violence, sexual assault, domestic violence, and I am not even certain the gentlelady from Georgia understood what she was speaking for because she was talking about the murder rate and carjacking. And unless she is saying that police officers who may be removed from the force in D.C. for having committed a sexual assault or domestic violence are more likely to help bring down the murder rate, then her remarks are completely nonsensical. It was much ado about nothing. So, thank you for allowing me to make that point. I yield back to you, Mr. Garcia.

Chairman COMER. Would the gentleman yield to a question?

Mr. GARCIA. Sure.

Chairman COMER. You mentioned that crime was down nationwide. Then why isn't it down in Washington, D.C.? Any idea?

Mr. GARCIA. Well, I mean, let me just say, I served as mayor of a city of half a million people for 8 years. Crime trends go up and down. You look at overall crime rates, you look at violent crime, crime overall across the country has gone down. Not everywhere. There are areas of Kentucky and other places in the country that crime has gone up, but why? But if we are so focused on just D.C., then we should focus on places like Kentucky and Arkansas and Texas and other cities where crime is also slightly going up.

Mr. RASKIN. Well, and if the gentleman would yield on that point. There have been increases in different categories in crime in the gentlelady's own state that she represents, Georgia. If collective bargaining is the solution to that, would she support collective bargaining for public workers in Georgia because it is not allowed there, and she does not seem to understand that she just became a champion of collective bargaining and the right to organize a union. And I would invite her to come back to proclaim her new pro-union sympathies publicly for her own state as well.

Mr. GARCIA. We would support her on the PRO Act, actually, if you would like to vote for the PRO Act.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman's time has expired. Do any other Members wish to be recognized?

Ms. NORTON. Yes.

Chairman COMER. Ms. Norton.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before I begin my remarks, I ask unanimous consent to submit for the record a letter from the D.C. Council opposing this bill.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Chairman, I strongly oppose this undemocratic and paternalistic bill. This is the seventh bill this Congress House Republicans have marked up or brought directly to the floor to repeal laws enacted by the duly elected District of Columbia government. Congress has constitutional authority to legislate on local D.C. matters, but it does not have a constitutional duty to do so. Instead, legislating on local D.C. matters is a choice. House Republicans have repeatedly demonstrated that they believe D.C. residents, the majority of whom are Black and Brown, are unworthy or incapable of governing themselves.

The D.C. Council has 13 members. The members are elected by D.C. residents. If D.C. residents do not like how the members vote, they can vote them out of office. That is called democracy. Congress has 535 full voting Members. The Members are elected by residents of the states. None are elected by D.C. residents. If D.C. residents do not like how Members vote on local D.C. matters, they cannot vote them out of office. This is the antithesis of democracy.

The legislative history and merits of the Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Amendment Act of 2022 should be irrelevant since there is never a justification for Congress repealing legislation enacted by D.C. Nevertheless, I would like to set the record straight. The D.C. Council unanimously passed the Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Amendment Act of 2022. While the legislation was enacted without the D.C. Mayor's signature, the Mayor urged Congress to oppose the disapproval resolution on the legislation. The D.C. Police Department supported removing discipline from collective bargaining, eliminating the 90-day statute of limitations for discipline and allowing the police chief to increase proposed disciplinary penalties to make it easier to fire officers for serious misconduct. Moreover, disciplinary hearings have long been open to the public. Now the public finally can learn when and where they are occurring.

The Revolutionary War was forged to give consent to the governed and to end taxation without representation. Yet, D.C. residents cannot consent to any action taken by Congress, whether on national or local matters, and pay full Federal income taxes. Indeed, D.C. pays more Federal taxes per capita than any state and more Federal taxes in total than 19 states. If Republicans cared about our democratic principles or D.C. residents, they would bring my D.C. Statehood bill, which will give D.C. residents voting representation in Congress and full self-government, to the floor. Congress has the constitutional authority to admit the state of Washington, D.C. It simply lacks the will.

I am deeply concerned about the violent crime spike in D.C., and the D.C. Council is voting on legislation today that it believes will reduce crime. To suggest that Congress knows or cares more about public policy in D.C. than D.C. is patronizing. I urge Members to vote no on this bill.

Mr. RASKIN. Will the gentlelady yield?

Ms. NORTON. Glad to yield.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Congresswoman Norton. Thank you for that powerful statement. You know, it is your constituents, it is D.C. taxpayers, who pay the price for the officers who engage in misconduct that this legislation has set out to rescue. Between 2010 and 2020, the Washington Post found that Washington, D.C. paid out \$91 million to resolve claims alleging police misconduct. Sixty-five different officers were named in these multiple claims. It is just baffling to me how you get someone like the representative from Georgia, from a state which does not allow public employees to engage in any collective bargaining at all, come to speak for this one very narrow category of dirty cops who have gotten in trouble, who the police chiefs want to have the power to remove from the force.

Chairman COMER. The time has expired. The Chair now recognizes the law enforcement expert on the Committee, the gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. Higgins, for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate my colleague and friend, Mr. Raskin, stating that he is baffled because that is a rare moment when Jamie Raskin will be baffled. But if you were going to be baffled about something, my friend, it would be in the realm of, could we agree, something that you have never personally experienced. And let me say that when a police officer faces accusation because this is every day, ladies and gentlemen. Respectfully, some of you guys do not have any idea what you are talking about here, and the injury you are bringing into the rank and file of your law enforcement professional is significant when you take away that insulation of support that individual officers have when they face accusations, which is every day.

Let me say that whenever there has been an effort to enhance the ability of the street to impact individual officers that are working patrol, that are on the street, the street immediately picks that up, and the street wants the muscle officers off of the street so that they can run their crime. It is called the game. They are in the game on that side, I am in the game on this side. So, when they see that they can push buttons on particular police officers that are working effective patrol—I am talking about cops that will actually get out of their car and have interaction with citizenry that they are observing.

And if you get out of your car in a high drug, a high crime area, you know what you can expect. Ladies and gentlemen, you can expect a foot pursuit, and at the end of that foot pursuit, you can expect resistance, and then we are going to affect that arrest, and we are going to find drugs. We are going to take another drug dealer, another criminal, off of the street. In some way, we are going to try. This is every day, man. Maybe for some of America, this might sound like a bizarre concept, but for a patrol officer and working in cities of America today, this is every day, 12-hour shifts.

So, when you know that if you are squared away, if you are protecting people's civil rights, if you are operating within the parameters of your department's training and policy, if you are handling your business properly on the street, then you will be protected. You will be protected because you are going to be accused. But the moment the street figures out that an officer is on his own, of course the street is going after that guy. Don't you understand? They want that cop off the street. So, if they find out they can sue him or pursue him or publicly have his name listed on a website for what he is accused of, of course you are going to lose officers, and of course crime is going to increase.

So, you got to just be humble enough to step back from this reform that was forced through and say, man, that is not working. It does not work. We have to protect righteous officers, and because I love and respect my colleague, Mr. Raskin, and because I named him in my opening, I am going to yield to him to respond to my—

Mr. RASKIN. Well, I just have a question for my dear friend, Mr. Higgins from Louisiana, and thank you for a typically insightful and eloquent statement. Do you believe that chiefs of police are aware of the dynamic you are talking about?

Mr. HIGGINS. Yes, sir.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. And would you trust the chiefs of police to be able to make determinations about when someone's coming—you do not?

Mr. HIGGINS. No, sir. You have to trust your organization, your civil service rep, and the infrastructure there, the attorneys and the staff there. You have to trust them because they have power that the chief will respect. As an individual officer, you do not.

Mr. RASKIN. So, if I could follow up, my question is, do you think that this is a decision that we should make nationally for every state and city in the country, or do you think it should be decided locally by particular—

Mr. HIGGINS. Good question, but as a constitutionalist, I think it should be determined according to constitutional jurisdictional authority. So, for this Congress, we only have authority over D.C., and, therefore, in the sovereign states, I think the sovereign states should determine their course there. And I appreciate the gentleman's dialog here, and I yield, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman's time has expired. Do any other Members seek recognition? The Chair recognizes Mr. Gosar from Arizona.

Mr. GOSAR. Yes, and I yield my time to the Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Thank you, gentleman from Arizona. I just want to add that the Mayor of Washington, D.C. and the police chief told us all about their struggles to recruit and retain police officers when we had our closed door Mayor and Police Chief briefing right there at that table. There were Members from both parties there, because I think we all agree that the crime spree in Washington, D.C. is a huge problem. It is a huge problem nationwide in the big cities, in the blue cities, but it is especially a problem here in our Nation's Capital. And I believe this bill will help because right now nobody wants to work for the Washington D.C. police force because they are treated like the enemy by the D.C. Council, and this bill will take steps to change that. And in closing, I want to add that approximately 70 percent of Metro Police Department's sworn members are Black, Hispanic, or Asian, meaning that the department closely mirrors the makeup of the resident population it serves. Do any other Members wish to be recognized?

The Chair recognizes Mr. Frost from Florida.

Mr. FROST. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield my time to the Ranking Member.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you kindly, Mr. Frost, and thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that statement. I am happy to yield to you if you have any information that contradicts me. I do not believe that the Mayor of the District of Columbia is supporting this legislation, and I am not quite sure how it relates to the problem that you invoke of recruitment shortages on the force. Of course, that is a nationwide problem. I just, as you were talking, flipped online and I found the headlines, "Kentucky Law Enforcement Recruiters Face Tough Challenge Amid Officer Shortage," "How one Northern Kentucky Police Department plans to deal with officer shortage," and so on. I mean, it is a national problem that is taking place. It is not limited to Washington, D.C.

And in any event, I do not see the logic of saying that we are not going to trust the local government, the 13-member D.C. City Council and the Mayor, to make this decision for themselves. I do not know exactly what the tally is across the country. I know that in some states, they allow collective bargaining over personnel decisions, and other states have made the same decision that the people of Washington, D.C., have made. In any event, I know that this Committee and the Congress of the United States have not done any hearings to replicate the work of the District of Columbia Council and the Mayor to decide this. I know that legal challenges were brought to the law that they have that were rejected in the Federal courts. And so, I think that there would be something kind of flippant and superficial about us just saying that regardless of what is taking place in our own states, in Kentucky or Georgia or Maryland or Texas or Florida, that we will just decide on the spur of the moment to overturn the studied will of the people of the District of Columbia, who have decided this matter and have spent a lot of time working on it.

We have not had any hearings in the eight wards of Washington, D.C. We have not gone out to hear from the people in Washington, and I certainly have not heard from any of my constituents. I wonder how many of us have heard from constituents who think that the most important thing we need to do to reduce the murder rate and carjacking, as the gentlelady from Georgia suggested, was to overthrow the law of the District of Columbia, allowing the Chief of Police to control who is hired and who is fired and who is promoted and who is not. I mean, that just seems to me to be a complete non-sequitur and an exercise in absurdity.

During some of her heckling of our colleagues, the gentlelady from Georgia described the January 6th insurrectionists, who I know are close to her heart, as political prisoners and as hostages. I am sorry. The Proud Boys are not political prisoners like Nelson Mandela or Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. The Oath Keepers are not hostages like the Israelis and Americans being held by Hamas. A hostage is someone who has been illegally abducted by a criminal organization and held for a financial or a political ransom. And the thought that they would compare people, the majority of whom have pled guilty for assaulting Federal officers, destroying Federal property, or engaging in seditious conspiracy, which means conspiracy to overthrow the government, to hostages or to political prisoners demonstrates the complete collapse of critical thinking skills on that side of the aisle.

I would hope some of Ms. Greene's colleagues, not just on the Democratic side, but on the Republican side, would at least disassociate themselves from the claim that convicted January 6th insurrectionists are political prisoners or hostages. I know that Donald Trump has trafficked in such foul abuse, I know that Elise Stefanik has repeated his claims for her own reasons, but I would hope that others would maintain the essential semantic, logical, rational, and moral distinction between people who have been convicted of assaulting our officers and people who have been abducted by terrorist organizations. I thank the gentleman from Texas, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Any other Members wish to speak? The Chair recognizes Mr. Grothman from Wisconsin.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Yes. I am going to yield a little time to Congressman Gosar.

Mr. GOSAR. I thank the gentleman for yielding. To the Ranking Member, I hope that all those January 6th folks got their due diligence and due process. I really hope so, because if they did not, that is a total violation, and the gentleman should know that, and hopefully you will get a chance to see and ask that very same question of those individuals.

Mr. RASKIN. But, by all means, and if you would yield for a question, are you aware of a single January 6th defendant who did not receive due process?

Mr. GOSAR. Well, I can tell you one thing, the exculpatory evidence was restricted.

Mr. RASKIN. I am sorry?

Mr. GOSAR. The exculpatory. I think it is called the exculpatory.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes. The Brady evidence.

Mr. GOSAR. It was restricted, and that was the access to the videos, the active videos, so if that had something to do with it—

Mr. RASKIN. The videos are public. Have you found a single snippet on any of the videos that contradicts any findings either in court or—

Mr. GOSAR. Yes, yes, yes.

Mr. RASKIN. Which one is that?

Mr. GOSAR. The Shaman.

Mr. RASKIN. I am sorry?

Mr. GOSAR. The Shaman guy, the guy with the horns.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Mr. GOSAR. He did not go ransack the offices. They showed him peacefully going in with officers and coming back out.

Mr. RASKIN. I completely disagree with that.

Mr. GOSAR. Because here is what happened. He was in prison, and they immediately let him out. So, I have also heard from the other side of the aisle that there were officers killed. There was not a single officer killed in that aspect, so let us get the issues right.

Mr. RASKIN. I think that the family of Officer Gary Sicknick would beg to differ with you, sir. The defense counsel had access to all of the video.

Mr. GOSAR. No, no, no. My time. I took my time.

Chairman COMER. Mr. Gosar's time.

Mr. GOSAR. My time. So no, no, we have evidence that the timeline that was given on Mr. Sicknick's death did not correspond because they had timelines in which he is in the crypt when he is supposed to be dead, so there are things that do not match up. Yes, go back to the record. I got to tell you, when I hear inaccurate comments from both sides, it bothers me. You have inaccurate comments.

Mr. RASKIN. You are saying that Gary, if I could, are you saying that Officer Gary Sicknick did not die after the violent events of January 6th took place?

Mr. GOSAR. No, no, no, no, no. The time in which he was reported dead is not right because he is shown in the crypt actually

taking some posters from some of the folks that were partitioning. You got be careful with these things.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. You know, I do not want us to tread into a territory where we are deeply offending the family. In any event, every criminal defendant, January 6th criminal defendant, has the right to appeal his or her case. There is not a single case that has been overthrown by an appeals court because their due process rights were violated, unless I am not aware of one.

Mr. GOSAR. I just showed you one. The Shaman.

Mr. RASKIN. That was overturned.

Mr. GOSAR. What is that?

Mr. RASKIN. That was overturned by an appeals court.

Mr. GOSAR. Well, it was overturned because they showed evidence that he was never given during his trial.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. Then I will stand corrected if his conviction was overturned, but I was not aware of that.

Mr. GOSAR. Well, it was.

Mr. RASKIN. But for the many hundreds of other people convicted of violently assaulting our officers, there have been no due process reversals, and I am going to check about the Shaman.

Mr. GOSAR. I am going to tell you, it will be something, hopefully, you will get a chance to ask directly because I think it is that important to democracy.

Mr. RASKIN. Right. I agree with you that the criminal defendants' rights should be respected. I am not quite sure what that has to do with the legislative matter before us.

Mr. GOSAR. I was just answering you.

Mr. RASKIN. Right. And I was responding to just the shouted claims about hostages and political prisoners, which somehow entered into the conversation when Ms. Greene was heckling one of our colleagues, but let us put it this way. If you believe that there have been due process violations of a whole class of prisoners, which is what I have been hearing from the gentlelady from Georgia and others, let us have a hearing about that, and let us determine if you really believe that. I also heard her say at the beginning that it was really Antifa. I heard her invoke Antifa in sort of her drive-by remarks, and I think that was something that the former President said. It was really Antifa. Sometimes they blame it on the FBI, but then the rest of the time, they are down in the D.C. courthouse demanding that these people be released from jail. So, I do not know why they are protesting for Antifa, if it was really Antifa fighters that they want to blame it on.

Mr. GOSAR. Well, I would tell the gentleman—he sounds like he has got a lot of questions, like I do—and would like to have an answer. With that, I yield back.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you kindly.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Seeing no further request to speak, the question is now on the Garbarino Amendment in the nature of a substitute.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The amendment is agreed to.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 5798, as amended.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[Chorus of noes]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I ask for a recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote is ordered by Mr. Gosar. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 7184**, the Congressional Budget Office Data Access Act. The clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 7184, the Congressional Budget Office Data Access Act, a bill to provide the Congressional Budget Office with necessary authorities to expedite the sharing of data from executive branch agencies.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill shall be considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Without objection, so ordered.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes himself to offer an amendment in the nature of substitute. The clerk will please designate the amendment.

The CLERK. An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 7184, as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read and the substitute will be considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment.

Chairman COMER. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for a statement on the bill and amendment.

The Congressional Budget Office, or CBO, is the legislative branch agency responsible for helping Congress accurately analyze the budgetary impact of proposed legislation. The Congressional Budget Act of 1974 authorized CBO to collect information and data directly from agencies. Timely access to agency data is necessary for CBO to produce accurate cost estimates for legislation and to prepare for other congressional reports. However, agencies often delay or restrict CBO's access to data. One of the most common reasons agencies restrict CBO's access to Federal agency data is because of perceived Privacy Act obstacles.

This bill, the Congressional Budget Office Data Access Act, solves this problem by granting CBO the same Privacy Act exemption afforded to the Government Accountability Office and Congress. Under existing law, CBO must meet the confidentiality standards required by the agency that is providing the data, and this bill maintains that standard of confidentiality while expanding CBO's data access authority, such access that GAO and Congress already possess. CBO access to agency data is critical for the legislative branch agency's ability to fulfill its mission.

I thank my colleagues, Representative Grothman and Representative Mfume, for their work on this much-needed legislation. I encourage my colleagues to support this bicameral, bipartisan bill. I now yield to Ranking Member Raskin.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to commend Chairman Grothman and Ranking Member Mfume for introducing this good government commonsense measure. It would accelerate the speed and improve the accuracy with which the CBO analyzes the budgetary impact of proposed legislation by providing CBO with an exemption to the Privacy Act.

Despite an existing mandate for agencies to provide information to CBO, obstacles remain, particularly around Privacy Act restrictions on sharing data. The bill wisely leaves in place existing law that requires CBO to treat any information it receives with the same level of confidentiality as the agency from which it is received. I urge colleagues to support the legislation. I yield back to you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Grothman, the sponsor of the bill, from Wisconsin.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I will tell you what, you guys did such a great job of explaining that bill, I will just pass.

Chairman COMER. All right. Very good.

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Mfume, the other sponsor of the bill, from Maryland.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The American people deserve clear-cut communication on how taxpayer funds obviously are utilized to best serve the public. The bill that Congressman Grothman and I are putting forward today does exactly that. Under current law, CBO can only access certain non-public restricted data under a memorandum of understanding or a data sharing agreement. According to CBO, some of these agreements can take up to 5 years to negotiate. So, that translates into a 5-year delay, actually, in understanding the financial impact of proposed legislation here in the Congress.

This bill would remove a barrier that is too often a hindrance to the Congressional Budget Office from carrying out its mission by providing timely cost estimates and will ensure, as well, the fiscal responsibility of our Federal Government. Simultaneously, privacy protections will remain in place when CBO receives the necessary agency information that is pertinent to their work, safeguarding personal information utilized by CBO to improve transparency in government operation. So, in a nutshell, this bill is to support enhancing the efficiency and accuracy of CBO's work, which will benefit all Americans.

I thank Mr. Grothman for his insight and leadership on this, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation, and I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Gosar from Arizona for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOSAR. Yes, I thank the two gentlemen. It is high time this thing was done because we have always said garbage in, garbage out. You know, how does CBO come up with a response to this year that they are over a trillion dollars in the wrong, they are wrong

by a trillion dollars? So, it is about time that we as decision-makers and policy-makers find out that accurate information and be able to make those pertinent decisions, so thank you. It is high time. I wish I would have done it myself, so thank you. I appreciate you. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Seeing no further Members requesting to speak, the question is now on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

All those who favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 7184, as amended.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I ask for a recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote is ordered by the gentleman from Arizona. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 6972**, the Securing Chain of Command Continuity Act. The clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 6972, the Securing Chain of Command Continuity Act, a bill to require an executive agency, whose head is a member of the National Security Council, to notify the Executive Office of the President, the Comptroller General of the United States, and congressional leadership of such head becoming medically incapacitated within 24 hours and for other purposes.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill should be considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Without objection, so ordered.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes himself to offer an amendment in the nature of a substitute. The clerk will please designate the amendment.

The CLERK. An amendment in the nature of a substitute offered to H.R. 6972, as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read, and the substitute will be considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment.

Chairman COMER. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for a statement on the bill and the amendment.

Like many of you, I was shocked when Congress learned that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin was medically incapacitated for days before the President or congressional leaders were made aware. The lack of transparency set off alarm bells on both sides of the aisle and across the national security community. During Secretary Austin's medical incapacitation, an incident for global repercussions could have occurred, and those responsible for responding

would not have known Secretary Austin was not in charge. These events have made it clear that we must address medical incapacitation notification requirements for certain key members of our national security.

This bill, the Securing Chain of Command Continuity Act, would require the prompt notification of Federal leaders in the future. This legislation requires congressional and Presidential notification when someone who is a member of the National Security Council and the head of an executive agency becomes medically incapacitated. The person filling in for the incapacitated official must send the proper notifications within 24 hours of the official's medical incapacitation. If the proper notifications are not provided, a report detailing why the notification rules were not followed must be sent to Congress, the President, and the Comptroller General within 72 hours. This is a measured and balanced solution to this national security issue.

I thank my colleagues, Representative Kiggans of Virginia and Representative Davis of North Carolina, for their bipartisan work on this important and timely legislation. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill. I now recognize Ranking Member Raskin for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. And thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Before I give my statement, I just wanted to introduce for the record and ask unanimous consent for acceptance of an article entitled, "Judge Rejects QAnon Shaman's Bid To Throw Out His January 6th Sentence," and this explains the history that Mr. Gosar and I were describing.

Mr. RASKIN. It does confirm that there was no appellate reversal of his conviction. He actually pled guilty. When all of the video was released to Tucker Carlson by the Speaker of the House, he introduced some video of himself meandering along, but he did not show the video of him entering the building nor a video of the time that was the basis of the criminal charges against him. And, in fact, Judge Lamberth said—and I will share this with you, Mr. Gosar—that, in fact, had he known that Mr. Chansley was now going to not take responsibility for his criminal actions, he would have given him a higher sentence, and the video did nothing to change his mind. So, there was no appellate reversal. Every criminal conviction, and there have been hundreds of them, have been upheld in the courts.

Mr. GOSAR. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. RASKIN. Yes, by all means.

Mr. GOSAR. Yes. So let me get this straight. So once the video was released to Tucker Carlson, it showed opposite of what was—

Mr. RASKIN. No, it did not. That is what the judge said. It did not show the opposite. It was completely distorted. It showed some additional stuff of Mr. Chansley, who was kind of disoriented, wandering around at one point, but—

Mr. GOSAR. He was escorted by the Capitol Police.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Mr. GOSAR. He was escorted in there, and he was very peaceful.

Mr. RASKIN. But then the judge cited the video evidence of him entering violently and unlawfully by the mob, and then engaging

in illegal action that he was ordered not to do by the police officers present.

Mr. GOSAR. You know, that will be something, I hope that you will agree, that you will get and I will to get a chance to ask those questions.

Mr. RASKIN. Well, yes, and Judge Royce Lamberth can explain the whole thing to you, you know, if you got questions. But his opinion is authoritative on it, and there have been no reversals of criminal convictions, so we want to be extremely clear about that.

Look, the Securing Chain of Command Continuity Act would amend the Federal Vacancies Reform Act to require any agency head who is a member of the NSC to notify the Executive Office of the President, GAO, and congressional leadership within a day in the event of medical incapacitation. And the bill would require that if notification is not provided to Congress, the acting head or first assistant must submit a report to the EOP, GAO, and leadership of Congress within 72 hours, including information about the medical incapacity, including the reason for and dates of it.

I want to address the recent episode involving Secretary Defense Lloyd Austin, which clearly inspired the bill. In remarks from the Pentagon last Thursday, Secretary Austin took full responsibility for the lack of notification to the President during his hospitalization for cancer. Moreover, Secretary Austin assured the American public that during his period of absence, "There were no gaps in authorities and no risks to the Department's command and control."

I want to commend the Biden Administration for the swift action they took by conducting a thorough review of the current protocols and notifying agencies to ensure that the Office of the President is informed any time a cabinet head is unable to carry out his or her duties. Consistent with the spirit of the transparency of the 25th Amendment of the Constitution, which requires congressional leadership to be notified if the President is unable to successfully discharge the powers and duties of office, I agree that Congress should be notified if an agency head as well, who is a member of the NSC, is incapacitated.

I support the transparency that this bill imparts. I would ask the Chairman to continue working with us as the bill moves forward in the legislative process. We have not yet gotten agency input on whether implementation of the bill as written would present any unintended consequences that we have not dealt with yet, and we want to ensure it aligns appropriately with the strong steps the Administration has already taken to close gaps in the chain of notification. In any event, I thank you for bringing it forward, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Any other Members who wish to speak?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, the question is now on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The amendment is agreed to.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 6972, as amended.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I ask for a recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote is ordered by the gentleman from Arizona. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 5658**, the Vote by Mail Tracking Act. The clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 5658, Vote by Mail Tracking Act, a bill to require mail-in ballots to use the Postal Service barcode service.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill should be considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Without objection, so ordered.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes himself to offer an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

Will the clerk please designate the amendment?

The CLERK. An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5658, as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read and the substitute will be considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment.

Chairman COMER. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for a statement on the bill and the amendment.

Every American citizen who votes deserves to know that their vote has been counted and their voice has been heard. This bill, the Vote by Mail Tracking Act, would ensure this is the case. H.R. 5658 requires that all ballots for a Federal election, mailed within the United States to or from a voter, contain a Postal Service barcode. This barcode would allow voters to track the status of their ballot in the U.S. Postal Service system, allowing voters to know in real time when their ballot is received by the Postal Service, when it is in transit, and when it has arrived at their election authority. Beyond a Postal Service barcode, under this bill, for a ballot to be mailable, it must meet other requirements, including utilizing Postal Services' envelope design standards, and the ballot must include the official election mail logo or any future logo the Postal Service establishes for ballots. If a ballot does not meet these requirements, it cannot be mailed.

Do not get me wrong. While I encourage every citizen who wishes to vote in person on Election Day to do so, many states have adopted vote by mail policies. Five states currently conduct their elections entirely by mail. Twenty-nine states and D.C. allow no-excuse absentee voting. Thirteen of those automatically send out a ballot before every election. The U.S. Postal Service has delivered nearly all election mail on time in recent years. Over 97 percent of election mail was delivered on time for the 2022 midterm election, but without safeguards, bad actors could attempt to influence our elec-

tion. We must take our election security seriously and account for the fact that a significant number of Americans choose to cast their ballot by mail. This bill is a commonsense, bipartisan response to rising levels of mail-in voting nationwide.

I thank my colleagues, Representative Katie Porter, Representative Byron Donalds, and Representative Nancy Mace, for their work on this important legislation, and now I yield to Ranking Member Raskin for his opening statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Post Office mailed and delivered more than 105 million mail-in ballots in the 2022 elections. As we embark on 2024, millions of Americans across the country will decide to cast their ballots by mail. The bipartisan Vote by Mail Tracking Act would strengthen vote by mail processes and develop more efficient mechanisms to deliver and process all these mail-in ballots. The bill would require every mail-in ballot to contain a unique barcode and an official mail logo, which would enable voters and election officials to more readily track the status of these mail-in ballots. The bill would also require mail-in ballots to meet specific Postal guidelines, making it easier for the Postal Service and election officials to sort, track, and verify the authenticity of the ballots.

Voting by mail is a highly secure and safe way to vote, and despite the misinformation circulating online about it in some places, I will note that the Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Jen Easterly, confirmed in a statement on November 9, 2022 that the Agency had “seen no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes, or was in any way compromised in any race in the country.” This bill would not overrule any state’s decision to establish or expand the use of vote by mail. The Constitution leaves it to the states the determination of its own election administration rules unless Congress acts under its Article 4 authority, and this bill would not conflict with that.

The Vote by Mail Tracking Act was favorably reported out of this Committee last Congress with robust bipartisan support. This commonsense legislation would inspire confidence in the electorate in the performance and efficiency of our election systems, giving voters comfort that their ballot has arrived and been counted on time, and giving postal managers and state election officials the tools they need to ensure every vote has been counted by the voting deadline. I urge everybody to support this bill, and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Do any other Members wish to be heard?

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Porter, the sponsor of the bill.

Ms. PORTER. Some of us here voted in-person, and some of us here vote by mail. This Committee is not here to tell voters how to vote, but however they choose to cast their ballot, whoever they choose to vote for, whatever their political party affiliation is, every voter deserves to feel confident that their vote gets counted. There is a really easy way to give those who choose to vote by mail that confidence: Postal Service tracking barcodes. We already use them for so many other things. We use them to track shipments of medication, food, clothing.

Republicans and Democrats alike want to know when something important is mailed and is it going to end up in the right place. Our ballots are no exception. The United States Postal Service recommends that every mail-in ballot envelope contain a USPS tracking barcode, includes an official election mail logo, and meets USPS letter standards for size, weight, and shape. Unfortunately, not everyone gets to use ballot envelopes that follow these standards. This bill fixes that problem. That is why I am leading the Vote by Mail Tracking Act with the support of Representatives Mace, Mfume, Donalds, Connolly, Fitzpatrick, Norton, Ciscomani, Williams, and Burchett.

Under our bill, every ballot envelope will meet Postal Service standards and get a tracking barcode. All voters can then verify for themselves that their ballot reached its final destination. That transparency is a necessary step to make Republicans and Democrats alike confident in our elections, and that is exactly why this bill is led by five Republicans and five Democrats. It is not partisan. It is just good policy. This bill does not just make things more streamlined for the American people. It also makes processing easier and faster for the Postal Service, reducing its burden and making efficient use of tax dollars.

I want to be very clear about what this bill does not do. It does not expand voting by mail. It does not authorize new Federal spending. It simply makes sure that where voting by mail happens, where voters choose to vote by mail, that those voters can verify that their ballots were received by the election office.

Chairman Comer and Ranking Member Raskin, I thank you both for making this commonsense legislation a priority. Once we mark this bill up today, I look forward to working with you to quickly pass this bipartisan bill on the House floor. And to my fellow Committee members, you will be in great company joining 10 bipartisan Members and both Chairman and Ranking Member in supporting this bill. I urge every Committee Member to vote for this bill, and I would be glad to add anyone as a co-sponsor. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Mace from South Carolina.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for this legislation. And ironically, as much as we debate—I will not say “fight,” we will say “debate” in here—the Oversight Committee is one of the few committees where we actually can get a lot of bipartisan work done, so I appreciate my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. And whether you are Republican or Democrat, I think we can all agree our republic cannot ensure if Americans of all political stripes do not have confidence in the integrity and results of our elections.

Over the last 4 years, we have seen a rapid expansion in mail in voting, and it has made a lot of Americans uneasy. And I remember in the 2020 cycle getting calls from at least a half dozen people that received a ballot from multiple states through the mail and listening to their concerns about that and how uneasy they felt about it. So, this comprehensive legislation requires ballots for all Federal elections to be trackable while in the mail by having unique Postal Service barcode, ensuring it can be tracked from the mailbox to the ballot box, and there is nothing more American or

more supportive of a republic and a democracy than this piece of legislation.

It is 2024, and if I can buy a dress online and order it online and know when it is going to be delivered to the house, then our ballot should be the same way. There is no reason why we cannot track them and let us know if they have been delivered. So, it is time to bring our election system into the 21st century. I have co-led on this bipartisan legislation, election integrity legislation, ensuring we have transparency and accountability for all those who vote by mail regardless of your political affiliation.

Election integrity should not be a partisan issue. Every legal vote should be counted, and our bipartisan bill will go a long way to making that a reality. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Gosar from Arizona for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOSAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I applaud those folks that put this together. It is high time. Arizona has been doing mail-in ballots for over 25 years, but it is only one piece of the pie. We can already do this, except we do not do it with the post office, so I love the fact that we are using the post office to use that barcode. However, that is only one piece of the pie because in our state, you have to affidavit the signatures. They have to match up, so it is one piece of the pie, and that is really all it is, but it gives an easier tool for people to follow through with. The last thing I would ask is—I did not finish reading it—but what are the remedies in case you cannot find that barcode? What would you expect the post office to do? I will yield to—

Ms. PORTER. Will the gentleman yield? In the bill, it is written there is no individual remedy, although I think the goal would be that as you track your ballot, if it is not received, you would have the ability to—mail-in voting, as you know, often occurs over a period of time—

Mr. GOSAR. So, you will be able to do a provisional—

Ms. PORTER. You would be able to do a provisional. You can contact and request a new ballot. And I think this also will enable county election officials and state officials to see if the Postal Service is actually delivering these ballots on time and in full. And if there were problems or gaps, we would be able to hold, as a Committee, the Postal Service accountable for those kinds of problems. That we currently do not have.

Mr. GOSAR. Yes. I would tell you, I applaud the folks who put this together because it is like one piece of another complex puzzle, so thank you. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Seeing no other Members requesting time to speak, the question is now on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 5658, as amended.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it and the bill is ordered favorably—

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, can I ask for a recorded vote? I want to wear out these little machines today.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote is ordered by the gentleman from Arizona. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 5887**, the Government Service Delivery Improvement Act. The clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 5887, the Government Service Delivery Improvement Act, a bill to improve government service delivery and build related capacity for the Federal Government.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill should be considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Without objection, so ordered.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes himself to offer an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

Will the clerk please designate the amendment?

The CLERK. An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5887, as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read, and the substitute will be considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment.

Chairman COMER. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for a statement on the bill and the amendment.

Outdated bureaucratic government processes make it challenging and costly to deliver government services. This wastes taxpayer dollars and creates opportunities for fraud and abuse. These processes do not change because Federal agencies lack a single designated official that Congress can hold accountable for program service delivery, including agency-wide backlogs, unprocessed applications, or improperly delivered benefits. Many agency officials, program managers, policy-makers, human resource managers are responsible for parts of the problem, but developing solutions to poor government service delivery will require someone to be responsible for cross-agency coordination.

This legislation, the Government Service Delivery Improvement Act, addresses this problem by requiring the Office of Management and Budget and Federal agencies to designate a senior official accountable for improving government service delivery. This bill requires OMB to designate a senior official as the Federal Government service delivery lead or hold them responsible for facilitating and coordinating agency government processes reforms. This OMB official will develop standards, policies, and performance metrics to ensure agency progress. This bill also requires each agency to designate a senior official responsible for improving government service delivery. This official must work with other relevant agency officials, such as the chief information officer, chief procurement offi-

cer, and program managers, to improve agency operations and implement reform policies.

This bill further requires OMB to report to Congress within a year on the status of implementing these requirements, with GAO providing a similar report to Congress within 2 years. With this expansion of the bipartisan 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act of 2018, this bill will improve congressional oversight over the Administration's government service delivery reform efforts.

I am thankful for the work of my colleagues, Representative Khanna and Representative Timmons, for their work on this important legislation. I encourage my colleagues to support this commonsense bill.

The Chair now recognizes Ranking Member Raskin.

Mr. RASKIN. Just very quickly, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Mr. Timmons and Mr. Khanna from California for their leadership of H.R. 5887, the Government Service Delivery Improvement Act, and I am proud to support this bipartisan bill. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Timmons from South Carolina.

Mr. TIMMONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank my colleague, Mr. Khanna, for his leadership on this bill. The Government Service Delivery Improvement Act aims to overhaul the public's experience with government services, aligning them with the expectations set by the digital era. And I could not think of a better time for this Committee to take up this legislation on this exciting day when the House Oversight Committee steps into the 21st century with electronic voting.

I worked alongside my friend from Washington, Representative Kilmer, for 4 years on the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. We made over 200 recommendations, and we appreciate Chairman Comer adopting Recommendation Number 55 by implementing electronic voting in this Committee. It will save everyone here immense amounts of time and allow us to be more efficient and effective, so thank you. It really is exciting to see the Modernization Committee's recommendations come to fruition.

Now, back to the bill at hand. Over the past year, this Committee has held hearings on the failures of government service delivery, whether it is passport backlogs, delays for former service members requesting personnel records, or the ineffective 1-800 number at the Social Security Administration. Our interactions with Federal agencies are pivotal moments, yet under our current system of government, there is not a single individual the American people can turn to and hold accountable for agencies' actions and failures. No one person is in charge of implementing effective solutions or improving government service delivery across all Federal agencies, and as a result, individual agencies are not operating in an efficient manner. Without such direct supervision or accountability, agencies can continue to fall behind on the delivery of their services, like the distribution of benefits or the effective handling of backlogs.

In order to fix this lack of agency accountability and oversight, this bill tasks OMB with a designated senior official to facilitate and coordinate agency efforts so they can work more efficiently and deliver services in a timely and less wasteful manner. This bill will

also require the designation of a senior official for every Federal agency that will be responsible for improving the service delivery of that particular agency. The Government Service Delivery Improvement Act is a beacon of hope in this landscape of frustration. It mandates the appointment of a senior official at the OMB to spearhead the improvement of government delivery service. Additionally, it will hold agency heads accountable for enhancing services, fostering greater trust with the public, and appointing senior officials to drive these necessary changes.

The Government Service Delivery Improvement Act is not just about streamlining processes. It is about rebuilding trust between the government and its people. It is about ensuring that when Americans turn to their government for assistance, they are met with efficiency, reliability, and above all, respect. With that, I would like to thank Chairman Comer for holding this markup and thank Representative Khanna for carrying this bill. I urge all Members of this Committee to support, and thank you. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. I thank the gentleman from South Carolina. The Chair now recognizes the sponsor of the bill, Mr. Khanna from California.

Mr. KHANNA. Thank you, Chair Comer, and thank you for your leadership in helping this bill go forward. I want to thank Representative Timmons for his partnership in this bill and also acknowledge the leadership of our Ranking Member, Ranking Member Raskin, and the Committee Chair, Mace, and Ranking Member Connolly, as well as the many co-sponsors, bipartisan, Representatives Donalds and Loudermilk, who all helped make this possible.

And I think the reason we have, Mr. Chairman, such bipartisan support is that this bill is common sense. We want to make sure that government services are provided to people with the latest technology. We know that digital technology saves extraordinary amount of money for taxpayers. An average IRS transaction that is not online is \$53 per transaction. A digital transaction is 22 cents. But more than saving taxpayers money, this bill and the creation of the lead position at OMB will ensure that the latest technology that we have in this country is being used to make government better and to make government perform better for citizens who need it. So, I appreciate your leadership in helping this bipartisan bill go forward and look forward to hopefully a vote in the House and having the President sign this.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Seeing no further Members wishing to speak, the question is now on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The amendment is agreed to.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 5887, as amended.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[No response]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I would like to have a recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote is ordered by Mr. Gosar from Arizona. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

I now ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a letter of support from the American Pharmacy Cooperative, Inc. and a letter of support from the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association supporting our PBM legislation.

Without objection, so ordered.

Chairman COMER. We will now recess until 2:30. At that time, we will vote on any recorded votes. I ask Members to arrive promptly at 2:30 because we will be using electronic voting for the first time, and votes will hopefully go quickly. So again, we will recess until 2:30, which should be at the conclusion of the first vote series.

The House stands in recess.

[Recess.]

Chairman COMER. The meeting will come back to order. We have a quorum.

Before the first of our recorded votes, I would like to remind Members of the rules and process for using the brand-new electronic voting system.

[Applause.]

Chairman COMER. All right. My intention is to hold the first vote open for a bit longer than the following votes, just to allow Members to get familiar with the new system. When using the electronic voting system, Members must be in their seat in the hearing room to cast a vote. Members are not allowed to remove their voting remote from the room. Once voting begins, Members will be able to select "yes," "no," or "present" for each vote. A Member may change their vote any time prior to the closing of the vote by the clerk, but once a vote is recorded, the Member may not un-recorded their vote from the record. Finally, this new system will allow the Committee to dispense with votes quickly, so it is important that Members do not leave the room during the vote series.

The question is on favorably reporting H.R. 7219, the Information Quality Assurance Act of 2023. Members will record their votes using the electronic system.

The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting the bill, and the Chairman is going to vote aye.

Mr. RASKIN. And the Ranking Member votes aye.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Ready to go, and the results are on the screen. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 41. The nays are 0.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.
[Applause.]

Chairman COMER. The question is on favorably reporting H.R. 5798. Members will record their vote using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorable reporting H.R. 5798.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members recorded their—who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change the vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 22. The nays are 19.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 7184. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 7184.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 41. The nays are 0.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

The question is on favorably reporting H.R. 6972. Members will record their vote using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 6972.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 41, the nays are 0.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 5658. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 5658.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 41. The nays are 0.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported.

Without objection the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 5887. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 5887.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 41. The nays are 0.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

The question now is on favorably reporting H.R. 262. Members will record their vote using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 262.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 21. The nays are 19.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

The Committee will now resume consideration of H.R. 6283, the Delinking Revenue from Unfair Gouging Act.

The question is now on the previously postponed amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Ms. Crockett from Texas.

Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on the amendment to the amendment on H.R. 6283.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 20. The nays are 22.

Chairman COMER. The noes have it, and the amendment is not agreed to.

The question is now on the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6283.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signify by saying no.

[Chorus of noes]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6283 is agreed to.

The question is on favorably reporting H.R. 6283. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 6283.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The clerk will close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 29, the nays are 11, with one Member voting present.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it, and the bill is ordered favorably reported.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

Pursuant to notice, I now call up the following POSTAL NAMING BILLS, which were distributed in advance on this markup: H.R. 3608, 5476, 5640, 5712, 6073, 6162, 6188, 6651, 6750, 6983, and 7192.

Without objection, the bills are considered read.

Chairman COMER. If any Member would like to speak on any of the measures, they may do so now.

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Hearing no request to speak, I request unanimous consent for these bills' immediate consideration and to favorably report the en bloc package.

Hearing no objection, the en bloc package is ordered favorably reported.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

Pursuant to Rule 11, Clause 2, I ask that Committee Members have the right to file with the clerk of the Committee supplemental, additional, minority and dissenting views.

Without objection.

Additionally, staff is authorized to make necessary technical and conforming changes to the bills ordered reported today, subject to the approval of the Minority.

Without objection, so ordered.

If there is no further business before the Committee, without objection, the Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:50 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

